

JERUSALEM BY JEZ BUTTERWORTH: Social, Cultural and Historical Context

1.	Written 2009: Background of New Labour – ‘Cool Britannia’ & realisation that this might not actually be the case...
2.	Police clearances of Traveller encampments such as Dale Farm
3.	Rise in NIMBYism
4.	Increased ecological concerns about the Green Belt and unchecked development and urbanisation eg. the New Estate
5.	“Little England” attitude and middle class hypocrisy
6.	Nature of English Heritage and folklore set against behaviour of English as perceived from outside
7.	Paedophile fears and moral panics about youth subcultures and deviance
8.	Literary: Pastoral movement and Shakesperean echoes
9.	Rural unemployment, lack of aspiration, racism and xenophobia, a rise in pro-Brexit sentiment (although unspoken in so many words)

Form

1.	Drama (naturalistic with the exception of Phaedra’s songs and her curtsey to the audience)
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Genre

1.	Tragi-comic
2.	Twenty first century Anarchic Realism

Themes

1.	Degradation of England’s heritage seen specifically in the use of St George analogy and the Flintock Fair
2.	Hypocrisy of middle class society enforced through property rights/ law and order
3.	Tolerance and the right to free choice
4.	Innocence and Experience (William Blake- Jerusalem)
5.	State of the Nation (with comparisons with a mythical Olde Englande/pastoral idyll)
6.	Gender portrayal
7.	Carnival and Civil Disobedience

Key Characters

1.	Johnny ‘Rooster’ Byron: Protagonist, either a latter day hero or an “ogre”. User of profane language for rich poetic effect, story-teller, drug dealer, provider of sanctuary for youth of the village, subject to animalistic behaviour and short-term self-gratification, amorality, self-mythologised, once a local hero. Attractive villain? Roughly 50 yrs old. Romany descent. Clearly at one with nature and the natural as well as his ancestral past (Byron boys).
2.	Ginger: Johnny’s sidekick, challenges his stories but ultimately loyal. Roughly 30 yrs old. Unemployed plasterer, fantasist. Wishes he was a DJ.
3.	Davey: Young – 20? Dead end job, embodies lack of opportunity for rural poor/undereducated. Little loyalty. Tactless and crude. Xenophobic.
4.	Lee: Trying to break away from the village, seeks individualism, cares about Johnny and the others, fantasist, optimist. Is due to depart on gap year. Romantic target of Tanya.
5.	Professor: a voice of sanity despite signs of dementia onset. Old man with an academic past. Clear understanding of nature as a thing of beauty. Enjoys a tippie with Johnny. Johnny does not disillusion Professor with reality when Professor is confused but content.
6.	Troy: Same age as Ginger – returned to “normal” life in the village, bully, aggressive, at the centre of the Johnny/Phaedra/Troy mystery which is never resolved. Uses language in a weaponised form to attack young women. Uses racist slurs towards Johnny’s Romany identity.
7.	Fawcett: Female representative of authority, assertive, Johnny’s antagonist, jobsworth, determined to win and have him evicted as promised.
8.	Dawn: Johnny’s ex-partner and mother of his son. Only character to treat him as a figure worthy of care, affection. Vulnerable. Her son Marky will represent the next generation of Byron boys...she does not want him visiting Johnny in prison. Still in love with Johnny?
9.	Pea and Tanya: Teenage girls in Johnny’s circle – two extremes – Pea is young and enthusiastic – treated badly by Troy, Tanya is sex-mad – though we see no one take up her offers! Both acting older than they are -15 yrs old or so. A social link to Phaedra.
10.	Phaedra: Queen of the Fair, missing person, 15 yr old, vulnerable, possible victim of abuse. Is able to command Johnny when no-one else can.
11.	Wesley: Johnny’s companion from youth, now runs a local pub. Focus of wasted life and societal hypocrisy. Mid-life crisis in Act 3. Visits Johnny for drugs.

Shakespearean and Literary Links

1.	Falstaff: Both Johnny and Ginger show elements of this character – Johnny in his grandiose military planning and boastful claims, Ginger in the his willingness to ingratiate himself with his leader, despite his evident cowardice. The settings recalls the Boar’s Head with the crowd of drunkards and ne’er do wells.
2.	Othello: Links can be drawn between Othello’s seduction of Desdemona through his story telling and the spell cast by Johnny in the same way – particularly over Dawn
3.	Midsummer Night’s Dream and As You Like It: References to fairies and the “other world” of the forest. Forest as sanctuary and place of spiritual development.
5.	Lear: Professor in Act 3 with his crown of flowers with seeming insight into the world around him but the problem of who will be loyal.
6.	Satyr Plays: Ancient Greek model – mixture of Tragedy and Comedy, centred around the God Pan who rules over his crowd of drunken revellers and is an early representation of the Lord of Misrule (hedonism and decadence)
7.	Post Pastoral writing: Poets such as John Clare who wish to point out that the “pastoral idyll” is rarely idyllic for those who have to live and work in it.
8.	Pied Piper/Peter Pan: Johnny’s links to both central characters become evident. Johnny seemingly never grows up. He calls the young people ‘rats’.
9.	Legend of St George: Central question – in this debased world, which is St George and which the Dragon? Who is the abuser and who is the rescuer? Who is the scapegoat? Particularly important at the close of Act 2 when the Professor declaims the St George story.

10.	Myths and Biblical legends of Virgin Birth and resurrection... Also heroic actions fitting of a great hero – escape from captivity, daring entry to the enemy's camp etc. References to ancient folklore and even Norse mythology (Woden's Wild Hunt).
Key Quotations	
1.	"And did those feet..." The prologue introduces Blake's poem which needs to be discussed. The urbanisation and mechanisation of the industrial revolution needs to be considered against the encroachment into the forest of the New Estate. The Prologue seems to set up the focus for the Act. It is a deliberate irony that Johnny forgets the answer 'Jerusalem' in the game of Trivial Pursuit even though he has learnt all other answers!
2.	"Time" -Fawcett speaks the first line of the play – it highlights the dichotomy between the natural and the societal world. We find humour in the three different 9 o'clocks which emerge in the next page.
3.	J: "It was a rural display" G: "with a flare gun?" Apart from the obvious humour of the punch line we see how out of step Johnny is with polite society. Note, though, the nature of Davey's job – are the two worlds any different?
4.	G: "There's a George and the Dragon. Men in Black II... Stop me before I kill again" Ginger explores the world of the festival –a world of debased heritage and weak Hollywood reconstruction – and racism and sexism – all for charity.
5.	"I leave Wiltshire, my ears pop" Davey outlines his philosophy – the Little Englander view in miniature – can be seen now as a synecdoche for the Brexit arguments. Davey appears to be a xenophobic bigot in many ways. He does not mind who he offends eg. his tasteless suggestions about what may have happened to Phaedra and his 'AIDS' comment about Johnny.
6.	"He tried to jump twenty eighteen-wheelers, he fucked it up, and he died" - Ginger defends Johnny and introduces the story of his resurrection – one of several possible echoes of Biblical and/or mythological themes. Ginger's admiration of Johnny is clear and this appears to be a show of loyalty.
7.	"It connotes fertility and the hunt" Wesley, after telling us that the Morris Dancing is a poor excuse to sell out of date stock tries to make a link to past heritage – and fails. At the least he may be hoping this is not an emasculating costume/dance but actually is macho and attractive!
8.	"My father Hector Byron was a philanderer..." Johnny tells the story of his Virgin Birth – more self-mythologizing. Layer of meaning can be found in the fact that the story is a direct echo of Tom Waits "Train Song" – Is Johnny deliberately lying here?
9.	"Make Merry. For tonight, like a flaming flock of snakes, we will storm Flintock village..." The Lord of Misrule rallies his troops for an act of civil disobedience against mainstream society.
10.	"What the hell are you doing, John?" Dawn, using Johnny's given name strikes at the heart of the play – she is the only person who seems to be able to interrogate him and put him on the back foot (until Phaedra in Act Three). He will seduce her again with words (and drugs).
11.	"He kisses her. They kiss. She pulls away" and example of Butterworth's 3 part stage directions. Clearly establishes the actions as separate. All stage directions in this play carry weight and must be considered carefully by the performer.
12.	"Lovely big eyes"... "it's not just you feel a little randy today?" Johnny taunts Troy and sets the seed of suspicion about his relationship with Phaedra. This avenges Troy's overt racism and mood of accusation against Johnny. Troy retaliates with a story that reveals the ensemble's lack of loyalty to Johnny, their generous 'friend'. We learn that they are fair-weather friends.
13.	"Just open your f**ing cockhole...shut your greasy cakehole" Troy weaponises language and clearly uses sexual insults against young women though not against men
14.	Make paper. Make more paper. Shag on" Davey's philosophy of life. "Unimprovable" and fatalistic/futuristic.
15.	"What the fuck is an English forest for?" Johnny. Central question about ownership of the earth and its resources. Highlights the divide at the centre of the play.
Further reading/watching	
	https://jwpblog.wordpress.com/tag/jerusalem/ - and please request further reading list from Dr. Barnsley. When reading online articles be aware that some might be writing about the text from an English Literature perspective- we need to keep our written style focussed around theatrical skills!

Jerusalem- show trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=up3M7WOPsg4>

Mark Rylance talking about "Jerusalem", on Newsnight, 29/09/11

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CTJYmBqQcw4> (contains montage of filmed footage near start)

Mark Rylance & Mackenzie Crook on Andrew Marr Show

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrdKme_QU48 (contains stage photographs)

Opening Night: "Jerusalem" (on Broadway)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy0HpGwsVVs> (contains curtain call footage and some silent footage including 'hair of the dog' sequence!)

Playwright Jez Butterworth on Jerusalem, England and Englishness

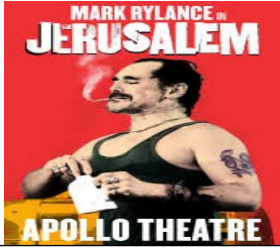
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=efbHlyk4Nx0> (contains clips!)

RADA: A Word With ... Mark Rylance (interview)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNUWU_IqoQI

Actor Mark Rylance talks with John Lahr - Conversations - The New Yorker

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Bw9MFLi2wk> (contains clips!)



Links to: develops from GCSE textual study (Blood Brothers) to more challenging contemporary text with similar SCH considerations.

Leads to: Study of Yerma for Section B and chosen Component Three texts, equipping you with an eye for SCH context and further study of perf/dir/design skills.