QUEER(ING) TIME IN MODERNISM

AND HOW TO READ IT:

JAMES JOYCE'S *ULYSSES* AND VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *THE WAVES*

By

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Abstract

This dissertation traces the processes of queering time in two modernist novels: James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931). In doing so, it combines insights from modernist studies, narratology, and queer theory in developing a framework in which the functioning of queer time is seen as a thematic element and narrative factor in modernist texts. Looking at the ways in which queer time explores the connections between the interconnected processes of destabilizing subjectivity and deforming linear timelines, I propose that a closer look at the modernist practices of characterization can illuminate the potentials that arise from a dialogue between modernism and queer thought.

Or in other words, I argue that in *Ulysses*' 'Penelope' and *The Waves* the notion of the stable subject/or character is destabilized through a reconceptualization of time through the power of the sexual, resulting in what I describe as the *complexification of the present* in the two texts. This dissertation looks closely at how queerness motivates the processes of expanding the "now" and resulting in two different, yet comparable characterization strategies.

In conclusion, in this dissertation I trace the manners in which modernist works reinvent the notion of subjectivity through questioning the power and potentials of individuality and collectivity – an idea that is one of the tenets of queer thought. Using queer theory's apparatus in analyzing these modernist projects can shed some light on their ongoing currency. In turn, reading modernists through queer lenses, can also contribute to the development and enrichment of field of studies and thought such as queer theory, that owes plenty to the modernist legacy. The category of queer time I develop here serves as a bridge between the interest of these two fields of thought and study. Queer time, as a thematic element and a narrative factor, unveils both the modernist obsession with time and queer theory's obsession with reinventing subjectivity, as deeply dependent on non-normative sexualities.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Obsessions: An Entry Point

"Obsessions are the most durable form of intellectual capital", writes Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in her preface to "Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire" (ix). This dissertation is the result of multiple obsessions. First, it is the result of my own long-lasting obsession with the topics of time and modernism (sometimes intertwined, other times not). Second, it is the result of a far more relevant obsession that forms the analysis I present here – the profound modernist obsession with all facets of time. What follows is the result of my thinking, writing, obsessing about and struggling with the many points of interaction (and contention) between time in modernist literature and queer theory.

In this dissertation, I argue that these two fields – modernism and queer theory – formed by the concrete political, economic, and cultural circumstances of their times share many similar interests, amongst which I am mostly interested in the treatment of temporality through sexuality. My object of study, or the bridging point between modernism and queer studies is queer time, and here I look at the intricacies of queer time in two modernist novels: *Ulysses* by James Joyce, and *The Waves*, by Virginia Woolf.

James Joyce and Virginia Woolf were born a few days apart in 1882 (2nd February and 25th January) and died only months apart in 1941 (13th January and 28th March, respectively). Probably the two most famous Anglo-Saxon modernist writers, Joyce and Woolf grew up and lived their lives in very different circumstances, determined by their gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality. However canonical of figures they might be today, I believe that a profound

experience of marginality they both lived through brings them closer, and influences the manner in which they think and write about sexuality and temporality in their novels[1].

Ulysses, published in 1922 – the *annus mirabilis* of high modernism[2] – and *The Waves*, published in 1931 – and often considered a classic text for high modernism[3] – share even more traits than their respective authors did, when it comes to the features of high modernist narratives[4]. The first reason for choosing Joyce's and Woolf's novels is precisely that: their unmistakable belonging to the category of high modernism. Exhibiting all the qualities one might expect from modernist narratives, their novels (and in addition, criticism and reception of their novels spanning over multiple decades) are the perfect ground for studying the inner dynamics of modernist narratives and the role queer time plays in their formation.

The twofold question that forms the main focus of my project and shapes my argument is born at the intersection of three different but interrelated fields: modernist narratives, temporality and sexuality. How do queer forms of sexuality interact with a sense of modernist temporality, and from there on, how do queer temporalities shape the development of the modernist narrative? The linking of the sexual and the literary, the temporal and the narrative, and their treatment in Joyce and Woolf has been meticulously studied in a rather large body of works on these two canonical authors over the best part of the last hundred years, and many of those works have helped me devise an entry point for my analysis. The threads between the

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[1] This is not a biographical work, nor is my approach a positivist one that looks at biographic moments for explanations in existing narratives structures. That is, I am not proposing that Joyce's and Woolf's similar experience of marginality is a determining factor in their writing. However, it has certainly influenced my approach and interest in their works, and I believe it should be flagged when reading them as canonical writers.

[2] See *1922: Literature, Culture, Politics* (2015), edited by Jean-Michel Rabaté.

[3] Hussey (83).

[4] In literature, modernism occupied the years from shortly after the beginning of the twentieth century through around 1965. Marked with sudden and unexpected breaks with traditional ways of representing the world and human interaction, modernism is usually related to experimental narratives, disrupted language and sexual ambiguity (see Levenson 3-10, Anderson 97-113). High modernism is usually perceived as a particular subcategory of literary modernism interested in finding new ways of representing reality, defined by: explicit formal experiments, search for new genres/techniques/language, plot fragmentation, disruption of time, sexual and gendered ambiguity and it is connected to the time period between the two world wars (1918-1939) (see Bradbury and McFarlane 24-27; Berman 15-20; Lunn 34-36, Rado 8-10).

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sexual and the temporal, and their relationship to the literary and the narrative, however, have been somewhat neglected in this equation. That is why, the presence of queer time in their texts, and its impact on the processes of producing their narrative is at the focus of this dissertation.

In the next part of this introduction, I will take a brief look at the three categories that establish the foundation of my approach to the category of queer time in these two novels: Modernism, Narrative and Character. In each of the following sections, I will outline my understanding of the term, explaining its relevance for the topic in question. The interaction between these categories provides the basis for my definition of queer time, the focus of the second, or the theoretical chapter of this dissertation. In the second part of the introduction, I give an outline of the dissertation, consisting of summaries of all the chapters.

1.2.   Bad Modernisms, or, The "Fertile Negatives" of a Crisis

There is a strain of thinking in queer theory and modernism that emphasizes the importance of "negativity" that assumes a central role in my approach to temporality as a queer and a modernist phenomenon. "To this day, no other name for a field of cultural production evokes quite the constellation of negativity, risk of aesthetic failure, and bad behavior that 'modernism' does", claim Mao and Walkowitz in their aptly titled edited volume *Bad Modernisms* (12). The idea that there might be something "good" about "bad" artistic behavior does not originate with modernism, but what Mao and Walkowitz (and the rest of the authors in their edited volume) aim to point out is that the refractory relation between modernist art and dominant aesthetic values and its audience, or the bourgeoisie, or capitalism, or mass culture, or even between modernist art and society, in general, is not only present, but structural in how we perceive and engage with modernist art (10).

In their 1976 survey *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane famously outline "shock, violation of expected continuities,

the element of de-creation and crisis" as the key features of the modernist style (24). Since then, a countless number of studies, books, projects (academic and not) have placed the many features of "badness" at the center of their approach towards modernism, from various ideologically-determined standpoints. As Heather Love puts it, with modernism, the value of "badness" and transgression undergoes a sharp reversal, up to the extent that this "heroic" version of modernism has been most consistently identified with modernism itself over the course of the twentieth century, and innovation and the break with authority and tradition are set up as its core values (in ed. Mao and Waltkowitz 26).

For instance, the interest in *Ulysses*' subversive reception as a notorious book resulted in the obscenity trials in 1921 regarding its publication in *The Little Review* and led to its subsequent ban in the U.S (and elsewhere).[5] Woolf's "failed" writing, in terms of her character-creation, from *Night and Day* to the *Between the Acts* was a staple of early Woolf reviews, and later scholarship[6]. Similarly, early critics of Proust's *In Search of Lost Times* characterize his writing as a tumorous unfolding that stops a "normal" narrative progression, leading into an "aesthetic disintegration" of the genre of the novel[7]. These examples clearly illustrate the arch of transformation when it comes to a work's "bad", or "failed" features. *Ulysses* is now often celebrated as one of (if not the) masterpieces of twentieth-century literature, precisely for its representation of "the art of everyday living", to quote the title of Declan Kiberd's widely-popular work[8]. The very quality that had notoriously marked *Ulysses* as a "bad" and obscene book was responsible for turning it into a "masterpiece". In a similar manner, Woolf's character techniques in *The Waves* and Proust's "tumorous" writing are now seen not as failed writing

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[5] See *James Joyce and Censorship: The Trials of Ulysses* (1998), by Paul Vanderham. Another recent contribution to the topic is *Joyce and the Law* (2017), edited by Johnathan Goldman.
[6] Some of Woolf's own reactions to these reviews are captured in her diaries. See *A Writer's Dairy* (58, 80). Another example of the latter observation - in his book *The Singing of the Real World: The Philosophy of Virginia Woolf's Fiction* (1986), Hussey reads *The Waves* as a general failure in terms of Woolf's aesthetics.
[7] See more in Cano: Genetic Aberrations: The Two Faces of Proust.", in Textual Practice 17.1 (2003).
[8] *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Living* (2009).

strategies, but narrative techniques that reinvented the genre of the (modernist) novel. *Bad Modernisms* and new modernist studies[9] in general, posit the multifaceted phenomenon of "badness" as an object of their inquiry and look at the evolution of its perception and at its role in forming the modernist certain canon as both a relative and a contextual process.

Furthermore, it is precisely a conundrum of socio-contextual conditions that enable features previously seen as "bad" to be valued as "good". As Mao and Walkowitz point out, the radical destabilizing of the criteria by which a work of art's goodness or badness could be judged, so typical for modernism, is closely bound up with bad feelings, bad times, or bad reactions (*Bad Modernisms* 11). Therefore, it is worth underlining some of the historical features of this period that led to experiencing and conceptualizing negativity as a defining feature of modernism. In the next few paragraphs, I will focus on the notion of *crisis* – related to experiences of badness and negativity – as a bridge between the similarities in conceptualizing modernist and queer temporalities.

Modernism is traditionally considered a period in which "science, art, psychology, technology, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy were simultaneously undergoing a period of revolutionary change" (Rado 8). The changes the period brought were perceived as positive, exciting and promising, but also as frightening, negative and overwhelming. Bradbury and McFarlane nicely capture this ambiguous spirit of modernism as they write about the experimental, technical and aesthetical developments that were perceived as a source of unimaginable progress and at the same time were experienced as a symptom of a crisis of culture, leading to a distinguished sense of despair, fear and desire to stabilize the present or to immerse in a more stable tradition (24-27).

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[9] See "The New Modernist Studies" (2008) ed. by Mao and Walkowitz; *The New Modernist Studies Reader: An Anthology of Essential Criticism* (2021), ed. Latham and Rogers.

In other words, the intense experience of crisis, resulting from a struggle between these two tendencies – preserving the old and creating the new – lies at the center of a perception of time common to modernist thinking. Or as Perry Anderson concludes, the outcome of these overwhelming changes is a reception of modernism as historically situated at the "intersection of three temporalities […] a still usable classical past, a still indeterminate technical present, and a still unpredictable political future" (104, 106). The perception and narrativization of time in modernism reflects this multifaceted and sometimes contradictory experience of temporality. And as this dissertation will show, modernist temporalities offer plenty of potential when it comes to new ways of thinking about different forms of sexuality, and unsettling already recognized patterns.

Transgression, marginality and the destruction of bourgeois social values have often been claimed as the tenets of high modernism (Amin 3). Therefore, reading modernism and interpreting it in dialogue with queer theory's interests was a highly intuitive move for me. The strain of failure that can be found in all modernisms, caught up with the fate of social exiles (Love, in ed. Mao and Walkowitz, *Bad Modernisms* 32) can be compared to the multiple ways of thinking about failure and negativity in queer studies as well. In fact, as I will outline in the upcoming theoretical chapter, the interest on queer time is deeply embedded in rethinking the "negative" in queer studies. I believe that these "fertile negatives" (Mao and Walkowitz, *Bad Modernisms* 18) determine the set of expectations we have from both bad modernism and non-normative queer studies, and at the same time enable the reading of their representative works as undone by their innermost principles. In other words, the process of investigating the subversive value of something conventionally deemed "bad" is what produces the affinity between modernism and queer approaches. And it is pivotal in the role queer time has been assigned as a topic of study in queer thinking.

Queer theory as a field of study was also established on the backbone of a crisis. In their book *If Memory Serves: Gay Men, AIDS and the Promise of the Queer Past* (2012) Christopher Castiglia and Christopher Reed write about the institutionalization of Queer Theory as a discipline on the back of 1970s and 1980s U.S. gay culture in general and of the AIDS crisis in particular[10]. Kadji Amin similarly places "the field's affective haunting by the inaugural moment of the U.S. 1990s" as an important factor in addressing the "queerness" of Queer Studies (see 177). The AIDS crisis also represents a "clear example of a historical moment that facilitated a rethinking of time" (Haffey 2). Emphasizing the meaning the AIDS crisis had for positing time in the center of some of the debates on queerness in the 1990s, Haffey writes: "[f]or a number of scholars of queer temporality, the AIDS crisis stands as a pivotal moment, a protracted historical event that produced new relations to time. For those living through the epidemic, the future no longer stretched out like a limitless horizon" (1-2). The notion and the profound experience of crisis then, although in two very different ways and contexts, is one of the merging points for queer theory and modernist studies. Crisis, especially when experienced through suffering, loss, death mourning (as throughput the AIDS epidemic and the First World War) brings about questions about temporality and the experiencing of time. As Halberstam notes in his 2005 study *In Queer Time and Place*, the AIDS crisis leads to a "rethinking of the conventional emphasis on longevity and futurity" (2). Therefore, every rethinking of what crises mean and bring is entangled in an inquiry on time.

Time seems to act as the receptor and transmitter of the existing tensions between old and new, or rather, between the constant and messy efforts for replacing the old with the new, done by those on the margins. Time is at the forefront of imagining societal and cultural change,

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[10] Should be noted though, that although Castigila and Reed make a few detailed observations on how the AIDS crisis influenced the formation of Queer Theory as an academic field, their book unnecessarily posits the former's occurrence as the sole factor for the latter's development. In addition, I find their overall claim – the neglecting of the queer past through practices of unremembering as a defining feature of contemporary Queer Studies both superficial and oversimplifying, especially when it comes to works like Muñoz's.

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as the future typically becomes the temporal plane invested with desires for a present that is different than the past. The complexities surrounding this generalization, its refusal, and its persistence in (re)imagining the role time has for queer existences is one of the underlying currents of this dissertation. What I am interested in is looking at the profound role time has had in creating narratives on queer sexuality.

1.3.   Narrative: A Complexification of the Present

Narration is a temporal process, writes Günter Müller in his famous 1946 inaugural lecture "The Significance of Time in Narrative Art" that introduces the fundamental opposition of time of narration vs. narrated time, a distinction that has become a common spot in almost all later narrative theories (quoted in Meister and Schernus 70). "The world unfolded by every narrative work is always a temporal world" is the motto that guides Paul Ricoeur's examination of the interrelatedness of time and narration in his canonical three-volume study *Time and Narrative* published between 1983 and 1985 (3). Time is "not only as a recurrent theme in great deal of narrative fiction, but also a constituent factor of both text and story", writes Rimmon-Kenan (44) at approximately the same time in her field-defining monograph *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (1983). These three premises guide my approach towards analyzing queer time as a factor of narration in *Ulysses* and *The Waves*, and through them, in modernism.

Time is a foundational category of narrative, but what I am interested in here is how time's multiplicity, and specifically one dimension of its multiplicity – its queerness – is a foundational category for modernist narratives. "To read a narrative is to experience the present as if it were already past, and to know that the future is also already complete, and tensed in the past", writes Mark Currie (*The Unexpected* 48). Or in other words, narratives – in construction, or reading are never one-dimensional temporal events. Currie has written two insightful studies that aim to replace the past as a main temporal field of narrative study. Drawing from philosophy of time conceptions – a direction that he believes would help

narrative theorists in forming a more nuanced understanding to time as a narrative category, he develops two related approaches to the present as a main axis of inquiry in the nature of narratives.

About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time (2007) places the focus on the present more explicitly as Currie aims to approach it as a defining category of narrative. Since St. Augustine's famous contemplations on time in his *Confessions* (written between AD 397 and 400), the present (at least in Western thought and philosophy) has been imagined as something that lacks extension and it is without duration. The present is infinitely small and caught in a paradoxical position: it does not exist, and yet, it is the only thing that does exist. The past is what has been, so it is not; and the future is what will be, so it is not yet. That only leaves the present, but as long as the present has any duration, it can be and always is divided into bits of what has been and what is not yet. Therefore, the present depends on a duration that it cannot claim as its own, reduced to non-presence and non-existence, an always "vanishing" present as Currie puts it (see Currie *About Time* 8, 13). St. Augustine's reflections on the nature of the "now" and the nature of time as marked by a profuse elusiveness have very much influenced a commonsensical view of the present as ineluctable, and guided many philosophical inquiries into the nature of time, including Husserl's, Heidegger's, and Derrida's (whose theories are at the center of Currie's study).

In his later work, *The Unexpected: Narrative Temporality and the Philosophy of Surprise* (2013), in many ways a continuation of the previous study, Currie focuses on the future perfect tense (example: "I will have finished"), or future anteriority, designating an uncertain blend of futurity and pastness that marks the present and the way we read as a tense that symbolically represents the nature of narrative (Currie, *The Unexpected* 5). The basic structure of narrative is one that blends what has not yet happened with what has already taken place, or which combines two ideas of the future – the future which is to come and the future

which is already there (see *The Unexpected* 13). For Currie then, a defining feature of narrative is the position it takes towards futurity, and a very specific kind of futurity: one that is already written, and therefore, accessible. Hence, in Currie's view, the relationship between the future that has always already happened in narrative; and the way in which it unfolds in the present, is a staple of narrative. In this dissertation, I argue that at their basis, both *Ulysses* and *The Waves* are narratives that are explicitly interested (meaning thematically, not only formally as in Currie's theory) in exploring this relationship: between the present and the future, and that way that relationship is mitigated with the help of the past.

Despite focusing almost exclusively on the future perfect, or future anteriority, Currie's main argument in these two books seems to be centered on the intricate relationship narrative has to the present. The present in narrative, claims Currie, is experienced and represented as the object of the future memory, or in anticipation of retrospection. *The present as a future past* is the main feature of narrative (my emphasis, *About Time* 5). Thus, even though the present seems to assume the central role in conceptualizing narrative for Currie, this is done by revisiting what the present encompasses. For Currie, therefore, the present is never simply the present in narrative. I believe that what Currie is describing here might be termed *complex presentification* of all temporal fields, or, more specifically, a *complexification of the present*. Meaning, the present does not simply take over all other temporal planes (leading to presentification), but rather, different temporal planes participate in re-defining what the present is and means. Similarly, throughout this dissertation, I focus on the manners in which queer time *complexifies the present* through narrative in *Ulysses* and *The Waves*.

No (narrative) event, fictional or factual, could ever exist on one secluded temporal plane. It will always exist and be constructed in multiple times, as it is being (re)written for a new purpose every time it enters a new context. The mere definition and understanding of any "time" (moment, plane, or modality) depends on its interaction with another "time". Temporal

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multiplicity will always mark even the simplest narrative utterance. By its definition then, time is a queer, undefinable phenomenon. Time's inner queerness is, I believe, most succinctly realized when expressed in narrative – forming one of the main premises of this project. Following this hypothesis, in this dissertation I examine the intricacies of time's queerness in a specific type of texts – modernist works – by addressing queerness as tied to a sexual non-normativity. In doing that, I rely on recent developments in queer narratology/narratives. The eagerness for relocating narrativity to queer theory has also been of interest to queer theorists engaged in rethinking time (Matz in eds. Warhol and Lanser 243). As time is a foundational category of narrative, it should not come as a surprise that narrative would assume a role in queer time debates, or that queer time would offer a possibility for studying the diversity of narrative temporality.

Queer literary critics have been interested in tracing to what degree nonnormative narrative is cognate with nonnormative sexuality and gender experience, as forms of queerness have often been addressed through their disruptive power, and marked as being able to destabilize narrative's teleological coherence (Rohy in ed. Garrett 169, 175). In their edited volume *Narrative Theory Unbound: Queer and Feminist Interventions* (2015), Robyn Warhol and Susan S. Lanser address the possibly problematic conjecture between "narratology", that applies formal principles in the study of all narratives and whose roots in ahistorical structuralism for many still seems to preclude culturally invested approaches, and "queer" – defined as a capacious sign for move(ment)s that challenge, or that aim to understand, analyze and rectify heteronormative systems and practices and their binary assumptions about gender, sex and sexuality (see 2). And although works that categorize themselves as belonging to a category of "queer narratology" are still scarce in comparison to works on "feminist narratology", theorizing about narrative has assumed a significant, if not central position in for almost all major queer theory works, ranging from Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's literary analyses

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and Judith Butler's models of performativity; through rethinkings of queer history/iography in the works of Ann Cvetkovich, Jack J. Halberstam, and Carolyn Dinshaw; to Lee Edelman's intervention in queer temporality (see more in Warhol and Lanser 8) – most of these works forming the basis of my theoretical approach to queer time in this dissertation.

That being noted, I am careful of drawing a causal relationship between what queer encompasses and nonlinear modes of time, especially in modernist narratives. In a formulation that summarizes my caution, Matz argues that there is a risk in simplifying the diverse forms narrative temporality has (and has always had), if queer temporality and its significance for narrative is approached as something that presumes a need for absolute rapture, or a refusal of all forms of linearity that are assumed to be heteronormative (in eds. Warhol and Lanser 245). As Rohy notes, not all nonlinear effects attributed to queerness can be aligned with modernist narratives, and literary modernism has offered myriad examples of nonlinear temporality, only some of which can be considered queer (in ed. Garrett 175).

Following this claim, in this dissertation, I am rather interested in understanding the connections between queer time as a thematic element *and* a narrative factor in the novels, or, the manner in which queer time functions on these two levels. With this move, I want to stress the fact that queer time is not only a thematic concern for modernism, but also a structuring narrative factor. Going back to Ricoeur's famous division, tales of time and tales about time, conventionally there exist two major ways in which temporality is part of narrative: formal/structural and thematic. Queer time, functioning as a tool for questioning the stability of normative sexualities, does so on those two intertwined levels in *Ulysses* and *The Waves*.

1.4.   Character: (De)Forming Identity through Time

The risk one encounters when using time as an analytical tool (for tracing a theme) and a methodological approach (when looking at the inner dynamics of narrative formation) for the study of the works of two hyper-canonical authors and their equally canonical novels is two-

fold. I struggled with devising an approach to queer time that would somehow allow for the multiplicity time inherently possesses to come across but would also offer a perspective embedded in the issues I have been outlining as central in this introduction: queerness, narrative, modernism, and subjectivity.

A foundational category, a structural principle, a guiding presence: All the narratological terms I have outlined here are "ultimately too placid to describe the restlessness or volatility of narrative time" (Wittenberg, in ed. Garrett 122). That is why, when approaching such a relentless phenomenon as queer time, focusing on its formative interaction with a set of interrelated dimensions might help one get a better sense of its immensurability. One literary category that especially helped me in pinning down that diversity of approaches, while creating a balance between them, is character. For this project, character serves as the red thread that brings all the different categories into dialogue – it is what centers my perspective when thinking of queer time in all its multiplicity.

Time is not a solitary axis or an independent category of analysis. As a structuring factor of both content and form in narrative, time has always been addressed in interrelation with other elements. Perhaps most famously, Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope (developed in his 1937 essay "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel") functions as a temporal-spatial intersection that stresses the fact that time cannot be viewed as an isolated category in literary narratives. In my project, queer time is a particular dimension of time that is implicated in the creation and narrativization of queer worlds. As such, queerness acts as a stabilizer of time's vastness. Insightful and necessary as they may be, spatio-temporal analyses of Woolf's and Joyce's works are plentiful. My goal here was to decentralize a popular direction, while focusing on other social aspects that are often essential in understanding time, such as sexuality, but have not received as much attention as space has, for instance.

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That is not to ever claim that time is not a spatial category as well. If time's multiplicity and its significance for all the fields of thought and knowledge-production I am using here as organizing principles point to something, it is that time is by default a cross-sectional category, and it produces its value and meaning when interacting with other adjacent models of thought and experience. In other words, time has no meaning, if not perceived in direct relation to another category. This might sound like a truism, and it certainly is, for words, concepts, paradigms, and theories are profoundly interrelational and form their meanings when interacting with each other. But in the case of time, this is particularly visible, as time is one of those human experiences whose development is dependent on *presence*. The formation of identity as a time-centered process is one good example of the relevance of temporal movement. In addition, it is one question that has also received a lot of attention from gender and queer theory scholars, as the practices of forming and maintaining identities are at the heart of their inquiries. In the analysis of literary narratives this process is naturally centered on the formation of characters, one literary category that is especially linked to temporality.

Characters can be approached from different theoretical perspectives, and for different interpretative purposes. Most often, they are complex entities because they exist at the crossings of various domains: for example, they are literary figures or artistic products or artifices constructed by an author for some purpose; then, non-actual but well-specified individuals presumed to exist in fictional domains; as well as text-based constructs or mental image in the reader's mind (see Margolin 66, in ed. Herman). Characters and narratives do not exist independently of each other, they are both authorial products and they influence each other in their mutual creation and existence. As Gorman notes, "my fundamental assumption of literary character is that it is interwoven with other components in the production and comprehension of narrative" and in such a way, it is best studied and approached when one considers the connections it establishes with different components (166 in ed. Herman, McHale

and Phelan). Characters, in conclusion, are self-enclosed entities that exist primarily in the texts, meaning characters can exist outside of the narrative in which they were created (in the minds of their readers, in popular culture, sometimes even in other works – by same/different authors), but all of their out-of-textual existences depend on the text they originate in. Narratives create characters, and the other way around, characters can determine the plot, temporal progression, and perception of narratives.

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle states that ethos (character) is subordinated to mythos (story, or plot structure). Aristotle's argument might have set in motion a literary tradition of undermining the meaning of characters in narratives, reducing them to mere agents who are meant to convey the story, but do nothing more. This approach probably finds its most vigorous and influential reach in the works of the formalist-structuralist tradition (beginning in Russia during the 1910-1920, culminating in France in the 1960s and 1970s). Theorists like Vladimir Propp, A.J. Greimas, Tzvetan Todorov, Viktor Shklovsky, and Roland Barthes, in different manners pay more attention to the story, treating characters as by-products of the narrated events, that do not seem to have other purposes than transmitting the story (see Gorman 166-167 in ed. Herman, McHale and Phelan; Balossi 20).

One of the most famous opposing views is offered by Henry James in his well-known essay "The Art of Fiction" (1884) where James puts forward the idea that stories and characters have an equal status in narratives. E.M. Forester, a fellow-modernist, in his equally influential "Aspects of the Novel" (1927) develops this idea, emphasizing the importance of characters as he differentiates between "flat" and "round" characters, a typology that will be further developed by many others (see Gorman 168-169 in ed. Herman, McHale and Phelan). Thus, in addition to time, modernism offers a new perceptual framework for approaching characters and their narrative role. In this dissertation, I aim to explore the connection between modernist

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times and modernist characters by seeing how queerness' destabilizing presence functions as a possible site of interaction between the two.

Today, narrative approaches to character/characterization mostly focus on analyzing characters based on the many typologies created for these purposes: looking for traits in literary characters that might qualify them as: simple, consistent, coherent, contradictory, opened, closed, fragmented, complex, etc. (see Gorman 170 in ed. Herman, McHale and Phelan). It seems that the difficulty in approaching literary characters as (serious and consequential) elements of narratives consists of the use of similar apparatuses for judging real people and fictive characters. A lot of the problems in studying characters emerge between what is often a thin line: between the differences in using a set of tools in interpreting real people and literary characters.

And yet, most narrative theorists would agree (and it seems commonsensical to claim this) that literary characters do not exist outside of a narrative. They are first and foremost, authorial, fictive constructs, not real people, but "paper" people. Both Joyce and Woolf always had this dimension in mind, sometimes even over-emphasizing the artificiality of their characters and affirming their literary statuses. In the following chapters, I will be looking at character(s) and character-creation in Joyce's *Ulysses* and Woolf's *The Waves* as closely related to the functioning of queer time and its narrative repercussions. I believe that a more far-reaching understanding of temporality that places queerness at its center can act as the basis for a more integrated approach towards both modernist characterization and narratology.

1.5. Chapter summaries

This dissertation consists of one theoretical and six analytical chapters. The six analytical chapters are divided into two sections: three chapters devoted to Joyce's *Ulysses* and another three to Woolf's *The Waves*. The theoretical chapter both outlines the development of academic

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interest in queer time as a category and uses this literature review as a basis for a theoretical framework that guides the analysis in the following chapters.

The first chapter, then, functions as both a contextual and a theoretical chapter. Taking the queer turn to temporality in the early 2000s as my starting point, I analyze how time became a point of vexed interest in a larger dialogue on antisociality. As most popularly reflected in the opposing works of José Esteban Muñoz and Lee Edelman, time was getting attention as a category of queer analysis, representing the nuances between different conceptions of sociality and relationality: ranging from failure to utopia. Going through the major works of scholars as Leo Bersani, Lee Edelman, J. Jack Halberstam, José Esteban Muñoz, Laurent Berlant and Lisa Duggan and their interest in exploring how queerness reimagines the social, I trace the role time can have/has for such processes. Then, I offer an alternative approach to thinking about time when it comes to assessing the lingering influences of the antisocial debate. In formulating this argument, I use Berlant and Edelman's rethinking of negativity that places sex and the sexual as an axis of reconciliation between some of the truly opposed stances on relationality, negativity, optimism, hope, and importantly, temporality, resulting from the antisocial debate in queer theory. As I will show, I find their approach productive because it develops a queer erotic whose grounding in an understanding of sex as a subject-shattering practice produces a non-normative temporality so characteristic of the modernist narratives I am analyzing here. The theoretical chapter of this dissertation points out the ways in which this understanding of queer temporality can be used as a point of dialogue between queer and modernist conceptions of time – the broad research interest of the chapters that follow.

The six analytical chapters that provide the body of the dissertation and its two different parts are devoted to James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, that is, they look closely at the processes of queering time in *Ulysses* and *The Waves*. There are three chapters on Joyce, and three on Woolf, that are meant to structurally mirror each other. Meaning, each of the chapters in the

two parts is organized around one principle: character (third and sixth chapters); (queer) time (fourth and seventh chapters); narrative (fifth and eight chapters). *Character*, as outlined above, lies at the center of my approach to queering time in *Ulysses* and *The Waves*. The first two chapters of the respective parts on *Ulysses and The Waves*, or, the third and the sixth chapters of this dissertation, place attention on the crucial role Joyce's and Woolf's re-conceptualization of characters play for the development of modernist narratives, by analyzing them in conjunction with instances of queering time. A close reading of *queer time* is the organizing principle of the fourth and the seventh chapters. These two chapters also form the bulk of the analysis I engage with in this dissertation, looking at the specific dynamics of queering time instances in the two novels. Finally, the last two chapters of the two respective parts – the fifth and the eight chapters – are written with the larger category of *narrative* in mind. Here I argue that queer time is not only a thematic element – the manner of analysis which all the previous chapters follow – but also a narrative principle. These two chapters are imagined as the concluding, contribution-oriented sections for *Ulysses* and *The Waves*, as they emphasize the structuring (not only thematic) role queer time has as a narrative aspect of modernist texts.

These three categories of literary analysis – character, time, and narrative – function as structuring principles of the analytical chapters in this dissertation. And although I consider them to be important directions in guiding the analysis, it should also be noted that it is practically impossible for these categories to be separated from each other or looked at independently. In other words, it is precisely the interaction between character, time and narrative (with each one in the focus of attention in a separate chapter, but not replacing the others) that produces my analysis, as will become apparent from the following chapter summaries.

The third chapter is the introductory chapter to Joyce's *Ulysses*. I start by briefly outlining the vast scholarship on time in *Ulysses*. After that, I situate my interest in the

particular temporality of last episode in this novel, 'Penelope', by listing the reasons that make Molly Bloom the center of queer temporality in *Ulysses*. The bulk of this chapter is devoted to tracing ambiguity as a queering mechanism in this episode, of both time and character. As I show throughout, 'Penelope' is the ambiguous end of *Ulysses*: It functions as an ending after the "proper" ending of the novel. Belonging, but at the same time, not belonging to the text is the starting point of addressing Molly's ambiguous presence as a character trait. Molly Bloom's character as based on uniting contradictions is a foundational trait of (modernist) character development and here, I analyze it as an aspect of her queerness and a transmitter of her temporality. I do that, by both looking at Joyce's practice of uniting contradictions as the source of femininity, and at the evolution of Molly Bloom's reception over the last seventy years of Ulyssean scholarship, caught up in tropes ranging from an "Earth Goddess" to a "Satanic Mistress" imagery. The union of contradictions, then, is both a gender- and queer-specific narrative mechanism, and it functions as the basis of my approach to what I address in greater detail in the second chapter, or the instances of queering time in 'Penelope'.

The following, fourth chapter presents the crux of the analysis on queering time in 'Penelope'. Using insights from Leo Bersani's two essays, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" (1987) and "Against Ulysses" (1988) – both addressing the (de)formation of subjectivities – I look more closely at the processes of constructing Molly Bloom as a queer character. Starting off with that premise that focuses on Molly as a theoretical construct, I then continue the analysis by implementing the concept – by reading Molly's time as queer time. In the second half of this chapter, I engage in a close reading of sexually-centered temporal instances in 'Penelope'. Closely analyzing past interactions that Molly is reminiscing about, I argue that in her monologue, the mixing of temporal boundaries happens under the influence of the sexual. In 'Penelope' the process of queering of time can be summarized as an expansion of the present where the past and the future are used as queer instances that motivate the unfolding of such

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temporal activity. In the final section of this chapter, by devoting particular attention to Molly's homosocial and homoertotic interactions with Hester Stanhope, a minor character in the novel, I attempt to address the (narrative) consequences of queering Molly, and 'Penelope'.

The last chapter of the Joyce section is devoted to the narrativization of time in 'Penelope'. I begin the fifth chapter with a brief throwback to the first chapter, as I establish how characterial ambiguity can act as the source of queer narration in *Ulysses*. Drawing from narratological approaches on the novel, I address the complexity of breaking narrative coherency in *Ulysses* to point out the specific Penelopean narrativity, and further emphasize its dependence on queerness. Finally, I read the famous last words of *Ulysses* – "yes I said yes I will Yes" – as emblematic of the process of queering time in 'Penelope', and its narrative impact for the novel as a whole. The dissolving of narrative, I argue, is deeply related to the inner dynamics of queering time. Queer temporality functions as one of the possibilities for a breakdown of conventional narrative – so characteristic of Joyce's modernist style.

The sixth chapter, or the first Woolf chapter of this dissertation, is devoted to the nuances of "contested characterization" in Woolf's novel *The Waves.* I begin this chapter on Woolf by outlining the general structure of the novel, and the important place characters assume within it. *The Waves* traces the lives of six (present) characters – Neville, Louis, Susan, Jinny, Rhoda, and Bernard – through their nine interrelated soliloquies, interspersed with ten interludes. A seventh character, Percival, is allusively and absently present, only through the voices of the others. Woolf's take on character-formation is one of the most significant staples of literary criticism when it comes to *The Waves* and its reception. For that reason, I first map out some of the most significant analyses of Woolf's reformulation of subjectivity in narrative – the central tenant of this chapter, broken down into a debate: whether we can talk about six/seven different characters in this novel or six/seven sides of one entity. In the second part of this chapter, through a close reading of queer aspects of the characters, I attempt to offer a

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new model of approaching the issue of "contested characterization". I propose a reading of queerness as the impetus that influences the process of simultaneous character unification and disintegration, and in such a way determines the plot and participates in the invention of the new narrative form Woolf is attempting to create. In the following two chapters I examine in detail the formative role queerness – arising as an aspect of characterization – has in both structuring time and queering narrative in *The Waves*.

Mirroring the fourth chapter on Joyce, the seventh chapter focuses on reading instances of queer time in *The Waves*. I expand the claim brought forward in the previous chapter, as I argue that in *The Waves* time is most clearly perceived when considered together with characters. As I show, time is constricted and expanded in two interconnected processes of sameness and difference that are embodied in *The Waves* through the unification of all the characters in one entity and their subsequent disintegration. But unlike *Ulysses*, in *The Waves*, the all-assuming present that presides over the past and the future throughout the narrative, is broken on a few occasions when queerness prevails. The seventh chapter is devoted to examining how queerness itself creates those occasions. In doing that, I focus on the analyzing how queerness functions specifically through time in episodes related to *The Waves'* most famous "queers": Rhoda/Miss Lambert on the one hand, and Neville/Percival on the other. I address them through counter-imposing the text's two most significant instance of queering time: Rhoda's suicide, that annihilates temporality, and Percival's farewell dinner that crystalizes the present, uniting all the six characters into one globe-like entity, where the past, present and future exist in simultaneous but differentiated strands.

The eight and last analytical chapter examines the queering of time as a narratological process in *The Waves*, by combining insights and conclusions from the previous two chapters. First, I look into how characterial multidimensionality – the focus of the sixth chapter – can be addressed as closely related to the depiction of time in *The Waves*. With the intent of analyzing

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the inner dynamics of the narrative, this chapter proposes a close read of the tension between scenes in *The Waves* and the intricacies of the grammatical tenses used to convey them. I argue that Woolf's disturbance of the fine line between characerial and narratorial consciousness can be interpreted as an instance of queer temporality. Queering Percival's "no" as specifically opposed to Bernard's narratorial linearity and resulting erasure of time forms the analytical bulk of this chapter. And finally, the ninth and last chapter of this dissertation – its conclusion – summarizes the results of my interpretation outlined in the previous chapters, emphasizing the impulses of interaction and contention my reading produces as productive cross-points between the works of Joyce and Woolf in particular, and modernism and queer theory in general, when positing queer time as a bridge between these fields of study.

This introduction was also divided into two parts: a larger outline of the categories of analysis in this dissertation, and a subsequent mapping out of the chapters that follow. With the first part I was aiming to delineate the axes of approach through the relevant theoretical and contextual apparatus, while the second part clearly shows how these categories are interdependent, and how their intertwinement produces the analysis. In sum, this dissertation focuses on the connections between queerness and time in two modernist texts. Queer time is not a singular phenomenon that appears in one shape. As I aim to show, queer time functions in a different manner, has different consequences for the narrative, and ultimately draws out different meanings from the two texts. The mirroring structure I develop throughout aims to do exactly that – bring Joyce's *Ulysses* and Woolf's *The Waves* into dialogue but does not nullify the differences between the forms in which queer time shapes the two novels. Quite the contrary, the division of the dissertation into six chapters, focused on three categories and their (sometimes different, sometimes similar) treatment, offers a comparative framework that is the cornerstone of this project.

Chapter 2: Queer Modernist Times

2.1.   Queer: Sudden inadequacy of definition

There is a wonderful passage in Marcel Proust's *The Captive*, the fifth volume *of In Search of Lost Time* that succinctly captures how issues of same-sex desires and affiliations, or rather, the perception and construction of hetero- and homosexual identities are dependent on gender categories. In this scene Marcel, the (presumably heterosexual) narrator explains Baron de Charlus' (himself homosexual) confusion at the coded phrase "one of us" that is supposed to represent his own, that is, Charlus' same-sex affiliations. The reader finds out that Charlus had first discovered the phrase "one of us" in his male circles, that is meant to represent that "his tastes did not lie in the direction of women". But when used by Lea, a lesbian actress the narrator suspects of having an affair with Albertine (Marcel's love interest) with the aim of describing Morel, Charlus's lover; Charlus is left in a state of shock. The extension of the phrase "one of us" reserved for Charlus for exclusively male same-sex desires is now made to also include individuals, in Proust's words, "having the same taste as certain women [have] for other women". So, in an unusual, and from this contemporary perspective, ungraspable turn of events, after this discovery, Charlus is left with the knowledge that "one of us" does not mean what he had assumed by that point, but, instead covers a whole and vaster section of the population, including women. Faced with this novel meaning of the phrase, Charlus finds himself "tormented by an anxiety of the mind as well as of the heart, born out of this twofold mystery which combined an enlargement of the field of his jealousy with the *sudden inadequacy of a definition*" (my emphasis, see Proust 5: 280-1)[11].

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[11] This scene (like arguably many others from *In Search of Lost Times*) is a popular example when addressing the complexities of representing the division between homo- and heterosexuality in (queer) modernist studies. For example, Jarrod Hayes's "Proust in the Tearoom" (1995) briefly analyzes this episode and uses Edelman's concept of the "epistemology of the water closet" in addressing Proust's use of the tearoom. And although he passingly notes the "epistemological instability" and confusion Charlus feels here, Hayes does not offer a more detailed

What is discernable from this passage is that for Charlus the phrase "one of us" and all that it signifies (same-sex relations) was only applicable to his own sex/gender. The possibility of women – and their desires for each other – entering this category results not in a rethinking of the category (a definition of "one of us" that would now also include women loving women), but in a fit of unfounded jealousy towards women, which by definition, are not the object of love for his love interest. And while Charlus' initial view does signify a presupposed exclusionist stance – meaning, women do not even enter his worldview – it would be too simple for one to argue that this particular confusion is due to a misogynist attitude. Gender causes this profound confusion for Charlus, as (the opposite) gender is the one that leads him to question (and extend) the category. Even when not perceived as a factor in determining sexual desires, gender delineates the understanding around its inner dynamics. Charlus himself, and – I would argue – the reader as well, is baffled at the sudden inadequacy of a definition that he is left with. The "epistemological instability" (Hayes 999) that surrounds the emergence of homosexuality is intersected with a simultaneous crisis in thinking about femininity and masculinity. It is not the workings of gender as a sole category, but rather, the crossover of multiple forces that produces the kind of love and/or sexual interests "one of us" is meant to denote.

The epistemological confusion resulting from the lack of definition on what exactly is "male" and "female", "heterosexual" and "homosexual", and the formative connections between gender and sexualities, profoundly affects modernist literature, as well as the literary authority that was once built upon their presumed solidity, claims Coleen Lamos in her study *Deviant Modernism: Sexual and Textual Errancy in T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and Marcel Proust* (11). Thus, issues of same-sex desires and relations are vexed with questions of gender identity,

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analysis of the interactions/blurring of the boundaries between the two genders and their consequences for representing (homo)sexuality, as I intend to do here.

as the boundaries between them are being both blurred and meticulously drawn. The complex and complicated categories of gender and sexuality cause and are related to all sorts of anxieties in the ambiguity of modernist texts.

The intense experience of a socio-cultural and technological modernist crisis – whose consequences in a universal experience of modernist temporality was addressed in the introduction – parallels an equally relevant "crisis of gender and sexual definition in the early twentieth century" (Lamos 3). The convergence in the early twentieth century of women's socioeconomic independence, of feminist political struggles, and of the formation of discourses on femininity and homosexuality in sexology, psychology, and anthropology was starting to implicate, or even lead to the imbrication of femininity and masculinity, homo- and heterosexuality, categories that could not be perceived as single entities (see Lamos 6). The intricate connections between forms of gender and sexuality, as I will show throughout this dissertation, are at the heart of what produces queerness, especially in high modernist narratives. That is why I decided to start this section on my understanding of a term as vast as "queer" in this manner – by firstly underlying its dependence on the relevant categories and contextual settings for my project. Rather than tracing an origin story of the term and its many sources and applications, I am interested in mapping out a specific approach to queer that emphasizes the meaning of aspects important for my analysis.

Modern sexual identities are structured by a double-binding, but immensely productive incoherence about gender (see Sedgwick, *Tendencies* viii). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's oeuvre, with whose quote I began this dissertation, is another determining factor in how I think and write both about queer and time, and their mutual intersections. On the very first page of *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), Sedgwick declares that virtually any aspect of modern Western Culture will be not merely incomplete but damaged if it does not incorporate a critical analysis of the modern homo/heterosexual definition; as major nodes of thought and knowledge

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in twentieth century Western culture are defined by the endemic crisis of the divide (see 1). Therefore, the first consequence of this statement is the transformation of heretofore marginal presence of homosexuality (by itself, and in addition, in its relation to heterosexuality) to not only a present but defining aspect of modern culture.

Furthermore, by positing *People are different from each other* as the first Axiom of *Epistemology* (see 22), Sedgwick proposes a method towards sexual identity that centers on exploring differentiality as defining feature of the homo/heterosexual definition. Thus, the second consequence of her approach is a move towards treating this divide as volatile in nature, not as a done deal, but the result of complex processes of interaction between diverse elements. "Epistemology of the Closet's turn toward interrogating the coherence of homosexuality as a category of identity was foundational to the anti-identitarian hermeneutics that now serve as a signal characteristic of queer critique", writes Wiegman (see *Reading Sedgwick* 246). This Sedgwickian anti-identitarian hermeneutics also guides the general approach toward my own understanding of queer.

Famously, Sedgwick does not use the term "queer" in this field-defining monograph[12]. In *Tendencies* (1993), however, written almost at the same time as *Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick offers probably the most-often quoted definition of queer. And while throughout the work on this project, my thinking about what is queerness and how it interacts with and defines a universal experience such as time, has also led me in other directions, Sedgwick's thinking still determines my approach. In opposition to the straight assembling, or *lining up*, of hegemonic discourses (such as religion, state, capital, ideology, and domesticity) that produce one dimensional sexual identities as formed categories, Sedgwick thinks of queer "as the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made

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[12] See Preface to the 2008 edition (xvi).

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(or can't be made) to signify monolithically" (*Tendencies* 7). The richest junctures, she claims, are the ones where everything does *not* line up, where everything does *not* mean the same thing. Queer encapsulates the richest juncture, a double cross where necessarily there is also a distance; or the site of meaning production between multiple categories (see Goldberg, *Reading Sedgwick* 124).

In its very first meaning – that is alive in my thinking about it as well – queer denotes a same-sexual object of choice, desire, and attraction. As Sedgwick points out, given the historical and contemporary force of prohibition against same-sex sexual expressions, displacing these meanings from the term's definitional center, would be the same as dematerializing any possibility of queerness. However, she claims in addition, much of the most exciting work around queer spins the term outward along dimensions that cannot be subsumed under gender and sexuality. Queer seems to emerge at points where race, ethnicity, and postcolonial nationality criss-cross with these and other identity-constituting and identity-fracturing discourses (*Tendencies* 8). In this dissertation, I ague that interaction, or the crisscross between identity-fracturing discourses is a temporal process. Queer depends on the never-ending processes of queering (disturbing a straight line-up) between multiple categories. What I mean by this is that the constant *–ing* of queering is what produces queer. Queer's temporal complexity is a foundational aspect: it produces its definitional center.

Tendencies is probably Sedgwick's study that most explicitly deals with the question of time and its interactions with queer. In fact, this 1993 book might be one of the earliest examples of establishing a significant connection between queer and time, and exploring their interrelatedness, that will later lead to an interest in Queer Time. The first chapter of *Tendencies*, that charts out her famous definition of queer is aptly named "Queer and Now", and begins with a reflection on the suicides of adolescents that, Sedgwick believes, haunts anyone who researches gay and lesbian studies (see 1). Queer suicide, and especially queer

adolescent suicide and the accompanying high rate of homelessness in queer youth becomes a topic of interest for scholars studying queer time, as it clearly marks the temporal consequences of living a queer life.[13] *Tendencies'* forward, "T Times", is even more explicitly entangled in the topic of time. Even though she is aware that in the short shelf-life of American marketplaces the queer moment – whose presence she was vividly feeling in the early 1990s at gay prides and AIDS protests – might be gone tomorrow, Sedgwick claims that there is something about queer that is inextinguishable. Coming from the Indo-European root -twerkw, which also yields the German quer (transverse), Latin torquere (to twist), English athwart, queer itself means "across". Queer is then transitive – cutting across categories and formulations, but also a "continuing moment, movement, motive – recurrent, eddying, *troublant*" (emphasis in original, see viii).

A bit more than a decade after the publication of *Tendencies*, the 2005 special issue of *Social Text*, titled "What's Queer about Queer Studies Now?" edited by David Eng, J. Jack Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz, "reassesses the political utility of queer by asking "what's queer about queer studies now?" (1). In the introduction, Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz trace queer's many lives, from its emergence into public consciousness in the early 1990s as a term that challenges the normalizing mechanisms of state power over its subjects and interrogates the accompanying processes of producing and sustaining sexual identities. As a consequence of this scope, they situate the political dimension of the term in its broad critique of multiple social antagonisms, including race, gender, class, nationality, and religion, in addition to sexuality (see 1).

This special issue, however, attempts to map out what a *renewed* queer has to say about "late-twentieth-century global crises", including but not limited to: the national manifestations of sexual, racial, and gendered hierarchies; the functionings of empire, globalization,

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[13] See Halberstam in "Theorizing Queer Temporalities" (181-182).

neoliberalism, sovereignty, and terrorism; and the contemporary mainstreaming of gay and lesbian identity (see Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz 1-2[14]). Queer operates on two interrelated planes, that pertain to: sexual identities (and their processes of (de)formation), and a broader socio-political sphere, both crucial elements in Sedgwick's thinking on queerness as well. At the point of intersection between these two modes, queer is firmly defined "as a political metaphor without a fixed referent" (Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz 1).

It seems that the view according to which "sexual desire is an unpredictably powerful solvent of stable identities" (Sedgwick, *The Weather in Proust* 202) strikes the heart of "what is queer about Queer Studies". The "vital question of temporality" is linked to the "perversities of becoming", claim McCallum and Tuhkanen in the introduction to their edited volume *Queer Times, Queer Becomings* (2011), since "[l]iving on the margins of social intelligibility alters one's pace; one's tempo becomes at best contrapuntal, syncopated, and at worst, erratic, arrested" (1). My project focuses on the fictional lives of meticulously envisaged literary characters, but in its very essence it engages in a conversation with the questions formulated by McCallum and Tuhkanen: How does a queer existence, with all it may encompass, alter one's temporality; and how does time convey the perversities of becoming? Therefore, in a Sedgwickian-manner, the role that temporality plays as an aspect of queerness' force for disturbing solidified categories, including, but not limited to, identarian forms is the central focal point of my analysis here.

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[14] Queer temporality as a relevant focus of interest and a facet of analysis in this volume of essays comes to the forefront in essays like Elizabeth Freeman's "Time Binds, or, Erotohistoriography", and Jasbir Puar's "Queer Times, Queer Assemblages". Furthermore, the significance of time for a project that aims to reassess queer's political dimensions now – as the title itself asserts – is more than obvious.

2.2.   The turn to temporality in queer theory

There seems to be a consensus[15] among scholars interested in queer time that the queer turn to temporality in the early 2000s is represented by two important journal issues: the 2005 special issue of *Social Text* "What's Queer about Queer Studies Now?", edited by David Eng, J. Jack Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz; and the 2007 *GLQ* issue titled "Queer Temporalities". Both publications place time at the center when thinking about what is queer about queerness. "What's Queer about Queer Studies Now?", briefly referred to above, is primarily concerned with the status of the field, and the utility of "queer" as a political category and a theoretical apparatus, created at the intersection of multiple social antagonisms. The 2007 publication, "Queer Temporalities", is primarily devoted to looking into how the rubric of temporality has been and is important in the works of queer scholars. These two publications certainly summarize an already abundant interest in queer time in various fields that was being formed at the beginning of the twenty-first century, including works on queer time and temporality by queer historians, literary scholars, philosophers, and theorists.

A "queer desire for history", to use Dinshaw's expression, is what marked a lot of the work done by queer historians at this point (see "Theorizing Queer Temporalities" 178). For Dinshaw this signifies a desire for a different kind of past, a history that is not straight (185). Works like Christopher Nealon's *Foundlings: Lesbian and Gay Historical Emotion before Stonewall* (2001); Carolyn Dinshaw's *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (1999); Carla Freccero's *Queer/Early/Modern* (2006); Heather Love's *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (2007); Elizabeth Freeman's *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (2010), mark a new investigation into queer temporality as a method of queer historiography.

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[15] See Haffey 3-4; McBean 10; Amin 177-178.

As the dominant cultural rhetoric of the AIDS epidemic showed so clearly, since the emergence of the homosexual as a species – in Foucault's words – gays and lesbians have been figured as having no past, or history: no childhood, no precedent in nature, no traditions. Therefore, not only since the AIDS crisis, but starting from the 1970s, lesbian and gay historians have been devoted to the cause of creating new accounts of what has been erased from (hetero-sexual/temporal) history, uncovering the hidden, queering the straight (Freeman, "Theorizing Queer Temporalities" 162). These new historians, claims Freeman, many of whom write from other disciplines have worked with this goal in mind, and have created eclectic, idiosyncratic, transient archives, claiming queer historiographies, often based on sensations and emotions such as: untimeliness, belatedness, delay, and failure (162-163). The role of the negative (expressed through feelings of failure, untimeliness, belatedness) plays an important role in my conceptualization of queer time, as this chapter will show. But for now, in this first section, I aim to trace the emergence of interest in time and temporality at this specific moment in queer thought and emphasize some of the similarities between the conceptions of time in the works of queer scholars, and modernist writers at the turn of the twentieth century.

Wondering about the peculiar timing of the especially expressed interest in time at the end of the 1990s, in her contribution essay to the "Queer Temporalities" issue, Kate Thomas writes:

> [t]his revival may be prompted by the tempo of tabloidesque inquiries about whether queer theory is over, past, post. It may be prompted by good old-fashioned fin de siècle epistemic reflection. It is certainly inflected by the contradictions of a time of 'progress' for queer politics, about whose progressiveness many are dubious, a time accompanied by rollbacks and regressions in the form of renewed homophobias (328).

As Thomas notes here, the issue of queer temporality reflects not only a generally felt end-of-century crisis (a determining factor for the modernist interest in temporality as well), but also participates in a larger debate on queer's role and meaning in times when the struggle for "equality" and "progress" is accompanied by an ongoing homo-normalization and

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mainstreaming of gay cultures. The specific interest in queer temporality as an academic topic is entangled in a broader debate on the meaning and uses (theoretical, political, sociological) of queer, and furthermore, on queer theory as a field of studies. What is queer about queer studies, as the name of the 2005 special issue indicates, is I believe, one of the central aspects of works on queer temporality at this time period[16].

Or, in other words, queer temporality seems to capture queerness' existence on simultaneous planes, its strained position as a theoretical term, political platform and a signifier of non-normative sexualities. Functioning as a "political metaphor without a fixed referent" (Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz 1), that arises from the remnants of the AIDS crisis, but at the same time is meant to intervene in social and political late twentieth-century crises, queer is equally open to the past and the future. In many ways, queer seems to exist at that intersection Anderson prescribes as formative to modernism: combining a still usable past, a still indeterminate present and a still unpredictable political future.

In fact, in an essay titled "Culturally Queer" published in the first volume of GLQ in 1993, Judith Butler's definition of queer as "a point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings […] in the present, never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes" (quoted in Amin 179) also poignantly captures queerness' temporal complexity. Or as Amin puts it, the relevance of queer, as a term is contingent on its constant queering. Queer can never be queer enough. Queer has to always acknowledge and recognize its roots, but at the same time the future of queer scholarship depends on being queerer than

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[16] That being said, it is worth noting that the links between temporality and sexuality were established long before the turn to temporality in queer theory at the end of the twentieth century. The early sexologists, for example, were very keen on describing "inverts" as evolutionary throwbacks, remnants from another era. And even today, one of the most obvious ways that sex meets temporality is the persistent description of queers as temporally backward, and yet paradoxically always removed from a specific historical moment (Freeman, "Theorizing Queer Temporalities" 161-162).

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what came before (see 179). This paradoxical temporal positioning of queer lies at the heart of approaching queer as a multivalent term and approach.

And while queer's temporal ambiguity as a defining feature of the term had been well noted from the early 1990s in influential works such as Butler's and Sedgwick's and has been proven to be essential for the solidification of the field, the issue of re-defining queer for a new epoch that comes into focus a decade later, in the early 2000s, is a part of a larger debate on its political and social uses. In the next few pages, I will focus on positioning the issue of queer temporality as a central aspect of the antisocial thesis in queer theory, and from there, offer a few alternative takes on this debate, aiming to develop a new framework in which queer temporality is seen as an issue embedded in rethinking the oppositions between negativity and utopia; optimism and failure; sociability and anti-relationality. Or in other words, the desire for remaking relationality through the social plays a significant role in queer thought in the first decade of the twenty-first century (see Freeman, "Theorizing Queer Temporalities" 188). The meaning queer temporality assumes in this process will be addressed in length in the following pages.

2.3.   Queer Time and the Antisocial Thesis

In December 2005, a conference forum at the MLA Annual Convention, five speakers – Robert Caserio, Lee Edelman, J. Jack Halberstam, José Esteban Muñoz and Tim Dean – addressed the issue of the (anti)social in queer thought (in 2006 the forum was published as "The Antisocial Thesis in Queer Theory"). In his introductory notes, Caserio positions Leo Bersani and his study "Homos (1995) (together with earlier works such as *The Freudian Body*, 1986 and "Is the Rectum a Grave?", 1987) as foundational for the upsurge of works that question the "goodness" of gay sex/identity/lifestyle. The antisocial thesis in queer theory most commonly attributed to Bersani, summarizes Caserio, explores the ways in which homosexuality threatens

the fabric of the social, and the political effects the utilization of that possibility might have (see 819).

More than a decade before Bersani's work on re-imagining relationality, Foucault's take on homosexuality as "a historic occasion to reopen affective and relational virtualities; (…) [because of] the diagonal lines he [the homosexual, my note] can lay out in the social fabric allow[ing] these virtualities to come to light" positions homosexual practices and desires as capable of re-shifting social relations (see "Friendship as way of life" 137). Bersani takes on a similar direction in his work, but offers a different strategy for rethinking relationality, resulting in what will become known as "queer negativity". In the next couple of paragraphs, I will briefly outline the main premises of both "Is the Rectum a Grave?" (1987) and *Homos* (1995), that will set up the framework through which I look into some of the basic premises of works on the antisocial thesis that posit temporality as main factor while addressing questions of relationality, sexuality and sociability.

In "Is the Rectum a Grave?" Bersani traces a claim he argues has always formed a part of homosexual representation in a heterosexist, phallocentric culture, and has definitely marked the public discourse on homosexuality during the AIDS crisis – that is, the murderous and self-annihilating nature of homosexuals. Bersani is interested in the signifying mechanisms that produce this claim – homosexuals are killers – through looking at, first, in what way are they killers, and second, what happens if one takes this statement seriously (see 211).

The basic premise of Bersani's argument in this essay is that in a phallocentric culture, "the logic of homosexual desire includes a potential for a loving identification with the gay man's enemies" (208). In other words, the internalization of an oppression is constitutive of male homosexual desire, therefore resulting in a struggle for the gay male political subject for whom maleness and homosexuality in a heterosexist social setting are both seductive and must be rejected (209). A certain polarity, then, between power and subordination, or activity and

passivity that has also structured a power dynamic between men and women as socio-sexual relationship, is internalized as the basis of a gay male identity. And this same axis of socio-sexual power according to which, simply put, to be penetrated is to abdicate power, has been at the center of a centuries-long representation of female sexuality and sexual desire as unquenchable, unstoppable, and ultimately leading to destruction (see Bersani 211-212).

Bersani finds support for his view on (passive) sex and its social dimensions in patriarchal culture in the works of radical feminist activists and thinkers such as Andrea Dworkin and Catherine MacKinnon who advocated against pornography as an erotization of hierarchy, based on the view that *all* sex is essentially violent, and penetration is a reinstatement of the violence of inequality (see Bersani 213-214). The murderous representations of homosexuals legitimized during the AIDS crisis, that carry similar symbolical resonance as the representation of women through the mysteries of unstoppable desire, and that are implicit both in the violence towards gay men and women and their belonging to the categories that represent them, are grounded in a certain agreement about what sex is and should be, claims Bersani (221). But unlike MacKinnon and Dworkin whose work calls for what Bersani names the *redemptive reinvention of sex* – proposing the refusal of sex as inherently and always violent act while arguing for a new sexual paradigm in which sex would be less socially abrasive, less disturbing, more respectful of "personhood" in a phallocentric culture – Bersani rejects this romanticizing move and sees the inestimable value of sex in its anticommunal, antiegalitarian, antinurturing, antiloving aspects (emphasis in original 215). This redemptive appeal that leads to the mainstreaming of pluralism and diversity as the primary values of gay life in liberal cultures is dangerously tame, argues Bersani (217). For Bersani, if the rectum is the grave (an image that the AIDS epidemic brings forth), then it is the grave of the masculine ideal of proud subjectivity (meaning different things for men and women and shared differently by them). AIDS has tragically literalized that potential through the certainty of biological death,

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reinforcing the heterosexual association of anal sex, previously also identified with the mystery of an insatiable female sexuality. But finally, it may be the gay man's rectum, grounded in gay men's "obsession" with sex that will offer a new model of selfhood. And this is not a model that offers liberal pluralism and acceptance, but rather one that emphasizes the role of the sexual in shattering the self (see 222). "The self which the sexual shatters provides the basis on which sexuality is associated with power" (Bersani 218). This is a system that explores the value of sexual powerlessness, or passivity, as the method for a radical destabilizing of the proud self.

In *Homos* Bersani continues the exploration of practices of destabilizing and shattering the self that characterize the force of the sexual act. Looking at the great homo-heterosexual divide that pervades modern societies, he designates homosexuality as a central piece in the profoundly biased cultural education we all receive in sameness and difference. For Bersani, homosexuality is a subjectivity-defining term, as it is embedded in our self-forming perceptions of where we end and others begin, and how otherness produces/expands/negates the self (see 4). From there, homosexuality can become a privileged model of sameness, making manifest not only the limits, but the inestimable value of relations of sameness, of what Bersani terms homo-relations. Perhaps inherent in gay desire, claims Bersani, is a revolutionary inaptitude for heteroized sociality. Bersani's project in *Homos* is a is a redefinition of sociality, based on the most politically disruptive aspects of the homo-ness he sees in gay desire; and so radical that it may appear to require a provisional withdrawal from relationality itself (7). In a time when issues of gay marriage, gay parenting and gay civil service assume a big role in the effort for creating a "respectable" gay citizen, *Homos* argues that "*homo-ness itself necessitates a massive redefining of relationality*" (emphasis in original, 76).

This is a counterintuitive, but critical shift in thinking away from projects of redemption, reconstruction, restoration, and reclamation of homosexuality and homosexual practices, and toward an antisocial, negative, and anti-relational theory of sexuality (see

Halberstam, "Antisocial Thesis" 823). Bersani's formulation and similar takes on this issue have inspired a decade of explorations of queer unbelonging, in the midst of intensifying attempts for both normalizing gay sociability and rage directed at these efforts (Caserio, "Antisocial Thesis" 819). Bersani's call for a radical re-invention of both subjectivity and sociality through gay desire's "murderous potential" unveils the complex issue of the political potentials of homosexuality that, as I have been pointing out, lies at the center of what is "queer". While it is indisputably true that sexuality is and always has been politicized, the ways in which sex politicizes are not unidirectional and can be very problematic. Bersani warns against an easy and quick solution of imagining gay identities and lifestyles as synonymous with political radicalism (see "Is the Rectum a Grave?" 205-206). But what he is interested in and what has greatly determined the role queer time assumes in the antisocial debate is the connection between the socio-political and the sexual, by focusing on the murderous, or "negative" potential sex has in transforming the self, two aspect that guide my approach to queer time. What I am interested in tracing here (and I take away from Bersani's work) is the role (nonlinear) temporality plays for processes of shattering the notion of stable subjectivity through the sexual, leading to the reimagining of collectivity and sociality – a premise that lies at the center of my analysis of queering time in *Ulysses* and *The Waves*. In the following section, I will look closely at important works on the antisocial thesis that do exactly that – position temporality as an indispensable concept when it comes to homosexuality's (or queerness') role in redefining relationality.

2.4. Between Queer Negativity and Utopia

Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (2004) is one of the most significant works on the antisocial thesis that places a central focus on the role time has in redefining sociality through sexuality. Edelman's queer time is bound up in a radical attempt to liberate queers from what he calls the "the politics of reproductive futurism" (17). For

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Edelman, queerness functions as a refusal of the "telos of the social order" which offers a "fantasy of the future" by positing the Child as a symbol of its inevitable progress (11). The queer subject that has been epistemologically bound to negativity, anti-reproduction, and unintelligibility should not oppose this recognition, but embrace this negativity as a structural feature, claims Edelman, outlining an argument similar to Bersani's in "Is the Rectum a Grave?". One of the main differences here is that Edelman argues for a version of a political queer negativity that accepts and celebrates the death drive as one of the tenants of queer critique and theory, proposing a specific temporal project – a rejection of all futurity, a future that is inherently reproductive and hetero/homonormative. The queer subject, for Edelman, "comes to figure the bar to every realization of futurity, the resistance, internal to the social, to every social structure or form" (4). Edelman's work is very much aligned to the self-shattering, anti-identitarian, anti-relational theory of queerness Bersani proposes, but he develops his antisocial stance through a temporal emphasis. Edelman explores the consequences of the antisocial thesis through a rejection of futurity – for him an always already normative category.

Standing on the other side of this debate and defending the possibility for a queer future instead of its negation, is the work of queer scholar José Esteban Muñoz. Muñoz's 2009 study *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*[17] argues against anti-relationality and antiutopianism that he sees as the failures of imagination in queer critique, while proposing "queer futurity" as a counter-notion to "queer negativity" (see 43). I will now outline the main premises of *Cruising Utopia*, since the temporal model he develops in this study is at the center of my thinking about queer time and determines the way I analyze it in the following interpretation of *Ulysses* and *The Waves*.

> Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are not yet queer. We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality. We have never been queer, yet queerness exists for

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[17] All the quotes from *Cruising Utopia* are from the 10th Anniversary Edition (2019).

us as an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future. The future is queerness's domain. Queerness is a structuring and educated mode of desiring that allows us to see and feel beyond the quagmire of the present. The here and now is a prison house. We must strive, in the face of the here and now's totalizing rendering of reality, to think and feel a *then and there* (emphasis in original 1).

These are Muñoz' very first sentences. This "manifesto-like and ardent" study is a call, writes Muñoz, to leaving behind the narrow confines of the present, that uses the concept of utopia – inspired by Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch's work on critical utopianism and hope – as a starting point for a collective political becoming (233). In a move equally polemic to Edelman's assignment of futurity as "kid's stuff" and meant to denounce the main premises of the antisocial thesis, Muñoz argues that queerness does not really exist. Instead, a "posterior glance at different moments, objects, and spaces might offer us an anticipatory illumination of queerness" (47). What exists in the present, embedded in what Muñoz calls "gay pragmatism" dominating the contemporary mainstreaming of gay and lesbian politics, is not queerness, and we are not queer yet (see 47). Instead, queerness is a "temporal arrangement in which the past is the field of possibility in which subjects can act in the present in the service of new futurity" (41-42).

Muñoz' utopian hermeneutics promises "a human that is not yet here, thus disrupting any ossified understanding of the human" (see 51) invested in a project of rethinking human subjectivity and relationality as much as Bersani and Edelman are. Temporal relationality leads to a rethinking of social relationality. Or rather, the rethinking of relationality by promising a human that is not here yet (a reinventing of subjectivity) is done through a temporal relationality. Utopian hermeneutics are intensely relational with the past, by not turning away from the present, and acting in the service of queerness as a "forward-dawning futurity" (see 53, 48). One of Muñoz's greatest concerns is with the concept of potentiality contained in the politics of queer memory that fueled by utopian futurity can help us reimagine sociality, while escaping the narrowness of the present's here and now.

Potentiality, that Muñoz bases on model developed by philosopher Giorgio Agamben, "is a certain mode of nonbeing that is eminent, a thing that is present but not actually existing in the present tense" (33). Potentiality then, for Muñoz, is the tool that enables the existence of a temporal relationality. It is something that is present, but not existing in the present, imbued in the past, and allows for an opening between the past and the present, and the present and the future (34). Hope is for Muñoz both a critical affect and a methodology, described as a "backward glance that enacts a future vision" (28). If possibility is the critical tool, then hope is the methodology, the larger field on which his thinking rests. Hope permits access to futurity, is indispensable for minoritarian subjects, as it presents an exit from an auto-naturalizing temporality, that following Halberstam's work, Muñoz names "straight time" (see 126).

"Queerness's time is a stepping out of the linearity of straight time. Straight time is a self-naturalizing temporality" (51). Straight time tells us there is no future outside of the here and now of our everyday life, not allowing for any temporal relationality (47). For Muñoz, the present is most often equated to straight time, as it is conceived as a self-naturalizing endeavor. In his temporal model, the present can only escape the narrow confines of the here and now, if imbued with potentiality that allows for a temporal relationality.

"Queerness is utopian, and there is something queer about the utopian" (52), writes Muñoz, in a manner that is similar to my own thinking on queerness and time. Queerness, much as utopia, is in the constant process of forming, or in many ways is formless. Queerness' form is utopian, claims Muñoz (56). Queerness loses what makes it queer, its essence, if not formless. Part of what makes queerness "queer" is exactly the constant queering of its form, and in that manner, queerness resembles utopia. Utopia is an ideal, it is not prescriptive, and like queerness, it opens a horizon of possibility and potentiality, meaning, that utopia is a temporal disorganization (see 126). As I will explain shortly, utopia is an always already a disappointed ideal, as utopia is concievied around a failure of full realization – a feature Muñoz

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uses to reform the negative in his work. If utopia is a time that is not here yet, but a certain futurity, a could be and a should be (128), then the queerness Muñoz seems embedded in utopia is a temporal feature. What is queer about the utopia is the ongoing process of its formation. What is queer about the utopian is utopia's existence in a queer temporal plain. What is queer about utopia is queer time.

Queerness for Muñoz, like for Edelman, is all about refusal. "Queer failure is not an aesthetic failure, but instead a political refusal" (221). The German idealist notion of utopia is based in a critique of the present order, a direction Muñoz follows as he designates queer utopianism as a great refusal of an overarching here and now (173). Queerness is supposed to reject not just hetero- and homosexuality and its identitarian notions, but also "the dominant order and its systemic violence", in a rethinking of sociality, sex, love and politics (216). Edelman refuses the futurity as "kid's stuff", always embedded in heteronormativity, and Muñoz rejects a singular temporal existence in present, as he sees hope and utopia as always already existing in the future. "Utopia's rejection of pragmatism is often associated with failure. And, indeed, most profoundly, utopianism represents a failure to be normal" (216). What these two conceptions of queer time reject is normativity.

Edelman's paradigm celebrates the embrace of a foundational negativity, or a necessary failure as a feature of subjectivity formation and looks at its social consequences. Muñoz does not deny the existence of such features, but he is interested in offering a redemptive reading on what happens, as he says, in the "moments after the frenzy of negation" (*Cruising Utopia* 120). And while Edelman's position ends up proposing a rejection of futurity, and with that, Muñoz argues, of transformative politics and hope, Muñoz's own model celebrates hope, potentiality and utopia as "the ethics of embracing one's constituting negation" (ibid). Another formative difference is I believe, Muñoz' and Edelman's differing primary focus on collectivity vs. subjectivity, respectively. While Edelman is interested in the politics of the negative and its

playing out on a subjective individual level, Muñoz seems more invested in seeing how the politics of hope and utopia participate in rethinking sociality.

These two strands of thought, one arguing for queer negativity, other for queer utopianism, stand for two different kinds of temporal investment. For Edelman, queerness stops the solidification of time into history, as queerness is the impetus that does not allow for the linear (re)productive passing of time (see "Theorizing Queer Temporalities" 181). For Edelman, queerness is a rejection of the future, and as such is embedded in the present. And this is where the radicality of his approach lies, as it addresses queerness (in a rather utopian manner, it seems to me) as able to stop the passing of time. Queerness is time's refusal to submit to a temporal logic (Edelman, "Theorizing Queer Temporalities" 188). For Muñoz, on the other hand, queerness is a potentiality that enables what he terms a "gesture", a performative and dialectical move between Bloch's "not-quite-here" (the future) and "no-longer-conscious" (the past). Therefore, queerness here is exactly what allows the movement of time, a "doing" that opposes the stultifying effects of identitarian narratives and gains its political resonance as an articulation of a "forward-dawning futurity" (see "Cruising the Toilet" 353-357). It seems to me that Edelman's model proposes an enriching of the present through queerness, while Muñoz' uses the present as a starting point in enriching the past and the future via queerness.

Both conceptions of queer time, while emphasizing different prevailing notions, are ultimately engaged in a utopian understanding of queerness and its temporality. In other words, a similar intuition of perceiving and experiencing queer time as "the perverse turn away from the narrative coherence of adolescence – early adulthood – marriage – reproduction – child rearing – retirement – death, the embrace of late childhood in place of early adulthood or immaturity in place of responsibility" – quoting Halberstam's memorable definition on queer time ("Theorizing Queer Temporalities" 182) – marks both Edelman's and Muñoz's projects as queer temporality is aligned with both queer negativity and queer utopia. As I hope to have

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illustrated here, Muñoz's utopia is not the antithesis of negation, but rather it is the critical means of working through and with negation, as it incorporates the negativity utopia bears in its very name, originating from the Greek "no place" or "not place" (see Chambers-Letson, Nyong'o and Pellegrini's Foreword "Before and After" in the 2019 edition of *Cruising Utopia*, 15). In a similar move, I believe that Edelman's queer negativity is based on a utopian understanding of temporality[18]. And while in this section, I addressed Muñoz's utopian temporal model in greater detail, in a few pages, I will go back to Edelman's queer negativity and look how it functions as tool for reframing optimism, and in many ways, participates in outlining a utopian approach to time.

These two approaches, Edelman's "queers have no future" and Muñoz's "queers have nothing but the future", have been taken up as the cornerstone of the debate around the antisociality thesis (see Caserio 820). Queer temporality proves to be one of the topics that nicely illustrates how the claims made by both the advocates of political negativity and the proponents of queer utopianism – presenting the two radical sides of the antisocial thesis (see Edelman "Antagonism, Negativity and the Subject of Queer Theory" 821) – when taken as oppositional blocks, reduce the complexity of what is queer time. What I am interested in doing here is looking at the points of intersection between these two models (going beyond Edelman's and Muñoz's individual works) and the dialogues they incite.

Muñoz's queer futurity cannot exist as separated from both the present and the past, as he clearly recognizes by stating that his "theory of queer futurity attends to the past for the

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[18] That being said, there are serious methodological differences in their two different approaches, that clearly illustrate how much of an intersectional category (queer) time really is. Muñoz's biggest critique for Edelman's approach is that it fails to consider the relevance of race and class when addressing the figure of the Child (even if it is a symbolical one). A monolithic figure of a Child that is always already white and middle-class is implicated in a subject whose future is always already reproductive and whose time can be atemporal. Racialized kids, queer kids of color on the other hand, are often not allowed a future, and they are not the sovereigns of futurity (see "Cruising the Toilet" 364). Thus, what Muñoz sees in Edelman is an equation of futurity with normative white reproductive futurity at all costs, and an imperative towards "no future" that is complicit with an "active disavowal of a crisis in afrofuturism" (ibid) in times where social politics actively deny a future for every child that is not white and rich, i.e., the signifier of Edelman's reproductive future.

purpose for critiquing a present" ("Antisocial Thesis" 826). In a similar vein, Edelman's negation of futurity seems to be deeply invested in the past and the present. The strand of queer time that I believe can be applied in analyzing a modernist narrativization of time and sexuality is developed on the intersection between queerness as relational and anti-relational, queerness as dependent on futurity and invested in the past. The many connection points between the models of queer time offered by Edelman and Muñoz are made even clearer when considered in a larger framework, that consists not only of their own contributions to this debate, but other scholarly works that have traced concepts such as utopia, hope, optimism, and negativity, failure, following in their footsteps, or interested in contributing to the antisocial debate. Therefore, here follows a sketch of some important strands of thought and relevant works on these notions in the aftermath of Edelman's and Muñoz's debate, that I believe can help in tracing their overlaps and dissonances, and moreover, while emphasizing the role temporality assumes as a conveyor of meaning.

2.5.   Tracing Optimism, or, On the Other Side of Hope

Contextualizing the source of societal/historical interest in negativity as a vital element in thinking about homosexuality and queerness (the former in earlier works such as Hocquenghem's and Bersani's; the latter in later works, including Edelman's and Muñoz's) will probably provide a better understanding of this debate. The profound interest for negativity that structures different strands of queer theory (not only the antisocial thesis) is founded in a long history of societal perception of various groups of queer people and their subsequent marginalization.

In the early twentieth century, queer sex/sexuality and non-normative genders were more likely to be associated with a failed/arrested development, stasis, and a denial of futurity for anyone belonging to these groups. As Heather Love writes, "same-sex desire is marked by a long history of association with failure, impossibility and loss […] Homosexuality and

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homosexual serve as scapegoats for the failures and impossibilities of desire itself" (*Feeling Backward* 21). Similarly, when it comes to temporality, homosexuality's existence revolves around a paradox: often times perceived as a "modern invention" and yet at the same time marking "uncivilized", "pre-modern" cultures (racialized, colonized by modern, Western Europe). Homosexuality seems entrapped between the past from which it can never be liberated and the promise for the future that never arrives. Therefore, the connections between "backwardness", "decline", "stasis" and homosexuality/queerness have been addressed in lengths in multiple ways. In the last two decades, failure has become an important staple of interest in queer studies. Queer scholars, starting from Butler, through Bersani and Halberstam to Love, Freeman and Freccero, have analyzed the ways in which the homosexual is marked as the failed subject, as the inauthentic and unreal being who is incapable of proper love and fails to establish the desired connections between sociality, relationality, family, sex and reproduction (Halberstam, *Queer Art of Failure* 95).

When asking what the meaning of queer is, and how can queer theory acknowledge a historically present negativity in both political endeavors and re-imagining of non-normative subjectivity, the presence and role of time comes to the forefront. Furthermore, a lot of investment in approaching queer time in historical analyses and elsewhere, focuses on looking into how queer lives are differently lived, as queer experiences are transmitted from one generation to the next in a process that exceeds the heteronormative reproductive model. As Nguyen Tan Hoang notes in the Roundtable Discussion on "Theorizing Queer Temporalities", this model of inquiry was meant to intervene in the ongoing efforts for mainstreaming queer culture, as the public discussion on gay marriages was gaining more attention in the U.S. (183). Works like Michael Warner's *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics, and the Ethics of Queer Lif*e (1999), but also Edelman's *No Future* aim to offer a critical stance toward these processes of normalizing queer cultures and life-styles. For thinkers like Hoang, Edelman, Warner, and

Halberstam, a sense of failed temporality, whether experienced as belatedness, arrested development, a perpetual emerging in a never-ending present, or an impossibility to reach the future, can be used for mapping out ways out of the mainstream/into the margins (see Hoang 183).

The most celebrated approach to addressing queer failure in queer studies has a comparable theoretical relevance to the one negativity has for the antisocial turn in queer theory (see Halberstam, "Antisocial Thesis" 823-825). Arguing for the notion of failure as an intrinsic feature of queerness, this scholarship proposes that "failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing are in fact more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world" (Halberstam, *Queer Art of Failure* 2), rejecting the linear paths of reproductive futurism. On the other hand, as Muñoz illustrates, an interest in futurity and in the possibility for political transformations can also be a radically non-normative position, especially when coming from a perspective that strives for a more intersectional recognition of temporality's racial and class dynamics.

In a different, but related strand of thought, and in many ways as a reaction to the overwhelming association of queerness with negativity, in the early 2010s, there is an increased interest in works that trace the relevance of concepts such as optimism, utopia and hope as alternatives to antisocial negativity that would still have the power to disturb normativities. Muñoz's work in *Cruising Utopia* clearly stands out in this register, but I also find a later collaborative piece with Lisa Duggan on the role of hope and hopelessness in late capitalism rather instructive (see "Hope and Hopelessness: A Dialogue" 278). For Lisa Duggan, hope does not always share the theoretical/political value Muñoz is invested in. "[H]ope in the present is a projection forward of a wish for repair of the past. Since the past cannot be repaired, hope is a wish for that which never was and cannot be" (Muñoz and Duggan 275). However, there is an aspect that gives hope a certain edge or imbues hope with the potentiality for a

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critical utopia. Breaking out of the conundrum of regulated normative compulsory communality and temporality (organized and lived through via institutions such as work, marriage, domesticity), especially in neoliberal environments in late capitalism requires a streak of what Duggan names "negative energetic force" (280). This force, according to her, as a part of educated hope, can participate in the establishing of concrete utopia, laying the basis for a "sideways step" into political engagement. For Duggan, thus, hope and hopelessness exist in a dialectical and not oppositional relation, and the movements produced between the two are the basis for developing and maintaining utopias. This movement rests on a "queer temporal choreography" (as Muñoz nicely puts it, 281) that allows one to revisit the past, present and future in all possible directions and travel the distances between them.

One of the most detailed investigations of the diverse roles and meanings optimism and hope can take on in queer lives is certainly Lauren Berlant's 2011 book *Cruel Optimism*. "A relation of cruel optimism exists when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing" (Berlant 1). All attachment might be considered optimistic, explains Berlant, as optimism is a relation, an affective structure that puts one out of themselves and in touch with the world. Although not all optimism is cruel or all attachments inherently cruel, optimism becomes especially cruel when evolving around a desire for return at the "scene of fantasy" with an expectation for the thing that is bringing you there. Thus, it is a "sense of possibility" of attaining the desired and its profound unavailability that drives this process (1-2). At the core of this project on cruel optimism, writes Berlant, "is that moral-intimate-economic thing called 'the good life'" – what Berlant designates as an attachment to a to conventional good-life fantasy (composed of a notion of reciprocity in couples, families, political systems, institutions, markets, and at work), that is hard to shake off even when costs abound (2).

One of the Berlant's central methodological paths in thinking about what creates and sustains "cruel optimism" is a reflection on the historical sense of the present moment and its

lived (political, cultural, economic) implications. Berlant proposes a deeper look into the dynamics of the present, not just as a form of "shallow presentism, or 'the narcissism of the now'", but as a tactic for the past as well as for the future. Paying attention to the simultaneous, different and sometimes incompatible senses of the present teaches us not only about the past and future, but in Berlant's words, "of what's going on and what seems possible and blocked in personal/collective life" (4). For Berlant, in many studies on hope and optimism (including Munoz's) "the present is more or less a problem to be solved by hope's temporal projection" (13). She differentiates her project by positing that for her optimism and hope as social relations are attachments oriented towards pleasure, bearing world-making features that organize the present, but may or may not be hooked on futures (14)[19].

Berlant's position on the relation between her investment in the present and optimism is made even more clear through her dialogue with Lee Edelman, resulting in their joint essay/study *Sex, or the Unbearable* (2014), coincidently one of the best fairly recent contributions I have encountered on the lingering consequences of the anti-social debate, and its persisting presence in queer theoretical thought. In *Sex, or the Unbearable* Berlant and Edelman attempt to find the connecting dots between their projects as they think about optimism and the role it carries when sex is approached *as a scene of relational negativity*. At the center of Berlant's and Edelman's dialogue stands the question of not just what negativity is and what optimism is, how do they overlap and diverge, how do they constitute the act of sex, and the narrative on it, can there be a negativity that is both productive and destabilizing, optimism that is not stupidly naïve or cruel; but also – what sex is. Sex as a site of relationality invested with hope, expectations and anxiety, but also subjected to the pressures of legal

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[19] In his study *Queer Optimism* (2009), Michael D. Snediker similarly reflects on the role optimism has in queer theory and its dependence on time and temporality. Utopic optimism, or the kind of optimism that has marked queer theory and critical theory more generally is attached to a future, according to Snediker. The version of optimism he proposes – queer optimism – is not promissory, and instead of being attached to a future, or, futurally oriented, is embedded in its own immanent present (2).

sanction, social judgment, unconscious drives, and contradictory desires, while offering the prospect of discovering new ways of being and of being in the world, as well as confronting our limit in ourselves or in another – which ultimately makes sex one of the sites of the *unbearable* (my emphasis, see vii).

As they think about what sex without optimism would entail for the self as a physic and political subject, Berlant and Edelman address negativity not as antisocial, but an irreducible dimension of the social. Therefore, this dialogue, as they state, rejects projects of queer optimism that try to repair the subject's negativity by grounding an experiential positivity, and contributes to a set of aversion and commitments that has been called "the antisocial turn" in queer theory, turning around controversy centered around what embracing and living with negativity really means (5). As such, this mutual project of Berlant and Edelman is invested in rethinking negativity, and its position in the antisocial turn.

Negativity points to many kinds of relations, from psychic conflicts that constitute the subject to social forms of negation that produce subjectivity, showing the interaction between the optimism contained in negativity and the reparativity sex induces, in a Sedgwickian manner (see viii). For Berlant and Edelman negativity encompasses both the psychic and the social. By signifying the anti-normative, political potential that both sex and temporality have for the processes of (de)constructing the subject, negativity stands for the inherent contradictions in the fabric of (self)relation that are out of synch with themselves, disruptive, disturbing, and yet productive. Negativity does not erase optimism, and vice versa, optimism, or sex without optimism does not leave negativity behind. Rather, it entails a constant engagement with negativity, opening the self to an otherness that has the potential to undo it.

For Edelman, optimism presents itself as "orientation toward a future, toward something always yet to come, conceived as bestowing a value on life by way of the future anterior, by way of the life one *will have lived*, conceived, moreover, as justifying this refusal

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to live it *while one could*" (original emphasis, 3). This condition though, so wide and universal that structures experiences and their narratives is inherently under the risk of a "regulatory discipline", transforming itself into what Edelman designates as Panoptimism (3). Berlant has a similar interest in what happens when optimism becomes a tool for cruelty. This is where Berlant's and Edelman's interests converge, as they both position sex as a scene of a relation that brings with itself a negativity that has the potential to disrupt normative existences, but it also functions as a sphere subjected to regulatory control and discipline. This double valence, or ambiguity, is what they are addressing as the negativity present in sex. The site of interaction between optimism and negativity in sex, characterized by hopes and expectations, as well as unconscious desires, but also subjected to repressive actions and societal pressures, is what produces sex as the *unbearable*. The unbearable then, I believe, carries a certain encyclopedic, almost all-encompassing value that is the result of thinking through opposites. As I will show throughout this dissertation, the encyclopedic as a feature of the unbearable in sex is translated through a temporal complexity in Joyce and Woolf.

In many ways, Berlant's and Edelman's book shows that debates in queer thought on the antisocial thesis, in their thinking framed as optimism vs. negativity, still position sex at their center. Sex, it seems, is "what survives", after the title of the second chapter of this study. Sex, for Berlant and Edelman presupposes an encounter with a disruptive force, something that undoes a fixed identity, leading to an understanding of sexuality as a scene for radical incoherence (3). Sex is the invisible presence in both *Ulysses* and *The Waves.* That is one of the queerest aspects of these two works, I argue – that sex is made present through time.

> In the misrecognitions that sex entails and their recurrent neutralization by optimism's stabilizing impulse, I aim to locate the queerness that works as that optimism's self-resistance: *the queerness that is less an identity than an ongoing effort of divestiture, a practice of undoing* (Edelman, my emphasis 19).

Queerness then, is an intrinsic force that sex possess, or rather, that results from the misrecognitions sex performs, and that is able to reject cruel optimism's naivety and functions as a mechanism of resistance and undoing, claims Edelman. Stylistically, this definition carries some similarities with Sedgwick's open mesh of possibilities, but it also emphasizes one aspect that is of importance for me here: the (un)doing of subjectivity. Both Berlant and Edelman see sex as a site for experiencing an intensified encounter with a force that disorganizes accustomed ways of being. That encounter, as Edelman specifies, for both of them, remains bound to a nonfutural approach to sex as something non-teleological, non-normative, and disruptive of meaning-making processes: this is what sex without optimism means for them (11). This is a move oriented towards displacing a more commonly held view of sex: separating it from its normative function as a mechanism of emotional cohesion that sustains hetero/homo-normativity (13). As Berlant writes, that is the meaning of sex, sex as a liminal activity, that has the exceptional positionality to bring one into an ambiguous state, dissociate a self from a normativity (14).

And finally, the disruptive, radical force sex has in forcing the subject to face its fragmentariness only has relevance when time is viewed as one of the central factors of this process. The unbearable and the irreparable are, I believe, not only factors in addressing the drama of sexual negativity and subjectivity formation, but also facets of an inescapable temporal crisis, played out in this dialogue between Berlant and Edelman in a psychoanalytical account on the subject's formation and its political persona. This dialogue, as Berlant points out towards the end of their conversation, organized around two different approaches towards an account of "the subject's and the world's dialectic of intractable negativity" brings their attitudes together as "like-minded polemicists against futurity" (115-116). Edelman's refusal of futurity is based on his view that the optimism in futurity allows the straight-identified world to negate the unbearability of its own encounter with its irreducible otherness, a process in

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which the disturbing enemies, that is, queers, need to be subordinated. Berlant, on the other hand, refuses futurity's presumption that contemporary structural subordinations are intractable, while insisting that there are ways to live in a transformable now (see 116). The main temporal aspect of Berlant's theory is investing in and re-inventing the generative now, the present, while Edelman's is a refusal of a non-transformative future.

Edelman's and Berlant's dialogue, as well as many others engaged with questions positioned at the center of the antisocial turn do not attempt to redeem negativity, but to enact it, leading to an openness that is contradictory, unmanageable, but also, queer and relational. Thus, these two approaches, Berlant's and Edelman's addressed here, but also the works of queer theorists who think about "optimism", "utopia", "positivity" and "negativity", "failure", "pessimism", converge and interact more than it might appear so on the surface, as this dialogue shows. Berlant's utopianism acknowledges the persistence of structural constraints of these meaning-making processes (sex, narrative, subjectivity) as she is looking for ways to re-engage the present. Edelman's focus on what is persistent in negativity determines his approach to queerness, but at the same time it is oriented towards how that encounter can change how we live and think politically (70), thereby presuming a futural orientation.

What comes across most clearly when temporality is seen as a contributing factor to this debate, is that queer time as a topic of interest often gets embedded in registers of affect and emotion. Edelman, Bersani, Muñoz (and Duggan, in the later dialogue) all address – more or less explicitly – a preoccupation with the relational (and thus temporal) logics of these so-called "positive" and "negative" affects, and from there, their significance for political countenance, social reforms, revolutionary potential, as well as theoretical developments in queer thought and studies. The two sides of the (anti)social debate that animated much of the scholarship on queer time are invested in rethinking the role "negative" and "positive" affects

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and emotions have and can have in thinking about sexuality and temporality[20]. While "queer negativity" scholars like Edelman and Bersani are interested and work more with shame, guilt, melancholy, grumpiness, others, like Berlant, Love, Muñoz, Snediker work with the affective activity of another range that includes optimism, happiness, feeling good.

Queer temporality takes on a lot of directions: from a rejection of futurity (Edelman), through a rejection of the limited "now" (Muñoz), to a re-invention of the transformable "now" (Berlant), and a call for an investment in the past (Love). These different approaches place at the forefront of their investigations of queer temporality a tension between concepts that are entangled in thinking about what queer is, and living a queer life means: negativity, utopia, optimism, failure. What I believe is important for defining queer, especially when used as a marker for such a malleable topic of interest as time, are two aspects that I keep in mind during my analyses of queer time in *Ulysses* and *The Waves*: its very situatedness in a physical context, that encompasses the body – or, emotions, affections, intimacies, desires, practices, explicitly connected to non-normative forms of sex/sexuality; and its inherent ability to surpass this very physicality, as it is maintaining it, by functioning as a political/social/cultural metaphor without a fixed referent (see Eng, Halberstam and Muñoz 1).

These the two sides of queer I am addressing can also be represented through the past (signifying queer's historicity as a term that gains its meaning through a sexual struggle) and the future (signifying its open-endedness that allows for a political possibility to be born out of

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[20] It should also be noted that Sedgwick's brilliant complexification of the distinction between the paranoid and reparative modes that also negates the simple divide between "positive" and "negative" affects is very much in the background of this analysis (see "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading; or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Introduction Is about You." In *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction* (1997), edited by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick). I believe that looking at this debate and the meaning affect (and temporality) assume through Sedgwick's framework would definitely take it a step further. However, the somewhat limited scope of this chapter (and dissertation) stops me from exploring this link at this point. Sedgwick does not explicitly address temporality in that essay (unlike the other studies I use here), and that might have been my reason in refraining to use her essay. Berlant's and Edelman's *Sex, or the Unbearable*, that I discuss in some length is also very much indebted to Sedgwick's paranoid and reparative modes in their contribution to the topic – as the study itself is an homage to Sedgwick.

the spaces between the gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning). The two sides are not fixed entities, but as the discussed strands of approaches show, their mutual, sometimes contradictory, always necessary interactions allow for the constant process of queering that produces queer as a result of the back and forth between its past and future. I believe that this formative movement emerges from the way the potentially transformable now, the indeterminate tomorrow and the re-usable past are positioned as principal features when defining queer. Queer carries with itself not only a highly charged political potential and a historical heritage of a sexual struggle, but a decidedly present temporal ambiguity that has produced a lot of debate on how should queer thought define, interact, and project the past, present and future.

2.6. Rethinking Queer Negativity

Berlant's and Edelman's theoretical experiment does not only emphasize the role sex assumes in defining queer, but also draws attention to the role sex has/can have in re-positioning the stakes when it comes to the antisocial debate. In a move that brings them closer to Bersani's initial emphasis on sex's self-shattering powers, their essay also aims to offer a new reading on queer negativity and its impacts. In his study *Disturbing Attachments: Genet, Modern Pederasty, and Queer History*, Kadji Amin traces the alternative history of psychoanalytic queer negativity, connecting the celebration of the self-shattering and socially corrosive effects of sexuality to what he terms "liberationist negativity" (78). He argues that there is a split in the heart of queer theory when it comes to gay liberation: on the one side there is the more familiar utopian liberationism that celebrates the culture-building aspects of homosexual desire and its revolutionary ideals that lead into a queer futurity; on the other hand, a liberationist-inspired, but psychoanalytic negativity that emphasizes the corrosive effects queer desire has on identity and society (78-79).

Bersani is one of the influencers of this brand of psychoanalytic queer negativity. "This is a disturbing genealogy", admits Amin, "since Bersani himself critiques all those involved in 'the redemptive reinvention of sex' as echoing the rhetoric of sexual liberationism, which he presumably eschews" (95). But for Amin, Bersani, and some time before him, Guy Hocquenghem[21], as well as Edelman, represent an alternative gay liberationist affective orientation, one that he terms "liberationist negativity". Amin's alternative tracing of queer negativity's role for queer theory positions Guy Hocquenghem's work on the disintegrating, corrosive, disorganizing power of sex – more than any other gay liberationists – as an anticipator of this queer theoretical orientation. Nevertheless, there is a difference between this gay liberationist stream of thought, which follows Hocquenghem's lead, that indeed addresses sex as an anti-identiterian practice, but still believes in its politically resistant, revolutionary, even utopian potential; and what Amin calls psychoanalytic queer negativity (Bersani-influenced, including Edelman, Dean as its representatives).

Maybe not precisely celebrating the positive political and ethical effects of queer erotics, liberationist negativity is still built around an exploration and emphasis of the role sex and sexuality play in transforming the existing social order, with its "positioning of jouissance and/or sexual desire as the privileged site(s) through which the social order and its identities can be shattered" (95). Amin argues that Bersani, Hocquenghem and to an extent Edelman, "pose sex as a privileged and unique practice whose value consists in its corrosion of social identities and challenge to the social order" (213). Contrary to their initial intents, both liberationist futurity and psychoanalytic negativity idealize desire and jouissance as the privileged sites through which the social order and the identities that compose it can be shuttered.

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[21]Tim Dean also writes about Hocquenghem and his "Homosexual Desire" (1972) – a Deleuzian reading of Freud – as the proper initiator of rethinking sociality and the antisocial thesis (see "Antisocial Thesis" 827).

Although Bersani and Edelman are quite critical of the utopianism of sexual liberationist politics, Amin is right to point out that arguing for sex's self-shattering powers does nevertheless offer a paradigm in which sex possess the potentiality for a utopian redemption. Berlant's and Edelman's essay quite clearly proves this dynamic, the codependency of optimism and negativity, utopianism and failure when it comes to addressing sex's self-shattering potentials. Or, as Amin puts it, bluntly: *sexual self-shattering is not a utopian escape from the social order, but a method of its maintenance* (emphasis in original 101). In fact, the source of sexuality's negativity, claims Amin, is less its fragmentation of corporeal and psychic integrity than its uncontrollable historicity – that reflects the ways in which sexual and bodily pleasures, always a part of a socially-embodied, ideologically-produced imaginary are also a residue of the past felt in the present (see 101). Perhaps, then, this ambiguity is due to queer being not only the most mobile, undefinable, untraceable of terms – as it has often been defined – but also the "stickiest of terms" (see Amin 184), a highly charged theoretical and political tool that can evoke, as I have shown through this chapter – simultaneously and contradictorily, concepts such as optimism, negativity, utopianism, radicalism. And it is precisely the historicity of queerness, or the historicity of the erotic, that causes this "stickiness", as Amin names it, and that also determines the double practice of escaping and maintaining, structuring, and disintegrating the sexual and social.

Thinking about queer time as a central aspect in approaching the "positive" and "negative" affects at the core of the antisocial debate, especially by contrasting the complexities of Edelman's and Muñoz's positions, has helped me realize how much queerness is entangled in an effort of rethinking forms of sociability and relationality. Queer time, in this dissertation, is always addressed as a facet of the power the sexual has in creating new subjectivities and inventing models of queer sociability and relationality. That, for me – and I believe for Muñoz and Edelman – is a utopian investment in queerness. Muñoz' temporal model, that aims to

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replace the prison of the "here and now" by drawing on the past in reinventing the future, however utopian, uses the inherent negative force contained in queerness. Even Edelman's project that equates queerness with a refusal of futurity, clearly shows that queerness does not only destabilize sociability, but also produces it: with its mere inability to ever completely reject the futural. Or, as long as it proposes a system invested with the hope that sexual self-shattering will introduce new forms of sociality and subjectivity, Edelman's theory is still invested in a rethinking of the futural.

One of the most significant challenges in addressing the point of interaction between utopian futurity and queer negativity as markers of queer time, stems from the sometimes unresolvable dynamics between the different approaches they reflect. There are multiple resonances between the ways in which queer scholars think and write about time, but often times, they are not harmonious. Part of the reason for these disharmonies is the fact that many of them work in different traditions and rely on sometimes opposing scholarly notions: from Freudian and Lacanian models (in psychoanalytical and antisociality works, such as Edelman's and Bersani's), through Derridean spectrality (in historiographical works, as Freccero's) to Bloch's political idealism (in critical race studies, as Muñoz' work). This diversity of approaches also symbolizes the various intellectual traditions that have experienced and conceptualized time as cyclical, multi-layered, reversible, instead of linear, progressive and straight-forward, and that in their own terms have directly or indirectly influenced the work on queer time I have been outlining here. In other words, time's nature as "an existentially omnipresent, but philosophically evasive concept and phenomenon" (Martínez and Schmid in Meister and Schernus ix) that has long marked Western thought, tradition and art, from Augustine to Paul Ricoeur, has most definitely marked the works of Freud, Lacan, Derrida, Bloch etc., as their conceptions linger on in the re-workings of queer temporality I am addressing here.

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However, multiple, asynchronous, nonlinear timelines are not automatically queer, or in line with queer projects, political or social. I argue that queer time is queer when it promotes a certain tendency for a re-exploration of the social, political, and subjective. As I have shown here, the persistent interest in rethinking forms of relationality and sociality via de-centering subjectivity, is what defines the antisocial thesis in queer theory. Therefore, my approach to queer time in the next few chapters is aligned to a way of thinking that places the rethinking of sociality and subjectivity at the center of queerness. This project is an attempt to think through the effects, implications, powers that sex (in the widest possible sense) has in (re)imagining subjectivity, temporality, and narrative.

Without attempting to separate Bersani's work (especially "Is the Rectum a Grave?") from its very palpable setting – that is, its invested-ness in gay male sex, the AIDS context and a psychoanalytic approach – what drew me to Bersani's line of argumentation in the first place was his interest in examining the dangers and possibilities sex offers in reimagining subjectivity, that I believe is one of the most important aspects in how the issue of queer temporality has been positioned. In such way, that very general, and probably simplifying claim if read only in that manner – sex shatters the self – is the very basic argument that structures this thesis. Looking at how sex structures the self through temporality (in my project, by using the category of literary character and in narratives, as I am reading literary works here) is the main focus of the following chapters.

In an effort for escaping the trap of using queer time as a solitary tool for interpreting narratives that would lead to its reification, I do not follow one queer temporal model in this dissertation. My goal here is to trace the temporal power of queer by carving out spaces in which it sometimes functions as a utopian futurity and other times as disruptive negativity in two modernist narratives. Meaning, I do not aim to analyze the queering of time in 'Penelope' as a refusal of the future following Edelman; or as a temporal amalgamation of past, present

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and future in *The Waves* following Muñoz – although I do believe there is a bit of both happening in the two novels, as the following chapters will show. What I am interested in here is mapping out a concept of nonlinear temporality that traces the disintegration of stable subjectivity – a crucial aspect of my approach to queer time – and that is intimately connected to queer desires, emotions, practices.

At the same time, I do not wish to disregard the differences between these two models of thinking about queerness and time through queer(ing) subjectivity, outlined throughout this chapter. As it will become clear, I find Muñoz' queer futurity that is the result of the intertwinement of the three temporal axes, a more applicable temporal model when thinking about the queer time's intricacies in *Ulysses* and *The Waves*. However, I also believe Edelman's (and Bersani's) emphasis on queerness as a practice of undoing subjectivity can be productively used when looking at how queer time functions in these novels. Although I agree with Amin's reading of Bersani and Edelman as ultimately developing a paradigm of sex's self-shattering powers that offers a narrative for a utopian redemption, that is exactly the axis I am interested in, and whose implications I wish to consider together with Muñoz' temporal utopian model. One of the advantages of working with literary texts is that a such a strong and perhaps counterintuitive claim – as nonnormative sex has the power to shatter the self – becomes more visible when applied to experimental modernist character formations.

Or, in this dissertation, I am looking at the role queerness plays, through time, in the formation of the modernist character. My use of queer here is distanced from identity and desire-related notions, as I address queer as a transitive and transversal movement athwart or across (see Sedgwick, *Tendencies* xii). But at the same time, I am interested in tracing a queer erotic whose grounding in an understanding of sex as a subject-shattering practice produces the non-normative temporality of movements athwart and across. What is the temporal effect of sex as a self-shattering practice or can queer function as a feature of this self-shuttering? –

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these questions lie at the heart of how queer time functions in these two novels by Joyce and

Woolf.

Chapter 3: Contradictory Times and Characters in 'Penelope'

3.1. Ulyssean Times

In *Ulysse[22]s*, more so than in other works, Joyce is a writer of micro-time (Senn "Narrative Dissimulation of Time" 145). Unlike *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce's second novel that he had conceived as a of temporal encyclopedia, and that has since been interpreted as documenting the entire history of the world, but also "what has not happened, or at least 'has not' yet happened, and outlin[ing] all the various iterations of what might happen" (see Conley 71), *Ulysses* deals, first of all, with subjective, human, or personal time. And this aspect of time, time's affective intimacy and its relation to sexuality, narrative and language, are at the center of my approach in the analysis of this novel, focused on *Ulysses*' last episode, 'Penelope'.

Ulysses takes place on one single day – the 16 June 1904 – compressing years into less than twenty-four hours. It is a truism that every narrative can condense and expand time: what is written in a few sentences can take years in the fictive reality. The two novels I am analyzing in this dissertation can also be mentioned as two representative examples of this power of narrative: *Ulysses* is a novel that focuses on less than twenty-four hours, or the bulk of one day – 16 June and technically, some of the following day, as the very last episode takes place after midnight. *The Waves,* on the other hand, represents the entire lifetime of six characters.

A few Ulyssean are episodes usually mentioned when it comes to their temporal qualities. 'Wandering Rocks' with its panoramic view of Dublin through nineteen vignettes that focus on different characters and their wanderings through the city is probably the most often-quoted case, as simultaneity is one of this episode's leitmotifs[23]. Senn, for example, also

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[22] All quotes used from the revised Hans Gabler edition of *Ulysses* (1986), Vintage Books.

[23] See Senn "The Narrative Dissimulation of Time" in *Myriadminded Man: Jottings on Joyce* (1986), eds. Bosinelli, Pugliatti, Zacchi; Senn "Random Instances of Joyce's Handling of Time" in *New Perspectives on James Joyce: Ignatius Loyola, Make Haste to Help Me!* (2009), eds. Suárez Castiñeira, Altuna García de Salazar, Fernández Vicente; Lawrence "The Odyssey of Style in Ulysses" (1981).

mentions 'Sirens' and 'Oxen of the Sun' that seem to have double (temporal) structures. In 'Sirens' the story is told twice, in sequence, while 'Oxen of the Sun' tells two stories: one focused on the characters (Bloom's presence in the Maternity hospital) and the other on the history of language (presenting the history of English and its development) (Senn, "Random Instances" 28). Curiously enough, 'Penelope' does not get a mention that often, despite the pretty radical temporal transformations that mark its narrative.

Unlike classical narratives that tend to tell of events that occurred in the past[24], *Ulysses* for the most part tells events as they simultaneously occur, writes Norris. "In other words, erzählte Zeit (story time) and Erzählzeit (narrative time) generally overlap in *Ulysses* – as they do in cinematic narrative" (*The Value of James Joyce* 46). 'Penelope' is a peculiar example for this category, as during a first read, it might seem that it belongs to the group of episodes that do not comply with this overlap between story and narrative time, as it consists of retelling memories of the past. However, as my further analysis will show, narrative time and story time overlap in Molly's monologue, as she is experiencing the passing of (past) time that she is narrating. For Molly, there is no (temporal) difference between these two planes: the past she is recalling and the present in which she is doing the recalling. These two spheres intertwine, creating a new type of temporality.

Joyce creates the illusion that language and what language sets out to describe, the external reality, are one (Senn, "Narrative Dissimulation" 146). Language, in its nature, is linear, and cannot possibly be imitative, when it comes to representing the complexities of time, notes Senn. Even in an episode such as 'Wandering Rocks' where Joyce connects different locations, and creates the (false) impression of rendering simultaneous events at the same time, resulting in a panoramic view of Dublin, the reader will still be faced with an imitation of simultaneity, since even if she can move from one street in Dublin to the next one in a different

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[24] See my discussion on the narrativization of the past as a feature of classical narratives in the introduction.

part of the city with just a word, the two events taking place at those two locations cannot be narrated simultaneously, in one go (Senn 147). Language has to present every action, every event, one thing at a time, even the most synchronous events in reality.

Senn proposes the concept of allotopy as an appropriate category to capture theoretically the sense that narratives achieve, the feeling of elsewhereness that while one thing happens here, something else happens there (148). If we are here, we cannot possibly be there – that is what allotopic diversity expresses. Elsewhereness, or allotopy is a normal fact in life, and it is a feature of narratives as well. "What is projected as simultaneous has to be arranged in a nebeneinander on the page and is read as nacheinander" (Senn 150).

These two temporal categories, Nacheinander (sequential) and Nebeneinander (simultaneous) have become categories commonly used by Joycean scholars (especially when it comes to analyzing the nature of Stephen's thoughts) as they appear also appear in *Ulysses* and are used by Stephen. At the beginning of the third episode 'Proteus', Stephen is strolling down the beach, thinking to himself:

> You are walking through it howsomever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the Nacheinander. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible. Open your eyes. No. Jesus! If I fell over a cliff that beetles o'er his base, fell through the Nebeneinander ineluctably! (U. 3.11-15).

Originally used by German dramatist G.E. Lessing in his study Laokoon, Nacheinander (one after another) and Nebeneinander (side by side) are supposed to distinguish between the subjects of poetic/narrative and visual. In the first case, when it comes to language and narratives, action is progressive, it consists of different parts appearing one after the other in a sequence of time (Nacheinander); while in visual arts all the different parts coexist side by side (Nebeneinander) (see Gifford and Seidman 45). In other words, vision is simultaneous, language is sequential. Narrative is not only determined, but exists as the linear temporal progression of events, represented by words.

Senn also uses them in addressing the inherent sequentiality of language. He names the process of disentangling time in texts narrative dissimulation, arguing that what in reality is simultaneous, language cannot treat and represent as such, and that is why it serializes it, synchronizes it, dismembers time's entity. What in reality can happen at the same time language divides into parts (153)[25]. Senn is right in pointing out that language always has to take one thing at a time, narration resorting to a serial treatment of events ("Narrative Dissimulation" 150). But what happens when events exist simultaneously in someone's consciousness, with no clear divide between their temporal diversity, or as one complex time unit, as in Molly's case?

Molly's monologue is one of those instances where what Senn names allotopic synchronism is almost made possible. In a very literal sense, 'Penelope' is one of the most allotopic chapters, following Senn's mode of interpretation: We are constantly aware of what is happening elsewhere, as Molly remembers things that are taking place elsewhere, temporally and spatially. It seems to me that what we have in 'Penelope' is the opposite of Senn's allotopy (when simultaneous events are represented synchronistically in text, leading to narrative dissimulation). What the reader encounters in Molly's monologue is the simultaneous narrativization of synchronous events. Molly's life consists of a temporal progression of events: For example, she was born in Gibraltar, moved to Dublin, married Leopold Bloom, had two children with him and so on. These are all not events that are taking place at the same time, but at rather different phases in life, and here, they are combined in (an ever failed, yet almost achievable) narrative simultaneity. Amalgamation, or an interweaving of distinctive temporalities is what I believe is happening in 'Penelope', as multiple timeframes are neatly combined in a telling of Molly's thoughts.

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[25] Buck Mulligan comes down the stairs bearing a bowl all at once, but we first read "came" only then "bearing a bowl", to use one of Senn's examples (see 155).

In 'Penelope' the condensation of events from different temporal planes (the past, present, and the future) is done in such way that underplays their distinction, merging them into one indistinguishable fusion of times. And although, as Senn states, allotopic synchronism is quite impossible to achieve in language, I believe that the closest we get to experiencing synchronism's full effects in *Ulysses* is in 'Penelope', through Molly's monologue where two, three or more things happening at the same time are intertwined into one whole. The intermingling of events, and through them, temporal planes in 'Penelope' as motivated by queer elements in the text, and the manner in which intertwining temporalities in the episode produces its non-sequential narrative lies at the heart of my analysis in this Joyce section. But first, I would like to outline how time in 'Penelope' is differentiated from the rest of the novel, by comparing Bloom, Stephen, and Molly's individual temporal universes. This comparison I develop in the following section will serve me as an entry point in analyzing Molly's characterization as a particular Joycean strategy in the rest of this chapter.

3.2. The Times of Stephen, Molly and Bloom

Joyce, claims Frank Budgen in his early Ulyssean study, *James Joyce and the Making of Ulysses* (1934), is greatly interested in time in *Ulysses*. But, with the exception of Stephen who is concerned with time on a philosophical level as a medium of life and destiny, says Budgen, and who has a rather troubled relationship with the past, all the other characters only a social time sense, that is part of the mentality of the period and nothing more (131). In Budgen's reading, even this sense of time arises out of a purely technical need for coordinating one's daily routine. Stephen is the exception in *Ulysses*, claims Budgen. Stephen (and sometimes Bloom's) perceptions of time have been addressed on more than one occasion[26], but Molly's have been more or less disregarded. My analysis of queerness in 'Penelope' as translated

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[26] See more in Rickard's *Joyce's Book of Memory: The Mnemotechnic of Ulysses* (1999) and *Mixing Memory and Desire: Narrative Strategies and the Past in Ulysses* (2009), ed. by Beja and Fogarty.

through the representation of time in this episode, approaches Molly's experience of time as a determining narrative aspect of the novel. In the next few pages, I will look at how time has been read as an important aspect for Stephen's and Bloom's characters while arguing why Molly's experiences can be addressed from a different angle, and even more, why is that approach relevant for an overall reading of temporality in the novel.

In *Ulysses* "we find both a modern awareness of the instability of personal identity and a nostalgic longing for unified and purposive experience", writes Rickard (21). Stephen, more so than other characters, seems to unite these two tendencies. "I am another now and yet the same" (U.1.311-312), thinks Stephen in the first episode, remembering his first days in Clongowes. Haunted by the question of how one's self can keep its continuity, he seems afraid, but also interested in the effects the passing of time has for the dissolution of the I Stephen's thoughts on the duality of these two process: memory's power in preserving the self, and time's capacity in dissolving it, are clearly represented in a scene in 'Scylla and Charybdis', as he is musing over a debt. He thinks to himself:

> You owe it. Wait. Five months. Molecules all change. I am other I now. Other I got pound. Buzz buzz. But I, entelechy, form or forms, am I by memory because under everchanging forms. I that sinned and prayed and fasted. A child that Conmee saved from pandies. I, I and I.I. (U.9. 209-213).

This train of thought clearly shows his acceptance of time's transformative powers, as he wanders, a bit mockingly, whether he is the same person that owes the debt as time has passed by, and he has (physically, materially) transformed. In the end, he acknowledges the essential unity of his self, and the role memory plays in maintaining it. In an essay titled "Mixing Memory and Desire: Narrative Strategies and the Past in Ulysses", Richard P. Lynch focuses on Stephen's relationship with personal and national history, by using models of passive and active memory. Passive memory is used mostly for registering and storing impressions, while active memory entails the creative transformation of a certain experience (in ed. Beja and

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Fogarty 65-66). In both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, Stephen deals more effectively with the historical past than with his personal memories, claims Lynch. He applies the active model of memory as he thinks about Ireland's past and this enables him to create a liberating narrative, i.e. to escape from traditional narratives (66). With regards to his personal memories, he is not able to apply this creativity (69). Ironically, his personal memories are less intimate than the national ones he recreates if we follow Lynch's reading.

Although I am not sure a clear difference can be established between "passive" and "active" memory (since every act of remembering always entails a creative transformation) I draw upon Lynch's point about the two different models of time in *Ulysses*: national and personal, and the connections that exist between them. Lynch does not consider Molly as an example of someone who uses active memory in approaching her past, but in my reading, queerness is the leading principle of her relationship with the past. Her attempt to think through the past and the resulting narratives she (and the text) creates are motivated by her (re)living of past experiences. Stephen, as Lynch shows, is more invested in the creation of national memories. His most famous statement regarding the past is certainly his experiencing of history as "a nightmare from which I am trying to awake" (U.2.377). Stephen's primary relationship with the past unravels through historical and national memories that come to assume the significance of personal memories.

As someone who is philosophically preoccupied with the nature of time and memory, he is aware of the fluidity of his own self, but, as Lynch argues, his inability to process his own memories stops him from realizing this knowledge. As Stephen constantly tries to avoid the past, not being able to bear its burden and afraid of its consequences, he cannot go further, so he is caught up in a nostalgic longing for a unified and coherent self. He tries to form a stable self, but all that is available to him as building material are the memories he is not able to

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transform. Hence, although aware of the duplicity, he is unable to productively reuse time, making this dynamic his primary relationship to time.

Through Leopold Bloom's character, Joyce represents a nostalgic longing for the past. There are moments when Bloom consciously thinks about the inevitability of human change and the role time plays in it, like Stephen, but even then, he is immersed in the desire to bring back the past that once was (happier). Although caught up in memories, Bloom often struggles to remember the facts of his life, getting names, phone numbers wrong. He is aware that his memory is failing him, as he tells himself: "What was the name of that priestylooking chap was always squinting in when he passed? […] Pen something. Pendennis? My memory is getting. Pen…?"[27] (U.18.176-9). "Bloom's desire to remember things accurately is a recurring motif", notes Crispy (187), and I believe this also points to the fact that Bloom is consciously trying to first recall and then relive past memories. Bloom's efforts to remember the past that he idealizes can be read as a clear sign of nostalgia. There's also a connection between sexuality and memory for Leopold, a facet of time that will be more pronounced for Molly. The death of his son Rudy, the traumatic memory Rickard claims is stopping Leopold Bloom from living his present, is the memory that presumably causes Bloom's sexual impotence ("Could never like it again after Rudy", U.8.610) and that effectively stopped Molly and Leopold's sex life.

In his analysis of Stephen's and Bloom's temporal universes, Rickard uses traumatic memories and compares them with Freudian symptoms in emphasizing that experiences of trauma always converge around multiple events and depend on repetition of the same instants (see 36). Stephen's and Bloom's traumatic memories riddled with pain and guilt (such as the death of Stephen's mother and Rudy, Bloom's son, or the suicide of Bloom's father) have

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[27] This connection between forgetting exact details of names and places in the act of recalling memories, will also assume an important role in my analysis of the dynamics of queering time in 'Penelope'. However, I believe that this dynamic that has a more pronounced role for Molly is a recurring theme for Joyce, as he uses it for Leopold as well. In a meta-textual reference that might even emphasize the significance of this connection in 'Penelope', Leopold is trying to remember a name starting with "Pen".

prevented them both from establishing a connection with their pasts, by cutting them off from the present (36). Their inability to mourn these events properly and productively is what puts them both in the position of reliving the memories of the traumas, that bring up other repressed memories equally traumatic such as Stephen's continued rejection of Catholicism and his refusal of authority and Bloom's sexual and masculine inadequacy (see 41-42). Although they seemingly have two different attitudes towards the past (Stephen trying to escape from it, Bloom trying to relive it), their experience of time is quite similar. Their inability to face the traumatic memories that disrupt the passing of their time, determines their perception of time: They relive memories, or attempt to escape them, by consciously reenacting them, leading to a search for lost time that always fails (35). Even when they are aware of its more complex dimensions, both Bloom and Stephen do not accept time's inherent power to transform one's life and they remain closed to its possibilities.

For Stephen, time is history. Time is reduced to only one aspect of its unimaginable entirety. Stephen feels afraid, excluded of time, as this quote from 'Proteus' nicely shows: "There all the time without you: and ever shall be, world without end" (U.3.27). Time becomes a signifier of an inaccessible world, an aspect of his life Stephen does not know how to approach. And for Bloom, time is a symbol for nostalgia. "Nostalgia idealizes and romanticizes the past at the expense of the present and future, and, like habit, it calcifies the past, anesthetizing present experience by robbing it out of its uniqueness and immediacy", argues Rickard (66). Nostalgia has a paralyzing power and stops the intertwining of past and present that the flow of time allows – and that is experienced by Molly. Unlike Stephen and Leopold, she experiences her past in a liberating way, as she is immersed in it, resulting with the blurring of the clear line between her memories and the present she lives in.

Molly, unlike Stephen and Bloom, does not consciously strive to relive or escape memories. Rather, she is already living them, as she thinks, in the present moment. In a certain

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manner, "memory" does not really capture the meaning behind what is contained in Molly's thoughts. The imprints of past events have a different value for Molly, as they still exist in her present. The multivalent force of time and the processes of transforming time represented by the category of temporality capture more fully Molly's utopian crossing of past, present and future, motivated by queerness – a process that will be addressed in the following two chapters. But before that, I will first outline the position and structure of 'Penelope' in *Ulysses* and take a closer look into the issue of characterization with regards to Molly. Understanding how queerness constructs Molly's character sets the stage, as I will show, for my reading of queer temporality in 'Penelope'.

3.3.   An Ambiguous Ending: The Clou of the Book

'Penelope' is the ambiguous ending of *Ulysses*. In a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, Joyce writes that the penultimate episode is "in reality the end of Ulysses" because 'Penelope' has no "beginning, middle or end" (LI 172). The book ends with the story of Bloom and Stephen, Odysseus and Telemachus, the father and the son. Homer does not give Penelope her own episode. As such, 'Penelope' exists in *Ulysses* as an afterthought, an end after the "proper" end. In Ulyssean scholarship, this episode is often addressed as a coda[28], coming after the real end of the book, the 'Ithaca' episode, which Joyce literally marked by placing a giant black dot at the end of this chapter[29].

In her field-defining monograph, *The Odyssey of Style in 'Ulysses'* (1981) Karen Lawrence claims that "Ithaca" is more of a parody of closure. This "proper" ending of *Ulysses*, with its seemingly closed form of question and answer, instead fades away in a dream language,

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[28] See Lawrence (203)

[29] The period that famously ends 'Ithaca' is physically subverted as it becomes Molly's period in the next episode, "pouring out of me like the sea anyhow he didnt make me pregnant as big as he is I dont want to ruin the clean sheets" introducing the end after the end (U. 18. 1123-1124). Molly's period is another marker of not only the body that leaks but also of the text that flows, not wanting to stop (see Van Boheemen 274, Mullin 497-508).

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with a never-ending inventory of events, while 'Penelope' with its seamless web of past and present and its apparent formlessness is nevertheless more of a conclusion of this book, however ambiguous and non-ending it may seem (203). In "Molly's Heavenly Body and the Economy of the Sign: The Invention of Gender in 'Penelope'", Christine Van Boheemen similarly analyzes Joyce's emotional inability to detach himself from the text, to end the text of *Ulysses* that comes haunting him back[30]. For Van Boheemen, 'Penelope' as the conclusion of the text functions as a "strategy of coping with ending in the act of ending" (274).

Probably the most famous and instructive note that Joyce made on the creation of 'Penelope' as an episode in *Ulysses* and Molly as a character can be found in a letter to his friend Frank Budgen, from the 12 August 1921, that I will quote in full here:

> Penelope is the clou of the book. The first sentence contains 2500 words. There are eight sentences in the episode. It begins and ends with the female words yes. It turns like the huge earth ball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning, its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb and cunt expressed by the words because, bottom (in all sense bottom button, bottom of the class, bottom of the sea, bottom of his heart), woman, yes. Though probably more obscene than any preceding episode it seems to me to be perfectly sane full amoral fertilizable untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited prudent indifferent Weib. Ich bin der [sic] Fleisch der stets bejaht" (see LI 170, and SL 285).

In a footnote, Ellman, the editor of the volume of letters, explains that clou is the French word for "star turn, or topper" (285). As for the German: "'Woman. I am the flesh that always affirms', Joyce is playing on Mephistopheles' identification of himself in Goethe's Faust, Act I: 'I am the spirit that always denies'" (Ellman in SL 285). Tracing the (French) meanings of "clou" (OED says: "the point of chief interest or attraction; French, literally, nail, from Latin clavus"), Van Boheemen sees 'Penelope' as the "crowning moment of the novel, but also the

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[30] See Van Boheemen 270-272 on Joyce's fascinating dreams about Molly coming to life and threatening him.

rivet of the text" (272). Moreover, she adds, "'clouer' means to 'fix with a pointed instrument,' such as a dagger (or a pen), and to reduce to silence" (ibid).

'Penelope' does not belong to the story, claims Joyce, and yet it is the episode that contains the clue/clou of the book. Even outside of its main story, it determines its stream and plot. 'Penelope' is the "indispensable countersign" to *Ulysses* (LI 160). And in this project, the function 'Penelope' has as a countersign will be explored on several levels, that is, through how: it uses and subverts gendered and sexual markers in constructing Molly Bloom as a (anti)character, it utilizes time as a channel of queer sexuality, and it disrupts narrative employing queerness' and time's malleability in the process. Joyce's characterization of Molly as the "clou" of the book that contains the clue of the narrative, and simultaneously hides it reducing it to silence, is both representative of the ambivalent manners in which 'Penelope' and Molly have been read, and of a larger modernist tradition of characterization. In the following section, I focus closely on Molly's character in *Ulysses* and the significance her characterization has for the novel. In doing that, I combine some insights from genetic criticism studies and literary reception – aiming to trace the creation of Molly Bloom as a character and 'Penelope' as an episode – with a literary theory-based analysis of the features of this character and the importance time has as a principle of her creation.

3.4. Approaching a Joycean Character

In texts like *Ulysses* the readers will be most drawn to characters and consider them "recognizable" since everything else in the narratives seems less so, claims Attridge. But, at the same time, even if recognizable, these characters are not what a reader would expect from a genre form such as the novel. Joyce's texts tend to disrupt the automatic process of recognition and identification, since "it requires unusual skill and commitment as a reader to preserve untroubled the illusion of character" (see "Joyce and the Ideology of Character" in *The Augmented Ninth* 153).

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Character is a never self-existing entity, argues James A. Snead, looking at the multiple approaches to the category of character that emphasize its dependence on other factors – social (Marxist), artistic (New Criticism), biographical (psychoanalytical, for Snead, Freudian and Lacanian). What all of these different strands of interpretation have in common is the belief that fully consistent and coherent characters are an impossible category, both in fiction and reality (see Snead "Some Prefatory Remarks on Character in Joyce" in *The Augmented Ninth* 143-144). This new critical approach to character has shifted over the decades of scholarship exploring the narrative portrayals of characters in fiction, especially the transformations modernist literature brought in the twentieth century. One can only think of Beckett or Robbe-Grillet and the French nouveau roman – two obvious examples of texts with new types of characters – to see the need of a more appropriate understanding of character.

The issue of Molly's characterization is part of a bigger modernist theme, related to the change in construction and presentation of characters that came about with modernism. In his study *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature*, Denis Brown describes modernism as "a movement that radically probed the nature of selfhood and problematized the means whereby 'self' could be expressed" (1). The questioning of subjectivity and the stable form of the self, leading to a proliferation of attitudes on the multitude and indeterminacy of the subject was certainly a modernist preoccupation. At the end of the 1990s, as the theoretical significance of identity as category was becoming more and more prominent, much attention was paid to the construction of subjects and identity in Joyce's works, including Brown's study quoted above, as well as Rickards's inquiry into memory in Joyce's works. Rickard claims that the ambiguity present in *Ulysses* that translates into Joyce's contradictory characters is a result of a clash between two models of subjecthood: one that represents a subject that is incomplete, fragmented, aware of its multiplicity and fluidity; and another, older system that still tries to put forward, or is haunted by the idea of a self-sufficient and coherent self (17). This ambiguity

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between the two models of thought that were prevalent and so important for the formation of modernist writings shapes *Ulysses* on multiple levels[31]: when it comes to plot, the linguistic and narrative aspects, or concerning character formation.

In an essay from the same cluster of talks on Joyce and characters quoted above, delivered at the Frankfurt Symposium and later published as *James Joyce: The Augmented Ninth* (1988), Daniel Ferrer identifies this recognizable Joycean ambiguity as uniting two methods of characterization. He argues that *Ulysses* simultaneously does two things: creates characters in such a way that it multiplies the features needed, accumulates details, fills the gaps (in a manner comparable to nineteenth century novelist writers); and then, uses all the apparatuses to destabilize this frame, basically carrying it to the extreme, in a way that becomes parodic, self-defeating, encyclopedic [32] (see "Characters in *Ulysses*" 148-49), ultimately impacting the development of narrative. The two processes, the destabilization of character and the parallel disintegration of narrative – will be addressed at length in chapter five.

In a reading that emphasizes how this tension can be interpreted in a feminist manner, Bonnie Kime Scott argues that the modernist (and Joycean) practice of "making [the characters] less unified, more evasive, and more difficult to contain and master than did their materialist, Edwardian forefathers can be qualified as 'feminizing characters'" ("Character, Joyce and Feminist Critical Approaches" in *The Augmented Ninth* 158-59). Following her lead, what I am mostly interested in here is how Molly Bloom's ambiguity built on the basis of

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[31] *Ulysses*' position as an example of contradictions has often been noted (see Van Dyck Card 17; Crispi 42). The collision of different models, such as: the more general cultural forces like nature and culture, life and art, mind and memory; or a more contained set of oppositions such as modernism vs. postmodernism, fragmentation vs. encyclopedic value, makes *Ulysses* a text of unresolved ambiguities, but also a transitional text between two systems of thoughts (see Rickard 5). This creative tension in large part stems from a very specific modernist aesthetics that, as was explained in my introductory chapter, brought together two very different, sometimes opposite cultural, technical, literary models reflecting the complexity and confusion existing in a changing world.

[32] This process is more significant in *Finnegans Wake* where "it is only in the double sense that we can legitimately talk of HCE and ALP as 'characters' in Finnegans Wake: they are persons only insofar as they are at the same time letters scattered across the text" (Attridge, "Characters in Ulysses" 154). This statement might sound like a literary truism, after all, fictional characters are always consisted of and themselves are letters, but *Finnegans Wake* takes this fact to its extreme. *Ulysses* does so in a subtler, maybe even a more complex (and difficult to notice) manner. In *Ulysses* we can still talk of, identify, and relate to coherent characters.

uniting contradictory features functions as an aspect of her queerness and constructs her temporality. In the following section, I will outline some of the main strands of criticism on Molly's character in Joycean scholarship as an entry-point into thinking of her as an ambiguous, queer character, for whose creation and perception, temporality plays a significant role.

3.5.   A Contradictory Character

Marc Shecnher gives a useful summary of Molly criticism up to the 1970s (still applicable today) in his study *Joyce in Nighttown: A Psychoanalytic Inquiry into Ulysses* (1974). Most of Molly's interpreters, he claims, have put her in one of two opposed camps: the "earth mother" camp and "the satanic mistress" or "thirty-shilling whore" camp (197). The first of these two critical streams, in whose interpretations Molly was often seen and read as an Earth Goddess, the Earth Mother, or the "Gea Tellus" is certainly the older one, as it finds its basis in a line in the 'Ithaca' chapter, where Molly is represented in bed, "reclined semilaterally, left, left hand under head, right leg extended in a straight line and resting on left leg, flexed, in the attitude of Gea-Tellus, fulfilled, recumbent, big with seed" (U. 17. 2312-2314). On two other occasions, Joyce also emphasized this idea of Molly as a mythical Earth Goddess: in a letter to Harriet Shaw Weaver, where he says that with 'Penelope', "[i]n conception and technique I tried to depict the earth which is prehuman and presumably posthuman" (LI 180) , and in another often-cited letter focused on 'Penelope' and sent to Frank Budgen, where he talks of the episode itself as a "huge earth ball [that turns] slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning" (LI 170).[33]

In the first few decades after the publication of *Ulysses*, this was a rather popular reading of Molly. Starting from there, many of Joyce's early critics and readers, focused exclusively on this part of Molly's multidimensional presence in the novel, describing her as

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[33] This second letter to Budgen, however, also clearly emphasizes Molly's sexual and bodily dimensions, with an emphasis on the "flesh that always affirms".

"the voice of nature herself", "the eternal feminine", or as "the center of natural life" (quoted in McCormick 23). McCormick argues that these 1930s and 1940s interpretations were led by a literary determination to canonize *Ulysses* and Joyce's position as a modernist writer (25). As *Ulysses* was beginning to take on the status as a work of "high art" in academic circles, Molly was given the role of a symbolic Earth Mother, precisely with that intention: to emphasize Joyce's position as a serious, respectable author, whose female characters resemble Earth Goddesses. The Earth Mother readings certainly desexualized Molly, neglecting a very important part of her character that takes on a central position during the 1950s and 1960s.

At this time, as more realistic interpretations of Molly are starting to assume a more important role, begins the second phase of Molly criticism, or what Shechner names "the second camp" or readings that emphasize Molly's "offensive" nature, her un-fittingness as a mother, wife, and a woman (see Kime-Scott, "Joyce and Feminism", 159; McCormick, "Reproducing Molly Bloom: A Revisionist History of the Reception of 'Penelope', 1922-1970", 17-35). From being completely unreal, Molly becomes all too real. From a "heavenly body" she becomes a disgusting, distrusted, appalling body. Hugh Kenner's reading of Molly in *Joyce's Dublin* (1956) has often been considered the pioneering anti-Molly position (Shechner 200). For Kenner she is a "satanic mistress", and it is precisely her "'Yes' of consent that kills the soul that has darkened the intellect and blunted the moral sense of all Dublin" (262). But perhaps the most infamous sexist reading of Molly, still quoted in feminist analyses is Darcy O'Brien's interpretation of Molly as "obscenely narcissistic" and "at heart a thirty-shilling whore". Similarly, for Robert M. Adams she is a "slut, a sloven, and a voracious sexual animal […] a frightening venture into the unconsciousness of evil", and for J. Mitchell Morse she is a figure of "sterility, perversion, disease, and death", "a dirty joke" whom "[n]o one regards […] as anything but a whore" (all quoted in Froula 171).

"Penelope is a paragon of wifely fidelity; Molly seems to have insatiable appetite for adultery", claims Herring in *Joyce's Ulysses Notesheets* (64). Most of Molly's thoughts are channeled through other people's experiences, and they involve family life, relationships and house duties, and yet, they are "mostly about herself" (89), argues Steinberg in *The Stream of Consciousness and Beyond in Ulysses* (1973). Molly's thoughts (and her resulting stream of consciousness) are also deemed insignificant because they lack a certain "intellectual" value, a scientific orientation. Molly has absolutely no knowledge of science, she evidently does not understand the functioning of the female reproductive system, she has no interest in politics, theology or religion (rather, Steinberg, she is quite superstitious), she has no sense of "good literature" and prefers erotic literature (89-90). For Steinberg, and many of the representatives of this "second camp", Molly is the antithesis of the Gea-Tellus principle, or, the "[a]ll producing and all-nourishing mother, nourisher of children, receiver and nourisher of seeds, sanctuary of the dead, prophetess", because she is a woman who

> agrees to sending her daughter away so as to have more freedom to indulge in her own physical pleasures, who is interested in receiving neither the seeds of her husband nor her current lover, who sneers at women who do produce and nourish many children, who denies the memory of her own dead son a place in her heart, and whose dreams of the future are not prophecies of civic and human importance, but rather erotic daydreams about being the celebrated mistress of a famous young poet (229).

However misguided and almost cruel this reading of Molly might be, I quoted it in full here, because it is important to consider the terms through which it is being performed: Molly is the antithesis of productivity, she does not want children, nor respects women who do, she does not want the seeds of her husband and/or lover, she only cares about her own (sexual, erotic) pleasure, and all in all, her "dreams about the future" are not socially nor humanly productive.

In the 1980s, there beings another strand of Molly criticism, a feminist-oriented one. As Kime Scott explains in her Frankfurt talk "Character, Joyce and Feminist Critical Approaches", with the first-wave feminist approaches to Molly, Joycean feminist critics were

concerned with a relatively traditional analysis of Joyce's female characters, investigating the individual lives they lead, and here Molly Bloom assumed one of the central positions. This kind of realist readings were mostly interested in Joyce's treatment of female characters as a marker of the historical, political, social position from which Joyce (and writers like him) wrote and thought (see 160). Based on a letter that Joyce wrote to Louis Gillet, where he discusses his choice on ending the novel with the word "yes", as it marks the "self-abandon" and "the end of all resistance"[34], Molly's "yes" was seen as "an imposed stereotype of feminine passivity". Hence, Molly's monologue was often interpreted as one famous Kristeva passage points out, as "haloed, in all [its] nonsense, with a paternal aura, ironically but obstinately raising her toward that third-person-God – and filling her with a strange joy in the face of nothingness" (all quotes from Kime Scott, *Joyce and Feminism* 182). On the other hand, another brand of feminist Molly criticism, present today in many forms, focuses on Molly as a powerful woman figure, a feminist whose "yes" resists patriarchal discourses, rational authority and linear patterning of knowledge. These interpretations often attempt to reinstate Molly's glory as a goddess, but this time around, as a feminist figure (see Kime Scott, *Joyce and Feminism* 182).

Although different in focus the two strands of criticism of Molly, which see her as an embodiment of the Earth Goddess principle, or as a satanic mistress, are similar in content: they all seem to disregard the inherent ambiguity that is such a relevant part of Molly's monologue. Not focusing on (even the too explicit) sexist, misogynist, homophobic readings of Molly, it seems that all these divided interpretations struggle with Molly's position as a character in *Ulysses*. Is Molly a symbolic principle, or rather a "real", mimetic character?

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[34] "I had sought to end with the least forceful word I could possibly find. I had found the word 'yes', which is barely pronounced, which denotes acquiescence, self-abandon, relaxation, the end of all resistance" (see Ellmann, *James Joyce* 712).

3.6. A Queer Contradictory Character

A couple of decades later, with the onset of feminist studies, most feminist scholars interested in Molly have read her and her story while paying attention to the "full scope of the ambiguity and contradictory nature that has been detected in her", meant to be representing the complexity of the many different roles women can assume, "from conventional matron to liberal feminist" (Kime Scott, *Joyce and Feminism* 161). From a feminist perspective, Molly's ambiguity is often read as a characterization method Joyce used to represent female complexity, and develop a fuller female identity, which can be both conservative and liberal, as Molly is read both as a traditionalist who will excuse men's behavior and a quasi-feminist who is aware of the unjust position women have in society and the troubles they go through. Molly's contradictory character as a structuring principle of 'Penelope' becomes a general point of interest and reveals how Joyce's method of characterization aimed to create an all-encompassing, pre-and posthuman entity. James Van Dyck Card's *An Anatomy of "Penelope"* (1984) and the principal essay of this study, titled "Contradicting: the word for 'Penelope'" (1973) systematically notes how Joyce kept adding contradictions to this episode, peppering even the placards with last-minute additions which would directly or implicitly contradict previous remarks (see more in Rabaté, *Joyce Upon the Void* 55-56). In such a way, Molly's contradictions are now re-examined, they are not used as a weapon against her, to diminish her views, but rather, as an indicator for her "revolutionary potentials" (Kime Scott, *Joyce and Feminism* 169).

In a more recent genetic study – *Joyce's Creative Process and the Construction of Characters in Ulysses: Becoming the Blooms* (2014) – that traces the development of *Ulysses* over Joyce's many notes and manuscripts, Luca Crispi offers a similar reading to Van Dyck Card's. Crispi analyzes multiple episodes of Leopold's and Molly's life, before and after their marriage, focusing on the manner in which Joyce was constantly adding new details on the episodes he was developing, changing the main draft he had in mind, even up to the very last

phases. "A genetic reading of *Ulysses*", argues Crispi, "reveals the author's construction of his character's traits in the published work as a palimpsest over time and on one or more documents" (162). Joyce first had the very basic skeleton on the stories he wanted to tell in mind, and often, he was developing them through a few versions of the manuscripts, not paying so much close attention to the characters themselves as to the episodes they were entangled in, argues Crispi. This clearly comes across though a couple of examples where Joyce would develop a story attached to one character in a few early versions of the manuscripts, and then he would reassign it to another character later, as it appears in the published work (see 24-29).

This not only shows that he often revised, amplified and sometimes even drastically changed the episodes as he was working on them (a commonly known fact for any Joyce researcher), but also, that he was more invested in creating a complex narrative than believable and relatable characters. The narrative, or plotline of the story takes precedence over the characters as the subject of the story (Crispi 207). This might prove that Joyce firstly developed the stories, focusing more on the narrativization of a certain event than he did on a character, but as he was developing the narrative, he often went back to thinking and adding more materials on the characters and their features, forming the complex personas the reader encounters in Stephen, Bloom or Molly.

Ulysses readers are left with the impression that they know Leopold and Molly Bloom quite well, and yet these characters are built in such a way that at the same time they resist the idea that a full and comprehensive understanding of their worlds would be possible (Crispi 9). In Crispi's opinion that forms the argument of his study, this is due to the fact that Joyce's stories, although quite malleable and certainly fluid (at least in the manuscript versions), are also full of precise details that give *Ulysses* the semblance of facticity (Crispi 142)[35]. This

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[35] For example, one of those precise and detailed stories, although appearing in more than one version in *Ulysses*, is the story of Bloom and Molly's first meeting. Molly thinks to herself: "the first night ever we met when I was living in Reheboth we stood staring at each other for about 10 minutes" (U.18.1182-3). She seems to remember

analysis reads like a reiteration of the argument on Joyce's modernist characterization method in hand, which operates on two simultaneous levels: creates an extremely detailed persona, through narrative excess, detail, multiplication, and reiterations, but in such a way that destabilizes the notion of a realistic character by relying on that same building material. And although Crispi's enjoyable study argues that Joyce cared more about developing stories and plotlines than characters, I believe that the method he is discussing here as the principal strategy that Joyce used in event narrativization is also applicable when it comes to his character constructions. Joyce created stories and characters in such a way that infused them with so many details – his famous encyclopedic method – up to that point that almost begin to lose a semblance to an actual living person. It is a common belief that in some basic sense, every character in fiction must resemble ourselves, that she must be recognizably human as the rest of us (Brooks and Warren 148). In *Ulysses* and especially with Molly, Joyce creates a character that escapes that realm.

Molly's belonging to a prehuman and posthuman universe makes her more than a character who can be reduced to human psychology, writes Rabaté (*Joyce Upon the Void* 52). In one of the *Ulysses* schemes Joyce used the symbol of infinity to represent 'Penelope', which can be re-imagined as a reverse number 8, an 8 lying on its back (8th of September is, after all, Molly's birthday, the (birth)day of the Virgin Mary), in creating a character that also represents a temporal infinity (see Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey* 150). The infinity sign (∞) "represents the earth spinning on itself in a ribbon which is a Möbius strip: inside is outside in this figure in which everything can find a negative counterpart somewhere else" (Rabaté 56). This

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one version of this first meeting, while Bloom thinks of their first meeting in slightly different manners in 'Calypso', 'Lestrygonians', 'Nausicaa', 'Circe' and 'Sirens' (see Crispi 141-46 for more). This, Crispi claims, is the result of the evolving of the narrative, throughout the many versions it went through: the manuscripts, the published episodes in *The Little Review*, and the version of the published book (that also went through a couple of alternations). When it comes to the textual discrepancies that were bound to happen considering this lengthy process, Joyce tried to redress them by smoothing over it as much as he could, thereby changing the details in different episodes after they were published in another form, creating sometimes even contradictory versions and obviously not always diminishing the confusion (Crispi 146). This explains the different version of events in the novel, among which the first meeting of Bloom and Molly is one instance.

temporal infinity is also translated into Molly's monologue. 'Penelope' violates some basic narrative principles: temporal linearity and consistency, probability, the law of non-contradiction[36]. "The novelty of this distinctive effect – a single consciousness moving through time – actually necessitates a linear sequence; time and consciousness both move unidirectionally, and to mimetically recreate the flow of thoughts a chronological order is indispensable", writes Richardson (686). I believe that 'Penelope' is an example that illustrates the opposite of what Richardson proposes here. At certain times, Molly is a hard-to-follow, difficult-to-empathize-with character. She contradicts herself over and over, her thoughts wandering from one event to another, sometimes with no discernable casual links, except for a fleeting feeling, in an uninterrupted, unpunctuated flow of thoughts, often addressed as interior monologue, or a stream-of-consciousness mode. In this episode from *Ulysses*, a single consciousness moves through different planes of time, not unidirectionally, but multi-directionally, in all possible forms and undoing a chronological order. We might experience Leopold Bloom's day and get a sense of him as he remembers some of the most important/traumatic events from his past, but in the last episode we are exposed to the bulk of Molly Bloom's times, as she moves from one memory to another, mixing events, days, places, names. In the short span of an episode (or at least relatively short, for a book such as *Ulysses*), we get more of (the inner life of) Molly than we do for any other character in the novel. And the principal way in which the novel achieves this is by utilizing time and its malleability.

The two sets of characteristics (duly noted in Joycean scholarship, as this chapter has shown) that have taken on many forms when it comes to interpretations of Molly's character reflect a method of writing that is recognizable in Joyce's works: uniting contradictions. When it comes to Molly maybe they are best reflected in her creation as a pre- and post-human entity. In this dissertation I aim to approach Molly as a contradictory character, by looking into how

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[36] For more on the basic principle of narrative see Richardson (691).

this feature can be read as part of what makes her a queer character, primarily from the manner in which it creates her handing of time. Queer temporality as a facet of Molly's character will be the focus of analysis in the following chapter, where I will firstly elaborate on a possible way we could approach Molly's contradictory character as a facet of queerness, relying on the insights by queer (and sometimes Joycean) scholar Leo Bersani, as an introduction to the interpretation of her monologue I develop after.

Chapter 4: Queering 'Penelope'

4.1. A Character Without a Point of View

"Against Ulysses", Bersani's most famous essay on *Ulysses*, was originally published in 1988 in the journal *Raritan* (Volume 08, Number 02), and then republished in his book *The Culture of Redemption* (1990) and again in Derek Attridge's edited volume *James Joyce's Ulysses: A Casebook* (2004) [37]. My aim here is to see how Bersani's analysis of narrative and characterization in *Ulysses* shares some main points of interest with another one of his works – "Is the Rectum a Grave?" – that was already addressed in my theory section as a seminal work for anti-social debate. In these essays, Bersani focuses on the interrelated processes of formation/disintegration of the self, whether it is analyzed in *Ulysses* through the specificities of Joyce's narration, or the self-shattering force of sex and the sexual in "Is the Rectum a Grave?". As they both seem to be exposing the inner workings of what I perceive as "queer" in both character formation in "(Against) Ulysses" and subject disintegration in "Is the Rectum a Grave?" I believe that the combined insights from these two essays provide a direction in addressing the issue of queer characterization in 'Penelope'.

If we were to approach *Ulysses* with total naiveté (presuming such a thing is even possible), unaware of the avant-gardist claims made for Joyce's novel, we would surely read it as a psychological work, as a novel of character, claims Bersani. *Ulysses* is an exceptionally detailed study of character, especially when it comes to its three main characters of Leopold Bloom, Stephen Dedalus, and Molly Bloom, but even of minor ones like Gerty MacDowell. The readers know and recognize these characters well, both from the inside and from the outside. Joyce renders a detailed impression, by giving much evidence of how they look to others, and through long sections of internal monologue and free indirect style that familiarize

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[37] In this chapter the following quotes are from the 1990 study *The Culture of Redemption*.

the readers with their most intimate sides ("Against Ulysses" 156-157). Bersani emphasizes Joyce's narrative abilities and characterizing techniques that created such a recognizable character as Leopold Bloom and a couple as the Blooms. The existence of such characters that have marked the literature of the twentieth century "is an extraordinary tribute to Joyce's power of realistic evocation (…) and it would be not only snobbish but critically wrong to suggest that the innovative power of Joyce's novel lies in a questioning or breakdown of traditional novelistic assumptions about personality", concludes Bersani (157).

For Bersani, the question of characters in Joyce (and especially *Ulysses*) cannot be approached without considering the issue of characterial perspective, or a point of view. In this essay, Bersani is ultimately analyzing the presence of characters through examining their voices and their point of view, or as he argues, their lack thereof. As Bersani sees it, "Joyce attempts (a) transcription of essence into a literary representation distinct from the phenomenality of point of view through an act of quotation" (see Attell's essay on Bersani, "Of Questionable Character: The Construction of the subject in *Ulysses*" 107). According to Bersani, Joyce's epiphanic method – developed as early as *Dubliners* and applicable to his other works – consists of transporting the essence, or something that essentially exists beyond the immediate representational context within a narrative. This revelation is contained in Stephen's aesthetic theory, developed in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and based on Aquinas' notion that beauty is composed of three qualities: integritas (wholeness), consonatia (harmony) and claritas (radiance) (see Attell 104, 108).

Claritas represents the radiation of a unique essence of a thing and Joyce's style transposes this epiphany into literary form, eliminating a perspective, or a point of view. His style reflects the attempt to capture (the essence of) things, not in order to represent them (that is why the personal, authorial, narratorial role is minimized), but rather to transfer their essence into an aesthetic realm. In capturing this effect of claritas, Bersani uses the "logic of quotation":

"Claritas", he writes, "is an effect of quotation, although (…) the quotation is at the level of essence and not existence" ("Against Ulysses" 163). And this, argues Bersani, is Joyce's innovation in literary aesthetics and narrative form – the technique he starts developing as early as *Dubliners* and then carries to its extremes in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wakes* – capturing the essence of a thing while avoiding representation, and with that, a point of view.

Joyce avoids the trivial quotations of consciousness in favor of a quotation of an essential being. This method is mimetic tradition's most refined technique ("Against Ulysses" 161). What does this quotation of the essential being of characters, and not of their point of view, do to the narrative? That is, what kind of a narrative technique is it? According to Bersani, the very specific, non-perspectival manner of capturing (that is, not representing) the essence of a subject is a departure from the familiar techniques of novelistic realism, and yet it still reaffirms the illusion of referentiality, by suggesting that characters exist outside of their novelistic appearances (167). In other words, Joyce does not ignore the principles of realistic representation; quite the opposite, Bersani admires his realistic characters. But in constructing his characters he develops mimetic realism's most refined techniques to such an extent that they become perspective-less entities, both reconfirming and departing from this tradition's principles.

4.2.   A Novel Without Style

Long before Bersani, Joyce's "anti-perspectival" position was addressed in interpretations on *Ulysses* and its specific narrative/stylistic features (or lack thereof). As early as 1922, T.S. Eliot proclaimed that Joyce "had many voices but no 'style'" (quoted in Lawrence 8). In *The Odyssey of Style in Ulysses* – one of the first studies to specifically address the question of changing/progressing styles in *Ulysses* – Lawrence argues that while *Ulysses* does begin in an identifiable signature style, one that is also recognizable in *Dubliners* and *A Portrait of the Artist as Young Man*, about mid-way through the book abandons this third-person narrative

style and replaces it with a series of stylistic/rhetorical masks that allow the writing to be both Joyce's and not Joyce's (7-8). For Lawrence this is the most significant narrative change in the novel, breaching what she terms the "narrative contract" between readers and the novel, and in general, what distances *Ulysses* from the conventions of the novel. "One of Joyce's distinctions among modern writers is that he created and then abandoned what we normally think of as a personal or authentic style, and *Ulysses* itself records that process" (8).

Lawrence's interpretation is much like Bersani's reading of Joyce's lack of point of view when it comes to representing characters. Using Roland Barthes' ideas on style as a signature of one writer, she proposes that Joyce's (lack of) style completely changes the notion of a certain "citational quality" an author would possess, concluding that "somewhere in the middle of *Ulysses*, style goes 'public', as language is flooded by the memory of its prior use' (8). Lawrence's attention here is centered on the primary significance style (or its progressive abandonment) has for the novel. This treatment of style in Joyce's *Ulysses* ultimately shows the readers the arbitrariness of all styles as their multiplicity and diversity become a symbol for the proliferation of endless possibilities (see Lawrence 9). That is, Lawrence seems to say that as the book chapters progress, their styles and forms proliferate and this is reflected in the resulting narrative (events, characters, themes), almost reaching encyclopedic values, expressed through "excess" in multiple analyses of *Ulysses*[38]. Throughout *Ulysses* we witness the breakdown of the novel as a genre and the creation of an encyclopedia of narrative choices, as Joyce offers not a singular, signature style, but uses various literary and non-literary sources (journalism, magazine fiction, melodrama, science) to create this encyclopedic excess

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[38]Excess is an often-addressed theme in Joyce's works, *Ulysses* not excluded. "Ulysses flaunts its excess, makes its excessiveness the material for its interpretation", writes Attell (120), and 'Penelope' is the novelistic embodiment of this excess, the chapter that comes after the real end of the book. Lawrence claims that excess is the basic writing mode of *Ulysses,* and from there, the feature upon which Joyce's characters are created. Even at their innermost levels, represented through the stream of consciousness technique, *Ulysses*'s characters live that excess, embodying it, as they let it lead their narratives (see. 45-47). For Beatrice Monaco who proposes the Deleuzian literary machine as an interpretative tool for *Ulysses* (as well as other works from modernist writers such as Woolf and Lawrence), excess in U is what leads to representation to cease to "work" in the conventional way, as "it is becoming choked by sheer quantity and at starts to break down" (114).

(Lawrence 10). And in this process, style, plot, narrator, and genre are all used to reveal fictions as elements employed in the creation of novels (Lawrence 10). I would add character to this list that, although Lawrence does not explicitly include here as a category, is always addressed in her analyses of the separate chapters.

Lawrence argues that the tension between what functions in *Ulysses* as traditional, realistic narrative, on the one hand, and the breakdown of conventions, through excess, on the other hand, can be explained when looking into the novel as divided into two halves. *Ulysses* is a novel that begins with the implicit assumption of the primacy of character and the first, early chapters are devoted to exposing the characters, their inner thoughts and lives. This is done, of course, through narrative choices and stylistic decisions. In the second half of the book (Lawrence sets 'Aeolus' here as a certain "breaking point"), style or narrative does not serve to explore the characters anymore, as the novel begins to interpret its own self and its past. This does not mean that *Ulysses* disregards characters or their stories in the later chapters, but that there is a change of focus: from plots and characters to writing to style itself as a primary feature of this second half (see 12-14).

For Lawrence, 'Nausicaa' and 'Penelope' (the two episodes centered on female characters/stories) are the exception to this general outline and are "retrogressive chapters in this view" (14). What this means is that in 'Penelope' Joyce brings back character to the center of attention. Although on first reading 'Penelope' seems very unconventional (complete first-person narration that shuts out a third-person narrative voice; unpunctuated, unbroken sentences, representation of thought as a continuous speech – these are all features that are not present in earlier interior monologues), its underlying conventionality becomes apparent pretty soon, especially compared to other episodes such as 'Sirens' with its musical rhetoric, or 'Eumaeus' with its catalogue-obsession and 'Ithaca' with its pseudo-scientific features (see Lawrence 204). What Lawrence deems the "underlying conventionality" of this episode is

exactly the reinstatement of the link between character and style, as Joyce returns his attention to characters – as he has done in the first half of the book.

This might explain the peculiar tension encountered in 'Penelope' as an episode that belongs and does not belong to the novel, bridging (narrative) principles that divide the book into two halves. This episode is per se a part of the second half of the novel, and it reflects the preoccupation with style (language, narrative) and its de/re-formations; and the same instance, as a "regressive" chapter, it goes back to the features established in the first chapters, engaging in a realistic, character-based narration. This would make 'Penelope', I believe, an exceptional case in a book such as *Ulysses*, that is "both spectacularly artificial and, in its own way, realistic", to quote Lawrence (12). 'Penelope' assumes an ambiguous position: It is an ending, and yet not quite so; a character-based chapter, and still one very much preoccupied with the features of writing/style in this division.

It is this fine line, a border between a process of interrogating the basic (realist, psychological, allegorical, symbolical) narrative features and maintaining them that Joyce keeps pushing in *Ulysses* and yet, never quite seems to leave behind (as he does in *Finnegans Wake*). This position of liminality, of not belonging to one or the other might already be read as queer. My own approach here is very much in line with Bersani who emphasizes the complete presence and control Joyce exerts over *Ulysses*. The whole text of *Ulysses* seems to be a carefully thought of and delivered play between the urge for a complete disintegration of the novel and a complete reinstatement of its authority (even over life itself). As Bersani writes, it is a novel curiously unaffected by its most radical propositions (see "Against Ulysses 219). I believe Lawrence shares a similar opinion, especially when it comes to 'Penelope', the episode that at the very end of the novel seems to bring back into focus categories that the novel itself strives to destabilize throughout.

These two practices – the desire for both destruction and perfect perseverance – manifest through the manner in which characters are thought of and represented. Never fully developing any of these two practices and simultaneously developing both requires a lot of control, as Bersani notes, something that is reflected in the way Joyce organizes the narrative, invents styles, and forms characters without representation. The simultaneous working of two forces of creating overtly realistic characters and destabilizing them through that realistic excess that I use as a central method in approaching Molly's (contradictory) characterization, can be nicely explained when looking at it from Bersani's angle, as a peculiar way of writing characters. A character that exists as an entity with a non-perspectival point of view is still a character that maintains the realistic illusion of referentiality.

In other words, Bersani's argument on the perspective-less Ulyssean narration presupposes the existence of a different kind of a character: a fundamentally contradictory character, whose ambiguity does not only encompass the double existence of the binaries of which it consists (the prehuman and the posthuman; the Earth Mother and the satanic mistress; the virgin and the whore), but also the simultaneous undoing of these two entities. And although Bersani's claim is a general one, extended on not only all (the main) characters in *Ulysses*, but also including Joyce's other works, here I am interested in looking closely at Molly Bloom as an instance of a specific type of double character, while considering the importance time and queer sexuality have for her characterial (de)formation.

I agree (and I think every reader of *Ulysses* who enjoys the novel would agree) with Bersani's observation that Joyce creates vivid, round, traditionally realistic characters. And yet, there is something about these characters that distinguishes them from other equally human-like, identifiable figures present in so much of literature (modernist, but not only), and that has led to the array of various and often opposing interpretations addressed in the previous chapter. In "Is the Rectum a Grave?" Bersani outlines a similar clash between moves of doing and

undoing, of stabilizing and shattering one's self that characterizes the force of the sexual act. Here I am interested in the comparable way Joyce uses sexuality, or more specifically, invokes the reliving of sexual memories to reinvent Molly's (pre-human and post-human) self to create her specific character. Her final, orgasmic, and yet submissive "yes" rewrites sex, using its subject-shattering powers to both de/re/form character and the narrative of the novel.

"I had sought to end with the least forceful word I could possibly find. I had found the word 'yes', which is barely pronounced, which denotes acquiescence, self-abandon, relaxation, the end of all resistance" – writes Joyce on his choice to end Molly's monologue with the word "yes" (see Ellmann, *James Joyce* 712). It is exactly the passivity of the "yes" that functions as a site through which her character is reinvented, and via the force of the sexual, in a Bersanian manner. It is exactly Molly's passivity, most eloquently present through her "yes" that constructs what Bersani rightly sees as her complex and representation-less presentness. And I believe that it is precisely Molly's "yes" that here may be allowed to assume the (symbolical) role of the rectum as a grave that has the power to bury and to annihilate proud subjectivity (Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" 222). It is the power of Molly's simultaneously orgasmic, active, and submissive "yes" that unites the two contradictory approaches and produces Molly as a specific kind of subject, a prehuman, human, and posthuman entity. I follow Bersani's take on the destabilizing power of the sexual as a methodological approach in my analysis of 'Penelope', as I read how Molly's "yes" functions as a sexual marker, queering her times and narrative. But in order to reach the concluding "yes" of this episode, I first trace the intertwinement of time and sexuality throughout her monologue. The queer reading of Molly's "yes" is the pinnacle of this analysis, corresponding to the role that "yes" plays for and in 'Penelope'. That is why in the rest of this chapter I outline the mechanisms of queer time in Molly's multiple love triangles, which will later guide the analysis of her queer "yes".

4.3. Channeling Queer Time through Triangular Structures

At the opening of the eighteenth and last episode of *Ulysses*, Molly begins her monologue with a "yes":

> Yes because he never did a thing like that before as ask to get his breakfast in bed (…) (U. 18.01-02).

Molly's suspicion towards Bloom, present in her very first sentence seems to set her tone during the first few pages of this episode. Her annoyance grows as she is remembering and listing women she thinks flirted with Bloom, such as Mrs Riordan and Martha to whom Molly knows that Bloom has written a letter (U. 18.44-47), or Mary, the servant from Ontario Terrace who Molly fires suspecting her motives with regards to Bloom (U.18.56-69). But as she thinks of all these women and their interactions with Bloom, it is clear that:

> not that I care two straws now who he does it with or knew before that way though Id like to find out so long as I dont have the two of them under my nose all the time (U. 18.53-55),

getting angry at him only

> if I thought he was with a dirty barefaced liar and sloven like that one denying it up to my face (U. 18.73-74).

She is also aware of Bloom's extramarital relations, partially even excusing his behavior:

> yes because he couldnt possibly do without it that long so he must do it somewhere and the last time he came on my bottom when was it the night Boylan gave my hand a great squeeze going along by the Tolka (U. 18.76-78).

She continues thinking about Boylan, but her thoughts quickly rumble on to Bloom again, remembering the times when he was asking her to

> tell me who are you thinking of who is it tell me his name who tell me […] yes imagine Im him think of him (U. 18.94-96)

ending with her reproaching note:

> can you feel him trying to make a whore of me (U. 18.96).

As Margot Norris points out in her book *Virgin and Veteran Readings of Ulysses*, "her first reference to [the affair with Boylan] having happened comes right after her complaint about Bloom's interminable erotic game-playing" (240). The issue of adultery when it comes to Molly and Leopold Bloom's marriage, most often addressed through Molly's relationship to Blazes Boylan has assumed a central role in analyses of their relationship over many decades of Joycean scholarship[39]. Molly's adultery has often been used to paint her as a narcissistic, self- and sex-obsessed creation, as the reception from the 1950s onwards discussed in the previous chapter shows.

A more careful reading of not just 'Penelope', but *Ulysses* in total, would clearly show that adultery assumes a more complex position in this Ulyssean universe. Molly Bloom does perform the role of an adulteress, partly because she is the ironic antithesis of the fateful Penelope trope, much in the same manner Leopold Bloom is an ironic reinterpretation of the figure of Odysseys. Furthermore, one of the most debated aspects when it comes to the theme of adultery in *Ulysses* (and somehow forgotten in the many misogynist and sexist readings of Molly) is the mere fact that Bloom is aware and takes ample pleasure, it seems, in knowing about Molly's relationship with Boylan. As we see above, he encourages her fantasizing and engaging in sexual interactions with other men – a dynamics that influences Molly's understanding of that affair as well.

In this manner, more recent studies tend to approach adultery as a way of offering an alternative reading for Molly and Leopold's marriage, and looking at the narrative value the theme of adultery has for Joyce. In her book *James Joyce and the Revolt of Love* (2010) Janine Utell places the question "what would compel a man to facilitate his wife's affair" as the central issue of the novel, claiming that Bloom does so as a "recognition of Molly's alterity, her

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[39] From Richard Brown's addressing of the topic in *Joyce and Sexuality* (1988) via David Cotter's *Joyce and the Perverse Ideal* (2003) to more recent works like Utell's (2010) and Fraser's (2016) I will be discussing shortly.

otherness as a desiring self" (69). In Utell's reading, Molly's capacity for desire is what makes her who she is, and Bloom recognizes and uses that desire, not as an instrument to his own fulfillment – often accused of voyeurism and masochistic fantasies as he has been – but as a way for affirming selfhood in their marriage, through empathy and a radical acceptance of love (see 69). I agree with Utell's general approach here, as it emphasizes the way in which adultery is transformed and losses some of its conventional meaning in *Ulysses*, by turning it into a sphere of potentiality controlled and maintained both by Leopold and Molly, as two desiring subjects. However, that does not negate the persistence and "perverse" power[40] of Bloom's masochistic and voyeuristic fantasies. Moreover, adultery in *Ulysses* still maintains some of its more traditional meaning, as it does invoke jealousy (both from Molly and Leopold), and it is inevitably caught up in the intimate dynamics of Molly and Leopold's (non)existing sexual relationship. Molly's "affair" with Boylan is intermingled with her feelings towards Bloom, as she is blaming him for her loneliness[41], and eventually for the sexual relationship she is in[42]. On the other hand, Bloom's fantasies about Molly's sexual interactions with other men that culminate in 'Circe', seem both connected to his fetishism of adultery and the relationship of (un)belonging to his own gender role[43].

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[40] See Cotter, *Joyce and the Perverse Ideal* (166).

[41] "I cant help it if Im young still can I its a wonder Im not an old shrivelled hag before my time living with him so cold never embracing me except sometimes when hes asleep the wrong end of me not knowing I suppose who he has any man thatd kiss a womans bottom Id throw my hat at him after that hed kiss anything unnatural where we havent 1 atom of any kind of expression in us all of us the same 2 lumps of lard" (U. 18. 1398-1404).

[42] "Ill let him know if thats what he wanted that his wife is fucked yes and damn well fucked too up to my neck nearly not by him (…) Ive a mind to tell him every scrap and make him do it out in front of me serve him right its all his own fault if I am an adulteress" (U. 18. 1510-16).

[43] Writing about Bloom's inability (or unwillingness) to stop Molly and Boylan's encounter, Frank Budgen notes in a rather racist (and perhaps homophobic) account of Bloom's masochism: "Linked to the fatalism of the Oriental and organically connected with his Jewish and personal masochism is the homosexual wish to share his wife with other men. He is surrounded with acquaintances, yet he is a lonely man, condemned never to experience the warmth of male fellowship – incapable, perhaps, of accepting it were it offered him. That his wife is possessed by other males gives him a physical contact with them at second hand" (149). Budgen goes on to assert that the fact that Bloom carries with him Molly's photo is just a way for him to establish bonds with other men, and not for her private, personal gaze. Albeit a bit of an overdone interpretation, Budgen is perhaps right when he notices: "Marion acquires new value for him (Bloom) though the fact that her flesh is desirable to other men […] He wishes, perhaps, to be first but not alone" (149).

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In *Joyce and Betrayal* (2016), James Alexander Fraser looks at betrayal in all its diverse forms in Joyce's oeuvre as a "structuring principle, and tropic stockpile for his writing" (17). What this means for Fraser, is that in Joyce's works betrayal is not merely recorded, but instead, it is always theorized and investigated. Betrayal is necessarily a function of relationships (see 157). In 'Penelope', then, betrayal assumes a sexual form, and functions as one of the forms through which sexuality is also investigated and theorized in Joyce. Leopold and Molly's marriage that offers a new take on infidelity (through Bloom's encouragement) modifies the conventional narrative of betrayal. Reimagining the role sex and the sexual play in Joyce's representation of betrayal as a site of generative possibilities is at the center of Fraser's approach to 'Penelope' (see 154-155).

My aim here is not to offer a new reading of adultery in *Ulysses*. I have attempted to summarize here a few general directions of thinking about this motif in Joyce's work, as it shows so clearly how biased interpretations of Molly's character are not based on actual readings of the text. But moreover, what is most important for my analysis is the recognition of an interpersonal (and marital) dynamic that marks the Blooms' relationship. Leopold and Molly Bloom are aware and acknowledge the fact that their marriage seems to always exist with the inclusion of another, and even more, their desire for each other is often negotiated through that third member. With this dynamic in mind, I will now analyze a few instances that are telling of the manner in which Molly thinks and her thoughts are transmitted (maybe even heard) on the page, which clearly shows how the mixing of temporal boundaries happens under the influence of the sexual.

4.4. "its just like yesterday to me": Molly, Bloom and Boylan/Mulvey/Gardner

Molly's enumerating of "lovers" that unfolds during her monologue assumes a central place in my analysis of queer time. Most of Molly's memories about Bloom are a path to thinking of someone else, that lead her back to him in the end. As mentioned earlier, the first time she mentions Boylan (U. 18.78-79) is immediately after she thinks to herself that it is obvious that Bloom has relations with other women. As her monologue progresses, the reader becomes aware that Boylan is only a vehicle through which she fulfills her sexual fantasies. The monologue slowly keeps transforming into remembrance of her past lovers:

> Mulveys was the first when I was in bed that morning and Mrs Rubio brought it in [...] I remember shall I wear a white rose and I wanted to put on the old stupid clock to near the time he was the first man kissed me under the Moorish wall my sweetheart when a boy it never entered my head what kissing meant till he put his tongue in my mouth his mouth was sweetlike young I put my knee up to him a few times to learn the way what did I tell him I was engaged for fun to the son of a Spanish nobleman named Don Miguel de la Flora and he believed me that I was to be married to him in 3 years time (U 18.750-773).

Starting with Mulvey and the story of her first sexual encounter Molly, even noticeably, brings in parts of different stories till the reader cannot clearly distinguish (at least during a first reading) who exactly is she talking about. It seems that she is not really sure of her own memories as she tries to remember what his name was, Jack, Joe, Harry or Mulvey[44]. At the beginning of her story about Mulvey it is apparent that she has a clear sense of the events she is (re)living, but somewhere along the way, as more memories of similar experiences from the more recent past emerge, she melds different characters into one, not establishing differences between them simply concluding with a "its just like yesterday to me" (U. 18.821).

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[44] "Molly darling he called me what was his name Jack Joe Harry Mulvey was it" (U. 18.818).

In another instance, reminiscing about Bloom's obsession with drawers and the times he would beg for Molly to give him a pair of drawers, Molly thinks of a moment when excited to see him, she

> touched his trousers outside the way I used to Gardner after with my ring hand to keep him from doing worse where it was too public I was dying to find out was he circumcised (U. 18.312-315).

Then, she hastily moves again to thinking about Bloom who

> wrote me that letter with all those words in it how could he have the face to any woman after his company manners making it so awkward after when we met asking me have I offended you (U. 18. 318-321).

That one "offensive" letter Bloom wrote reminds her of him, that is Bloom,

> writing every morning a letter sometimes twice a day I liked the way *he* made love then he knew the way to take a woman when he sent me the 8 big poppies because mine was the 8th then I wrote the night he kissed my heart at Dolphins barn I couldnt describe it simply it makes you feel like nothing on earth but *he* never knew how to embrace well like Gardner I hope *hell* come on Monday as he said at the same time four (my emphasis, U. 18. 327-333).

In this very instructive passage for the manner in which Molly's thoughts are unfolding, we can read the almost undetectable progression of men: the first "he" she thinks of is Bloom (who wrote every morning, whose lovemaking she liked); then she compares him to Gardner (Bloom never knew how to embrace like Gardner); ending up with Boylan (hoping "he" will come on Monday). A first-time reader, who already has some trouble following Molly's thoughts, will probably presume the "he" she is thinking of in the last instance is Gardner himself. But Molly, of course, is thinking about Boylan, who said he will come by on Monday at four o'clock, that is reveled later, as Molly remembers the previous afternoon:

> O Lord I must stretch myself I wished he [Boylan, that is, my note] was here or somebody to let myself go with and come again like that (…) "Thursday Friday one Saturday two Sunday three O Lord I cant wait till Monday" (U. 18. 584-595).

Even more interesting, the reader would not know who Gardner exactly is at this point, since this is the second time Molly thinks of him (after comparing the way she used to touch his trousers, like she did to Bloom), and gives no under details. A bit later, as she thinks about Bloom and (his) political views, she remembers the Boer War:

> that Pretoria[45] […] where Gardner lieut Stanley G 8th Bn 2nd East Lancs Rgt of enteric
> fever he was a lovely fellow in khaki and just the right height over me (U. 18. 389-390),

only to finally reveal a few pages (minutes?) later that she could not possibly meet Gardner on Monday, remembering that

> Claddagh ring for luck that I gave Gardner going to south Africa where those Boers
> killed him with their war and fever (U. 18. 867-868).

Memories are never singular events, one of them leads to another, and then to a third, causing a stream. And this is so vividly represented through the flow of Molly's thoughts that keep transforming one matter into another, without any pauses. Molly's thoughts personify a flow of time. Unlike Stephen who is caught up in a passage of time he tries to escape from but cannot, or Leopold who is immersed in the superficial linearity of everyday life, she is the one who sees all the possibilities time can offer and grasps them. Time becomes the instrument through which she can relive her past sexual experiences, and in a non-normative manner. Her sexual relationships become a venue through which Molly is able to relive not only her past times with Leopold, but her other sexual memories as well. Fluid temporality and unrestrained sexuality are intermingled as she reconstructs the past and brings it into the present.

"Characters are radically decentered by erotic fantasy and attempt to uncover new identities latent in residual needs that overflow the boundaries of sex-role expectations", writes Suzette Henke, in a similar interpretative move in a study titled *James Joyce and the Politics of Desire* (6). Molly's greatest strength at the end, claims Henke, is her imagination, her polymorphic dreams and reveries. "By virtue of her capacious monologue, Molly can be

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[45] The capital of the Boer republic of Transvaal in South Africa, see Gifford and Seidman (614).

envisaged as both goddess and whore, Dublin housewife and archetypal precursor to Anna Livia Plurabelle, the great mother/lover of Finnegans Wake" (see Henke 7). What Henke addresses as Molly's imagination – through focusing primarily on desire as a vehicle of these processes – that produces her capacious monologue as a basis of her peculiar characterization, is, I argue, Molly's temporal positionality. In an attempt for escaping a reiteration of reading that would offer a similar interpretation to the ones listed above, or at least operate within a similar theoretical framework, I turn here to time as a channel of sexuality, instead of desire[46]. In my reading, Molly's queerness that cannot be fully contained by the notion of desire, but is translated through temporal ambiguity, is one of the narrative techniques Joyce uses for the destabilization of her character. Henke is right in noting that Molly (for Leopold Bloom as well for the readers) is the great Earth Mother, a mythic figure and a symbol, but at the same time, she is equally a mimetic character, who is emotionally frustrated, trapped in female, narrow roles (see 7). These two sides coexist, and they make for an interesting case for reading a character such as Molly, one of whose defining features is her queer complex ambiguity that is ultimately transmitted through the destabilization of narrative.

Furthermore, if desire in *Finnegans Wake*, as temporality, reaches otherworldly dimensions, as it exceeds the human, in *Ulysses* desire is all too human. Not to deny the existence – or the importance – of desire for Molly as a character that has generated a multitude of interpretations, my reading here takes on a different approach, as it tries to see what would happen if we considered time the mechanism of queer sexuality, instead of desire. Desire, in

[46] In addition, desire in Joyce and 'Penelope' has been addressed and analyzed in multiple feminist/psychoanalytical studies. Suzette A. Henke's study (*James Joyce and the Politic of Desire*, 1990) I am relying on here is a good example of a prevailing interest in desire as an analytical tool for addressing the dynamics of sexuality in Joyce's works in the 1980s and 1990s. Starting with Freud's fundamental and ground-laying analysis of psychic longing in terms of physical need and emotional demand; via Lacan's structuralist theories introducing notions such as sexual jouissance, the phallus as transcendental signifier, and the Other as an imaginary construction of the infantile psyche; to Kristeva's feminist re-readings of their works, Joycean scholarship has produced multiple readings that have focused on desire in *Ulysses* and especially 'Penelope' (see Henke 9-10, 126-164).

all its forms, is an anthropomorphic feature. As I have attempted to show here, Molly, by design, goes beyond what is called a "human" character. She is both human and not, pre- and post-human. Her human features, pronounced and real as they are, have produced many readings, placing desire in their center as well. My aim here is not to disregard the all-too-human side of Molly. Rather, to consider her as a double, contradictory character who exceeds the "human", by looking at the narrative interrelation between queerness and temporality.

4.5. "wd give anything to be back in Gib and hear you sing": Molly and Hester

As Molly's monologue consists primarily of reliving the past in multiple moments and within different emotional registers, the reader rarely gets a glimpse into her present. On one of these seldom occasions, she is listening to the train whistle outside her house (U. 18.596). This sound takes her back to her present reality, making her ponder the heat of the day that is passing, which in turn reminds her of Gibraltar. "We now enter an extended, vivid and poetic rumination by Molly on her youth in Gibraltar", writes Norris (*Virgin and Veteran Readings* 240), where we (that is the readers), first encounter Hester Stanhope:

> Mrs Stanhope sent me from the B Marche paris what a shame my dearest Doggerina she wrote on it she was very nice whats this her other name was just a p c to tell you I sent the little present have just had a jolly warm bath and feel a very clean dog now enjoyed it wogger she called him wogger wd give anything to be back in Gib and hear you sing Waiting and in old Madrid Concone is the name of those exercises he bought me one of those new some word I couldnt make out shawls amusing things but tear for the least thing still there lovely I think dont you will always think of the lovely teas we had together scrumptious currant scones and raspberry wafers I adore well now dearest Doggerina be sure and write soon kind she left out regards to your father also Captain Grove with love yrs affly Hester x x x x x she didnt look a bit married just like a girl he was years older than her wogger he was awfully fond of me [...] we used to compare our hair mine was thicker than hers she showed me how to settle it at the back when I put it up and whats this else how to make a knot on a thread with the one hand we were

like cousins what age was I then the night of the storm I slept in her bed she had her arms round me then we were fighting in the morning with the pillow what fun he was watching me whenever he got an opportunity (U. 18.612-44).

The significance that Gibraltar has for Molly's personal history, especially when it comes to the ambiguous and complex relations between nationality, race, and ethnicity, has been addressed in several instances. Susan Bazargran writes that "[p]lacing Molly Bloom's beginnings in Gibraltar enabled Joyce to offer us an intricately drawn portrait of the modern female colonial identity in which complications of race and religion are compounded by those of nationality, language and gender" (119). Similarly, in her desire to "relate Molly's recreation of her life in Gibraltar as much as possible to the dilemmas of her present moment" Norris notes that "[t]he evocation of Gibraltar instantly expands Molly's cultural and personal horizon, from that of the housebound housewife on Eccles street to that of a young woman immersed in a vital natural and cultural landscape" (*Virgin and Veteran Readings* 250). Unfortunately, neither Bazargran nor Norris in their relevant analysis of the ways in which the memories of Gibraltar affect Molly's present do not give Hester Stanhope any significant place, instead mostly reducing their relationship to a close friendship with a somewhat motherly character (see Norris 251).

Interestingly enough, in a different analysis (one that focuses solely on the postcard that Hester sends to Molly), Norris inspects more closely the hypothesis "that Hester Stanhope was a lesbian or latent lesbian who fell in love with the young Molly Bloom" (and the other way around), implicating that this might be an "ethically problematic speculation" (see Norris, "Risky Reading of Risky Writing" 46). "The nature of that love beckons us to an interpretive adventure, but one that has serious stakes", writes Norris in a conclusion on this interpretation (43). But what would happen if we decided to approach this relationship as a love interest, desire, or attraction that would have relevant narrative (and temporal) consequences for

'Penelope'? what would happen if Hester was appointed the same place Boylan, or Mulvey, or Gardner have as Molly's "love(r)s"?

Part of the neglected position Hester Stanhope has is due to the fact that throughout Joycean and Ulyssean scholarship she has been commonly treated as a minor character who has a very limited role: she is there in a motherly role, replacing the mother Molly does not have; or an older sister or a cousin[47]. She is addressed as a much-needed female presence for Molly who does not seem to have a lot of girlfriends, and even if there is a slight indication that she could display any kind of romantic interest for Molly, she is read as a fleeting presence, that does not really hold any consequences for the narrative. For Alex Woloch, whose study *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel* (2003) looks at the formative presence of minor characters in nineteenth-century novels, the realist novel is structurally destabilized by the gradual inclusion of too many people in the narrative. With the development of eighteenth-century empiricism and nineteenth-century omniscient social realism, the logic of social inclusiveness becomes one of the features of the novel, and central to its form. Thus, the novel shifts its narrative focus away from an established center towards minor characters. These minor characters are not always (or almost never are) fully developed, complex, or in E.M. Forster's famous division "round" characters. Quite the opposite, the novel makes allegorical use of its subordinate characters, eliding their human particularity, and flattening them. These "flat" characters in E.M. Forster's terminology, are meant to render attention to the subordinate-ness they embody, as they become a primary site for the dialectics between the spaces of the protagonists and their own that structures the novel (see 19-20). Hester assumes a similar role in my analysis, as there is no denying she is a minor

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[47] For example, see Norris, *Virgin and Veteran Readings of Ulysses* (251); Brown, "Molly's Gibraltar: The Other Location in Joyce's Ulysses" (170) in *A Companion to James Joyce*, ed. Brown (2017).

character in the whole of *Ulysses*. But what I am keen on observing here is the particular destabilization (if we follow Woloch's direction) she brings to the narrative.

In my reading Hester assumes a marginal Derridean and Joycean position. "For Derrida the term margin functions both as a signifier of the traditional border of the text and as a metaphor for the positions from which deconstructive analyses and readings can take place" (Roughley xviii). Derrida's notions on margin and marginality are not the subject of my interpretation here, but rather, the significance he gives to marginality both as a theme and as a site for deconstruction that is able to produce an effect that will overturn the "main body" of the text (see Roughley xviii/xix), that is also noticeable in Joyce's texts, I argue, via his treatment of minor characters. In Joyce, the marginal parts of texts can have such a power, to trigger a rethinking of the remaining text. Hester's role, it seems to me, can be addressed as this kind of marginal element in Joyce's writings, that appears in the text sporadically, but in a tone and an atmosphere that is different than the elements forming the "main" text (here represented by Bloom, Boylan, Gardner, Mulvey).

On some rare occasions, Hester Stanhope's queer presence has been noted, especially by readers who tend to emphasize Molly's quite clear and persistent memory of her. As early as 1977 John Henry Raleigh's *Chronicle of Leopold and Molly Bloom* identifies Hester Stanhope as "a first love" of Molly's (54). Writing on the vivacity of Molly's images of Gibraltar and their relatedness to names, Bernard Benstock notes a few instances in which Molly fails at "precise nomenclature and total recall in (…) cataloguing" such as when she is not able to remember Mulvey's name or uses interchangeably the names Captain Grove and Groves for one of her father's friends (see 172). As I have shown throughout this chapter, the mixing of names and inability to remember who exactly she is thinking about, is one of the most recognizable narrative features of Molly's monologue and a manner of queering time. And yet, as Benstock notes, Molly is pretty adamant about Hester, a fact that stands out when

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"Mr Stanhope, that vague sort of husband, is reduced merely to his wife's pet name for him, 'wogger she called him'" (172). Towards the end of 'Penelope', as Molly goes back again to her Gibraltar past, thinking of "Mulvey and Mr Stanhope and Hester and father and old captain Groves" (U.18.1583) there's

> [n]o 'Harry' for Mulvey, no 'wogger for Hester's husband, but a definite 'Hester' for the wife [...] [a]t this instance of finality, at establishing of a definitive, if only temporary, text, Hester persists as implicit in the narrative, endowed with narrational validity (she belongs to Molly, who has the final word on her naming) (Benstock 173).

In the majority of these instances, Hester's and Molly's relationship has been addressed in light of what Lamos calls the "commingling of female homosociality and homosexuality", and as such not taken up too seriously as a topic of consideration (191). "Female homosexuality in Joyce's works is notable for its invisibility, appearing only as a half-guessed thought or a speculative conjecture", writes Colleen Lamos (185) in "'A Faint Glimmer of Lesbianism' in Joyce", in a collection of essays titled *Quare Joyce* (1998) edited by Joseph Valente[48]. In support of her argument, she offers the famous "erotic moment" Molly shares with Hester, sleeping in her bed on a stormy night and later, saying goodbye to her when she leaves for America. Oscillating between emphasizing the Victorian-like innocence of the scene and then hidden, yet notable trace of lesbianism, Lamos concludes that "[a]lthough Joyce's works are colored by many tinges of male homosexuality, the fainter hues of lesbianism are barely distinguishable". The emotionally intense bond Molly shares with Hester remains a "harmless friendship", although it involves instances of sleeping together, hugging, kissing, and playing

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[48] For this edited volume, Valente uses "quare" as a distinctively Irish variant of queer, but also, because of quare's partaking in the word square – a synonym in both the technical and the idiomatic sense for "straight". Valente's intention here is to emphasize "aptitude for queering the dichotomy between the 'queer' and the 'square/straight', for unsettling the normative and hierarchical distinctions between different modes of sexual expression" (see 4-5). And although I fully support Valente's investment in Joyce's ambiguous narrative strategies that oscillate between queering the straight, and straightening the queer, I think "queer" as a process and category also marks this tension, "unsettling the normative and hierarchical distinctions between different modes of sexual expression" (Valente 5).

with each other's hair, etc. (185). If nothing more, the "commingling of female homosociality and homosexuality" through such acts points out the (hidden) lesbian dynamics of the narrative.

As Sedgwick notes in her monograph *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, homosocial desire – at least in a Western context – differs for men and women. A significant and thorough opposition between homosexual and homosocial that marks the relationship between men, making the phrase "male homosocial desire" an oxymoron of sorts is much less dichotomous for women, as lesbianism if often linked with other forms of relations between women: the bond between mother and daughter, sisters, women's friendships, the mentorship a teacher provides for a student, etc.[49] This apparently simple, unifying continuum of female homosexuality and homosociality comes across as such especially when compared to male homosocial bonding, often characterized by intense homophobia (210-11). What Sedgwick names as the "relatively continuous relation of female homosocial and homosexual bonds" (212) has been addressed in many studies on female homosexuality/homosociality over the decades, especially in Victorian literature[50], Molly Bloom's and Hester Stanhope's relationship/friendship occasionally making the cut.

My goal here is not to establish, or even speculate on Molly's lesbian identity. As described earlier, queer in this project is not an attribute of a fixed and lived identity, but rather a marker of a peculiar temporality and an aspect of characterization. What I am interested in is

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[49] Numerous relationships between women in modernist text that carry a certain ambiguity have been met with this kind of scholarly treatment. Woolf's works are often quoted examples, with *Mrs. Dalloway*'s Clarissa Dalloway and Sally Seton (see Haffey's chapter "Exquisite Moments and the Temporality of the Kiss in Mrs. Dalloway and The Hours", 31-67) and *The Lighthouse*'s Lily Briscoe and Mrs. Ramsey leading the count. Like in *Ulysses*, the relationship between the women is often reduced to a mother-daughter/younger-older sister bond. As Haffey rightly points out (while writing on Mrs. Dalloway, in an argument that can be extended for many other works), the character who is there to recapture this lost familial bond becomes a narrative tool, a vehicle by which the story of the "female development" towards maturity of the heroine is told (33). Haffey writes, these kinds of readings assume the inevitability of a clear (heterosexual) future, where women bonding is left behind, and marriage and children become the only path, through a marked separation of past and present (36). But as Molly's (and Clarissa's) persistent remembrances show, the past and the present are not so easily divisible, as they appear simultaneously on many occasions.

[50] See Sharon Marcus, *Between Women: Friendship, Desire, and Marriage in Victorian England* (2007); Carolyn Oulton, *Romantic Friendship in Victorian Literature* (2007).

the destabilizing narrative function Molly's and Hester's friendship carries, realized through temporal maneuvering. That being said, I argue that Hester deserves her recognition in this monologue as one of Molly's love interests. Like with all the other love(r)s, Molly's relationship with Hester is yet again negotiated through a third party, in this case via Mr. Stanhope, Hester's older husband. But this does not negate Molly's relationship with Hester, or, even a more general interest in women. Her focus is easily modified as it changes its shape and object, being directed at Boylan or Mulveys at one moment and then Hester in the next one. Her body and her own perception of it serve as a kind of vessel that enables that movement. Thinking about Boylan and their encounter earlier that day she says:

> I bet he never saw a better pair of thighs than that look how white they are the smoothest place is right there between this bit here how soft like a peach easy God I wouldnt mind being a man and get up on a lovely woman (U. 18.1144-46).

Voiced once again, this time directed through her wish to experience what being a man would feel like, a bit later Molly thinks to herself:

> its well for men all the amount of pleasure they get off a womans body were so round and white for them always I wished I was one myself for a change just to try with that thing they have swelling up on you so hard and at the same time so soft (U. 18. 1380-84)

It seems that the male gaze is easily transformed into a gaze Molly herself controls and directs it onto other women as well as her own body. And it is exactly the ability that Molly has in order to transfer both the gaze and her own position that allows her to inhabit different temporal registers in the same moment, or as John Paul Riquelme points out "[by] means of memory, Molly stands simultaneously in more than one location (see "Ulysses in Critical Perspective" 31).

Molly's memories and re-experiences of Hester determine her relationship with time in the same manner as the reminiscences of her other love(r)s do. Her relationship with Hester – like the moments when Molly is thinking of Gardner, Mulvey and even Boylan – is an instance

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of her monologue during which her remembering of past loves sweeps into the present, resembling Muñoz's utopian temporal project where queerness is posited as a "temporal arrangement in which the past is the field of possibility in which subjects can act in the present in the service of new futurity" (*Cruising Utopia* 41-42). Kime Scott emphasizes the significance space assumes in Molly's stories. We only see her confined in the space of Eccles Street 7, and further on, her intimate memories are often related to specific sites (the Moorish Wall in Gibraltar with Mulvey, the Hill of Howth with Leopold). "Molly's emphasis on space is a countersign to Bloom's preoccupation with time, visible throughout the preceding seventeen chapters, but irrelevant to 'Penelope', and constantly violated by Molly's freedom in memory and association" (*Joyce and Feminism* 180). Agreeing with Kime Scott's argumentation on the "constant violation" of time, my project emphasizes the relevance of time as a medium through which Molly not only (re)lives her memories, but as an instrument with its own force and agency that has the power to shape her understanding of them and situate her in a new reality. Here time has a "utopian" quality, but not in a sense that annihilates the temporal dimensions, rendering them indefinite. Rather the opposite: Molly's time in a Muñozian manner conflates the past, present and the future, producing a new future-oriented, present-based past. The past here is not replaced but rather transformed in both the present and the future that are mingled in one.

Molly's constitutive feature is the simultaneous expanding and contracting of subjectivity, a dynamic I have been analyzing through Bersani's reading of the (homo)sexual act as a disintegrator of the contained self. Queerness dissolves the illusion of Molly as a unitary subject, while participating in her construction as an all-encompassing, contradictory character. The two conflictual forces, of stabilization and fragmentation, that constrict the narrative as they expand it, operate under time's control. And these temporal operations engage in a dynamic that can be better understood if we consider the impetus of queer as an important

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element. Queer time allows Molly to undo herself, in a move that establishes and at the same time disintegrates her as a character.

Queerness generates temporal multiplicity, that then, generates a queer multiplicity, as in a never-ending loop. Time queers sexuality, and sexuality queers time in 'Penelope'. Time and queer are both marked by a multiplicity, or an excess, that then is translated into the narrative excess of the episode. Therefore, I believe that the complexity of Molly's sexual experiences and their peculiar transmission in this narrative exceeds what can be encapsulated by desire. Time's multiplicity acts as a conveyor of sexual polymorphism, assuming the place of desire. Queerness acts as a motivator for this process, it is the force that brings together and conflates the various temporal planes in 'Penelope'.

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Chapter 5: The Narrativization of Queer Time in 'Penelope'

5.1. Characterial Ambiguity as a Source of Queer Narration

There are many ways in which the narrative of *Ulysses* plays with time. In the third chapter of this dissertation, I looked at the differences between Stephen's, Molly's and Leopold's temporal universes, before focusing on how Molly's times can be seen as queer times. In other words, so far, I have been following the intertwinement of time and (queer) sexuality in Joyce's *Ulysses* by looking at queer time primarily as a thematic category. However, the specific characterization of Molly, and the peculiar rendering of her times are, I believe, facets of a queerness that functions on multiple textual levels. In this chapter, I will be tracing queer time's narrative dimensions, by looking into how queer time functions as an aspect of the inner mechanisms of the text producing the doubling of character/ization in 'Penelope.

The specific style that marks Molly's monologue and separates it as an autonomous whole in *Ulysses*, visible primarily through time's irregularity, can be addressed through looking at queerness as a narrative element in 'Penelope'. The problem of the dissolution of narrative in *Ulysses* has often been analyzed as related to the issue of characterization. The breaking of narrative, or, the invention of style seems to represent a certain transformation in the construction of characters as well. Starting from S.L. Goldberg's *The Classical Temper: A Study of Ulysses* (1961), to Karen Lawrence's 1981's *The Odyssey of Style in "Ulysses"*, or Patrick McGee's *Paperspace: Style as Ideology in Joyce's "Ulysses"* (1988) to Luca Crispi' genetic criticism inquiry *Joyce's Creative Processes and the Construction of Characters in Ulysses: Becoming the Blooms* (2015), studies on Joyce's narrative strategies in *Ulysses* have been concerned with the effect language, narrative, or style, has on the creation of characters, or rather, the representation of subjectivity.

Molly's contradictory characterization and the multiple readings it has engendered, addressed in my first Joyce chapter, reflects this tension that exists between narrative and characterization/story in *Ulysses*. As I have already argued, Molly is either too alive (the whore, the bitch, the monster) or not at all, an almost empty signifier (of a mythic idea or a symbolic principle). 'Penelope' brings together both Joyce's obsession with the minutiae of language, his desire to represent the psyche of this character from a different angle and, ineluctably, the story of the Blooms he wanted to tell. Molly's monologue thus functions on all these levels: as determined by the story, characterization, and language. Or as David Hayman argues in *Re-Forming The Narrative: Towards a Mechanics of Modernist Fiction* (1987), there are two forces at work in Joyce when it comes to narrativization of character in *Ulysses*. On the one hand, character development in *Ulysses* was facilitated by Joyce's modernist techniques, such as the choice to represent the inner lives of ordinary people. But on the other hand, as present in all of Joyce's other works, *Ulysses* and 'Penelope' as well are marked by an encyclopedic range (see Hayman 156-157), visible in Joyce's works through a practice of hyper-referentiality, as the novel operates through a network of interconnected references to places, events, historical and personal memories. [51] This encyclopedic range also characterizes 'Penelope' in the form of a temporal excess that I have been interpreting as an element in conceptualizing queer time in the previous chapter.

This chapter traces the importance queer temporalities have for the formation and structuring of narrative in 'Penelope'. It aims to carve out a space in which narrative temporal complexity can be also seen as a queering practice, or in Matz's words, this chapter aims to "attend to the ways a queer practice of time specifically operates in and through narrative

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[51] It has often been said of *Ulysses* that "Joyce's epic ambitions made his little story of a single day into a summa of all doctrine, knowledge and interpretation: an anatomy of criticism and an encyclopedia of Western culture" (Van Bohemeen-Saf, "Joyce, Derrida and the Discourse of "the Other" in ed. Benstock 89). Derrida's two most famous Joycean essays, "Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce" on *Ulysses*, and "Two Words for Joyce" on *Finnegans Wake*, invoke a similar idea, that of the all-inclusiveness of culture, politics, art, and time in Joyce.

forms" (in ed. Warhol and Lanser 244). Therefore, I will be analyzing the role queer time has, this time not as a thematic aspect, but a structuring narrative element, drawing on the queer/narratological insights outlined in my introduction. I will start with briefly setting-up the scholarly scene/important narratological developments in Joycean studies, before I move on to an analysis of 'Penelope'.

5.2. The Penelopean Flow

Karen Lawrence has famously described Joyce's narrative process in *Ulysses* as an "odyssey of style" that constructs a normative style, a more traditional realistic one in the first six episodes, which is then dissolved and reassembled in the later episodes (see 80). Since then, the idea that *Ulysses* can be divided into two big narrative parts: a first, more mimetic, naturalistically oriented representation of reality, a so called "initial style" that focuses more on the characters and their daily lives; and a second part that seems to start with 'Wandering Rocks', (or sometimes 'Sirens') and brings forth a meta-reflective dissolution of narrative, that culminates with 'Ithaca', "where narrative as a genre has ceased to exist" (see Fludernik 18) has been more or less a common critical claim in Joycean scholarship. It should be noted that this division of *Ulysses* into two narrative wholes, one more "realistic" and the second one more "modernist" sometimes seems too artificial[52]. What I am interested in here by evoking this divide, is the existing relation between the treatment of time and Joyce's narrative experiments in the novel, and especially the manner in which that tension plays out in the 'Penelope' that has commonly been addressed as the most "modernist" and "experimental", but at the same time, retaining some of its more "traditional" features, as it is character-oriented.

Joyce's stylistic experimentations in *Ulysses* that express the diversity of the many moods, voices and stories are a signature feature of his contribution to modernism, emphasizes

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[52] See Fludernik's "Narrative and Its Development in *Ulysses*" for a critique of this split up.

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Norris in her study *The Value of James Joyce* (95). But the flow of 'Penelope' prepared the relinquishing of representational narrative, adding a new dimension to linguistic representation and to the function of the literary sign (Van Boheemen, "Molly's Heavenly Body" 270). This is an often-repeated description of 'Penelope', as both Joyce and interpretations following his lead tend to emphasize the sea-changing power 'Penelope' has, for *Ulysses*, and for the genre of the (modernist) novel. The style, or the writing itself in 'Penelope', as everywhere else in *Ulysses*, conveys the content of the episode. 'Aeolus', for example, set in the newspaper office of the Freeman's Journal where Bloom works, is structured as a newspaper piece, with the capitalized headings and separated paragraphs. The newspaper as a medium provides not only the content of this episode, but also its narrative form. Similarly, in 'Penelope', the lack of punctuation and the long sentences that are not divided into paragraphs imitate the manner in which Molly thinks, and speaks (to herself, but also probably to others). The text one reads on the page does not have the features we expect from a narrative form: it does not read as a continuation of sentences that express a certain idea or convey a personality. Instead, writing in this episode assumes the format of spoken words, blurring the boundaries between what is usually thought of as written and spoken. Unlike other episodes, where the emphasis is put on language, and its power and significance are stressed by making the reader aware she is entering a fictional world, 'Penelope' carries a rather different tone: it is as if writing takes a back seat, while we listen to Molly.

Both Molly as a character, as well as 'Penelope' as an episode assume an ambiguous position in *Ulysses*, that I briefly addressed in the introduction to my previous chapter. As Bénéjam points out in her essay "Molly Inside and Outside 'Penelope'",

> Molly's arrival in the book takes place a long time before the final episode itself (…) [but] the viewpoint from which one sees her is consistently Bloom's. And throughout the rest of *Ulysses*, up to the end of 'Ithaca' […] – readers get little but Bloom's vision,

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fantasies, or recollections, combined with occasional comments from other characters (64).

This array of opinions around and about Molly obviously prepares the reader for her own monologue, believes Bénéjam (64). But although seemingly always present throughout the novel, the reader never gets a full image of Molly. From the readers' very first meeting with Molly (and Leopold) in Calypso, Molly is present through her "tousled head", "the curve of her knees", "her elbow", and later "her stripped petticoat, tossed soiled linen" – scenes focalized through Leopold (U 4.247-56, see Bénéjam 65). And when she enters the narrative by herself, a few episodes later, in 'Wandering Rocks', we can only see Molly via her "generous white arm from a window in Eccles street flung forth a coin" to the lame sailor singing beneath her window (U 10.222-23, see Bénéjam 67). Bénéjam analyzes these scenes considering the close relationship Joyce established between Molly's body and secrecy. "In fact, the only time Bloom seems to see Molly's body whole and naked is when he is peeping through the keyhole in 'Circe', watching her consummating her adultery with Boylan and the fantasmatic staging of this scene of adultery places this on a different plane altogether" (Bénéjam 66). As Bénéjam notes, even at this point, when we believe we have seen Molly, it is Bloom's masochistic and voyeuristic fantasies that are determining her presence in full, and not actually Molly's own self (66).

Dorrit Cohn similarly argues in her influential study *Transparent Minds* (1978) that 'Penelope' assumes a complex, and ambiguous position in *Ulysses*. As a text that comes after the end, 'Penelope' stands apart from its context, as a self-enclosed, almost self-generated fictional entity. And yet, there is a certain level of dramatic irony achieved with the presence of 'Penelope', as the reader (at least a reader who has gone through the novel) knows (or assumes she knows) so much about Molly before she hears her voice, and at the same time knows things Molly would not know about Bloom (or Bloomsday) (see Cohn 217-218). Cohn designates the episode as one of the rare real instances or, a *locus classicus* of autonomous

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interior monologue, the only moment of the novel (a fact that also determines its formal independence) "where a figural voice totally obliterates the authorial narrative voice throughout an entire chapter" (218). Molly's strong characterial presence is perhaps most glaringly expressed in one instance of the monologue during which Molly attempts to escape narrative itself. Complaining about the start of her period, but happy she is not pregnant, she starts thinking about all the male misconceptions around virginity, concluding this brief feminist-sounding detour with a "O Jamesey let me up out of this pooh"[53], allegedly addressed to James Joyce himself (U.18. 1129-1130). Whether the "let me up out of this pooh" is supposed to signify her menstrual pain, or the text itself, is not very clear[54]. But nevertheless, is an unmotivated line, happening in the midst of Molly's thoughts that is a direct reference to the author of the novel. It is as if in this instance Joyce positions Molly almost as a narrator herself, or, with a character that has that much power to invent "her" own words, uncontrolled by the actual author of the text. A postmodernist strategy in its inception, I read this scene as one of the many through which Joyce emphasizes Molly's control over 'Penelope' and the novel in general. Or as Cohn argues, no matter how strongly the whole of *Ulysses* influences this last episode and vice versa, one of the most pronounced features of this episode is that it is a model for a singular narrative genre constituted by a character's thoughts (218).

Starting from here, and repeated throughout studies on *Ulysses*, no technique is more commonly cited in definitions of the modernist novel than the interior monologue, or as it is more widely known, stream-of consciousness (see Menand 44). And even a short word-search through the commonly used companions and guides to modernism and the modernist novel

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[53] "I bet the cat itself is better off than us have we too much blood in us or what O patience above its pouring out of me like the sea anyhow he didnt make me pregnant as big as he is I dont want to ruin the clean sheets the clean linen I wore brought it on too damn it damn it and they always want to know youre a virgin for them theyre such fools too you could be a widow or divorced 40 times over a daub of red ink would do or blackberry juice no thats too purply O Jamesy let me up out of this pooh" (U.18.1121-1131).

[54] See more about this, and the importance of this scene in Paul Schwaber's "Molly Bloom and Literary Character" and James McMichael's "James Joyce Speaks".

reveals that the term "stream-of-consciousness" is most often quoted in describing precisely Joyce's and Woolf's writing techniques. Therefore, in the next few paragraphs I will briefly outline some of the history/features of this narrative method (or style), as it undoubtably guides a narrative analysis of their work.

The psychologist and American pragmatist William James (brother of novelist Henry James) is most often credited with coining the term "stream-of-consciousness" when using it in his "The Principles of Psychology" (1890) to mark the flow of different senses and thoughts as they occur to one person as a way of conceptualizing consciousness (see Jahn 95; Rabaté, *1922* 211-214). From here, the term was quickly appropriated into literary studies as a term for marking the modernist technique par excellence, firstly used in 1918 by the novelist May Sinclair for characterizing Dorothy Richardson's novel *Pilgrimage* (see Nicholls 200-202 for more on Richardson's use of stream-of-consciousness). Joyce famously credited the French symbolist Edouard Dujardin, the writer of *Les Lauriers sont coupés* (1888) for the idea of the what he called the "pure interior monologue" – another name for what is now mostly known as stream-of-consciousness – and that Joyce later used in his own works (see Rabaté, *1922* 7).

For Mary Ann Gillies stream-of-consciousness clearly demonstrates Bergsonian concepts of time. She quotes one of Woolf's most popular and often used sections from her essay "Modern Fiction" (1925)[55] in support for this claim: "Let us record the atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall, let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness" (Woolf, *CR* 61-62; Gillies in ed. Bradshaw 102-103). What I should not leave unnoticed here is that what prompts Woolf to write about this new method of "coming closer to life" that defines the work of several young writers is a look (at not an uncritical one) that she takes at

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[55] All quotes from "Modern Fiction" are from Woolf's collection of essays *The Common Reader*, originally published in 1925.

Joyce's work (*CR* 61). This passage from "Modern Fiction", together with Woolf's call for writers to examine "an ordinary mind on an ordinary day" and "life as a luminous halo" (*CR* 61) has certainly become one of the standard critical sources when discussing modernist literary principle and techniques, including stream-of-consciousness (see more on this in Goldman, *Modernism* 67-68).

Nevertheless, Gilles is right to note the connection between Bergsonian concepts of time and stream-of-consciousness (for more see Kumar), as this narrative method is meant to record, in Woolf's words, the flow of everyday thoughts and sensations, however disconnected and incoherent, privileging inner time. Nicholls emphasizes, for example, that William James' work is also grounded in a Bergsonian understanding of time as it proposes a decisive break with traditional empiricism and its view of experience as a series of isolated sensations or impressions, and instead it argues for regarding consciousness as not jointed, but a flow (see 200). Thus, stream-of-consciousness as the most famous formalist feature of the modernist novel is conceptualized around issues of representing consciousness/characters' voices and time – both central tenets of my approach. It can even be said that stream-of consciousness is the narrative method that most openly exemplifies the manner in which the new representation of consciousness (in my project centered on characters) in modernism depends on rethinking time, as it is seen through Bersgonian and Jamesian notions.

And as Cohn similarly points out, one of the most striking structural peculiarities of this kind of autonomous monologue is the "structure it imposes on the manipulation of the time dimension" (218). According to Cohn, Joyce's emphasis on the mythical image of the spinning earth-ball has resulted in a lot of criticism that overstresses the eternal return, or the circular in 'Penelope' and not so much the equally present sequential unrolling in time (218). For Cohn, a central event that structures Molly's monologue is the start of her menstrual cycle, that not only divides the episode into two parts, but marks Molly's time as resolutely biological, and

her temporality as undoubtedly linear (218). Molly's representation as an Earth Mother has influenced not only her reception as a character, but also her temporality, as Cohn rightly notes.

Molly's contradictory belonging to both a prehuman and a posthuman universe has been a staple of my approach towards her characterization. Molly's temporal infinity[56] is based in her ambiguity, and the sum of contradictions through which she exists both as an Earth Mother and a heavenly body, a pre- and a posthuman entity are her principal character feature. Molly is both a floating, light, heavenly body as much as Stephen and Bloom are (a transformation achieved in the penultimate episode, 'Ithaca'), but she also must remain strong and central, because she is the clou of the book: a climax and a knot, she pins it down, anchors it to its own gravity, and nails it to its own cross, claims Rabaté. It is precisely through Molly's existing on these two levels that 'Penelope' as an episode weaves and unweaves its own textual body (Rabaté, *Joyce Upon the Void* 52). The continuous weaving and unweaving of 'Penelope' are then reflected in her double temporality that is one of the many features of her constant ambiguity. In the following sections, I will explore the ways in which this Penelopian textual weaving and unweaving can be analyzed as related to Molly's queer temporality. But before that, I briefly turn to a very useful approach to the flow of narrative in 'Penelope' that follows the development of what Ruben Borg names the Penelopean motif in Joyce's oeuvre in his study *The Measureless Time of Joyce, Deleuze and Derrida* (2007).

Joyce's obsession with time is present in all his works and takes on different forms: it is represented through evocations of mythic structures, encyclopedic forms, or origin stories. Time in *Finnegans Wake*, writes Borg, does not come into view unmediated, it belongs to an abstract discourse and can only be thematized through association with something else (see 1). In 'Penelope' we encounter a similar situation: time does not exist as a separate graspable entity, rather, it is narrativized through Molly's sexuality and her ambiguous character. In his

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[56] See more on this in chapter three.

study on measureless time in Joyce – primarily addressed through *Finnegans Wake* – Borg rightly hints at the correlation between the manner in which 'Penelope' (as a symbolical figure for Molly and as an episode of *Ulysses*) is constructed as a human apparition (both a prehuman and posthuman entity, and maybe neither?) through her temporal rhythms. The prehuman does not refer to some earlier phase in a chronological continuum, and the posthuman does not signify an outcome of human history (Borg 15-16). Thus, Joyce's concoction of the prehuman and posthuman is not meant to signify a linear, chronological passing of human time encapsulated by one figure.

The myth about Penelope tells a famous tale of a woman who simultaneously produces texts as a means of buying time and buys time by wasting it (see Borg 13). Borg examines the role the Penelopean motif has for Joyce, from *Ulysses* to its more marginal, but significant, position in *Finnegans Wake*. "Joyce's deployment of the Penelopean motif lends its authority to the hypothesis that waste – together with its correlate, excess – links the nature of time and the production of texts indissolubly" (13). As excess has very much influenced my conceptualization of queer temporality in 'Penelope', I find Borg's connection between excess and waste while thinking about time and narrativity through the Penelopean motif very instructive. And although Borg examines the importance of these intertwined processes – buying and wasting time, while simultaneously producing and undoing texts as constituting elements for the narrative of *Finnegans Wake*, it is undeniable that 'Penelope' has that same function in *Ulysses*, even though this role has been carried out to its radical ends in *Finnegans Wake*. The unimaginable past in *Finnegans Wake* – as a feature of the measureless – is the source of narration itself, claims Borg (2). If the measureless and unimaginable are what characterizes time in *Finnegans Wake*, as it becomes a paradoxical entity that can never truly be analyzed, my question here is: how much of this time obsession that defines *Finnegans Wake* is present in *Ulysses* and more specifically, in 'Penelope' as the episode that anticipates

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Joyce's last novel with its ambiguous female-centered positionality? What are the interrelations of time and queer sexuality here, and how does their dynamics affect narration? In the following part of this chapter, I attempt to answer these questions as I focus on examining time as a queer-driven force that manages, produces and enables the simultaneous doing and undoing, waving and wasting, expanding and contracting of characters and narrative.

5.3. Queering Molly's Yes, or, a Kiss that Ties Time

The last two pages of *Ulysses* are, on the surface, future-oriented. Molly makes plans for the next morning, as she is also remembering the previous afternoon spent with Boylan and thinking of telling Bloom about it (U. 18. 1510-1512; 516). Suddenly, and not surprisingly by now, she starts thinking about that one afternoon with Bloom on Howth Hill near Dublin, when he proposed to her. These last memories of the more recent past (from sixteen years ago) are intertwined with older memories of Gibraltar. Here is likely the most quoted excerpt of *Ulysses*, consisting of Molly's final words, marking the end of the novel (despite of all Joyce's fears and denials):

> the sun shines for you he said the day we were lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head in the grey tweed suit and his straw hat the day I got him to propose to me yes first I gave him the bit of seedcake out of my mouth and it was leapyear like now yes 16 years ago my God after that long kiss I near lost my breath yes he said I was a flower of the mountain yes so we are flowers all a womans body yes that was one true thing he said in his life and the sun shines for you today yes that was why I liked him because I saw he understood or felt what a woman is and I knew I could always get round him and I gave him all the pleasure I could leading him on till he asked me to say yes and I wouldnt answer first only looked out over the sea and the sky I was thinking of so many things he didnt know of Mulvey and Mr Stanhope and Hester and father and old captain Groves and the sailors playing […] and Gibraltar as a girl where I was

a Flower of the mountain yes when I put the rose in my hair like the Andalusian girls
used or shall I wear a red yes and how he kissed me under the Moorish wall and I
thought well as well him as another and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes
and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my
arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume
yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes (U. 18. 1571-1583;
1602-1609).

As Bloom proposes to Molly, in what Crispi calls "the single most romantic memory Leopold
and Molly share […] the one that defines them as man and woman, as lovers, and as husband
and wife" (168), Molly thinks to herself that Bloom had no idea what she was thinking of,
including Mulvey, Mr. Stanhope and Hester, all of her previous love interests here. As she
thinks of all of them, memories of Gibraltar invade the scene. "I was a Flower of the mountain",
something Bloom says to Molly and is inherently a Bloomian sentence (flowery as it gets), is
now taken to the Gibraltar context, with Molly not only making it her own statement, but
transposing this rather intimate comment to a memory of a different lover.

The kiss with which this memory begins and seems to be the initiator of the proposal
("I got him to propose to me yes first I gave him the bit of seedcake out of my mouth (…) God
after that long kiss I near lost my breath") in a few seconds is transposed to another lover –
Mulvey ("How he kissed me under the Moorish wall"). This latter kiss that is a part of an earlier
memory Molly shares with Mulvey becomes "and I thought well as well him as another and
then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me I would say yes my
mountain flower", "he" and "him" referring to Bloom again, the mountain flower finding his
way back to Bloom. All the descriptions of Gibraltar, much of this last couple of sentences of
'Penelope' and thus *Ulysses*, are not included on the first draft of the episode, claims Crispi
(174). Joyce only added it on subsequent manuscripts, as he was writing more about Molly's

adolescence. In such a way, one of the most romantic scenes in the novel that was firstly imagined as taking place between Molly and Leopold in the later (and published versions) becomes intertwined with Molly's personal, even secret memories of old lovers ("I was thinking of so many things he didnt know"). Even Molly's Leopold's the seedcake kiss, I believe, is not their own intimate memory anymore, as this erotic instance signifies other kisses as well, and invoking other lovers. As one kiss leads to another, Molly is reliving her past selves, and her times expand to include more selves (her's and others'). It is almost as if this kiss that initiates the temporal amalgamation that will follow is itself a communal instance – a proposal kiss shared by Molly and Leopold, but also a kiss Molly shared with Mulvey under the Moorish wall. The kiss marks the beginning of the process of temporal and subjective expansion, as this sexually charged moment changes Molly's individual boundaries. And that process is accompanied by an extension of her present. The kiss starts off the transformation of an individual into collectivity, of a temporally isolated moment to a temporal tying of many moments that extend the present.

The last seven words of *Ulysses* ("yes I said yes I will Yes") have been a particularly significant subject of discussion over the last two decades in Joycean scholarship, as a large collection of previously unknown Joyce manuscripts (among them a draft of 'Penelope', a copybook) were acquired by the National Library of Ireland in 2002 (see Michel Groden, "The National Library of Ireland's New Joyce Manuscripts: A Statement and Document Descriptions"). In this essay Groden writes that the last page of the copybook with any writing on it contains only the two handwritten lines of the episode, that do end with "yes", but there is one big change in comparison with the later manuscripts: in the National Library's draft, instead of "and I said I will yes", we can read: "and I said I would yes" (47-48). Here's a full quote of Groden's linguistic analysis:

> He [Joyce] crossed out 'would' and substituted 'will,' and he did this by writing
> 'would,' crossing it out, and writing 'will' immediately next to it on the line. (…) Joyce

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produced what the manuscript experts call a *currente calamo* revision, one done 'with the pen running on,' that is, written on the run or on the fly. The possibility remains open, of course, that Joyce wrote 'would' by mistake and that he corrected rather than revised to 'will', but I think it is more likely that 'will' was a revision.) The switch to 'will' turns the last words into a memory of spoken dialogue and also changes the ending from the subdued subjunctive 'would' to the decisive indicative 'will' (48).

Crispi points out that this change has significantly altered our understanding of the last few lines of 'Penelope' and with that, of *Ulysses*. If Molly's initial answer to Bloom's proposal was rendered through "would", we get a rather different formulation, perhaps, as Crispi indicates, of a tentative answer. Even more, the change from "would" to "will" does signify the use of a future tense verb (thereby making it a representation of direct speech) instead of a conditional tense verb indicating indirect or reported speech (see Crispi 175).

But, adds Crispi, this change also transforms the meaning of that moment in time, it changes the temporal dimension of this event, as the event no longer marks only a recalling of a moment. Instead, "with the change of tense, the reader participates in the mode in which Molly *relives that moment for all time*" (my emphasis, 175). So, this new formulation represents an ongoing acceptance of Bloom's proposal by Molly, that does not only happen on that one day on Howth, but as well again at the end of Bloomsday, and for all eternity, argues Crispi. He then concludes that the Blooms' (Bloom's?) desire to go back to a time when they were happier is achieved in this final sentence, that also symbolizes the cyclical nature and optimistic promise of *Ulysses*, contained in the everlasting affirmation of Molly (and Bloom's love) (ibid). Crispi's reading is certainly on point when asserting one aspect of this last sentence that primarily refers to Molly's relationship with Leopold. He is right to note the temporal and emotional complexities contained in those last "will" and "yes", as they encapsulate Molly's reaffirmation to Bloom and her reliving of that moment on Howth. As Senn notes, this very much quoted last sentence (or a part of one) "yes I said yes I will Yes" is a quote in its own way – referring to Molly's life recalling "a very special moment in the past which then pointed

towards the future ('I will') – but also a marriage formula, and a recollection that has now been changed to a present" ("Random Instances" 24).

I have been arguing so far that Molly's memories and thoughts on Bloom are not so easily distinguishable from many other aspects and people in her life. A few sentences before the last seven words, we read about "Mulvey and Mr Stanhope and Hester", that seem to be a part, or at least colliding with that memory of Howth. Although I agree with Crispi's interpretation of this moment and its powerful optimistic energy, especially when it comes to Molly and Leopold's relationship, I do believe Molly's "will" can be read as her own "will" and therefore, represents not only her everlasting devotion to Bloom, but also, her attitude towards the past, that is so malleable and present, in both meanings of this word.

Molly's final "will" contains her temporal existence, as it brings the past in her present and becomes, as Crispi notes, her constantly relived future. But her constant and total reliving of that moment that, as I have shown, it's not only Leopold's, but also Mulvey's, and Hester's and Gibraltar's, and as such, it signifies her devotion to Leopold, but also to her past love(r)s, her past life, and her past. That is why I think the "will" that signifies that constant and eternal reliving of that moment does not only include Leopold as a figure to whom Molly is saying "yes" in those moments. She is "thinking of so many things" as Leopold is asking her, things he is not even aware of. That final "yes" exceeds their personal history, their marriage (although it does not exclude it) as it encompasses so many aspects of her past. Molly's "yes" becomes a symbol of the temporal and sexual amalgamation that is occurring on the pages of 'Penelope' as it interweaves and unites the different instances of her past ("Mulvey and Mr Stanhope and Hester and father and old Captain Groves") and reformulates them as moments present and future.

Molly, writes Conley, embodying the sign of infinity that stands for this episode, "shifts from past to present to future without noticeable care for grammar" (72). But this noticeable

lack of care for grammar and its tenses that conventionally convey the boundaries of distinctive temporalities and their impenetrability is a way of exemplifying the crossing of those borders between the past, present and the future. "Will" stands for the forever-renewed present, but also, the forever-experienced past, and the forever-anticipated future. This future tense, then, or Molly's "will" represents the intertwined simultaneity of all events, past, present and future. Molly transfigures time by manipulating its linearity. The change of "would" to "will" transforms the memory into an ongoing, active event. Instead of a simple memory, the Howth proposal is "will"-ed into an event that exists in a temporal plane of possibility between the present and the future. Muñoz' temporal paradigm that suggests a productive reuse of the past as a field of possibility for an act in the present with a new futurity in mind (see *Cruising Utopia* 41-42), is perfectly fitted model for a queer reading of Molly's "yes".

What we encounter in 'Penelope' is undeniably a working of the past: Molly is lying in her bed, thinking to herself, retelling the events of her day, and her life. But I believe that reading her monologue simply as a strain of reminiscences, a nostalgic dive into the past, obliterates the complex temporal dynamics at play. These dynamics become apparent when we consider queer time, as a narrative and thematic dimension, that brings forth the many ways in which queer sexuality and non-linear temporality create the narrative. Molly is not simply remembering her past here, as shown through the role that simple transformation of "would" to "will" assumes here. She is reexperiencing a queer moment in the present, by drawing on its eternal futural force. Her "will" can be eternally relived in the present – despite the fact that it does signify a past moment – since it is a (linguistic and grammatical) maker of eternal futurity. Uttered in the past (or, in its own present, by which I mean, the very moment when it was happening) when it was an answer to Leopold's Howth proposal "yes I said yes I will Yes", is not a particularly queer instance. It is both a reiteration of a marriage formula, and as Joyce has noted, an utterly submissive (and in his own view feminine) instance. One of the dimensions I

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like the most in Muñoz's approach to queerness and queer time is that his model does not reject time's linearity but looks at the ways in which queerness *twists* linear time. It is exactly that moment's unquestionable belonging to the past, or the connection that it will always have to the past, as it is drawn away from it, that enables its subsequent queering. Sixteen years later and precisely in Molly's bed (where she has just had a confusing extra-marital intercourse) the past is transformed, in a Muñozian manner, into a field of possibility. From a submissive marriage formula, Molly's "yes" transverses and twists the linearity and experiences of those sixteen years, and it becomes a queer instance. It now encompasses not only the love Molly has for Leopold, but all the loves she ever had, and "Mulvey and Mr Stanhope and Hester and father and old Captain Groves". Years later, and through its sticky persistence, this moment becomes excessive, non-linear, even unbearably sexual, or simply, queer.

5.4.   The Penelopean Narrative

Characters are usually temporally limited and discontinuous, writes Margolin, as we are not allowed to witness every minute of their days and lives (in ed. Herman 68). And yet, Molly's character is structured in such a way that aims to surpass this temporal limitation, as she is presented as a temporally flexible entity. While we follow Leopold Bloom's day throughout most of *Ulysses* with no depictions of Molly Bloom (besides a few isolated scenes), Leopold does not have an episode that is fully "his own". He never assumes the full focus of the readers, as he shares his day with the city, fellow Dubliners, Gerty MacDowell, Stephen Dedalus etc. Even if the episodes are primarily focused on his own thoughts and recollections, Bloom's day, as he walks, works, chats through the city of Dublin, is not fully his own, but shared by and sometimes interrupted by other people'. 'Penelope', on the other hand, is an episode fully and only focalized through Molly Bloom, nothing else taking the focus off her. Margolin's logical insight, claiming that literary characters are temporally discontinuous beings, loses parts of its

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applicability here, as in the case of Molly Bloom Joyce attempts to create a character that will cross temporal bounds as much as possible in order to reveal Molly in her entirety.

A continuous interior monologue, writes Cohn, "is based on an absolute correspondence between time and text, narrated time and time of narration" (220). Here, the single mark for the passage of time is the passing of words on a page. While in an ordinary narration time is a flexible medium that can be speeded up (by summary), retarded (by description or digression), advanced (by anticipation), or reversed (by retrospect), in an autonomous monologue, that is not controlled by an overarching narrator, time advances only with the articulation of thoughts (see 220). Thus, the monologist – Molly – has a full control over the narrative here, as she has full control over time. Molly's control of time, as Cohn precisely describes, is translated into her control of narrative. And this is achieved through the form of the interior monologue, or stream-of-consciousness, that although present throughout *Ulysses*, finds its crystallization in 'Penelope'. Molly's relentless handling of time, her explicit mixture of past, present and future is translated into the undeniable continuity of her monologue, signified as well by the omission of punctuation and the organization of her flowing, never-stopping thoughts into eight long sentences.

This narrative structure of 'Penelope' as Cohn argues, is mirrored in the linguistic structure. Cohn also engages in a linguistic-stylistic analysis of Molly's language, concluding that the most immediately apparent aspect of Molly's language is her emotional, agitated tone. No sentence in Molly's monologue has the form of a simple statement because it always contains emotive, expressive signals, whether these signals concern past or present events (225). One crucial element worth noting here is that interior monologue, by definition, is a form of discourse addressed to no one, it does not have a communicative aim, as Cohn points out. So, the emotional and affective value of this discourse is not aimed at creating a neutral report of the present, or a coherent form of the past. Molly's monologue, whose aim is not to

communicate or present a reliable chain of events to a listener/reader, further determines the anti-narrative, anti-reportorial dimension of this episode (see Cohn 226). Thus, the indeterminate mixture of past, present and future in Molly's monologue colors not only her temporality, but also the way this narrative is structured.

Another, and perhaps, the most telling symptom of the non-narrative nature of Molly's language is the profusion and the referential instability of its pronouns (Cohn 229). This instability, as I have shown in the previous chapter, is most clearly shown when it comes to the pronoun "he", which can cause significant confusion for the reader, especially during a first reading. Cohn has a similar conclusion, as she observes that the indeterminacy of the pronouns – and especially the "he" combines most of the linguistic features present in 'Penelope': the non-communicative nature of a language-for-oneself, as well as the malleability of temporal borders that is a distinctive feature of this kind of language in 'Penelope' (229). To this analysis, I would add the explicit sexual dimensions that the constant switching between the multiple "he" has for the narrative which has already been addressed. Molly's language, as we see here, functions on multiple levels, as it combines the (queer) distorting of temporality with a simultaneous disrupting of narrative, or rather, an inception of a non-narrative dimension in this episode. The constant oscillation between memories and projects, reflected through the simultaneous use of all the tenses: past, present, future, indicative, conditional, the present of generalizations is a distinctive mark of the freely associative monologic language, writes Cohn (227).

It is Molly's queer "will" that combines multiple temporal (and emotional) strains together as it brings the past in the present and in the future. Molly's "will" weaves and unweaves the present, past and the future in an unbreakable tissue. Examining Joyce's narrative effects in *Finnegans Wake*, Borg argues in favor of a "peculiar Joycean conception of writing as a technique of archivization that serves, at one and the same time, both memory and

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forgetting" (51), as he righty notes, is represented through the figure of Penelope as a valuable interpretative strategy. Here, weaving is paired with unweaving, composition with decomposition, writing with unwriting, in a pattern that follows the ebb and flow of time and leads to a radical rethinking of the processes of self-formation and de-formation (see Borg 51). As with the two strategies that Joyce takes on when composing Molly's character discussed earlier, these two narrative strands are not opposed, or exist in a contradictory schema for their own sake. The internal, narrative-(de)forming dynamics that exist between them is what interests me here.

In all aspects the Joycean practice seems an ambivalent move of both maintaining and invalidating at once. The Joycean text is always "both and" and "or already", writes Van Boheeman-Saf ("Joyce, Derrida, and the Discourse of 'the Other'" 91), while analyzing the parody and imitation of the Homeric epic in *Ulysses*. The same can be applied if we approach Joyce's writing in *Ulysses* as a novelistic form: Joyce seems to be affirming the generic conventions of the novel, and at the same time undoing them. The act and process of reading most often results in creating a world of its own, a fictional reality, that the readers approach with the apparatus for world-ordering developed for comprehending the reality that exist around them. Literary characters, settings, events have their individuality and entity by which they will be distinguished from others, and that is what gives them their identity, argues Van Boheeman-Saf. But *Ulysses* "deliberately confuses, blurs the semantic categories which Western culture has provided as ordering system" (ibid). This semantic mesh, claims Van-Boheeman, stops the reader/interpreter/scholar from asking the question "what does it mean?" which could more easily be asked from a more traditional text. Instead, Joyce's narratives ask different questions from their readers, and Van Boheeman-Saf's question is primarily focused on the otherness contained in Joyce's texts that for her is one of their structuring principles. Or, asked in a more literary fashion, she writes, these questions would take the form of: "What

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allows a text to both belong to a genre and destroy the idea of a genre from within, to tell a story and to alert the reader to the artifice, the violence, of plot, to present characters and to invalidate the notion of discrete personal identity?" (93).

Narrative in 'Penelope' is founded upon the two parallel, simultaneous forces of generation and de-generation, symbolically represented by weaving and unweaving. Time is the productive mechanism that pushes this process forward as Penelope weaves and unweaves in an effort to produce and waste time, and Molly relives past sexual experiences while expanding the present. The Penelopean narrative reflects the processes of expanding the present by simultaneously living the past and the future discussed in the previous chapters. This temporality of writing and unwriting can be viewed as a queer process. Molly's stream-of-consciousness is queer time in the act of generating itself. With their complex double-positionality both character and narrative enable us to perceive language's limitations when it comes to time's malleability. Queer time comes in focus through other elements – such as characters, narratives, queerness, or excess. Queer time is a narrative-generative and narrative-dissolving force: it produces narrative as 'Penelope' writes itself, while simultaneously dissolving the very principles it is made of.

5.5.   Derrida's Temporal Yes, or, Extending the Present through a Yes

In the next few paragraphs, as a closure of my queer reading of Molly's "yes" and a conclusion of this chapter (as well as the Joyce section of this dissertation), I turn to Derrida's interpretation of the (temporal) significance "yes" holds for Joyce and *Ulysses.* Derrida's Joycean texts often comment on the issue of memory. His most popular Joyce lectures, the 1982 talk "Two Words for Joyce", first delivered at the Centre national d'Art et de Culture Georges Pompidou at a symposium honoring the centennial of Joyce's birth; and "Ulysses

Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce"[57], a 1984 address to the Joyce Symposium in Frankfurt emphasize the totalizing magnitude of Joyce's oeuvre and the ways available to us, his readers, to remember and archive his works. The *Ulysses* talk though is mostly focused on the (performative, symbolic, temporal) meaning the word "yes" has for *Ulysses*. Thus, this talk unites both Joyce's "yeses" and memory/time as one of *Ulysses'* primary occupations.

Yes contains all meaning, and yet has no meaning by itself, claims Derrida, and this certainly defines how Derrida contemplates the manner in which "yes" is being said and performed, always in doubles:

> The yes says nothing and asks nothing but another yes (…) The latter only poses itself, proposes itself, marks itself in the call for confirmation, in the yes, yes (…) (and Molly remembers and recalls herself from the other yes), *one is always tempted to call this anamnesis a monologue* (my emphasis, 74).

This Derridean sending back to oneself from oneself that at the same time never leaves itself and yet never arrives at itself captures quite nicely the paradox of the queer time loop in which Molly herself is caught. "And we see the scene of 'sending oneself to oneself' replayed many times in *Ulysses* in its literally postal form", Derrida writes (77)[58]. The repletion and the dependency of the "yes" on other "yeses" depends on memory: "[A] yes demands a priori its own repetition, its own memorizing, and that a yes to the yes inhabits the arrival of the 'first' yes, which is therefore never simply originary (…) without the promise of memory. Molly remembers, recalls herself [se rappelle]" (78). "A yes must entrust itself to memory" (Derrida 79).

Molly remembers and recalls herself, but also sends herself to herself (and others) through the "yes". The "yes" becomes the signifier of a queer, all-encompassing power, of memory, desire and the transformation of the self. Thus, the "yes" depends, thrives on, and

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[57] All quotes from this essay used from *Derrida and Joyce: Texts and Contexts* (2013), edited by Andrew J. Mitchell and Sam Slote. The essays itself is translated by François Raffoul.

[58] He then addresses a couple of these occasions, but does not mention Hester and Molly's communication, done, significantly so, via a postcard that Hester sends to Molly.

exists, on memory and the promise of memory. In such a way, *Ulysses*, as a novel of the "yes",

is a novel of memory, even more, of all memory, or a "hypermnesic machine" in Derrida's

reading (60). For Derrida, *Ulysses* is a book that contains both the past and the future:

everything that has ever happened and all the traces of the future, in the complexity and the

repetitiveness of the "yes" (60). This very paradoxical situation Derrida is describing here is

contained in the very features of modernity, and as such, modernist literature: the structure,

world, novel, that contains everything in itself and contains itself in itself, functioning (or

believing to function) as an extreme model, the most proficient one, by its very definition, ruins

itself (or threatens to do so).

Is the "yes" a gendered "yes" though?[59] The "yes" is that of the woman, but also of the

mother, the flesh, the earth, as it has often been said about Molly and the interpretations devoted

to her "yeses", wonders Derrida (65). Is the "yes" a female yes, representing the ongoing

historical, patriarchal subjugation of women to men, a liberating feminist even yes, or a

masculine, sexist yes? Maybe it depends on how we address and see Molly: as "the creation of

a man (…) a one-sidedly masculine character" (according to Budgen 269), or the quite

opposite, as an overtly womanly woman, as she has been analyzed many times (see Derrida

71). That being said, it is obvious that the "yes" is a gendered yes, at least in the case of

'Penelope': it is being pronounced, enacted, performed, by a woman, who, as Derrida argues,

confirms, and then, transforms her own self through this yes, and even more, through the

memory of herself.

Besides gendered, the "yes" is an overtly sexual(ized) "yes". Although Derrida does

not really reflect on this aspect, saying "yes" as Molly does, to the other, "in order to tell that

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[59] 'Penelope' belongs to an ancient tradition of texts in which women speak the secret of their sexualities, revealing their true natures, writes Van Boheemen. What is new about Molly's monologue is that she confesses her pleasure in sexual intercourse, her sexuality, not so much through her words as through her vagina. This last episode of *Ulysses*, "characterized by its unpunctuated flow of feminine speech, is the locus of the invention of what we now call 'gender', the understanding of sexual difference as inscription and style, rather than an ontological essence" ("Molly's Heavenly Body" 268).

other that she will say yes if the other asks her, yes, to say yes" (Derrida 77) is most definitely a sexual "yes". Molly says yes to Bloom, promising to marry him, she says yes to all their future, and their marriage. At the same time, as the "yes" contains all the possible futures and pasts, she says "yes" to Boylan, Mulvey, Gardner, Hester, so on and on, everyone she ever thought of and loved. The past in 'Penelope', as we have seen, does not linearly extend into the present, but rather, transforms the present as it is compressed, into a swollen, distended, prolonged now. This multilayered now consists of re-enactments of the past in the present, as well as the future (as Molly's queer "yes" clearly shows). The expansion of the present also happens simultaneously with a reliving of the past, or merging of the past and the present, as well as with a reliving the past in the form of a future or reimagining the future as the past. As a result of all these actions, Molly's now is a condensed present, an extended moment, which as Joyce imagined, signifies both no time and all time.[60]

The forced linearity of language seems to disintegrate, however illusionary, in 'Penelope'. I argue that this process happens as a result of a queer temporal amalgamation. The dissolving of narrative comes about as a result of the workings of queer temporality in this episode. Queer temporality thus presents one of the possibilities through which language escapes its own linearity. The result here is a breakdown of conventional narrative, or as Dorrit Cohn argues, a creation of an interior monologue without an authorial presence. And this process, as I have shown throughout, is motivated and perpetuated by specific instances of the sexual. Queerness instigates time's malleability. It is the extraordinary "soul of the commonest object" (here assumed by sex, sexuality, interest, focus) that leads to a dissolution of time's boundaries (Stephen Hero 213). And that makes Joyce's treatment of time 'Penelope' another

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[60] Unlike all the other episodes that have clearly defined hours in which they are situated, the 'Time' marked for the ultimate episode is infinity in one scheme and no hour in another (see Richard Ellman, *Ulysses on the Liffey* Appendix).

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example, although often neglected, of one of his epiphanies. The extraordinary thus steams from the common, the ordinary, and transforms the movement of time and narrative.

The queer transformation of Molly through a multiplication of narrative "yeses" leads the development of her characterization trail to a halt – the constant, evert-lasting multiplication of the "yeses" is implicated in Molly's transformation of the self, as Derrida also notes. What my interpretation emphasizes here is that it is precisely Molly's queer ' "yes" that future-izes the past, in the present. Or, closer to Currie's terminology whose work was addressed in the introduction, Molly's queer "yes" turns an experience of the present into a future memory, and does so by uniting Molly's different selves across different timespans, ending with an orgasmic anticipation of the future that has already happened. "Some event in the future is set off that is always already past": this is the logics of future anterior, that according to Currie signifies the basic structure of narrative (see *The Unexpected* 93). Narrative blends what has not yet happened with what has already taken place, or which combines two ideas of the future – the future which is to come and the future which is already there (13). Thus, narrative designates an uncertain blend of futurity and pastness that marks the present (5).

In conclusion, this chapter looked at the narrative meaning and role of queer time in constructing the textual and thematic universes of 'Penelope'. Through a couple of blocks of concepts/notions that functioned as separate sections, I have traced the development of the narrative through Joyce's drafts, and the development of main narratological approaches to his work; a close-reading a few important scenes from the episodes (primarily through Molly's yes) that show the significance of queer time in developing the narrative; and emphasizing the role specific narrative techniques and tense structures (stream-of consciousness; and the mixture of various grammatical tenses) has in structuring the narrative. Unlike Woolf's *The Waves*, whose processes of queering time will be addressed in the following three chapter, and

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where an all-assuming present that presides over the past and the future is broken on a few occasions when queerness prevails; 'Penelope' is possibly a more straight-forward case. It consists of a pure narrative of recollections, whose events are primarily represented through the use of various tenses, as its speaker remembers her day/life. In 'Penelope' past and the future instances are used to enlarge the experience of a present moment as an all-existing temporal dimension. The expanding of the present itself unfolds as a queer event, as queer instances motivate this temporal activity.

Chapter 6: Contested Characterization in The Waves

6.1.   Tracing "the Rhythm of the Waves"

The Waves[61] is often considered Woolf's masterpiece and one of the most astonishing narrative achievements of modernism, but it is also read as "complex and difficult"[62] precisely because of Woolf's innovative engagements with characters and narrative (see Balossi 1; Warner xiv). In the second part of this dissertation consisting of three interrelated chapters devoted to *The Waves*, that follows a similar structure to previous three Joycean chapters, I analyze the processes of queering time through these two main categories: characters and narrative. I aim to map out the connections between characters and narrative – that produce this work's intensity, both as difficult and formidable – by placing queer time at the forefront of my interpretation.

The first idea, or a note that was to become the "origin" of *The Waves* was written down by Woolf in her dairy in September 1926. By April 1930 Woolf had completed the first version of *The Waves*, known as *The Moths*, and started working on the second in June of the same year. The second version, or the final manuscript, was finished in February 1931, and subsequently published on 8 October 1931 by Hogarth Press (see more in Graham, *Two Holograph Drafts* 69-72; Warner xi-xii). In 1976, the two versions were published as *The Waves: Two Holograph Drafts*, transcribed and edited by J.W. Graham. The second part of this chapter looks more carefully into Woolf's writing processes as she was drafting, struggling with, and revising this novel, as I use insights of these stages to support my interpretation. But

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[61] All quotes from the novel are from *The Waves: The Definitive Collected Edition of the Novels of Virginia Woolf*, published in 1990, by Hogarth Press, introduction by Angelica Garnett.
[62] "Yes, but this book is a very queer business (…) I keep pegging away; and find it the most complex and difficult of all my books" (Woolf, D III 298).

before that, in the first part of this chapter, I focus on the primary category through which I will be analyzing the processes of queering time in *The Waves*: characters.

The Waves traces the lives of six characters: Neville, Louis, Susan, Jinny, Rhoda, and Bernard, through their interrelated speeches. A seventh character, Percival is allusively present, as he does not have a voice of his own and he is not directly included in the narrative, but only present through the memories, stories, and desires of all the others. The lives of the six characters are represented by speeches that are usually referred as "soliloquies", delivered by each of them at different stages in their lives, from childhood to old age, forming the main body of the novel. Woolf herself introduced the term soliloquies for the characters' speeches. In August 1930, she wrote: "The Waves is I think resolving itself (I am at page 100) into a series of *dramatic soliloquies*. The thing is to keep them running homogenously in & out, in the *rhythm of the waves*" (my emphasis, D III 312). As Warner points out, Woolf is using "soliloquies" to indicate her borrowing from the genre of the drama – as her characters speak their parts in a manner similar to the dramatic form (each of their sentences followed by a "she/he said", as if it was a stage instruction), with the absence of classic dialogue (see 39). *The Waves* was imagined by Woolf as a tremendous discussion, in which every life should have its voice, a kind of mosaic (see D III 298). The intricacies of the specific genre of *The Waves* and Woolf's use of narrative techniques associated with poetry or drama, as a manner of conveying the mosaic of characters' voices without a narratorial figure, will be addressed at a greater length in the second part of this chapter. For now, I am interested in the structure of *The Waves* that is meant to follow the movement of the waves, and that, I argue, is connected to the treatment of time and characters in this novel.

Scattered between the chapters with the intention of imitating the rhythm of the waves are lyrical interludes, a term also used by Woolf to name sections in italic that describe the passing of a day and come before each chapter. In January 1930, as she was thinking of a way

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to organize that "gigantic conversation" she had in mind for *The Waves* and some months before her note on the "dramatic soliloquies", Woolf writes that the "interludes are very difficult, yet I think essential; so as to bridge and also to give a background – the sea; insensitive nature" (see D III 285). These interludes describe the rise and the decent of the sun through one day and the parallel moving of the waves. The short interludes come before every chapter, functioning as a symbol for the chapters that follow them, metaphorically representing what is coming next. Thus, the chapters in the novel represent an entire lifespan of six characters, while the interludes dividing them represent one day in nature. The action of the interludes in the novel is mainly focused on consolidating and "thickening" what happens in the upcoming chapters, argues Monaco (179).

> There are nine chapters and ten interludes in *TW*. The first interlude begins with:
> "The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the
> sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it" (TW 1);

tracing the birth of a day, when the sun is not yet risen, and the world exists in a state in which the sea is merged with the sky, corresponding with the first episode of the novel, where all the characters are children. From there, with each interlude the sun rises a bit higher (see TW 16); and as the day goes by objects become visible, animals appear throughout the gardens and beaches (see TW 45-46); the waves breaking and spreading their waters over the shore, withdrawing and felling again (TW 98); till eventually the sun starts sinking, lengthening the shadows on the beach (TW 138-139); resulting finally in a darkness in which the sea and sky are again indistinguishable (TW 157-158). The episodes consisting of the characters' soliloquies that come after the interludes correspondingly follow the progress (on the surface, linear) of the characters' lives, as they age through childhood, adolescence (school days), young adulthood, maturity and finally, death.

Warner reads the interludes that represent a brief day in the sun as a "standard poetic conceit" and an "animating structural device", as the growth and ageing of the six characters is

being imaged and represented through the progress of the sun (see 62). Or as Clements writes, "[a]ccordingly, life and time organize the novel, both in the interludes (one day) and the inter-chapters (7 life-long journeys)" (166). The last interlude, that comes right after the longest soliloquy of the novel, consists of one sentence – "The waves broke on the shore" (TW 199). It is meant to emphasize, I believe, the always-present meaning of the waves as a structural and thematic motif of the book, as the never-ending movement of the waves brings a stop to the narrative. Like in *Ulysses*, this interlude seems to mark an ambiguous ending, as the narrative ends with a sentence that explicitly does not stop time (the waves keep breaking on the shore), despite the death/disappearance of the characters. In addition, the novel starts and ends with an interlude, pointing to the timeless and eternal existence of nature.

According to Ryan, these ten italicized interludes have been read by critics in three main ways: as formal structural devices (expressing Woolf's concern for art and music); as an allegory of empire (representing Woolf's anti-imperialist politics); and as a representation of the non-human and natural world (in ed. Dubino et al. 144). Research on Woolf's engagement with the non-human, the natural, and the material (and especially in *The Waves*) has been a prominent topic of interest in Woolfian scholarship since the late 1980s.[63] In this dissertation, I am interested in seeing how *The Waves*' interludes, as narrative representations of nature and the non-human world are used in creating a temporality that both announces and counterposes the passage of time in the soliloquies. Translating time into words, or, finding the rhythm of time (nature and the non-human being among the vehicles through which this theme is explored in *The Waves*) is one of Woolf's main narrative preoccupations in this novel. Narrating the unfolding of human life as retold through the tempo of a single day in nature, *The Waves* is perhaps the most time-motived and driven piece in Woolf's oeuvre.

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[63] Also see Ryan's study *Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory: Sex, Animal, Life* (1988).

In her study *Machinic Modernism: The Deleuzian Literary Machines of Woolf, Lawrence and Joyce* (2008), Beatrice Monaco argues that one of Joyce's strategies for "universalizing" his texts was to inject them with large quantities of passing time, while Woolf is more interested in growth and the passing of life in a more integral way, as she melds the time of the body and nature's cosmic dimensions in her literary forms (168). I believe that *Ulysses* keeps the contradictory nature of time as it enriches, emphasizes, and promotes ambiguities, or clashes contradictory traits. These dynamics are also visible in *Ulysses* through the manner in which the past, future and the present come together in their separateness in one un-easy mesh, as I have shown previously. Woolf seems to strive for a certain reconciliation of opposites, as Monaco claims: "On every level *The Waves* exudes the triumphant climax of reconciliation, both formal and thematic, of all oppositions: organic and mechanical, aesthetic and political, and natural and civilised" (168-169). This reconciliation of opposites, present in *The Waves* through Woolf's merging of human (and temporally perishable) soliloquies and non-human interludes (representative of an eternal natural cycle) is one of the lenses through which I will approach the topic of character-(de)formation through queer time in this novel.

Time's repetitive rhythm is the cornerstone of *The Waves*. Each interlude, that is meant to signify a wave, represents the passing of a cycle of time corresponding to a phase in the characters' lives. Furthermore, the overall passing of time, or the narrativization of temporality in *The Waves* follows the rhythm of the waves. In this chapter, as well as in the following two, I trace the wave-like movement of time that, as I show, helped Woolf as she was working on devising a new kind of genre and character – two interrelated processes. I start the following section by introducing the characters of *The Waves* and their main features, before I continue with a more theoretical discussion of their place and significance in the narrative. Instead of describing the individual markers of the six different characters as an introduction to *The Waves*, I will follow the narrative of the novel, and from there, focus on each one of them

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individually. My close-reading interpretation of the novel follows this strategy in the following two chapters as well.

6.2. A Kiss that Unties Time

> "I see a ring," said Bernard, "hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light."
> "I see a slab of pale yellow," said Susan, "spreading away until it meets a purple stripe."
> "I hear a sound," said Rhoda, "cheep, chirp; cheep, chirp; going up and down."
> "I see a globe," said Neville," hanging down in a drop against the enormous flanks of some hill."
> "I see a crimson tassel," said Jinny," twisted with gold threads."
> "I hear something stamping," said Louis. "A great beast's foot is chained. It stamps, and stamps, and stamps." (TW 2).

The first lines of *The Waves*, or what each one of the characters sees or hears seems to hint at their specific futures, and acts as a marker of an identity that will be developed throughout the novel. Bernard, the most prominent writer-figure in the novel, sees a "ring" that is "hanging in a loop of light". This signifies the constant circularity existing in Bernard's stories, as well as his always-present endeavor for a full, rounded meaning, presented through a strive for the perfection of the "ring" as a form.

Susan, the maternal figure, who spends her life out of the city and lives of/in nature, sees a "pale yellow" spreading to a "purple stripe", perhaps reminiscent of yellow fields and the peaceful unwinding of a day, as the sun sets into the purple of the night. Rhoda, probably the main outsider in the group, who struggles to belong and eventually kills herself, "*hears*" – and it is very significant that she hears and not sees as the others – a sound "going up and down" – as she is immediately distinguished from the rest. Rhoda's vertical movement of sound here, going up and down, seems to me directly opposed to Susan's horizontal and day-like spread of colors, as these two symbolic cases are supposed to capture the differences of their future lives and interests. At the same time, as time goes by, Rhoda will become more associated with the color purple that assumes a different meaning in her soliloquy than the one

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it holds for Susan – this thematic pattern will be addressed at a greater length in the following chapter.

Neville sees a "globe" hanging down in a drop, against a hill, an image that is similar, yet distinguishable enough from Bernard's circle, as Neville is a character that is associated with writerly aspirations as well. The form of the globe positioned against the circular perfection of the ring encapsulates Neville's more down-to-earth life philosophy, in contrast to Bernard's idealized notion of life and art, as it will become clear throughout the novel. Significantly, Neville's globe also announces a later episode in which all of the characters unite together and exist as a full entity, under the watchful (and yet absent) presence of Percival, whom Neville loves. Even in Neville's first line, the "globe" is present as a symbol that will become most associated throughout the narrative with Percival's farewell dinner – whose queerness lies at the center of my analysis in the following chapter – as it insinuates the meaning Percival will come to hold in Neville's life.

Jinny, who is associated with a bohemian desire for life, vitality, and an expressive sexuality, sees a "crimson tassel twisted with gold threads" that places her in the same color register to which Susan belongs, but at the same time separates her from Susan's way of life. Crimson and gold, colors of passion (unlike Susan's yellow and purple) will often be associated with Jinny, and the topic of "thread" will find its way in Jinny's belonging to a more feminine, sensual, even extravagant life, filled with nice fabrics and lavish clothing.

And finally, Louis who – like Rhoda – "hears" (and does not see) a great beast whose foot is "chained" and "stamps, stamps, stamps", is another character who feels like he does not belong to the group. His sense of entrapment, accompanied by a lack of belonging marks him throughout the novel, as he never stops feeling conscious about the fact that he is not really a part of the group – his accent being Australian as his father is a banker from Brisbane (see TW 8).

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What is remarkable about their first lines is the amount of information contained in them that distinguishes every character from the others – like the subtle yet present differences drawn between Bernard and Neville, or Susan and Jinny, as they come to represent two sides on a spectrum. At the same time, the information contained also unites them in pairs (Jinny and Susan have a similar sensibility when contrasted to Rhoda; Rhoda and Louis are the "outsiders" of the group when compared to the others) that will keep coming together and growing apart during the course of their lives. Immediately after, the children start noticing similar patterns in nature (leaves, spiders, caterpillars, snails, see TW 1-2), after which they start describing their immediate surroundings: walls, houses, servants working, as if representing the slow awaking of human consciousness.

Louis' monologue is the first instance of a longer reflection, different from the previous brief and childish notes. Echoing the tone of his first sentence, Louis thinks (talks?) to himself:

> I hold a stalk in my hand. I am the stalk. My roots go down to the depths of the world, through earth dry with brick, and damp earth, through veins of lead and silver. I am all fibre. All tremors shake me, and the weight of the earth is pressed to my ribs (TW 4).

This is the first instance of an emerging pattern that will mark Louis' character throughout the novel. Louis goes on:

> Down there my eyes are the lidless eyes of a stone figure in a desert by the Nile. I see women passing with red pitchers to the river; I see camels swaying and men in turbans. I hear tramplings, tremblings, stirrings round me (TW 4).

The Nile and the women passing by with pitchers by the river are also a part of the recurring images in Louis' thoughts, which similar as the meaning of the deep roots, signify the burden of past times Louis carries on/with himself. This monologue is also the first instance of Louis' separation from the group:

> "Now they have all gone," said Louis. "I am alone (…) Up here Bernard, Neville, Jinny and Susan (but not Rhoda) skim the flower-beds with their nets" (TW 4).

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As the others, but not Rhoda, are wandering around, skimming the flower beds with their butterfly nets, shouting, and looking for Louis, he wishes to remain unseen. As Louis stands there,

> green as a yew tree in the shade of the hedge. My hair is made of leaves. I am rooted to the middle of the earth. My body is a stalk. I press the stalk (TW 5), Jinny approaches: Now an eye-beam is slid through the chink. Its beam strikes me. I am a boy in a grey flannel suit. She has found me. I am struck on the nape of the neck. She has kissed me. All is shattered (4).

The kiss interrupts Louis' remembrances, as it inserts the present. Before this moment, the children seem to be living a timeless existence: seeing and hearing, running and walking, playing in nature, with no contact with any other human being. The kiss shutters the temporal amalgamation Louis has been experiencing up to that point, rooted to the middle of the earth, feeling the weight of the centuries on him. This is the first moment of temporal crystallization, a moment that separates the present as a distinct temporal plane, or un-ties time. A kiss that un-times the lines of time, divides them and introduces the present for Louis (and all the others). And in a move opposite to Molly's and Leopold' seedcake kiss that unites time and creates a collectivity, Jinny and Louis' kiss unties the previously mixed, primordial lines of an eternal time and separates the six children into different characters. The present starts existing at this moment in *The Waves*, crystalizing itself as a distinguishable temporal axis. Unlike the warm and chewed seedcake Molly and Leopold share at Howth hill, filled with erotic meaning, and symbolic of their love and marriage proposal story, Jinny and Louis' kiss is a childish, non-sexual occurrence. It is precisely its complete removal from any sexual sphere that brings about the linearity of time at this instance, as compared to the amalgamation of different time planes that happens in the sexually explicit instance of Molly and Leopold's kiss.

Jinny, then we learn, runs around,

> seeing you [Louis, my note] green as a bush, like a branch, very still, Louis, with your eyes fixed. 'Is he dead?' I thought, and kissed you, with my heart jumping under my

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pink frock like the leaves, which go on moving, though there is nothing to move them (TW 5).

As the kiss[64] divides Louis' unmeasurable past into a presently experienced moment, it causes the first stir in Susan's life, who sees the kiss, jealousy and anger take over, after which she is comforted by Bernard who follows her into the forest (see TW 5-7). This is when Susan begins to "love and hate" (TW 7)[65], which becomes her recurring motif throughout the novel. The kiss seems to be first instance in the novel that identifies aspects of the characters and sets the stage for their further development, or, as mentioned separates them as individuals that were previously united in an eternal time.

Louis alone bears the burdens of the past, Jinny kisses and dances, quivering like a stream of light, Susan "loves and hates", and Bernard creates a coherent narrative of the situation, seeing how "we melt into each other with phrases" (TW 7). The kiss is the first moment of the process of characerical unification and disintegration that unfolds throughout *The Waves* and marks my approach to queer time in this novel. From here on, the characters begin interacting in a wave-like rhythm, as they form and de-form a globe-like entity that constructs the narrative. The manner in which queerness, through time, determines the interconnected processes of characerical unification and disintegration and its further implications for the development of the queer narrative of *The Waves* lie at the center of my analysis of this novel. But before I continue with the analysis of this process via queer time, I turn to the significance characters hold for Woolf's idea of restructuring the genre of the novel through *The Waves* – the main idea of this first Woolfian chapter. In doing that, I first look into the way characters in *The Waves* have been read and analyzed in scholarship on Woolf and propose using queer temporality in character (de)formation as a new way of approaching some existing debates.

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[64]After the kiss, "I [Jinny, my note] dance. I ripple. I am thrown over you like a net of light. I lie quivering flung over you" (5) – a line that resembles the very last one of the novel and Bernard's soliloquy.

[65] From Catullus' "Odi et amo", I hate and I love (see Beer 86).

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6.3. Contested Characterization

Woolf's take on characters and character-formation is more than noticeable in *The Waves*, and it is a topic that has been addressed on many occasions in scholarship on Woolf. In fact, the peculiar characters of *The Waves* attracted the attention of literary critics and Woolf admirers with the very first reviews of the novel, but much to her disappointment, none of them seemed to grasp what *The Waves* was really about. Excited as she was about the generally good reviews, Woolf was also surprised, precisely when it came to the issue of characterization: "Odd, that they (*The Times*) shd. praise my characters when I meant to have none", she wrote in her dairy a few months after the 1931 publication date (see D IV 47).

The interest in developing a new kind of character in *The Waves* that is directly connected to a desire for inventing a new kind of genre – analyzed in the second part of this chapter – was one of Woolf's main preoccupations while in the process of composing the novel. In 1930 she wrote in her diary: "What I now think (about *The Waves*) is that I can give in a very few strokes the essentials of a person's character. It should be done boldly; almost as caricature" (D III 300). In a more famous quote, from a letter Woolf sent to Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson after the publication of the novel in 1931, and as a reaction to the early reviews of *The Waves* (quoted above), she writes that "[t]he six characters were supposed to be one. I'm getting old myself – I shall be fifty next year; and I come to feel more and more how difficult it is to collect oneself into one Virginia" (L IV 397). After Woolf's interpretation, the idea that the six characters form one entity, together with their caricatural nature have become a staple in Woolfian and *The Waves'* scholarly reception, occasionally causing debates on how these characters should be approached and analyzed – whether as six sides of one entity, or individual personalities.

John Graham, the editor of the two holograph drafts of *The Waves* and one of the most significant early critics of this novel, claims that in *The Waves* Woolf did not want to

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distinguish between the styles of the speakers, using similar rhythm, sentence structure and vocabulary for different characters in different phases of their lives, precisely because she did want them to represent six (sets of) qualities in one character (see more in "Point of View", published in 1970). Starting from this widely-read essay, the idea of reading the characters in this manner, indistinguishable from one another, and in addition, each corresponding to one or more real-life people from Woolf's circles[66] has been more or less accepted in scholarship on *The Waves,* and especially in feminist circles[67].

One of the most famous examples of this position is Jane Goldman's study *The Feminist Aesthetics of Virginia Woolf: Modernism, Post-Impressionism, and the Politics of the Visual* (1998), that offers a feminist reading of Woolf's characterization technique in *The Waves*. "To talk of 'separate people' in *The Waves* is perhaps to miss the point", argues Goldman (186). And although these figures have individual names and soliloquies, and particular attributes that distinguish them from one another, they are also inseparable from each other, claims Goldman, as there are certain thematic and narrative clusters that unite them – they use the same phrases, think/feel/act in similar registers, and seem to share a sensibility. For Goldman, with the creation of such character/s, Woolf disperses the illusion of an "Absolute Subject" and instead offers a model of "contested subjectivity" (see 186).

Goldman's feminist interpretation of Woolf's reconceptualized method of characterization has been used in further research on *The Waves*. One other take worth mentioning here is a Goldman-inspired analysis of the interconnections between reinventing characters and genres by Elicia Clements. In her essay "Transforming Musical Sounds into Words: Narrative Method in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*", Clements also analyzes the reinvention of character through its division into six interconnected consciousnesses by

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[66] See more in Angelica Garnett's Introduction for *The Waves* (x).
[67] See more in Minow-Pinkney, *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject: Feminine Writing in the Major Novels* (1987); Jean Guiguet, *Virginia Woolf and Her Works* (1965); Caughie, Pamela, *Virginia Woolf and Postmodernism: Literature in Quest and Question of Itself* (1991).

employing music as the model via which Woolf both radicalizes her narrative structure and reconfigures human interaction (see 166-171). For Clements, the interchange between music and narrative, or even more explicitly, the musical form that Woolf develops by intermingling it with the themes and voices of her characters, reconceptualizes both subjectivity and form in this novel.

However, on the other side of this debate, stand scholarly works that argue that the six characters in *The Waves* can also be analyzed as six individuals, each existing within his/her own register. Giuseppina Balossi's study *A Corpus Linguistic Approach to Literary Language and Characterization: Virginia Woolf's The Waves* (2014) is one of these examples. Through a quantitative analysis of a statistically significant over/under-used word classes (meaning categories such as: nouns, verbs, adverbs, articles, etc.) obtained for each character in their speaking sections, i.e. soliloquies, Balossi analyzes the similarities and differences in the language of all six characters, aiming to show whether linguistic homogeneity or differentiation marks the narrative when it comes to the way these six voices are represented (see 1-2). Although a quantitative and linguistic analysis is far from my literary theory and close reading-based approach here, I find some of Balossi's findings illustrative regarding the issue of characterization in *The Waves*.

For example, Bernard's narrative represents nearly half of the total soliloquy text (45.1%, or 31385 words), mostly because he is the only speaker in the last closing section of the novel, which accounts for 22.4% of the total size of the entire narrative. In contrast, the other characters' soliloquies are much shorter. Susan's and Jinny's narratives are roughly comparable (8.3% - 5800 words, 8.7% - 6077 words), but they are smaller than Rhoda's (11.6% - 8094 words), Louis' (12.2% - 8541 word) and Neville's (13.9% - 9678 words) (see Balossi 86). Focusing on Rhoda's linguistic corpus, Balossi writes that the highest number of statistically significant differences occurs in contrast to Bernard and Susan, while difference is

slightly less evident towards Jinny and Neville and it is very low versus Louis (97). Meaning, Rhoda's text, analyzed linguistically, counting the differences between uses of classes of words, differs the most from Bernard, and the least from Louis[68].

And while all the characters show different degrees of differentiation with regards to the others, and with regards to different phases of their lives (for example, Jinny differs mostly with respect to Susan, Rhoda to Bernard, etc.), differentiation does not show up between Neville and Bernard and conversely between Bernard and Neville. This may suggest, writes Balossi, that Woolf created in Neville a similar voice as in Bernard and vice-versa (103). Based on these results, delivered on a basis of a quantitative methods corpus approach to language in linguistics and social psychology, Balossi concludes that "contrary to what some literary critics have argued, the characters are linguistically distinguishable and can be attributed self-evidently different personalities" (185).

I have quoted in some detail parts of Balossi's argument here because I find her approach innovative and interesting (although not completely in sync with my own method here). It is also the only full-length study devoted on the issue of characterization in *The Waves* and published fairly recently. That being said, I do not find a quantitative analysis of the linguistic structure of *The Waves* necessary for determining the "nature" of Woolf's characterization method. Monaco, quoted above, whose work emphasizes the significance of reconciling opposites when it comes to Woolf's treatment of temporality in her narratives, offers a similar argument to Balossi's, but one based on a Deleuzian reading of *The Waves*. In her analysis, Monaco uses the principles of (Deleuzian) difference and multiplicity in addressing character formation in Woolf's works (see 175-176). For Monaco, the peculiarity of character in *The Waves* consists of the subtle intertwining of difference and synthesis.

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[68] That being said, it is worth pointing out, that Balossi's analysis has its limitations, as the results note that the characters' linguistic differentiation principally occurs in function words rather than content words (103).

Difference is what structures *The Waves* as a whole: The different hours of the day that move forward spread out in ten interludes, the different phases of the life of six characters represented throughout nine chapters, the pronounced and explicit differences between six subjectivities (almost caricatural, to quote Woolf), all present through distinct poetic language create this difference. The novel makes it fairly obvious who is speaking, and no matter how difficult one might find Woolf's writing, *The Waves* distinctly separates the six characters by giving each of them their own linguistic, emotional, temporal register, claims Monaco, similar to Balossi's conclusion. And yet, these differences, reflected on many levels in *The Waves* seem to exist so they can result in a synthesis, a unison of features. "[T]he six characters slide into one another: continually thinking of and quoting one another, affecting one another in absence and defining themselves through each other" (Monaco 176).

In *The Waves*, "[i]t is not so much that the character speaks, as much as qualities channel themselves through the character, so attuned is the language", notices Monaco (176), in a move that resembles Bersani's analysis of characterization in *Ulysses*[69]. In her Deleuzian analysis of a dynamic binary that uses opposite forces as mechanisms that drive the narrative forward, Monaco does not posit Jinny and Rhoda as completely distinct figures, but rather tries to spot the ways in which life and death as principles of existence manifest in their stories. Even if we interpret Jinny as a representative of a life filed with vitality, youth, sexual energy, Rhoda would still stand out in various moments as a strong and vivid character, no matter how closely associated with death she might be (173). Here Monaco is analyzing the perversely productive interreferences of death-in-life and life-in-death finely balanced in Woolf's characters. In a

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[69]Monaco uses Deleuze's and Guattari's notion of a textual machine in which there is an assemblage that forms connections from the three orders – the field of reality (the world), the field of representation (the book) and the field of subjectivity (the author) resulting in a product where there is no division between these three planes (see Monaco 185). Meaning, we have a book whose object is not really the world, and whose subjects are not the characters, or its author. Rather, a book that "speaks for itself", representing its essence. Similarly, Bersani claims that characters do not have or share (and are not supposed to have or share) their perspectives in *Ulysses*, as they also "speak for themselves", not attempting to put forward a point of view, but their true essence.

way, destructive forces, or death drives (such as Bersani's self-shattering death drive I argued can be used in analyzing the formation of Molly's character in *Ulysses*) can lead to a complete reconceptualization of subjectivity. What interest me here is not a Freudian analysis of the death drive and its consequences for works like *Ulysses* and *The Waves*, or characters like Molly and Rhoda, or Jinny. But rather, an analysis of underlying dynamics of the (ambiguous, contradictory) forces that translate into the molar themes of time and sexuality in the text, and that working together lead to the formation of characters such as Molly and Rhoda, or Jinny.

6.4.   Reconciling Contradictions in Re-Forming Character

"Now is life very solid, or very shifting? I am haunted by the two contradictions", Woolf wrote in her diary at the beginning of 1929, as she was already seriously working on *The Waves* (D III 218). These two contradictions that can be seen reflected in a number of principles that reiterate throughout Woolf's works do not simply structure the novel into two halves or the characters in two groups. Rather, they participate in different renderings of rhythms that can be compared to the constant oscillation of waves. Or, as Warner writes, the novel,

> seen in broad terms, reveals the conflux of two influences: advancement and retrospect, form and 'life' (…) are constantly crossing and countering one another, setting up not so much a dialectic, as the rhythm of movement and countermovement, systole and diastole which one would expect of a work entitled *The Waves* (19).

I argue that the six characters are connected entities, their experiences rhythmically mirroring themselves in the different phases of their lives, represented in the nine episodes. They are part of a narrative structure, assuming the form of a system of repetitive motifs, that I believe can be distinguished as experiences they share and patterns that bind them. While the shared experiences can be considered to be general life-shaping events (such as boarding-school years, marriage, old age etc.), the communal patterns that manifest themselves in different forms in each of the soliloquies create a deeper bond between the characters.

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The thematic correspondences on these two levels – between the different stages in the lives of the characters and between the different characters – are also reflected on a stylistic and linguistic level. Most often these patterns appear as linguistic phrases (for example, Susan's "I love and I hate" used by Jinny), premonitions (Louis' and Rhoda's sensing Percival's death) or shared emotions/positions (Louis' and Rhoda's sense of not belonging; the role of writer/poet assumed by Bernard and Neville)[70]. The repetition of words, full phrases, or patterns creates a rhythm that structures this novel. A motif that originated with one character gets taken up in a different context, associated with another character and thus changes in certain regards, before it ends up back with the first character, or appropriated by another, and so on. This combination of elements scattered throughout episodes and soliloquies results in a rhythm that resembles the movement of the waves.

In a comprehensive study of the novel, simply named "*The Waves*" (1987), Eric Warner reads the inner intertextuality of the text as a post-modernist, or a self-reflective feature of the narrative, as "the six figures whose speech absorbs the narrative are in a sense critics themselves, perpetually engaged in an attempt to read the text of their lives, and establish the patterns, links, recurrent motifs, structures contained therein" (3). Angelica Garnett also notes this dimension of *The Waves* in her Introduction to the 1990 edition, writing that the six characters are chosen for their differences as well as for their underlying homogeneity, as the form of the book depends on the development and the growth of the characters. "They are not exactly in search of an author, like Pirandello's: they are the author", concludes Garnett (xii). Here, like Joyce's experiments with Molly's voice (or even rebellion) in *Ulysses*, Woolf is playing with the notion of authorial presence, as the characters themselves become the writers.

Warner might be right to claim that the flow of language created by the six characters takes the form of a perpetual analysis as they constantly, overtly try to assess the patterns of

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[70] All of these will be addressed throughout my close reading of episodes in the following chapters.

their lives. *TW* is among the most self-conscious works ever written, a continual dramatization of self-awareness and self-positionality, he argues (3). This overemphasized articulation seems to account for the peculiar artificiality of the narrative. If 'Penelope' tries to imitate or even precisely reproduce the oral speech of an average woman living in Dublin at the beginning of the twentieth century, *The Waves* does something complete opposite: does not aim to capture real-life appearances, but rather, represents the overly conscious reflections of these six figures. In other words, if we can hear Molly speak to herself, we can hardly hear any of the characters in *The Waves* in the same manner. The six figures might even function as one at times, but even if as they exist as one entity, what the reader experiences most prominently is a sense of solitude and separation[71].

I believe that these repetitions of patterns have a pronounced artistic function, as they serve to establish the connections between the characters and to emphasize their interdependence. It is the rhythmized appearance of such patterns that do not fit a realistic narrative (such as the one presented by the sequenced unravelling of shared life-events) that represent the peculiar breakdown of a traditional characterization technique by pointing out their artificiality. The existence of such six characters who share not just an uncanny number of similar experiences, but thoughts, feelings and mutual dynamics would be quite unimaginable in a realistic (narrative) context. And while, as I have shown here, critics have focused on determining whether the characters in *The Waves* are six individuals, or rather, one entity composed of six individuals, I believe that there is a more important underlying issue here where it comes to the type of characterization Woolf is developing here. As Balossi has shown, the six characters in *The Waves* can undoubtably be seen as six individual characters. Despite the common features they share and the steady repetition of patterns that mark their

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[71]The theme of solitude of separation is also a very present topic in scholarship on *TW*. See Alex Zwerdling reading of *The Waves* as a "vision of human solitude" (10) in *Virginia Woolf and the Real World* (1986).

soliloquies, they all have distinguishable linguistic and stylistic vocabularies. And yet, it is exactly the shared ground of common features and repeated patterns that turns these six characters into something more than six individual characters, as Monaco also argues. They are individual characters, as much as they are also a part of a communal dynamics that leads the narrative and determines the rhythmic repetition of patterns that create the impression of a larger entity.

In this dissertation I address the ways in which queerness as a thematic concern and a narrative dimension, also functions as one of the methods Woolf used in her attempt to re-form the novel. Temporal aberrations, owning their presence to queer longings, offer Woolf a model for a new narrative form she is trying to develop through re-forming characters, in the work that is often considered the most structurally innovative in her career. In analyzing the processing of queering time in *The Waves* that forms the second part of this dissertation, I argue that there is a strive for a unification of the six characters into one entity that determines the rhythm of the narrative and determines its temporality and is led by a desire of merging of two contradictions, present in Woolf's structural ideas and subsequent analyses of the novel, addressed here. In my analysis this attempt for uniting the characters into one is dependent on a queerness that is manifested through various characters and stages in the novel. Queerness provides the impetus that influences the process of characterial unification and later, disintegration; and in such a way determines the plot and participates in the invention of the new narrative form Woolf is attempting to bring about.

So far, this chapter has started tracing the processes of characterial unification and disintegration in *The Waves*, initially by analyzing the first episode of the novel – a moment of temporal and characterial dissolution; and then, by summarizing the most important scholarly approaches to the (contested) issue of characterization in *The Waves*. The following, seventh chapter of this dissertation maps out in detail these processes of queer unification and

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disintegration of characters through several key-episodes. As Warner notes, the work is marked by a strong communal drive, as "the six individuals repeatedly form and re-form into a collective circle, and the way in which friendship sustains them against the forces of dissolution" (19). My analysis will show how the rhythmical integration and dissolution of the six characters function on a few levels: first, how their wave-like movements are determined by the queerness present in the text; and second, how they participate in the narrative reinvention of the novel as a genre, the formalistic experiment Woolf was principally engaged in while working on *The Waves*. And while the eight chapter looks closely at how queer time functions as a narrative, and not only thematic element in *The Waves*, in the second part of this chapter, I look into how characters in *The Waves* function as an essential outlet in Woolf's attempt at reinventing the genre of the novel.

6.5.   A New Kind of Narrative: Prose, yet Poetry; a Novel and a Play

Part of the complexity of determining what kind of characters there are in *The Waves* also concerns the issue of genre (see more in Sandberg 210). Following Woolf's notes from her diary and essays (that I will be using throughout this second part of the chapter) on creating a new kind of narrative, the issue of the specific genre of *The Waves* has determined much of its reception and criticism. Issues of characterization then, and time, have also been addressed in connection to the specific non-novelistic form of this novel.

For Woolf, *The Waves* was the peak of her mature writing style, and this conviction seems directly related to the fact that she thought of *The Waves* as something other than a novel. "I think I am about to embody at last the exact shapes my brain holds. What a long toil to reach this beginning - if *The Waves* is my first work in my own style", she wrote in her Diary in November 1931, a month after *The Waves'* original publication date (D IV 53). Despite some criticism she received after the publication of the novel, it seems that *The Waves* changed her perception of the kinds of books she wanted to write. In one of the two manuscript versions of

The Waves, she even wrote "the author would be glad if the following pages were read not as a novel" (see Graham, "Point of View" 193).

On another occasion, even more interestingly, she noted that she intends to "write another four novels: *Waves*, I mean" (13 Jan 1932, D IV 63). As Graham points out, it is as if she had wanted to say: "since this new form of fiction had no proper name of its own, she would call it, for her own purposes, by the name of the work which was her first attempt to create it on a large scale" ("Point of View" 193). In this essay, Graham famously declares that *The Waves* is a "radically a-novelistic work of fiction", (193), a claim supported by Woolf in many instances. In a rather often-quoted note from her diary from 1927, Woolf notes that she is aiming to "invent a new kind of play":

> Why not invent a new kind of play; as for instance:
> Woman thinks
> He does.
> Organ plays.
> She writes.
> They say:
> She sings.
> Night speaks
> They miss
> I think it must be something on this line—though I can't now see what. Away from facts; free; yet concentrated; *prose yet poetry; a novel and a play* (my emphasis, D III 128)

This, by now canonical approach to *The Waves*, as Woolf's novel that is the least a "novel" from all of her works was well established by Woolf herself not only in her diaries and letters, but also in her essayistic work. There are multiple essays through which Woolf attempts to conceptualize a new form of fiction, or a re-writing of the novel, that would combine elements of prose and poetry, combining the two generic types. The most significant one, when it comes to tracing the development of this new genre in her work is "The Narrow Bridge of Art",

published in August 1927, in the New York Herald Tribune, the original title being "Poetry, Fiction and the Future". As Graham notes, it is probable that at the same time as writing her plans on *The Waves*, Woolf was also working on this essay (see *Two Holograph Drafts* 18).

Therefore, often considered the non-fictional equivalent of *The Waves*, "The Narrow Bridge of Art"[72] expresses Woolf's dissatisfaction with the current limitations of the fictional method in general. Reflecting on the awkward and uncomfortable situation a writer is placed in when writing a poetic play that deals with past and distant events instead of familiar daily life, and the inadequacy of narrative forms that accompanies this incompatibility (see NBA 904-905). "The Narrow Bridge of Art" is a nice continuation of Woolf's concerns expressed in more famous essays such as "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown" and "Modern Fiction". "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown", for example, is essentially a critique of the manner of characterization used by Edwardian writers, and probably represents the first stage of development of this interest in the future of characterization and fiction in Woolf and is reflected in her earlier novels. "The Narrow Bridge of Art" then signifies the development of Woolf's ideas that lead to her explorations of matters that go beyond conventional (even if complexly composed) characters, such as the ones in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* (for more on this see Graham *Two Holograph Drafts* 20).

The main argument of this essay deals with the differences between poetry and prose, as Woolf attempts to determine why and how poetry lost its power in the modern era. The historic and still maintained difference between poetry that follows certain sacred rights and rules, never used for the common purposes of life; and prose that takes on the more profane tasks, has led, Woolf claims, to a stiffness, seriousness and aloofness of the poetic genre, resulting in a situation in which prose takes over many of poetry's responsibilities and privileges (see 906-907). Yet, Woolf is interested in a cross-over between the genres, a new

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[72] Quoted here from *Modernism: An Anthology* (2005), ed. by Rainey (see 903-910).

form that she believes will not only bridge the differences between poetry and prose but will create new possibilities for literary forms. And this can, or will, be done through a reinvention of the novel:

> That cannibal, the novel, which has devoured so many forms of art will by then have devoured even more. We shall be forced to invent new names for the different books which masquerade under this one heading. And it is possible that there will be among the so-called novels one which we shall scarcely know how to christen. It will be written in prose, but in prose which has many of the characteristics of poetry. It will have something of the exaltation of poetry, but much of the ordinariness of prose. It will be dramatic, and yet not a play. It will be read, not acted. By what name we are to call it is not a matter of very great importance. What is important is that this book which we see on the horizon may serve to express some of those feelings which seem at the moment to be balked by poetry pure and simple and to find the drama equally inhospitable to them (NBA 908).

As mentioned above, soon after finishing *The Waves*, Woolf names this new form (at least for herself) written in prose but carrying the features of poetry – Waves. The features of this new form of the novel are at the center of this essay, and simultaneously, *The Waves*. Firstly, this new form of the novel will stand further back from life, giving, as poetry does, the outline and not so much the details, or the fact-saturated reality. It will express not so much the living, practical conditions of the characters, but instead their feelings and ideas (see NBA 908). Even more importantly it will resemble poetry by not representing mostly people's relations, but a person's "soliloquy in solitude" (NBA 909).

For, claims Woolf, psychological novels have been way too interested in interpersonal relationships, leaving unexplored a significant part of our daily lives, spent alone, dreaming, reading, thinking, or sleeping. This kind of "impersonal relationship" is an aspect of the new form of the novel Woolf is interested in. *The Waves* explores the nuances of impersonal relationships more than any of her previous works. Despite their experimental nature both *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* deal so exclusively with the psychology of their characters

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that anything that does not belong to this realm is clearly separated from the main body of the text, such as the famous "Time Passes" section in *To the Lighthouse* (see Graham "Point of View" 20). Avoiding that strategy, the new form of the novel will be closer to poetry as it explores the complexity of life not only through a depiction of socio-economic conditions, but also through the relations the human mind establishes between nature, fate, imagination, dreams. Therefore, this new novel "will take the mould of that queer conglomeration of incongruous things — the modern mind" (NBA 909-910). And at the same time, owning to prose's democratic character and its flexibility, this new form that exists at the cross-lines between the two genres will be able to achieve a universal view of life, placing the human mind and character at its center while reaching all places possible (see NBA 910).

In her study on the experience of time in *Orlando* and *To the Lighthouse*, Teresa Prudente argues that Woolf's perspective on impersonality as one of the main features of the new form of the novel discussed in "The Narrow Bridge of Art", finds its way in her representation of the art of panting in general, and the difficulties Lily Briscoe faces as she attempts to finish her painting in *To the Lighthouse* (see 102-103). If painting in *To the Lighthouse* possesses such potential as to be able to convey that impersonal dimension Woolf is striving to achieve in her novels, then in *The Waves*, Woolf explores this aspect further by focusing on different elements. How would a novel acquire the same sense of impersonality that a painting can achieve – is one of the questions *The Waves* is attempting to ask, but this time through the narrativization of temporality. My answer here, as one of the many possible, analyzes the specific types of characters Woolf developed in this novel, and the way in which queer time participates in de-constructing characters through impersonality.

6.6.   The Flight of Time before the Break of the Waves

"The flight of time" as connected to impersonality was already a prominent topic in Woolf's writing long before she had even started thinking about *The Waves*. As this note written as she was working on *To the Lighthouse* indicates:

> It might contain all characters boiled down; & childhood; & then *this impersonal thing*, which I'm dared to do by my friends, *the flight of time*, & the consequent *break of unity* in my design (my emphasis, D III 36) –

the representation of time and "the break of unity" through impersonality are interrelated for Woolf as early as 1925. Her desire for a new form (the "Elegy" that *To the Lighthouse* was to become in this case) that distances itself from the novel was always in some manner connected to the question of time. Writing about the creation of *To the Lighthouse*, Hermione Lee argues that what preoccupied Woolf was the question of the design and writing of a novel. A fragment of her 1925 lecture "How Should One Read a Book" that is devoted to reading as much as to writing is even included in the manuscript of the novel. These writings that served as little notes on developing writing techniques represent Woolf's desires for a complex and ambiguous structure – one according to which the novel should have a strong structural basis, appear "formed and controlled" and yet also be fluid and translucent, embodying both breaking and fragmentation. They were certainly not easily achievable, concludes Lee (see 530).

Although the question of time and its representation are present in many of her previous writings, it seems that thinking about time between the two poles – stabilization and fragmentation – became a more significant issue for Woolf's writing with *To the Lighthouse*. "[S]he had trouble with the middle section, 'Time Passes', but she liked her strategy there of 'collecting' all the 'lyric portions' in one place, so that they 'don't interfere with the text so much as usual'", writes Lee (531), quoting parts of the 'outline' for "Time Passes" as it appears in Woolf's Diary on the 5 September 1926. This might be the first instance in which Woolf

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connects "time" and "the lyrical", attempting to "separate them with the text", before *The Waves*.

But, if in *To the Lighthouse* time and the lyrical are seen as entities that "disturb" the text and should be somehow removed from it, *The Waves* does the opposite: it brings in time (and the lyrical) to interfere, disturb, and alter the textual. If Lily Briscoe can be read as a representation of Woolf's desire to create a (novelistic, artistic) structure that works (Lee 531), I believe that Rhoda can be read as a refusal of that very structure that by the time of the writing of *The Waves* threatened to suffocate the form and its potentials. "The savage break of narrative down the middle of the book", i.e. the 'Time Passes section', that "is a break with literary tradition" (Lee 536) is constructed with the usage of time and its passing. Time breaks down narrative, quite literally. And yet, as Woolf herself writes, it is in a section separated from the "textual". "But the new writing keeps trying to find its way back into the past, so that there is an odd tension in the book between the experimental and the nostalgic" (Lee 536). I believe that the "new writing" of *To the Lighthouse* is still a form of mixture between the old and the new, the experimental and the nostalgic. And although in many forms, Woolf's writings always consist of a combination between these two, the new will be re-invented a few years later, with *The Waves*.

The Waves seems to *bridge* this difference by creating a certain type of character that is able to embody this transition, or in Woolf's words – a play, between prose and poetry. And characters, as *The Waves* shows, assume a very important role in this process of narrative experimentation for Woolf. In fact, "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown", probably Woolf's most famous essay on the future of fiction that is a comment on the genre of the novel and a criticism of the Edwardian novel and published in 1924, when first delivered to the Heretics Club at Cambridge University earlier that year was titled "Character in Fiction" (Graham, *Two Holograph Drafts* 20). Even that early, in 1924, with this essay, but especially later on, in 1927

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with "The Narrow Bridge of Art", Woolf emphasized the centrality that characters, or rather, the reconceptualization of characters through a focus on impersonality, assumes for her writing.

In the following section I focus on the manner in which Woolf destabilizes realistic characters through time in the attempt to reform the novel. In doing that I will first look into the details of the creation of *The Waves*, through its different phases, while using excerpts from Woolf's diaries and, occasionally, letters. These sources contain a lot of information about the creative processes behind Woolf's writings. They certainly do have a more illustrative purpose, as the information contained in the diaries and the letters should not always be taken for granted (similarly as with Joyce, and as showed in the previous chapters). But at the same time, Woolf's diaries can illuminate some of the later writings, and as it can be expected, they have influenced, as well as inaugurated many critical views on Woolf's fiction. The non-fictional essays often devoted to the art and future of fiction that Woolf published parallelly for most of her writing career also contain important insights on her own processes and record them, as well as present her more theoretical thinking on the issues she was developing simultaneously in the novels.

6.7. I don't want a Penelope: I want "She": Creating Impersonality through Time

Woolf often referred to *The Waves* as a "serious, mystical poetical work" (see D III 131), especially when comparing it to *Orlando*, like on this occasion. On the 18 June 1927, she refers to it for the first time as *The Moths*, the title she was to use for this novel for a year:

> Now the Moths will I think fill out the skeleton which I dashed in here; *the play-poem idea*; the idea of some continuous stream, not solely of human thought, but of the ship, the night etc, all flowing together: intersected by the arrival of the bright moths. And a man and a woman are to be sitting at a table talking. Or shall they remain silent? It is to be a love story; she is finally to let the last green moth in. The contrasts might be something of this sort; she might talk, or think, about the age of the earth; the death of

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humanity; then the moths keep on coming. Perhaps the man could be left absolutely dim. France: hear the sea; at night; a garden under the window. But it needs ripening (my emphasis, D III 139).

In a footnote to this paragraph, Anne Oliver Bell, the editor of the collected diaries, explains the presence and significance of the moths: "Vanessa had written on 3 May from the Villa Corsica at Cassis describing how they were beset by moths of a night time; VW was fascinated, and contemplated a story on the theme – *the genesis of what was eventually to become The Waves*" (my emphasis, see D III 139).

But even before the diary note from February 1927 that records the desire for "invent[ing] a new kind of play", Woolf was toying with ideas on a new book centered on the semi-mystic life of a woman. As she was revising *To the Lighthouse*, in November 1926, she writes in her diary about the book she plans to write next – and that I will quote again in full here, as it is likely the first ever mention of *The Waves* in her notes:

> Yet I am now & then haunted by some semi mystic very profound life of a woman, which shall all be told on one occasion; & *time shall be utterly obliterated; future shall somehow blossom out of the past*. One incident – say the fall of a flower – might contain it. My theory being that *the actual event practically does not exist – nor time either* (my emphasis, D III 118)

In a footnote to this passage, Leonard Woolf suggests that it refers to the book that is to become *The Waves* (see Graham "Point of View" 197), and later diary entries, in which Woolf goes back to the image of a flower, timeless book, and finally, the idea of a play-poem, prove him right. Almost a month after the February 1927 note, Woolf notes on this "new book":

> I toyed vaguely with some thoughts of a flower whose petals fall; of time all telescoped into one lucid channel through wh. my heroine was to pass at will. The petals falling. But nothing came of it (…) One can see anything (for this is all fantasy) the Tower Bridge, clouds, aeroplanes. Also old men listening in the room over the way. Everything is to be tumbled in pall mall. It is to be written as I write letters at the top of my speed (…) *No attempt is to be made to realise the character. Sapphism is to be suggested* (my emphasis, D III 131).

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The next few lines, though, reading:

> Satire is to be the main note – satire & wildness. The Ladies are to have Constantinople in view. Dreams of golden domes. My own lyric vein is to be satisfied. Everything mocked (…) I feel the need of an escapade after these serious poetic experimental books whose form is so closely considered. I want to kick up my heels & be off (D III 131),

show – as well as the editor's note "Orlando leading to The Waves", an early stage in Woolf's thinking of both *Orlando* and *The Waves,* when the two novels were thought of together. Yet, Woolf's "very serious, mystical poetical work" kept some of the features sketched out in these early 1927 passages. The flower whose petals fall, and all time channeled – ideas also appearing a few months before in the 1926 paragraph, commented on by Leonard Woolf as the "origin" story for *The Waves* – are motives that will be discussed at length in my analysis of Percival's farewell dinner in the following chapter, since, as it will be shown, they form the center of Woolf's treatment of time in the novel.

The possibility of including something mystic in the novel, and specifically the idea for representing the semi-mystic life of a woman, thought of as early as 1926-1927, continued to find its way in the narrative, especially in the first draft. Even after two years of writing, in March 1929, Woolf notes – right after a paragraph on how she is "bored by narrative" and "one ought to invent a fine narrative style" – that she is "not satisfied (…) with the frame" of *The Moths* (see D III 219). Two months after this entry, she gives a more detailed account of the difficulties she has with *The Moths*, centered, it seems, on how/through whom should the story be told.

> I am not trying to tell a story. Yet perhaps it might be done in that way. A mind thinking. *They* might be islands of light – islands in the stream I am trying to convey: life itself going on. The current of the moths flying strongly this way. A lamp and a flower pot in the centre. The flower can always be changing. But there must be more unity between each scene than I can find at present. Autobiography it might be called. How am I to make one lap, or act, between the coming of the moths, more intense than another; if there are only scenes? One must get the sense that this is the beginning; this the middle;

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that the climax – when she opens the window & the moth comes in. I shall have the two different currents – the moths flying along; the flower upright in the centre; a perpetual crumbling & renewing of the plant. In its leaves she might see things happen. *But who is she? I am very anxious that she should have no name*. I don't want a Lavinia or a *Penelope*: *I want 'She'*. But that becomes arty, Liberty greenery yallery somehow: symbolic in loose robes. Of course I can make her think backwards & forwards; I can tell stories. But that's not it. Also I shall do away with exact place & time. Anything may be out of the window – a ship – a desert – London. (my emphasis, D III 229, 230).

This indeterminacy between she or they, a flower, a plant, or the moths that should assume the center of the story, reflects Woolf's difficulty with choosing a vessel through which the story of "life itself going on" is to be told. Even at this stage, as she is thinking about the current of the moths and the flower and their role, it is evident how significant nature and non-human entities will be for *The Waves*, later designated to the interludes that announce, and in a way, perform every episode. For Graham, this confusion results from Woolf's struggle on deciding what to do with a narrator. She wanted to retain the advantages that a narratorial perspective offers, and yet, diminish the disadvantages. Despite the fact that a narrator can tell stories, and move forward and backwards in time, such a figure would impose a rigidity of perspective that Woolf did not want. Her desire to leave her unnamed, while still giving her an identity is the usual problem of the first-person narrator, claims Graham – that of making her a person vivid enough to be a presence in the book, and neutral and detached enough, as to not become its center (see "Point of View" 197). Woolf's "I don't want a Penelope" is especially interesting when compared to Joyce's technique of creating *the Penelope*, by oversaturating Molly's character with mythical/cultural references, as it represents their two different methods of characterization: striving for virtual impersonality vs. abundant over-personalization.

The first manuscript (started on 2 July 1929, completed on 28 October 1929) did not resolve this problem of finding a perfect narratorial/characterical presence. Between this date and 23 September 1929, Woolf scrapped her draft material and began from the beginning three

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times (Graham "Point of View" 197). On the 25 September, she notes: "Yesterday morning I made another start on The Moths, but that wont be its title. & several problems cry out at once to be solved. *Who thinks it? And am I outside the thinker?* One wants some device *which is not a trick*" (my emphasis, D III 257).[73] The attempt to avoid producing a writing style that does not appear "tricky" occupied Woolf for some time, as she goes back to that idea a few months later:

> There is *something* there (as I felt about Mrs Dalloway) but I can't get at it, squarely; nothing like the speed and certainty of The Lighthouse: Orlando mere childs play. Is there some falsity, of method, somewhere? Something tricky – so that the interesting things aren't firmly based? (…) I am convinced that I am right to seek for a station whence I can set my people against time & the sea (…) (D III 264).

All her diary notes and the changes that the manuscript went through in its two versions show that Woolf struggled with pinpointing the role of the narrator in *The Waves*. The bulk of the first draft of the *The Waves* is written from an omniscient point of view, focalized through an omnipresent narrator, while the characters rarely speak in the first person.[74] The characters started to resemble their published version only after Woolf started to write the first draft of the farewell dinner party, on 3 January 1930. A few days later, she notes in her diary how she can think of nothing else and can now hardly stop making up *The Waves*, referring to the changes in style and the feeling of progress coming after her "beginning to write the Phantom party" (see D III 282). This feeling of breaking through some barrier and a sudden sense of liberation is likely connected to "the virtual abandonment of the narrator's omniscient

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[73] In between these two notes, on the 23 October 1929, Woolf notes "The Moths; but I think it is to be waves, is trudging along" (D III: 262), in the first reference I have encountered on the name change of the novel.

[74] My goal here is not to dwell on an analysis of the two drafts and the differences between them. What I am more interested in showing is the development of a story that in its first phase is presented through a narratorial perspective, and by the end of the second draft, loses almost all traces of this omniscient presence, as the narrative is built on the interplay between six characters. Graham ("Point of View" 197) offers detailed analysis of the differences between the drafts. I will briefly quote one example that Graham uses here, namely the kiss between Jinny and Louis in the garden, in its first draft version, as it shows the significant differences with the published version and the presence of an omnipresent narrator in the first: "I am not laying too great a stress upon all this. I am not exaggerating the intensity of children's feelings! Indeed, there is nothing more certain than that children are tortured by jealousy and love long before they know their own names; the mind was certain of this" (1, 27, quoted in Graham "Point of View" 198).

interventions" (Graham "Point of View" 200). Then, three months after the start on the second draft, in August 1930, Woolf notes how "The Waves is I think resolving itself (…) into a series of *dramatic soliloquies*. The thing is to keep them running homogeneously in & out, *in the rhythm of the waves*" (my emphasis, D III 312). From then on, the speeches of all six characters' will be termed "soliloquies" in Woolf criticism and often analyzed in the rhythm of the waves.

For three and a half years then, since the summer of 1926 till the first draft of Percival's farewell dinner, Woolf tried to write *The Waves* from a narrator's point of view (Graham "Point of View" 200). Particularly interesting for me here is the formative significance that the farewell dinner – one of the queerest moments in the book – has for the development of narrative method/characterization in *The Waves*. One of the main instances of queering time in *The Waves*, that assumes the center of my analysis in the following chapter, is also a point of narrative transformation for Woolf: an instance that helped her form the approach towards developing the six characters as a complex entity, without a determinative omnipresent narrator, and therefore, generated the narrative dynamics of the novel. The significance that this episode holds is pivotal for my argument on queering time in *The Waves*, and as I will show next, Percival's farewell dinner as a vehicle of queering time also assumes a central role in queering narrative in the novel.

6.8.   A Queerness that Bridges Oppositions

The new kind of novel Woolf imagined in *The Waves*, that was to be realized as a form that bridges the differences between poetry and prose, subjectivity and impersonality, merging universal with detailed, and rhythmic with complex, through a decentering technique (of subject/ivity, identity, time, linearity) posits the characters at the center of the narrative instead of one all-present narrator. However, as the six characters' voices unravel throughout their separate, yet connected soliloquies in the sequencing episodes, becoming one multidimensional entity that is then disintegrated (into the voice of a single narrator), the narrative is led forward

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by, if not an omniscient narrator, then by a narrative presence that seems to control the sequentialization of events and the repetition of patterns.

"In Woolf the impersonal narrator's voice, starting from *Mrs. Dalloway*, is subjected to a process of progressive de-materialization which leads this narrative element to acquire immaterial and non-human character", argues Prudente (148). In *The Waves* this process of de-materialization of a narrative voice reaches its height, as the narrative consists only of the soliloquies of six characters and no overt narratorial presence. But despite this, as the narrative unfolds, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between not only the voices of separate characters, but between the characters and the (absent) narrator. I believe that this paradox is due to the fact that the six characters are created in such a way that they often function (are read, or sound) as more than characters: they represent more than one focalized, limited point of view. Rather, through the more-than-realistic repetition of connecting patterns, whenever we read the soliloquy of one character we are faced with the impression of a larger narrative framework. The singular voices of the characters are not limited to a single consciousness, but they inhabit spaces that are usually appointed to an omniscient narratorial presence. This presence is most clearly manifested through the recurrent use of certain patterns across the soliloquies, and in the resulting impersonal, often-described as neutral language, shared by the characters.

"According to Woolf", writes Prudente, "Joyce's representation of consciousness was not able to transcend the author's egocentrism, and this was the opposite of Woolf's attempt to achieve impersonal and non-embodied forms of writing" (139).[75] Prudente further points out

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[75] Woolf writes in "Modern Fiction", emphasizing Joyce's desire to represent life itself, not impersonality: "Mr. Joyce is spiritual; he is concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its messages through the brain, and in order to preserve it he disregards with complete courage whatever seems to him adventitious, whether it be probability, or coherence, or any other of these signposts which for generations have served to support the imagination of a reader when called upon to imagine what he can neither touch nor see […] If we want life itself, here surely we have it" (as qtd. in *The Crowded Dance of Modern Life* 9).

that Woolf's ambiguous opinion and criticism on Joyce is most vehement when focused on Joyce's language and linguistic/narrative experiments, as at is in this often-quoted passage of "Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown":

> Grammar is violated; syntax disintegrated […] Mr. Joyce's indecency in Ulysses seems to me the conscious and calculated indecency of a desperate man who feels that in order to breathe he must break the windows. At moments, when the window is broken, he is magnificent. But what a waste of energy! And, after all, how dull indecency is, when it is not the overflowing of a superabundant energy or savagery, but the determined and public-spirited act of a man who needs fresh air (18).

When it comes to restructuring the novel Joyce and Woolf's use of narrative strategies are comparable, even if different endeavors. Compared to Joyce's linguistic and narrative experimentations in 'Penelope', Woolf focuses not so much on creating characters via excessive, encyclopedic methods that combine multiple strategies in a seemingly endless present. Rather, her writing overlaps two methods (a personal and impersonal one; individual and communal) through a plurality of temporal spheres that interact following the dynamics of thematic clusters. *The Waves* is marked by this complex process of combining two narrative methods: the narration is carried out by the characters whose integrative dynamics, or their functioning as a multi-layered entity eventually (re)assumes the role of an omniscient narrator. Or it attempts to present the illusion of a narrative guided by an all-knowing, all-controlling narrator. And while the specifics of Woolf's narrative methods in *The Waves* are the subject of the eight and last chapter of this dissertation, what is important to point out here is that the issue of characterization that has always been a central focus for *The Waves* has repercussions for the form of this novel as well. I propose a new look at this question that situates the importance of time and queerness at the forefront when it comes to analyzing the methods of characterization in this novel. In the following chapter, I will analyze the repercussions of addressing time as a primary motif of *The Waves*, looking at its role in the processes of characterical unification and disintegration. In doing that I will argue that the temporal dynamics

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that lead the processes of characterization are marked and determined by a queerness present

in the novel.

Chapter 7: Queer Time, Queer Characterizations in *The Waves*

7.1. Queering "the Rhythm of the Waves"

Virginia Woolf conceived *The Waves* as an "abstract mystical eyeless book" (D III 203), as she aimed to reform both characters and the form of the novel. This has led to numerous interpretations of *The Waves* as a "pallid retreat from political issues", and a "product of a secluded disembodied sensibility" (Beer 76; 74). But, as Gillian Beer notes in her chapter on *The Waves*, titled "The life of anybody" from her study *Virginia Woolf: The Common Ground* (1996), this novel was "concievied, brooded on and written during a highly political phase in Woolf s career, when she was speaking at public and private meetings on issues of gender and of class" (74). *The Waves* does not distance itself from the political and social issues that occupied Woolf's attention in her previous works as well, such as the gender and class system. While in her previous works, Woolf takes on these topics in a more light-footed mode of satire and pastiche (see Beer 74), *The Waves* does so in another manner, or through reconfiguring the prosaic via the poetic.

In addition, I believe that one of the themes that lies at the center of this novel and that guides my analysis in this chapter – reimagining the notions of collectivity and individuality through *The Waves*' six characters – is a highly political project. My analysis focuses on the reforming of collectivity and individuality in this novel through looking at (politically charged) topics that were significant throughout Woolf's career: the representation of homo-sexuality/eroticism and the critique of British imperialism/colonialism. More concretely, the chapter looks closely at the project of reforming characters that unfolds in *The Waves* through processes of unification and disintegration as motivated by queerness, or, following the rhythm of a time that is queer.

The Waves is a rhythmic narrative, a work of poetic prose that follows a rhythmic dynamic as it expands and contracts, following and repeating the same patterns (linguistically and thematically). Its rhythmic temporality is imbued on every level. It starts with a sense of communal identity that is achieved through a sense of a timeless existence – in the childhood section – and it gradually leads – through adolescence and young age – to an epiphanic moment of a temporal unity. From there, the narrative dissolves the sense of achieved union leading to an end that I read as disintegratory and anti-climactic, through the figure of the writer, or narrator, Bernard. In this chapter I look at how queerness regulates the coming together and coming apart of the six characters that form the narrative. These six characters form different kinds of units. Throughout the narrative we are faced with various couplings, or units, whose dynamics change as they come into one and then come apart. These units, formed of different characters are not static entities. Rather, two characters may form a unit based on structural similarities, but at the same time, their bond will also emphasize their differences, and lead to the formation of other units. Thus, the characters form and de-form different entities throughout the narrative. Only on one occasion, all six characters unite in one entity. The analysis of that moment forms the main body of this chapter, as I look into how queerness produces that characterial unification.

What drives my analysis of the temporal narrativization in *The Waves* unfolding through queerness is the connection between the characters' separate timelines and their translation into an overarching temporal model. Two characters, or rather, the bonds between two sets of characters are at the center of my interpretation: Neville and Percival, and Rhoda and Miss Lambert. While Neville and Rhoda are part of the original six characters around which the narrative of *The Waves* is formed, Percival and Miss Lambert, that is, Neville's and Rhoda's love interest are silently present, or present in absentia throughout the narrative. What Rhoda and Neville (present in the narrative) have in common are their homosexual/homoerotic

tendencies, a topic which has been addressed as a site of literary criticism in Woolf studies when it comes to their role in *TW*[76]. These two sets, or units, form the temporal dynamics that creates the narrative, as the queerness at the basis of their relationships structures the novel's temporality.

Two dinner parties order the narrative, argues Beer: the one before Percival's travel to India, and the one at Hampton Court where the six characters meet after his death. Even Bernard's last soliloquy takes place at a restaurant, enacting a dinner scene (see 79). This chapter analyzes closely these two dinner parties and the processes of characterial unification and disintegration that take place during them. The following, eight chapter analyzes Bernard's last soliloquy and thus, is focused on that third dinner scene. Throughout the two sets of analysis, I position Percival as the starting point of my interpretation. And while in the eight chapter his queerness is read in opposition to Bernard, the narratorial figure, this chapter analyzes him assumes alongside Rhoda's, almost like two sides of a same coin.

7.2. Percival: Tracing the Sun-God

In a novel entirely consisted of the inner thoughts of its six characters, Percival never gets the chance to express his own. He is an opaque, mysterious figure (maybe a glimmer of Woolf's idea of the semi-mystic woman survives through him), or as Beer notes, a character whose consciousness the reader can never enter (85). If *The Waves* was supposed to render human nature through a "soliloquy in solitude" (see previous chapter), then Percival who does not actively participate in the units created by the others, is the closest to this ideal. Whether is he a screen on which his friends' fantasies and desires are projected (Purifoy 33), or a floating signifier whose meaning remains both arbitrary and unstable (Garrity 281), Percival is present

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[76] See Kennard 1998; Hussey and Neverow-Turk 1992; Oxindine in Hussey and Neverow-Turk 1993; Barret and Cramer 1997.

in *The Waves* through his absence, or is constructed only through the eyes of the others, primarily Neville.

The reader first encounters Percival in the third episode of *The Waves*, that recounts the characters' adolescent school days. He is first introduced in the school chapel, a highly symbolical location for the significance he assumes in the narrative. Scholars have often read Percival in connection with his namesake Parsifal, the central figure in the Arthurian legend[77], the knight who seeks the Holy Grail[78]. His character is constructed following the principles of the old imperial form he should represent, with its seductive narratives of power and glory (Purifoy 34). He is a cricket captain, he rows, hunts and rides, he is a man at ease in the world of Empire and action (Beer 85). Everybody follows Percival, thinks Louis, for his "magnificence is that of some mediaeval commander" (TW 21). But at the same time, like his namesake Parsifal, he is pure and ignorant, he appears to be entirely unreflective; he is loved, but he is also mocked and despised both out of jealousy and envy (Beer 85). Or as Louis admits, Percival's presence "abrades my side like a file with two edges: one, that I adore his magnificence; the other I despise his slovenly accents – I who am so much his superior – and am jealous" (TW 22).

Percival resembles an archetypal commander and is the novel's most obvious fascist figure, writes McIntire (40). He might be trying to recapitulate a heroic imaginary of an empire already lost, but he is no savior, writes Beer (85). Jane Garrity reads this ambiguous position as a part of the overall structure of *The Waves* as "revealing simultaneous attraction to and repulsion by the narrative of empire" as she argues that the novel's critique of imperialism is undermined by its form – that of an "imperialist nostalgia" (see more in *Step-Daughters of England: British Women Modernists and the National Imaginary* 244). The following chapter

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[77] See Beer 85; Minow-Pinkney, *Virginia Woolf & the Problem of the Subject: Feminine Writing in the Major Novels* 176; McIntire 40; Graham, "Manuscript Revision and the Heroic Theme of The Waves" (316).
[78] "In Arthurian legend Parsifal found the Holy Grail at Chapel Perilous", writes Beer (85).

of this dissertation focuses in greater detail on the ambiguous position Percival inhabits as he exists simultaneously as a figure that is supposed to maintain the imperialist/colonial order of the Empire, and as someone who represents its inner undoing[79].

In this chapter, however, I focus on "Neville's heartfelt and unwavering homo-eroticism" (Beer 84) towards Percival that constructs one of the central aspects of queerness in this novel. Before moving on to my close-reading analysis of the dinner party, one of the two around which, as Beer agues, Woolf structures the narrative and during which all six characters form one entity, I will shortly look at how Neville's love for Percival is presented throughout the narrative. In other words, before I read the scene of temporal unification, I will map out the outlines of the queerness I argue is embodied in this narrative through Percival.

As mentioned already, Percival enters the narrative of *The Waves* in the third episode, as Neville looks at him at the school chapel:

> Now I will lean sideways as if to scratch my thigh. So I shall see Percival. There he sits, upright among the smaller fry. He breathes through his straight nose rather *heavily*. His blue and oddly inexpressive eyes are fixed with pagan indifference upon the pillar opposite. He would make an admirable churchwarden. He should have a birch and beat little boys for misdemeanours. He is allied with the Latin phrases on the memorial brasses. He sees nothing; he hears nothing. He is remote from us all in a pagan universe. But look – he flicks his hand to the back of his neck. *For such gestures one falls hopelessly in love for a lifetime* (my emphasis TW 20-21).

All the features and leitmotifs through which Percival is to be seen throughout the novel are announced in this very section: his heaviness, his indifference and remoteness, the violent attitude he exudes, and Neville's persistent love. But from the start, Neville feels that Percival

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[79] Part of this ambiguity is represented with the fact that Percival is most likely not from England, but from Scotland. As he is taking the train to London after the final term, Bernard thinks to himself: "Percival is now almost in Scotland; his train draws through the red moors; he sees the long line of the Border hills and the Roman wall" (45). As Purifoy notes, although Scotland is also known for generating great colonial administrators, and reads the Roman wall as an image that is supposed to connect Percival with even an older civilization, there is still a certain ironic distance that Woolf wishes to maintain between "the great elm trees" and cricket "playing-fields" of a particularly English landscape that should, but do not fully correspond with Percival's figure (see 31).

will not stay in his life for long, and that he will forget him, leaving Neville's letters and poems answered, refusing meetings. But "[i]t is for that that I love him. Oblivious, almost entirely ignorant, he will pass from my life" (TW 37). This fear exists simultaneously with Neville's constant retreat from his feelings from Percival. Neville blames Percival's ignorance and stupidity, "for he cannot read", as he imagines that he will not be able to live with him: he will coarsen and he will snore (see TW 29). And yet, Neville's "absurd and violent passion" (TW 31) that he cannot share with anyone is something that he cannot let go off, and that will forever mark his life[80].

7.3. The Farewell Dinner, or, Uniting Time

In the interlude that announces this episode set on a bright, sunny day, the sun is fully risen, and the waves fall with a regular thud (TW 70). The sun is in zenith, symbolically replicating the position assumed by Percival, the sun-god figure. In a garden with trees, flower-beds and lilac bushes, birds sing in the hot sunshine, each by itself, with passion and vehemence. As time passes by, "[n]ow and again their songs ran together in swift scales like the interlacings of a mountain stream whose waters, meeting, foam and then mix, and hasten quicker and

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[80] In his essay "From Foe to Friend: Virginia Woolf's Changing View of the Male Homosexual", Jean E. Kennard examines, as he names it, the "problematic" nature of the relationship Woolf had with male homosexuality in her works. Kennard traces the evolution of Woolf's representation of male homosexuals as equated with anti-feminist, patriarchal power in her earlier works to their development into fellow outsiders, pacifist and empathic to women and their struggles. He sees the death of Lytton Strachey, Woolf's close friend, in January 1932 as the turning point for the change of her attitude (see 67-68). Woolf's portrayal of male characters with homosexual traits before the early 1930s are primarily negative: misogynistic, patronizing, associated with the academic world of Cambridge she had no access to, hence, also marked by feelings of envy (see 71). And even though more sympathetic picture comes to the front with *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), in which for the first time homoeroticism is connected to an anti-war position (see 72), it is in *The Years* (1937) – Woolf's penultimate novel – that male homosexuality is linked with stronger sentiments of pacifism and empathy towards women (see 75). Still, *TW* that was published a few months before 1932, a time that assumes a significant role for Kennard's readings, can also be read as participating in the transformation of representation of male homosexuality in Woolf. For Kennard, I believe, *The Waves* maintains an ambiguous position in this regard. In his interpretation of *The Waves*, Kennard proposes that Neville's homosexuality is still more negatively than positively represented in *The Waves.* Associated with a masochistic passion for Percival, Kennard believes that Neville's love for Percival allies him with the imperialism that the novel is meant to critique (see 74) – something that might explain Neville's troubled relationship to his own feelings towards Percival.

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quicker down the same channel, brushing the same broad leaves. But there is a rock; they sever"
(TW 70-71) – describes the interlude, hinting at the movement of plot that follows.

The episode begins with Bernard's soliloquy, who announces the reason for the characters' meeting: "We shall dine together. We shall say goodbye to Percival, who goes to India" (TW 75). Neville's excitement is palpable, as he has arrived early, waiting for Percival to come, waiting for the "door to open". The door opens multiple times, and yet Percival does not come (TW 77). The repetition of this pattern persists throughout the first couple of pages, as if hinting at the painful perpetuation of Neville's unrealized desires. The opening of the door – with its sexual connotations – is also one of Jinny's most notable leitmotifs, as she is most often associated with expressed sexuality. Neville is nervously aware of the "prickly light" whose intensity causes normal things to lose their uses, such as the "knife-blade [that now] is only a flash of light, not a thing to cut with" (TW 77). This seems to suggest Percival's sun-godly presence, through one of the objects Neville is most associated with: the knife. Susan brings order, and centers everything, believes Jinny; but Rhoda feels the terror of people walking and doors opening. This state only changes when Percival arrives, who brings solidity and brings everyone together:

> 'Now,' said Neville, 'my tree flowers. My heart rises. All oppression is relieved. All impediment is removed. The reign of chaos is over. He has imposed order. Knives cut again.' (TW 79).

As Percival's arrival restores order and brings back meaning for Neville, Bernard feels their coming together, drawn into communion, by an emotion conventionally called "love", resulting into "a seven-sided flower, many-petalled, red, puce, purple-shaded, stiff with silver-tinted leaves" (TW 82). The seven-sided flower represents the unification of all the seven characters into one entity but does not nullify their own features. Louis still hears the songs by the Nile and the chained beast stomping as he feels the thousands lives he has lived already (TW 83); Neville is engulfed by the love he feels and the desires he knows will never will be fulfilled

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(TW 84); Rhoda has no face, and Jinny feels her body (TW 84-5), while Susan thinks of a life filled with animals, wet fields, twisted herbs and children (TW 86). And yet, they all feel their coming together. Rhoda looks as the light is becoming richer, as one thing melts into another; Jinny feels the widening of all senses; Louis listens the roar of London as all sounds become one; while Neville sees all things, colors, objects, walled in one, as India lies outside. Time seems endless to Bernard as he sees a vision of Percival advancing, riding a fleabitten mare, and wearing a sun-helmet, as the God he is (TW 88). As the future blossoms out of the past, but also the actual event does not exist, and thus nor does time itself, the fall of a flower symbolizes this simultaneous obliteration and amalgamation of time.[81] The perfect unison seems to last for only a moment.

Louis, the prophet of the group, sees that it is Percival "who makes us aware that these attempts to say, 'I am this, I am that,' which we make, coming together, like separated parts of one body and soul, are false (…) But there is a chain whirling round, round, in a steel-blue circle beneath" (TW 89-90). As Susan and Jinny relive the kiss-scene that separated time into different temporal planes and determined who they will be (see TW 90), Rhoda and Neville already see the future. "One waits and he does not come. It gets later and later. He has forgotten. He is with someone else. He is faithless, his love meant nothing. Oh, then the agony – then the intolerable despair! And then the door opens", thinks Neville, as he imagines himself waiting for Percival who will never come. From the darkness that surrounds her, Rhoda sees a "shape, white, but not of stone, moving, perhaps alive". She knows that it is not any of them – not Percival, Susan, Jinny, Neville, or Louis. Its "white arm rests upon the knee it is a triangle; now it is upright - a column; now a fountain, falling (…) Behind it roars the sea" (TW 91).

The white arm of this mysterious stone figure is reminiscent of a narrator-figure, that also has connections with Bernard (whom Rhoda leaves out of the list of people in her mind),

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81 See the discussion on Woolf's diary note on this idea in my previous chapter (23).

addressed at length in the following chapter. But the imagery here consisting of a white, stone figure, a column, a fountain, and the sea, announces Rhoda's soliloquy in the following episode of the *The Waves*, as she is faced with the death of the solar hero who here unites them all. Lastly, Louis, "aware of downfalling" and foreboding decay, thinks how "[d]eath is woven in with the violets", as he is Rhoda's "conspirator"[82] (see TW 92) – a motif that is also central in Rhoda's following soliloquy and representative of a color that marks her throughout the narrative.

As the feeling of unison has passed and the "moment of ravenous identity is over", Bernard who never stops creating stories and whose life meaning depends on that process, starts wondering what stories are, and if they even exist: "Toys I twist, bubbles I blow, one ring passing through another" (TW 94). This moment of unexpected self-reflection seems to bring about the feeling of unity for one last time.

> 'Now once more,' said Louis, 'as we are about to part, having paid our bill, the circle in our blood, broken so often, so sharply, *for we are so different, closes in a ring*. Something is made. Yes, as we rise and fidget, a little nervously, we pray, holding in our hands this *common feeling*.' Do not move, do not let the swing door cut to pieces the thing that we have made, that *globes* itself here, among these lights, these peelings, this litter of bread crumbs and people passing. Do not move, do not go. Hold it for ever.' (my emphasis, TW 95).

Parting, as they are so different, they still close in a ring – Louis uses here one of Bernard's leitmotifs, associated with his story making. He feels they have made a thing that globes itself. Jinny continues where Louis had stopped:

> 'Let us hold it for one moment,' said Jinny; 'love, hatred, by whatever name we call it, *this globe whose walls are made of Percival,* of youth and beauty, and something so

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deep sunk within us that *we shall perhaps never make this moment out of one man again*.' (my emphasis TW 95).

The globe they have made, a superior version to Bernard's ring, is made of Percival, feels Jinny. It is also made out of love and hate – Susan's motif, but likely will never be made out of one man again. In the very next line, things start dissolving again, as Rhoda thinks of forests and far countries on the other side of the world, seas and jungles, not mentioning Percival, but clearly thinking of his departure. Neville thinks of ordinary things, his pocket-knife and books, but feels the "petal falling from the rose, and the light flickering as we sit silent", as the dissolving if the flower and the disappearance of the light announce the ending of the perfect moment. Susan further reinstates the disintegration of time into moments of the ordinary, as she thinks of her fields and the weekdays moving from Monday to Tuesday to Wednesday, April eventually turning to November (TW 95). Linear time has been reestablished, as they walk away, never to see Percival again. Bernard still feels "[w]e are creators. We too have made something that will join the innumerable congregations of past time" (TW 96), making clear that he will be the one that will keep this role throughout the narrative – always attempting to achieve that unison that existed in that perfect *moment of being*.

Percival's dinner party as a moment of unity can also be analyzed as an epiphanic moment[83], similarly to Molly's "yes", or in Woolf's own vocabulary, as a "moment of being". In her essay "A Sketch of the Past" (1939)[84], Woolf describes what she calls "moments of being" that take one out of her existence of non-being, experienced as if living in a "cotton wool" (see 70-71). During these "violent moments of being", writes Woolf, "[n]othing remained stable long" (79). They are exceptional moments of revelation, but also moments of shock and terror (71). And although written a few years after the publication of *The Waves* (and published in 1939) this essay is clearly a reflection on *The Waves* (and Rhoda as well). Among

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[83] Katz also describes the moment of unity achieved by Percival as an "epiphanic moment" (see 243).
[84] Quoted here from *Moments of Being: Unpublished Autobiographical Writings*.

her earliest memories of these "moments of being" are two instances. In the first one, she remembers a fight with her brother Thoby on the lawn – who is one of the main inspirations for the figure of Percival and to whom she wanted to dedicate the novel[85]. As she raises her fist to hit him, she backs off, somehow realizing the absurdity of that move. But as he goes on hitting her, all she is left feeling with is a sense of "powerlessness" and "hopeless sadness" (71). In the second instance, as a young child, she is looking at a flower-bed in the garden:

> 'That is the whole', I said. I was looking at a plant with a spread of leaves; and it seemed suddenly plain that the flower itself was a part of the earth; *that a ring enclosed what was the flower;* and that was the real flower; part earth; part flower. It was a thought I put away as being likely to be very useful to me later' (my emphasis 71).

The revelation and the shock, the great sadness, but also the feeling that she was part of something bigger than her, a sort of collective expressed with floral metaphors (the flower, the ring), clearly relate Woolf's "moments of being" experienced early in her childhood with the farewell party for Percival. Woolf's "moments of being" crystalize a moment, fixing it, separating it, rounding it up, paradoxically making it a-temporal and all-temporal.

A certain excessiveness marks this moment of unity and of being, as the characters begin to notice everything around them in the very present moment, the table and chairs in the restaurant, the forest surrounding them, detailing every little thing they can think of. This encyclopedic quality resembles the excessiveness present in Molly's monologue as well. The present moment is saturated, until it is transformed/narrativized as a globe, a symbol I believe functions here as a metaphor for an attempt at excessive gathering of individual information, impulses, and emotions into one collective entity. The resulting entity is the moment formed here, a globe with its circular shape, that encloses a multiplicity of timelines, combining the temporalities of all the characters as it unites all their subjectivities into one multifaceted entity.

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[85] "Here in the few minutes that remain, I must record, heaven be praised, the end of The Waves (…) and I have been sitting these 15 minutes in a state of glory, and calm, and some tears, thinking of Thoby and if I could write Julian Thoby Stephen 1881–1906 on the first page" (see D IV 10).

It is only at this moment, that a complete unification symbolized by the circle produces an epiphanic moment, a moment of being that crystalizes the present, as it saturates it with multiple timelines. Unlike *Ulysses*, where past events are merged into an excessively lived present that incorporates all possible timelines into one final culminative instance, *The Waves* gradually develops a narrative that strives towards a temporal and identarian amalgamation, reaches a point where this crystallization of the present moments unravels, for it to dissolve into fragmentary, temporally-isolated patterns. In many ways, *Ulysses* and *The Waves* then, stand on opposite sides. The time-defining (defying?) event is placed at different stages that give it a different role; this is quite visible though an analysis of the resulting narrative forms developed, and subjectivities reformed.

Therefore, it would be hard to miss this central "epiphanic moment" and its connections with Percival. Percival's role as a uniting force at the dinner party has been noted in scholarship on *The Waves* (see Warner 18; Gorsky 453; Katz 243-244). Tamar Katz's essay "Modernism, Subjectivity, and Narrative Form: Abstraction in 'The Waves'" that nicely maps out this process has served as a guide for my reading as well, as it summarizes some of the previous interpretations and approaches to reading Percival's unifying presence in *The Waves*. For Katz, abstraction is the model that structures the double and opposing forces of characterization and form in *The Waves*. Percival has a peculiarly double function in *The Waves*, argues Katz. On the one hand, he is a conventional, imperialist figure, a colonizing presence, but on the other, he functions as the most abstract structuring and narrative principle, as his absence is a uniting force that brings the others together (see 243). This abstraction mostly reveals itself as a non-linear mode, but spatial mode of structuring the narrative (see 233, 244, 248).

Katz meticulously shows the significance Percival carries as a narrative locus in influencing both the modernist unraveling of form and the characterization in *The Waves*, but she seems to be alluding to the non-temporality in which these processes unwind. My reading,

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on the other hand, emphasizes the role time assumes as a complex conveyor of these intertwined processes of interrogation of characterization and form. Part of the reason for this a-temporal reading, I believe, springs from Woolf's own negation of time in *The Waves*, or her idea that "time shall be obliterated" through the (non)event of unification, represented by the flower. But as I have shown here, this a-temporal state that maybe even reproduces the state of characterial unification in the childhood section results from the mixing of all the characters' timelines, or, in Woolf's words, the future blossoms out of the past. The unification and separation of the six characters is a clearly marked temporal process, and the globe-like entity produced by and through Percival is both an all-temporal and a-temporal (timeless) moment, but it is not removed from time. I believe that Percival's absent presence in the novel constructed precisely through a poignant homoeroticism is embodied most clearly as a queerness that structures the functioning of time as it also acts as an apparatus for interrogating the notion of character.

If in 'Penelope' Molly's thoughts are not temporally separated, but unwinding in instantaneous simultaneity, in *The Waves*, the inner thoughts of the six characters are chronologically separated, and yet they are intertwined, or rather, motifs and patterns reappear in all the soliloquies. These acts of repetition act as unifying elements, as memories, thoughts, dreams, visions shared between Bernard, Neville, Louis, Jinny, Susan and Rhoda connect them, reducing the distance between them as they attempt to establish a single entity. The act of a profound union between the six characters is achieved via Percival. During the first dinner, Percival's figure suspends time, prolongs the now, separates and infuses the present moment with the different temporalities of all the others. In that moment, his presence embodies Woolf's idea of a new character. In my reading, Percival's queerness, the result of Neville's unwavering love and devotion that remains his leitmotif during the narrative, is what makes Percival a structuring principle of temporality in *The Waves*. The one and only manner in which

the reader sees Percival is through Neville's eyes. Percival is not an abstract symbol, but rather, he exists on a completely opposite narrative plane. He is a Neville's creation, and as such, it is the love and passion Neville feels for him that produce him into the unifying presence he is for all the others.

Neville is the one with whose words the farewell dinner ends, as he already feels the agony, the horror that seizes him as Percival goes away. He wonders what he can do to keep him, to bridge the difference between them (all), but he is aware that "Percival is now gone" (TW 96). The first lines of the following episode are again Neville's:

> 'He is dead,' said Neville. 'He fell. His horse tripped. He was thrown. The sails of the world have swung round and caught me on the head. All is over. The lights of the world have gone out. There stands the tree which I cannot pass.' (TW 98).

Neville feels the "past is cut from me (…) [f]rom this moment I am solitary. No one will know me now" (TW 99). Besides Neville, who is the one most affected by Percival's "meaningless death" (TW 101), we can only read Bernard's and Rhoda's soliloquies in this episode, mourning the event. The effect that Percival's death has on Bernard's sequenced world is analyzed in detail in the following chapter. Here, I am primarily interested in an interpretation of Rhoda's soliloquy and reaction to Percival's death, that I believe, also announces her own. The following section of this chapter, focuses on Rhoda's character, marked by underlying homoeroticism, that I address in dialogue with the queerness that marks Percival. Percival and Rhoda are often seen as opposing figures in *The Waves*, as I will show shortly.

7.4. Rhoda: A White Empress

It has become a common place in feminist modernist scholarship to read Virginia Woolf's life and fiction through her love for women. As Eileen Barrett writes in her Introduction to the edited volume *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings* (1997), one of the most important (and first) studies devoted to Woolf's lesbianism: "Virginia Woolf is one of the twentieth century's best-

known lesbians" (3). Barrett is right, the (still ongoing) interest in her life displayed in various artistic and popular culture mediums, as well as a constant production of studies from feminist, modernist, and queer scholars, have made Woolf's love affairs with women (especially Vita-Sackville-West), the homoerotic atmosphere of Bloomsbury, the constant inspiration she drew from women, and the many ambiguous friendships she had with them pretty much familiar to anyone who has heard of Virginia Woolf.

Research focusing on Woolf's personal life, especially her relationships with women, and bringing it in dialogue with her works, is a necessary and very much needed part of scholarship on Woolf. And although it is widely acknowledged that her experiences with, thoughts on, and relationships with women, so thoroughly reflected in her letters and diaries influenced profoundly her short fiction, novels and essays, Woolf's writing is also marked by an ambivalent relationship with lesbianism. "Throughout her writing, Woolf resisted what she referred to as the 'perpetually narrowing and naming' of lesbian and homosexual love; instead […] she developed an intricate, multifaceted style to convey 'these immensely composite and wide flung passions' (Barrett and Cramer 4). As Hermione Lee argues, if Virginia Woolf was "lesbian", or "Sapphist", a term that was more commonly used in her circles[86], she accepted that identity only evasively and ambivalently (610). In fact, she would only refer to herself as a lesbian as a joke, because this was not a concept for her, or a political identity she could see herself fitting into (312). In Lee's opinion, Woolf did not define herself as a "Sapphist", as she could not bear being categorized as belonging to a group defined by a sexual behavior, similarly like she did not want to identify herself as a "wife" or a writer of "novels" (see 606). This resistance might have been due to Woolf's personal ambiguity towards her sexuality, her fear of being perceived and read as a lesbian writer[87] in the late 1920s[88], her preference for more

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[86] OED: Sapphist began to be used in 1890, lesbian in 1908 (as qtd. in Lee 1148).
[87] Lee notes that Woolf was "painfully anticipating" the publication of *A Room of One's Own*, afraid of being attacked as a "feminist" and a "Sapphist" (see 564).
[88] See Lee's account on Woolf's involvement with Radclyffe Hall's *Well of Loneliness* trail in 1928 (526).

fluid configurations of sexuality as opposed to stable political categories or is likely a combination of all of the above. What I am interested in here is seeing how this ambiguity regarding the representation of lesbianism is narrativized in *The Waves* through Rhoda.

Rhoda has been often analyzed as one of the most enigmatic characters in modernist literature. Garrett Stewart describes her as "the most extravagant avatar of discontinuity in modern fiction" emphasizing the importance of "her recoil from language as a system" for the construction of her character (453, 439). Feminist inquiries have often posited her retreat from language as a sign of resisting a patriarchal system (see Minow-Pinkney 183). In her essay "Rhoda Submerged: Lesbian Suicide in The Waves", Annette Oxindine argues that it is "precisely the erotic space that Rhoda occupies in *The Waves* that necessitates analysis, for her sexuality is crucial to understanding her silence and ultimately her suicide" (in ed. Barrett and Cramer 204). However, as Oxindine demonstrates throughout her essay, lesbianism is only implicitly present in *The Waves* as Rhoda's same-sex desires are a rather marginal character trait. Oxindine instead focuses on the two holograph drafts of the novel where Rhoda's lesbianism is more overtly presented, an aspect that Woolf decided to remove from the final published version. She closely reads Rhoda's visions and dreams, as well as an episode in which Rhoda longs to kiss a girl named Alice while she is away in the all-girls school, only sketched in Woolf's notes (see 210-214).

Patricia Cramer in "Jane Harrison and Lesbian Plots: The Absent Lover in Virginia Woolf's 'The Waves'" presents a similar argument as she examines how Woolf constructed Rhoda's subtle lesbian eroticism by using similar language to describe her own experiences with her friend and lover Vita Sackville-Vest and Rhoda's sexual fantasies for her teacher Miss Lambert (see 451). According to both Cramer and Oxindine, the lesbian connotations present in the novel become more visible when their evolution is traced through Woolf's diaries, letters, and notebooks up to the novel. Some of what Rhoda feels for Alice in the unpublished draft is

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transferred into the published novel as Rhoda's feelings towards Miss Lambert. Furthermore, some of the most vivid reflections of Rhoda's inner life revolve around her teacher. Therefore, Miss Lambert has been addressed in detail in feminist and lesbian readings of Woolf's work. Following some of these works' leads, I will first map out Rhoda's position in *The Waves*, that will help me better introduce her main traits and see how queerness constructs her character, similarly to Percival.

7.5.   Out of Time and Body

From the beginning of the novel, Rhoda is posited as an outsider. She hears as the others see (see previous chapter). In one of the schoolroom scenes, as the six children are all together in class, Rhoda feels a "terror" that is consuming her: as all the others write and seem to understand their lesson, she "cannot write" and only "see[s] only figures" (TW 10-11). As the others hand in their assignments and leave the room, Rhoda is left behind, feeling that:

> Meaning has gone. *The clock ticks*. The two hands are convoys marching through a desert. The black bars on the clock face are green oases. The long hand has marched ahead to find water. The other, painfully stumbles among hot stones in the desert. *It will die in the desert* (…) Look, the loop of the figure is beginning to fill with time; it holds the world in it. I begin to draw a figure and the world is looped in it, and *I myself am outside the loop*; which *I now join* – so – and seal up, and make entire. *The world is entire, and I am outside of it, crying, 'Oh save me, from being blown for ever outside the loop of time!*' (my emphasis TW 11).

Excluded from language as Percival was (she cannot write as the others do, while Percival cannot read, Neville claims), Rhoda feels outside of time as well. The two hands of the clock do not signify the passing of time for her, but rather, death in the desert. Unable to *read* time, she finds herself out of the loop of time, removed from an entity she feels forming around her, even though she has joined it. Louis notices her "staring at the blackboard" in the schoolroom, while her mind "steps through those *white loops* into emptiness, alone", that have no meaning for her, as in the background "Bernard tells a story" (TW 11). Rhoda lacks the continuity

temporal progression provides, the one Bernard, the storyteller, seems to embody the most. In that moment, continuing the bond that has existed between Rhoda and Louis since the first lines and that will eventually result in an intimate relationship, Louis is the only one who sees Rhoda struggling and understands her. Note that as he thinks of her isolation, he uses her word *loop* as well, as he can read her thoughts, in one of those repetition of patterns through the characters' soliloquies on which grounds Woolf builds the narrative[89].

> She has *no body* as the others have. And I, who speak with an Australian accent, whose
>
> father is a banker in Brisbane, do not fear her as I fear the others (my emphasis TW 11).

From here on, Rhoda's strained relationship with her own body and the lack of bodily presence she feels more so than the others become her defining repetitive motifs. While in school, she feels as if she is a "nobody", and she has "no face", as if the crowds around her robbed her out of her identity (see TW 19). "At the furthest extreme of unembodiment of all Virginia Woolf's characters is Rhoda, in *The Waves*", argues Hussey (23). Hence, from all the six characters who are given voices, Rhoda is the one with the most elusive physical, or bodily presence.

Opposite Rhoda's constant feeling of "falling down" and "falling off the edge of the world into nothingness" as she attempts to call herself back into her body (see TW 26), stands Jinny who seems to completely inhabit her body. Jinny's "I move, I dance; I never cease to move and to dance" (TW 25) is one of her most prominent patterns and phrases. Jinny's language is full of "dancing" and "pirouetting" (TW 19). Unlike Rhoda, Jinny's body is her calling and her life (TW 66). Jinny's body is a connection to the outside world. Her dancing is also a way of conveying her sensual and sexual nature. As Jinny arrives to a party where she feels like "a native", "[t]he door is opening and shutting", people are coming and going, and Jinny is "rooted but flows", taking up and transforming Louis' "rooted to the middle of the earth".

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[89]As Balossi argues, Rhoda's soliloquies differ the most from Bernard and are the most similar to Louis (see 97).

Jinny is rooted, but also flitters and ripples, "stream[ing] like a plant in the river, flowing this way, flowing that way, but rooted, so that he may come to me. 'Come,' I say, 'come'" (TW 66). This sexual encounter[90] that follows "the current of the dance", is visualized through a water imagery typical of Rhoda as well (as I will argue shortly) and formed around Jinny's notion of her body. The repeated phrase "the door opens" here initially used by Jinny to symbolize her openness and excitement is used by Rhoda in the very next line, in a context that underlines all the differences between Jinny and herself.

> 'I shall edge behind them,' said Rhoda, 'as if I saw someone I know. But I know no one. I shall twitch the curtain and look at the moon. Draughts of oblivion shall quench my agitation. *The door opens; the tiger leaps. The door opens; terror rushes in; terror upon terror, pursuing me*' (my emphasis TW 68).

If Jinny is excited at the door opening and people coming in, Rhoda is terrified (as one would be in front of a leaping tiger), as they come towards her, throwing fake smiles to mask their cruelty, and she is "thrust back to stand burning in this clumsy, this ill-fitting body" (TW 68). As Jinny welcomes others with and through her body, the presence of other people just reminds Rhoda how "ill-fitted" her own body is. Afraid and hateful of "all details of individual life", Rhoda feels an immense pressure on her, and "cannot move without dislodging the weight of centuries" (TW 68), paraphrasing Louis' leitmotif. She hides and cries, asking for protection (TW 69). As the narrative flows, she thinks:

> Alone, I rock my basins; I am mistress of my fleet of ships. But here (…) I am broken into separate pieces; I am no longer one. What then is the knowledge that Jinny has as she dances; the assurance that Susan has as, stooping quietly beneath the lamplight, she draws the white cotton through the eye of her needle? They say, Yes; they say, No; they

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[90] "Now with a little jerk, like a limpet broken from a rock, I am broken off: I fall with him; I am carried off. We yield to this slow flood. We go in and out of this hesitating music. Rocks break the current of the dance; it jars, it shivers. In and out, we are swept now into this large figure; it holds us together; we cannot step outside its sinuous, its hesitating, its abrupt, its perfectly encircling walls. Our bodies, his hard, mine flowing, are pressed together within its body; it holds us together; and then lengthening out, in smooth, in sinuous folds, rolls us between it, on and on. Suddenly the music breaks. My blood runs on but my body stands still. The room reels past my eyes. It stops" (TW 66-67).

bring their fists down with a bang on the table. But I doubt; I tremble; I see the wild

thorn tree shake its shadow in the desert (TW 69).

The counter position of the "yes" and the "no" that reappears in Rhoda's soliloquies as she feels excluded from their meaning will be addressed in the following chapter of this dissertation. What I want to emphasize here is Rhoda's image of herself as a "mistress of her fleet of ships" in connection to "rocking her basins", a narrative combination that is also repeated throughout her soliloquies. From the very first episode, when shortly after Jinny and Louis' kiss Susan notices Rhoda in the garden "rocking petals to and fro in her brown basin" (TW 9), Rhoda's basin full with petals becomes an indicator of her association with sea and naval imagery, often transmitted through the color white. Here is that first scene[91]:

> 'All my ships are white,' said Rhoda. (…) I want white petals that float when I tip the basin up. I have a fleet now swimming from shore to shore. (…) I will drop a stone in and see bubbles rise from the depths of the sea. Neville has gone and Susan has gone; Jinny is in the kitchen garden picking currants with Louis perhaps. I have a short time alone, while Miss Hudson spreads our copy-books on the school-room table. I have a short space of freedom. I have picked all the fallen petals and made them swim. (…) And I will now rock the brown basin from side to side so that my ships may ride the waves. Some will founder. Some will dash themselves against the cliffs. One sails alone. That is my ship' (TW 9).

This pattern gets transformed as Rhoda grows older, and gradually becomes a part of an Empress fantasy Rhoda seems to harbor. In her schooldays, as Rhoda is contemplating the end of her day, getting ready for bed, taking off her clothes and washing up, she thinks to herself:

> as I bend my head down over the basin, I will let the Russian Empress's veil flow about my shoulders. The diamonds of the Imperial crown blaze on my forehead. I hear the

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[91] On a few occasions, Bernard, Neville and Louis all think of Rhoda's basin full with white petals. Bernard does so while summarizing this childhood scene during his last soliloquy, as he thinks about how Rhoda "had a basin in which she sailed petals of white flowers", when he first realized he was different from Neville, a "wonderful discovery" (see TW 160). Neville remembers interrupting Rhoda while she was rocking her petals in the brown basin, asking for the pocket-knife Bernard had stolen. "Love is not a whirlpool to her", thinks Neville (TW 90). And finally, Louis who understands Rhoda the best, sees her arriving at Percival's farewell dinner, thinking that she must have been hiding from them, "so as to be secure for one more moment to rock her petals in her basin. We wake her. We torture her. She dreads us, despises us", concludes Louis, but still comes back to us (see TW 78).

roar of the hostile mob as I step out on to the balcony. Now I dry my hands, vigorously, so that Miss, whose name I forget, cannot suspect that I am waving my fist at an infuriated mob. 'I am your Empress, people.' My attitude is one of defiance. I am fearless. I conquer (TW 34-35).

In her essay "'Purple Buttons on her Bodice': Feminist History and Iconography in 'The Waves'", that focuses on the feminist undertones of *The Waves*, as allusively transmitted through Woolf's use of color, Jane Goldman reads these instances as Rhoda's fantasies of becoming the ultimate female imperial subject, the counterpart to Percival (12). Similarly, Marcus who reads *The Waves* as a strong critique of white British colonialism and imperialism believes that imperialism in the novel is "ideologically asserting itself even in the unconscious of oppressed and silenced women" and uses Rhoda's fantasy of her white flower fleet as an example ("Britannia" 65)[92]. Goldman traces the submerged history of feminism, and especially suffragette history, through Woolf's iconographic deployment of color, focused on the evolving visions of Rhoda who is predominantly associated with purple, white and green (see 7). As Goldman argues, from as early as 1910 Woolf was actively involved with the suffragette movement, whose banners were famous for their beautiful symbolic colors, most notably purple (see 6).

Purple carries a great significance in *The Waves*. From Susan's "purple stripes" appearing in the first lines, via Bernard's "unhappy purple waves" that reside over them in Elvedon (TW 7), to the "purple buttons on [Mrs. Hudson's, the schoolteacher's] bodice" noticed by Louis (TW 10), that according to Goldman are meant to keep up with the suffragettes' dress code (10). Goldman does not offer a reading of the lesbian undertones in *The Waves* as Cramer and Oxindine do. She also argues that Rhoda cannot be read as an active and a conscious feminist, as she does not successfully intervene in the material world, but rather retreats from its indifference (10). However, a significant part of her reading is centered on

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[92] In her study *Hearts of Darkness: White Women Write Race* (2004)

Miss Lambert, as she is the character most notably associated with the color purple and one of the most prominent figures in Rhoda's soliloquies.

In the next part of this chapter, I will use some of Goldman's interpretative directions in analyzing Miss Lambert's presence in *The Waves* and the role she plays both for Rhoda and the overall structure. In doing that, I am particularly interested in tracing the structural connections between how Miss Lambert and Percival are portrayed, following Rhoda's infatuation with Miss Lambert and Neville's with Percival. Goldman is right to point out that Rhoda is a reclusive character who retreats from the material world, eventually ending her life. But at the same time, I believe she is also one of the queerest presences in the novel. An analysis that focuses more on Rhoda and Percival's similarities, instead of emphasizing their very real differences (like Goldman's does), can also highlight the significant role Rhoda plays in process of queer characterial unification that was read through Percival in the first half of this chapter. The homoerotic implications present in these two sets of interaction produce a similar narrative pattern, that can be followed through several key-episodes, starting from Rhoda and Neville's schooldays, where they first encounter Miss Lambert and Percival, respectively, to Rhoda and Percival's deaths.

7.6. Purple Undertones and Hidden Loves

> 'The *purple light*,' said Rhoda, 'in Miss Lambert's ring passes to and fro across the black stain on the white page of the Prayer Book. It is a vinous, it is an *amorous light*. Now that our boxes are unpacked in the dormitories, we sit herded together under maps of the entire world' (my emphasis TW 19).

The purple light that passes to and fro (like the petals in Rhoda's basin) is an amorous light. The purple light seems to counter the dichotomizing patriarchal subtexts of the religious text, argues Goldman. The black ink, the maps and the prayer books all suggest a model of education that favors a submissive inscription into the empire, against which shines the purple ring. And,

Goldman, concludes, women are seen here as complicit with imperialist ideology, but also, there is a sense of resistance and opposition contained in the purple imagery of the ring, associated with the suffragette movement (12).

There is another instance during which Miss Lambert's purple ring comes to the forefront yet again, with even more intensity:

> 'When Miss Lambert passes,' said Rhoda, 'talking to the clergyman, the others laugh and imitate her hunch behind her back; yet everything changes and becomes luminous (…) Wherever she goes, things are changed under her eyes; and yet when she has gone is not the thing the same again? (…) All is solemn, all is pale where she stands, like a statue in a grove. She lets her tasselled silken cloak slip down, and only her *purple ring still glows*, her vinous, her amethystine ring (…) When Miss Lambert passes, she makes the daisy change; and everything runs like streaks of fire when she carves the beef. Month by month things are *losing their hardness*; *even my body now lets the light through*; my spine is soft like wax near the flame of the candle. I dream; I dream.' (my emphasis TW 27).

For Rhoda, Miss Lambert possesses transformative powers, argues Goldman. And while the male characters all turn to the solar figure of Percival, Rhoda's vision of Miss Lambert can be considered an alternative to that masculine vision of subjectivity (11-12). I agree with Goldman that there is an overlap in the roles Percival and Miss Lambert are inhabiting in this narrative.

But unlike Goldman, what I find fascinating here are the similarities, even if transmitted through consciously emphasized differences, in tone and vocabulary used for the portrayal of Miss Lambert by Rhoda and of Percival by Neville and the others. While the little boys are trooping after Percival across the playing-fields, following their hero devotedly, imitating him and failing at it[93] (see TW 80), Miss Lambert is also followed and imitated: the mocking irony that marks the tone when it comes to Percival is changed into a stiff solemnness with Miss Lambert. She becomes associated with an eruption of light, almost like a fresco (or a statue) of

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[93] "They blew their noses as he blew his nose, but unsuccessfully, for he is Percival" (TW 80).

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some divinity, that is even felt (let through) by Rhoda's own body, in addition to the feeling of softness Rhoda is left with after Miss Lambert passes by her. It seems to me that this physical affect (and for a character who almost always exists outside of a bodily experience) is probably the most explicit reference of an underlying lesbian context in *The Waves*.

Goldman further argues that Rhoda might be trying to position Miss Lambert as her role model, or the Absolute Subject, similarly to the way Percival is perceived as a god and a hero-figure by the others. The only difference here is that Miss Lambert herself challenges the idea of replacing a patriarchal subject with a female version. Analyzing Rhoda's Russian Empress fantasy quoted above as a counterpart to Percival's phantasmatic (and never-achieved) role, Goldman points out the fact that what turns Rhoda back from that imperial dream in the same instance she thinks of it is precisely Miss Lambert (12-13). Here is the continuation of Rhoda's thoughts, after her vision of conquest and conquer:

> 'But this is a thin dream. This is a papery tree. Miss Lambert blows it down. Even the sight of her vanishing down the corridor blows it to atoms. It is not solid; it gives me no satisfaction – this Empress dream. It leaves me, now that it has fallen, here in the passage rather shivering. Things seem paler' (TW 35).

Rhoda's denouncement of the Empress dream is particularly closely associated with the language of Shelley, whose poems are heavily featured among the works that determine the narrative of *The Waves*. In this particular instance, Shelley's poems are also used to forge an even deeper bond between Rhoda and Percival. Or, as Rhoda gives up the Empress vision, under the guide of Miss Lambert, the language that she uses does not separate her, but brings her even closer to Percival's realm.

Shelley's poem "The Indian Serenade" is associated with Rhoda long before Percival's journey is announced, writes Beer, in a similar manner to Catullus' Odi et Amo – I love and hate, Susan recurring phrase (see 86; also Goldman "Purple Buttons" 13-14). "I die! I faint! I fail/ Let thy love in kisses rain./ On my lips and eyelids pale" – these lines of "The Indian

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Serenade" together with the last lines of another poem of Shelley's "The Question" that read: "I hastened to the spot whence I had come,/ That I might there present it! - Oh! to whom?" become part of Rhoda's speech right after she denounces her Empress vision (see Beer 86; Goldman "Purple Buttons" 13). "I will wander down it and pick flowers, green cowbind and the moonlightcoloured May, wild roses and ivy serpentine", plans Rhoda. "I will clasp them in my hands and lay them on the desk's shiny surface" (maybe Miss Lambert's desk?). But soon, the flower-picking plan turns into a lamentation:

> I will pick flowers; I will bind flowers in one garland and clasp them and present them – *Oh! to whom?* (...) Oh, this is pain, this is anguish! *I faint, I fail*. Now my body thaws; I am unsealed, I am incandescent. Now the stream pours in a deep tide fertilising, opening the shut, forcing the tight-folded, flooding free. To whom shall I give all that now flows through me, from *my warm, my porous body*? I will gather my flowers and present them – Oh! to whom? (my emphasis TW 35).

Here, Shelley's poems merge with Rhoda's by now known experience of her own body. And although Goldman analyzes Rhoda's use of Shelley's imagery – his "flag-flowers, purple pranked with white" in contrast with to the solar imagery and masculine subjectivity represented by Percival (see 13), it cannot be denied that Rhoda's "I faint, I fail" taken from "The Indian Serenade" announces Percival's untimely death. In fact, death is the final and ultimate connection Woolf draws between Rhoda and Percival. The following section of this chapter is devoted to Rhoda's reaction to Percival's death, that is closely related to her own death. Rhoda's soliloquy after Percival's death (in an episode that also shows Bernard's and Neville's, but excludes Jinny and Susan soliloquies) is the longest speech that honors his passing. In the following section, I aim to trace Rhoda's reaction to Percival's death as embedded in the queerness they both represent, but also to see how this event anticipates Rhoda's own death (symbolic and real), as it uses similar narrative patterns.

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7.7.   Proleptic Death as a Moment of Being

'There is the *puddle*,' said Rhoda, 'and I cannot cross it. I hear the rush of the great grindstone within an inch of my head. Its wind roars in my face. All palpable forms of life have failed me. Unless I can stretch and *touch something hard*, I shall be blown down the eternal corridors for ever. What, then, can I touch? What brick, what s*tone*? and so draw myself across the enormous gulf into my body safely' (TW 104) –

In her essay the "Sketch of the Past" that I have used above in analyzing Percival's farewell dinner as a "moment of being", Woolf writes of a couple of such occasions, moments of being that she will never forget: "There was the moment of the puddle in the path; when for no reason I could discover, everything suddenly became unreal; I was suspended; I could not step across the puddle; I tried to touch something ... the whole world became unreal" (78). Woolf uses the same language – things become unreal, all palpable forms of life fail her – as she describes Rhoda's reaction to Percival's death, the quoted with which I started this section.

As she hears of the news, Rhoda feels her lack of bodily presence yet again, attempts to stretch out and touch something hard*, a stone*, that she sees in her vision at the farewell dinner. The softness that engulfs her, as we have seen, is also brough out in her when Miss Lambert is around. Feeling that she will be blown out of life if she does not touch something hard, as the wind blows in her face, the death of Percival becomes a "moment of being" for Rhoda.

Walking in a confusion down Oxford Street, running errands, buying gifts, wondering if she should go to Hampton Court (announcing the location of their last encounter taking place in the penultimate episode of *The Waves*), Rhoda thinks: "I will pick violets and bind them together and offer them to Percival, something given him by me" (104). As the shadow falls and the *purple light* slants downwards, she sees:

The figure that was robed in beauty is now clothed in ruin. The figure that stood in the grove where the steepbacked hills come down falls in ruin, as I told them when they

said they loved his voice on the stair, and his old shoes and *moments of being together* (my emphasis, TW 104).

In a reiteration of her vision, she sees the mysterious figure again, this time cloth in ruin, but feels this moment as another *moment of being*. Something of the epiphanic revelation of the moments of being is also contained here, as she keeps repeating "Look now at what Percival has given me" (TW 104); "Percival, by his death, has made me this present, has revealed this terror, has left me to undergo this humiliation" (TW 105); "Percival, by his death, has made me this gift, let me see the thing" (TW 107). This time, happening in the absence of all the others, and most importantly, Percival, the moment of being is even more so a moment of horror that Rhoda cannot escape. It has made Rhoda realize that "I ride rough waters and shall sink with no one to save me" (TW 105). But at the same time, it does contain a revelation. "Now that lightning has gashed the tree and the flowering branch has fallen", Percival lets her see:

> There is a square; there is an oblong. The players take the square and place it upon the oblong. They place it very accurately; they make a perfect dwelling-place. Very little is left outside. The structure is now visible; what is inchoate is here stated; we are not so various or so mean; we have made oblongs and stood them upon squares. This is our triumph; this is our consolation (…) The oblong has been set upon the square; the spiral is on top. We have been hauled over the shingle, down to the sea. The players come again (…) I will go (…) I will fling myself fearlessly into trams, into omnibuses[94] (…) I am not injured, I am not outraged by the collision. A square stands upon an oblong (TW 107).

Faced with Percival's death, Rhoda attempts to escape the physical, temporal space around her represented by the crowds in Oxford Street. Instead, she goes to the music hall, where music serves as a vehicle for transporting her to spatial, abstract, atemporal scenery again. For Goldman, the "humiliation" Rhoda undergoes because of Percival's death might be due to her painful encounter with the material world in the aftermath of the loss of the one who provides

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[94] Reiterated in Bernard's last sentence.

transcendence ("Purple Buttons" 18). Rhoda's withdrawal from the variety of social situations she finds so dreadful often takes on a spatial imagery. She imagines spaces where human entities dissolve and are replaced by abstract forms, as during her vision at the farewell dinner. Her constant flights from reality and the unwinding of time leads her to experiencing space more readily than she does time. Here spatial, geometrical imagery is meant to oppose the flight of time she cannot master. It is almost as if Percival's death had erased time, reducing its multiplicity to a singular spatial dimension. Rhoda, who cannot make one moment merge in the next, or enter the loop of time, is the character that is the most recognizable as a spatial being, claims Monaco (165).

I believe that in the aftermath of Percival's death, the square and the oblong, "imperfect" geometrical forms when compared to the unifying globe he once embodied, symbolize the transcendence to a sphere in which the perfect multiplicity of time and identities no longer exists. This scene signifies the most radical transformation of Rhoda's inner imagery. Or rather, the process that has been ongoing for her since the beginning of the narrative – her fight with time – finally ends here, as Percival's death enables her to leave the temporal sphere the others inhabit, and she was previously forced to take part of. With Percival gone, and her presence no longer required for the formation of a greater unity, Rhoda is free to "relinquish", or to "let loose". "Into the wave that dashes upon the shore, into the wave that flings its white foam to the uttermost corners of the earth, I throw my violets, my offering to Percival" (TW 108) – she ends her soliloquy, setting the scene for the following episode of *The Waves*.

7.8.   Queer Death, or, the Event that Annihilates Time

Rhoda's "Oh! To whom?" that was originally meant to be an allusion to Percival's death as a part of Shelley's linguistic register, makes one more significant appearance in the novel, this time announcing Rhoda's own death. This happens in the seventh episode of *The Waves*, that seems to mark a new stage in the characters' lives. After two episodes primarily devoted to

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mourning Percival (the fifth and sixth) following his death that divides the narrative in half, this later section of the novel introduces a new and a more self-reflective phase for the characters, that will culminate in Bernard's last soliloquy. Announced by the first line of the interlude "The sun had now sunk lower in the sky" as "each blade [of grass, my note] regained its identity" (TW 120), this episode traces the process of their further disintegration. The unity that Percival brought might have persisted in some vague form in the two episodes following his death, as a profound sense of mourning united (at least some of) the characters, but now the remnants of that globe are slowly disappearing, as will become obvious during their final meeting in Hampton Court where they exist as separate, almost solidified characters. But before that, in this moment of time, all six of them attempt to summarize their own lives, perhaps as a prelude to the final encounter that announces Bernard's last speech.

Bernard begins this episode, as he reflects on his lost youth, followed by a trip to Rome (see TW 122) – a moment I will be looking at closely in the following chapter. Susan announces, in a rather melancholy mood, that she has "reached the summit of [her] desires" and that she is "sick of the body" (TW 126-127). For the first time since his death, she thinks of Percival "who loved me. He rode and fell in India. I think sometimes of Rhoda. Uneasy cries wake me at dead of night" (TW 127). A life unlived, one with Percival seems to be on her mind. But the thought of Percival immediately takes her to Rhoda and "uneasy cries". Jinny laments the passing of her youth, looking at her solitary, aged, shrunk body. But, as she reminds herself, "Percival died. I still move. I still live" (TW 128), repeating her leitmotif "Come", and waiting for a new stranger (TW 129). Neville is also "no longer young" (TW 130). Lonely, he thinks about Louis and Rhoda, imagining their life together, seeing how "cheep, cheep, creaks the fire, like the cheep of insects in the middle of a forest" (TW 132), repeating Rhoda's very first sentence. Although he cannot quite grasp the dynamics of Louis' and Rhoda's relationship, Neville's loneliness ends his reflection with another appropriation, this time of Jinny's

"Come". Hearing the sound he is waiting for, of someone coming, he cries: "'Come in. Sit by me. Sit on the edge of the chair.' Swept away by the old hallucination, I cry, 'Come closer, closer'." (TW 132). Louis declares that "life has been a terrible affair" for him, as he thinks of his destiny as a "sharp-pointed pyramid" that he has been carrying on his shoulders like a burden and that has been pressing his ribs, while he wishes he were like Susan, or like Percival who he admires (TW 133-134). In a continuation of his Egyptian leitmotif, he feels all time passing through him, as a summation of his individual life:

> I remember the Nile and the women carrying pitchers on their heads; that I feel myself woven in and out of the long summers and winters that have made the corn flow and have frozen the streams. I am not a single and passing being. My life is not a moment's bright spark like that on the surface of a diamond. I go beneath ground tortuously, as if a warder carried a lamp from cell to cell. My destiny has been that I remember and must weave together, must plait into one cable the many threads, the thin, the thick, the broken, the enduring of our long history, of our tumultuous and varied day (TW 134).

This is probably the clearest instance of the divide that exists between Louis and Rhoda, despite the fact that they are most often perceived as an entity by all the others, as "plotting" against them, just a few lines above, in Neville's soliloquy (TW 131). While Louis lives in time, or rather, is created by time's multiplicity, existing as the epitome of multiple temporalities in the novel, Rhoda is a timeless creature. While Louis cannot be a single entity as the rest are, since he has lived a thousand lives already; Rhoda cannot make one moment merge in the next, as to her they are all violent and separate. If Louis feels the weight of thousands of years, as he hears the songs sung by the women of the Nile and the chained beast stamping, Rhoda cannot merge the minutes to hours, creating that heavy mass the others call life (see TW 83, 85). Louis has all the faces, Rhoda has no face; Louis is a heavy, chained, rooted figure; Rhoda is a soft, flowing, failing element. Louis and Rhoda's relationship relies, as does the whole narrative of *The Waves*, on a repetition of a pattern of sameness and difference. These differences between the two most interrelated characters are a part of the narrative since the first episode, made even

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clearer during Percival's farewell dinner, but are the most pronounced at this instance. As he concludes his speech on his burdened pyramid-shaped destiny, Louis announces that "Percival died. Rhoda left me" (TW 134), equating the two:

> Percival was flowering with green leaves and was laid in the earth with all his branches still sighing in the summer wind. Rhoda, with whom I shared silence when the others spoke, she who hung back and turned aside when the herd assembled and galloped with orderly, sleek backs over the rich pastures, has gone now like the desert heat (TW 135).

Percival is laid in the earth with green leaves (suggestive of the British green-fields and pastures imagery associated with him), Rhoda evaporates like the desert heat – a connection between Rhoda and the desert persisting since her childhood. But they are both gone in this soliloquy – another one of Louis' proleptic visions.

Lastly, Rhoda starts of her soliloquy with a repetition of Louis' speech:

> 'Oh, life, how I have dreaded you,' said Rhoda, 'oh, human beings, how I have hated you! (…) Now as I climb this mountain, from the top of which I shall see Africa, my mind is printed with brown-paper parcels and your faces. I have been stained by you and corrupted (…) How you chained me to one spot, one hour, one chair, and sat yourselves down opposite! How you snatched from me the white spaces that lie between hour and hour and rolled them into dirty pellets and tossed them into the waste-paper basket with your greasy paws. Yet those were my life' (TW 135).

In a tone resembling her soliloquy during Percival's dinner, and yet using some of Louis' phrases (a hated, terrible life, feeling "chained"), Rhoda is reiterating some of her own leitmotifs: the basket and the petals, the white spaces where she feels safe, the hours they were taken away from her. And yet, she is also aware that those moments were her life. This line, delivered as it were a part of a farewell speech also resembles Louis' thoughts on Rhoda, as he sees her during the farewell dinner party and thinks to himself how Rhoda always dreaded and despised them, and yet she always came back to them since they made it possible to replenish her dreams (see TW 78). Rhoda's summary of her life looks back at school moments with Jinny and Susan, but also on Louis who she left, because she feared embraces (TW 136). Then, as

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she remembers "the square that stood upon the oblong" – the vision she had after Percival's death, she thinks about him again: "I threw my bunch into the spreading wave. I said, 'Consume me, carry me to the furthest limit.' The wave has broken; the bunch is withered. I seldom think of Percival now." (TW 136).

The soliloquy continues with Rhoda climbing a Spanish hill, imagining that the mule-back she is on (perhaps invoking the mule Percival died on) is her bed, and in it she lies dying, feeling the thin sheets between her and infinite depths:

> 'The mule stumbles up and on. The ridge of the hill rises like mist, but from the top I shall see Africa. Now the bed gives under me. The sheets spotted with yellow holes let me fall through (…) Who then comes with me? *Flowers only*, the cow-bind and the moonlight-coloured May. Gathering them loosely in a sheaf I made of them a garland and gave them – *Oh, to whom*? We launch out now over the precipice. Beneath us lie the lights of the *herring fleet*. The cliffs vanish. Rippling small, rippling grey, innumerable waves spread beneath us. *I touch nothing. I see nothing*. We may sink and settle on the waves. The sea will drum in my ears. *The white petals will be darkened with sea water*. They will float for a moment and then sink. Rolling me over the waves will shoulder me under. Everything falls in a tremendous shower, *dissolving me*' (my emphasis, TW 136).

Bernard might have the privilege of announcing her death in his last speech, but with this soliloquy, I believe, Rhoda exits the narrative on her own terms. Her most significant leitmotifs – the flowers and the question "to whom" will they go; the white petals as a symbol for her "herring fleet"; the "darkened sea waters"; the waves that dissolve her – all of the elements which place her in the same symbolic field as Percival and that she had invoked while mourning him are here.

The Spanish hill from which she will see Africa, likely Gibraltar (also Molly's birthplace) should be noted here since it is, like McIntire writes "a site that rests, quite significantly, on the cusp of Europe and its Empire" (42). Joyce uses Gibraltar in constructing Molly's character as he uses Leopold Bloom's Hungarian roots: to form a "peculiar", not

"completely" Irish character, someone who is an Other within his/her own nation. Woolf might have another strategy in mind: I believe that the Spanish hill from which Rhoda is to see Africa, when read with her imagery of the "herring fleet" reinforces yet again Rhoda's ambiguous imperial position, another trait she shares with Percival. McIntire believes that Rhoda commits suicide from the precipice of Gibraltar (42). But the narrative itself revokes this reading. The last line of her soliloquy (and of the episode) sees Rhoda "[p]utting my foot to the ground [as] I step gingerly and press my hand against the hard door of a Spanish inn" (TW 137), in an emphasis of all the bodily strength she gathers to do so, to stay alive on the ground. Goldman sees Rhoda's vision as an "imaginary flight"[95] juxtaposed by her recognition of the material world she still inhabits ("Purple Buttons" 21).

In fact, Rhoda appears in *The Waves* one more time, with all the rest of the six characters, in the penultimate episode as they all meet for one more dinner – this time without Percival – in Hampton Court. Solitude and disintegration pervade this scene. Bernard is unsatisfied with his "imperfect phrases", as he pines in solitude, that is his "undoing" (TW 144). Louis thinks about the thread that Jinny broke in the garden when she kissed him years ago (TW 145), while Jinny is "never alone", accompanied by her fleet of desiring men (TW 147). Rhoda feels she has hated, loved, envied and despised all of the others, but never joined them happily. Their embeddedness in a substance made of repeated moments that run together, have provided them with children, authority, fame, love, society, "where I have nothing. I have no face". Now, she feels that she falls alone through the thin sheet into gulfs of fire, and none of them helps her (TW 150-151), a reiteration of the vision she has after Percival's death, as she realizes she is left alone. Neville remembers that Percival will come no more (TW 150), while Louis feels the disappearing of the civilization, of the Nile, and of all life. "Our separate

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[95] Goldman also suggests that Rhoda's imaginary leap might be tied to Sappho's also suggest Sappho's legendary or "lover's leap" (from a white rock) due to unrequited love (21).

drops are dissolved; we are extinct, lost in the abysses of time, in the darkness" (TW 150).
Louis seems to lose his sense of eternal time, as they all come undone. This process coincides
with Rhoda's "a square is stood upon an oblong" that makes visible the structure, or what is
left of it (see TW 152) – it being the perfect globe under Percival's I/eye that is no more.

> 'The flower,' said Bernard, 'the red carnation that stood in the vase on the table of the
> restaurant when we dined together with Percival, is become a six-sided flower; made
> of six lives' (TW 152).

The disintegration that had started with the seventh episode and Rhoda's imaginary leap, and
got its shape with the Hampton Court dinner, concludes in Bernard's last soliloquy. Bernard's
last attempt at keeping the unity of the group, read against Percival's queer presence is at the
center of my analysis in the following chapter. In his final summary of their lives, Bernard goes
back to the Hampton Court encounter, and muses over it as that one last time the six of them
were together and yet drew apart (TW 186). He wonders whether that new "assembly of
elements" created of Susan, Jinny, Neville, Rhoda, and Louis, was "a sort of death?" (…) Some
hint of what was to come?" (TW 187), only to reveal that Rhoda "Rhoda, always so furtive,
always with fear in her eyes, always seeking some pillar in the desert, to find which she had
gone; she had killed herself" (TW 188).

Rhoda's death, argues Beer, is treated remarkably different from that of Percival.
Unlike Percival, we are not even sure when Rhoda died. It is only in Bernard last speech that
the reader realizes she has killed herself (85). Unlike Percival, we do not get to see anyone's
reaction to her death, but like with Percival, her death does not occur in the narrative itself.
Beer is right to point out that Rhoda and Percival's deaths are remarkably different: while two
full episodes of the novel are devoted to mourning Percival, and in many ways, none of the
characters is ever the same after he dies, Rhoda's suicide is suspiciously absent. However, as I
have showed here, following Percival's death, Rhoda is one of the characters that is the most

impacted by Percival's fate. Her reaction to Percival's death is meant to also announce, if not act out her own death.

With this I do not mean to argue that her death gets submerged in Percival's narrative. Nor do I wish to follow a line of interpretation that celebrates Rhoda's suicide as a reaction against the (patriarchal) normativity of the system – reading her as a typical lesbian character from the era. What I believe happens here is that death is represented through two very queer characters in *The Waves*. There is certainly an uneasy relationship between homoeroticism and imperialism/colonialism that is transferred through both Percival and Rhoda. I believe there is two reasons for this decision. One of them might reflect Woolf's own ambiguity towards the representation of homosexuality in her works (male, but also female). It is almost as if Woolf translated that tension into the narrative through creating two queer worlds, if not characters, that were always already predestined to failure. Queerness in *The Waves* is a horizon that is never fully reached, a Muñozian possibility. In this universe, neither Neville's, nor Rhoda's loves can be realized, only hinted at. But even so, queerness functions as a structuring narrative principle, as it creates the temporal universe of the novel. Additionally, in a rhythmic work such as *The Waves* that depends so much on the repetition of narrative patterns, linguistic phrases and leitmotifs that produce its very predictability (announced by the novel itself, through Louis), Rhoda's suicide and Percival's death reflect their silently/absently lived lives. Their deaths occur outside the narration, mirroring their existing position determined by queer sexuality whose presence cannot be named or retold; by their fragmented/absent subjectivity; and by their failure to situate themselves within and through language and time; and finally, by an uneasy relationship with imperialism/structures of power.

While in 'Penelope' queerness manifests in the unmistakable intertwinement of temporal lanes through the destabilization of a character, in *The Waves* queerness is an instigator of the temporal dynamics that mingle sameness and difference as operations of

unison and differentiation in the lives of six characters. This entity that Woolf is trying to construct here, an amalgamation of six characters is determined by the presence of queerness that manifests itself in an expansion and constriction of time. Time is constricted and expanded in these two interconnected processes of sameness and difference that are embodied in *The Waves* through the coming together of all the characters in one entity and their subsequent dissolution. Queerness in *The Waves* allows for the crossing of temporal and subjective boundaries, producing relations of sameness and otherness, or literally representing the movements between same-ness/sex (homo-ness) and other-ness/sex (hetero-ness). Queerness is a shared, or a communal experience here. It is not only the marker of characters (such as Rhoda and Neville), but a communal feature of this new characterial entity. Queer time can be used as a model for resolving the issues of characterization set up here. Time becomes a pattern for understanding the multifaceted processes of condensation/expansion of characters in *The Waves*.

Chapter 8: Queering Narrative Through Time in *The Waves*

8.1.   "A Wavering Dialogical Structure"

In the first phase of narratological criticism on Woolf's works, her oeuvre was mostly analyzed from a formalist point of view that aimed to understand a literary work as an aesthetic whole. In his monumental study *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (1946), Erich Auerbach devoted a chapter to Woolf's works, describing her narrative methods as the modern representative of what he named the "Biblical" type of Western realism (suggestive, many-layered, nomadic, domestic, and inviting continuous interpretation) and opposed to the "Homeric" type (externalized, direct, continuous, heroic, and unproblematic). For Auerbach, Woolf's multipersonal representation of consciousness, her polyphonic and multi-layered handling of time; the representation of minor happenings of everyday life, as most characteristic features of her style, make her a representative modernist writer, part of the "Biblical" type of Western realism. Starting from an analysis of *TTL* and moving on to her later works, Auerbach shows how the narrator's voice is not omniscient and privileged, but woven into the "overall narrative consciousness" as one of multiple perspectives, including characterial, and closely related to Woolf's depiction of the "symbolic temporality of events" (as qtd. in Snaith 18-19).

From here on, the role of the narrator's presence as a character's role in Woolf's narrative method, that also assumes a central place in my narrative analysis of *The Waves*, informed many studies of her works in the 1960s and 1970s. Questions of "point of view" guided the confused inquiries into the possibility of marking an articulate thought/speech as stream-of-consciousness; writing soliloquies under a strong narrator's presence; or the consequences of dispersing an omniscient narrator into fragmented characters, with *The Waves*

assuming the most important position in these early studies on Woolf's narrative methods (see Snaith 20)[96].

John Graham, the editor of the holograph drafts of *The Waves* and the most significant early critic of the novel has a similar understanding of Woolf's narrative voice[97]. In an early field-defining essay titled "Point of View in *The Waves*: Some Services of the Style" (1970) he struggles to find the right terminology that will describe her narrative techniques. What is important to emphasize here is that narratological analysis of Woolf's works from the 1960s to the 1980s, guided by structuralist principles, posits a certain fluidity when it comes to Woolf's narrative voice. From the 1980s onward, and especially with the advances of feminist thought, Woolf's "experimental" style as related to her questioning of gender roles, patriarchal authority, narratives of unity and progress assumes a crucial role in the works of authors such as Julia Kristeva, Toril Moi, Rachel Blau DuPlessis, and Susan Friedman (see Snaith 24-32). In these works, more attention is paid to connecting "female" writing with distinctive female topics, with Woolf often assuming a central position as a hyper-canonical woman writer.

In her essay "Lyric Subversion of Narrative in Women's Writing: Virginia Woolf and the Tyranny of Plot" (1989), Susan Stanford Friedman explores the connection between female writing and female topics through a narratological terminology. Mirroring the basic features of Auerbach's approach, Friedman writes of "narrative" and "lyric" mode of discourse, where narrative is a mode that foregrounds a sequence of events that move dynamically in space and time; while lyric foregrounds a simultaneity, a cluster of feelings and ideas. Narrative centers on story, while lyric focuses on state of mind (see 164). Analyzing primarily *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* – but not *The Waves* – Friedman positions the lyric novel as a form for which Woolf is justly famous, as writing that breaches the oppositions between linearity and

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[96] For example, in a manner similar to Auerbach's, James Naremore's "The World Without a Self" (1973), ascribes Woolf's narrating voice as "the voice of everyone and no one", and broadly defines her writing as stream-of-consciousness (quoted in Snaith 21).

[97] For a detailed and chronological overview of these early critics see Snaith 17-24.

circularity, pre-Oedipal and Oedipal plots, lyric and narrative (168). Woolf's lyric strategies for subverting narrative are not new within the modern novel, as Friedman notes, but what is significant for me here is the emphasis she places on "a homoerotic subtext concealed in lyric discourse" (171). The lyric mode of discourse that acts as a conveyer of homoerotic images often does so through moments of epiphany, suspended outside of time (170), as one of its primary functions in Friedman's view is the disturbance of narrative's sequentiality through simultaneity.

The notion that tempering with time is a significant factor in the establishment of Woolf's lyric mode, has been a characteristic feature in the reception of her works, starting from her own notes. What is new in Friedman's approach is the connection drawn between the thematic representation of sexuality and time, and the manner in which the lyric novel as a model of uniting the lyric and narrative, through moments of epiphany, underlies their interplay. A "wavering dialogical structure", in DuPlessis's words (*Writing Beyond the Ending* 38), oscillating between narrative and lyric modes; female and male experiences; life and death; hetero- and homosexuality, is a primary structuring principle in Woolf's works. In this chapter, I aim to push this claim further, by looking into how the interplay between time and sexuality, realized through the category of queer time, produces the lyric narrative mode of *The Waves*, a justly famous "wavering dialogical structure".

8.2.   Between Narrator and Character: Tracing Ambiguity

The debate on whether we can talk about six (or seven) different characters, or one multiple-sided entity in *The Waves* was addressed at length in the fifth chapter of this dissertation. No matter how they are perceived, it would be hard to argue that the soliloquies of the six characters that constitute the narrative of *The Waves* are written as stream-of-consciousness. Unlike Molly's stream-of-consciousness where the "incessant flow of sensory experience and mental activity" (see Spiropoulou, *1922* 78) is transmitted through one all-encompassing, even

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if temporally chaotic, disrupted and fragmented focalizer; *The Waves* unfolds through another narrative technique. As Graham points out, even the first few pages (or especially the first few pages) are enough to make the reader realize that "even the most precious children would never talk like that" (see Graham, "Point of View" 194). This line of thinking will be often used as evidence that Woolf's style in this novel cannot be thought of as stream-of-consciousness.

And whether one agrees with Graham who claims that in *The Waves* the soliloquies cannot be read as stream-of-consciousness because Woolf made no attempts to distinguish between the styles of speakers, using similar rhythm, sentence structure and vocabulary both amidst different characters and in different phases of their lives (see "Point of View"); or more recent studies such as Balossi's assertion that the six characters in *The Waves* present different personalities precisely because they are linguistically and stylistically distinguishable (see more in the chapter six), it is noticeable that their soliloquies do not fit perfectly into the category of stream-of-consciousness. Hence, in the early years of reception centered on *The Waves*, Woolf's stylistic method caused some confusion, as critics were oscillating between writing about "internal monologues", "soliloquies" (following Woolf's own description), "free indirect discourse", or "stream-of-consciousness" (see Graham, "Point of View" 194).

For some, Woolf's technique is rather "a third-person narrative in which the storyworld is seen through the eyes of a character" (Jahn, in ed. Herman 95). Jane Marcus, for example, believes that Woolf's usage, or rather, exhaustion of the form of the soliloquy is also a way of mocking the Western valorization of individual selfhood (see "Britannia" 66). As Snaith remarks, most narratologists tend to ascribe the free indirect model (FID) to Woolf's narrating style, since it is "a technique in which the focalization can be through the mind of one character but in which voice can shift, almost imperceptibly, back and forth between narrator and character-focalizer" (29). Unlike early feminist narratological research that seeks distinctively female plots in Woolf's works, more recent narratology refuses to stabilize the narrative voice

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in one position (Snaith 30). Furthermore, distinguishing itself from the stream-of-consciousness mode that transmits the thoughts and experiences of one person as it is focalized through her consciousness, FID is the most ambiguous mode of narrative, or in Gennette's words, "gradual or subtle blend of indirect style and narrated speech" (qtd. in Freed Thall, in ed. Garrett 69).

As Whitworth explains in his study devoted to Woolf, one of the main problems with (literary) terms as broadly used as stream-of-consciousness is that it does not distinguish between the various kinds of consciousness writers strive to convey and it groups different literary experiments and projects under this heading, conflating their methods (95). In addition, it is fairly impossible for one method to be completely isolated from others, as there will always be some collapse between narrative techniques that generally aim to represent levels of consciousness[98]. Woolf often aimed not to represent the single consciousness of one character, but several distinct consciousnesses, or a group (Whitworth 95). It seems that Woolf's essayistic take on the method[99] has positioned her as one of the most prominent examples of stream-of-consciousness, while Woolf's narrative methods tend to be more ambiguous – this "confusion" existing since the very early days of Woolf criticism will be also addressed here, as it forms a central strain in studying narrative in *The Waves*.

In the following section I will analyze the peculiarities of this subtle blend of indirect and narrated speech, or character and narrator in *The Waves*, and the grammatical categories it is conveyed through, before analyzing it as a feature of the ambiguous (queer?)

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[98] For example, Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage*, thought of as a clear representative of stream-of-consciousness, has been studied with regards to the instances in which reported speech is integrated into passages of stream-of-consciousness, disrupting the boundary between speech and thought (see Thomas, in ed. Herman 82). Even what is represented in *U* as stream-of-consciousness is not the meditations of one centered subject, but more something closer to a distracted flow of various sensory messages, believes Armstrong (*Concise Companion* 170). As Molly is not a centered, one-dimensional character, the stream-of-consciousness used as a primary narrative method for this episode is not a direct, easily discernable flow of thoughts.

[99] Like Woolf's propositions in "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" or "Modern Fiction", oriented towards capturing the personal lives of characters through their inner monologues.

presence/present of a narrating consciousness – an issue that, as shown previously, caused a lot of difficulties for Woolf during the creation of this novel.

8.3.   The Narrative Power of the Pure Present

For Graham, the most striking departure from narrative convention in *The Waves* is centered on the handling of verb tenses. For most of the book, the characters speak in the pure present, for example: "I go, I do, I see". A progressive form of the present (I am going) would be far more natural, argues Graham, since the pure present is rarely used in speech or thought. When one uses the pure present in this form, it is habitually for conveying two kinds of activity: an external action that does not require a fixed location in time (as a recipe); or an internal activity exempt from any necessary fixed duration or location in time ("I feel", I believe"). Therefore, the use of pure present does not result in or involve a fixed/determined/marked sense of time. This tense is used to signify an activity that does not require a temporal marker. That is why it is so unusual that Woolf here uses it when conveying habitual, or repeatable acts, and what happens is that the use of the tense makes them "momentary" actions, writes Graham (see "Point of View" 194-195). Any action (and especially external actions that depend more readily on a sense of time for their unfolding as events, such as making bread, taking a train, going down the stairs) whose duration is presented through the pure present loses its temporal specificity. No matter what their actual duration may be in life, when the verbs are conjugated in pure present, the activities happen so rapidly, that one feels them receding into the past even as they occur, and yet, while assuming an unconscious mental posture which inclines towards the future (see Graham "Point of View" 195).

Therefore, following Graham, one can conclude that the pure present does exactly what its name signifies: it freezes actions in the present, suspending them in the realm of one temporal field, by removing the specificities of the future and the past. Or in other words, everything that occurs in *The Waves* does so under the all-encompassing rubric of the present.

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Memories of past events, when represented in pure present, fall under the category of the present. Aspirations, desires, plans, wishes – when represented in pure present – can be classified as present events. The only escape from the pure present of the narrative of *The Waves* occurs at two occasions: at Percival's farewell dinner, and in Bernard's final soliloquy. Percival's farewell dinner – as a momentous occasion of queering time in *The Waves* – was the thematic focus of the previous chapter, and in this one Bernard, the narrator figure of *The Waves* is the non-surprising central presence in a narrative analysis of the novel.

The consistent use of pure present, for all kinds of actions and activities, as it is done throughout *The Waves,* results in the characters' constant awareness of their actions, claims Graham. This awareness, through the uniformity of style, does not only belong to one individual character, but creates an "invisible narrating consciousness closely resembling the speaker of lyric poetry, in which the pure present is the prevailing tense" ("Point of View" 196). As Graham rightly points out, the present is a tense typical of lyric poetry, and is a narrative tool Woolf would be inclined to use when writing a new kind of poetic novel.

But I believe that more than just being a feature of a poetic style, the pure present both expands the present, and participates in the creation of the "invisible narrating consciousness". The soliloquies of the six characters in *The Waves*, all of whom take turns to "talk" during the course of the different chapters use forms of present for most of the time, accompanied by the word "said". Unlike Molly's narrative in 'Penelope', the continuous use of the word "said" implies that someone is reporting the speeches[100]. This feature of Woolf's narrative, as well as the interludes that are associated with any and all of the characters, are often used as an indication of an omniscient narrator. For Graham, these faint vestiges are all that remains from a narrator with whom the book started and who was more explicitly present throughout the first

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[100] But similarly to Molly's monologue, there is a certain blend between meanings assumed by "thought" and "said", as often we cannot be sure if the characters are talking to someone, themselves, or just thinking in an interior monologue style.

draft ("Point of View" 196). In the next section, I will look more closely into the lingering presence of the omniscient narrator, and see how this "narrating consciousness" is most explicitly related to Bernard, who is meant to assume the figure of the writer/narrator in *The Waves*.

8.4. "I see the lady writing, I see the gardeners sweeping": Invisible Narrating Consciousness

Immediately after the kissing scene that disintegrates timelessness into separate time-lines for each of the six characters ("Now we have fallen through the tree-tops to the earth. The air no longer rolls its long, unhappy, purple waves over us. We touch earth; we tread ground", in Bernard's words (see TW 7)), Bernard goes on to "explore" what is around them:

> That is Elvedon. The lady sits between the two long windows, writing. The gardeners sweep the lawn with giant brooms. We are the first to come here. We are the discoverers of an unknown land (TW 8).

Immediately after him, Susan also says:

> I see the lady writing. I see the gardeners sweeping (TW 8).

This is the first instance of the figure of the "lady writing, gardeners sweeping" that appears throughout the novel several times. As I have mentioned, for Graham, the lady who is sitting at a table and writing is a trace of the once present omniscient narrator that is visible in the first drafts, but then gradually diminished by Woolf. In the published text of *The Waves* she only figures in two characters' soliloquies: Bernard and Susan. After the initial scene in which they both see "the lady writing, the gardeners sweeping", Susan thinks of her one more time, reminiscing about Elvedon ("and [I] saw the lady writing and the gardeners with their great brooms", see TW 127), and in his last soliloquy Bernard retells Susan's memory of Elvedon and the lady writing, this signifying an instance during which he establishes himself as an omnipresent narrator, one who has the overview into everyone else's memories as well (TW 166).

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In the retelling of his own memories in his last soliloquy, the lady writing appears on two occasions. Firstly, when Bernard reminisces about the kiss, a moment during which timelessness dissolves and the six become separate entities (see TW 160). Following this moment, he remembers encountering the lady writing:

> Down below, through the depths of the leaves, the gardeners swept the lawns with great brooms. The lady sat writing. Transfixed, stopped dead, I thought, 'I cannot interfere with a single stroke of those brooms. They sweep and they sweep. Nor with the fixity of that woman writing.' It is strange that one cannot stop gardeners sweeping nor dislodge a woman. There they have remained all my life (TW 160-161).

Then, he thinks about her one last time, in a reflection that follows the events surrounding Percival's death (see TW 176-180). Percival's death causes a significant stir for Bernard, representing an occasion in his life when writing seems to lose the meaning of order and coherence it presumes for him. In the last soliloquy, reminiscing about life's most important events he naturally goes back to Percival and what his death meant for him/all of them. Even in remembering the events, Percival's death is perceived as an occasion during which Bernard starts doubting the significance of stories:

> But if there are no stories, what end can there be, or what beginning? Life is not susceptible perhaps to the treatment we give it when we try to tell (TW 179).

However, meaning comes back, an old order resumes, as Bernard goes on with life (even if wondering "it goes on, but why?", TW 179). Then,

> the old image – the gardeners sweeping, the lady writing- returned. I saw the figures beneath the beech trees at Elvedon. The gardeners swept; the lady at the table sat writing (TW 180).

The lady itself, I believe, this memory of a primordial writing figure that has signified (for Bernard, and for the narrative) the omniscient narrator, one that provides order, stability and coherence, comes back to Bernard in this moment to establish these values, when he feels them being threatened, allowing him to

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net them (images of trees, my note) under with a sudden phrase. I retrieved them from formlessness with words (TW 181).

But despite being a figure that both reestablishes (narrative) order when stories are lost, and symbolizes the narrative omniscience Bernard is given at last, the lady writing appears synecdochally as early as the first page of *The Waves*. As the sun "had not yet risen" and the sea is "indistinguishable from the sky" – the first interlude records the very early morning and the slow rising of the sun (see TW 1). The sky soon starts clearing,

> as if the *arm of a woman* couched beneath the horizon had raised a lamp and flat bars of white, green and yellow spread across the sky like the blades of a fan. Then she raised her lamp higher and the air seemed to become fibrous and to tear away from the green surface flickering and flaming (…) Slowly the arm that held the lamp raised it higher and then higher until a broad flame became visible; an arc of fire burnt on the rim of the horizon, and all round it the sea blazed gold (my emphasis, TW 1).

The arm of a woman here functions on two levels: metonymically – as the arm is a part that represents a bigger (narratorial) figure, that of the lady writing; and metaphorically – as it also serves to announce the rising of the sun and the transition from night to early morning. It is also apparent that the arm of the woman possesses a (narrative) agency: it is the arm that raises the lamp that then clears up the sky and lights up the surface of the sea.

The actual presence of the arm (even if seen as a metaphor) replaces the function of an omnipresent narrator, who would be the one to be narrating all that is now actually unfolding through the actions taken by the arm/woman. There is a parallel to be drawn here between how this arm of a woman functions in *The Waves* as a trace of a narrator, and Molly's gradual, synecdochal appearance throughout *Ulysses* (perhaps also as a trace of an authorial figure she later assumes in her own episode?) briefly discussed in the Joyce section, where it is precisely Molly's arm the reader sees before 'Penelope'. In the case of *The Waves,* I believe this is the first instance, on the very first page, at which Woolf destabilizes a strong narrative presence,

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and instead introduces a trace, or a symbol even, of a figure that will reappear throughout the novel, in connection to Bernard.

In "Britannia Rules *The Waves*" (2004), an analysis of the novel as an anti-imperialist, post-colonial work by Jane Marcus, the lady writing at the table, while the gardeners sweep with their great brooms is a recurring vision through which Bernard authorizes his role as an "inheritor" of his civilization. English culture is represented as an aristocratic female figure, claims Marcus, in a grand country house, while the gardeners are sweeping around her – two inseparable figures for Bernard – his leisure and creativity provided by the class position of subservient servants (see 61). The lady/sweepers pair assists in the interrogation of class that underwrites *The Waves*, claims Marcus (63).

The "lady writing" is undoubtedly a figure that is most significant for Bernard's soliloquies. That is a logical (and expected) move, as she carries traces of and represents a narrator, a role Bernard (aspires to) assume in *The Waves*. This role is most pronounced in his last soliloquy that, as Graham points out, can be read as a certain transformation, or a continuation, of the figure of the lady writing:

> The point of view from which the summing-up (Bernard's, my note) is narrated is almost identical with that which had prevailed in the early phases of the manuscript, when the omniscient narrator was still present. Like her, Bernard is telling the story of the world from the beginning; *like her, he narrates it in the past tense and comments on it in the present; like her, he is seated at a table with the conscious purpose of recovering from the past such fragments as time*, having broken the perfect vessel, still keeps safe; and like her, he finds that the scrutiny of his past forces him to deal not with the single life but with lives together (my emphasis, Graham, "Point of View" 207-208).

With this point in mind, in the following sections, I will look closely into the role Bernard assumes as a narrator, and the implications that narratorial role has on the way time is structured both in his last soliloquy and *The Waves*, by drawing comparisons to Percival and indicating the different narrative agency their characters have for the novel.

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8.5.   For It's Percival Who Inspires Poetry: Queering's Percival's No

In "Britannia Rules The Waves", Marcus offers a similar interpretation of Bernard's all-encompassing role in *The Waves*. "*The Waves* writes the death of the (white Western) author in Bernard's assumption of literary hegemony by absorbing the voices of his marginalized peers into his own – he needs 'other people's eyes' to read his and other people's I's, their lives and selves, to make his stories" (Marcus 66). Bernard is a colonizing presence on two levels, according to Marcus: he takes over his friends' voices in his final soliloquy, and he also represents the figure of the poet who creates the cult of the hero (Percival). His obsession with Percival and India, in Marcus' words, makes *The Waves* a novel that "deconstructs the politics of the elegy as an instrument of social cohesion" while positioning the complicity of the poet who uses the dead hero as grounding for nationalism, war, and eventually fascism (see 64-65).

Bernard's "obsession" with Percival is rather different from the one I have been analyzing so far as central in queering the streams of time in *The Waves* – the one experienced by Neville. Marcus' main argument in reading *The Waves* as a vocal anti-imperial work set at a "precise historical moment" of modern British history against the more common interpretation of this novel as modernist, apolitical, ahistorical, and abstract work known for its technical difficulty and apparent antirealism depends on her addressing Percival as the fallen hero of a falling imperialist regime and tradition (see 66). In doing this Marcus appropriately acknowledges the irony contained in "Percival's quixotic ride on a fleabitten mare and fall from a donkey [as] England's fall from imperial glory" (ibid).

But Bernard can, and should, also be read against a strain of irony that marks his representation throughout *The Waves*, that Marcus does not miss to notice (see "Britannia 60-63). Bernard, "the inheritor" of this proud tradition is also meant to be an inheritor of its failure, the latter represented through Percival's fall. There is no denying that he is constructed upon and meant to honor, and at the same time mock, a very persistent Romantic tradition in Woolf's

oeuvre. He is the grandiose writer, who imagines himself as Byron, while his friends keep pointing out he is not quite that (see TW 54-55). He is the figure of the authoritative/authoritarian author, the one who desires to structure the narrative in the form of an elegy for the hero. But the hero's premature (and ridiculous) death and a life that is not always fully comprehensible even before this death, stops him in doing so. Constantly striving to impose coherence and order, and to collect everyone's stories into one grand narrative, he is also perceived by everyone else around him as unable to finalize his stories.

> 'Bernard's stories amuse me', said Neville, 'at the start. But when they tail off absurdly and he gapes, twiddling a bit of string, I feel my own solitude. He sees everyone with blurred edges' (TW 31).

Neville then goes on to say, counterpoising Bernard's story-making and the violent and absurd passion Percival is for him:

> Hence I cannot talk to him of Percival. I cannot expose my absurd and violent passion to his sympathetic understanding. It would too make a 'story' (TW 31).

One particularly striking instance of the great opposition that Woolf draws between Bernard and Percival is formed around the different meanings stories, or narrative, hold for Bernard and Percival. This is not to deny the importance of Marcus' analysis of *The Waves* as a serious and critical reading of British imperialism and colonialism, and even more important for me, her great emphasis of Woolf's treatment of Bernard's character with irony and comical mockery. But if one is to focus more closely on the manner in which Bernard attempts (and fails) to order his stories as the "inheritor" and "continuer" of a great intellectual and imperial tradition, Percival comes across as a decisive disturbing presence of a desired coherence.

The very first time Percival enters the novel, through Neville's idealizing gaze (see TW 20-21) – an episode whose homoerotic significance was discussed in detail in the previous chapter – his figure is sharply contrasted to Bernard's. This is the second episode of the novel that recounts the six characters' first impressions from their school days. In many ways, it is the first episode where sexuality/eroticism comes to the front, specifically through Rhoda's and

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Neville's soliloquies. At the very moment Neville is admiring Percival, Bernard is listening to the headmaster's sermon and makes a plan to always carry a notebook with himself, one in which he will jot down all the beautiful phrases he can the use when writing a novel (see TW 21). Unlike Bernard who never notices Percival, Louis' soliloquy revolves around the ambiguous figure he is for Louis. Everybody follows Percival, laments Louis,

> [h]is magnificence is that of some medieval commander. A wake of light seems to lie on the grass behind him. Look at us trooping after him, his faithful servants, to be shot like sheep, for he will certainly attempt some forlorn enterprise and die in battle (TW 21-22).

This early prediction, made by Louis, the "inheritor" of all time (and its wisdom), does come true, as the narrative unfolds, with one major plot twist, as Percival dies not in battle, but riding a fleabitten mare. The next few lines are Neville's, as he thinks to himself:

> [L]et Bernard begin. Let him burble on, telling us stories, while we lie recumbent. Let him describe what we have all seen *so that it becomes a sequence. Bernard says there is always a story.* I am a story. Louis is a story (my emphasis, TW 22).

As Bernard burbles on with his stories, Neville watches a cricket match on the grass field, lying on his back, looking at "the stiff-legged figures of the padded batsmen", wishing that "*this moment could stay for eve*r" (my emphasis, TW 22). This unfinished thought/wish is immediately interrupted by "[b]ut Bernard goes on talking" (TW 22), bubbling images. When Bernard talks, feels Neville, "[o]ne floats, too, as if one were that bubble*; one is freed*; I have escaped, one feels" (my emphasis, TW 22). Bernard's powerful talk is seductive, it spreads over the boys who "like this better than the cricket" (TW 22). "And then we all feel Percival lying *heavy* among us. His curious guffaw seems to sanction our laughter" (my emphasis, TW 22). Percival is bored, Neville too feels the same, as the atmosphere is now visibly set by Percival and not Bernard. Noticing this, Bernard tries to reposition himself, to insert "an extravagance in his phrase", but he fails, as Percival says "no". Here is the full scene, seen from Neville's perspective:

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He (Percival, my note) *feels bored; I too feel bored*. Bernard at once perceives that we are bored. I detect a certain effort, an extravagance in his phrase, as if he said 'Look!' but *Percival says 'No.'* For he is always the first to detect insincerity; and is brutal in the extreme. The sentence tails off feebly. Yes, the appalling moment has come when *Bernard's power fails him and there is no longer any sequence* and he sags and twiddles a bit of string and falls silent, gaping as if about to burst into tears. Among the tortures and devastations of life is this then - our friends are not able to finish their stories (my emphasis, TW 23).

As Neville wishes to freeze the moment – something that can occur only in the presence of all others – Louis attempts to "to fix the moment in one effort of supreme endeavor" (TW 23), to restore the freedom of the linear, inconsequential burbling Bernard brings. Louis tries to "fix [the moment] in words, to forge in a ring of steel what is about to come", as Percival destroys it, as he "blunders off, crushing the grasses, with the small fry trotting subservient after him" (TW 23). And even though he resents the intense power Percival represents, as much as he despises

dabblers in imagery (…) [his] shattered mind is pieced together by some sudden perception (…) [and he is] born entire, out of hatred, out of discord (TW 23).

Recreating Susan's "I hate, I love", Louis' shattered persona is torn between an admiration for Percival's magnificence and a hatred and jealousy of his slovenly accents (see TW 22). Louis' attempt here – grounded in the all-encompassing predictive powers he has as a creature of all times – of "what is about to come" – foreshadows the farewell dinner, where Percival stays, does not blunder off, but fulfills the role he has. But even at this early moment, realizes Louis, "it is Percival I need; for it is Percival who inspires poetry" (TW 23), and not Bernard. Louis becomes a mediator between Percival and Neville on one side, and Bernard, on the other. Louis as the carrier of all time in *The Waves* verbalizes this opposition. If Neville (or his lust for Percival) is the initiator of this scene, then Louis acts as a vehicle that translates that tension.

Percival's heaviness opposes Bernard's freeing burbling, his "no" is the antithesis to Bernard's sequentiality. Bernard's desire to form a story, to construct a sequence, which

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functions as a repeated pattern and motif in his soliloquy, fails under Percival's power, so strongly noticed here by Louis, and crumbles under Percival's presence "for it is he who inspires poetry". Percival is not only "a Siegfried, a superman, the strong silent bully who will by the end of the decade be a fascist idol" (Marcus "Britannia" 66), he is also an undetectable, unknowable, queering force that opposes precisely Bernard's fascist urge to recognize the sequence, one thing leading to another, the usual order (TW 102). Percival's "no" is the only word Percival ever utters throughout the whole narrative. His "no" functions as a narrative mechanism in a way similar to Molly's "yes" analyzed in the previous chapter. His "no" carries a power that effectively stops Bernard's mission to (re)produce the story of their lives as an elegy in praise of the (later on fallen) hero, in Marcus' reading. Percival's "no" disturbs the sequence of ordered events that structures Bernard's manner of story-telling.

This dynamic is even more visible in the aftermath of Percival's "meaningless death" (TW 101). For Bernard, this event unfolds in an "incomprehensible combination", as his son is born in the very moment Percival dies. As he mourns the world that has "lost a leader whom you would have followed; and one of you has lost happiness and children", he is utterly confused by the manner in which everything around him carries on following a quotidian rhythm (TW 100). Bernard though, notes the rhythm, but is not able to partake in any of the activities, since Percival who "sat there in the center", sees none of it no longer (see TW 100). But only for a brief moment, he exists in this state where "curiosity is knocked out". And yet,

> one cannot live outside the machine for more perhaps than half an hour" (TW 100); soon enough "chaos, detail return (…) [t]he sequence returns; one thing leads to another - the usual order (TW 102).

Percival's presence is one that can be only experienced in short intervals, it is not a long-lasting occurrence. Similarly to the brief moment of temporal unison experienced at the farewell dinner that breaks the sequence of order for the six of them, his death achieves the same effect, but in a reverse order. As already shown, they all come together, in a globe-like felt moment at

the height of Percival's existence, and they all come undone in the aftermath of his death, never to be fully reunited again. In both these moments, the sequence of events that is carefully and willfully maintained throughout by Bernard breaks down. In many ways, the farewell dinner is also the pinnacle of Percival's presence in *The Waves*. He seems to have a function that is meant to be realized through breaking the linearity of life (and Bernard's story making) crystalized around two main events in the novel: his departure for India, and his subsequent death.

Marcus' nuanced reading rightly points out the role of (failed) British imperialism and colonialism that is associated with Percival. But the complex and at times confusing relationship Woolf had with the idea and the figure of the homosexual man (as addressed in the previous chapter) is also a part of Percival's character. In my reading I wish to acknowledge the role the ambiguous homoerotic imagery centered around him has for the structuring of narrative in the novel. A lot of historical, cultural and literary research shows the significance of male homoeroticism in constructing and maintaining both colonial/imperial regimes and (proto)fascist systems[101]. If *The Waves* is a novel of its "precise historical moment", in Marcus' words (see 66), then it definitely explores this theme. Homoeroticism, it seems to me, marks Percival in another way as well, as a marker of queerness, recognizable by the way time functions in the novel.

As I have been showing throughout this section, Percival also opposes Bernard's strive for orderly stories, as much as he maintains the illusion of the national hero. He might be Woolf's cousin J.K. Stephen, misogynist poet, imperialist-loving, colonial policy-maker who fell from a horse to his early death when he was thirty three years old (see Marcus 71-74); but he is also Thoby Stephen, Woolf's beloved brother, to whom this novel was meant to be

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[101] See more in Herzog's "Hubris and Hypocrisy, Incitement and Disavowal: Sexuality and German Fascism"; Benadusi's "Private Life and Public Morals: Fascism and the 'Problem' of Homosexuality"; Hewitt's *Political Inversions: Homosexuality, Fascism, & the Modernist Imaginary* (1996).

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dedicated. Ambiguity feeds into this representation as it does in Molly's case: queerness, or in Marcus' formulation, gender is "often the site of both discourses, the place of articulation of the fear of difference" ("Britannia" 68). Therefore, Percival might embody the mechanism that sustains (or attempts to) the meticulously built *machine* of white British imperialism and colonialism (in Bernard's words, a machine that never stops), but he is also the tool through which that order is meant to be destabilized. His absurd and ironic death, his "stupidity", his silent presence, or the manner in which he can only exist as the love interest of another man clash with and are meant to go against a traditional idea of a colonizing hero. With the demise of the traditional hero though, another hero (or rather, another mockery of the idea of a hero) takes on the stage. What Percival's death ultimately brings to Bernard, after life and the usual order resumes is this:

> Lines and colours almost persuade me that *I too can be heroic*, I, who make phrases so easily, am so soon seduced, love what comes next, and cannot clench my fist, but vacillate weakly making phrases according to my circumstances. Now, through my own infirmity I recover what he (Percival, my note) was to me: *my opposite*" (my emphasis, TW 102).

Of all the others, Percival is most clearly Bernard's opposite; his free, easy, but weak phrases opposing Percival's strong, determined, absent silence, his "no" wreaking havoc for Bernard's order. In the end, order and sequence are restored, Bernard's heroism survives. Or as Marcus notes, Bernard, the self-proclaimed "inheritor" dominates the novel at last, "stealing the subjectivities of his friends, their marginalized voices and silences, their images of disaster and the meaninglessness of the universe" ("Britannia" 70). In the following section of this chapter, I will look into this process more closely, turning my attention to Bernard's final soliloquy, the one that famously ends the novel, and address its narrative significance in relation to the processes of queering time.

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8.6. "Netting that Fin in the Waste of Water": Bernard's Erasure of Time

The root for *The Waves* in general, and often times for Woolf's specific narrative style in this novel – the virtual abandonment of the narrator's omniscience – has often been attributed to a note in her dairy I have not discussed as of yet, written down on 30 September 1926, at Rodmell, as Woolf was revising *To the Lighthouse* (see Graham, "Point of View" 201-202; Warner 26-31; Goldman, *Cambridge Introduction* 19-20).

Writing the last few pages of *To the Lighthouse* she wishes "to add some remarks (…) on the mystical side of this solitude", as she finds herself "in the midst of my profound gloom, depression, boredom, whatever it is: One sees a fin passing far out". Woolf immediately associates that fin grown out of solitude to something she used to feel "as a child – couldn't step across a puddle once I remember, for thinking, how strange – what am I?" (see D III 113). This instance is now commonly thought of as the first impulse behind *The Waves*. This dairy note does not only streamline the concepts that will become important to Woolf's conception of *The Waves* and that are topics I have been addressing throughout (solitude, mystical aspects), but also, reinforces the idea that Woolf's moments of being are connected with her reflection of *The Waves*, as I have been attempting to

According to Graham there are two more diary notes that confirm this connection (see "Point of View" 202). Immediately after completing the first draft of *The Waves*, Woolf notes that "this is a reach after that vision I had, the unhappy summer – or three weeks – at Rodmell, after finishing the Lighthouse", still "suspect[ing] the structure is wrong" at this moment (29 April 1930, see D III 302). Nine months later, minutes after finishing the second draft, she notes her relief and sense of triumph: "I mean that I have *netted that fin in the waste of water* which appeared to me over the marshes out of my window at Rodmell when I was coming to an end of To the Lighthouse" (my emphasis, 7 February, D IV 10).

In the published version of *The Waves*, "fin" and "fin in a waste of water" are associated most clearly with Bernard – another proof of the role he is about to assume, the narrator/writer, who like Woolf, is allowed to "net" trees (if not fins) with sudden phrases (see TW 181). There are two important occasions during which Bernard thinks of a "fin in a waste of waters" that I will address here. In the first, during his Rome trip, he experiences a "moment of escape", after which he sees a "fin in a waste of waters", and decides to record

> this bare visual impression [that] is unattached to any line of reason" under F in his book of beautiful phrases to be used for story-making (TW 125).

For Graham, in Rome, Bernard is undergoing one of his rare moments of detachment, during which he experiences Time most clearly, and that for him assumes the significance of a "true event" (see "Point of View" 202).

This episode, the seventh, begins with the lowering of the sun in the sky – a clear metaphor for Percival's death, as was discussed in the previous chapters. After the fifth and the sixth episode, where mourning Percival assumes central position, the seventh seems to attempt to change the focus back to the separate lives of the six characters.

> The dead leaf no longer stood upon its edge, but had been blown, now running, now pausing, against some stalk (…) as each blade regained its identity, announces the interlude (TW 120).

The episode begins with a Bernard soliloquy who feels that time

> lest fall its drop. The drop that has formed on the roof of the soul falls. On the roof of my mind time, forming, lets fall its drop (TW 120).

This is an event caused by the falling of a drop of water, as he shaves, standing with the razor in his hands. The banal occurrence makes him think about losing his youth, as he struggles to come up with a phrase that would resolve the momentary crisis (TW 121). But he does not succeed to:

> This drop falling has nothing to do with losing my youth. This drop falling is time tapering to a point. Time, which is a sunny pasture covered with a dancing light, time, which is widespread as a field at midday, becomes pendant. *Time tapers to a point*. As

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a drop falls from a glass heavy with some sediment, time falls. These are the true cycles, these are the *true events* (my emphasis TW 121).

After a few days of "slagging in bed" he gets a "ticket to Rome" (see TW 121), where he sits in the gardens, thinking about his life, the desires he has outlived, the friends he has lost (TW 122-123). In a stream of thought that seems to foreshadow his last soliloquy, Bernard thinks of how he had made up thousands of stories, filled his many notebooks with phrases to be used for that one true story, but never found it (TW 124). A sense of failure and underachievement marks this trip to Rome. But in a moment it all changes, as he feels the dots and dashes running themselves into "continuous lines", things are losing "the separate identity that they had" and Bernard is "moving too, [I] am becoming involved in the general sequence when one thing follows another" (TW 125). In that very moment, phrases start to bubble up, and Bernard feels a familiarity with everything and everyone in that space. These are "moments of escape" where everything becomes possible, as Bernard sees "far out a waste of water. A fin turns". He then notes, under F "fin in a waste of waters", a phrase to be used "for some final statement", "waiting for some winter's evening" (TW 125).

Bernard's soliloquy inspired by and devoted to time in this episode ends with another hint to his final words, as invokes a "you" (his own self), very similar to the one he is yet to address at the end of the novel:

> So, Bernard (I recall you, you the usual partner in my enterprises), let us begin this new chapter, and observe the formation of this new, this unknown, strange, altogether unidentified and terrifying experience - the new drop – which is about to shape itself. (TW 125).

Rethinking time here turns into an individual discovery of continuity, brought upon seeing the "fin in a waste of waters", and as such it is an epiphanic moment for Bernard.

But fin appears to assume a central place again, this time, as planned, on a winter's evening, in perhaps the most important soliloquy ascribed to Bernard, his final speech. The ninth and last episode of *The Waves* consists entirely of Bernard's soliloquy, as he sums up his,

and everyone's lives. "Now to sum up," said Bernard. "Now to explain to you the meaning of my life" (TW 158), it begins, as Bernard retells the narrative, to a stranger who he has met once on a ship going to Africa. In a manner similar to Molly's monologue, Bernard here delivers a speech that is not addressed to a specific person. Although the "you" remains, this speaker whom Bernard is supposedly addressing never says anything, the reader does not get any clue on who s/he might be, besides the fact Bernard met them on a ship to Africa. Like with Molly, the soliloquy has an emphasized emotional value, but not a clear communicative aim, leading to what Cohn named anti-narrative, anti-reportorial dimension, when writing about *P* (see more in chapter three).

Tired of stories, of which none is true, and of phrases, Bernard attempts to conceive his last one (see TW 159). From the incident with the kiss that interrupts the "primordial" temporal amalgamation and discerns them into beings with individual identity:

'Therefore,' I said, 'I am myself, not Neville,' a wonderful discovery (see TW 160); through Percival's farewell dinner that re-establishes the lost continuity:

There was no past, no future; merely the moment in its ring of light, and our bodies; and the inevitable climax, the ecstasy, see TW 169);

to the consequent dissolution:

I rose and walked away - I, I, I; not Byron, Shelley, Dostoevsky, but I, Bernard (…) and I was the inheritor; I, the continuer; I, the person miraculously appointed to carry it on (TW 169).

In Rome, Bernard feels "time's tapering to a point", its gradual diminishing as a "true event" in life, but is still unable to say he found his story. A vision of a "fin in a waste of waters" appears to him, and new chapter begins to unfold in front of his eyes, as he is waiting for the "new drop – which is about to shape itself".

In his final speech,
no fin breaks the waste of this immeasurable sea. Life has destroyed me. No echo comes when I speak, no varied words. This is more truly death than the death of friends, than the death of youth. (TW 190).

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Time vanishes as Bernard retells everyone's life through his own. The multiplicity of time that had existed in the frozen pure present is now replaced by a temporal experience of only the past. As he equates everyone's narrative into one, and his own, the temporal ambiguities produced by the intersection of the past and the future into a pure present is replaced with a one-dimensional, nostalgic past. Bernard's story finally trumps Percival's and Neville's, Rhoda's and Luis', Susan's, and Jinny's.

Throughout my analysis of queering time as factor of narration in *The Waves*, I have been strongly relying on Graham's 1970's essay. Graham wrote a brilliant and insightful analysis exploring Woolf's "point of view" as a "service of style", that is the formation of narrative techniques in *The Waves*. As I have shown, he is fascinated with the manner in which Woolf abandons her strong authorial presence masqueraded in an omnipresent narrator that she has maintained throughout her earlier works (a figure of an "omniscient author-narrator") and the first drafts of *The Waves*, so she can develop what he terms "omnipercipience: a perception (not an understanding) of the characters' inner experience fused with a perception (not an understanding) of what they do not perceive" ("Point of View" 204). There is an obvious change then, argues Graham, from Woolf's earlier prose to what she is doing in *The Waves*, while developing a new narrative for representing consciousness and impersonality through time figurations. And yet, he concludes his essay by saying that Bernard's last soliloquy is a narratorial "summing-up" that brings all the lives of partial and shifting figures together as they converge into "one burning point of illumination", a "final conjunction of vision and fact" that marks all of Woolf's works (see "Point of View" 208).

This glorification of Bernard's figure, and from there, of the desire for an omniscient author-narrator, seems to me to be undermining the carefully-crafted and executed argument Graham has been pursuing in his analysis. I am more akin to agreeing with Marcus' reading of Bernard as a narrator who is "stealing the subjectivities of his friends, their marginalized voices

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and silence" ("Britannia" 70). From the narrative point of view though, it also seems unsustainable that Graham declares Bernard's summing-up the body of the text as an epiphanic moment, when he has spent more than twenty pages examining the ways in which Woolf attempts to, struggles, and finally undermines an omniscient narratorial figure.

The irony that characterizes his failed attempt at idealizing Percival as a national hero also marks his writerly tendencies. Although he sees himself as Byron, and Shelly, and Dostoevsky at various moments in his life, it is Percival who inspires poetry (as Louis notes), and the intermingled process of queering time. *The Waves* is both the parody "and the swan song of the white Western male author with his romantic notions of individual genius, his Cartesian confidence in the unitary self and its identity", claims Marcus ("Britannia" 79). And although a swan song undoubtedly plays with the notion of pathos, igniting feelings of pity and nostalgia, there is something very comical, and mockery about this character who thinks to himself: "I am, in some ways, like Byron. Perhaps a sip of Byron will help to put me in the vein" (TW 50). He is the "inheritor" whose efforts seem to amount to nothing much, who attempts to create a national narrative fails, after which he becomes the narrator of his friends' lives – the only thing he can do.

The linear passage of time that he cannot defer and that I believe also symbolizes his colonizing presence, the process of silencing and stealing the subjectivities and voices of the others, showcases his role as a failed author (or narrator) figure. This dimension is also apparent from the manner in which his last soliloquy is presented. As Graham rightly points out, the bulk of Bernard's summing-up is done in past tense, and not the pure present tense that is used throughout the novel. The usual tenses are restored, argues Graham, as Bernard narrates his/everyone's past, so he uses the past tense, and the pure present is only used for generalizing, commonsensical instances. The narrative of his past is not invaded by the present moment/tense (see "Point of View" 209). Instead of the pure present that features almost everywhere in the

text and that, as I have argued here, signifies the grammatical freezing of all temporal plains in an extended present moment, interrupted on two occasions when these plains dynamically interact in a temporally-felt extension of the "now", we are faced with a detached, de-subjectified (or over-subjectified) past tense. The temporal complexity, both grammatical and narrative, is lost in this last soliloquy, displaying the role Bernard has come to assume, a colonizer of both voices and times.

8.7. Extending the Present through a No

This chapter looked at the narrative meaning and role of queer time in constructing the textual and thematic universes of *The Waves*. I developed the argument through a couple of blocks of concepts/notions that functioned as separate sections: tracing the development of main narratological approaches to *The Waves* as a prelude to a close reading a few important episodes that show the significance of queer time in developing the narrative (Percival's no as opposed to Bernard's ordering of events and Bernard's final soliloquy), while emphasizing the role specific narrative techniques and tense structures (stream-of consciousness vs. free indirect speech; past tense vs. pure present) and the mismatch between them has in structuring the narrative.

Like in *Ulysses*, the present, or rather, the process of extending the present assumes a central place in *The Waves*. Various instances of retelling of the past, but also of predicting the future are instances of the present, that seems to be the dominating temporal field. *The Waves* is a narrative that unravels constantly in the present, seemingly moving forward, depicting the lives of six (or seven) characters, as it progresses evenly from one age to another. Excluding the final chapter, Bernard's last speech, there is little recollection in the narrative that is almost exclusively rendered in the present tense. *The Waves* uses mostly the present tense, while seemingly depicting a linear progression of time. But instead of a linear unfolding, the narrative unravels through the six characters, not progressing from past to future, but only in the present,

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as the present, like Bernard, seems to be colonizing the past and the future, through using "inadequate" grammatical tenses for actions that unfold in time. It is this mismatch between used tense and temporal reference that leads to a certain freezing of time, or of the instantaneous, momentous, "now".

Both Joyce and Woolf use relatively simple forms of the past and present tense, with temporal complexities on thematic and narrative levels that surpass the presumed coherence between tense and the temporal reference it is supposed to indicate. For Ricoeur, fictional narratives are always characterized by a mismatch between tense and time, or verbal utterance and the resulting statement. What this means, explains Mark Currie in his insightful study on the meaning of time and futurity for narrative theory, is that narratives (and narrators) almost always use the past to present events that have already happened, but in the time of reading, these events despite being tensed as past are happening, or will happen (see *The Unexpected* 47-48).

"To read a narrative is to experience the present as if it were already past, and to know that the future is also already complete, and tensed in the past" (*The Unexpected* 48). Or in other words, narratives – in construction, or reading are never one-dimensional temporal events. The present in narrative, claims Currie, is experienced and represented as the object of the future memory, or in anticipation of retrospection. *The present as a future past*, is the main feature of narrative (see *About Time* 40). Thus, even though the present seems to assume the central role in conceptualizing narrative for Currie, this is done by revisiting what the present encompasses. So, what we have here is a presentification of all temporal fields, but one that occurs through a complexification of the present. For Currie, therefore, the present is never simply the present in narrative. Similarly, the pure present tense of *The Waves*, that levels out the future and the past throughout the narrative does not only signify the present.

This all-assuming, but complex present that presides over the past and the future, is broken on a few occasions when queerness prevails. Percival's farewell dinner in *The Waves* unites all the six characters into one globe-like entity, while combining their different temporal strands into one experience of a unified temporal universe where the past, present and future exist in simultaneous, but differentiated strands. This one moment is in stark opposition to the continuous passage of the pure present, or Bernard's desire for a narrative linearity, a sequence of events, broken by Percival's 'no'. These two queer instances – whose queerness as a marker of temporality was the subject of extended analysis in the previous chapters – complexify time as they bring the present, past and future into interaction. But in doing that, they seem to freeze the moment. What we are left here is a sense of an extended, out-of-time present. And while (as least in *The Waves*) Graham sees this "presentification" of time as a consequence of the continuous, and at times inappropriate, "queer" use of the pure present, I believe Ricoeur's take on the mismatch between tense and time, as represented in Currie, carries a bigger significance here. Simplicity of used tenses is translated into a complex temporal experience through the queering of the presentification of the now. Presentification here does not signify a simple extension of the present, but rather, a reuse of the past and the future in experiencing/defining the present moment, a process that occurs as accompanied by the constant queer unification and disintegration of the six characters throughout the narrative.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

> The years shall run like rabbits,
> For in my arms I hold
> The Flower of the Ages,
> And the first love of the world.
>
> But all the clocks in the city
> Began to whirr and chime:
> O let not Time deceive you,
> You cannot conquer Time.
>
> In the burrows of the Nightmare
> Where Justice naked is,
> Time watches from the shadow
> And coughs when you would kiss.
>
> In headaches and in worry
> Vaguely life leaks away,
> And Time will have his fancy
> To-morrow or to-day.
>
> "As I Walked Out One Evening",
> W.H. Auden

For the longest time, the draft-title of this dissertation was 'O Let Not Time Deceive You, You Cannot Conquer Time', after a line from W.H. Auden's 1937 poem "As I Walked Out One Evening" (published in a 1940 volume titled *Another Time*). W.H. Auden was a queer modernist poet, deeply interested in the topic of time, so his verses seemed to perfectly capture something in my thinking about queer time. In this poem, Time is a magnificent, and yet intangible and irrefutable force, which cannot be touched nor altered. However, the more I read

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and thought about queer time, the more this verse became associated with another way of thinking about time, somehow connected to the value of the artistic, the literary, or the aesthetic – a dimension I kept going back to, since I was working on literary works.

Muñoz' hopeful devotion to queerness as a forward-dawning futurity that is not yet here is grounded in Bloch's understanding of the aesthetic. For Bloch, a performance of futurity characterizes any aesthetic production, and this is what he called the anticipatory illumination of art. In his work, Muñoz offers a formulation of queerness as an anticipatory illumination that signifies the movement between the not-yet-here and the no-longer-conscious, or the future and the past in Bloch's paradigm (see more in *Cruising Utopia* 115). It is the aesthetic, that inner and inherent quality of art, that is realized as a forward-dawning futurity. Queerness' futurity then, is inseparable from something that lies in the very heart of art. Muñoz' book is the best illustration of this statement, as it presents nuanced and rich readings of cultural and literary artifacts. Or as Muñoz frames it, the queer aesthetic frequently contains blueprints and schemata of a forward-dawning futurity (*Cruising Utopia* 1). His notion of queerness, then, is grounded in the queer utopian potential art possesses.

There is an irrefutable truth, though, that still speaks to me in Auden's verse - O Let Not Time Deceive You,/You Cannot Conquer Time. 'In headaches and in worry/Vaguely life leaks away,/And Time will have his fancy/To-morrow or to-day', the following lines declare. One of the very few universally experienced human conditions is the "leaking away" of life, or its transformation from today to tomorrow. Queer time does not deny the existing experiential linearity of time. Rather, in a Muñozian manner, it points out the manners in which linear, or straight time, is a naturalized temporality; and starting from there, it opens a horizon in which queerness through another form of time, can be experienced as a potentiality. For Muñoz, it is exactly the aesthetic, a surplus in the work of art which exceeds its social function that promises a futurity, something that is not quite there, and restructures sociality (*Cruising Utopia* 31).

Similarly, in this dissertation, queer moments were not addressed as fleeting moments that signify passing adolescent phases. Rather, I have argued that queer time, as seen through the examples of 'Penelope' in *Ulysses* and *The Waves*, has an enduring impact on the narrative structure of these two texts. Queerness that is temporally marked most certainly acts as a narrative element of the plot and a determinant of style in the two texts. Neither in *Ulysses* nor in *The Waves* is queerness an isolated moment that can be located in a fleeting instance, or an interruption that one needs to overcome in the pursuit towards a heterosexual happy ending (Jagose in ed. Freeman, "Theorizing Queer Temporalities" 85). Instead, it is a structural element of the narrative and a plot device, and its significant presence is, I argue, most visibly expressed, through the impact it has on the representation on temporality.

The role modernist narratives play in framing queer temporalities has not been easily recognized. Kate Haffey's very recent study, *Literary Modernism, Queer Temporality: Eddies in Time*, published in 2019, is probably the most sustained look at queer temporalities in modernist literature. In Haffey's study, queer temporality is addressed primarily through what she designates as "queer moments", following Sedgwick's concept as presented in *Tendencies*. Queer moments, according to Haffey's analysis, seem to rupture or upset the forward flow of time in narrative, and usually this forward flow is represented by an inevitable social progression towards marriage and reproduction (see 31-32). Queer moments, as Haffey states, are moments that counter the normal flow of time in narratives, and moments that are marked as significant in the texts, while at the same time are outside of the cause and effect logic of the narrative (32).

In my readings of Joyce and Woolf queer time cannot be reduced to an anti-normative, anti-linear or a-chronological time. Percival's "no" and Molly's "yes" are not all-assuming temporal models. Clearly visible through the number of instances I am analyzing here, queer time does not and cannot exist as a primary timeline. I hope to have proven that the immense

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power queer time has in structuring characters and narrative in these two novels is not limited solely to isolated moments Or, rather, how even when occurring in isolated moments, queer time still disturbs the overall temporal structure of the narratives. But it is important to note that in my readings, queer time is not addressed as a constantly felt temporal dimension. Rather, queer time interrupts, or aims to interrupt an established linear sequence of events. It comes in waves, like in *The Waves*, or rather, in ecstatic epiphanies, like in Molly's "yes" in 'Penelope'. It observes a rhythm that can be opposed to the linear unfolding of time or can function parallel to it. This approach towards the narrative dimensions of queer time is one of this dissertation's largest contributions.

What I hope this dynamic shows is that queer (time) assumes many forms. Reiterating Amin's claim, despite our best efforts for equating queer with non-normative, radical, or oppositional, queer is the stickiest of terms (see 184), and as such it often gets entangled in multiple timelines that can sometimes be reactionary, traditional, or homonormative. Edelman's antifuturity as opposed to Munoz's queer utopian futurity, succinctly captures the different (temporal) meanings even the defining of homonormativity can have for two queer temporal projects. For Muñoz, queerness can also be addressed as a sense of the incalculable and the incommensurable, something that eludes and escapes a neat analysis (in ed. Berlant, *Reading Sedgwick* 153). Queer attaches itself to a "positive" disturbing force, whose impact can be and is used to dismantle patriarchal, misogynistic, or homophobic notions. But queer can also assume another dimension of the disturbing, or a more "negative" one. This side of queer can be translated into a sense of uncanniness, embarrassment, or a desire for escape when we are faced with practices that can be reiterating (even if in a reparative manner) oppression, structural inequality, and subjugation (Muñoz in ed. Berlant, *Reading Sedgwick* 154).

It is that sense of uneasiness that I have encountered while working on Joyce and Woolf when thinking about Molly as a misogynistic creation of a white, straight writer, or Rhoda's

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suicide as an easy narrative device for making sense of the life of a lesbian character. As I hope to have shown throughout this dissertation, reducing Molly to only this side of her character, or Rhoda's narrative role and presence to one aspect of her death, is not only simplistic, but misleading. Nevertheless, my goal here has been to recognize the uneasiness and pinpoint the resulting tension that is a constitutive element of an incommensurable queerness that takes on many forms and marks modernist narratives.

Gender and sexual contradictions, anxieties, and desires, writes Lamos, pervade the texts of modernist canonical writers. And these works, far from composing monolithic entities, are "the sites of unresolved struggles" (see *Deviant Modernisms* 1-2). Time absorbs and is a transmitter of many tensions when it comes to addressing sexuality's multifaceted and sometimes strained presence in modernist texts. The inner multiplicity of time as a structuring principle of the "unresolved struggles" surrounding sexuality lies at the center of my approach to queer time. This dissertation has mapped out the double-binding relationship between queer and temporality in modernist narratives, by examining how queerness produces the particular temporality of the modernist narrative, and in turn, how an ambiguous modernist temporality participates in the construction and representation of an unspeakable and illegible queer sexuality. Time in *Ulysses* and *The Waves* uncovers the hidden rhythms of queerness as a structuring factor of the narrative.

In addition, another great challenge that I encountered when conceptualizing this project was also due to time's (not only queer's) immeasurable vastness. From philosophical debates – ranging from Augustine's fourth century's *Confessions* to Derrida and phenomenology; quantum psychics; cognitive psychology; via narrative theory; and literary analysis; to queer theory – time is an all-encompassing phenomenon, a universal human experience, and a most elusive category. Even in this project, where time was meant to be used as a category of analysis for the study of two modernist novels, it has definitely assumed more

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than one function. The queering of time is a partial system of recognizing the narrativity of time, as are all classifications of temporality. Temporality is not a neutral tool that traces the passing of times, but rather, it signifies the underlying complexity of time as a meaning-producing category/phenomenon/experience. In this project, queer temporality has signified the processes that produce time as a sexually charged phenomenon.

What queer time (as a center of interest for queer scholars at the end of the 1990s), narrative time (as a category of story-telling and character development), philosophical time (an enormously wide category, but what I mean here is a conception that underlies the former two), modernist time (focused here on Joycean and Woolfian time) have in common is, I believe, a strive for redefining the future as something that does not simply lie ahead, understood as a linear extension of the past and the present. "Queer theory's contemporary's love affair with the open horizon of future possibility", to quote Amin (73) has marked a lot of political projects, as well as theoretical insights. The political imperative translated through the struggle for "transforming life now", in Berlant's words (see *Sex Or, the Unbearable* 116) as a defining question of queer thought is a futural issue. It is precisely this tension between the present and the future still depending on what has unfolded in the past, and which determines the way queerness structures these two modernist novels, that is the object of my approach here.

The future is a looming horizon both in 'Penelope' and *The Waves*. It is constantly there, full of possibilities, and yet never fully developed. On the very first level, Molly's monologue is a timeless narrative. Unfolding as "the future" of *Ulysses* (happening in the early morning hours of 17 June 1904, the day after Bloomsday, or the primary timeline of this novel), 'Penelope' ironically consists of Molly's recalling of her past during a present moment. In *The Waves* the future is the one temporal plain that is never realized, despite the fact that the novel represents the lives of the six characters from childhood to old age. Percival, the one character

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who does not get to experience adulthood, is the one most associated with the use of future tense in *The Waves*, whether through Neville's thoughts who is afraid that Percival will forget and leave him, or in Bernard's glorifications of his hero-statue. But this future that was imagined as a future full of possibility, similar to the one Molly seems to be experiencing endlessly in the present in 'Penelope', is interrupted with Percival's death, and it stops its progression in that moment.

In some ways, in both texts, queerness, or, the queer moment, stops futural progressions. That is not to say that in its most realistic sense, the future does not exist and takes place in both *Ulysses* and *The Waves*. Molly does marry Leopold, has children, has a lover, is a singer, her future – following the scene on Howth and the 16 June – is unwinding in front of her readers. The same can be said about Neville, Louis, Bernard, Susan, Jinny, even Rhoda, who all move on with their lives after Percival's death. But what we have here, both in *Ulysses* and *The Waves* is a re-orientation of an expected, of a normative future, that leads to a transformation of the other temporal planes. It is only the possibility of the future looming on the horizon that turns the present into the past, as the past is transported into the present, and enables the two processes of presentification I have been arguing take place in the two texts: as an extension of the present in 'Penelope', and a wave-like movement that constricts and contracts timelines in *The Waves*.

Homosexuality does not have a future in *Ulysses* or *The Waves*. Rather, its lingering and untimely persistence changes the narrative, replacing a conventional (heterosexual) story with a new type of a novel that aims to represent a skewed temporality. Queerness does not have a bodily, or a physical presence in these modernist texts, but it is present through time. My analysis of these two modernist novels has aimed to illustrate (or shed some light on) the liminal spaces created from the clash of opposing forces resulting in structuring ambiguities that in turn, enable the functioning of queerness' non-conquerable temporal force. More

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specifically, queerness as an indicator of the tension between the "transformable now", or the present, and the not-yet-here, or the future, was addressed by looking at the characters' narrative role in these two novels. The notion of the self-shattered subject that disturbs a perception of fixed identity through a sexually subversive activity – primarily approached through Bersani's paradigm, but also found in many of the works on queer negativity I have addressed throughout – served me a starting point in addressing the sexual and temporal dissolution of characters in both *Ulysses* and *The Waves*. The re-invention of characterization in these modernist novels was read as a process motivated by looking at queerness as a temporal force.

In this dissertation I have argued that the force of the sexual, transmitted through time, is what lies at the heart of these characterization practices. It is sex and the sexual, with its unbearable clash between negativity and utopia that breaks the subject and changes the flux of time. Here is where I situate the largest contribution of this project: in addressing the sexual as one of the main factors that instigates the processes of redefining characters (in modernism) through temporality.

Joyce's approach to building characters is ambivalent, and this ambiguity translates into the manner in which Molly is imagined and represented: through uniting contradictions. His characters are overtly personal (especially compared to Woolf's techniques), but I agree with Bersani that they do lack a point of view. Ultimately, the biggest clash of contradictions that creates Molly as an ambiguous character, consists in creating an all-powerful entity with no representational value. Bersani's reading nicely captures Joyce's impersonal techniques, despite the fact he is often celebrated (or criticized, like in Woolf's essays) for overtly personalized characters. Bersani's interpretation also comes very close, in sentiment if not argument, to Woolf's take on Joyce: Joyce pushes a limit, he breaks a boundary when it comes to the representation of life (and consciousness) in his works. But Joyce does that by using a

method that opposes Woolf's: in an encyclopedic, or all-comprehensive manner he oversaturates his character(s) – here Molly – by pushing mimetic realism to its boundaries. This uniting of contradiction is supposed to function on a large scale (the largest scale), as Molly is a pre- and post-human entity. Molly contains the whole world, and the whole world is contained in Molly: she is an Earth Goddess and a satanic mistress. As an all-human and non-human entity, she controls all time.

Woolf seems to stand on the opposite side of this spectrum, as she builds she six (or seven) impersonal characters that are supposed to function as one collective entity. In *The Waves*, the progression of linear time depicted in the present tense, unravels through the different characters. But this all-assuming present that controls both the past and the future is disrupted through characterial unification and disintegration led by queerness. As the six (or seven) characters that are supposed to represent anyone and everyone (like Molly does) come as one, the present extends in few instances. The present crystallizes, and as it unites all temporal planes into one, all characters form one collective entity, and they become a sort of an all-human entity. All time is gathered in them and they come to represent all time.

The resulting characters in both novels are – using Karen Lawrence's description of 'Penelope' – "both spectacularly artificial and, in [their] own way, realistic" (12). As Bersani points out about *Ulysses*, and many studies I have referenced had struggled to prove when it comes to *The Waves*, it would be snobbish and outright wrong to suggest that what we have here is a questioning, or a breakdown of traditional characters. *Ulysses* revolves around some of the most recognizable characters in world literature, and *The Waves* does trace the lives of equally human characters. Both Joyce and Woolf are deeply implicated in preserving the contours, even in the process of undoing them, of the grand ideas they are working with, as modernism does exist at the intersections of the past, present and the future, and that ideal is also illustrated in the manner in which they constructed their characters.

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Finally, this dissertation has been very much in line with Sedgwick's desire started in *Tendencies* "to make the tacit things explicit; to smuggle queer representation in where it must be smuggled and (…) to challenge queer eradicating impulses frontally where they are to be so challenged" (3). For Sedgwick, this strategy of reading that smuggles queer representation and depends on the surplus of trust in texts, asking them to remain powerful, refractory, and exemplary is what makes one a "perverse reader" (4). This perverse project, I hope, has illuminated the silenced, non-bodily, absent elements in the texts and showed how queer they are precisely through their take on such an irrefutable force as Time. This perverse project, furthermore, was in line with another Sedgwickian premise, emphasizing the foundational meaning of homo/heterosexual divide for any Western cultural artifact.

The resulting interpretation was formed around a few categories, or rather, thematic clusters through which I addressed the processes of queering time in/through characterization in 'Penelope' and *The Waves* and that have assumed parallel, or mirroring qualities. Most visibly, the significance of uniting, or clashing contradictions as a manner of creating queer (modernist) characters that was at the forefront of my approach in addressing time's functioning via de-centering subjectivity – is one of most pronounced shared narrative strategies between Joyce and Woolf. Furthermore, the importance of the two kisses that tie and untie time in 'Penelope' and The Waves, accompanied by a queering of a "yes" and a "no" in *Ulysses* and *The Waves*, respectively, that contribute to the two processes of complexifying the present are part of the mirroring structure I have developed here. This was certainly not a pre-determined analysis, meaning, I did not approach these texts aiming to find these parallel structures. Rather, an obsessive and detail-oriented reading led my interpretation that eventually resulted in this analysis, that I believe, could have happened only if these two works were read together, in dialogue, or as *Wave-ian* conspirators.

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Queer time is a theoretical category that gained importance in all sorts of queer analyses at that impasse between the twentieth and twenty-first century. From Sedgwick's musings on the short-lived life of "queer", through Edelman's attempt to imagine a world in which queerness eradicates the linear passing of time, to Muñoz' utopian desire to use queerness in rethinking the relationship between the present and the future via the past. Joyce and Woolf certainly did not think of "queer(ing) time" while writing their works. But I believe they were aware of the profound connections that existed between the spheres of the sexual and the temporal and used them profusely. I believe that reading together Joyce's and Woolf's simultaneous projects of reinventing subjectivity through destabilizing characters in narrative can tell us something about the interconnections between modernism's persisting legacy[102] and queer theory's active struggle for reformulating the future.

What Joyce and Woolf (and many other modernists) offer is a reinvention of the notion of subjectivity through questioning the power and potentials of individuality and collectivity – an idea that is one of the tenets of queer thought. Using queer theory's apparatus in analyzing these modernist projects can shed some light on their ongoing currency. In turn, reading modernists through queer lenses, can also contribute to the development and enrichment of field of studies and thought such as queer theory, that owes plenty to the modernist legacy. Joyce's and Woolf's profoundly modernist project, embedded in such vastly grandiose notions as Time, Subject, and Sex is undoubtedly a utopian mission, as are many of the goals of the queer thinkers and scholars I have used throughout, in building this multifaceted argument. Both the modernist and the queer projects are utopian projects that use, primarily, the power of the artistic and the aesthetic in achieving (or at least stating) their goals.

After Muñoz' investment in the artistic through the utopian, 'O Let Not Time Deceive You, You Cannot Conquer Time' does not only signify the irrefutable force of Time's

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[102] Also see Detloff's *The Persistence of Modernism: Loss and Mourning in the Twentieth Century* (2011).

unstoppable passing, or the undeniability of the death drive. The ghostly, haunting presence of queer negativity I firstly associated with this verse has remained there. Simply put, none of us will conquer time's passing, that much is painfully obvious. And that is precisely what I am drawn to in Edelman's thinking, or to the very real persistence of the endemic unbearable. But there is something else as well, that opens the horizon of queerness, that has the power to transform that You who cannot conquer time, from a singular to a plural through queerness. If Time can be conquered anywhere at all it must be done through queering sociality and subjectivity, even if it necessitates a counterintuitive embrace of negativity, and a conceptualization of queerness as a dimension of the aesthetic/literary. Reading the queering of time in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* through a reforming of characterization is a utopian project that unmasks the connection between these processes.

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