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Popular Music on Screen and the Road to Brexit

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As part of an expansion from six to nine members states, the United Kingdom joined the European Union in January 1973. Just two years later in 1975, following legal provision provided by the Referendum Act, the UK's first nationwide referendum took place and determined that that UK would stay in the European Economic Community, or the Common Market as it was then known. 67% of voters supported the Government's campaign to remain. Jump forward 41 years to 2016 and 51.9% of the UK electorate (about 17.5 million people) voted to leave the European Union, eventually triggering Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty and enacting the Brexit process. The nature of the UK's relationship with the European Union had, apparently, split the country down the middle.

In this article, I argue that the Brexit division and the conflicted notions of identity that surround it is not a new phenomenon. Indeed, ideological debates about the "European question" assumed a central place in British political life from the early-1960s onwards with rival factions appearing in both Labour and Conservative parties.[1] I focus on a pivotal historical period to trace some of the political and cultural implications of the use of popular music and popular musicians in British films of the 1960s and 1970s. Although studies of both cinema and popular music *as* political are numerous rarely is the use of popular music *in* cinema considered within socio-political frameworks.[2] For Street, the boundary between music and politics is 'largely illusionary' and he claims that 'music does not just provide a vehicle of political expression, it *is* that expression'.[3] Street also notes that in order to be political, cultural outputs have to be used collectively. I extend this idea and argue that there is an interactive dependency between society, the films it makes, and the way that popular music is used in them, even if this is not developed or intended to drive an overtly political mobilizing movement. Films are closely related to what people feel about the world around them, they demonstrate clear identity connections and also shape the contours of social change by imagining new boundaries, territories, and networks.

I hope to demonstrate some facets of the British psyche in relation to identity, independence, nationalism, nostalgia, and exoticism. In this sense, the various interrelationships between culture, identity politics, stardom, and music show that the decision to leave the EU in 2016 was not a flash in the pan, but a long and protracted journey reflecting oppositional notions of freedom and accountability. By exploring the road to Brexit various interrelationships between culture and music emerge showing how popular music in film reflected wider political deliberations. I propose to explore this through three general typologies which I define as Discovering Europe, Defeating Europe, and Reappraising Home. These should not be understood as representative of a teleological political evolution but considered as interweaving parallel strands within which a range of films from the period could be analysed. Space does not permit a broader evaluation here and, instead, I examine a specific, provocative example of a film within each

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[1] Anthony Forster, *Euroscepticism in Contemporary British Politics: Opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties Since 1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

[2] See for example: Jonathan Rosenbaum, *Movies as Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Mike Wayne, *The Politics of Contemporary European Cinema: Histories, Borders, Disaporas* (Bristol: Intellect, 2002); Ian Peddie, *The Resisting Muse: Popular Music and Social Protest* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); John Street, *Music and Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013); Yannis Tzioumakis and Claire Molloy, *The Routledge Companion to Cinema and Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[3] Street, p. 1.

typology. I hope, nonetheless, to be able to demonstrate the potential for a framework that highlights the contrasting perspectives on the UK's relationship with Europe which have long been evident and did not simply splinter at the point of the Brexit referendum.

Performing Freedom(s)

The reaction to Brexit across Europe and in many parts of the UK was one of complete shock, but history tells us that it should not have been quite such a surprise. Brexit goes far beyond the wider phenomenon of a populist backlash against globalization.[4] The challenge of resolving Britain's constitutional tradition with the EU is a long-standing and deep-rooted aspect of the British mentality; this means that the Brexit result was, in many ways, inevitable, especially when unbalanced devolution had already poured fuel on the fire of an internal identity crisis. As Allen and others have observed, British governments have often been highly Europeanized but British politics has not, meaning that disputes over government structures and wider notions of resistance to overseas "intrusions" have been a constant battleground.[5]

For British people, questions of freedom and of the democratic right to elect and remove governments are, arguably, a preoccupation that is more forcefully determined than in other European countries, as Anthony Smith and others have identified.[6] Sheila Lawlor discusses a range of historic motives for this in her 2016 essay *Ruling the Ruler: Parliament, the People and Britain's Political Identity*. Here she cites the British Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, who, even in the 1930s evoked an image of inherited freedom passed on through generations. His focus was on the importance of parliamentary government as a symbol of resistance against power as well as the protection of ancient freedoms which he considered a birth right. This freedom, Baldwin argued, had been 'fought for from the *beginning of our history* […] the result of centuries of resistance to the power of the executive' (my italics).[7] Baldwin aimed to present British freedom in opposition to continental systems emerging in the interwar years and especially the authoritarian movements of fascism and communism. But his main aim was to highlight British independence: independence of the individual, independence of spirit, independence that continually challenged authority. Whether this perceived view was accurate is, of course, an entirely different question, but it is clear that Baldwin had touched on something appealing because Britain's engagement with mass politics, from the 20th Century onwards, has been framed by a very particular form of popular scepticism. By choosing to characterize an independent British spirit, then, Baldwin was engaging in a speech act, a deliberate attempt to *make* (not just describe) a specific form of Britishness. These attitudes were amplified following the Second World War, where Gifford argues that Euroscepticism increasingly became a national movement for British

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[4] Craig Calhoun, 'Populism, nationalism and Brexit', in *Brexit: Sociological Responses*, ed. by William Outhwaite (London: Anthem Press, 2017), pp. 56–76; Kevin O'Rourke (2016) 'Too much market, too little state: The Brexit backlash against globalisation has been a long time coming', *LSE Brexit Blog*, 19 August. < http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2016/08/19/too-much-market-too-little-state-the-brexit-backlash-against-globalisation-has-been-a-long-time-coming/> [accessed 3rd March 2018].

[5] David Allen, 'The United Kingdom: A Europeanized government in a non-Europeanized polity', in *The Institutions of the European Union*, ed. by Simon Bulmer and Christian Lequesne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 108–133; Helen Thompson, 'Inevitability and contingency: The political economy of Brexit', *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 19: 3 (2017), 434–449.

[6] Anthony Smith, 'Set in the silver sea: English national identity and European integration', *Nations and Nationalism*, 12:3 (2006), 433–452.

[7] Stanley Baldwin, *This Torch of Freedom* (London, 1935/4th edn. 1937), p. 25.

exceptionalism.[8]

Extending the concept of the speech act, Adler-Nissen *et al.*, following J. L. Austin and Judith Butler, argue that Brexit signifies far more than the technical complexities of the United Kingdom withdrawing from the European Union.[9] It works *performatively* both as a promise of a different future and to establish a specific past. As such, Britain's notion of freedom is also closely tied to nostalgia. I would argue that it reflects a fascinating example of what Svetlana Boym described as "restorative nostalgia". Restorative nostalgia stresses the idea of home and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home: it attempts to patch up collective memory gaps.[10] Restorative nostalgia presents itself as truth and tradition. Indeed, Boym has argued that restorative nostalgia 'appears to be a longing for a place but is actually a yearning for a different time […]. A rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress'.[11] Adler-Nissen also implicitly identifies the same point:

> the discourse of Brexit does not express some "true" nature of British identity, geopolitics or economy. Rather, it creates that which it seems to represent: namely, a post-Brexit Britain and post-Brexit world – and in doing so, it also constructs a particular past. Overall, understanding Brexit as performative assumes that the very language of Brexit does something politically.[12]

Considering Brexit as a performative act blanketed by restorative nostalgia, it becomes possible to see the usefulness of examining cultural texts such as films of the 1960s and 1970s. Film does not simply reflect or describe a given reality, it also constructs it. From this perspective, we may consider the representation of the "Other", and the boundaries that demarcate inside and outside, domestic and foreign, leave and remain.

Discovering Europe

In the early 1960s, British cinema was in transition. Of the former dominant studios, only Associated British at Elstree and Rank at Pinewood had survived the postwar era. The funding and infrastructural gap was partly filled by American studios which invested heavily in British films. A number of government-sponsored mechanisms attempted to animate the ailing domestic film industry and to draw people away from their television sets. These included the National Film Finance Corporation (NFFC); the Eady levy, a tax on exhibitors named after the Treasury official who set it up in 1954; and British Lion, a government-sponsored umbrella for film production and distribution.[13]

In this context, a film such as *Summer Holiday* (Peter Yates, 1963) is a productive case study, as it moves away from the socially-aware working-class new wave, e.g. *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Karel Reisz, 1960), towards the increasingly confident mid-decade celebration of music and fashion in swinging London, e.g. *The Knack* (Richard Lester, 1965). *Summer Holiday* was made by Associated British at Elstree Studios and distributed by Warner-Pathé, and it consciously aped the Hollywood film musical. American

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[8] Chris Gifford, *The Making of Eurosceptic Britain: Identity and Economy in a Post-imperial State* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

[9] Rebecca Adler-Nissen, Charlotte Galpin, and Ben Rosamond, 'Performing Brexit: How a post-Brexit world is imagined outside the United Kingdom', The *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 19: 3 (2017), 573–591.

[10] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001) pp. 41–9.

[11] Boym, p. xv.

[12] Adler-Nissen, p. 575.

[13] Margaret Dickinson and Sarah Street, *Cinema and State: The Film Industry and the British Government 1927–1984* (London: BFI, 1985).

Herbert Ross was brought in to choreograph and film the musical numbers and the dialogue scenes that surrounded them. *Summer Holiday* featured the artist Cliff Richard and it was primarily responsible for his transformation from rock star into family entertainer. A significant aspect of the film was its extended and integrated marketing campaign. *The Daily Cinema* identified it as 'one of the most ambitious and far-reaching exploitation campaigns planned for a British motion picture'.[14] It worked not only as publicity but also as a cross-promotional drive towards the youth market that embraced the British music, fashion, and travel industries. Two singles from the film were released before *Summer Holiday* reached cinemas, followed by an LP of the entire soundtrack. The women's costumes designed for the film were made available in a range of identical high street versions. An elaborate press book identified numerous strategies for marketing the film.[15] This type of marketing is usually attributed to the Hollywood 'high concept' films of the 1980s, but the evidence regarding *Summer Holiday* suggests an earlier integrated marketing approach.[16]

The film's blunt narrative device is that the central characters are bus mechanics working for London Transport who decide, during a miserable, rainy lunch break, to convert a double-decker bus into to a mobile holiday home and drive across continental Europe, eventually ending up in Greece. It is a film that has often been thought of as charming and highly innocent. Melvyn Hayes, for example, refers to *Summer Holiday* as 'a family picture which you could take your granny to and no one would be offended'.[17] At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that the film also has a clear exoticist stance. According to Cliff Richard's biographer Steve Turner, 'the idea of filming Cliff in an exotic location was inspired by the boom in foreign travel in the early '60s'.[18]

An early sequence presents the film's title song. It has a cheery, repetitive harmonic pattern (I-vi^7-ii^7-V^9) and features Richard's lilting voice in well-defined question and answer phrases. In stark contrast to the scenes in Britain – filmed in black and white and showing a downcast English beach – the scenes in France are bright and sunny, with happy people waving from the roadside. This is the promotion of foreign travel as a desirable leisure activity for young people, a reflection of the postwar affluence and higher disposable income that resulted in increased charter flights and opened the way to mass tourism in the UK. The song defines the journey abroad as both exotic and relaxing: we're going where the sun shines brightly and the sea is blue. Indeed, the film asserts its "touristic" subject position by expressing not only a desire for but the British *right to* a European summer holiday: 'everybody has a summer holiday, doing things they always wanted to.' Here the foreign holiday is presented as utopia.

Some of the French people are represented wearing berets. This could only be more ethnically essentialist if they also wore a string of onions round their neck while singing the Marseillaise. And there are also a range of unacceptably jingoistic comments such as: 'you know what they say about French drivers'. In his book *The Holiday and British Film* Matthew Kerry is right to highlight some of the problematic imperialist perspectives that the film presents. He discusses some of the blatantly racist and primitive representations of the former Yugoslavia, for example. The film also celebrates an icon of British culture, the red double-decker bus, increasingly imposing itself throughout Europe. Indeed, at the film's conclusion, Cliff Richard's enterprising spirit results in a message from London Transport saying he can go ahead with his idea of introducing two-hundred holiday buses to Europe.

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[14] *The Daily Cinema*, Wednesday 9 January, (1963), 6–8 (p. 6).
[15] Mathew Kerry, *The Holiday and British Film* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
[16] Justin Wyatt, *High Concept: Movies and Marketing in Hollywood* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994).
[17] Howard Maxford, 'Call Sheet: Summer Holiday', *Film Review,* 549 (1996), 44–47 (p.45).
[18] Steve Turner, *The Bachelor Boy* (London: Carlton Books, 2008), p. 102.

In several important ways Summer *Holiday* seems to outline the kind of relationship Britain really wanted to have with Europe. It wanted to enjoy the exotic pleasures but also to keep them under control. It wanted access but with cultural distance; a connection without connecting, to savour without being reciprocally influenced, to visit Europe but also to enjoy home comforts, even if these were only represented by a London bus. This, of course, maps onto the stereotypical and tainted image of Brits abroad. Karen O'Reilly for example, in her ethnographic study of expat communities on the Costa del Sol reports how the British neither showed interest in the local way of life or of learning the local language.[19] So, in this sense, the innocence of *Summer Holiday* is only partial. It reaches out to Europe only at the surface level but it does so only through a shallow, exoticist, and touristic engagement.

Defeating Europe

At the outset of *The Italian Job* (Peter Collinson, 1969) there appears to be a similar touristic perspective. The song, 'On Days Like These', sung by Matt Monro, is influenced by the lyricism of Neapolitan Song and is designed to represent 1960s European "chic" as we see a car make its way through beautiful mountainous landscape. The song's lyricist, Don Black, referred to it as 'a gorgeous, sunny-tinted song'.[20] Black also explained that his sister (apparently a fluent Italian speaker), helped him translate the first few lines of text so that some of the last verse could be sung in Italian. However, both the translation and Matt Monro's pronunciation leave a lot to be desired. 'On days like these when skies are blue and fields are green' is translated as '*Questi giorni quando viene il bel sole*'.[21] Inaccurate syllabic stresses throughout, as well a curious French/Italian hybrid on the word *sole* (which is sung as *soleil*), are disrespectful: *Que**sti** gior**ni** quan**do** vie**ni** il **bel** sol**eil***. But as the function of the song is to be generically "foreign" and to present the hypnotic and attractive exoticism of Italy, the actual meaning of the words is clearly irrelevant to the filmmakers and the intended audience.

This song is then immediately undercut by an explosive murder and we gradually become aware of the movie's underlying structure and agenda. *The Italian Job* is not just a charming crime caper about a gold bullion robbery in Turin. The film's producer Michael Deely has freely admitted that *The Italian Job* is a Eurosceptic film. He stated that the film was 'about us kicking European ass'.[22] Indeed, in the scenes of planning, preparation, and execution *The Italian Job* conforms closely to the genre conventions of the war movie. Other critical commentators have also suggested that the film's subsequent cult status owes something to the symbolism of independence that it flaunts. Paul Elliott wrote:

> *The Italian Job* details a post-colonial Britain desperately renegotiating its place on a world stage. No longer was it the Empiric power it was in the nineteenth century nor was it the symbol of stoicism that it became during the Second Word War and it was certainly far from the apex of cultural cool that it had presented itself as five years earlier.[23]

If the film aims to reclaim or reinvigorate a sense of British identity, how does it go about it? The climactic scene is an extended chase where the thieves set up a traffic jam in Turin, but

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[19] Karen O"Reilly, *The British on the Costa del Sol* (London: Routledge, 2000).

[20] Don Black, *The Making of The Italian Job* (Mathew Field and Lancelot Narayan, 2003).

[21] A literal translation could be 'In giornate come queste, quando i cieli sono azzurri e i prati verdi'.

[22] Michael Deely cited in York Memberry, 'Fans of Italian Job angered by remake of Caine classic' *The Telegraph*, (14th April, 2002) http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/1390861/Fans-of-Italian-Job-angered-by-remake-of-Caine-classic.html [accessed 12th March 2018].

[23] Paul Elliott, *Studying the British Crime Film* (New York; Columbia University Press, 2014), p. 65.

then escape with the gold bullion in red, white, and blue Mini-Coopers, humiliating both the Italian police and the Mafia in the process. Noel Coward, as the camp criminal mastermind, Mr. Bridger, celebrates from inside prison and this is cross-cut with the gang executing the final stages of their escape. The song that accompanies this, performed by the cast, is called 'Getta Bloomin' Move On'. It is punctuated by instrumental versions of Thomas Arne's patriotic hymn 'Rule Britannia' with scenes in the prison obviously drawn from the chanting of football terraces, with repeated cries of 'England' incorporated into the musical structure.

One other striking feature is that Quincy Jones' and Don Black's song uses Cockney rhyming slang. A Cockney is normally considered to be a person from London's East End but more broadly (and certainly in the late 1960s) it implied someone from a working-class background. Cockney rhyming slang has roots that go back to the 1840s but was reputedly used by prisoners to converse without their guards understanding what they were saying. The construction of rhyming slang normally involves replacing a common word with a phrase of two-or-more words, the last of which rhymes with the original word. The secondary rhyming word would then usually be omitted from the end of the phrase, which makes the meaning of the phrase elusive to anyone who is not in the know.

Getta Bloomin' Move On

This is the self-preservation society
This is the self-preservation society

Go wash your German bands, your boat race too
Comb your Barnet Fair we got a lot to do
Put on your Dickie Dirt and your Peckham Rye
Cause time's soon hurrying by

Get your skates on mate, get your skates on mate
No bib around your Gregory Peck today, eh?
Drop your plates of meat right up on the seat

This is the self-preservation society
This is the self-preservation society

In the song 'Getta Bloomin' Move On', *German bands* in the verse means hands, *boat race* means face. In Cockney rhyming slang you would say: "go wash your Germans and your boat" which would mean wash your hands and face. Dickie Dirt would mean shirt, Peckham Rye (which is an area in the borough of Southwark) means tie. You would say "put on your Dickie and your Peckham" which would mean put on your shirt and tie. In this song both the contexualizing primary word and secondary rhyming word are included.

This localized cockney rhyming slang is used as a clear nationalist symbol. Cockney is not explicitly deployed anywhere else in the film and the use of the song is delayed until this point where it celebrates ingenuity in defeating the unsuspecting enemy. In his seminal text *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson suggested that even though most members of a single nation do not know each other they can be brought together by the image of their communion.[24] This is one reason why displays of nationalism at sporting events, and indeed why National anthems, are so important. 'Getta Bloomin' Move On' seems to me to act like a classic example of an attempt to shape cultural nationalism. The music, with a unique defining local characteristic based on Cockney song in musical style and genre, is presented

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[24] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2016).

as cultural symbol of the whole Nation and is then pitted directly against an "Other". 'Getta Bloomin' Move On' is also, therefore, a direct structural response to the "Italianate" song that opens the film and is a striking assertion of British victory and dominance.

Normally, this kind of explicit cultural nationalism would be a form of resistance against a dominant Other. But what would have prompted this attitude in the late 1960s, beyond historic British geopolitical insularity? Northern Italy of the 1960s had, of course, transformed its economic fortunes thanks to what has been dubbed *il miracolo economico*, a prolonged period of strong economic growth and significant social change.[25] In the UK, on the other hand, there were several sterling crises between 1964 and 1969. In 1967, for example, the pound was devalued (by 14%) because of a trade deficit, a weak domestic economy, and pressure from external creditors. Some authors have suggested that the sterling crises were, in fact, decisive in forcing prime minister Harold Wilson towards the European Economic Community.[26] Within these broader contexts a film like *The Italian Job* is more than just a mild satire on the state of the nation in the late 1960s, as some commentators have suggested. It is, arguably, more akin to what Raymond Durgnat described as a "mirror for England".[27]

Don Black himself thought that the lyrics did not really mean anything and were just a random collection of rhyming slang. But the often-repeated line: 'This is the self-preservation society' seems significant in this respect. It clearly refers to the group of criminals engaged in a process of financial self-interest. As the song is also designed narratively to represent the British Nation, one also has to wonder why it was grasped by the British public with such enthusiasm. Paul Elliot interprets it in the following way:

> The subtext of *The Italian Job* seems to be, despite all of its red, white and blue flag waving, that Britain was fast becoming more self-preservation and less of a society. All of this is at odds with how the film has been reinvented and revisited in the popular arena, where is has come to stand for a form of nostalgic Britishness in TV commercials, pop videos and on the football terraces.[28]

However, I do not think the subtext Elliott refers to was particularly intended or is how this film has been widely received in the UK. Indeed, the afterlife of the song that Elliot alludes to highlights its continued cultural relevance as a staunch British symbol. It has been used in a British-only Martini V2 Vodka Advertisement from 1999, in adverts for the gas and electricity company EDF Energy ('The Smart Installation Society'), for Cuprinol, a company that creates wood-coating products ('The Wood Preservation Society'), and in perhaps the clearest example of its nationalist sentiment and function, for the Euro 2012 championships as the anthem for the English football team. *The Italian Job*, therefore, clearly attempts to assert a sense of British pride, even if its tongue is firmly in its cheek.

Reappraising Home

Before looking at one specific example from the late 1970s, it is first useful to note that there are some recurrent tropes in British pop music films of the 1970s. The cultural context is

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[25] Valerio Castronovo, *L'Italia del miracolo economico* (Roma: Editori Laterza, 2014).

[26] Helen Parr, 'A Question of Leadership: July 1966 and Harold Wilson's European Decision', *Contemporary British History*, 19:4 (2005), 437–458, DOI: 10.1080/13619460500254364; Catherine Schenk, 'Sterling, international monetary reform and Britain's applications to the EEC in the 1960s', *Contemporary European History*, 11:3 (2002), 345–369.

[27] Raymond Durgnat, *A Mirror for England: British Movies from Austerity to Affluence* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970).

[28] Elliot, p. 65.

significant. This was a fractious decade marked by economic decline. The 1973 oil crisis lead to a three-day working week. Despite a brief period of calm negotiated by the Labour Government of 1974, known as the 'Social Contract', this did not prevent widespread strikes by public sector unions and a complete breakdown of the Government (both Labour and Conservative). The year 1978 was dubbed the 'Winter of Discontent' and the UK was consistently referred to as the sick man of Europe.

Allen suggests that the response to growing national pessimism in the 1970s was to look backwards with both popular music in song and on film searching for 'greater innocence, simplicity and familiarity in two different ways: offering either the comfort of nostalgia, or the earnestness of "authenticity" in the roots of American blues and country or British folk.'[29] Allen's notion of a comforting look back, however, seems to understate a common trope of the period which is a high degree of critical revisionism or what Matthew Kerry refers to as "grim nostalgia".[30] For example, the films *That'll be The Day* (Claude Whatham, 1973) and *Stardust* (Michael Apted, 1974) show the rise and fall of a rock n'roll artist, Jim Maclaine (played by David Essex) in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Maclaine escapes home and school and runs away to the seaside, undertakes a series of depressing jobs, and engages in several scenes of unpleasant sex in holiday camp chalets. In one particularly disturbing scene Maclaine rapes a schoolgirl under a tree. His predatory partner in the film, astonishingly, is ex-Beatle Ringo Starr, and through the film's tawdry narrative, Kerry observes that Starr 'destroys any mystique he may have had in the previous decade as a Beatle'.[31] The sequel, *Stardust*, shows Maclaine rising to prominence as a rock artist, but abandoning his family and friends, and finally becoming a reclusive drug-addict in a castle in Spain. It is a painful and dark reappraisal that disintegrates classic rock mythology. In other bleak nostalgic films from this period we can also point to the Rock-opera *Tommy* (Ken Russell, 1975) which reconsiders the 1950s in what Glynn calls a 'miserabilist mise en scène',[32] and *Quadrophenia* (Franc Roddam, 1979) which takes a social-realist perspective on the battle between mods and rockers of the early 1960s, exploring the importance of music in working-class identity formation. In these films, we can see Britain trying to come to terms with the rose-tinted idea of "swinging 60s" and the contrasting severe reality of the 1970s.

One of the most striking examples of this critical revisionism can be found in Derek Jarman's *Jubilee* (1978). The title refers to the Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II in 1977. In this high-art film Queen Elizabeth I is transported from the 16th Century forward in time to witness the shattered Britain of the 1970s. The episodic structure is heavily influenced by punk aesthetics and it provides a powerful vision of chaos, urban dystopia, and social disintegration. It featured several punk performers including Toyah Wilcox, Adam Ant and Sioxsie Sioux. Jarman called it 'a determined and often reckless analysis of the world which surrounded us'.[33] It was critically acclaimed, but it also outraged many members of the punk community who felt it misrepresented them. The fashion designer, Vivienne Westwood, was famously vicious about the film and made an open T-Shirt to Jarman outlining her criticisms. She called it 'the most boring and therefore disgusting film' and accused Jarman of being 'a gay boy jerk[ing] off through the titillation of his masochistic tremblings'.[34] Jarman was

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[29] Dave Allen, 'British Graffiti: Popular Music and Film in the 1970s', in Sue Harper and Justin Smith, *British Film Culture in the 1970s: The Boundaries of Pleasure*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2013), 99–111, Loc2155.

[30] Kerry, p. 164.

[31] Kerry, p. 168.

[32] Stephen Glynn, *The British Pop Music Film: The Beatles and Beyond* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 172.

[33] Derek Jarman, *Dancing Ledge* (London: Quartet, 1984), p. 176.

[34] Vivienne Westwood, V&A Collections (1978), T.104-2002.

certainly ambivalent about punk as an ideology and just two years earlier had described its instigators as '...petit bourgeois art students, who a few months ago were David Bowie and Bryan Ferry look-alikes—who've read a little art history and adopted some Dadaist typography and bad manners, and who are now in the business of reproducing a fake street credibility'.[35] *Jubilee* therefore venerates punk's bold attack on the establishment, but is somewhat doubtful about its binary politics. An important scene that engages with some of these contradictions is when the powerful impresario, Borgia Ginz, introduces performer Amyl Nitrate as a possible UK entry for the Eurovision Song Contest. Her performance is a punk-rock re-arrangement of 'Rule Britannia' with hyperbolic melismas and agitated repetition of the word Britannia. Forward-momentum is maintained by the off-beat strumming of distorted guitars. Nitrate is dressed as a satirical version of the goddess Britannia complete with Corinthian helmet, trident, and a feathered fan which acts as a proxy for a shield. Britannia as the personification and emblem of British power and unity is undercut by the spirited musical performance as well as the inclusion of goose stepping and the superimposition of recordings of Hitler's speeches. Obviously, at one level this grotesque scene equates British patriotism with fascism, as the Sex Pistols had done with 'God Save the Queen', but Roland Wymer argues that: 'Although Amyl Nitrate's performance is a camp parody of patriotic sentiment, the look on her face is one of tragic intensity rather than that of an irreverent clown,' and he notes that the published script describes her as 'shellshocked' and her performance as a 'vision of disaster'.[36] In this sense, Wymer thinks the film helps to 'expose contradictions within punk itself' as much as to provide a critique on 1970s British culture.[37] Even in what is an extreme version of a representational strategy targeting concepts of nation and nationhood at a deeply troubled point in British recent history there is a conflicted and conflicting outlook.

Conclusion

What I hope to have demonstrated is that the divergent opinions that seem to have ruptured in the Brexit vote in 2016 were evident long before. They are, in fact, a deep-rooted conflict that has been, over an extended period, an important characteristic of the British people and the British circumstance. By examining the use of music in filmic texts associated with British popular culture of the 1960s and 1970s we can see some of the ways that these issues have played out and fed back into society. The films highlighted here are, of course, very different in terms of budget scale, target audience demographic, style, genre, and so on. While they can be understood as interesting analytical examples of different aspects of the constantly shifting opinions on British relationships with Europe, they also represent a fascinating self-reflection on the internal challenges of reconciling the past with changing "youth" culture, on the desire to reach out beyond borders, and on the challenges of closing the drawbridge. If we accept the central thrust of the argument, then we should also see relevant examples of this kind of conflict in our current audiovisual environment. Is the spirit of *Summer Holiday* really so different from what is presented in the programme *Top Gear* (BBC, 2002–), or its sequel *The Grand Tour* (Amazon, 2016–), which consistently use music to emphasise the exotic as the presenters drive across various locations asserting a sense of mildly-jingoistic superiority? Is it not significant that a film like *Mamma Mia* (Phyllida Lloyd, 2008) is

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[35] Derek Jarman cited in Simon Frith and Howard Horne, *Art Into Pop* (New York, Routledge, 2016), p. 20.
[36] Roland Wymer *Derek Jarman*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 59.
[37] Wymer, p. 59.

financed, developed, and made by a British production company, featuring an exoticist and, in narrative terms, weakly-justified pseudo-Greek location? Is the song 'Getta Bloomin' Move On' so very different from the climactic sequence in the first *Kingsman* movie (Matthew Vaughn, 2014), where the heads of the complicit elite explode in a "fireworks" display that is perfectly timed with Elgar's 'Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1'? How many Bond films assert the independence of British spirit, the absolute necessity of the maverick individual to solve the world's problems? Even when these films are critical of this kind of perspective they also present it as a clear phenomenon and as a site of celebration. I wonder, then, how we might come to re-evaluate these texts as well as earlier ones in the fullness of time and in light of the journey towards and away from Brexit?

At the end of *The Italian Job*, the gang of criminals have brilliantly managed to escape and are high on their success, but as they wend their way around the looping roads of the Swiss Alps the driver loses control of the bus and it is left teetering over a cliff edge as the stolen gold slides towards the rear doors. It is, quite literally, the film's cliff-hanger. To me this seems a surprisingly powerful metaphor for a pro-Brexit ideology. An audacious and maverick plan led by charismatic figures with the determination to assert free-spirited isolationism, but at the end future prosperity hangs over a precipice. For all the jubilation and comic misadventure there is also a harsh reality. As far as Brexit is concerned, however, the principal of self-determination, of independence, and of freedom is far more important for many than the risks and potential dangers. This independent character is simultaneously one of Britain's greatest strengths and one of its biggest weaknesses.

It is my personal view – not least as a someone with both Spanish and British heritage – that Brexit is a serious mistake, but the outcome of the 2016 vote should certainly not be a surprise. Britain was always divided on this issue. Brexit does not primarily represent an increasingly active or aggressive form of nationalism, nor even the decline or emergence of particular political movements. It reveals a fundamental identity conflict that, for better or worse, has long been central to the British imaginary.