Heritage Film Audiences 2.0: Period Film Audiences and Online Fan Cultures

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Abstract

In an update to my monograph *Heritage Film Audiences: Period Films and Contemporary Audiences in the UK* (Edinburgh University Press, 2011), this paper explores currently evolving forms of online audience behaviour and participatory fan activity around contemporary period films. Its detailed focus is on the online reception, (re-)appropriation and remixing of key films originally released in the 1980s to 1990s which academic criticism has routinely constructed and denigrated as 'heritage films', but most centrally the gay love story *Maurice* (1987), a film which Web 2.0 activity now reveals to be the object of passionate fan investment, unexpected forms of fan productivity and crossover appropriation, and a growing following among unexpectedly young (female and male, sexually diverse) audiences. The paper outlines the key findings of the original *Heritage Film Audiences* study about the attitudes and pleasures of two contrasting sections of 'the' 'traditional' UK-based heritage-film audience in the pre-Web 2.0 era. It then maps the very different forms of *online* (participatory and productive) audience and fan activity around (some) 'heritage films' now becoming visible via YouTube, the IMDb, LiveJournal, Tumblr, and beyond, via a central case-study of the distinctive online fan culture visible around *Maurice*.

Keywords: Heritage cinema, period films, audiences, fandom, convergence culture, Web 2.0, transtextuality, sexuality, Merchant Ivory Productions, *Maurice*, BBC *Sherlock*, YouTube, IMDb, LiveJournal, Tumblr.

Introduction

In the late 1990s I designed and conducted the Heritage Film Audiences survey, an empirical study, conducted via a postal questionnaire, which was completed by two highly contrasting sub-groups drawn from the UK-based audiences who watch and enjoy 'quality' period films: members of the National Trust's local Associations and Centres across England and Wales, and readers of the London listings magazine *Time Out*. The resulting study, published in June 2011 as the monograph *Heritage Film Audiences: Period Film and Contemporary Audiences in the UK*, presents (to the best of my knowledge) the first attempt to engage directly and empirically with the audiences for these films (across a spectrum ranging from classic literary adaptations to historically based narratives and retro biopics).

The *Heritage Film Audiences* study was initially motivated – indeed, necessitated – by the particular negative, highly politicised critical–discursive climate which had become established in the early 1990s around a cluster of culturally (if not always economically) British – and, typically, exportable and internationally successful – period films which this same discourse constructed as 'heritage films'. As I have discussed in earlier publications, this critique of 'heritage cinema' had historically and politically specific origins in the UK, having emerged out of (characteristically, vehement and appalled) Left and liberal-intellectual reactions against the cultural–political climate fostered by 1980s Thatcherism (Monk, 2002, pp. 187–91; 2011, pp. 10–19). More specifically, it was closely influenced by 1980s critiques of the heritage 'industry' (officially promoted by the Thatcher Government via the National Heritage Acts of 1980 and 1983), particularly the writings of Patrick Wright (1985) and Robert Hewison (1987).

In this initial coinage, the label 'heritage film' and its synonyms – which ranged from 'white-flannel films' to the director Alan Parker's famous dismissal of 'the Laura Ashley school of filmmaking' (in a cartoon reproduced in Parker, 1998) – were explicitly pejorative. A critical position that had first become visible journalistically solidified into a more developed academic critique, in which 'heritage films' were argued to operate aesthetically and ideologically – via their construction of the 'national past' as English, southern, bourgeois or upper-class, and 'essentially pastoral' (Higson, 1993, p. 110) – in ways that were complicit with the Thatcherite political project. Despite the evident changes, since the mid-1990s, in the political, funding and institutional contexts; the diversified strategies (aesthetic, political and commercial) adopted by makers of 'quality' period films; and the diversified modes and media across which they might be consumed, the notion of the 'heritage film' has become institutionalised within academic Film Studies as if it were a more stable and unproblematic label or category than it actually is.

From any perspective concerned with the responses of real audiences rather than the putative ideological workings of film 'texts', however, the anti-heritage-film critique presented a more fundamental problem: its construction of, and claims about, 'heritage films' were dependent on an othering, dismissive projection of 'the' heritage-film 'spectator'. Ironically, heritage-film criticism aspired from the outset to offer insights into 'how [the films'] representation [of the national past] works for contemporary spectators' (Higson, 1993, p.109). But it did so while taking no steps to engage directly with real audiences, or with the potential pleasures of the films from an audience (as opposed to top-down, self-dissociating, ideologically preoccupied critical) perspective.

The problems of this approach are thrown into sharper relief when we consider the diversity of films to which the 'heritage film' label was applied – a diversity evident even among those films widely agreed to form the core of the 'genre' – and (as revisionist critics soon began to argue) the gendered, socially critical, comic, emotional, and even sexual and queer potential appeals of some of these films for audiences. In illustration of both difficulties, three of the most prominent, core, agreed exemplars of the 'heritage film' were Merchant Ivory Productions' adaptations from E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View* (1985), *Maurice* (1987) and *Howards End* (1992) – the first two of which, in particular, lend themselves to reception and enjoyment in the terms just proposed – but alongside films and generic strands quite different from these in their tone and likely appeals, from the multi-Oscar-winning 1924 Olympic drama *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981) to the inevitable Jane Austen adaptations and beyond. The anti-heritage-film critique, however, in effect proposed that the ideological–aesthetic workings of films as disparate as *A Room* and *Chariots of Fire* 'produced' a certain (and singular) kind of spectatorship that was ideologically as well as aesthetically conservative.

One reason, then (although not the only one) to study the responses, pleasures and tastes of real 'heritage film' audiences lies in the history of these films as contested objects: from one perspective, homogeneously denounced for their politically regressive, class-bound (bourgeois or aristocratic) and conservative projections of the 'national' past; from another, defended (more selectively) as offering a space for progressive – and particularly feminist and queer – politics and pleasures.

The *Heritage Film Audiences* study was conceived and designed in direct response to these debates. It breaks new ground not merely by paying empirical attention to the real audiences for contemporary period films, but in its collection and analysis of detailed, nuanced evidence about respondents' social identities; the (differing) places of period films within their wider patterns of film taste and cinemagoing/film-viewing habitus; and above all in its emphasis on audience *pleasures* in relation to the period films they enjoyed, as well as their attitudes on issues salient to the heritage debate, and associated questions around cultural value, period 'authenticity' and 'faithful' adaptation.

This article is structured in two parts. Part 1 presents a brief, contextualising overview of the original *Heritage Film Audiences* study focusing on three specific areas. First, the survey's approach, timing and consequent benefits and limitations. Second, I set out some of its key findings, focusing particularly on the distinctive discursive positionings and sets of attitudes that characterised the two cohorts of respondents. Third, I highlight some (unanticipated) findings that have implications for wider audience studies in that they problematise the universal validity of conceiving of audiences as 'active' or 'participatory'. This article's main purpose, however, in (the longer) Part 2, is to provide a coda and update to *Heritage Film Audiences* the book. In this second and main part of the article, I provisionally explore, and attempt to map, forms of audience activity around (some) 'heritage films' that the original 1998 survey could not (by definition) explore: namely the forms of *online* audience and fan activity enabled and made newly visible by the evolution, over the past decade, of the interactive and productive uses of the internet now routinely summarised as 'Web 2.0'.

The *fact* of this activity is of interest (in part) precisely because neither the widespread prejudices and stereotypes around 'heritage films' and their audiences, nor the actual demographics and practices of these audiences as recorded in conventional industry research sources and confirmed in my own (pre-DVD, pre-broadband and download culture, pre-Web 2.0) study, make these films or their (pre-2.0) audiences look like strong candidates for the forms of 'participatory cultur[al]' activity studied by and championed by fan–scholars such as Henry Jenkins (1992, 2009). (In fact, despite having spent more than a decade studying 'heritage films' and their audiences, I first stumbled upon this activity myself only by accident, while searching YouTube for other, not wholly academic, purposes.)

The particular *forms* of online/2.0 activity and discussion around 'heritage films' observed (between Spring and Autumn 2011) while working towards this paper, however, are significant in showing not only how both old and new audiences for these films have gone online and become newly visible there, but how some of this activity departs drastically from what we might expect in relation to the period film and costume drama genres. In a development I doubt anyone would have predicted at the height of the 1990s heritage-film debate, DVD, broadband, download culture, streaming, file-sharing and broader 2.0 activity are bringing (some) 'heritage films' – including some core British examples dating back to the 1980s – a new and expanding following among the very different audiences (much younger, and transnational rather than nationally specific) more typically associated with internet use, online social networks and participatory fan cultures. The (surprising) insights here are the ways in which convergence culture and Web 2.0 have prolonged and perhaps even heightened the cultural presence of these films, expanded their reach to include unexpectedly young audiences not previously associated with the heritage 'genre', and made them a visible focus of both enthusiastic appreciation and participatory fan culture –

in contrast with the (to me, disappointing) near-absence of admitted fandom among either group of participants in the original 1998 *Heritage Film Audiences* survey.

Some of the recent forms of online activity that can be observed around the 1980s 'Merchant–Forster–Ivory' films *A Room with a View* and – most acutely – *Maurice* offer especially intriguing, even startling, material for exploring these shifts (more so than their more lavish and commercially successful successor, 1992's *Howards End*). Accordingly, Part 2 of this paper draws on online responses to *Maurice* for many of its core examples. Tracing a young, upper-middle-class Edwardian gay man's journey to self-discovery – in a 'deceptive[ly simple]' plot which the gay US critic Thomas Waugh summarises as 'boy meets boy, loses boy, and meets another' (1987/2000, p. 188) – *Maurice* is notable for rewarding audiences not only with its hero's (eventual) cathartic sexual and emotional fulfilment, but with a swooningly romantic and Utopian ending which declares that its cross-class male lovers, stockbroker Maurice Hall (James Wilby) and gamekeeper Alec Scudder (Rupert Graves), 'shan't never be parted'. This promise of an *eternal* pairing was iterated in the film's original trailer: 'A story of unforgettable passion / *Without ending*' [my italics]; and *Maurice* is a film 'without ending' in the other sense that the pair's intense final embrace marks the start of an unknowable future rather than narrative closure.

Maurice's original UK release came just one month before Parliament debated the Clause 28 amendment to the Local Government Act – which banned the 'promotion' of homosexuality by local authorities, including the screening of a film such as *Maurice* in council-subsidised cinemas. Conversely, however, the gay *and* Left cultural-political climate of the time perceived *Maurice* as both politically and sexually tepid (at a time when Britain's great militant queer filmmaker Derek Jarman was still alive and very much active). Right-on critics found fault with it both as heterocentric melodrama (Finch and Kwietniowksi, 1988) and for its disregard for the material, social and historical barriers to an enduring Maurice/Alec pairing (see indicatively, Craig, 2001, p. 4). Viewed through cold realist eyes, this was contingent not just on the pair staying together across a significant class divide, but on their escape into 'the greenwood', where they must somehow survive materially while living 'outside class' and undetected by society, as sexual outlaws in an illegal relationship – and all this on the eve of World War I. But Forster himself (who had faced similar criticisms from his contemporaries) remained committed to this Utopian ending (although he was posthumously branded a traitor by the 1970s Gay Liberation movement for delaying *Maurice*'s publication until 1971, after his death: Hodges and Hutter, 1974); and for its fans, *Maurice* is a radical film/novel precisely because it operates on the level of myth, 'outside' class and 'outside' time.[1] Maurice's liberation is delivered by 'magical' means: Alec – the young gamekeeper on the country estate of Clive Durham (Hugh Grant), Maurice's rigidly celibate first love who has abandoned him for a closeted marriage – senses Maurice's repressed desires, fancies him, and simply climbs through the bedroom window to seduce him.[2] (Via a ladder 'accidentally' left there: *Maurice* is enjoyably rife with phallic symbolism

and double-entendres.) For the film's advocates, this unapologetic rejection of gay self-denial or tragedy is a political act in itself – and *more* so within a mainstream, (UK) 15-certificate film marketed as 'a story of love and self-discovery for all audiences'.[3]

Of particular interest is the journey of both films (*A Room* as well as *Maurice*) from contested objects which have attracted conflictual responses on questions from class ideology to queer politics – and which inspired my own earliest (openly feminist, tacitly fandom-inspired) interventions in these debates (Monk, 1994, 1995/2001, 1997) – to a 21st-century online visibility in the spaces where audiences and fans participate and interact. This new visibility testifies to the enduring following, rediscovery, recirculation – and *reappropriation* – of both films across decades, generations and cultures, often in the context of other fandoms. Many of these fan spaces (especially the female-led fanfiction and slash communities[4]) are now widely understood as engaged in the queering of popular culture and the active (if not always politically 'progressive') expression of female and queer(ed) desires (Busse and Hellekson, 2006, pp. 21–3). Online audience responses to both films, but especially *Maurice*, illustrate how little purchase academic critiques can have on the emotionally invested responses of fans – even while some fans grapple directly with the same issues problematised by critics.

The sheer visibility of both films online in 2011 also shows clearly that initial box-office performance is no predictor of a film's longevity of popularity or the intensity of audience/fan response it attracts. Where *A Room* 'was the tenth highest-grossing English-language European film [of] the 1980s, taking $25million in the US, and more than $68million worldwide', Andrew Higson reports that *Maurice*, by contrast, 'took only $2.3million in the US, and £504,000 in the UK' (2003, pp. 93–4) – although it should be added that these US takings were achieved with a one-screen-only opening and an MPAA Restricted rating,[5] and data on *Maurice*'s box-office performance in Europe or other territories is unavailable. Yet these contrasting box-office fortunes are not mirrored in quantitative indices such as YouTube view counts for the two films and their ancillary material; and both the slow-burning growth and sheer intensity of 21st-century audience/fan investment in *Maurice* made visible and promoted online signal its arrival as a 'gay classic' – or, at the very least, as a cult film – rather than a box-office failure.

However, aspects of the online audience/fan activity witnessed around these films and discussed in Part 2 also highlight the limitations of, and tensions within, such activity. Recent work on online fan sites/discussion boards (Andrejevic, 2008), YouTube (Burgess and Green, 2009; Jenkins, 2009; Gehl, 2009) and other manifestations of online participatory culture has already pointed, variously, to the tensions between Web 2.0's Utopian democratising, transformative, resistant potentials and the actual (global) political economy of big-media power and ownership; the issues of co-option arising when 'the gift economy meets commodity culture' (Jenkins, 2009, p. 119); more specific analyses of the political-economic

implications of the unpaid but value-enhancing labour of online fans (Terranova, 2000; Andrejevic, 2008[6]); inequalities in the 'distribution of value' around amateur content and in access to participate, with the result that 'a participatory culture is not necessarily a diverse culture' (Jenkins, 2009, p. 124); and issues and risks of decontextualisation.

Rather than repeating or shadowing these debates, Part 2 will limit itself to describing the (generally smaller or more specific) tensions or limitations empirically observed in the sites, forums and interactions I will discuss. The specific concerns that emerge include the limited *active*-ity of some forms of participation themselves, and difficulties (of kinds often highlighted in YouTube comments/discussions) around the 'flattening out' of historical distance, decontextualisation (particularly in the absence of contextual knowledge of cultural or historical specifics), and related difficulties of comprehension or critical engagement.

PART 1: THE ORIGINAL *HERITAGE FILM AUDIENCES* STUDY

1.1   Introduction to Part 1

The *Heritage Film Audiences* survey was designed and conducted in the late 1990s via a detailed postal questionnaire which was completed between the end of 1997 and mid-1998 by 92 respondents self-selected from two demographically and culturally contrasting sub-groups:

• 62 members of the National Trust (NT)'s local Associations and Centres drawn from varied regions across England and Wales, living mostly in regional small towns.

• 30 readers of the London listings magazine *Time Out* (TO), which in the late 1990s attracted a sexually liberated and diverse – and, historically, traditionally left-leaning – readership.

1.2   The questionnaire

The postal questionnaire combined open questions (centrally, inviting respondents' self-worded written accounts of what they enjoyed, or disliked, in the period films they watched, and asking them to name their favourite period films and TV dramas), with a range of pre-coded multiple-choice elements, including a list of 28 pre-suggested 'pleasures' audiences might find in period films, 74 attitude statements, and lists of indicative films (with both period and non-period narrative settings, and spanning US, British, and wider world cinema). Overall, the questionnaire sought information from respondents in seven broad areas relevant to enjoyment of period films (allowing for interest in a range of genres) and the debates around 'heritage cinema':

1. Respondents' demographic characteristics and wider indicators of identity.
2. General film viewing habitus, both cinematic and domestic.
3. Overall patterns of film taste, and awareness of contemporary film culture.
4. More detailed tastes in *period* films and *period* TV dramas/serials.
5. Preferred actors and directors: how far was respondents' interest in, and choice of, period (or other) films guided by a liking for specific actors, awareness of specific directors, or driven by fandom?
6. Factors or ingredients ('pleasures') explaining or influencing respondents' enjoyment of (or sometimes dislike of) period films.
7. Attitudes to period films, literary adaptations and related issues salient to the heritage-film debate.

This hybrid approach generated a mix of qualitative data and more 'sociological' findings. Accordingly, the finished study takes a loosely Bourdieuian 'sociology of taste' approach (see, particularly, Bourdieu, 1984), drawing on analysis of demographics and gender and sexual identities, but also on more nuanced aspects of respondents' social identities and life experiences such as class fractions, intergenerational social mobility, specifics of educational background, and occupational cultures.

1.3 The respondents: the 'National Trust audience' versus the '*Time Out* audience'

Given the small sample size, uneven sub-samples and self-selected respondents, the profiles of the two cohorts were compared for control purposes with (i) the closest available data on the source populations (readership surveys for *Time Out* and the National Trust's quarterly members' magazine); and (ii) the profile of the UK cinemagoing audience 'as a whole', and audiences for named UK period-film releases of the mid-1990s, extracted from the much larger industry-sponsored Caviar (Cinema and Video Industry Audience Research) surveys.[7] What follows below is a brief sketch of the key characteristics of the two cohorts who took part in the study. (For the full analysis, see Monk, 2011, Chapters 3–5.)

The 62 respondents in the NT cohort ranged in age from 45 to 81: 61% were aged 65-plus. 82% were female. 95% of NTs belonged to household socio-economic grades ABC1, with the highest concentration (48%) drawn from the lower professional and managerial class B. No NTs identified as gay or lesbian (with a 20% non-response rate to this question). 24% of NTs declined to specify their race/ethnicity, and only one (Jewish) NT respondent described this as anything other than 'white'.

By contrast, 80% of the 30 TO respondents were aged under 45 – although they ranged in age from 26 to 61 – with a (more even) 57% female/43% male gender split. 97% of TOs were ABC1s, and (like NTs) were most strongly concentrated in class B (60%). 10% of TOs were

gay men and a further 10% lesbian or bisexual women; 80% were white, but of varied national origins.

NT respondents were characteristically either infrequent, 'event' cinemagoers, or watched films mainly or only on TV. Although it was evident that some National Trust respondents had had wider, even cinephilic, film tastes when younger (encompassing subtitled European art cinema, for example), their current tastes were narrow. Recent film viewing was strongly dominated by British films, concentrated in two areas: 'heritage' films and 'classic' literary adaptations; and 1980s–1990s British films with contemporary settings with a particular emphasis on woman's films mixing self-improvement and comedy elements (*Educating Rita*, *Shirley Valentine*), and the cycle of upper-middle-class romcoms epitomised by *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

Most TOs, by contrast, typically displayed wide, eclectic, even cinephilic film tastes, were typically frequent cinemagoers (supplemented by home VHS use), and (in constrast with the conservative social and political attitudes expressed by many NTs) were sexually liberal, culturally adventurous and politically diverse. Their varied and informed wider film tastes were neither dominated by British cinema, nor confined to the costume, historical or 'quality' literary genres. Indeed, contemporary and post-classical American auteur cinema formed the most consistent core around which TOs' wider tastes tended to cluster.

1.4   Situatedness and cultural positioning: making sense of the 'pleasures' and 'attitudes' of the two cohorts

The NT and TO 'audiences' who emerged from the original study each showed distinctive and relatively cohesive patterns of taste, views and attitudes in relation to period films and the surrounding debates – although the NT cohort proved far more univocal in these respects than the less predictable or easily classifiable tastes and responses of the TO 'audience'. Crucially, however, these differences emerged in relation to a *clearly overlapping core* of *shared* film tastes across both cohorts, including shared strong liking for a core of films widely agreed to be 'heritage films'.

There was therefore strong justification for identifying both groups of respondents as part of the 'heritage film audience' – but, to account for their significant differences of attitude and orientation, it was necessary to look to the surrounding social, educational, cultural and critical–discursive intertexts that differentiated the two groups. Two findings seemed especially relevant to accounting for the different attitudes to cultural value mobilised by NTs and TOs, and the contrasting discourses around period films they had absorbed. First, a disproportionate number of respondents – particularly NTs – were (retired) teachers, for whom a drive to display 'cultured' and 'educated' capital (already over-determined by the

widespread experience of intergenerational social mobility within both cohorts[8] was both intensified and legitimated by a pedagogic occupational culture.

Second, TOs and NTs had been educated in generationally distinct eras, separated by profound disciplinary shifts within literary and historical studies and the wider Humanities – and these shifts were evident in the cultural orientations and critical attitudes the two cohorts expressed. NTs overwhelmingly voiced the certainties instilled by a traditionalist, academically selective education. In contrast, most TOs had acquired their educational capital and notions of cultural value via degree study in the post-1960 era in which the Humanities had been transformed by the influences of post-structuralism, Marxism, semiotics and critical theory, and the emergence of new disciplines such as Cultural Studies. Indeed, 40% of TOs held Humanities degrees, and one-third had studied at the 1960s or post-1992 'new' universities at the forefront of this transformation. These experiences of divergent academic cultures could be seen to inflect the radically differing priorities and modes of engagement in relation to 'quality' period films expressed by the NT and TO 'audiences'. My analysis of the distinct orientations of these two 'audiences' (summarised below; presented more fully in Monk, 2011, Chapters 6–8) drew on three forms of evidence generated by the questionnaire: respondents' self-worded written statements, analysed against their multiple-choice responses to the questionnaire's pre-suggested 'pleasures' and attitude statements.

1.5   'Pleasures' and 'attitudes' of the NT audience

NT respondents' self-worded statements (supported by their patterns of multiple-choice response) expressed rigid attitudes to the primacy of the original (i.e. the source novel, in the case of literary adaptations): period films should be 'true to the book, if there is one'. This attitude dovetailed with unquestioning assertions of the value of 'the classics' – frequently equated with 'proper' stories, 'with a beginning, a middle and an end', 'that have stood the test of time' – alongside a mobilisation of notions of the 'well-made' film.

NTs' replies confirmed them, however, as an audience *pre-eminently* preoccupied with 'authentic' period detail – and specialised aspects of this, such as hairstyles, props, or costume – alongside more abstract notions of 'quality' or 'inestimable value' (invoked rather than dissected). This preoccupation with period correctness went beyond mise-en-scene to *explicitly class-specific, gendered areas* such as the speech and deportment of actors – or, more often, actresses. It was clear from such comments that, for many NTs, watching period films was a highly specialised (even, by some definitions, subcultural) activity that served both as a pretext for peer-group displays of cultural competences – including a borderline-sadistic *scrutiny* of period detail, and admitted *pleasure in finding error*:

> I especially like finding a discrepancy in the history displayed. (NT woman, 68, retired teacher, West/South-West England)

> I've chatted to friends about this questionnaire. All but one enjoy period/costume films – two (ex-textile tutors) enjoy as much for the sake of finding mistakes! (NT woman, 66, retired primary teacher, North of England)

By contrast, NTs expressed relatively little interest in the pleasures of narrative or emotional engagement, while actors and acting appeared to function for them more as further indices of 'quality' than as focuses of engagement, erotic attraction or fandom. As we shall see in Part 2 of this paper, this dissociation from emotional or bodily affect is entirely overturned in the (often expressly lustful) pleasures embraced by the 'Heritage Film Audiences 2.0' generation(s). For some NTs, it was evident that attitudes to acting were also entangled with a use of the films as vehicles for asserting (conservative) resistant values that were *generational* as much as classed, in a discourse which often pitted the 'elegance' of the past against the 'sloppiness' of the present (and which – as with the gender-specific critical scrutiny of *female* acting by some *female* respondents – came from a gender-politics position that was tacitly pre-, or anti-, feminist):

> I enjoy most of all the use, more often than not, of top quality actors who beautifully speak the Queen's English, and a reminder that ladies were once treated as such! (NT woman, 68, retired school secretary, Central England)

The non-expression of emotional or personal investment in period films could be seen even in the linguistic structure of NTs' replies – which were typically phrased as third-person 'objective', impersonal statements rather than first-person statements of opinion or taste. The effect was to present the merits of period films as blindingly *self-evident*: as neither a matter of personal taste, nor a site of debate. This apparent disengagement had a further, socio-political, dimension. A significant number of NTs expressly *did not want* period (or any) films to 'involve' them – emotionally or politically – since they watched them in a spirit of retreat from social issues and problems – whether personal or societal – which were perceived to be the province of the present:

> Period dramas … tend to be less violent, provide a form of escape from everyday problems. (NT woman, 46, part-time special-needs classroom assistant, North of England)

> One friend dislikes period films – only enjoys 'modern reality'. She happens to be not as 'merry' as most I know. (NT woman, 66, retired primary teacher, North of England)

As my book discusses in more detail, however, many NTs' attitudes – and their particular uses of heritage films – needed to be understood in the context of – and as an expression of

– an alienated reaction against aspects of contemporary *society* that they found regrettable or disturbing:

> When I do watch television, films, etc, I like to feel happy at the end and not depressed, as so many modern programmes do. Although I know the portrayal of life in period dramas is unreal, I enjoy escaping from the unsavoury news media and violence of our present-day society. (NT woman, 59, retired shopkeeper, Midlands)

The positions expressed by the NT 'audience', then, although sometimes easily caricatured, were – as we can see here – not always unreflective. In seeking to understand them, it is vital to read such comments in the context of lived experience and everyday anxieties – as well as the particular (generational) forms of class-consciousness, educational capital, and related certainties of cultural value that characterised the NT cohort.

1.6   'Pleasures' and 'attitudes' of the TO audience

In contrast with the NT 'audience', TO respondents expected narrative and emotional engagement from the period films they enjoyed – and, in some cases, also to be socio-politically or erotically engaged. In a corresponding contrast with the *politics* of NT responses, TOs showed a particular enthusiasm for strong female protagonists, and valued their preferred 'heritage films' for their *progressive* gender and sexual politics and as critical explorations of class and wider social constraints, all of which they celebrated as key strengths:

> Good period films are stimulating to the imagination and historically interesting … [Also] far more likely than contemporary films to focus on the experiences of strong and central women characters. (TO woman, 33, solicitor, London)

> In contrast with [conservative Edwardian 'Golden Age' nostalgia], films [such as The *Wings of the Dove* or *Maurice*] show that society in a negative way, as rigidly structured, class-bound, etc. And often focus on characters who are constrained by that … There is a strong sense of desire as something transgressive and dangerous, punished by society. Perhaps this is something which appeals to a gay audience… (TO woman, 33, lesbian, poetry librarian, London)

This *expectation* of engagement, openness to erotic response and self-alignment with progressive sexual- and gender-political positions place the TO 'audience' closer to the online 'Heritage Film Audiences 2.0' responses I shall discuss shortly. Indeed, it seems plausible that those '(parts of) the established audiences for these films [who] have gone online and become newly visible there' that I noted earlier share some common ground (in

terms of their social identities as well as orientations towards the films) with the audience segment represented (albeit on a very small scale) in the TO cohort.

In addition, TOs placed a very high value on *visual pleasure* in period films – as opposed to visual *accuracy* – often using language that expressed this pleasure in sensuous terms: 'sumptuous style', 'visually rich', 'visual ravishment'. TOs also associated the films strongly with quality of script, dialogue and acting – all widely perceived by this cohort as literate, complex, nuanced and 'richer' compared to mainstream commercial cinema. Accordingly, they were far less likely than the NT 'audience' to subscribe to the 'discourse of authenticity' (Andrew Higson's shorthand term for 'the desire to establish the adaptation … as an authentic reproduction of the original': 1995, p. 26) in relation to either period detail or the adaptation of 'classic' texts, and far more likely to understand and value literary adaptation and historical production design as *creative processes*.

Where, among the NT 'audience', educational and cultural capital were exercised and displayed via an obsessive scrutiny of period detail and the policing of values of literary 'fidelity', TOs more typically did so by drawing upon more specific (and politically progressive) elements of degree-level learning in literary criticism or Cultural Studies. Some TOs drew upon – or even directly cited – F. R. Leavis's account of 'The Great Tradition' in the English novel to place the 'heritage films' they enjoyed (characteristically, the Merchant Ivory Forster adaptations) within an established tradition of liberal social and sexual critique. Others responded implicitly to the heritage-film debate itself, by arguing for the films' complexity and value as feminist or liberal representations, while (in some cases) expressly rejecting the *label* 'heritage film' from a position of awareness of its conservative and dismissive connotations:

> Many [of these] films … revolve around issues of class and sexuality which have remained central to our literary tradition and to the structures of our social, economic and psychological experiences. The complexities of these themes makes [sic] the term 'heritage films' especially redundant/inadequate. (TO man, 39, English teacher, London)

The most distinctive traits of TO replies were critical (self-)reflection and knowingness. TOs were far more likely than NTs, for example, to *think critically* about terms such as 'quality' and to define them in their own – at times, expressly revisionist – terms. Yet this critical reflexivity came at a cost. While TOs engaged with period films in ways that exercised their particular forms of cultural and graduate educational capital, this same capital spawned their defining self-consciousness. TOs' relationships with period films, and the terms in which they felt able to express and justify enjoyment of them, were mediated and burdened by prior knowledge, including a keen awareness of a negative critical debate around 'heritage films' that was absent among NTs. A disappointment of the study for me was that

the TO cohort emerged as a *too-knowing* audience: too (self-)conscious of the critiques to express (or explain) uncomplicated pleasure in the films.

1.7   Timing of the study: benefits and limitations

The particular 1998 timing of the *Heritage Film Audiences* survey gave the resulting study some crucial advantages as a portrait of contemporary period-film audiences in relation to the evolution of the heritage-film debate (which it would not be possible to replicate in an equivalent survey today), but also some limitations.

Crucially, the questionnaire was completed by respondents at a juncture of innovations and transformations in the heritage 'genre', but also at a time when the key British heritage-film successes of the 1980s to mid 1990s were still frequently screened on British TV and remained vivid in audiences' minds; and also at a key juncture in the evolution of the surrounding debates, when the concept of the heritage film remained current but had been joined in critical discourse by new propositions such as the 'post-heritage' film (see Monk, 2001) or (alternatively) the proposed 'end of English heritage' (see Church Gibson, 2000 and 2002). The survey also, of course, coincided with a pivotal moment of political change (and optimism) in the UK, as eighteen years of Conservative rule gave way to the May 1997 landslide election of Tony Blair's New Labour government. Beneficially, then, *Heritage Film Audiences* presents a snapshot of contemporary responses to these contexts from varied audiences at a pivotal moment, while being able to situate these responses historically and contextually in relation to the cinematic and cultural–political context of the 1980s heritage debate, the late 1990s 'present' of the survey, and points in between.

On the other hand (as will already be evident), the study pre-dated the arrival of home DVD (or, even, among my older NT respondents, the widespread take-up of home video), widespread internet use, download and upload culture, YouTube, and the wider forms and forums of 'Web 2.0' activity that form the focus of the rest of this paper. In a further limitation, the 'fan' audiences I had hoped to find and survey (not least as representatives of interests and pleasures close to my own viewing position) were barely present (or, at least, coy in declaring themselves) in the final *Heritage Film Audiences* sample (in contrast with the pilot study, which had attracted some actor-centred fans).

1.8   *Heritage Film Audiences*, Audience Studies and the active audience thesis

The distinctive significance of the *Heritage Film Audiences* study for wider Audience Studies, however, is closely related to this absence of self-identified fans among its respondents. First, in focusing on mainly middle-class, 'older', audiences for 'quality' films – a demographic underrepresented even in large, mainstream industry surveys (Monk, 1999; Monk, 2011, pp. 47–50), let alone participatory fan communities – the study by definition

offers different insights from the (foundational, and arguably normative) body of Audience Studies work which (strongly invested in *active* audiences as autonomous makers of meaning) has focused on cult audiences and fandom at their most participatory (as in Jenkins, 1992; Barker and Brooks, 1998; Hills, 2002). Second (as already illustrated) the particular case of heritage cinema demonstrates the need to situate and make sense of audiences' viewing positions in relation to intertexts (in this case, social, educational, cultural and critical–discursive) beyond the films themselves.

Third and last, the responses of those sections of the audience who took part in the study are significant *because* they raised (for me, unanticipated) doubts about the universal validity of conceiving of audiences as *active* and *autonomous* (or of over-privileging the study of those audiences who are). Specifically, the responses of both cohorts – even though (unsurprisingly) contrasting in many respects – demonstrated the existence (and specifics) of audience sectors and cultures whose responses are significantly mediated, constrained and even over-determined by existing discourses: in this case, the powerful existing (media, critical, academic) discourses around period films and 'heritage cinema', whether negative or (in the case of NTs) conservative, triumphalist and celebratory. Neither group seemed able to produce a more distinct, spontaneous, autonomous *audience* discourse around period films. While my study certainly demonstrated the diversity and complexity of responses and viewing positions among these (plural) audiences, it did not show them to be *free* to respond to the films and creatively use them as they wished, unconstrained by dominant or 'legitimate' readings. As I commented at the end of *Heritage Film Audiences*: 'I had hoped that at least some respondents would write in a personal way about their enjoyment … but in practice this occurred relatively little' (Monk, 2011, p. 179).

PART 2: HERITAGE FILM AUDIENCES 2.0

2.1   Introduction to Part 2

However, the above story requires some reappraisal in the light of the recent and emerging manifestations of online audience activity around 'heritage films', to which I will now turn.

While the unarguable proliferation – and increasingly mainstream visibility – of diverse forms of online fan activity, interactivity, (virtual) community, and productivity has been enabled and encouraged by the new *ease of opportunity* brought about by digital technologies, broadband internet and the wider set of technologies and internet uses clustered under the 'Web 2.0' umbrella, virtually none are strictly 'new' to the new-media era. As the work of embedded, participatory fan–scholars such as Busse and Helleksen (2006) (and their various contributors) makes clear, virtually all of the fan phenomena observable online have their old-media, pre-internet precursors (in the fan convention, the circulation of photocopied fanzines, newsletters and penpal correspondence within fan

communities, the pre-internet histories – clearly of differing longevities – of fanvideo-making, fanart, fanfiction, and so on). The validity of Henry Jenkins' observation that 'if YouTube seems to have sprung up overnight, it is because so many groups have been waiting for something like YouTube … YouTube may represent the epicentre of today's participatory culture but it doesn't represent its origin point for any of the cultural practices people associate with it' (2009, p. 110) extends, I would argue, to diverse forms, and sites, of online audience and fan practice well *beyond* YouTube.

'Heritage films' and their audiences, however, represent a different case from the kinds of groups envisaged by Jenkins, or the fanfic communities in which Busse and Helleksen are immersed. For a variety of reasons, we might not expect 'heritage film' audiences (whether understood stereotypically, or in terms of the concrete, known, characteristics of the National Trust and *Time Out* audience segments represented in my survey) to be prominent among Jenkins' 'groups [who] have been waiting for something like YouTube'. The NT cohort (aside from their age demographics) were clearly not early adopters of new technologies. Neither cohort betrayed signs of 'fannish' behaviour as Busse and Helleksen and their contributors would understand it (in which 'Fandom Is A Way of Life': Coppa, 2006, p. 42). It barely needs stating that 'quality' period films have not been among the genres (notably sci-fi and fantasy) with the longest and strongest histories of attracting committed media fandom. Similarly, with the prominent exception of Jane Austen, histories of archontic (literary-derived fan) literature (notably Derecho, 2006), and a trawl of online archives such as FanFiction.net alike, confirm that the highest-profile 'heritage' literary adaptations have been adapted from authors (such as E. M. Forster or Evelyn Waugh) who, historically, have been marginal to the canon of sources favoured by writers of literary fanfiction.[9]

The transformative importance of Web 2.0 for audience and fan activity around 'heritage films' is closely allied to Busse and Helleksen's observation that 'technological tools affect not only dissemination and reception, but also production, interaction and even demographics'; indeed, 'technology is *complicit* in the generation of fan texts' (2006, p. 23, my italics). Observation of the particular forms of online activity taking place, since the mid-2000s, around 'heritage films' makes it amply clear that this holds equally true for a broader range of (less committedly productive) audience and fan activity (for instance, posting on discussion boards rather than creating fanworks). Here are four specific examples – most of which I never expected to see until I stumbled upon them accidentally – which illustrate the spectrum of this activity, although they can only give a snapshot of the complexities of audience response found within it:

Example 1: The longest-running and most active debate on the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) Message Board for Ivory's *A Room with a View* – a film that, on its original release, was expressly celebrated by the *Daily Mail* as a chaste antidote to 'Hollywood

permissiveness' in which 'overt sex is restricted to a single screen kiss exchanged by fully clothed lovers' (Usher, 1986) – is an epic slanging match which kicked off on 14 May 2005 with the heading: 'Shouldn't we be warned about the massive nudity?'[10] By September 2011, this thread (prompted by the film's famous all-male, comic but full-frontal, nude bathing scene at the 'Sacred Lake') had been running for more than six years, attracting 113 responses, morphing into a complex, often ill-tempered, cross-cultural argument between Americans and Europeans on the themes of American prudery and attitudes to nudity – but overwhelmingly dominated by a consensus insisting on the film's, and scene's, innocuousness that, in its scathing dismissal, silences other (queer) possiblities (which, as we shall see later, are very real indeed for other sections of *A Room*'s audience absent from this particular forum). As the original US poster, contact-258, proved to be a Christian – but one vehemently opposed to the Iraq war – the argument also detours into European complicity in the latter (with the poster pleading: 'Come on mates, save America from Bush!!').[11]

Example 2: On YouTube in January 2008, a site-user uploaded the 30-plus minutes of alternative and omitted scenes from *Maurice* released as extras with the 2004 Merchant Ivory Collection special-edition DVD of the film (which, in its UK cinema-released version, already ran to 140 minutes).[12] The additional scenes include a differently scripted ending, grainy additional footage of a tender post-sex scene between Maurice and Alec during their first night together – and a significantly different opening which introduces characters and episodes from Forster's novel omitted from the released film, and in which the sexually disgraced Lord Risley (Mark Tandy) – in a plot line invented for the film to help make the oppression by law, and related self-repression, of gay men in Edwardian Britain more comprehensible to a 1980s audience – commits suicide rather than 'merely' being sentenced to hard labour for his sexuality.

By 22 September 2011, the omitted scenes had attracted YouTube view counts of between 33,860 and 167,649, and provoked a range of impassioned and emotionally charged fan responses. Amid wider claims (on the *Maurice* IMDb board as well as YouTube) that at least one alternative cut of the film had existed,[13] these include widespread calls for a three-hour Director's Cut restoring the omitted material – to be completed by a fan/amateur if necessary, although by August 2011 one YouTube user reported that they had written to the 83-year-old director James Ivory ('Yes, I dare try!') to make the request.[14] One fan went further: 'They had to know we would sit through a 4-hour film if need be'.[15] The wider emotions expressed by fans now able to reappraise the film in the light of the missing scenes include frustration, complex anger, and sadness, directed at the omissions themselves ('WHY THE HELL WAS THIS SCENE CUT?!?!?!?!', 'I just cannot take this', 'Now that I see the deleted scenes I feel so angry that [Merchant Ivory] weren't braver'); at the character of Clive Durham and his abandonment of Maurice ('fuck u clive!. he was once yours till death but u never seem to really care about him'; '[Finally] Clive is revealed as the

scheming bitch he always was'); and occasionally at the film's politically correct 1980s critics ('I once read a real bitch-slag article about the film called "Homo Is Where the Het Is"').[16]

Example 3: YouTube also hosts a more unexpected phenomenon: fan-made heritage-film music videos (alongside other forms, such as heritage-film actor-appreciation fanvids) which remix key British heritage films from the 1980s to 1990s to soundtracks by unlikely artists across an eclectic range of rock and pop genres (alongside more esoteric contemporary and classical, music choices) that really ought *not* to work, but do. Most of these videos show every sign of being motivated not by anti-heritage derision but by a knowledgeable love for the films. Even a pleasurably silly example such as bellebrett's 'The Hotness of King George' (derived from *The Madness of King George* [Nicholas Hytner, UK, 1994]) – in which 'William Pitt the Younger brings sexy back to Parliament' with the assistance of Justin Timberlake's 2006 hit 'SexyBack', attracting a divided reception on YouTube – achieves a kind of flip commentary on the character of Pitt and the 1780s political and constitutional context (as presented in the film) in conjunction with 'appreciation' of the actor Julian Wadham.[17] In a tactic more widespread across such videos – most obviously, in heritage and heritage-related slash examples (to be discussed later) – the re-editing also (re)positions Pitt/Wadham (who, a few years earlier, had come close to being cast by Ivory as the eponymous *Maurice*) as an object of the male gaze (here, multiple, and more awe-struck than lustful).

Although their makers tend to present them more as experiments in music video than interventions in the films, in reality the best heritage-film fanvids tend to appropriate the films in ways that clearly spring from immersive fandom, working in the same affective registers that Henry Jenkins identifies in music fanvids drawing on cult television to 'intensif[y] the emotional experience of the original, taking us deeper into the thoughts and feelings of central characters' (2009, p. 117). For instance, one unusually widely viewed example, Muttzrock777's video 'Maurice Kiss you off', pits the New York gay-scene nu-disco of the Scissor Sisters' track 'Kiss You Off' against scenes of Maurice's serial disappointments with Clive and his (lyrically implied) retribution in finding 'a brand new shade of man' in Alec.[18] The emotional drama is lent a hard edge (not least, of hostility towards Clive) by the song's aggressive dual play on 'kissing off' (which combines slang for forceful rejection with strong sexual connotations), which in turn provides an excuse for the video's (inevitable) emphasis on the film's male kissing scenes.

Muttzrock777's (less-viewed) 'Alec and Maurice's Christmas Fairytale' – essentially a video Christmas card – is one of a larger strand of Maurice/Alec romance music videos on YouTube (plus slash variants), but stands out for the way it foregrounds class tensions, and particularly Alec's (working-class) point-of-view, by remixing their pairing against Shane MacGowan and Kirsty MacColl's (famously foul-mouthed) Irish-immigrant duet in The Pogues' 1987 'Fairytale of New York', with Alec as the main, male voice and Maurice as the

female.[19] The effect is painfully romantic, while heightening and ironising the class relations, fears and resentments that both define and nearly derail the Maurice/Alec courtship. The song's 'cars big as bars' and 'rivers of gold' are illustrated by the heritage grandeur of Clive's wedding. Alec's 'mouthing' of the line 'I could have been someone' is fully in character with his boasts in the film; and the song's most controversial lyrics transform his pseudo-blackmailing pursuit of Maurice, and the pair's resulting charged, confrontational encounter in London, into a non-PC slanging-match (with Maurice denounced by Alec as 'an old slut on junk', and Alec as the target of the retort 'You scumbag, you maggot, you cheap lousy faggot'). It is (I am guessing) not a coincidence that 'Fairytale of New York' reached number 2 in the UK singles charts just one month after *Maurice* 's 1987 UK cinema release. The choice to juxtapose the two is one of many indicators of the place *Maurice* (alongside *A Room*) has come to occupy in *popular-cultural* nostalgia and memory: a nostalgia in relation to viewers' first encounters with, and contextual memories around, *the films themselves* – often, even, as a rite of passage – rather than nostalgia for the Edwardian era the films depict.

Example 4: Since the mid-2000s, however, such fanvids are merely the tip of a larger iceberg of participatory online fan activity around *Maurice*, extending beyond YouTube to the fan-blogging and fan-fiction communities on LiveJournal and Tumblr, and encompassing varied forms of 'appreciation' and passionate engagement with the film. These forms span (almost) the full gamut of fan interaction, productivity and textual poaching that we are accustomed to see in the fandoms around far higher-profile – not to mention expressly youth/young-adult-oriented and much more recent – film franchises (from *Harry Potter* to *The Lord of the Rings*): endless blogging and reblogging of (static) screencaps and (simple animated) GIFs from the films (commonplace with *A Room* as well as *Maurice*), manipulation of these stills into icons/avatars[20] and other fanart, *Maurice* fanfiction, mash-ups with other texts (from fanfic to fanvids) – and, increasingly, appropriations of the film as an off-the-peg source of slash content (both narrative and visual) in a context of other fandoms.

 Maurice is by no means the only 'heritage film' to be recirculated, newly discovered or rediscovered and celebrated in these Web 2.0 contexts; it is however, something of a special case. First, because the intensely passionate, even obsessive, audience investment it can be seen to attract (see Example 2, above), and the growing visibility of this fandom online, are so powerfully at odds with the terms in which the film was first released and initially (publicly) received. Second, because, almost 25 years on, *Maurice* fandom itself is growing: stimulated cumulatively by the 2004 special-edition DVD, by the formation of tiny but passionate niche communities around the film and novel on (mainly) LiveJournal, by YouTube, and – since circa 2010 – by an escalating visibility among a much younger generation on LiveJournal and Tumblr via the film's intertextuality with far larger and more 'mainstream' fandoms.

Most of this 'new' Tumblr and LiveJournal activity around *Maurice* (alongside certain other period films/TV dramas and a range of other media texts) – defined in terms of a suddenly increased visibility, and new trends in intertextual poaching – has been sparked by the seemingly unstoppable (even truly 'viral') explosion of online fan activity since July 2010 around the cult of BBC-TV's Sherlock Holmes update, the 21st-century, gadget-rich and (non-coincidentally) social-media-savvy *Sherlock*. Tumblr-generation fans (predominantly aged under 22; female, male and undefined; variously straight-ish, 'queer', 'bisexual', 'LGBT-friendly', and 'martian'; and listing the most familiar of contemporary fantasy/cult fandoms: *Doctor Who*, *Harry Potter*, *Merlin*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Game of Thrones*[21] – with the trail, for some, leading back to *Star Trek*) have discovered *Maurice*, and also *A Room with a View*, for one reason only: the cross-casting of Rupert Graves (as *A Room*'s Freddy Honeychurch, *Maurice*'s Alec and, since 2010, *Sherlock*'s D.I. Lestrade) – but cross-casting across a quarter-century time-lag and age gap. As the fan who posted a screencap of the first of Maurice and Alec's two post-sex scenes on 'The Science of Seduction' (a Tumblr site soliciting 'any and all *Sherlock*-related confessions, sexual desires, submissions, [sub]missives') confirmed: 'Yes, that's D.I. Lestrade on the bottom'.[22]

The vast, fast-evolving terrain of BBC-TV *Sherlock* fan activity and its specialised branches and fetishes clearly lies beyond the scope of this essay,[23] as do the full, complicated implications of Graves-via-Lestrade fandom in the context of the temporal 'flattening out' effects of convergence culture (in which young and not-so-young Tumblr fans lust or 'squee' over the same actor in both extreme youth and middle age, in productions filmed a quarter-century apart). It is nevertheless essential to note these contexts if we are to make sense of the pronounced entry of 'heritage films' like *Maurice* or *A Room with a View* into the realm of what (to poach a term used by some fans themselves) we could call *infinite fandom*. By this, I mean those forms of fan activity (collective as much as individual) in which fandoms blur with and feed off multiple other fandoms in an 'infinite' continuum or mesh, as opposed to fan or audience activity with a more clearly *differentiated* focus on specific texts, genres, series/franchises or performers.

The pleasures of transtextuality[24] are so central to online fan activity, however, that it may be more accurate to conceive of *all* fandoms as potentially *infinite*. Moreover, an examination of the earlier-established, niche, and fragile *differentiated* fan communities around *Maurice* established on LiveJournal (and rival communities such as Dreamwidth) from the mid-2000s (some still active, others seemingly not) shows two things very clearly. First, that the affinity between *Maurice* fandom, fanfic culture and the slash sensibility was clearly established before *Sherlock* (although the '*Sherlock* effect', by enlarging the fan-pool, has made these connections more unsubtle and publicly visible). Second (as I will return to in more detail), that the online behaviour of *Maurice* fans both prior to, and distinct from, the BBC *Sherlock* – across both YouTube comments and forums such as the IMDb Message Boards – show their own distinct trend of *Maurice* fans interacting as a (small) *fan*

community in ways not mirrored in these forums around *A Room* and *Howards End*. The significance of the '*Sherlock* effect', then, is *not* that it has introduce slashiness or 'fannish' intensity to *Maurice* fandom for the first time; more that it has propelled the film from a marginal fandom into a much larger arena of 'infinite fandom' and made it more available for (inter)textual poaching, including previously improbable mash-ups and slash appropriations.

In the critical climate of the late 1980s, Finch and Kwietniowski could state with confidence, and with little fear of contradiction, that:

> *Maurice* [is] first and foremost, a 'Merchant-Ivory' picture … [S]econdly, a British-costume-drama in that it exports a nostalgic remoteness and fastidious mise-en-scene … thirdly, a literary adaptation [defined by] a certain faithfulness to the hallowed source … fourthly, and only fourthly, about *le vice anglais*, [treated with] a sublimation suitable for school trips. (1988, p. 72)

If we revisit what *Maurice* means in 2011, however, *as understood through audience and fan cultures* (witnessed in the passions and preoccupations expressed on YouTube or IMDb discussion boards and fan activity on LiveJournal and Tumblr), the validity of these classifications today is far from clear. A fandom-led, 2.0-era reformulation might more accurately classify *Maurice* as *all at once* a classic romance, a paradigm-shifting and life-changing queer cultural object, and a slash text; for some fans, as porn (in terms of the responses the film *permits*, particularly with the assistance of DVD and screencapping technologies, as distinct from its advertised intentions); and as a cult film.

2.2 Online 'heritage-film' audience/fan activity: a conceptual map

In the pre-Web 2.0 universe, we might rationally have expected heritage films or 'quality' period films (and certainly the audience segments and demographics traditionally associated with them) to attract forms of audience/fan appreciation that were more *reactive* than *participatory*, relatively *differentiated* rather than '*infinite*', and typically both *respectful* and *respectable* (characterised by notions of respect for canon, source authors, directors, 'their creations', characters and performers) rather than their opposites (potentially implying overtly libidinous or transgressive forms of engagement). The examples already cited above, however, show that audience and fan behaviour in the Web 2.0 era around (what used to be defined as) 'heritage films' is a complicated field in which more or less participatory, differentiated, and dis/respectful forms of fandom coexist, while such distinctions often cut across the various forms and forums of online audience/fan activity.

One way to map the latter is in terms of the types of websites where film-related audience/fan activity can be observed, include blogs (and subcategories such as Tumblr

microblog sites or fan-fiction archives); video-sharing and photo-sharing sites (such as YouTube or Flickr respectively); and user comments (YouTube) and discussion or review boards (IMDb). In these last categories, participants may comment and interact on sites – such as the IMDb – where the bulk of content is professionally generated and managed, or those – such as YouTube – which in theory major on user-generated content but where (in this particular case), the professionally produced feature films under discussion are merely *uploaded* by users. As this list is starting to imply, however, for this essay's purposes it makes most sense to map this field in terms of the forms of audience/fan *activity* and/or user-generated *content* themselves. Taking this approach, the forms of online audience/fan activity that can currently be observed around 'heritage films' can be classified as follows:

1)   **Posting of films, film extracts, and DVD extras or other professionally generated ancillary material** on YouTube.

2)   **Appreciation, discussion and criticism** of the above on YouTube Comments threads and IMDb Message Boards (the most detailed discussions were found mainly on these two sites) as well as posting User Reviews (IMDb). In this essay, I confine my focus to discussions taking place on *interactive* forums – Comments/Message boards – as opposed to, say, IMDb User Reviews.

3)   Making and posting **fanvideos and mash-ups** (YouTube). The (potentially intersecting) variations include the 'heritage' music fanvids already discussed; (remix) videos condensing, commenting on or parodying a specific film, or made in appreciation of specific actors; slash narratives; and other mash-ups (or crossovers) mixing multiple originary films/texts.

4)   **Posting and re-posting static screencaps** (captured still images) **or GIFs** (simple animated files) from the films – characteristically on Tumblr or LiveJournal fan-blogs, in a context of actor 'appreciation'. In some cases, fans also post high-quality screen-caps (of favourite/significant screen moments or sequences) on photo-sharing sites such as Flickr, or occasionally on sites devoted to capping a whole film.

5)   **Fanfiction:** both stories inspired by a specific text, and hybrid or crossover fictions meshing together characters, narrative events and/or settings drawn from more than one source text or franchise.

6)   **Fanart and icon-making**: Examples of the former (derived from favourite 'heritage-film' characters, actors and/or screen moments) are most commonly posted and shared within fan-blogs on Tumblr or LiveJournal, and (to a more limited extent) on the dedicated art-sharing website DeviantArt. Icons – stamp-sized artworks – are used by fans (as self-identifiers and representations of their fandom) on fanfiction archives, in fan-blogs, and on

comments boards within both – that is, in contexts clearly integrated into wider online (sub)cultures of fan productivity. Much 21st-century online fan-art, and most icon-art, consists of digital 'manips' (manipulations) of existing still images or screencaps – whether of characters, actors, or pairings (typically captured at highly precise narrative situations) or other 'iconic' images – rather than drawings or paintings. Sets of icons relating to a particular fandom or theme may be shared with other fans; and both fan-fiction and other fan sites/communities (characteristically, on LiveJournal) may host icon-making 'festivals' – instigated by setting a particular brief – in much the same way that participants in fanfic sites post requests or prompts to be filled by other writers.

7)   Last, there are **fan-run websites or blogs dedicated to period films and costume dramas** *in general*. With one exception (http://perioddrama.com, which included a feature on gay, lesbian and transgender period drama) – and in contrast with most of the activity mapped above – most of the sites I found confined themselves to the more anodyne interests that 'heritage films' are assumed to hold for their audiences – historical costume and the details of period styling, the 'elegance' of the past, and (a typically uncritical notion of) history, understood in terms of neat periodisations (Tudor, Regency, etc) – combined with a highly 'respectable' and even cloying orientation towards the films and their pleasures. While such sites might, on the face of it, sound tailor-made for the 'National Trust audience' in my study, their content was in reality too kitsch – and their engagement with specific films, 'history', or the material cultures of the past too superficial and consumerist – to hold genuine appeal for the better-informed National Trust respondents. While these sites mostly appeared to be fan-run, a few combined costume-drama 'appreciation' with the promotion and/or sale of nostalgia lifestyle products or (in one case) 'motivational posters', pointing to possible religious–ideological or commercial agendas.

In the remaining sections below, I explore further these questions of 'respectable'/'respectful' versus *less* 'respectable'/'respectful' audience engagements with 'heritage films', and *differentiated* versus *infinite* forms of fan productivity, predominantly in relation to *Maurice* and *A Room* through the prism of two distinct areas of online activity: (*reactive*) **audience/fan talk** around the films on YouTube and IMDb boards and other forums, and forms of participatory **fan *productivity*** in the broader context of blogging culture. Where the former illustrates the existence of a distinctive audience culture and expressions of fan *community* around (especially) *Maurice* which are very different from more distant, self-conscious forms of heritage-film appreciation – more intimate, more overtly sexual, and hence far less 'respectable' – the latter illustrates the productive work of fans in imagining and extending *Maurice* as a text 'without ending': in 2.0 culture, across various media, via fanfic, slash video and icon art.

2.3   From 'respectable' fandom to heritage spack: Merchant Ivory audiences on the YouTube and IMDd boards

In contrast with the measured, thoughtful and informed – but also discursively over-determined, generally unspontaneous and *un-fannish* – responses of both sets of respondents in my 1998 *Heritage Film Audiences* survey, the 2011 YouTube comments threads and IMDb message boards on *Maurice* and *A Room With A View* were sites of intense engagement, immediate and direct responses, and visceral and carnal enthusiasms. Contrary to (generalised) media denouncement of the YouTube comments boards as 'a hotbed of infantile debate and unashamed ignorance' (Anon., *Guardian*, 2009), the YouTube and imDb discussion boards on all three Merchant–Forster–Ivory films serve as forums for intense investment in characters, forms of historical imagining, and engagement with a variety of representational, ethical, social and regulatory debates. Examples range from the nudity debate around *A Room* already cited, to an argument, sparked by *Maurice*'s casting of straight actors in gay lead roles, around the sidelining – and commercial viability – of openly gay stars in mainstream cinema.[25] Given the global reach of YouTube (very evident on these boards, and bringing a further shift in the context of *Maurice*'s audience reception which problematises any simple classification as a 'British-costume-drama'), many questions and exchanges also highlighted issues of linguistic comprehension or cross-cultural understanding. In the case of *Maurice*, this ranged from non-native English speakers pleading for written transcriptions of dialogue they could not quite catch (particularly in the love scenes), to gay men living in regions of the world still legislatively and socially hostile to homosexuality tentatively trying to challenging dominant assumptions on the boards that the repression represented in *Maurice* was, by 2011, a thing of the past.

The variety of topics raised around the three Merchant–Forster–Ivory films in the (less innately social) forum of the IMDb boards suggested that 'heritage film audiences 2.0' are highly engaged with detail and specifics.[26] Not, however, the kinds of 'period detail' that obsessed the National Trust cohort in *Heritage Film Audiences*, but in areas such as narrative; character motivations, moral choices, sexual orientations and even sexual histories; cultural, historical and class specifics of behaviour, attitudes and social hierarchy; nuances of script and dialogue; dialects and accents; and other aspects of the films which may require specialised cultural or academic knowledge, or sophisticated reading skills, to understand. IMDb discussions on *Howards End* ranged from 'Does the book tell what happens to Jacky [Bast]?' (the answer is no, yielding speculative suggestions that ranged from a compensatory financial settlement from Henry Wilcox to a return to prostitution); 'Where did the Schlegels get their money from?' (prompting an explanation of the Edwardian British class system); to two discussions on the theme of 'What does Margaret see in Henry Wilcox?' Some of these questions seemed motivated by a kind of laziness (in asking questions that would be more reliably answered via independent Googling or by

reading the book). The replies they attracted were, at times, strong on projecting a cultural authority that was not necessarily backed by reliable expertise.

For unclear reasons, the IMDb board for *A Room* was purged during Summer 2011 from more than 100 topics down to 20. Post-purge, at September 2011, the nudity debate remained the largest and longest-running discussion; followed by 'Cecil, gay?' (a topic which, depressingly, has been colonised by homophobes and descended into a slanging match: few contributors seem aware that Forster himself was gay, and any contributor posting an affirmative analysis is branded 'a homo'); and (in reaction against the debate launched by contact-258) 'Why are people so offended by the nudity?'

The (extensive) IMDb board activity around *Maurice* differed from the boards for both *Howards End* and *A Room* in that it combined discussion of serious topics with a more fannish enthusiasm, a definite social-networking element (with some participants even forging off-board connections, e.g. across on LiveJournal), and – not usual on the IMBb boards – very warm interaction between participants. It was also the only Merchant–Forster–Ivory board to include a post asking if there was any *Maurice* fanfic. Indicatively, the most-discussed topics were 'Comparing *Maurice* with *Brokeback Mountain*', 'Your favourite scene', and 'At last! I saw it today!' (in which a new, but not uncritical, female fan finds a ready community of *Maurice* enthusiasts to interact with). A similar thread, 'I love this movie!', begins (in 2004): 'I know you might get sick of seeing all my posts. But I just wanted to say that I am surprised of how many people [have] responded … The first time I visited this page was ... like 2 years ago, and there [were] only 2 posts on it. Now, I see overwhelming responses…' This latter thread leads one gay man to share (in extraordinary personal detail) his own real-life *Brokeback Mountain* experience (the loss of his first teenage love to marriage due to parental intervention) to explain his own deep investment in *Maurice*. Other topics of discussion include (inevitably) the deleted scenes, 'servants' reactions', and speculation around Alec's sexual experience prior to Maurice (extent, kinds, and the class as well as gender of past partners). One female poster asking 'I love *Brokeback Mountain*, should I see this?' is gently challenged about why she is anxious, but perhaps she should be: another first-time female viewer finds *Maurice* the 'Most erotic movie ever made'.

The eroticism or not of *Maurice*, and equally the innocuousness or not of the nudity in *A Room with a View*, are, of course, ultimately dependent on the responses of particular spectator(ship)s: images or moments that are erotic for some viewing orientations or fan(dom)s may leave other sections of the audience cold. *A Room*, however, presents an extreme example of how one film can attract irreconcilably divergent responses in these respects that extend considerably beyond the IMDb debate cited in **Example 1**.

A Room's famous all-male nude bathing scene at the 'Sacred Lake' in the woods – where Lucy Honeychurch's brother Freddy (Graves), her frustrated suitor George Emerson (Julian Sands) and the vicar Mr Beebe (Simon Callow) strip off, splash around and chase each other in comic horseplay until they are stumbled upon by Lucy (Helena Bonham Carter), her effete and incompatible fiancé Cecil Vyse (Daniel Day-Lewis), and Lucy and Freddy's mother (Rosemary Leach) – is marked as innocently comic by Lucy's laughter, her mother's mock-shock, and Cecil's redundantly chivalrous attempt to protect the sensibilities of the 'ladies'. Back in 1986, *A Room* was uncontroversially released in the UK with only a PG certificate, and the bathing scene was judged innocuous enough to feature frequently in British TV coverage of the film and its Oscar and BAFTA awards triumphs. *A Room* was, however, the first-ever PG-certificate film to show full-frontal male genitals, and it did so with a carefree nonchalance that remains a landmark (and unusual) in mainstream cinema. For a queer (or female slash) gaze, the bathing scene's nominal innocence does nothing to disavow its (homo)erotic subtext – which becomes amplified when one realises that Sands was Ivory's first casting choice for the title role in *Maurice*, alongside the actual re-casting of Graves as Maurice's lover Alec.

In the pre-Web 2.0 era, concrete evidence that such pleasures had a real and self-acknowledged place in (gay male, straight female, and less classifiably queer) audience experiences and memories of *A Room* remained anecdotal, fragmented and part-speculative. The terms in which the film is now discussed and recirculated online, however, in forums such as YouTube comments boards and beyond, make an ever-growing body of such evidence increasingly visible. To give one example, *A Room*'s inclusion in a 2011 *Entertainment Weekly* online feature, 'Bodies of work: 42 unforgettable nude scenes' attracted more reader comments – the majority from women – than Daniel Craig's torso in the 2006 James Bond film *Casino Royale*.[27] Of the 40 comments posted, 13 shared (unprompted) memories of their first experience of the bathing scene, the viewing context (often educational, or rendered embarrassing by the presence of parents) and their reactions. Their testimonies (which are entirely consistent with a similar strand of responses on YouTube, and with the behaviour of , typically much younger, fans around *A Room* on Tumblr and LiveJournal) – affirm the scene's widespread status as a formative moment for both young women and young gay men:

> This scene includes the first penis I ever saw. Ahh memories. I think my mom assumed Merchant Ivory would be safe for a 10-year-old :) (Lynny)

> First 'real-life' wedding tackle I'd ever seen... and in my high-school English class, no less! Seeing this scene still makes me smile. :) (Annie)

When I saw this movie for the first time, I was a senior in high school. I can tell you all the girls in the class really REALLY enjoyed this part of the movie and had much to say about it. (Sarah)

I [like another poster, saw] this movie with my dad in the [cinema]. I was 19 and truly embarrassed to be watching that scene with him ... but loved watching it a few more times with girlfriends. This is one of my all time fave period films and helped me discover the wonderful Helena Bonham Carter (loved her hair), fell in love with Julian Sands and couldn't believe Daniel Day Lewis became such a a big star. (Curly)

Edwardian homo-eroticism. Dig it. (DRG)

A wet dream-come-true for a young teen gay. (Zee)

Just as I was completing this article, the place of *A Room* in the gay 'wet dream-come-true' Hall of Fame was forcefully confirmed by a new upload on YouTube, a promotional clip from Andrew Haigh's internationally praised British indie feature *Weekend* (2011), a semi-improvised, realist drama about a gay 'one-night stand that becomes something more' set in Nottingham. On a date at Nottingham's Goose Fair with Russell (Tom Cullen), Glen (Chris New) recounts his own teenage version of the *A Room* formative experience – but in grubbily graphic terms that (comically) foreground the desperation driving Glen's use of the film, the exposure and humiliation that resulted, and (in line with Busse and Hellekson's observations quoted earlier) the crucial role of technology in audience appropriations of 'heritage-film' content:

>…That was pre-internet, so, y'know, there wasn't any 'straight boy goes gay for pay' [or] 'stick a monster cock up your arse.com'. But my Mum had this VHS, er, *A Room with a View*. You seen it? (Russell replies: 'Yeah. I think I have. Is that the one with all the pussies in all the houses?') Yeh, well, they've got that, but also they've got this scene where all the boys go running naked round the lake. And I'd frozen the video just on the moment when you could see Rupert Graves's cock, and – you know, it's like, when you pause the video, it was *shuddering*. And I was tanking away, and there it was, and I spacked up a huge spiderweb of juvenile semen, just as my mate walked in. And he looked at me, and he looked at the TV screen, and he saw Rupert Graves's shuddering cock, and he knew … He called me a faggot, he called me a queer … (Russell: 'Are you still friends with him?') Nah. And I wasn't friends with anyone else after he told the rest of the school.[28]

For any readers who find *Weekend*'s (fictional/ised) heritage-spack anecdote far-fetched (and I promise you this is yet another heritage-film paratext I never expected to see): within less than 48 hours of upload, the clip had gained the attention and approving comments of the hard core of Graves fans active on LiveJournal ('Oh my god, that is fricken hilarious xD'; 'Who among us *hasn't* paused that film at that particular point?'), who immediately raised the obvious questions. ('I wonder if they asked him first if it was OK? "Mind if we discuss your awesome tackle in our film?" – "Yeah, whatever"'; and 'I can't imagine what [Glen] would have done if he ever watched *Maurice*'.) As another poster noted, 'There's a reason there are YouTube clips showing only Rupert's scenes in various things'.[29]

Which brings us neatly to this section's second case study: responses to *Maurice* and the film's 2004 DVD extras on the YouTube user comments boards. It will come as no surprise that actor-centred 'appreciation' was one pronounced theme here, from women at least as much as from men, and often expressed in palpably sexual terms. These responses were *most* distinctive, however, in expressing a fan relationship – with the film, its characters, and its key performers – marked by a striking presumption of intimacy (whether adulatory or irreverent) rather than distance. The quotes I present below, illustrating the spectrum and flavour of such responses, are YouTube user comments in response to the video '*Maurice* – Interview with the Cast (3/3)' (actually from the 2004 DVD-extra documentary *The Making of Maurice*).[30]

I have selected, re-ordered and (occasionally) edited these comments to present a relatively linear narrative of forms of talk around the film (from 'respectable' and 'respectful' to much less so) and themes of discussion (from deeply felt testimonies to the power of *Maurice*, via rapt starlust – to steal a term first coined by the rock-and-celebrity writers Fred and Judy Vermorel – to a complicit sexual *knowingness*). Three further points should be noted. First, the cast interviews show *Maurice*'s three lead actors in their 40s (as opposed to their 20-something selves who starred in the film). Second, displaying a certain *knowingness* itself, the documentary films the three leads with differing degrees of distance and intimacy.[31] Third, the descent into comment-board irreverence is prompted by distinct moments in the footage itself: first, when Graves (within the standard actor-commentary-on-his-role) summarises the essence of Alec's character as 'It wasn't where he put his dick, it was how happy he was with it'; second, when (with a near-giggle) he lets slip a grasp of the nature of *Maurice*'s appeal to Japanese fangirls that eludes Wilby (who seems genuinely perplexed). Fourth, however, the *documentary itself* makes no *direct* reference to the yaoi phenomenon. On this point and others – and in a pattern seen more widely across the *Maurice* boards – it is the *audience* who transform subtext into text:

> Thank God fate decided you three young men should come together with James Ivory and make this wondrous film – this 63-year-old grandma thanks you all. I hope James Wilby, Hugh Grant and Rupert Graves come to these

YouTube comments and check them out occasionally. I'm glad I saw the movie before I read the book. Much love to you all. (cracker417) (12 likes)

This film continues to break my heart, but in a way that gives me hope. I remember first seeing it [in] a theatre years ago and I was completely in awe of it. I don't think any 'gay' movie since has moved me as much. Wonderful! (Gandalf1of9) (4 likes)

Too bad there wasn't any sex scenes with Hugh Grant. (babybirl009) (27 likes; second most-'liked' comment)

@babybirl009: Thank goodness there wasn't – he looks rather clumsy :) including sex scenes. Besides, Mr Durham, Esq. was locked in his personal closet, wasn't he? (AloutkaKazawa)

I love what Rupert says about approaching [the role] as a sexual being. It's exactly what Forster would like, I think. I am sort of pissed that MI cut certain scenes though. The thing with the grapes and especially the thing where Maurice and Alec talk after Alec comes to him the first time. It sort of explains how Maurice can love Alec so easily. It was a rotten idea to cut it. (everythingseventual2) (10 likes)

I love how James Wilby and Rupert Graves are really upfront about this and Hugh Grant is embarrassed. (missbabyice)

I'm so envious of Rupert! He got to kiss Wilby and do everything!!!! (Pacabelle) (8 likes)

@Pacabelle: I'm so envious of WILBY! I've got a gigantic 'older man crush' on Rupert Graves! … I'm 19, so I don't really go for guys his age, but for Rupert, I would do ANYTHING! Haha! (hXbradshaw) (42 likes; most-'liked' comment)

Rupert is stunning. Then and now. And I LOVE his voice. A lot. :) And the fact that they had Japanese yaoi fangirls was the most adorable thing. So cute. And I can DEFINITELY see why. :P (hypnotisedbabe) (16 likes)

He should be imprisoned for being such a heart-wrenching beauty. And his voice ... no comments. (kajanadziejabiedron) (8 likes)

<3333 u rupert! (SlashHorrorNut666) (8 likes)

Ah, them Japanese school girls and their yaoi fantasies! (Emgee78)

'I think they liked three pretty boys running around...' I love Rupert. :-) (deepesttottenham) (14 likes)

@deepesttottenham: Haha Rupert just goes there with quotes. Couldn't believe the quote he said about his ummm … well you know. Wonder the person he was talking to didn't blush when he said that about Scudder. He says it so quietly I had to be really sure I caught that. And sure enough that is exactly what he said. Wow. Did anyone else catch that? (ericnfan)

@ericnfan: Yes, LoL. Most philosophical. :P (missbabyice)

@deepesttottenham: I certainly did! (missbabyice)

Oh holy fuck, Rupert. Never stop talking. Never ever. (Maricimo)

Such responses and exchanges both highlight the existence of an audience culture around *Maurice* and its performers/performances which is at once very knowing and very invested, and illustrate how this culture is cemented by collective acknowledgement and reinforcement on the boards themselves. At certain iconic (erotic/emotional/nude) moments in the film, the YouTube board responses express something further: a complicit sense among viewers/fans that they are *getting away with* these pleasures. This complicity reaches its peak on the YouTube board for the segment 'MAURICE (13/14)', which opens with the second of Maurice and Alec's two 'morning-after' love scenes (in a dingy London hotel, following their confrontation, then gradual coming together, at the British Museum) – a scene which (very belatedly) introduces the film's only full-frontal nudity, prompting an avalanche of comments. ('HOLY SHIT. PENISES'; 'Ooooo, they're nakey!'; 'Oh gosh … *Maurice* did it again ...').[32] The two most-'liked' comments on this board, however, taken in juxtaposition, stand not just as a fair summation of the wider balance of comment, but as a microcosm of the erotic, emotional and socio-political investments intertwined in *Maurice* fandom:

Maybe everyone who made it this far in the movie has enough sense to not flag it. (lisambofoh, 98 likes)

Listen to how Alec speaks about their class differences. He is right, of course. Living in the lower class teaches you things that the wealthy can afford to ignore, well almost. You never forget your place. If you do there is someone who will always remind you of who you are. We all have to face facts sooner or later. Poor Maurice is a dreamer. Thankfully Forster permits that dream to run off and live another day. (chopin65, 41 likes)

2.4   Fan productivity online: *Maurice* without ending

The first, fragmentary, attempts to establish virtual fan communities around *Maurice*, both novel and film, can be traced to around 2004 – the same year in which the Merchant Ivory Collection special-edition DVD of the film with deleted scenes was released. It may be helpful to place this date within a wider 'Web 2.0' and technological chronology. Late 1998 saw both the arrival of DVDs in the UK (a format which, for the first time, would enable viewers to select, capture – and potentially recirculate – their own high-quality still images from films), and the launch (in Los Angeles) of Fanfiction.net, now the world's largest and most-used online fan-fiction archive. The virtual community LiveJournal (hosting users' individual blogs and journals, extensively including fanfiction) followed in 1999. Domestic broadband internet became popularised around 2001 – the same year in which the IMDb (which had been founded much earlier in 1990, as an e-mail newsgroup list, moved onto the internet in 1992, and was bought by Amazon in 1998) launched its user Message Boards. YouTube arrived in June 2005, and had been acquired by Google by October 2006. The open-source, open-access, non-commercial fanworks archive an An Archive of Our Own was launched in 2009.

The first *Maurice* online fan community (judging from activity still visible at 2011) was 'Outlaws of the Greenwood', started in June 2004 on LiveJournal by mr_edna_may, and at 2011 still fitfully active as a specialised site for *Maurice* fanfic, icon art and discussions (although depleted by much purged material).[33] 'mr_edna_may' is, in fact, female, and also writes as 'Marauder the Slash Nymph' across a broader range of fandoms dominated by *Harry Potter*. The choice of name references the episode in the novel/film in which Maurice – desperate to find a 'cure' for his homosexuality – consults an American hypnotist, Lasker-Jones (Ben Kingsley; the original casting intention had been John Malkovich) who attempts (and fails) to redirect *Maurice*'s desires by making him see a non-existent portrait of the 'attractive' 'Miss Edna May' – an image which Maurice, even under hynopsis, experiences as 'Mr Edna May'. 'Outlaws of the Greenwood' focuses on Forster's novel as much as the film, but with a strong interest in the Maurice/Alec pairing over Maurice/Clive. In Spring 2005, the site was complemented by a transient role-play LiveJournal ostensibly written by Alec Scudder himself (under the user name longedfordream, in the context of a larger LiveJournal community, desperatefans: 'For Your Desperate Alter Ego Needs'), with Marauder presented by 'Alec' as his 'typist'.[34] In an uncanny premonition of the post-2010 explosion of *Sherlock*-meets-Scudder fandom, in May 2005 'Alec' announced his plans to marry 'Maurice' … in a double wedding alongside Holmes and Watson.

March 2005 saw the launch of a different LiveJournal under the name alec_scudder, but this immediately morphed into 'Fans of Rupert Graves', majoring (mainly) on discussion boards and screen-capping and still patchily active at 2011.[35] Significantly less so, however, than the multiple post-2010 Tumblr sites where *Maurice*- (and *A Room*-) related screencaps, GIFs and fanart are posted as acts of (blurred) Graves and Lestrade 'appreciation' within the context

of BBC *Sherlock* and wider 'infinite' fandom(s). At the opposite, more literary and 'respectable' end of the spectrum, 'Never Be Parted: The Dreamwidth *Maurice* Community', devoted to fanfic and (more extensive) discussion of the novel, was active in 2009 to mid-2010, but seemingly no longer.[36] A Russian fansite for *Maurice*, blogging and reblogging a (fairly comprehensive) mix of screencaps, stills, YouTube video links, and news of the three lead actors' more recent activities (possibly hosted by torchinca, a Ukrainian, who also makes *Maurice* music fanvids: see below) has been active since 2010.[37] Finally (for the moment), this was joined in mid-August 2011 by a dedicated *Maurice* Tumblr site titled simply 'Maurice, Clive, Alec' – devoted to both pairings and the wider film – with a clean, modern format comparable to the many *Sherlock* sites, combining very high-quality screencaps and GIFs with Forster quotes and less reverent content. (Maurice: 'Can't you kiss me?' Clive: 'I think – I think it would bring us – I think it would bring us down'. Comment: 'Durham is SO full of SHIT. UUGHHH'.)

Beyond sites with a dedicated fanfic focus, discussion boards, and the posting of heritage-film fanvids and slash videos on YouTube, the most widespread online activities around *Maurice* and *A Room*, particularly on the new *Sherlock*-related Tumblr sites, are the obsessive posting and reposting of screencaps and GIFs, and fanart and icon-making (activity **types 4** and **6** in my conceptual map) rather than the more *creative* and *laborious* fan-work of fanfic-writing or video-making.

My interest, in this closing section, is in the ways in which such fanworks (most obviously, fanfiction, but also across other forms such as slash video) can be understood as efforts to imagine and perpetuate *Maurice* – and the 'One True Pairing' of Maurice/Alec – as a text 'without ending'. While some of this activity at first sight looks (or is) meretricious, fans who attempt to imagine and project Maurice/Alec beyond the temporal and narrative bounds of the film/novel – including (for some) the desire to see/imagine the pair in middle age – are, in their own way, honouring Forster's Utopian vision that 'in fiction anyway two men should fall in love and remain in it for the ever and ever that fiction allows' (Forster, 1960/1972, p. 218). Moreover, the attempt itself requires writers to engage, on some level, with the historical and socio-political significance, and practicalities, of Maurice/Alec's story, and to find narrative and characterisation solutions – though not necessarily realist, and not always with full success.

The fan yearning for an *expanded or extended* experience of (the already long) *Maurice* – 'passion without ending' indeed – can be seen even in some of the forms of fanvid posted on YouTube. From one perspective, we would (rightly) expect narrative condensation, not expansion, to be one key function of such videos. As one uploader/creator explains in their introduction to a video which (via a mix of speeded-up footage and fast montage editing) attempts to condense *A Room With A View*: 'A young woman in the restrictive Edwardian culture of turn-of-the century England and her love for a free-spirited young man strung

together IN UNDER SIX MINUTES. No need to watch the whole thing here'.[38] In other cases (such as actor-appreciation *extracts* – unmanipulated by the poster – or actor-appreciation *fanvids* – which are), the video may provide gratifications that the *viewer's* own fetishistic repeat-viewing practices transform into an extended text.

One *Maurice* video on YouTube, however – mis-described by its uploader as merely 'a clip from' the film – goes further by structuring such fetishistic spectator practices into the video itself. '*Maurice* 1987 Movie, love scean [sic] between James Wilby & Rupert Graves' expands the film's final kiss and embrace from an original duration of 32 seconds to just over two minutes, in slow motion and high definition.[39] In a screen kiss that is *already* fetishised and fixated upon at normal speed, as surely as Laura Mulvey [1975] once argued that classical Hollywood cinema fetishised and fixated on the body of 'the woman', the enforced encounter with this slow-mo intensification borders on unwatchable.[40] Board discussions in the *Maurice*-related LiveJournal communities confirm, however, that some hardcore fans do indeed slow down favourite scenes to quarter speed during viewing.

Within the extensive catalogue of BBC *Sherlock* clips and slash and mash-up fanvids posted on YouTube since 2010, it is, then, no surprise that *that same kiss* is appropriated at least once for off-the-peg slash purposes. Thus the video 'My skin – Sherlock/Lestrade' constructs Sherlock as desiring Lestrade via a series of superimposed shared framings and dissolves – including one juxtaposition in which Sherlock's mindscreen (first-person perception/dream) is represented by the *exact* 'visceral … fantastic close-up' of Graves from *Maurice* described in such fetishistic terms by the fan-critic David K.: 'Dazed, love-besotted … [his mouth] still shimmering and slick with saliva' (c. 2004; see Note 40).[41]

A further strand of slash vids – mostly made by Ukrainian YouTube contributor torchinca – do their bit to ensure that Maurice and Alec 'shan't never be parted' by repeatedly slashing together Wilby and Graves from their later film and TV roles – whether cast jointly or separately, across 'heritage films' and contemporary dramas, in youth but (in common with some *Maurice* icon art) particularly in middle age. These include a laudable effort to queer Charles Sturridge's 1988 film of Evelyn Waugh's novel *A Handful of Dust* – which recast Wilby and Graves the year after *Maurice*, but as straight love rivals over Kristin Scott Thomas (with Wilby as the tragic cuckolded aristocratic husband Tony Last, and Graves as his wife's superficial, arriviste toyboy John Beaver).[42] The video starts out like a Graves fanvid, but then – via the construction of a male-on-male gaze (in the tradition of earlier lesbian/New Queer Cinema remixes of classical Hollywood such as Jane Cottis and Kaucyila Brooke's *Dry Kisses Only* [1990] and Mark Rappaport's *Rock Hudson's Home Movies* [1992]) and a brief cut-in from *Maurice* – remixes an implied Wilby/Graves male-marriage-with-son happy ending in which Tony Last's little son John (killed in the novel/film in a hunting accident) remains alive.

Another torchinca video – *'Clapham Junction–Maurice'*, with a Duran Duran soundtrack – resorts to *Maurice* slash in an attempt to improve Kevin Elyot's much-hyped but representationally contentious state-of-the-gay-nation 2007 TV drama for Channel 4, *Clapham Junction* – which itself recast an older, tireder, Wilby and Graves (as, respectively, a closeted married lawyer and an out, politicised gay screenwriter who struggles to get commissioned) in an in-joke that failed to distract from wider shortcomings.[43]

Fanfic, however, remains the medium of choice for the most developed attempts to imagine Maurice and Alec's future or to expand the *Maurice* text in other ways. The body of *Maurice* fanfic posted online since 2000 is impossible to survey definitively, with the work of a (self-acknowledged) small community of fan–writers scattered across a range of personal blogs and archives, and some shared recommendations already inaccessible due to obsolete links, heightened privacy settings or account deletions. Despite this marginality, however, fanfic activity and related discussions around *Maurice* remain significantly more widespread than for Forster's other filmed novels (Merchant Ivory or otherwise).

As a site like 'Outlaws of the Greenwood' illustrates, *Maurice* fanfic is characteristically produced and circulated squarely within the context of the fanfic and/or slash communities, typically by writers with an established a track-record (and a larger body of work) within more mainstream/widespread fandoms. Within this, a clear distinction can be seen between (the majority of) *differentiated Maurice* fanworks – seeking to expand or extend the text's narrative, characterisations and/or relationships in ways consistent with the novel and/or film as 'canon' – and a smaller number of crossover/multi-source fictions in which elements of *Maurice* are appropriated within a context of *infinite* (and, since 2010, typically BBC *Sherlock*-centred) fandom. It should be noted that *Maurice* fics written with varying degrees of 'respectfulness' (and sexual explicitness) can be found across both categories; but also that the BBC *Sherlock* fandom has fast acquired a self-confessed 'bad rep' for 'smutfics and slash', alongside an endemic elevation of fanon (elaborately self-constructed fanlore around the series) over canon.[44] In this context, the place of *Maurice* within *Sherlock* crossover fictions is best understood as a transtext for knowing, creative (and slightly jokey) appropriation and remixing, attractive to this fandom for its cocktail of off-the-peg gay and slashy credentials and intertextual cross-casting.

The majority of (differentiated) *Mauric*e-inspired fanfictions visible online at 2011 straddled two (overlapping) categories. They were either propelled by an impulse to imagine Maurice and Alec's future together in 1914 onwards in terms that engaged (or tried to) with the material/practical, historical/war and/or class barriers their continuing relationship would have faced (i.e. precisely the kinds of issues raised by the novel's critics); and/or by a romantic impulse that sought to reward and legitimise their enduring love with marriage and/or an adopted or foundling child.[45]

While some fan-stories respond to the realist imperative to foreground the hardship and isolation of the pair's choice to live 'without money, without people', a more intriguing strand combine or transcend this with a more radical vision, including engagement with questions of gay rights and possible models for alternative lifestyles. In some of these narratives, Maurice and Alec provide a powerful non-heteronormative role model or beacon of hope for other (isolated, afraid, closeted) gay or lesbian characters – mirroring the intense personal impact of *Maurice* the film testified to by many gay men – or themselves gain from non-heteronormative solidarity and friendship.[46] devo79's seven-chapter World War I story, 'Happy Endings', presents an especially effective, sensitively developed, example of the latter, taking Maurice and Alec (both serving as ordinary soldiers so that they can be together) from the horrors of the trenches (where homophobic bullying is juxtaposed against a pivotal sympathetic 'helper' character), via trench fever and a harrowing separation, back to England where they are able to live together freely thanks to the friendship of a cross-class – and more broadly free-thinking and egalitarian – lesbian couple. ('What Abigail's job on [Rebecca's] estate was always seemed to elude Maurice, and for some reason he did not think it polite to ask.')[47]

A bleaker World War I *Maurice* fiction, kindkit's 'The Home Front' – written from Alec's trenchantly class-conscious point of view ('The war hasn't changed the way rich men get their pennies from poor men's pockets. Just speeded it up, maybe') – imagines Maurice and Alec living a fugitive existence as charcoal-makers. In a trope common in such 'realist greenwood' stories, Maurice's class background and manner as a 'gentleman' *disadvantage* him relative to Alec: not merely because he lacks Alec's practical survival skills, but because the near-impossibility of Maurice 'passing' as working class denies him the public and social interactions available to Alec and confines him to a more isolated, domestic existence. Accordingly, the story keeps Maurice 'offscreen', leaving Alec to go into town to sell the charcoal – where, as a conscientious objector against the war, he is exposed to the full white-feather treatment (from 'a pretty woman [who] gives him a long look … [but then] draws herself up rigid').

Against a backdrop of conscription efforts in the market square ('Does anybody ever join up because he fancies the [soldier] on the poster? That'd be a laugh'), 'The Home Front' stages a defiant encounter between Alec and Clive Durham – back from the war as a sickly and wounded 'hero' – which is significant for its projection of Alec as a holistically dissenting (and even communitarian socialist) figure in senses that – importantly – both extend beyond, and counter the character's too-easy reduction to, his sexuality. In this exchange, Alec not only repeatedly refuses to address Clive as 'sir', but responds to Clive's (unwise) attempt to suture him into patriotic allegiance with 'King and Country' by voicing a position that both directly echoes Forster's own and resonates back to Marx and Engels: '"I think men like me haven't got a country"'. In keeping with this reading, kindkit's own comments (as an author who writes across fandoms from Discworld via *Blake's 7* to Simon Pegg/Nick

Frost, and self-describes as 'a trans man slowly learning to accept myself as such' and 'a former academic, currently experiencing the economic downturn from entirely too close a vantage point') confirm the story's motivation of 'giving [Alec] a voice':

> For the one story I wrote in this fandom, I decided to take the more difficult path and *not* write from the POV of the more educated character. The resulting story was a lot better for it, I think, [since] in the book Scudder never really is more than an object of desire.[48]

To turn to the multi-text mash-and-slash appropriations of *Maurice*, the LiveJournal vaults confirm that these did not begin with *Sherlock* – even turning up a (sadly, uncompleted) *Doctor Who* crossover from 2009 titled 'Alec Scudder: Zombie Hunter', accompanied by a cheeky icon ('Alec; it rhymes with phallic') that exemplifies how the complicit *knowingness* of *Maurice* fandom also finds expression in *Maurice* icon art.[49] The role of BBC *Sherlock* fandom as a key stimulus (in relation to other intertextually-cast period films and dramas as well as *Maurice*) is, however, evident from the timelines of individual writers' interests. For instance, stories derived from period films/TV dramas only start to feature in the LiveJournal of a fanfic and slash writer named rusty_armour some months after her/his entry into BBC *Sherlock* fandom – and only in cases where there are casting intertextualities with *Sherlock*. These stories include a *Maurice* parody, one piece of *A Room with a View* slash, and a longer, carefully researched, piece of historical slash/parody inspired by the dual cross-casting of both Martin Freeman (*Sherlock*'s Dr Watson) and Graves (*Sherlock*'s Lestrade) in the earlier (already lubricious) historical miniseries *Charles II: The Power and The Passion* (Joe Wright, BBC-TV/A&E USA, 2003), as the first Lord Shaftsbury and Charles II's libertine best friend the Duke of Buckingham.[50]

It seems highly significant that all three impulses noted across the *Maurice* fanfics – the realist impulse, the Maurice/Alec marriage plot, and the framing of their story as one with wider political resonances – all recur in the *Maurice*/BBC *Sherlock* crossovers, whether these project *Maurice*'s protagonists forward into the 21st-century London alternate universe of the BBC *Sherlock*, or mash the texts in other ways. In illustration, I will end with two contrasting examples. The first, 'The Boathouse' by rusty_armour, is a wilfully silly *Maurice* parody and sequel (blamed by its author on the effects of Tylenol Cold Plus medication), flippant to an extent that flouts most notions of 'respect' for Forster, the novel and film, or their characters.[51] At the same time, it draws upon Alec's canonic bisexuality and sexual history with female servants – in Forster's novel, and in one omitted film scene, but not the finished film – as a device for fulfilling the non-heteronormative family imperative.[52]

Maurice and Alec have somehow married ('The pastor said I was the most beautiful bride he'd ever seen' – 'Alec, the pastor was blind') and live in France – but with no mention of World War I, and not only because 'our love' (not to mention 'the numerous lewd and

indecent acts we've just committed') aren't 'accepted in England'. Here, Alec presents Maurice with a baby boy who (Maurice deduces) Alec fathered with a French maid back at Pendersleigh (Clive Durham's country estate in the film), who returned, pregnant, to her home village in France – where Maurice and Alec are now living. The baby not only 'looks just like' Alec; it is named Gaston Lestrade. In short, Maurice and Alec gain a son; while from a BBC *Sherlock* fan perspective, Rupert Graves reproduces himself (across several decades' temporal licence) in a story that answers two of the enigmas of *Sherlock* fanlore: what is Inspector G. Lestrade's first name (never elaborated by Conan Doyle), and why does he have a French-sounding surname? Class, social relations and politics are all present and correct, but treated with extreme facetiousness. Tory politician Clive's upper-class wife Anne Durham threatens to 'join the Women's Social and Political Union', and calls Alec 'a working-class poof who has slept with the entire household' – including, key to the plot, Anne herself – a characterisation justified by rusty_armour's 'impression from the film that Scudder was a tad bit slutty' and 'both sulky *and* a girl when he demanded to know why Maurice never ~~called him back~~ wrote to him' [*sic*].[53]

fengirl88's 'The Old Bad Songs', in contrast, is a significantly more complex and serious 11-chapter *Sherlock/Maurice* crossover fanfic (complemented by some shorter spin-off stories) set decisively in BBC *Sherlock*'s 21st-century London.[54] Importantly, the narrative also looks back to late-1970s/early-1980s Britain (with Maurice and Clive's time at Cambridge timeshifted forward from the 1910s to the 1970s) – a decade after the UK's *decriminalisation* (short of full *legalisation*) of sexual acts in private between men aged over 21, but also a time of continuing homophobia, discrimination and prosecutions, including (crucially) the use of police harassment, beatings and set-ups against gay men. 'The Old Bad Songs' transports an older Maurice (and, in some chapters, Clive Durham) to 21st-century London as a wealthy, gay, but closeted City stockbroker targeted with blackmail threats despite a tepid sex life and apparent lack of motive. Clive Durham, by contrast – retaining his minor-landed-gentry background from the novel/film – has morphed from a past far more decadent than Maurice's into a right-wing Tory Cabinet Minister 'hot on family values'. BBC *Sherlock*'s D.I. Lestrade – written in character from the series, but functioning structurally (in terms of class relations and some of the story's sexual dynamics) as an older Alec – is placed in charge of the investigation.

This adoption of *Sherlock*'s contemporisation strategy facilitates a very credible and critical handling of the class tensions between Maurice, Lestrade/Alec and Clive, while the wider plot draws parallels that point up the continuing pertinence of *Maurice*'s themes. 'The Old Bad Songs' is told from Lestrade's perspective, and for its purposes, Lestrade is not just expressly gay, but serves as the carrier of historical/political memory of gay male experience extending back to the 1970s, when, as a working-class 16-year-old, he used to climb through windows at 'the big house' for parties with slightly older men, in a socio-political climate coloured by the 1979 Jeremy Thorpe trial (which, here, also provides the motivation for

Clive's politically expedient straight marriage). Lestrade also carries (Alec's) class resentments from *Maurice*: Clive Durham's 'look and his manner and his accent' in a formal police interview 'raise hackles Lestrade didn't know he still *had*. Lestrade can't remember who coined that phrase about *the hidden injuries of class,* but they certainly had the right fucking idea'.

In a further 'echo from long ago' (as Maurice describes the blackmailer's voice) the story is written to an accompanying playlist of songs from the 1977–82 new wave period: the 'Old Bad Songs' which also provide the chapter titles. (This particular use of new wave-era music as a memory-invocation device might easily be inspired by another Graves text/film, the politicised – and anti-police – transgender romcom *Different for Girls* [Richard Spence, UK, 1996].) Thus Chapter 1 is (Elvis Costello's) 'Watching the Detectives'. More boldly, Chapter 2, 'The British Police are the Best in the World', takes its title, and themes, from the bitterly ironic opening line of Tom Robinson's 1978 Top 20 British chart hit 'Glad to be Gay':

> Lestrade enjoys working with people younger than him, most of the time … But every now and then you hit a case like this where it matters that your team were still in nappies [when] you were growing up a young gay man … People think homosexuality stopped being illegal in 1967. That's if they know anything at all, which these days mostly they don't. But he *remembers* being sixteen, knowing any man who shagged him in the next *five years* could end up in prison. While all around him other 16-year-olds were having legal (if almost certainly ill-advised and fumbling) sex with their same-age girlfriends. Any of the men who came to the big house, for example, could have ended up in jail for what happened after he climbed in.[55]

At the risk of further spoiling the story, it eventually dawns on Lestrade (with canonic slowness) that his 1970s memories link back to the blackmail threat. But, in an ironic (and downbeat realist) reversal of the erotics of *Maurice* the novel/film, his response to sexual come-ons from the 21st-century Maurice is less than enthusiastic. ('Lestrade is getting a bit tired of having his ear bent by someone who should probably just go into therapy or ring Gay Switchboard or something. If Gay Switchboard still exists').[56]

2.5   In conclusion
It can be seen clearly that the diversity of online fan phenomena and behaviour I have sketched in this article around (what old-media critics previously classified as) 'heritage films' have been both facilitated, and made newly publicly visible, by digital convergence culture, in which cinema and TV are *knowingly* 'shifting to create transmedia entertainment', and in which 'narratives can no longer be contained within a single medium and thus spill out onto the web' (Gilligan, forthcoming 2012, p.21). As Sarah Gilligan notes in her work on a very different set of transmedial developments around period drama from

those I have explored here (specifically, around costume and celebrity), 'what is new [here] is the capacity of institutions to keep generating new narratives that are not simply confined to the consumption practices of viewing or buying, but extend to the formation of participatory practices in which the audience immerses themselves … creating new meanings and pleasures beyond a film's theatrical release' (2012, p. 22).

Within these developments, however, the online audience/fan activity taking place around the quarter-century-old Merchant–Forster–Ivory films is of distinct interest – both because of the temporal distance between 1980s production and post-2000 reception, rediscovery and reappropriation, and because of its dual character in relation to questions of institutional versus audience power and agency. On the one hand, it has been facilitated and promoted by the institutions of convergence culture – including, very prominently, the BBC's explicit and sophisticated exploitation of the transmedial and participatory potentials surrounding *Sherlock*. But, on the other hand, the passionate, invested, online fan culture, and genuine (if fragmented) fan community, we have witnessed specifically around *Maurice* cannot be viewed as anything other than a fan-led, bottom-up, stealth-viral phenomenon.

The particular characteristics of *Maurice* fandom – by turns emotionally engaged and highly irreverent, sexually frank and politicised – can be viewed a distinct case: relative, even, to the other Merchant–Forster–Ivory films (particularly *Howards End*). And, as already noted, websites and forums catering to more conservative, nostalgic and anodyne modes of engagement with (different) 'heritage-film' texts can also be found online (though the authentically fan-led character of these is sometimes less than clear).[57] The cumulative portrait of invested and productive fan activity around *Maurice* I have presented here nevertheless demonstrates how far off-target generalized academic (and especially the most ideologically driven) critiques can be about the actual passions, sympathies and priorities of real-life fans. Andrew Higson's response to *Maurice*, for instance (as the best-known academic scholar of the 'heritage film') – 'Clive Durham, becomes, for me, a far more attractive and fascinating character than Maurice himself, partly because of Grant's boyish good looks and sublimely camp performance' (2003, p. 81) – could not be further from the ('fuck u clive') emotions of outright hatred, contempt or, at best, pity and sadness felt and expressed by so many *Maurice* fans – and *most of all* by those for whom the film had been a life-changing experience.

Another (oddly widely accepted) critical reading – that homosexuality somehow figures in *Maurice*'s narrative only as a disruptive 'threat', 'the mild allure of the forbidden', after which conservative 'order' is re-established (see, especially, Paul Giles, 1993, p. 76) – is contradicted by just about everything we have witnessed of fan responses, from the intense emotional and erotic investment in Maurice/Alec as the 'One True Pairing', to imaginative efforts to project them as a *vanguard* non-heteronormative pairing – and inspiration to others – 'without ending'. Last, the extent of fan investment in the *working-class* Alec,

including as a stated favourite character[58] – and not merely as lust object (although there was plenty of that), but as an imagined dissenting, politicised figure and/or icon of sexuality without shame – radically challenges a widespread view that condemns *Maurice* the film for its *presumed* 'bourgeois' appeal, while refusing to countenance that Alec Scudder might mean something more for audiences than an objectified 'working-class "natural"' (Dave, 2006, p. 34) or stereotypical 'amorous interest' (Finch and Kwietniowski, 1988, p. 77).

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Notes

[1] For a fuller, fan-critic's, analysis of the film in these terms, see David K. (c. 2004).

[2] I was interested to see a contributor to one gay discussion board (devoted to BBC *Sherlock* sexually explicit fanart and fan/slashfic) describe this scene (which is highly charged but shows no explicit sex) in slang terms usual in slash, gay or porn discourse but not in heritage-film criticism, including classification of Alec as 'an on-the-extreme-down-low [straight-seeming, straight-identifying] gay man', and the seduction as one of potentially dubious consent: '[It] screams dub-con in the beginning, but it's so good you just have to stare in awe'. (Anonymous, posted 13 Jun 2011, PRRRROMOTIONS of a Queer Sort discussion board, http://plus4chan.org/b/coq/res/71705+50.html [accessed 20 Jul 2011])

[3] Cover copy, Merchant Ivory Collection DVD edition of *Maurice*, The Criterion Collection, 2004.

[4] As Busse and Hellekson explain, 'slash stories posit a same-sex relationship, usually one imposed by the author and based on perceived homo-erotic subtext' (2006, p. 10). Japanese culture has its own comparable (and extremely popular genre), yaoi, female-oriented, and usually female-authored, homoerotic fictions/representations (originating within manga and anime). In comparison with slash, yaoi is not innately engaged in *queering* existing 'straight' popular-cultural material or texts, and is characteristically more narrowly preoccupied with explicit sex and romance between (very beautiful) men rather than the development of plot or characterisation.

[5] Source: www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=maurice.htm. The IMDB, at Sep 2011, stated a higher US box-office gross for *Maurice* of $3,130,592 (www.imdb.com/title/tt0093512/business) [both accessed 17 Sep 2011].

[6] Andrejevic's analysis relates this gifted labour and its (circumscribed) pleasures for fans to Zizek's Lacanian account of 'libinidal satisfaction [gained] from actively sustaining the scene of one's own submission' (Zizek, 1999, p. 284) and to a 'refeudalisation' of the public as well as publicity sphere (2008, pp. 40–1).

[7] See Caviar (1993), Caviar (1995), and – for a detailed analysis of the data on period-film audiences that can be extracted from these surveys – Monk (1999).

[8] For a salient Bourdieu-ian theorisation of the relationship between college-educated liberal-arts educational capital, experiences of insecure and contingent socio-economic status and the gratifications of heritage-film viewing – in this case, in the US, not UK, context – see Hipsky (1994).

[9] By contrast, historiographers of the evolution of fanfiction since the 1920s place Austen's novels – alongside Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes cycle – among the originatory ur-texts of all literary fanfiction (see Derecho, 2006, p. 62).

[10] Post by contact-258, 14 May 2005, www.imdb.com/title/tt0091867/board/thread/19219778.

[11] Post by contact-258, 5 Jul 2005, www.imdb.com/title/tt0091867/board/thread/19219778?d=21923675&p=3#21923675.

[12] 'Maurice deleted scenes' [search result], at www.youtube.com/results?search_query=maurice+deleted+scenes&aq=f, plus follow-on links. View counts cited were correct at 23 Sep 2011.

[13] *Maurice* IMDb Message Board, 'Deleted scenes' thread, post by harryrstevens, 16 Sep 2011, www.imdb.com/title/tt0093512/board/thread/18411367?d=188442461&p=3#188442461 [accessed 22 Sep 2011].

[14] Post by tamasan100, 'one month ago' at 23 Sep 2011, www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=lqV4TNkrxMs. As Ivory has completed only one (barely released) film since the death of his long-term producer and life partner Ismail Merchant in 2005 – the ominously titled *The City of Your Final Destination* (2009) – a Director's Cut of *Maurice* seems an unlikely prospect. Earlier YouTube postings (from c. 2008) suggest the possibility that one fan may have attempted the task him/herself, with repercussions (the poster's YouTube account has now been terminated due to 'severe violations … or claims of copyright infringement').

[15] Comment from jhr459, 'Maurice – Deleted Scenes – 6', www.youtube.com/watch?v=eO5j1s-l1Ww&feature=related [accessed 19 Sep 2011].

[16] Comments 1 and 4, from Mochil123 and euriqqa respectively, at www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=eO5j1s-l1Ww. Comment 2, from vixlad, at www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxZj_3gYY_A&feature=related. Comments 2 and 6, both from troubleasusual, at www.youtube.com/all_comments?v=act73BrFHVE. Comment 5, also troubleasusual, www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_KLmFgF5f8&feature=related. The 'bitch-slag article' troubleasusual refers to in the last comment is Finch and Kwietniowski (1988). [All accessed 19 Sep 2011.]

[17] 'The Hotness of King George', by bellebrett, uploaded 21 Feb 2009, 7,915 views [by 9 Sep 2011], www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCd3l4Bk5Cc.

[18] 'Maurice kiss you off', by Muttrock777, uploaded 26 Nov 2007, 365,250 views [at 23 Sep 2011], www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHmURIPXN4w&feature=related.

[19] 'Alec and Maurice's Christmas fairytale', uploaded 17 Dec 2007, 6,571 views [at 23 Sep 2011], www.youtube.com/watch?v=qi29D6-JsRM. The song's themes of transatlantic migration and separation additionally resonate with Alec's last-minute curtailment of his emigration to Argentina in the film/novel.

[20] In the context of online fan activity (from fanfic sites to Tumblr blogs) an icon is an 'image chosen to represent oneself' (Busse and Hellekson, 2006, p. 12). Busse and Hellekson argue, further, that 'icon-making has become a new form of textual poaching, with its own set of aesthetic sensibility [sic], fannish rules and network' (Ibid.).

[21] A *Sunday Times* news story on the success of George R. R. Martin's medieval fantasy-novel saga *Game of Thrones* and its 2011 adaptation for TV by HBO – 'the first adult literary phenomenon in years to rival teenage obsessions such as *Harry Potter* and the *Twilight* series' – accounts for this success in terms which may also shed some light on the easy absorption of period films and TV dramas of earlier decades (including the more restrained strand represented by Merchant Ivory) into the tastes and enthusiasms of young Harry Potter-generation fans. The *Sunday Times* describes the *Game of Thrones* saga as 'the X-rated Potter' and 'not for children', distinguished by its 'witty

writing, brutal realism and ample sex' – yet also notes that it has been promoted with 'marketing tricks straight from the "young adults" rulebook', and quotes a 15-year-old British fan who explains that the books '[merge] fantasy and what feels like real history so well' (Harlow, 2011). It is not difficult to see how such historical–fantastical tastes might foster a wider acceptance of period narratives (within a reception framework – primed by Harry Potter rather than the heritage debate – relatively untroubled by questions of realism, class ideology or past assumptions that these were films for an older audience), coupled with a normalisation of strong sexual content (heightened by the activities of fans themselves). In support of this hypothesis, see not only the mix of fandoms frequently listed by the same Tumblr fans who post and reblog screencaps or GIFs from *Maurice* or *A Room With a View*, but the following exchange on the YouTube comments board for '*A Room with a View* (1986) in Under 6 Minutes', www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5MKuJ8ZnJQ [accessed 19 Sep 2011]:

> OK, I am getting a very strong Draco Hermione post-Hogwarts Italian romance fanfiction vibe here.... (AnastasiaAlison)
> @AnastasiaAlison: Let me know when you write it! I'd love to read it!!!! +D
> (Riss313)

[22] Post by moriartyisirish, The Science of Seduction [BBC *Sherlock* Tumblr fan site], 28 Oct 2010, http://sherlocksexualfrustrationblog.tumblr.com/post/1426266030/yes-thats-d-i-lestrade-on-the-bottom-submitted.

[23] In particular, character-specific and pairing-specific (slash fiction or role-play) fandoms are widespread across the numerous fan blogs, microblogs and fanfic sites devoted solely to the 2010 BBC-TV *Sherlock* (as distinct from the larger field of non-version-specific Sherlock Holmes fan-sites), including specialised sites devoted to specific characters/pairings. The latter include Lestrade (as played by Graves) appreciation and fanfic sites (http://inspectorlestrade.tumblr.com/, http://dilestrade.livejournal.com/), a significant strand of (self-evidently, fanon/non-canon) 'Mystrade' slash activity, in which Lestrade is imagined to be in a romantic/sexual relationship, or even civil partnership, with Mycroft Holmes (played by *Sherlock*'s co-creator, Mark Gatiss) (http://fuckyeahmystrade.tumblr.com/, http://askgreglestrade.tumblr.com/), and a 'Sherlestrade' equivalent (http://sherlestrade.livejournal.com/). The significance for this article is that *Maurice* (prominently, although not uniquely, in Graves' past CV) is often screencapped and GIF'd on these sites, and even crossover-slashed with the BBC *Sherlock* universe, in the context of a fandom ostensibly focused on the latter.

[24] Transtextuality, as conceived by Gérard Genette, encompasses 'all that puts one text in relation, whether manifest or secret, with other texts' (1982; quoted by Stam, 2000, p. 207).

[25] Discussion on the YouTube board for 'Maurice – Interview with the Cast (3/3)', www.youtube.com/watch?v=act73BrFHVE&feature=related [accessed 23 Sep 2011].

[26] IMDb Message Boards for (respectively) *A Room With A View*, www.imdb.com/title/tt0091867/board/; *Maurice*, www.imdb.com/title/tt0093512/board/; *Howards End*, www.imdb.com/title/tt0104454/board/. [All accessed 30 Sep 2011.]

[27] Anon., 'Bodies of work: 42 unforgettable nude scenes', EW.com (*Entertainment Weekly*), 29 Jul 2011, www.ew.com/ew/gallery/0,,20355856_20438403,00.html#comments [accessed 19 Sep 2011].

[28] 'WEEKEND Clip – "Rupert Graves"', uploaded by IFCFilmsTube, 19 Sep 2011, 1,848 views [by 22 Sep 2011], www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=wk_bIs2GagU#!

[29] Blog entry 'RG mention and vid: sporfles and sweetness', 20 Sep 2011, plus selected comments, http://gravesdiggers.livejournal.com/5832.html [accessed 22 Sep 2011]. Most of the participants in this discussion also write and post BBC *Sherlock*, and other, fanfic and slash on LiveJournal and other archives, but not with a pronounced focus on Lestrade/Graves.

[30] Posted 23 Feb 2008, 24,514 views and 74 user comments at 23 Sep 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=act73BrFHVE&feature=related. I have ordered these quotes for comprehensibility rather than in temporal order of posting.

[31] Grant is framed head-and-shoulders against a neutral studio backdrop; Wilby filmed at a similar distance but more informally, sitting in a domestic garden. Graves, by contrast (in a loft-style urban interior) is filmed with frequent cut-ins to full, or even cropped, close-up.

[32] 'MAURICE (13/14)', uploaded 4 Jan 2009, 54,217 views [by 23 Sep 2011], www.youtube.com/watch?v=ufS4-nkdSSM.

[33] http://mr-edna-may.livejournal.com/ [accessed 30 Sep 2011].

[34] http://longedfordream.livejournal.com/ [accessed 23 Sep 2011].

[35] http://rupertgraves.livejournal.com/ (not to be confused with Graves's official fansite at www.rupert-graves.com/) [accessed 23 Sep 2011].

[36] http://never-be-parted.dreamwidth.org/ [accessed 23 Sep 2011].

[37] http://www.diary.ru/~Maurice1987/ [accessed 23 Sep 2011].

[38] '*A Room With A View* (1986) in under 6 minutes' by theholytoast, uploaded 16 Jun 2010, 3,801 views [by 19 Sep 2011], www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5MKuJ8ZnJQ.

[39] Uploaded by lilaclad, 11 Jun 2011, 2,991 views [at 23 Sep 2011], www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lh4OrFm3Cgs]. For the non-temporally-manipulated original, see 'Maurice Alec boathouse last scene together', uploaded by hellywellyxyz123, 30 Nov 2008, 55,299 views [at 23 Sep 2011].

[40] The 'visceral' power of 'that kiss' from a fan perspective – an intensity inseparable from its political significance for him as a gay man – is well conveyed by fan-critic David K. (c. 2004):

> I recall going back to the theater to see [*Maurice*] a second time, immediately after my initial viewing … just to make sure that my overamped imagination hadn't played a trick on me. And no, I'd embellished nothing … That swoon-inducing kiss … literally sent an involuntary sound (half sigh, half exclamation) from my mouth the first time I watched it. There is something magical about the way Wilby simultaneously falls on top of *and* sweeps Graves upwards into his arms in front of that boathouse fireplace – an embrace both glamorous (in the old hetero Hollywood tradition) and rapacious … And better yet, and even more visceral, is that fantastic close-up of Rupert Graves' dazed, love-besotted expression – after the kiss – with the corner of his odd-shaped mouth still shimmering and slick with saliva. Actually, I think *that* was the visage that caused me to let out that sound in the theater. I'd unknowingly been waiting twenty years to see a reverie like that depicted on the big screen. It was as if the image shot straight into my soul … [It] was a thousand times more effective than any gay pride march or civil rights amendment. It fostered in me a strong, unshakeable hope.

[41] By JDcation, uploaded 5 Nov 2010, 2,913 views [at 23 Sep 2011], www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5PeD4IkpE4.

[42] '*A Handful Of Dust–Maurice* (Palast Orchestre – Follow Me)', by torchinca, uploaded 4 Feb 2011, 662 views [at 19 Sep 2011], www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2AMw2NxCBk.

[43] By torchinca, uploaded 23 Dec 2010, 1797 views [at 19 Sep 2011], www.youtube.com/watch?v=v89hUD6-KX0.

[44] Anon. post, 15 Sep 2011, sherlock-confessions.tumblr.com/post/10241813127 [accessed 23 Sep 2011].

[45] For two of the best adopted-child stories, see 'Child of the greenwood', by AuburnRed, posted 2 Mar 2011, http://archiveofourown.org/works/167135; and its sequel 'The prince and the woodcutter', posted 13 Aug 2011, http://archiveofourown.org/works/238967. In the latter, Maurice and Alec's adopted son Georgie loves to hear a favourite fairytale which is, of course, a retelling of his two fathers' own love story: 'When he saw the prince's face, he desired to climb the tallest tower to rescue him'. [All accessed 19 Sep 2011.]

[46] For example, 'Somewhere to begin', by Duinn Fionn, posted 10 Apr 2006, http://archive.skyehawke.com/authors.php?no=157; and 'Kitty', by angie_sylvie, posted 2 Aug 2008, http://angie-sylvie.livejournal.com/1860.html [both accessed 23 Sep 2011]. In the former, Maurice and Alec, invalided out of World War I in 1915 – Maurice with a foot missing, Alec as his carer – gain 'odd-couple' employment as, respectively, book-keeper and groundsman at Cheltenham Ladies' College, and the silent complicity of the Principal's deeply closeted and lonely brother. The latter rewrites Forster's abandoned epilogue, in which Maurice's sister Kitty (implied by Forster to be a lesbian) encounters two woodcutters (i.e. Maurice and Alec) while cycling in a forest.

[47] 'Happy endings', in seven parts, by devo79, posted 23 Jun to 21 Sep 2007, http://devo79.livejournal.com/11956.html. 'The Home Front', by kindkit, posted 18 Dec 2009, http://archiveofourown.org/works/31038. [Both accessed 19 Sep 2011.]

[48] 'The Home Front', by kindkit, posted 1 Jan 2010, http://kindkit.livejournal.com/437889.html. Author profile at http://kindkit.livejournal.com/profile. Author comments on story, posted 11 Jul 2011, at http://kindkit.livejournal.com/557642.html. [All accessed 30 Sep 2011.]

[49] Prologue to 'Alec Scudder: Zombie Hunter' (an 'as of yet untitled Zombie crossover') by harmjo, posted 16 Sep 2009, http://thrilldivine.livejournal.com/3660.html [accessed 26 Sep 2011]. While much *Maurice* and *A Room* icon-art follows a romantic, even kitsch, approach more widely seen in icon artwork around 'respectable' heritage and costume-film fandoms (especially Jane Austen), other examples are far more irreverent and upfront. Examples include naked, wet Freddy Honeychurch from *A Room* with captions such as 'Oops!' or (in anachronistic 21st-century youth-speak) 'I'm lurking in yo bushes scandalizin yo ladeez'; a 'moustaches of failed heterosexuality' set of icons featuring Maurice and Clive; and a close-up of Alec's face (at the house-versus-servants cricket match that takes place the day after Maurice and Alec's first night together) superimposed with the command: 'Shut up and fuck me'. See, for instance, http://coloryourdreams.livejournal.com/9203.html#cutid1 and http://mr-edna-may.livejournal.com/tag/icons [accessed 26 Sep 2011].

[50] 'Buckingham and Shaftesbury: the schemes and the theatrics', by rusty_armour, posted 10 Sep 2011, http://rusty-armour.livejournal.com/91048.html [accessed 19 Sep 2011].

[51] Posted 17 Dec 2010, http://rusty-armour.livejournal.com/76846.html [accessed 19 Sep 2011].

[52] The deleted scene concerned is the same scene referred to in the YouTube comments, quoted earlier as 'the thing with the grapes'. It can be viewed as 'Maurice – Deleted Scenes – 4' at www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_KLmFgF5f8 [accessed 19 Sep 2011].

[53] Comments, http://rusty-armour.livejournal.com/76846.html [accessed 19 Sep 2011].

[54] Posted 13 Sep 2010, www.fanfiction.net/s/6291817/1/The_Old_Bad_Songs. For fengirl88's shorter spin-off stories, see http://fengirl88.livejournal.com/tag/maurice. [Both accessed 19 Sep 2011.]

[55] fengirl88, 'The Old Bad Songs', Chapter 2, www.fanfiction.net/s/6291817/2/The_Old_Bad_Songs [accessed 19 Sep 2011].

[56] fengirl88, 'The Old Bad Songs', Chapter 3, www.fanfiction.net/s/6291817/3/The_Old_Bad_Songs [accessed 19 Sep 2011].

[57] Representative examples of the strand of 'respectable', conservative websites or blogs devoted to period films and costume drama *in general* (not discussed in detail in this article, but described under **type 7** in my earlier conceptual map) include http://enchantedserenityperiodfilms.blogspot.com ('a site dedicated to those classic films that take us to another era, to a time of simplicity and serenity…') and www.erasofelegance.com/index.html. The former boasts a sideline in 'motivational posters' – stills from favoured dramas combined with 'inspirational' texts – http://enchantedserenityperiodfilms.blogspot.com/2009/01/period-motivational-posters.html); the latter includes a prominent online shop selling expensive 'period-style' merchandise. Both sites give only thin coverage to *A Room* (on Eras of Elegance, this includes warnings for 'sensuality' as well as nudity) and completely ignore *Maurice*.

[58] To give one, perhaps surprising, example, one contributor to a 2007–8 board discussion of *Empire* (magazine) Online's Top 100 Movie Characters ranks Alec Scudder at number 5 in a Top 10 list of personal favourite movie characters (with places 4–1 occupied by Mr Incredible, Jason Bourne, Gandalf and Legolas). Post by HowTaoBrownCow (Santa Monica, California), 4 Jun 2007, http://antifanboypodcast.com/forum/viewtopic.php?p=25833 [accessed 26 Sep 2011].