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‘Everything seemed very queer’: Virginia Woolf and Queer Phenomenology

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of Philosophy

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Abstract

This thesis employs queer phenomenology to explore how Virginia Woolf's writing imagines and constructs non-normative ways of being, focusing on the presentation of queer temporalities, spatialities, and materialities. Building upon the rise in scholarly attention regarding Woolf's depictions of time, space, and material objects, I read Woolf alongside theorists of phenomenology, and its recent, queer turn, including: Edmund Husserl, Sara Ahmed, Jack Halberstam, and Eve Sedgwick, to suggest how Woolf's writings present ways of being which resist hegemonic constructions of the three aforementioned areas. Alongside these (queer) phenomenological thinkers, in the course of this thesis I also draw on other theorists of narratology, temporality, spatiality, and materialisms in my reading of Woolf, such as: Paul Ricoeur, Mark Currie, Michel de Certeau, Michael Warner and Lauren Berlant, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. The most prominent theorist engaged with throughout is Sara Ahmed who, despite her sustained theorisation of relationships between queer subjectivities and time, space, and objects in *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006), has been consistently underutilised by Woolf scholarship with regards to these subjects.

In the introduction, I use Woolf's essay 'Modern Fiction' to introduce the central concepts of queer phenomenology and its potential for reading Woolf. I will also map out the structure of this thesis. I then continue over the course of the thesis to consider: the queer temporality of Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) (chapter one); Clarissa Dalloway and Woolf's 'moment of being' (chapter two); Septimus Smith and Jacob Flanders's fugitive, queer spatiality (chapter three); Sapphic sanctuaries in *Mrs. Dalloway* and 'A Woman's College from Outside' (1926) (chapter four); and queer objects in *Orlando: A Biography* (1928) (chapter five). In the Coda, in a mirroring of the non-linear temporalities and resistances to hegemonic narrative considered in the course of the thesis, I return to the quotation included in the title of this thesis (*MD*: 23), to suggest how Maisie Johnson's queer feeling in Regent's Park symbolises and connects the arguments made over the preceding chapters.

As suggested by the chapter outline above, and the quotation used in the title of this thesis, *Mrs. Dalloway* serves as the primary text from which the majority of the chapters in this thesis advance, directed by the novel's own preoccupations with resistances to hetero-patriarchal hegemonies, particularly in relation to constructions of time and space. However, this is not to suggest that this thesis's focus remains on *Mrs. Dalloway* for its entirety; as well

as providing readings of the three texts noted above (*Jacob's Room* (1922), 'A Woman's College from Outside', and *Orlando*), other novels, essays, short stories, diaries, letters, archival materials, and autobiographical writing by Woolf, are touched on throughout.

Proceeding from close readings of key episodes within Woolf's novels, and through sustained engagement with queer phenomenological theory, this thesis argues that across the texts considered Woolf not only depicts characters who desire queer love objects, but that queerness also manifests in her works through the fashioning of characters' subjectivities, showing how Woolf's writing offers imaginative models for ways of being which resist hegemonic constructions of time, space, and relationships with material objects. Furthermore, I consider how Woolf's writing itself works to resist and subvert the forms and narratives born from and propagating compulsory hetero-patriarchy, imagining queer alternatives which in turn enable readers to imagine alternative possibilities for living.

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Abbreviations

Works by Virginia Woolf

Full references in Bibliography

AROO A Room of One's Own

BA Between the Acts

BERG The Virginia Woolf Manuscripts: from the Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection at the New York Public Library

CSF The Complete Shorter Fiction

D1-5 The Diary of Virginia Woolf

E1-6 The Essays of Virginia Woolf

JR Jacob's Room

L1-6 The Letters of Virginia Woolf

MB Moments of Being

MD Mrs. Dalloway

O Orlando: A Biography

Where different from the publication date of the copy cited, the original publication dates of sources are indicated in square brackets on first citation and in the bibliography.

Introduction: Getting (Dis)Oriented

The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability embalming the whole so impeccable that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour. The tyrant is obeyed; the novel is done to a turn. But sometimes, more and more often as time goes by, we suspect a momentary doubt, a spasm of rebellion, as the pages fill themselves in the customary way. Is life like this? Must novels be like this?

Look within and life, it seems, is very far from being 'like this.' Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from the old; the moment of importance came not here but there; so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose, not what he must, if he could base his work upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted style, and perhaps not a single button sewn on as the Bond Street tailors would have it. Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? We are not pleading merely for courage and sincerity; we are suggesting that the proper stuff of fiction is a little other than custom would have us believe it. (*E4*: 160- 161)

So goes Virginia Woolf's now famous, and often quoted, argument from 'Modern Fiction' (1925).¹ Here, Woolf critiques what she refers to as the 'materialist' inclinations of living Edwardian writers, exemplified by Arnold Bennett, H.G. Wells, and John Galsworthy, 'concerned not with the spirit but with the body,' arguing that Bennett's fiction fails to capture 'life' owing to his obedience to the tyrannical pressure to conform to narrative convention (*E4*: 158). Voicing the complaint which surfaces on reading Bennett's materialist prose, 'is life like this?' Woolf turns to consider what 'life' might really be like, and what, consequently, a novel might also be. Woolf continues the essay by similarly examining, and critiquing, the methods of younger, Georgian writers, exemplified by James Joyce, as well as

¹ 'Modern Fiction' was first published as 'Modern Novels' (1919) in *The Times Literary Supplement* before being revised for inclusion in *The Common Reader*; it is the revised, 1925 version of the essay which is cited throughout this introduction.

Russian authors, specifically Anton Chekhov. Ultimately, however, Woolf does not affirm any of the approaches to the writing of 'modern fiction' as superior, but concludes that:

Nothing – no 'method', no experiment, even of the wildest – is forbidden, but only falsity and pretence. 'The proper stuff of fiction' does not exist; everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feeling, every thought; every quality of the brain and spirit is drawn upon; no perception comes amiss (E4: 164).

Since its publication, 'Modern Fiction' has frequently been the subject of critical attention. Perhaps the most common and enduring reading of 'Modern Fiction' can be summarised by Randall Stevenson's claim that in the essay 'Woolf provides a summary of her own priorities for modern fiction' (1992: 58), as well as his description of 'Modern Fiction' as 'one of the most comprehensive and celebrated statements of the priorities of modernism' (1992: 59). Here, Stevenson reads the essay (as many critics do) as a key to understanding not only Woolf's own literary preoccupations, but also to those of all of modernist writing. However, as noted above, Woolf pointedly does not align herself so neatly with the concerns of what have come to be known as modernist writers, exemplified in the essay by Joyce. Indeed, she ultimately criticises them just as she does the Edwardians (a point I will return to below). Concurrent with such readings is an emphasis on the parallels between Woolf's model of consciousness and the writing of psychologist William James. As James Acheson argues: 'here Woolf is saying, as James does, that our experience of the world is of an undifferentiated welter of sense-data [...] Woolf says it is important to write not about the image of the world that the mind presents us but instead about our initial impression of sensory experience' (Acheson: 3). Here Acheson alludes to William James's writings on the stream of consciousness, a term which has frequently, and inaccurately, been used to describe Woolf's use of free-indirect discourse. However, readings such as Acheson's overlook Woolf's critiques of James Joyce's method later in 'Modern Fiction.'

If we want life itself, here surely we have it. Indeed, we find ourselves fumbling rather awkwardly if we try to say what else we wish, and for what reason a work of such originality yet fails to compare, for we must take high examples, with *Youth* or *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. It fails because of the comparative poverty of the writer's mind, we might say simply and have done with it. But it is possible to press a little further and wonder whether we may not refer our sense of being shut in a bright yet narrow room, confined and shut in, rather than enlarged and set free, to some limitation imposed by the method as well as by the mind. (E4: 161-162).

In one of the most sustained engagements with this essay to date, Jane Goldman (2004: 69) argues that 'in referring to the confining space of "a bright yet narrow room" Woolf seems to be opening up for criticism the "luminous halo" passage she has used to introduce Joyce's

work, or at the very least suggesting his halo is not big or luminous enough.’ Whilst Woolf’s language here does echo her luminous halo image in order to critique Joyce’s writing, Woolf’s complaint is not, as Goldman proposes, that ‘Joyce’s halo is not big or luminous enough’ but instead that it is too bright, too solid. Woolf argues that the reader feels ‘confined and shut in, rather than enlarged and set free’; the envelope is not ‘semi-transparent’ but fully opaque; there is no view of what lies beyond the horizon of perception, no mingling of ‘within’ and without. Indeed, this is made clear when Woolf expands on her dissatisfaction with Joyce to suggest that his work is ‘centred in a self which, in spite of its tremor and susceptibility never embraces or creates what is outside itself and beyond’ (*E4*: 162). Woolf then can be seen to critique, not call for, the kind of writing exemplified in the essay by Joyce’s method, which focusses too entirely on representing the stream of consciousness, the purely subjective interiority of characters, without any recourse to what lies beyond. Given the terms of Woolf’s critique of Joyce’s method, as well as her wider argument in ‘Modern Fiction’, it seems clear that Woolf is not advocating for a clean break from the method of the ‘materialists’ in favour of a purely stream of consciousness style, in this essay. Instead, Woolf’s dissatisfaction with the Edwardians and Georgians is the extremity of their methods in either direction. As both Laura Marcus and Goldman have noted, Woolf would go on in her writing to seek forms which would braid the two extremes Woolf sees in Bennett and Joyce. As Goldman has drawn attention to, Woolf’s essay ‘The New Biography’ (1927) describes an ideal of biography as ‘that queer amalgamation of dream and reality, that perpetual marriage of granite and rainbow’ which shows ‘not only the outer life of work and activity but the inner life of emotion and thought’, echoing the language she uses in ‘Modern Fiction’ to idealise a method which sits between Joyce’s interiority and Bennett’s materialism (*E4*: 474). Furthermore, Marcus notes that in Woolf’s later work:

she sought to develop fictional strategies other than those of ‘stream-of-consciousness’ techniques – techniques which attempt to represent the inner workings of the mind and to embody thought patterns by dispensing entirely with an omniscient narrator. By contrast, Woolf produced complex patterns of narration which, although specific to each of her novels, are united in combining “the inner & the outer”, positioning Woolf’s experiments with free-indirect discourse as attempts to reach such an ideal (Marcus 2004: 27).

In ‘Modern Fiction’ then, Woolf does not disavow the methods of the ‘materialists’ entirely, nor seek to align herself with the priorities of those who would come to be called modernists,

such as Joyce. Instead, she searches across 'Modern Fiction' for a new method, a 'queer amalgamation' of 'both the outer, material, and the inner, spiritual' (Goldman 2004: 70).

Recent criticism has begun to re-appraise 'Modern Fiction', drawing attention to the ways in which gender and class are made central to the essay's argument. As Marcus has noted, since the mid-twentieth century, critics such as Herbert Muller were drawing on 'Modern Fiction' 'as a way of defining by contrast, and shoring up, the "masculine" writing of her male contemporaries', the essay being 'used against Woolf by her detractors, who frequently defined her limitations as those of a purely passive, receptive consciousness' one which was 'invariably feminised' (Marcus 2010: 161). Whilst those early readers were emphasising the femininity of 'Modern Fiction' in order to ultimately deride Woolf's writing (again, misreading Woolf as advocating for a purely passive, receptive, stream-of-consciousness style), as Goldman has argued, it is necessary not to lose sight of the feminist political and representational commitments which underpin Woolf's argument.

Turning to the closing sentence of 'Modern Fiction', Woolf presents a pointedly gendered vision of fiction as a woman:

And if we can imagine the art of fiction come alive and standing in our midst, she would undoubtedly bid us to break her and bully her, as well as honour and love her, for so her youth is renewed and her sovereignty assured. (*E4*, 164)

In *Modernism, 1910-1945: Image to Apocalypse*, Goldman draws attention to the various ways in which gender and class are made central to Woolf's text, particularly drawing attention to this closing image 'of fiction as a messianic woman seeking transformational violence to her person, as a necessary means for the renewal of her youth and of her beauty' (Goldman 2004: 72). Goldman follows this feminine personification of fiction to its precedents in Christian trope and John Donne's Holy Sonnet 14, as well as into Woolf's later more explicitly feminist writings such as 'Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown' (1924), *A Room of One's Own* (1928), and 'Poetry, Fiction, and the Future' (1927) in order to 'confirm an implicit feminist subtext at work in "Modern Fiction"' (Goldman 2004: 76). Ultimately, Goldman concludes that 'it is evident that Woolf's early formulations on what has become known implicitly as "Modernist Fiction" are bound up with questions of gender, sexuality, and feminism' (Goldman 2004: 76). Building on Goldman's assertion of the centrality of gender and sexuality to the arguments in Woolf's essay, despite the sustained attention 'Modern Fiction' has received from Woolf critics, a quality of the essay which has, to date, been overlooked by those critics is its inherent queerness. Although the essay does

not concern itself with explicit considerations of sexuality or objects of desire, by reading it in relation to the concerns of queer phenomenology, it becomes possible to understand its perspective towards fiction as a distinctly queer one (see page 10).

Over the course of this thesis, I draw on queer phenomenology to consider how Woolf's writing imagines and constructs non-normative ways of being, with a particular focus on queer temporalities, spatialities, and materialities. Building upon the rise in scholarly attention regarding Woolf's depictions of time, space, and material objects, I read Woolf alongside theorists of phenomenology, and its recent, queer turn, including: Edmund Husserl, Sara Ahmed, Jack Halberstam, and Eve Sedgwick, to suggest how Woolf's writings present ways of being which resist hegemonic constructions of the three aforementioned areas. Of these theorists, Sara Ahmed is the most frequently evoked. Despite Ahmed's sustained theorisation of relationships between queer subjectivities and time, space, and objects in *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (2006), her work has been consistently underutilised by Woolf scholarship in relation to these areas— an oversight this thesis seeks to correct. Across the thesis I consider: the queer temporality of Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway* (chapter one); Clarissa Dalloway and Woolf's 'moment of being' (chapter two); Septimus Smith and Jacob Flanders's fugitive, queer spatiality (chapter three); Sapphic sanctuaries in *Mrs. Dalloway* and 'A Woman's College from Outside' (chapter four); and queer objects in *Orlando: A Biography* (chapter five). In the Coda, I return to the quotation included in the title of this thesis, to suggest how Maisie Johnson's queer feeling in Regent's Park unites the ways of being considered across the proceeding chapters.

Proceeding (as this introduction does) from close readings of key episodes in Woolf's texts, and through sustained engagement with queer phenomenological theory, this thesis argues that throughout her writing Woolf not only depicts characters who desire queer love objects, but that queerness also manifests in her works through the fashioning of characters' subjectivities, showing how Woolf's writing offers models for ways of being which resist hegemonic constructions of time, space, and subject-object relationships. Furthermore, as suggested by my opening reading of Woolf's 'Modern Fiction' (continued on p.10), I consider how Woolf's writing itself works to resist and subvert hegemonic forms of narrative, imagining queer alternatives which in turn enable readers to imagine alternative possibilities for living.

Defining Queer Phenomenology

Queer phenomenology refers to theoretical writings which bring the concepts and preoccupations of the early-twentieth century strand of philosophy, phenomenology, into dialogue with those of queer theory – which, for the purposes of this thesis are defined as ‘dissent from the hegemonic, structured relations and meanings of sexuality and gender’ (Duggan 1992: 24). Before turning to consider phenomenology’s recent, queer iteration, it is first necessary to establish phenomenology’s original preoccupations, in order to understand why, and in what ways, queer phenomenological thinking draws on this branch of philosophical inquiry.

Phenomenology first developed in the early twentieth century, primarily in the work of Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In a break from preceding notions of Cartesian dualism, of the mind as separate from the world and the body, a key tenet of Husserl’s writing was the idea that consciousness is always directed toward ‘some thing – even if the intended object is ideal (such as a number), psychological (such as a feeling) or material (such as a thing)’ (Colebrook 2002: 76). Husserl referred to this directionality of consciousness as ‘intentionality’ (Husserl [1913] 2012: 171). As Emmanuel Levinas states, ‘Husserl’s great originality was to see that the ‘relation to the object’ is not something inserted between consciousness and the object; it is consciousness itself. It is the relation to the object that is the primitive phenomenon’ (Levinas 1998: 13). In this way, we can understand the primary focus of Husserlian phenomenology as being a concern with the perception of the world, the relation to the object and, building upon this, how to become aware of this form of consciousness, which Husserl called ‘pure consciousness’ (Husserl [1913] 2012: 112).

The method through which Husserl suggested reaching pure consciousness, the pre-reflective dimension of experience before what Husserl refers to as the ‘natural attitude’ of ‘everyday experience’ and ‘assumptions,’ was the method of the phenomenological reduction, what he called ‘*epoché*’ or bracketing (Colebrook 2002: 75). Through this method, Husserl sought to observe ‘reality just as it is given’ (Gallagher and Zahavi 2012: 25). As Ariane Mildenberg notes, by reduction Husserl does not mean the loss of anything, instead, she argues, Husserl is using the term in a sense more akin to its Latin stem word ‘*re-ducere*’ meaning to lead or bring back’, in this way we can understand the reduction as a change in stance toward the world, leading toward the object-world as actually experienced by consciousness (Mildenberg 2017: 3).

Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1927) developed upon the phenomenological method proposed by Husserl, turning his attention to the matter of being. Throughout this project,

Heidegger's concern was with showing being 'as it is *initially and for the most part*— in its average everydayness' (Heidegger [1927] 2010: 16). Heidegger referred to the being of his investigation as *Dasein*, which we may translate as human-being. Heidegger defined *Dasein* as 'ontically distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned *about* its very being' (Heidegger 2010: 11). Heidegger posited that a core constitution of *Dasein* was its state of being-in-the-world. Akin to Husserl's rejection of Cartesian dualism, by being-in-the-world, Heidegger meant that 'in directing itself toward... and in grasping something [...] the perception of what is known does not take place as a return with one's booty to the cabinet of consciousness after one has gone out and grasped it. Rather, in perceiving, preserving, and retaining, the *Dasein* which knows remains outside as *Dasein*' (Heidegger 2010: 62). In other words, human-being is always already amongst the world, not in some way separate from it and perceiving from within a subject-object division. Building upon this explanation of *Dasein*'s constitution, Heidegger explains that as a result of its being-in-the-world, *Dasein*'s mode of being can, for the most part, be understood in the terms of 'taking care of [*Besorgen*]' (Heidegger 2010: 54). By 'taking care of,' Heidegger gives the examples of 'to have to do with something, to give something up and get it lost, to undertake, to accomplish, to find out, to ask about, to observe, to speak about, to determine' (Heidegger 2010: 54). Furthermore, in this work Heidegger concerned himself with the idea of temporality as the horizon of being. Heidegger argued 'time is that from which *Dasein* tacitly understand and interprets something like being at all. Time must be brought to light and genuinely grasped as the horizon of every understanding and interpretation of being' (Heidegger 2010: 17).

Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, then, was based upon both Husserl's work as well as Heidegger's concept of 'being-in-the-world'. Merleau-Ponty argued that unlike machines, human perception could not be objective, believing that this was because it was always essentially defined by, and experienced through, the limitations of the body. Therefore, it was in an exploration of the body's role in perception that his phenomenological investigations centred. In *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 2012: 93) states:

my own body defies exploration and always appears to me from the same angle. Its permanence is not a permanence in the world, but a permanence on my side. To say that my body is always near to me or always there for me is to say that it is never truly in front of me, that I cannot spread it out under my gaze, that it remains on the margins of all of my perceptions, and that it is with me.

In Merleau-Ponty's view of the body as '[remaining] on the margins of all my perceptions, he presents the body as a horizon of perception, one that is inescapable. He suggests that 'life' is always fundamentally coloured by one's experience of the world *through* the body.

Furthermore, building on the idea of the breakdown of subject-object dichotomies such as Heidegger's conception of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world, Merleau-Ponty proposed his conception of the 'flesh.' Flesh in a Merleau-Pontian sense speaks to an idea that the individual, sensing body and the sensed objects of the world are akin and connected, what Husserl referred to as *Verflechtung* (intertwined), it is this that makes their communication possible. As a result, the body can be understood as both observer and observed, sensible and sensed. Further, as part of his work in *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty (2012: 172) includes a section on 'The Body as a Sexed Being', wherein he argues:

There is osmosis between sexuality and existence, that is, if existence diffuses throughout sexuality, sexuality reciprocally diffuses throughout existence, such that it is impossible to identify the contribution of sexual motivation and the contribution of other motivations for a given decision or action, and it is impossible to characterize a decision or an action as "sexual" or as "nonsexual."

For Merleau-Ponty then, sexuality is fundamental to, and indivisible from, his model of subjectivity. It is from this consideration of the osmosis between sexuality and existence that Merleau-Ponty describes that we begin to reach the preoccupations of queer phenomenology.

In *Queer Phenomenology* (2006), Sara Ahmed offers the most sustained and explicit exploration of how phenomenology can be brought to bear on the concerns of queer theory. Ahmed (2006: 2) justifies this use of phenomenology for queer theory through the way that:

[...] phenomenology makes "orientation" central in the very argument that consciousness is always directed "toward" an object, and given its emphasis on the lived experience of inhabiting a body, or what Edmund Husserl calls the "living body (*Leib*).'' Phenomenology can offer a resource for queer studies insofar as it emphasizes the importance of lived experience, the intentionality of consciousness, the significance of nearness or what is ready-to-hand, and the role of repeated and habitual actions in shaping bodies and worlds.

Through this engagement with Husserlian and Merleau-Pontian theorisations of the situatedness of consciousness, intentionality, and repetition in shaping bodies, Ahmed reaches the central concept of her queer phenomenology, that of queer orientations. Ahmed's theorisation of queer orientations centres around the idea that 'if orientation is a matter of how we reside in space, then sexual orientation might also be a matter of residence; of how we inhabit spaces as well as "who" or "what" we inhabit spaces with' (Ahmed 2006: 1). In

her suggestion that ‘sexual orientation might also be a matter of residence; of how we inhabit spaces as well as “who” or “what” we inhabit space with,’ Ahmed expands upon definitions of queer theory, such as Duggan’s, as a concern with ‘dissent from the hegemonic, structured relations and meanings of sexuality and gender’ (Duggan 1992: 24), positioning these acts of dissent as not only a matter of who or what one is attracted to, but also as a matter of how one exists within the world.

Whilst queer orientations are the central concern of Ahmed’s *Queer Phenomenology*, Ahmed also brings this concern into dialogue with phenomenology’s turn toward objects to propose her concept of queer and heterosexual objects. Drawing on a Husserlian definition of objects (as ideal, psychological, or material), as well as Heidegger’s exploration of being’s interactions with material objects in his exploration of his concept of ‘taking care of’, Ahmed proposes the way

[...] that the “nearness” of love objects is not casual: we do not just find objects there, like that. The very requirement that the child follow a parental line puts some objects and not others in reach. Compulsory heterosexuality produces a “field of heterosexual objects,” by the very requirement that the subject “give up” the possibility of other love objects. (Ahmed 2006: 87).

From this consideration of the way in which compulsory heterosexuality demands the invisibility or disavowal of the possibility of certain ‘love objects,’ Ahmed then goes on to nuance her idea of heterosexual objects, arguing:

Heterosexuality is not [...] simply “in” objects as if “it” could be a property of objects, and it is not simply about love objects or about the delimitation of “who” is available to love, although such objects do matter. And neither does “heterosexual objects” simply refer to objects that depict heterosexuality as a social and sexual good, although such objects also do matter. Rather, heterosexuality would be an effect of how objects gather to clear a ground, how objects are arranged to create a background. Following Husserl, we could say that heterosexuality functions as a background, as that which is behind actions that are repeated over time and with force, and that insofar as it is behind does not come into view. (Ahmed 2006: 87).

Here, Ahmed’s theorisation of heterosexual objects comes to be a consideration of more than ‘love objects,’ but of an entire ‘background’, that which sits behind and out of view, directing the individual by constructing the clear ground which one is able to follow, ‘that which allows me to arrive and to do things’ (Ahmed 2006: 88). Through this expansion of the idea of what heterosexual objects are and do, and via a Husserlian definition of objects, Ahmed

defines heterosexual objects as ‘not only material: they may be values, capital, aspirations, projects, and styles’ (Ahmed 2006: 86). By contrast, Ahmed defines queer objects as those ‘which do not allow the subject to approximate the form of the heterosexual couple, may not even get near enough to ‘come into view’ as possible objects to be directed towards’ (Ahmed 2006: 91).²

Whilst Ahmed offers the most sustained and explicit theorisation of a queer phenomenology, in this thesis I will also frequently draw on Jack Halberstam’s *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* and Eve Sedgwick’s *Tendencies*. Whilst these writers may not be directly or explicitly influenced by phenomenology, their writing can still be understood as engaging in the work of theorising a queer phenomenology. In their Heideggerian preoccupations with temporality as the horizon of experience, as well as their Merleau-Pontian emphasis on the indivisibility of sexuality and existence and the situatedness of the body in space, these theorists *queer* phenomenology to consider, as Ahmed does, the ways in which queerness is not only a matter of the objects of sexual desire but of ways of being.

‘Modern Fiction’ and Queer Orientations

Returning to the quotation with which I opened, by including the paragraph prior to the one containing the ‘luminous halo’ image (often excised by critics in their readings of the essay), it becomes possible to see that Woolf’s model of consciousness, of what life is really like, is positioned specifically as a counter-discourse, an act of resistance to ‘the tyrant’ which demands traditional elements of narrative: ‘to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability embalming the whole.’ Woolf’s complaint is not with Bennett himself, at least, not entirely. Instead, Woolf’s complaint centres around the hegemonic force which shapes Bennett’s novels. Furthermore, the complaint is constructed as arising from ‘a momentary doubt, a spasm of rebellion’, that is to say, as a contingent, ephemeral resistance to such conventional discourses. Woolf’s vision of what life is like then comes only as a result of lingering in this ‘momentary doubt’, of heeding it and actively working to inhabit it, following it in order to uncover the alternative form Woolf’s narrative voice ultimately pleads for.

² For further discussion of Ahmed’s queer and heterosexual objects, in relation to *Orlando: A Biography* (1928), see chapter five.

In Woolf's construction of this 'momentary doubt', this effortful inhabitation of a resistance to conventional modes of narrative, there is an anticipation of what Sara Ahmed would come to define as 'queer orientations.' As outlined above, underpinning Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology* (2006) is the idea that 'if orientation is a matter of how we reside in space, then sexual orientation might also be a matter of residence; of how we inhabit spaces as well as "who" or "what" we inhabit spaces with' (Ahmed 2006: 1). Ahmed expands further on this idea of sexuality as an orienting force over the course of *Queer Phenomenology*. Perhaps the clearest explication of this idea comes when she argues:

If we presume that sexuality is crucial to bodily orientation, to how we inhabit spaces, then the differences between how we are orientated sexually are not only a matter of "which" objects we are orientated toward, but also how we extend through our bodies into the world. Sexuality would not be seen as determined only by object choice, but as involving differences in one's very relation to the world— that is, in how one "faces" the world or is directed toward it. Or rather, we could say that orientations toward sexual objects affect other things that we do, such that different orientations, different ways of directing one's desires, means inhabiting different worlds. (Ahmed 2006: 67-68).

Across these quotations then, Ahmed works to re-orient the focus of sexual orientation away from the conventional view of it as only a relationship towards other people, the objects of sexual desire, but as also a matter of one's relationship 'to the world', a matter of how one experiences life. Later, Ahmed expands further on this suggestion, noting:

Queer orientations are those that put within reach bodies that have been made unreachable by the lines of conventional genealogy. Queer orientations might be those that don't line up, which by seeing the world "slantwise" allow other objects to come into view. A queer orientation might be one that does not overcome what is "off line," and hence acts out of line with others (Ahmed 2006: 107).

In Ahmed's descriptions of queer orientations then, there are clear parallels to Woolf's 'spasm of resistance' to the tyrant of conventional narrative. In 'Modern Fiction' the narrative voice is positioned as possessing an orientation which does not line up, which does not conform to convention. It sees what is left out of conventional narrative, what is "off line", and does not resist the deviation, letting itself be constrained by the tyrant, but 'acts out of line' and lingers in its doubt, following the new, alternative line of thought and narrative that feeling makes legible.

Indeed, building on this parallel, elsewhere in *Queer Phenomenology*, Ahmed also constructs the queer orientation in terms of the momentary and ephemeral in her discussion of queer moments. Ahmed describes how, for heterosexuals, 'the queer moment, in which

objects appear slantwise and the vertical and horizontal axes appear “‘out of line,’” must be overcome’ (Ahmed 2006: 66). She goes on to expand on this when she writes:

For lesbians, inhabiting the queer slant may be a matter of everyday negotiation. This is not about the romance of being off line or the joy of radical politics (though it can be), but rather the everyday work of dealing with the perceptions of others, with the “‘straightening devices’” and the violence that might follow when such perceptions congeal into social forms. In such loving and living we learn to feel the oblique in the slant of its slant as another kind of gift. We would not aim to overcome the disorientation of the queer moment, but instead inhabit the intensity of its moment. (Ahmed 2006: 107).

For Ahmed then, queerness is a matter of effort, of actively working to inhabit queer moments, to remain aslant and resist the “‘straightening devices’” which work to pull one back towards the straight line. Here, again, the position of Woolf’s narrative voice is constructed in parallel terms; it too momentarily doubts the line of narrative which is presented to it and effortfully inhabits that moment of doubt in resistance to the “‘straightening’” device of the tyrant, to reach its view of what life is really like and what fiction ought to be.

Turning to read ‘Modern Fiction’ in relation to another theorist of queer phenomenology, Jack Halberstam, Woolf’s critique of conventional narrative, and the impetus placed by the tyrant on providing ‘comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability’, can itself be understood as a queer resistance to heteronormative narratives of life. In his writing on queer temporality, Halberstam argues:

Queer time for me is the dark nightclub, 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. It is a theory of queerness as a way of being in the world and a critique of the careful social scripts that usher even the most queer among us through major markers of individual development and into normativity (Halberstam 2007: 182).

In defining queer time as a ‘perverse turn away from the narrative coherence of adolescence – early adulthood – marriage – reproduction – child rearing – retirement – death,’ Halberstam can be seen to position queer temporality as just the kind of resistance to conventional narratives of human development that Woolf critiques ‘materialist’ fiction for conforming to. Indeed, queer temporality for Halberstam is exclusively a matter of narratives: the romance plot, the *Bildungsroman*, and the conventional biography, all being rejected in his ‘perverse turn.’ Woolf’s complaint with the conventions of narrative in terms of its unwavering

adherence to ‘comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability’ then, anticipates Halberstam’s definition of queer time in its resistance to conventional narrative and narrative coherence. Akin to queer temporalities, the narrative voice of ‘Modern Fiction’ resists the hegemonic line, doubting whether life is really like this, or if life might be something different, if alternative narratives might be both lived and written.

Above, I noted Marcus and Goldman’s suggestions that Woolf would go on to utilise a method and aesthetic which is borne out of her reflections in ‘Modern Fiction’, a braiding of inner and outer, ‘granite and rainbow.’ In reading Woolf’s alternative perspective in ‘Modern Fiction’ as a queer one then, it also becomes possible to read Woolf’s method of free-indirect discourse in her later works as equally queer, a continued inhabiting of this queer perspective towards fiction, a resistance to its (heteronormative) conventions. This reading of Woolf’s use of free-indirect discourse as a queer, non-normative form is one I consider further in chapter four. For now, however, it will suffice to say that it seems no coincidence that Woolf describes that ‘amalgamation of dream and reality’ as ‘queer.’

What I have begun to show in this opening reading of ‘Modern Fiction’ then, is the potential which introducing the concerns of queer phenomenology, and specifically the concept of queer orientations, has for the reading of Woolf. By comparing Woolf’s ‘spasm of rebellion’ in that essay with Ahmed’s discussions of queer orientations and queer objects, I have been able to suggest a previously overlooked queerness which characterises the essay’s perspective towards hegemonic conventions of narrative.

Queer Readings of Woolf

Whilst each chapter of the thesis will discuss the relevant critical contexts for that chapter’s concerns, situating my argument amongst those which have preceded and shaped it, my aim in this section is to offer a (non-exhaustive) overview of trends in queer Woolf studies. In so doing, I situate my wider project within a broader critical context and in relation to the contemporary concerns of queer Woolf studies, and establish some of the central differences in my approach to reading Woolf queerly.

The first book on Woolf and lesbian studies was the edited collection *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings* (1997), edited by Eileen Barret and Patricia Cramer. That work consisted of fourteen essays, divided into two sections. The first of these sections focused on ‘Lesbian Intersections’ which features essays on reading Woolf as a lesbian, Woolf’s reading of lesbian narratives in nineteenth-century works and readings of Woolf alongside a number of

contemporaneous lesbian authors such as Gertrude Stein, Katherine Mansfield, and Nella Larsen. The second section, 'Lesbian Readings of Woolf's Novels' offers seven lesbian interpretations of Woolf's writing, one for each of her novels. Despite Eileen Barrett's assertion in her introduction that the works in this second section 'shift the emphasis of lesbian interpretation from Woolf's life to her work' underpinning the approach to Woolf across this volume is a preoccupation with Woolf's own sexuality (1997: 4), Woolf the lesbian writer is the figure under consideration here, her novels read as expressions of 'her lesbian-feminist identity' (Barrett 1997: 7). Whilst being the only book-length work specifically focused on discussions of Woolf and sexuality, it is of course necessary to note the difference between 'lesbian' readings and queer ones. This difference is perhaps best described by Eve Sedgwick when she defines queer as the:

resistance to treating homo/hetero-sexual categorization—still so very volatile an act—as a done deal, a transparently empirical fact about any person. The resistance is not a matter of airily wanting to ignore the “facts of life” in their materiality. If anything, the specificity, materiality, and variety of sexual practices, along with their diverse meanings for individual lives, can be done better justice in a context where the impoverished abstractions that claim to define sexuality can be treated as not authoritative. The dividing up of all sexual acts—indeed all persons—under the “opposite” categories of “homo” and “hetero” is not a natural given but a historical process, still incomplete today and ultimately impossible but characterized by potent contradictions and explosive effects. (Sedgwick [1990] 2008: xvi).

For Sedgwick then, a queer reading is one which does not subscribe to strict binaries, to a focus solely on 'homo' in contrast to 'hetero.' Indeed, a queer reading is fundamentally sceptical of the stability of all such binaries, and actively works to deconstruct them.

Furthermore, queer acknowledges the instability of identity across time, both personal (that the heterosexual can, at times, act queerly and that the queer can also behave in ways which align with heteronormativity) as well as socially (where terminology is constantly changing and categories shifting across societies and generations).

This over-emphasis on reading Woolf's writing through, and as evidence of, her own sexuality which we find in *Virginia Woolf: Lesbian Readings* is one which characterises much of queer Woolf studies prior to the twenty-first century (which is not to suggest that critics no longer draw on Woolf's own sexual biography to read the queerness of her works, see for example Derek Ryan's discussion of the dogs in *Orlando* and their correspondence to Woolf and Vita Sackville-West's relationship, outlined below). As Madelyn Detloff notes in 'Woolf and Lesbian Culture: Queering Woolf Queering' this over-emphasis of Woolf's own sexuality can be understood as 'critical efforts to counter the stereotypical representation of

Woolf,' exemplified in her biography by Quintin Bell, 'as a frigid mad genius – shrewish, mother-obsessed, eccentric, sex-phobic ... anything but a mature sexual being who desired other women and acted on those desires' (Detloff 2012: 343).

Here then we come to some of the differences between this thesis and such early work on Woolf and sexuality. First, following Sedgwick, I resist the kind of definitive identity categorizations which construct homo/hetero-sexualities as concrete and oppositional. Second, I will not seek to justify reading Woolf queerly through recourse to her own sexuality or relationships (platonic or romantic) with queer individuals, as critics of the late twentieth century sought to do. Furthermore, throughout the thesis, my approach is to be led by the texts themselves– which is not to say that I make no recourse to context, but that any contexts must be suggested by the passages I consider, and not forced upon them. That is to say, the justification for reading queerness in Woolf's writing in this thesis will not be based upon biographical detail but will be justified on a case by case basis through close reading of the texts themselves. Finally, this thesis does not concern itself specifically with characters which can be read as 'queer' versus 'hetero' (acknowledging that no fictional character can ever be in possession of a sexuality). Instead, my focus in the chapters that follow is always primarily on the characters as imagined, constructed horizons of perception, and a concern with how these perspectives and their consequent experiences can be understood as queer in terms of their resistances to hegemonic constructions of the world (both the world of the novel in which they're immersed, and the world beyond in which the reader is situated).

Since the turn of the twenty-first century, queer readings of Woolf have proliferated, moving their focus (generally) beyond considerations of Woolf's own sexuality. In 2012, Brenda S. Helt and Madelyn Detloff co-edited a special issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* dedicated to the theme of 'Queering Woolf.' Reading through the articles included in that issue reveals the sheer variety of queer approaches which have begun to be applied to Woolf's texts: for example, Linda Camarasana writes on queer trespassing of domestic and nationalist space; essays by Melanie Micir and Matt Franks focus on queer temporalities in *Orlando: A Biography* and *To the Lighthouse*, respectively; Erin Douglas considers the queer eroticism of the flower in "'Moments of Being": Slater's Pins Have no Points'; and, Derek Ryan offers a new materialist reading of Woolf's queering of granite in her oeuvre.

Increasingly, mirroring queer theory's expansive, and expanding, concerns, queer readings of Woolf have similarly begun to intersect with other disciplines. For example, as well as his work on queer new materialisms (which I will return to consider in chapter five),

in ‘Virginia Woolf and Animal Biography,’ Derek Ryan braids together queer and eco-critical concerns in order to illuminate how Woolf uses the animals of *Orlando* to encode queerness in the novel. Ryan reveals that each of the dogs mentioned in *Orlando* correspond to ones owned by Woolf and her lover, to whom the novel is dedicated, Vita Sackville-West, as well as how the dog was deployed as a sexualised image in their writings to one another. Further, Ryan traces the leporine imagery in the novel to a passage in Sir Thomas Browne’s *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (Vulgar Errors) concerning a myth about the hare’s ability to change sex, reading this as a crucial intertext for understanding Woolf’s engagement with ideas of sex and gender in the novel.

Concurrently, queer readings of Woolf have also become increasingly influenced by contemporary theorisations of transness and trans experience.³ This branch of criticism has particularly led to a re-evaluation of *Orlando*, establishing it as a canonical work of trans fiction.⁴ Making the case for the use of trans theory in reading *Orlando*, Chris Coffman argues:

Orlando continues to be a useful touchstone for contemporary questions about sex and gender. By shifting from the use of ‘sexuality’ as a framework for understanding *Orlando* to the use of ‘gender’ as the primary rubric, one can see that the novel’s traversals of sex and gender do not merely serve as figures for homosexuality. Rather, they reverberate with contemporary formations of transgender as well. (Coffman 2010: para. 27)

Building on the work done by Coffman and others, in ‘Is the Trans in Transnational the Trans in Transsexual,’ Jessica Berman argues that:

³ For the purposes of this thesis, ‘trans’ is defined as ways of being which resist and subvert hegemonic definitions of sex and gender as fixed and binary— in contrast to my definition of queer which also includes a consideration of (intertwined) subversions of sexuality and desire. Across the thesis, although particularly in chapter five, I frequently use the umbrella term ‘queer’ in place of the more specific ‘trans.’ My intention here is not to erase potential differences between ways of being which resist the dominant in terms of gender as opposed to sexuality. Instead, my reasoning for this preference towards ‘queer’ is two-fold: first, as I will continue to propose throughout the thesis, distinctions between challenges to hegemonic gender expression and sexuality are often overlapping, particularly in Woolf’s oeuvre (see for example, my discussion of Woolf’s feminisation of Septimus in chapter one, as well as the homoeroticism in Woolf’s construction of Orlando prior to his transformation in chapter five); second, I am seeking to emphasise in my use of ‘queer’ shared potentials for critique of hegemonic constructions of the world which are contained within all sexual and gender identities falling under queer’s umbrella.

⁴ See also: Stef Craps. 2006. “How to Do Things with Gender: Transgenderism in Woolf’s *Orlando*,” in *Image into Identity: Constructing and Assigning Identity in a Culture of Modernity*. Edited by Michael Wintle. Amsterdam: Rodopi. 175–89; Pamela L. Caughie. 2013. “The Temporality of Modernist Life Writing in the Era of Transsexualism: Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* and Einar Wegener’s *Man Into Woman*,” *Modern Fiction Studies* 59, no. 3. 501–25; and, Erica Gene Delsandro. 2023. ‘The Trans Life Writing of Virginia Woolf and Maggie Nelson’ in *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature* Vol. 42 No.2. 313–341.

Woolf's novel, like other twentieth-century narratives, demands to be read as what I call a "trans" text, one that challenges prevailing assumptions about national belonging and scenes of reading, asking to be situated in the context of transnational modernism or twentieth-century "world literature" at the same time as it raises the question of gender and sexual identity as a constitutive dimension of those critical categories (Berman 2017: 218).

Here, Berman begins to move the consideration of transness in *Orlando* away from merely establishing the novel as trans in terms of its gender, but also to consider how that transness speaks critically to other concerns, in this case, nationalism.

Indicative of *Orlando*'s increasing interest to trans studies is the release of Paul B. Preciado's filmic re-imagining of *Orlando: A Biography*, as *Orlando: My Political Biography* (2023). In that film, twenty-five trans and non-binary actors take turns playing the role of Orlando, blurring Woolf's text with the actors' own narratives of transition, emphasising how *Orlando* has been, and continues to be, used to imagine and interrogate trans experience.

As my outline of some of the key trends in, and works of, queer Woolf studies suggests, the focus of this field has been both sustained and varied. Over the course of the thesis, I engage with a number of the more recent trends in queer readings of Woolf: drawing on new materialism and trans theory to consider the interactions between gender and material objects in *Orlando*, as well as working with theories of queer temporality to consider Clarissa and Septimus's experiences of time in *Mrs. Dalloway*. However, the thesis also diverts from these previous readings in its emphasis on analysing how queerness can be located not only in relation to the object of sexual desire, or the symbolic encoding of that desire. Instead, I consider the way Woolf's writing depicts, and initiates, engagements with the world which deviate from the hegemonic 'straight line', with which there has been no sustained engagement to date in Woolf studies.

Queer Phenomenological readings of Woolf

Despite the long and persuasive critical history of queer readings of Woolf, and indeed phenomenological readings of Woolf, it is perhaps surprising that queer phenomenology has infrequently been made use of in Woolf studies.⁵ Indeed, it is all the more surprising when

⁵ For phenomenological readings of Woolf see: Mark Hussey. 1986. *The Singing of the Real World*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press; Ariane Mildenberg. 2017. *Modernism and Phenomenology: Literature,*

Woolf herself is made central to one of the foundational texts of queer phenomenology, with Ahmed acknowledging a sympathy between her thinking and Woolf's: 'I think fondly of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. How important it is, especially for women, to claim that space, to take up that space through what one does with one's body' (Ahmed 2006: 11).

Of course, I noted above two pieces from the 'Queering Woolf' issue of the Virginia Woolf Miscellany which engage with queer temporalities, by Melanie Micir and Matt Franks. Though these two critics do not explicitly identify their work as engaging with queer phenomenology, in their concern with the ways in which queerness can be located in Woolf's construction of narrative temporality and characters' experiences of time, they do engage with an Halberstamian concern with queer resistances to hegemonic constructions of time and narrative. Whilst my approach to Woolf's writing in the course of this thesis is sympathetic to these works by Micir and Franks, it will build upon the work begun in these articles. Not only will I offer more sustained readings of queer temporalities across chapters one and two, but I will also consider the relationships between queerness and material objects, and queerness and spatiality, topics which fall outside the scope of Micir and Franks' articles, but which are also made legible in reading Woolf in relation to the concerns of queer phenomenology.

In 'Virginia Woolf's Queer Time and Place,' the final chapter of Madelyn Detloff and Brenda S. Helt's landmark publication *Queer Bloomsbury*, Kimberley Engdahl Coates offers the only explicit reading of Woolf through queer phenomenology to date. Drawing on the writing of Ahmed and Halberstam, Engdahl Coates' chapter considers how:

Orienting us toward an awareness of these hegemonic straightening devices, Woolf's war novels reorient readers perceptually by insisting that we follow lines of deviation, lines that encourage perpetual reorientation and refuse any easy return to history's seemingly irrevocable and upright march toward a repetition of the same (Engdahl Coates 2016: 278).

Tracing Woolf's constructions of time and space across four of her 'war novels' – *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *The Waves* and *The Years*– Engdahl Coates (2016: 291) considers how Woolf's depiction of wartime London 'is bent on disturbing that ordinary work of

Philosophy, Art. London: Palgrave Macmillan; Anna Frøsig. 2018. "'Something Intricate and Many Chambered': Sexuality and the Embodied Sentence' in *Sentencing Orlando: Virginia Woolf and the Morphology of the Modernist Sentence*. Edited by Amy Bromley and Elsa Högberg. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press; Imola Nagy-Seres. 2019. 'Malleable Sculptures in Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* and Early Travel Diaries' in *Journal of Modern Literature* vol.42 Issue. 2. 149-166.

perception and staying with the queer effects that follow such a disturbance.’ In considering the queerness of Woolf’s constructions of time and space, Engdahl Coates’ chapter begins the work of considering how queerness in Woolf’s writing is not only a matter of objects of desire but of ways of being in the world. However, Engdahl Coates’ queer phenomenological reading is limited, not least because of its brevity (fourteen pages), which necessarily requires her to elide many of the ways that queerness makes itself felt in the narratives of Woolf’s texts. Further Engdahl Coates’s focus in this chapter is solely on experiences of London, and thus necessarily cannot encompass the breadth of Woolf’s depiction of queer spatiality across her oeuvre. Finally, Engdahl Coates does not in her chapter consider queerness and materiality, a concern which is central to Ahmed’s, and Woolf’s, projects (as I will show in chapter five). Therefore, whilst Engdahl Coates’ chapter does begin in earnest the work of considering how queerness can be read in relation to Woolf’s constructions of time and space, over the course of this thesis I will build on her work by providing a sustained and wide-ranging consideration of the ways in which Woolf presents alternative, queer orientations towards time, space, and material objects.

On Structure: Is queer life like this? Must a thesis be like this?

Across its five chapters, this thesis considers constructions of queer ways of being across Woolf’s oeuvre, focusing specifically on the distinct but interrelated areas of queer temporality, spatiality, and materiality. Throughout, I refer frequently to *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *Jacob’s Room* (1922), and *Orlando: A Biography* (1928). Alongside these three novels, I also draw throughout the thesis on Woolf’s short fiction, essays, autobiographical writing, diaries, and letters.

Inspired by Woolf’s queer critique of conventional narratives in ‘Modern Fiction,’ as well as Halberstam’s queer phenomenological concern with resistances to normative, linear narratives, the structure of this thesis resists the convention of a single, chronological argument which unfolds sequentially over the course of its chapters. Instead, each chapter focuses on facets of queer experience present in Woolf’s texts: Septimus’s queer temporality, Clarissa’s queer temporality, queer men’s experiences of space, Sapphic women’s experiences of space, and Orlando’s queer interactions with material objects. This structure allows the thesis to both explore the breadth of ways that Woolf constructs queerness in her novels, as well as (following queer phenomenology’s emphasis on ‘lived experience’ and

subjectivity) their specificity, revealing Woolf's sustained consideration of the intersections between queerness, class, age, and gender.

However, this is not to suggest that the chapters of this thesis are entirely distinct and self-contained. Primarily, each chapter is unified by the shared queer phenomenological framework used to read Woolf's texts. Furthermore, chapters frequently gesture to one another, whether through re-reading the same passages and narratives from different perspectives, direct comparison of different characters' experiences, or references to further discussion of specific theoretical concepts, gestures which evoke Woolf's tunnelling structure in *Mrs. Dalloway*.⁶ Through these gestures, the reader is offered opportunities to move back and forth between chapters in an act of reading which itself resists normative temporalities and narratives of linear progression, braiding the theoretical concerns of the chapters to make a queer object of the thesis itself, one which permits and encourages moments of queer disorientation for its readers.

Employing a methodology inspired by Ahmed's queer moments, I begin each chapter with a sustained close reading of an episode from Woolf's oeuvre, illuminating the queer lines which reveal themselves in the text, before following them to consider how the effects of queerness present in the passage resonate through the text, as well as into other works by Woolf. As suggested by the quotation included in the title of this thesis, double-voiced by Maisie Johnson and the narrator as she makes her way through Regent's Park following and interaction with Rezia and Septimus, the majority of this thesis's chapters begin and progress from readings of episodes in *Mrs. Dalloway*. In beginning four of the thesis's five chapters with this novel, I am led by *Mrs. Dalloway*'s own preoccupations with temporality and spatiality and its characters subjective resistances to them, as well as its own emphasis on resistances to hegemonic constructions of time and space. In contrast to the preceding chapters, in chapter five, I begin with, and continue throughout, to focus upon Woolf's 1928 novel *Orlando: A Biography*. In this choice of text, I am led by that novel's greater emphasis on the themes of inheritance, clothing, and the ongoing process of Orlando's change in sex, themes which resonate most clearly with queer phenomenological discussions of materiality.

Ultimately, as I have done in my opening reading of 'Modern Fiction', drawing on the idea of queer orientations, I consider how queerness can be read in Woolf's work as not only a matter of the object of desire, but as a matter of how characters relate to and interact with

⁶ For discussion of Woolf's tunnelling structure, see chapter one.

their world. As suggested by the reading of ‘Modern Fiction’ above, however, over the course of the thesis, I not only draw on Ahmed’s queer phenomenology to read Woolf, but also a number of other theorists of queer theory, narratology, and materialisms, including Jack Halberstam, Eve Sedgwick, Paul Ricoeur, Mark Currie, Michel de Certeau, Michael Warner and Lauren Berlant, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. By reading Woolf in relation to these theorists, I argue that the three experiences on which I focus – temporality, spatiality, and interactions with material objects – are not merely neutral, objective realities, but are instead fundamentally intertwined with, and constituted by, the discourses of hetero-patriarchy, and that Woolf’s texts work to represent and imagine queer interactions with, and subversions of, these constructs. Furthermore, I propose that Woolf’s writings work to enable its readers to imagine alternative, queer ways of being which resist heteronormative constructions of, and relationships to, time, space, and material objects.

Chapter Overview

The thesis begins in chapters one and two with an exploration of temporality in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Chapter one focuses on Woolf’s construction of time in relation to the character of Septimus Smith and his visions of his fallen comrade Evans. Drawing on Jack Halberstam’s definition of queer temporality, I nuance previous readings of Septimus’s hallucinatory visions of Evans, and his eventual suicide, as solely representative of his war trauma, suggesting that they also represent resistances to heteronormative constructions of time – as an emphasis on futurity, reproduction, and longevity. Consequently, I argue the treatment he receives from the doctors William Bradshaw and Holmes can be read as attempts to bring Septimus back in line with nationalistic, hetero-masculine ideals. I conclude with a reading of the final appearance of railings in Septimus’s narrative, when he jumps from his apartment window to his death on Mrs. Filmer’s area railings. I suggest that this episode be re-appraised as representing an ultimate act of resistance to heteronormative temporality, refusing the impetus to straighten up, prioritise longevity and reproduce with Rezia, instead embracing death and the potential it offers for his reunification with Evans.

In chapter two, I turn to consider Clarissa Dalloway’s parallel experience of time in the novel. I open with a reading of Clarissa’s recollection of her ‘exquisite moment’ when she kisses Sally Seton at Bourton (*MD*: 32). I compare both the narrative temporality and the representation of queer desire in Woolf’s construction of this memory against Septimus’s vision of and relationship with Evans, before considering the various references to both

Bourton and moments in Clarissa's narrative to illuminate the queer subtexts of the kiss. I then turn to consider previous readings of Clarissa's temporality including comparisons to Henri Bergson's *La Durée* and William James' stream of consciousness, ultimately proposing that these comparisons overlook the parallels to Woolf's own concept of 'moments of being' as set out in her autobiographical essay 'Sketch of the Past.' Through close reading of that essay, I offer a working definition of Woolf's moment of being and suggest its similarities to Clarissa's temporality. I then move to compare both *Mrs. Dalloway* and 'Sketch of the Past' to Eve Sedgwick's description of queer as 'a continuous moment, movement, motive – recurrent, eddying, *troubant*' to suggest how Woolf's moment of being can itself be read as a queer temporality in its emphasis on the momentary and the ability of such moments to continuously move from the past to the present, in place of linear narratives of progress. To emphasise this queer dimension to Woolf's moments of being, I then offer a reading of Woolf's short story 'Moments of Being: "Slater's Pins Have no Points",' written ten years prior to 'Sketch of the Past', in which Woolf narrativises her moments of being specifically in relation to a Sapphic encounter between its characters. I conclude by turning to Ahmed's adaptation of queer moments which she defines in relation to their epiphanic and ephemeral nature, ultimately suggesting that Woolf's moments of being in *Mrs. Dalloway* and "Slater's Pins Have no Points" can be read as Ahmedian queer moments as a result of their disorienting and revelatory nature, brought about by the sudden, unexpected queer encounter.

In chapters three and four, I move to focus on queer spatiality. In chapter three, I draw on Ahmed's discussions of queer experiences of space to argue that Septimus's spatiality is characterised by three interrelated sensations: immobility, disorientation, and hostility. Opening with Septimus 'unable to pass' in Bond Street (*MD*: 13), I consider this episode in relation to Ahmed's (2006: 66) description of queer moments as 'block[ing] bodily action' and, with reference to Crip theory, draw attention to the episode's resonances with contemporaneous attitudes towards physical disability and its conflation with queerness.

I then turn to consider Septimus's experiences of disorientation, again with reference to Ahmed. I argue that Septimus's queerness causes him to be torn between locations, unable to securely inhabit any one space, focusing specifically on his sense of dislocation in his hallucinations of Italian mountains whilst sitting in Regent's Park as well as his inhabitation of the liminal space of the boundary between the boroughs of St. Pancras and St. Marylebone, and their respective cultural milieus.

The third sensation by which I characterise Septimus's experiences of space is in terms of hostility. Drawing attention to the terms of the Labouchère Amendment which criminalised gross indecency between men in both public and private, I argue that Septimus experiences the world as universally unsafe, consistently imagining himself being hunted and punished. I also discuss how the doctors Williams and Bradshaw weaponise space to punish Septimus's queerness. I conclude my discussion of Septimus's spatiality by returning to his death on Mrs. Filmer's area railings, reappraising this moment from a spatial perspective. I suggest that these area railings represent normative divisions of private vs public, drawing on Berlant and Warner's discussion of the privatisation of heterosexuality. With reference to Michel de Certeau's idea of the tactic, I argue that Septimus's death on top of them can consequently be read as a subversion of these methods of spatial division, re-appropriating the railings to free himself from this space which has been made hostile towards him.

In the final section of this chapter, I move to *Jacob's Room* to consider Jacob Flanders's spatiality, specifically in Cambridge. I focus on an episode where, following a gathering in one of the college rooms, Jacob is left alone with Simeon. I elucidate the queer subtext of this episode with reference to Cambridge's queer subcultures and the Cambridge Apostles, and discuss how Woolf's typography mirrors the spatiality of this passage. I then argue that the spatiality of this episode mirrors Berlant and Warner's queer counterpublic, specifically in relation to the space's fragility and ephemerality. I conclude that Jacob's retreat to his own room following this episode represents a realignment with heteronormativity, inaugurating a continual movement from Jacob towards the demands of hegemonic masculinity through the remainder of the narrative, ultimately (I suggest) leading to his death in the trenches.

Chapter four considers two Sapphic experiences of space, Clarissa's in *Mrs. Dalloway* and Angela's in 'A Woman's College from Outside.' I suggest that these feminine experiences of specifically feminine space juxtapose those of the men considered in the chapter prior, offering contrasting spaces in which queerness is safely expressed and experienced. I begin by focusing on Clarissa's attic room, in which she engages in her reminiscence of the kiss with Sally at Bourton. Noting that homosexuality for women was not criminalised in the way it was for men, and with reference to Terry Castle's 'invisible lesbian', I suggest that Clarissa is able to experience space as considerably less hostile, still, however, choosing to spatially distance herself as far as possible from others when thinking of her Sapphic experience. I continue to argue that whilst this contextual difference is significant, it is also possible to understand Clarissa's comfort as the result of her compliance

with the demands of heterosexuality. As a consequence of this compliance, Clarissa is able to access this private space, as well as a position of sexual invisibility within society, which prevents her from experiencing the hostility Septimus does.

I then turn to Woolf's short story 'A Woman's College from Outside,' written as 'Chapter X' of *Jacob's Room* but ultimately excised and published separately after the publication of *Mrs. Dalloway*. I argue that in this story Woolf imagines an exclusively feminine space, one which, in the absence of men, is able to resist the demands and subvert the spatial and behavioural constructions of hetero-patriarchal masculine society, allowing queer feminine desire to be expressed openly and without the impetus to overcome the queer moment which defines the experiences of the other characters considered in the preceding chapters.

The fifth and final chapter of the thesis draws on Ahmed's descriptions of queer and heterosexual objects to read materiality in *Orlando: A Biography*. Whilst my focus in this chapter is for the most part on Woolf's depiction of Orlando's interactions with material objects, in drawing on Ahmed, this chapter moves beyond the strictly material, to also consider objects in the form of values and aspirations, and how these more abstract objects are intertwined with the material throughout the novel. I begin with a close reading of the opening paragraph of *Orlando*. I suggest this opening paragraph represents two of the central relationships to material objects in the novel: Orlando's clothing and its role in expressing his sex, and Orlando's relationship with objects inherited along the patrilineal line. I continue by interrogating Derek Ryan's reading of a distinct split between a majoritarian and minoritarian, male and female, Orlando. I suggest Ryan's reading overlooks the distinctive feminisation of Orlando *prior to* his transformation, specifically, through the act of writing. I trace Orlando's characterisation as a writer through the novel, with reference to Woolf's wider oeuvre, to position Orlando as representative of Woolf's 'man-womanly,' androgynous writer, indicating a femininity and minoritarian desire in Orlando prior to his transformation. Further, I draw on Ahmed's description of queer objects to read the act of writing as a queer object in its own right, as a project which Orlando ought not, but does, engage in as a nobleman, and which inhibits Orlando's ability to replicate the life of his parents.

I conclude the chapter by considering the dialectical relationship between Orlando's change in sex and the clothing she wears. Again, drawing on Ahmed's descriptions of queer objects, I argue that although Orlando's change prompts her to wear feminine clothing, the novel presents these clothes as in turn working upon Orlando and re-inscribing this transformation, leading her further, and more securely, towards the feminine and queer.

In the Coda, in a mirroring of the non-linear temporalities and resistances to hegemonic forms of narrative considered over the course of the thesis, I return to the quotation included in the title of this thesis (*MD*: 23). Restoring that quotation to the passage from which it has been excised, and with reference to the queer phenomenological concepts considered across the thesis, I suggest how Maisie Johnson's queer feeling in Regent's Park connects together the arguments made over the preceding chapters.

1. 'Evans was behind the railings!': Tunnels, Ghosts, and Queer Temporality in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Coming towards the end of the second of twelve sections that make up Virginia Woolf's 1925 novel *Mrs. Dalloway*, the quotation included in the title of this chapter, 'Evans was behind the railings!' (*MD*: 22) comes in the midst of what Woolf referred to in her diary at the time of composition as 'the mad scene in Regent's Park' (*D2*: 340). Continuing her entry on the writing of this passage, Woolf stated that 'I find I write it by clinging as tight to fact as I can.' (*D2*: 340). Indeed, we find such a claim present, at least on the surface, in the quoted exclamation; the past indicative presents us with a simple fact, leaving no room for disagreement or doubt on the part of the reader, 'Evans *was* behind the railings!' [my emphasis].

However, whilst that exclamation may present the veneer of simple fact, it is somewhat less simple to come to any kind of conclusion regarding its meaning or significance. Firstly, owing to Woolf's deployment of free indirect discourse, we might be left wondering whose perspective this sentence is written from. Though it is not possible to conclusively state who the speaker of this sentence is, we may reasonably deduce that this sentence is an example of what Roy Pascal refers to as 'dual voice' in his book of the same name, 'which, through vocabulary, sentence structure, and intonation subtly fuses the two voices of the character and the narrator' (Pascal 1997: 26). In this instance, the character whose voice fuses with the narrator's being that of World War One veteran Septimus Smith. The novel primes the reader to expect and register such a double voicing in the course of its narration from its opening where we find a pair of similar exclamations, 'What a lark! What a plunge!' in the narration of Clarissa Dalloway's morning (*MD*: 3). In a similar way to the exclamation 'Evans was behind the railings!', these earlier exclamations are left freestanding without quotation marks or dialogue tags to identify them as specifically Clarissa's, blurring Clarissa's subjective voice with that of the third-person narrator. However, in this earlier example, the exclamations are more closely tied to Clarissa's perspective as, in the next sentence, the narrator continues 'For so it had always seemed to her [...]' (*MD*: 3).

We can deduce that such a dual voice is at play in this moment as the 'was' of the exclamation speaks to a recollection, to a voice which is speaking from a present in relation to which the events of the book have passed. In this sense the vantage point can only be that of the narrator, as we know that Septimus does not survive beyond the end of the narrative. However, simultaneously, the exclamation point which ends the quotation is only likely to be

Septimus's, speaking to an emotional intensity which the disembodied, omniscient narrator of *Mrs. Dalloway* would be unlikely to experience, but which Septimus, whom it has already been suggested by this point in the narrative is suffering with mental illness, and also with whom the character of Evans is always connected throughout the rest of the novel, might be more reasonably expected to experience. Furthermore, if we look to the context of the passage from which the quotation is taken, Septimus emerges as the most likely character for the perspective of this quotation, given that he is the focus of the passage preceding the quotation, where he's described sitting cross-legged on a bench in Regent's Park, hearing sparrows speaking to him in Greek, calling his name, and stating that 'there is no crime [...] there is no death' (MD: 22).

What we find in this double-voiced narration then, is the possibility for subjective experience to be represented in the novel. This subjectivity complicates the temporality of the novel in a two-fold way. Firstly, it complicates what Paul Ricoeur refers to as the present of narration (1985, 98). The idea that, because a novel (in our case *Mrs. Dalloway*) is written in past tense, it is implied that the events of the novel are being told to us from a perspective which is located in a time beyond the end of the novel, 'the present of narration is understood by the reader as *posterior* to the narrated story' (Ricoeur 1985: 98). Though Mark Currie notably develops on this distinction between time of narration and the time of that which is narrated in *About Time: Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time*, when he suggests 'narrated time is anterior to the time of narration which is in turn prior to the time of reading,' that is to say that the act of narration might also be understood as occurring at a temporal distance from us as readers (Currie 2006: 32). However, as we find in the exclamations quoted, by allowing the subjective voices of characters to encroach on this distanced narratorial voice, the temporal distance between the event described and the time of describing seems to collapse. The intense emotion felt by Septimus and Clarissa represented by those exclamation marks, persist beyond their moment and become present in the time of narration, indeed perhaps also persisting into the time of reading, directing the reader on how to read and react to the text.

Secondly, the presence of subjectivity complicates the structure of the narrative itself. *Mrs. Dalloway* follows an ostensibly linear narrative, a fact which is emphasised not only by the chimes of Big Ben which sound throughout the novel, marking the characters' passage through the course of the day, but also by the novel's separation into twelve sections, the

number of hours on the face of a clock.⁷ However, as Ricoeur argues in his reading of the novel:

what is important is not this reminder of the hour, striking at the same time for everyone, but the relation that the various protagonists establish with these marks of time. The variations in this relation, depending on the character and the occasion, themselves constitute the fictive temporal experience that the narrative constructs (Ricoeur 1985: 205).

What Ricoeur suggests then, is that by allowing subjective experience to enter the narration, Woolf undermines not only the linear structure of the novel but also the very concept which the chimes of Big Ben can be seen to symbolise, that of *time* as linear. In this chapter, I will explore how this subjectivity, as well as the unique structure deployed by Woolf in the writing of this novel and the temporal journeys that structure provokes, work to undermine the concept of linear time and, by reading that undermining alongside Jack Halberstam's writing on queer temporality, how it becomes possible to see *Mrs. Dalloway* as a novel which is concerned with representing and reflecting non-normative, queer experiences of time.

1.1 'Who is Evans?': Tunnelling through Time

However, before continuing, there are two questions provoked by the quotation included in this chapter's title which must first be answered: who exactly is Evans? And, why does his appearance provoke the intensity of feeling indicated by that exclamation mark? The potential for the presence of these questions in the mind of the reader is symptomatic of the non-linear structure at play in the novel, a structure which encourages the reader to journey forwards and backwards through the time of the narrative in order to elucidate the passage's connotations, journeys which resist normative, linear modes of storytelling, acts of reading, as well as understandings of time itself.

To answer the question of who Evans is, it is necessary first to journey forward through the course of the narrative, as Woolf delays revealing the answer, and indeed when she does, does so only incrementally. The requirement for such a journey can be understood as the result of what Woolf described in her diary as the 'tunnelling process' she deployed in the structure of this work, 'by which I tell the past by instalments, as I have need of it' (D2: 340). If Woolf's tunnels connect the novel's June day back to the past of its characters, as

⁷ Whilst these section breaks are not uniform across editions, including those published in Woolf's lifetime, the first British edition published by Woolf's own Hogarth Press features these twelve breaks, and Anne E. Fernald restores this number of breaks in the Cambridge edition of the novel (2015).

Woolf herself suggests, we also find in the delayed revelation of who Evans is, that these tunnels equally serve to lead the reader forwards towards both the novel's future and their own, searching for the next instalment of the past to reveal the significance of those moments which came before. Indeed, in light of this forwards then backwards motion in the temporality of the novel, and potentially the act of reading also (whether that be a reader physically searching back through the text for that first mention of Evans, or else just casting their mind back to it), we may understand Woolf's 'tunnels' as akin to the tunnels of rabbits, with multiple openings which appear throughout the course of the narrative, connecting up both the novel's, and reader's, past, present and future.

Returning then to the question of who Evans is, we must wait until the seventh section of the novel for him to next be mentioned, when Septimus's wife Rezia is thinking how she must go over to Septimus and take him to meet Sir William Bradshaw, a psychiatrist whom they have an appointment with:

she must go back and tell him, go back to him sitting there on the green chair under the tree, talking to himself, or to that dead man Evans, whom she had only seen once for a moment in the shop. He had seemed a nice quiet man; a great friend of Septimus's, and he had been killed in the war (*MD*: 59).

So then, it is only in this passage, five sections after the first reference to Evans quoted at the start of this chapter, that we are told who Evans is, a 'great friend of Septimus's,' as well as the more significant fact that Evans is in fact dead, having been killed in the war. Drawing on the kind of readerly participation in the configuration of time in narrative described by Mark Currie in *About Time*, we find that by only revealing Evans's death at this later point, as a result of her tunnelling structure, Woolf also effects a non-linear temporality in the structure of the novel's reading. On learning of Evans's death, the reader must then think back through their own past, through the time that they have spent reading, as well as the past of the novel, in order to remember encountering the first reference to Evans, and only then are they able to retroactively understand its significance, that Evans's appearance behind the railings should not, in a linear timeline at least, be possible. Indeed, whilst the immediate context of Evans's appearance might have provoked the reader to question if he is in some way connected with the reference to 'the dead' in the same paragraph that first quotation is lifted from, it is only at this moment that such a connection can retroactively be confirmed (*MD*: 22). Furthermore, it is in light of this confirmation that a reader may begin to make some sense of the intensity of feeling expressed on Evans's

appearance indicated by the use of the exclamation mark; that it seems to indicate Septimus's shock, or indeed horror, on encountering this vision of his deceased friend.

What we find then, in the way Woolf's structure affects the reader's own interactions with time, is an experience akin to that described by Currie when he states:

The interesting thing about configuration in relation to time is that it takes place in a hermeneutic circle whereby the organisation of event in a narrative fiction modifies the understanding that a reader may have of real time and this changed understanding in effect comes to be part of the world of action which subsequent narrative fictions may then reflect. This circle of prefiguration, configuration and refiguration might also be understood as a concept of mimesis coupled to a concept of reverse mimesis, according to which a fiction may be seen to imitate the world of action and in so doing, produces a reverse mimesis in which the world of action 'imitates', or is modified by, fiction (Currie 2006: 94).

It is exactly this kind of hermeneutic circle which we can see being created by Woolf's 'tunnelling' structure; by having the readers engage with a structure of time which leads them both forwards and backwards through the time and narrative of the novel, Woolf may also be understood to bring about a mirrored experience of time, creating tunnels in the reader's 'real time' which serve to lead them forwards and backwards between their own pasts and presents.

1.2 'He had been killed in the war.': Evans, Septimus, and War Trauma

Given the revelation that Evans is supposed to be dead when he first appears behind the railings, as discussed above, we can now understand the quotation with which we began as holding two simultaneously existing meanings, hinging on our interpretation of the word 'railings.' The first, which I suggested in the previous section, is that it describes Evans's relational position in space as observed by Septimus, that he is (stood) behind the (park) railings. However, there is also the possibility that 'railings' in this instance could be understood as the progressive form of the verb to rail, that is to say, as meaning to complain or protest. In this light, the question arises, what protestations Evans is being held responsible for? If we return to the context of the passage from which the quotation is pulled, we find that there *is* a protestation made the paragraph before Evans appears, the claim that 'there is no death' made by the sparrows of Regent's Park. Reading 'railings' in this second way then, we find that the sentence can also be understood as saying that Evans was behind (responsible for) the (sparrows') railings (against the reality of death). In light of our knowledge of Evans's death, this second, simultaneous meaning can be understood as

speaking to the grief Septimus feels at the death of his friend; that it is because of Evans's death and the grief he feels over this, that he is hallucinating the birds saying 'there is no death,' and that this claim he hears may actually be the expression of his own desire for that loss to not be real.

Returning however to the reading of the exclamation as describing Evans's position in space, the reader may also now come back to that appearance doubting whether Evans's manifestation in Regent's Park was really the 'fact' it was first presented to us as. Such a doubt may lead one to ask whether this manifestation is in some way supernatural, if it is Evans's ghost appearing behind the railings, or else whether the cause of his appearance is psychological. This latter view is suggested by critics such as Johanna Church, who argues that Evans is appearing as a visual hallucination caused by Septimus' suffering from shell shock, which Church suggests may have been inspired by Woolf's acquaintance with the poet and World War One veteran Siegfried Sassoon, and his experiences hallucinating corpses in post-war London (Church 2016: 56). Certainly, there is a textual basis for reading Sassoon as the inspiration for Septimus, even beyond their shared experiences of visual and auditory hallucinations of the dead. Most obviously there is the similarity in their 'fantastic Christian names' and the sibilance which punctuates them both (*MD*: 76). Septimus and Sassoon are further connected by their shared identities as poets; Septimus is described as leaving his hometown because 'he could see no future for a poet in Stroud' (*MD*: 76). Elsewhere, Woolf again gestures to Septimus's identity as a poet in relation to 'his writings; how the dead sing behind rhododendron bushes; odes to time; conversations with Shakespeare; Evans, Evans, Evans – his messages from the dead' which Rezia prevents him from burning just before his death (*MD*: 132). Finally, there is also a potential parallel between Septimus's relationship with Evans, and Sassoon's (potentially romantic) relationship with another poet and soldier, Wilfred Owen. Sassoon and Owen's relationship, like Evans and Septimus's, also ended 'just before the armistice' when Owen was killed in battle in 1918 (*MD*: 77).

However, it has alternatively been suggested by Karen L. Levenback that Woolf was drawing on her interactions with her brother-in-law Philip Woolf, when she would visit him at the recovery facility of Fishmonger's Hall, where he had been sent after being injured by the same bomb which took his brother Cecil's life. Levenback suggests that the records Woolf made of those visits point to Philip's experience of survivor's guilt (Levenback 1996: 71). Levenback notes that 'among the aftereffects of survival are depression, expectation of punishment (anxiety), personality change, and identification with the dead' (Levenback 1996: 71, footnote 2). Indeed, we do appear to see Septimus experiencing these symptoms.

Septimus believes that he can speak with, and see, the dead. Further, the repeated descriptions of his sensation of ‘falling down, down into the flames!’ (*MD*: 126) seem to bear the connotation of his being sent to hell, as well as the fact that Septimus goes as far as to state: ‘I have been dead, and yet am now alive’ (*MD*: 62), both of which clearly suggest Septimus’s experiences of anticipating punishment and identifying with the dead. Building upon this construction of Septimus as anticipating punishment, he is described on his first introduction in the narrative as having ‘Hazel eyes which had a look of apprehension’ before, in another moment of double voicing, it is asked ‘the world has raised its whip; where will it descend?’ (*MD*: 13).

Despite the potential evidence for reading Septimus as a fictionalised portrait of either Sassoon or Philip Woolf, Church and Levenback fail to acknowledge perhaps the most obvious source of inspiration for this character, Virginia Woolf herself. Whilst, in the introduction I critiqued an over-reliance on Woolf’s biography in queer readings of her writing, it is necessary to acknowledge the ways in which Woolf may have drawn on her own life experience in her construction of Septimus, particularly in order to read his interactions with the medical establishment (see page 42- 45). The most obvious overlap between Woolf and Septimus is that Woolf too was an author. Further, Woolf also experienced periods of mental illness throughout her life and experienced suicidal ideation (Whitworth 2005: xi-xvii). Woolf also had romantic relationships with other women (and I will explore the queer dimension of Septimus and Evans’s relationship further over the course of both this chapter and chapter three). Finally, the very name ‘Septimus,’ Latin for seventh, implies that Septimus is the seventh child in his family, just as Woolf herself was.

What readings like Church’s and Levenback’s suggest is that Evans is in some way representative of the trauma Septimus has sustained as a result of what he witnessed on the battlefield. In *Modernism, History and the First World War*, Trudi Tate discusses the various ways witnessing dead bodies on the battlefield was shown to traumatise veterans, drawing on various ‘war novels’ and survivors accounts. In that work, Tate writes ‘two sights are figured repeatedly in the soldiers’ narratives of the Great War: corpses and bodies in pieces’ (Tate 1998: 64). And certainly the sight of the dead, and of the dead body, is shown to be something which Septimus fears; just before Evans’ second appearance he is shown begging Evans ‘For God’s sake don’t come! [...] for he could not look upon the dead’ (*MD*: 63). However, to Septimus’s surprise, when Evans does appear it is not as a corpse at all, ‘no mud was on him; no wounds; he was not changed’ (*MD*: 63). The fact that Evans appears ‘unchanged,’ with no signs of the injuries which killed him, seems to present a significant

distinction from Sassoon's accounts of hallucinating dead bodies, which Church suggests as a possible inspiration for Evans's appearance. What we find in this passage then is that Woolf seems to gesture towards the trauma of witnessing death and contemporary soldiers' accounts of how this trauma manifests, as well as Evans's potential to represent this, by presenting us with Septimus's fearful anticipation of looking upon the dead, before pointedly undermining such a cut and dried reading of Evans's appearance as a trauma symptom, by having Evans appear as he was before his death. This subversion of the expected shell-shock induced hallucination transforms Evans from a figure of trauma into one of relief and hope for Septimus.

Building upon this, if we look at Evans's appearances, they don't seem, in themselves, traumatic to Septimus at all. Just after seeing Evans as he was before the war, Septimus is shown to become jubilant, 'I must tell the whole world, Septimus cried,' presumably believing Evans's 'unchanged' appearance to be confirmation that 'there is no death' (*MD*: 22). Indeed, the sense of Evans's presence as in some way soothing to Septimus is made evident by the very association between Evans's appearance and that assertion that 'there is no death,' a suggestion which seems to offer reassurance that the traumas of the war and the deaths which Septimus witnessed are not as they appeared. Further, in Rezia's description quoted earlier in this chapter, we are presented with a seemingly calm vision of Septimus 'sitting there on the green chair under the tree, talking to himself, or to that dead man Evans' (*MD*: 59). This subversive construction of Evans's appearance to Septimus as a figure of hope or comfort, introduces the possibility of another reading of the exclamation mark in 'Evans was behind the railings!' as also signifying delight, as well as the shock or horror suggested above (see p.28).

What this suggests then, is that whilst Evans's appearances may certainly be seen to be, in part, born out of Septimus's trauma, and to speak to that trauma, it is necessary to nuance previous readings which have viewed this trauma as the only cause for Evans's appearances; the recurring vision of an unnamed corpse, more akin to the visions experienced by Sassoon, would have just as effectively shown the trauma of the war to a reader, if that were Woolf's intention. In the fact that it is specifically the image of Evans as he was before the war and not the image of his corpse which haunts Septimus, as well as the fact that we are given insight into their relationship with one another throughout the narrative, it becomes difficult to divorce Evans's appearances from the relationship which he and Septimus shared. Furthermore, this relationship, in contrast to readings which suggest that Septimus is based upon Philip Woolf, is notably not a familial or fraternal one, but pointedly constructed by

Woolf as a relationship between two bachelors. In the following section, I will continue to look at how Woolf constructs this relationship, suggesting the queer dynamic which it can be seen to contain.

1.3 'That dead man Evans': Queer Ghosts

Building upon the potential we've identified for the reader to doubt the facticity of Evans's appearance behind the railings, created by the revelation of his death, what we may understand on returning to that original exclamation and its past indicative 'was' is that, in her use of free-indirect discourse in that moment, Woolf is not necessarily meant to be providing us with an objective fact. Instead, Woolf appears to be providing us access to Septimus' subjective truth, and it is from this subjective perspective that the facticity of the exclamation is drawn. That is to say, for Septimus, at least, Evans really was behind the railings.

We find this sense of the reality of Evans's appearance for Septimus emphasised again later in the novel when we read 'a man in grey was actually walking towards them. It was Evans!' (*MD*: 63). Once more, Woolf employs free-indirect speech here in order to convey Septimus' experience of Evans's presence as 'fact,' making use of the same past indicative phrasing, but bolstered in this instance by the affirming adverb 'actually.' In Septimus' belief in the reality of his encounter with Evans in the park, what we find is the expression of a non-linear relationship with time. In a normative, linear model of time, Evans, having died, should belong to the past and be unable to exist in the present. However, what we see presented to us instead is Septimus experiencing this figure from his past as 'actually' in his present, defying the proper bounds between past, present, and future inherent to the structure of linear time.

In this temporally non-linear encounter, we find a significant parallel to writings on queer temporality which first emerged at the end of the twentieth century, in the wake of the AIDS epidemic. One theorist of queer temporality, Jack Halberstam, defines queer temporalities in his book *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* as 'alternative temporalities [...] allowing their participants to believe that their futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience— namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death' (Halberstam 2005: 14). Here we begin to see a connection to Septimus's experience of time, which, given his vision of Evans and the negation of death he thinks he hears the birds proclaiming, can certainly be

read as engaging with logics that lie outside the paradigmatic marker of death. Indeed, the specific kind of alternative temporality Woolf presents Septimus inhabiting, one in which boundaries between past and present are ruptured causing the past to be experienced in the present in the form of Evans's non-linear appearance, bears significant parallels with features of queer temporality theory identified by Kate Haffey in *Literary Modernism, Queer Temporality*. In that work, Haffey not only comments that 'one particular concept— a view of the present in which the past persists— arises in a number of different ways across theorists of queer temporality,' but also continues to note that the image of the ghost often features in the writing of these theorists, something Haffey argues occurs because the ghost is 'a remnant from a previous time that should not, but does, exist in the present' (Haffey 2019: 8). The 'ghosts' of queer temporality then, are not only significant for their supernatural quality. Instead, what Haffey draws attention to is their temporal symbolism, that they represent an alternative relation to time experienced by queer individuals. It is in relation to this temporal symbolism that we find Evans's appearance draws a parallel to such queer ghosts. Regardless of whether he is understood as a supernatural or psychological manifestation by the reader, he is still a figure out of time, 'a remnant from a previous time that should not, but does, exist in the present,' and therefore in his appearance to Septimus, can be understood as a symbol of Septimus's non-normative relationship to time.

Whilst we find clear parallels between Septimus' vision of Evans behind the railings and the kinds of alternative temporalities described by Halberstam and Haffey in their respective discussions of queer temporality, we have only so far shown how such parallels allow us to read the expression of an alternative temporality in Woolf's characterisation of Septimus and how his interactions with Evans can be read as symbolic of this temporality. Therefore, it now becomes necessary to show how such an alternative temporality is presented as fundamentally queer, that is to say, as resistant to hegemonies of gender and sexuality, in order to justifiably label it a queer temporality and Evans a queer ghost.

Throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf can be seen to weave the queer and the temporal together in relation to Septimus. Firstly, with regards to Evans's first appearance in Regent's Park, alongside the nonlinear temporality of that moment considered above, there is also a queer undertone to that encounter (and, indeed, to all encounters between the two in the novel), one which is generated by the nature of Evans and Septimus's relationship. Whilst, as quoted above, Rezia describes Evans as 'a great friend of Septimus's,' later in the novel, the narrator reveals the extent of Septimus and Evans's closeness, how 'they had to be together, share with each other, fight with each other, quarrel with each other,' a description bearing

queer undertones in its mirroring of the kinds of interactions we might expect to describe a romantic relationship (*MD*: 77). Furthermore, this queer connotation to their relationship is reinforced by the narrator's reference to Evans's 'affection' for Septimus earlier in that passage (*MD*: 77). Given the suggested romantic dynamic to their relationship, Evans's very appearance before Septimus becomes bound up with the intensity of their relationship, that the cause for Evans's appearances cannot be disentangled from the seemingly romantic relationship they shared.

Further, the queer dimension of Septimus's characterisation is presented, quite literally, elsewhere in the novel when Maisie Johnson, newly-arrived in London, describes Septimus as 'the man looking queer' (*MD*: 23). The use of 'queer' here can of course be understood on one level as referring to Septimus' strangeness, with Woolf perhaps showing how Septimus' mental illness manifests physically upon him to the extent that it can be visually perceived by Maisie. However, it is plausible that Woolf intended the word to also hold its connotation of homosexuality; the *Oxford English Dictionary* identifies the first written usage of queer in reference to sexuality in a letter by the Marquess of Queensbury dated November 1894 (*OED*: "queer, n.², sense 2.a"), showing that it would have already held such a connotation by the time of its inclusion in *Mrs. Dalloway* thirty years later.

Building on Maisie Johnson's description of Septimus as visibly queer, as mentioned in the opening of this chapter, just before Evans appears to Septimus, we are told how he hears a sparrow in the park asserting that 'there is no crime and, joined by another sparrow, they sang in voices prolonged and piercing in Greek words, from trees in the meadow of life beyond a river where the dead walk, how there is no death' (*MD*: 22). In that episode which heralds Evans's arrival, Woolf once again braids the queer and temporal. The temporal qualities of this passage are perhaps obvious, presented through the bird's rejection of death, as well as their singing from 'beyond a river where the dead walk,' both of which bear clear similarities to Halberstam's description of queer temporalities as those in which 'futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside those paradigmatic markers of life experience,' such as death. There may also be a double-meaning to the adjective 'prolonged' to describe their voices. Whilst that adjective might refer to the action of drawing out the syllables of a word, there is also an obvious temporal connotation in the sense of 'to cause to continue or last longer,' foreshadowing Evans's arrival soon after, whose existence is 'prolonged' beyond its natural course in his appearance to Septimus (*OED*: "prolong, v., sense 1.a").

However, the queer connotation in this scene is relatively more obscured than its temporal ones, hidden within the references to Greece and ‘crime.’ Beyond the mere fact that the sparrows are described explicitly to be singing in Greek, there are two other more obscure references to Greek culture in this passage. First, the reference to ‘the meadow of life beyond a river where the dead walk’ bears obvious similarities to the afterlife of ancient Greek mythology with its Elysium, the district of the afterlife reserved for the heroic or virtuous, as well as the river Styx which the dead had to cross to reach the afterlife. Further, given that Woolf appears to be leading the reader towards a consideration of the Greek connotations to this passage, the sparrows themselves can also be understood to serve as Greek, and consequently queer, allusions. Turning to the poetry of the late-seventh to early-sixth century BCE Greek poet Sappho, a famously queer figure from whose name and place of birth we get the terms Sapphic and lesbian on account of the queer themes of her work, we notably find sparrows also mentioned in her fragment one. In that poem, an ode to Aphrodite, Sappho writes, ‘your chariot yoked with lovely sparrows| drawing you quickly over the dark earth’ (Sappho 2014, 25). If one considers Sappho’s fragment as an intertext with this scene then it connects the sparrows who, as I have suggested, herald Evans’s arrival, to both the ancient Greek goddess of love as well as to the queer figure of Sappho, making them into particularly potent symbols of queer romantic feeling. Building on this queer connotation to the references to Sparrows, there is also here a gesture to Woolf’s own queer relationships, with Woolf referring to herself as ‘sparrow,’ a derivative of sparrow, in letters to her lover Violet Dickinson (L1: 85). Goldman has suggested that this pet name employed by Woolf gestures to the Roman poet Catullus’ second poem and his lover Lesbia’s pet sparrow, constructing Dickinson as Lesbia and Woolf as her beloved pet (Goldman 2024: 107-108). Whether one locates the literary precedent for Woolf’s references to sparrows in the poems of Sappho or Catullus, what this personal context suggests is that these specific birds were, for Woolf, bound up with expressions of queer romantic feeling.

Following these Greek allusions in the text, we are also led to the idea of ‘Greek Love’ or *paiderastia*, a commonplace euphemism for homosexuality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and one which it would be inconceivable for Woolf to not have been aware of. Most famously, it was evoked by Oscar Wilde during his trial for gross indecency. However, it is also mentioned in Gibbon’s *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, a work which Woolf references throughout her writing, including in her first novel *The Voyage Out* (1915), as well as the essay ‘On Being Ill’ (1926). Furthermore, the concept of Greek love was one which proliferated amongst the ‘Cambridge Apostles’ at the turn of

the 20th century, which counted Woolf's husband, Leonard Woolf, as well as her friends Lytton Strachey, John Maynard Keynes, E.M Forster, and Clive Bell, amongst its members. As Julie Anne Taddeo argues:

Strachey's generation of Apostles quite simply saw this ancient philosophy of male friendship as a way to comprehend and explain their feelings for one another. These men tried to fashion for themselves a nonmedical, nonpathological identity that erased the newly constructed boundaries between heterosexual and homosexual males. By strengthening their society's devotion to Plato, Strachey and Keynes eschewed the claims of sexologists that inversion was perversion. Their "New Style of Love" promised to unite a select group of men and protect them from suspicion and marginalisation (Taddeo 2002: 21-22).

Indeed, Septimus and Evans' relationship can be read as exemplary of just the kind of relationship which was justified by the Apostle's invocation of Greek philosophy. As Taddeo notes elsewhere, 'the ambiguity of the ancient Greek model of friendship could [...] imply a bonding of male equals, or a spiritual, educational, and/or sexual union between two men of slightly different generations' (Taddeo 2002: 21). In the narrator's description of how 'they had to be together, share with each other, fight with each other, quarrel with each other,' Woolf can be seen to construct Septimus and Evans's relationship along the same lines of 'equality and spiritual union' which defined the Apostle's definition of Greek love (*MD*: 77).

However, whilst Woolf can be seen to draw inspiration from both the queer subculture of the Cambridge Apostles and their invocations of Greek love in both the description of the two men's relationship, as well as the encoded references to Greece, Septimus and Evans's relationship does not sit comfortably within Strachey and the Apostles' definition of Greek love, which specifically excluded men like Septimus. As Taddeo goes on to note, the Apostle's interpretation of Greek love and what they called Higher Sodomy:

deliberately signified the intellectual, physical, spiritual, and emotional superiority of the Apostolic man and further sanctioned the bonds of all-male friendships. This form of manly love did not encompass the dirty acts of "buggars" who lurked in subway stations and dark alleys, nor did the Higher Sodomy include the even baser practices of the reputed womanizers at Oxford. Rather, the roots of the Higher Sodomy, Strachey and his brothers asserted, extended to ancient Greece and emulated Plato's dualistic construct of love: the sacred, nonphysical male love far exceeded the profane bodily expression of desire. Should "copulation—the act of beasts," occur, the Apostolic identity still preserved the dignity of the brothers. After all, physical intimacy between intellectual and spiritual equals did not resemble the lust of "ordinary" men (Taddeo 2002: 23).

Central to the Apostolic model of Greek love then were their belief in the superiority of their intellectual and spiritual capacities in comparison to ‘ordinary’ men, and particularly other men who engaged in homosexual acts. Of course, underlying the Apostle’s definition is a classism which denies the intellectual or spiritual capacities of those who do not attend Oxbridge, perversely abandoning and condemning other queer men for engaging in the same acts as themselves outside the walls of Cambridge. In reading Septimus and Evans’s relationship as drawing on the culture of the Apostles then, Woolf appears to critique their attitudes, gesturing to the equal capacity of middle-class men who did not attend Cambridge to engage in this form of relationship. Furthermore, Septimus’s paranoia and fear of punishment can be understood as gesturing to the consequence of the Apostle’s abandonment of men such as Septimus in their attempts to define their sodomy as ‘higher’ than that of ‘ordinary’ men.

Returning to the reference to crime contained in the image of the sparrows singing, and in light of the queer symbolism that image can be seen to contain, it becomes possible to interpret the crime which the sparrows are singing of as referring to the crime of homosexuality. Homosexual acts were illegal in England at the time the novel is set, under the ‘Labouchere amendment’ of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, the same law under which Wilde was tried when he referred to ‘Greek love’ in his defence. Prior to the Labouchere Amendment only ‘buggery’ was outlawed in Britain. However, with its introduction, all acts which fell under the more ambiguous charge of ‘gross indecency’ between two men were made illegal, with the punishment being up to two years of imprisonment with or without hard labour (*Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885*, 48 & 49 Vict., c.69).

This reference to ‘crime’ in the episode with the sparrows consequently opens its own tunnel throughout the novel. We see the idea of ‘crime’ appear again with relation to Septimus in a passage of analepsis describing when he first meets Dr. Holmes, where we are told:

He had not cared when Evans was killed; that was worst; but all the other crimes raised their heads and shook their fingers and jeered and sneered over the rail of the bed in the early hours of the morning at the prostrate body which lay realising its degradation; how he had married his wife without loving her; had lied to her; seduced her; outraged Miss Isabel Pole, and was so pocked and marked with vice that women shuddered when they saw him in the street (*MD*: 82).

Here, it is difficult to ignore that reference to the bed rail, which once again leads us back to Evans's appearance 'behind the railings,' retroactively associating his character with those crimes which haunt Septimus, and consequently with the idea of Septimus's degradation and vice. This connection again appears to contain a certain queer dimension, associating both Evans and Septimus's 'crime' with this image of Septimus's marital bed and his 'prostrate body.' Furthermore, it is only in this moment that we may retroactively understand the sparrows of Regent's Park as having been speaking to Septimus and his own sense of criminality, their assertion that there is no crime serving to reassure him of his innocence. Consequently, this connection between the Sparrows' proclamation and Septimus's own sense of guilt seems to further affirm a reading of Septimus's crimes as relating to his love for Evans, building upon the Greek and romantic connotations of that earlier passage. Of course, in this passage Septimus does not specifically identify his crime as being his love for Evans. Instead, much of the focus of this quotation is on his romantic relationships with two women— Isabel Pole and Rezia. However, these relationships are also characterised by Septimus as crimes, specifically due to their false and degraded nature: his loveless seduction of Rezia, and his behaviour which outraged Miss Isabel Pole. Again, the reason for Miss Pole's outrage is left ambiguous here. Whilst the semi-colon which connects Septimus's seduction of Rezia to Isabel's outrage suggests the two are related and sequential, it is also equally possible to read Isabel's outrage as unrelated to the marriage and the consequence of some other, undefined behaviour on Septimus's part. Certainly, however, these two relationships with women are connected for Septimus, as representative of reasons for him to feel guilt, as failed and false attempts at heterosexual romance, as 'crimes' he has committed. Therefore, whilst Septimus's guilt is largely bound up with his relationships with women in this sentence, these relationships can still be read as undermined by and representative of his queerness; that it is because of his queerness that he is unable to have an authentic and successful relationship with these two women, in stark contrast with the ease and comfort found in the description of his relationship with Evans (see page 35).

Returning to Septimus's first confession, that 'he had not cared when Evans was killed,' there is a significant implication regarding the temporality of Septimus's grief; the reader is left to question when exactly, and why, Septimus did come to care that Evans was killed, if we assume he did at all. Further, there is in this admission the sense that Septimus's alternative temporality is, at least in part, related to his lack of feeling when Evans died; both in the suggestion that his grief may have been unprocessed at the time, and has consequently 'caught up' with him at a later date, and in the sense of guilt he seems to feel over this lack of

feeling, both of which might go some way in explaining why Evans's presence haunts him. However, these two possible explanations do not necessarily contradict the sense that Septimus's temporality is related to his queer feelings for Evans, indeed, they may even be understood to reinforce such a reading. That is to say, we are left with the sense that the lack of feeling he experienced after Evans's death was in some way disingenuous, that it failed to honour the closeness of his relationship with Evans and that this is the cause of his guilt.

Returning to that final image, of Septimus's being 'so pocked and marked with vice that women shuddered when they saw him in the street,' we seem to find a parallel with Maisie Johnson's sense of Septimus's queerness upon looking on him. Woolf mirrors this idea of Septimus being visibly marked by his 'crime' or, as he also refers to it, 'sin,' in Septimus's very name which marks him out to the reader as sinfully queer (*MD*: 81). As discussed earlier in this chapter, Septimus is Latin for seventh, and therefore a name given to the seventh child of a family. However, it also points us to another 'seventh,' the seventh circle of hell in Dante's *Inferno*, a text Septimus is in fact described as reading in Italy shortly after Evans's death. In "'A Curious Pattern Like a Tree": Edenic Death and Life in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*', Molly E. Porter picks up on this numerical relationship between the two works, arguing that: 'in the Divine Comedy the suicides are punished in the "seventh abyss" or the "septimal" circle of hell, where Septimus himself would be headed in the Dantean cosmos after he takes his own life' (Porter 2020: 11). In Porter's reading then, the 'septimal' relationship is considered a foreshadowing of Septimus's death in the novel. However, Porter's reading ignores an equally plausible, and distinctly queer, dimension to this allusion; Dante's seventh circle is also the circle in which those who have committed sodomy are placed. Although both readings of the symbolism of this septimal connection can be understood as simultaneously present in the text, as I will consider further both later in this chapter and in chapter three, Septimus's death cannot be divorced from his queerness and the hostile heteronormative forces which seek to fix it.

Returning to the queer connotations of that reference to Greece in the scene in Regent's Park, Woolf appears to continue to make a point of emphasising throughout the novel this 'Greek' connection between Septimus and Evans. For example, we find it alluded to when we later read 'The dead were in Thessaly, Evans sang, among the orchids' (*MD*: 63). Here, not only do we find Septimus's alternative temporality represented in another appearance from Evans in his present, but we also see the same use of Hellenic references used in connection with this appearance; in Evans's assertion that 'the dead' are in Thessaly, a northern region of Greece perhaps most notable for its appearance in Homer's *The Odyssey*,

as well as the more disguised and sexually-charged Greek connotation of ‘the orchids,’ orchid coming from the Greek word for testicles. And we find it alluded to again when Rezia brings in roses purchased from a street vendor and Septimus thinks ‘so there was a man outside; Evans presumably; and the roses, which Rezia said were half dead, had been picked by him in the fields of Greece’ (*MD*: 84). Here, not only do we have the representation of Septimus’s temporality evidenced in his belief that the dead Evans could possibly be standing outside selling roses alongside another Greek reference, but we also find in this passage a blatant queering of the heteronormative domestic sphere. Here, Septimus displaces the wifely, feminine act of decorating the marital home with flowers, something Clarissa Dalloway also engages in at the opening of the novel, moving the focus away from Rezia, who bought them in her role as wife and homemaker. Instead, Septimus attributes the flowers’ appearance to Evans, who he imagines picked them in Greece and seemingly snuck them into the house by posing as a flower vendor outside. Indeed, it seems no coincidence that the flowers which turn Septimus’ thoughts to Evans are roses, with their long-established romantic connotation, nor that they are described as ‘half-dead,’ a term which symbolically unites Evans, who should be dead but isn’t, and Septimus, who is struggling to stay alive, into one image.

Furthermore, Septimus’ queerness and its connection to an alternative temporality are elsewhere implied with regards to his relationship with Rezia. We can see this suggested when we are provided with another passage of free-indirect speech which appears to represent Septimus’ thoughts, which states that ‘love between man and woman was repulsive to Shakespeare. The business of copulation was filth to him before the end. But, Rezia said, she must have children. They had been married five years’ (*MD*: 80). Here we see Septimus’ own repulsion towards the idea of heterosexual sex and reproduction articulated in a veiled way through these comments on Shakespeare, emphasised in the conjunction ‘but’ which connects Rezia’s desire for a child to the reflections on Shakespeare’s supposed feelings about reproduction. In connecting Septimus’s reading of Shakespeare with Rezia’s argument and need for having children, the implication becomes that Septimus himself sees ‘love between man and woman’ as ‘repulsive’ and the ‘business of copulation’ to be ‘filth.’ Beyond the anti-heterosexual allusions of this passage, we once again find the temporal implicated in the allusion to their being ‘married five years.’ Here, Woolf appears to imply the kind of family scheduling which Halberstam refers to as ‘the time of reproduction [...] ruled by a biological clock for women and by strict bourgeois rules of respectability and scheduling for married couples’ (Halberstam 2005: 18). In light of this idea, we can see how

Septimus' failure or resistance to provide Rezia with a child may be understood as representative of his resistance to the logics of heteronormative time which dictates that he should by now have moved on to the next stage of his life and sexual development, fatherhood. Septimus' resistance to the kind of heteronormative temporal constructs which seek to dictate the scheduling of his life, draws a further parallel to Halberstam's definition of queer temporalities which he elsewhere describes as characterised by an 'opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction' (Halberstam 2005: 12). Indeed, 'family, heterosexuality, and reproduction' are exactly the institutions which Septimus resists and opposes in this passage.

What we find then, is that throughout *Mrs. Dalloway* Woolf braids the queer and temporal with relation to Septimus, and particularly so with regards to his relationship and interactions with Evans. In light of this, it becomes possible to understand how we might see Evans's appearance behind the railings as representing the kind of queer ghost identified by Haffey; that is, not only does his appearance represent a non-linear, alternative interaction with time, but that this appearance is fundamentally connected to Septimus' queerness, that it is the result of both his desire and grief for Evans.

1.4 Pathologizing Queer Temporality

Building on the parallels between Septimus' encounter with Evans and queer temporality discourses, we find in Halberstam's work a possible explanation for the kinds of reactions which Septimus receives from the medical professionals in the novel. Within *In a Queer Time and Place*, Halberstam argues that the experience of 'queer temporality disrupts the normative narratives of time that form the base of nearly every definition of human in almost all our modes of understanding, from the professions of psychoanalysis and medicine to socioeconomic and demographic studies' (Halberstam 2005: 266). By applying Halberstam's argument to a reading of Septimus' interaction with Evans, as well as his suicidal thoughts, we might consider how these interactions are representative of Septimus's resistance to, or existence outside of, the heteronormative temporal marker of death, instead of a symptom of his mental illness. Further, we may consider how the view of these as symptoms of mental illness may be understood as the result of normative modes of understanding which cannot otherwise account for this alternative temporality without pathologizing it.

Indeed, in Halberstam's reference to Western society's pathologizing of these alternative modes of living which do not prioritize longevity, we find a further parallel to the kinds of reactions to Septimus' suicide and suicidal ideation presented to us in the novel, exemplified in the characters of Sir William Bradshaw and Dr. Holmes. Holmes and Bradshaw are the two doctors Rezia engages over the course of the novel in an attempt to alleviate Septimus's suffering. A likely inspiration for the two doctors are Sir George Savage and Dr. Henry Head, the physicians who, along with Leonard Woolf, attempted to help alleviate Virginia Woolf's own mental health struggles. We can find this potential inspiration appear most obviously in the similarity between the character's names and those of their real-life counterparts—the two knighted doctors and the shared H of both Holmes and Head's names—as well as in the parallels between Savage and Bradshaw's treatments, with Savage being the one to encourage a 'rest cure' for Woolf, as Bradshaw does for Septimus (Bell 1972: 13).

In Septimus's interactions with Holmes, the heteronormativity of Holmes's 'concerns' manifests most clearly when Holmes asks Septimus if his saying to Rezia that he would kill himself didn't 'give her a very odd idea of English husbands? Didn't one owe perhaps a duty to one's wife?' (*MD*: 81). In these two questions, we can see how Holmes's concern is presented as not being for Septimus's wellbeing at all, but instead (at least superficially), for how his behaviour is impacting Rezia, in an attempt to manipulate Septimus out of his trauma and suicidality by calling into question his ability to represent 'English husbands' and to fulfil his 'duty' to his wife. As Matt Franks notes with regards to this interaction, in Holmes's attempts to coerce Septimus out of his PTSD, 'Holmes expresses a nationalist concern about the threat that war-related disability posed to the institution of marriage [...] in this rhetoric we can also see how the drive toward the social reintegration of soldiers was in large part motivated by an ableist, heteronormalizing crusade rather than concern for disabled veterans themselves' (Franks 2019: 66). Of course, in Holmes's evoking of Septimus's 'duty' as a husband, with the obvious sexual and reproductive overtones that word can be seen to hold, as well as his 'odd' representation of 'English husbands,' Holmes positions Septimus's suicidality, as well as his lack of a desire to have children (which is to say, his queer temporality characterised by a refusal to prioritize longevity and a failure to follow the timeline of heteronormative scheduling) as in direct opposition to the values and goals of heteronormative masculinity.

Building on this reading of the doctors' attempts to treat Septimus as representative of a hegemonic demand to straighten up, we then find Septimus's temporality being

pathologized by Bradshaw (as Halberstam suggests queer temporalities are) when Bradshaw states ‘when a man comes into your room [...] and threatens, as they often do, to kill himself, you invoke proportion; order bed rest; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages; six months rest; until a man who came in weighing seven stone six comes out weighing twelve’ (*MD*: 89). Throughout this passage Woolf appears to undercut the authority of Bradshaw (and, by extension, the medical professionals he represents) through an almost satirical portrayal of the doctor, suggested by the flippancy with which he states that ‘they often do’ threaten to kill themselves, alongside the almost comic repetition of ‘rest’ five times in one sentence, and through the immediate recourse to a treatment which appears to amount to no more than an extreme form of solitary confinement. Indeed, Woolf appears to undermine the sense that these extreme measures would even have any success as a ‘cure’ for anything psychological, when Bradshaw’s sole metric for determining such a success is shown to be the simple and purely physiological act of measuring the patient’s weight gain. As suggested earlier in this chapter, it is possible to read Woolf’s depiction of Septimus’s interactions with medical authorities for his mental health on her own, with Woolf appearing to draw on her hospitalization and bed rest order following periods of hallucination and suicidality for Bradshaw’s description of his treatment in this passage. Woolf herself spent ‘a few weeks in bed in Jean Thomas’s Twickenham nursing home’ in 1910 and again from the 25th of July to the 11th of August 1913, this second stay failing to stop Woolf from experiencing suicidal thoughts, with her taking a near-fatal dose of veronal by early September (Bell 1972: 13, 16). Across this passage then, it becomes apparent that Woolf appears to be leaving room for the reader to question the validity of the apparent authority figures of Holmes and Bradshaw to judge Septimus’ attitudes, painting Bradshaw’s medicalised view of Septimus’ threat to kill himself as cruel, reductive, and ultimately naïve, and Holmes’ as coercive and callous.

Building on the above readings of Holmes and Bradshaw’s attempts to treat Septimus as constructing Septimus as a queer figure and the two doctors as heteronormative forces which seek to bring him back in line with hetero-masculine ideals, Franks notes that, ‘Sir William’s prescription of a rest cure feminises Septimus’ (Franks 2019: 78). This is because rest cures were specifically prescribed to treat women’s illnesses, as they were for Woolf. In light of this feminised treatment of Septimus by the medical professionals of the novel, Franks argues that ‘Septimus is constructed as disabled and therefore improperly gendered [...] that is, he is oriented towards disproportional objects of identification and desire’ (Franks 2019: 78). Through Franks’ reading then, we can see how Sir William’s prescription

of a rest cure is inherently bound up with a view of Septimus's illness as positioning him in opposition to proper masculinity, that it constructs Septimus as a queer subject.

Later in the novel, we find such a potential for the critique of the medical professionals who seek to 'cure' Septimus suggested again in relation to Holmes' reaction to Septimus's suicide: 'Who could have foretold it? A sudden impulse, no one was in the least to blame [...] and, why the devil he did it, Dr. Holmes could not conceive' (*MD*: 134). In this reaction, we see Holmes attempting to re-write history, to avoid having to take any accountability for Septimus' suicide. Of course, given the earlier conversation between the two, we know that Holmes was aware that Septimus had said he would kill himself. Indeed, that was the reason he had been brought in to treat him. Therefore, when we see him suggesting that nobody could have foretold it, and that it must have been the result of 'a sudden impulse,' the reader is keenly aware Holmes's disingenuousness. Further, it is only in that final sentence, tagged on to the end of Holmes' assertions of innocence, that Holmes begins to consider why Septimus might have done it, emphasising the sense that his first priority is defending himself, not concern for his patient. Further, even when he does turn to considering why Septimus does it, he is either incapable of understanding, or else he is unwilling to admit it, for to do so would be to acknowledge his own part in Septimus's demise.

What we seem to find then, is that the novel works to critique and undermine those figures who pathologize Septimus's experiences, and by extension the normative forces they represent. Though it is necessary not to discount the suffering which Septimus is shown to experience over the course of the novel, one is left to wonder to what extent that suffering is caused by his desire to die and his temporally non-linear encounters with Evans, and how much of it is actually brought about by these figures who pathologize and punish such queer, non-normative experiences of time. Indeed, whilst I will discuss Septimus's suicide further in the following, concluding, section of this chapter, it is no coincidence that Septimus's final words, spoken to Holmes, are 'I'll give it you!' reinforcing the sense that his death is not only brought about by, but in fact desired by such figures.

1.5 'Behind the Railings': Queer Afterlives

If the sentence which opened this chapter, 'Evans was behind the railings!' served as our first entry point to the tunnel which leads us both forwards and backwards through the time of the narrative, that tunnel's final opening in Septimus's narrative undoubtedly appears at

the moment of Septimus' death by suicide, '[flinging] himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer's area railings' (*MD*: 134). Given the method by which Septimus dies – which recalls Woolf jumping out of a window after the death of her father in 1904, though it is debated whether this was a suicide attempt or not (Newman 2015: 36-37) – we find the railings of these two quotations taking on a particularly queer connotation. In his death, the phallic railings penetrate Septimus' body in a mirroring of male-male sexual penetration, an act which may then retroactively colour our reading of the railings Evans appears behind as equally phallic, paralleling the aforementioned reference to his appearance amongst the (testicular) orchids.

In Halberstam's discussion of queer temporality, we find further parallels with Septimus's depiction, parallels which allow us to reappraise his suicide, understanding it as another manifestation of his queer temporality. Halberstam contrasts queer temporalities against the normative modes of living 'in Western cultures' wherein 'we create longevity as the most desirable future. We applaud the pursuit of long life under any circumstances and pathologize modes of living that show little or no concern for longevity' (Halberstam 2005: 266). Elsewhere, Halberstam gives the examples of 'ravers, club kids, HIV-Positive bare backers, rent boys, sex workers, homeless people, drug dealers, and the unemployed,' as figures who inhabit this kind of alternative temporality wherein 'little or no concern for longevity' is shown (Halberstam 2005: 26). In Septimus's suicide and suicidal ideation, we find a figure akin to those listed by Halberstam, those who inhabit this kind of alternative mode of living, with Septimus shown to similarly not view longevity as the most desirable future. As well as this rejection of futurity being evidenced by Septimus's suicidal ideation, we find it suggested even before Septimus had actually been to war, in the fact he was 'one of the first to volunteer' to join the army at the outbreak of World War One, a choice which, given the obvious risk to his life, similarly displays his lack of concern for survival (*MD*: 77). This lack of concern is again evidenced to the reader in the moment before Septimus's suicide when it is noted that '[suicide] was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia's (for she was with him)' (*MD*: 133). In light of these parallels between Halberstam's writing on those who inhabit a queer temporality and Septimus's characterisation in the novel through their shared lack of concern for longevity and modes of living which do not prioritise it, we are presented with an alternative understanding of Septimus's experiences, coming to read them not as simply representations of the tragedy of war and symptoms of mental illness, but as expressions of a reasonable alternative way of being, one which is only pathologized by a normative society which cannot account for it.

Returning to that specific method of Septimus' suicide, 'flinging himself onto Mrs. Filmer's area railings,' we are led by Woolf one final time through the 'railings' tunnel, back to the sentence quoted in the title of this chapter. The shared references to 'railings' once again serves to lead the reader back to that first quotation, where they may retroactively read 'the railings!' as foreshadowing Septimus' death. Indeed, in light of this new connotation revealed in relation to 'the railings' Evans appears behind, we find that this line not only serves to present Septimus's alternative and non-linear temporality by collapsing the boundaries between past and present in its ghostly reference to Evans, but that in the foreshadowing of his death it can also retrospectively be seen to weave Septimus's future into his present in that moment, taking on a new meaning, one in which Septimus identifies not only how he will die but what waits for him 'behind the railings!' (beyond his death). In this final interpretation, Septimus's exclamation can be understood as now also speaking to the imagining of a future beyond the bounds and logic of heteronormative time, culminating as Halberstam posits with that final temporal marker of death; one which imagines the potential for a reunion of queer lovers in the afterlife. This connotation then serves to change that exclamation from one of terror to one of joy, to change our reading of Septimus's death from one of tragedy to one which sees in it a kind of queer hope. For, after all, 'Evans was behind the railings!'

2. Queer Moments of Being

Then came the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down! The others disappeared; there she was alone with Sally. And she felt that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it – a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling! – when old Joseph and Peter faced them:

“Star-gazing?” said Peter.

It was like running one’s face against a granite wall in the darkness! It was shocking; it was horrible! (*MD*: 32)

The above quotation, taken from the third of *Mrs. Dalloway*’s twelve sections, describes Clarissa Dalloway’s memory of her Sapphic kiss with Sally Seton in Bourton, some thirty years prior to the novel’s present June day. Unlike the more ambiguous descriptions of the relationship between Septimus and Evans considered in the previous chapter, owing to the series of past simple declaratives in that second sentence, the queerness of this moment is rendered in a considerably more explicit way; the kiss between the two is presented as factually as Sally’s having ‘stopped’ and ‘picked a flower.’ However, the significance of the kiss is not only downplayed as a result of the sentence structure which equates it with the commonplace acts of stopping and picking a flower, but also in the way that the act itself only takes up five words in the narrative, the only description of the kiss itself being that it was ‘on her lips.’ Whilst the fact of it being placed ‘on her lips’ is certainly significant in a queer reading of the moment, imbuing the act with a queer potential which might otherwise be minimised if it were described as on her cheek, or else not located at all, it does not suggest with what intention the kiss was delivered, or indeed what qualities the kiss possessed: hard, soft, brief, long, etc. In contrast to the textual brevity of the kiss however, Clarissa’s reaction to it takes up seventy-six words of the narrative; thereby, a clear emphasis is placed by the text not on the kiss itself, but on how it is received by Clarissa.

The significance of the kiss for Clarissa is set up from that first sentence, where the moment is described as ‘the most exquisite [...] of her whole life.’ Of course, in placing the kiss at the pinnacle of a hierarchy of moments from throughout Clarissa’s life, the kiss is positioned above a number of events which one would expect to hold that title, events which traditionally define the life of a wife and mother, including her marriage and her daughter’s birth. By positioning the kiss above these moments, there emerges an obvious parallel with

Halberstam's definition of queer temporalities as being those which diverge from heteronormative 'paradigmatic markers of life experience— namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death' as discussed in the previous chapter (Halberstam 2005: 14).

Alongside this emphatic description of the memory as 'the most exquisite moment of her whole life' it is also presented as 'a present,' 'a diamond, something infinitely precious.' So central is this moment to Clarissa's characterisation that the metaphor employed to describe it, of 'a diamond,' whose 'radiance burnt through,' plays directly on the etymological meaning of Clarissa's name, coming from the Latin *clara*, the feminine form of *clarum*, meaning bright and clear, the same qualities possessed by a diamond. Indeed, by understanding the diamond metaphor as drawing on Clarissa's name, it becomes possible to understand the passage as reflective of Clarissa's feeling of being most herself in that moment. At the same time, the 'gift' of this moment is also described as 'wrapped up' twice in one sentence. Of course, on one hand, this wrapping up draws on the 'gift' metaphor, but it also constructs it as something doubly hidden away from both Clarissa and the wider world. In a similar vein, the narrator also describes Clarissa's feeling as though she had been told 'not to look at it.' There is, then, an unacknowledgeable quality to the kiss, a taboo or transgressive quality assigned to it; it is something to be hidden away, even from Clarissa herself. In light of this hidden quality, the kiss is further estranged from the mundanity with which it is first presented to the reader; it is positioned, in Clarissa's mind at least, as a moment of considerable significance, and of consequence. In Clarissa's sense that the kiss is 'wrapped up' and as though she has been told 'not to look at it,' the construction of the kiss parallels Terry Castle's argument in *The Apparitional Lesbian* that:

The lesbian is never with us, it seems, but always somewhere else: in the shadows, in the margins, hidden from history, out of sight, out of mind, a wanderer in the dusk, a lost soul, a tragic mistake, a pale denizen of the night (Castle 1993: 2)

Which is to say, that the unacknowledgeable quality of the kiss for Clarissa further gestures towards its queer significance; that by constructing this encounter as incommunicable, its queerness is ironically communicated even more clearly. Whether or not the kiss was intended to be romantic or erotic on Sally's part is immaterial, and is, indeed, impossible for a reader to discern given that we are only able to access it through Clarissa's voice, through her memory. However, in her reaction to the kiss, her intensity of emotion, and her dual characterisation of it as both a precious gift and as necessarily unacknowledgeable, we can

begin to understand the kiss's significance for Clarissa, and consequently it is in this reaction that the queerness of the kiss can begin to be located.

Following the queer connotations of Sally and Clarissa's kiss, Michael H. Whitworth further emphasises the queer significance of this episode's flight in to the novel's past, noting that the memories of Bourton can be dated to 1893, 'significantly before Oscar Wilde's trial for 'gross indecency' in 1895; it implies the comparative sexual tolerance of that period [...] following the prosecution of Oscar Wilde, identities became fixed and choices became restricted' (Whitworth 2005: 141) Building on Whitworth's reading of this temporal location in the novel as evocative of lost sexual potentials, it becomes possible to read Clarissa's reaction to her kiss as reflective of these sexual potentials. Such a construction of Bourton as representative of such a time and potential can be located in Clarissa's exclamation that 'the world might turn upside down!' following her kiss with Sally. Whilst this phrase 'the world turned upside down' is Biblical in origin, it is perhaps more significantly in this context, also the name of an English Ballad 'The World Turned Upside Down' dating to the English Revolution. In his 1972 book named for that ballad, Christopher Hill traces the radical potential of the revolutionary period across various proletarian movements of the time; potentials which, ultimately, were not borne out. In evoking this phrase, and by extension the potential outcomes and promises of the English Revolution in Clarissa's reaction to her kiss with Sally, Woolf can be seen to evoke a similar (unrealised) revolutionary potential of the queer kiss, as a praxis for the 'turning upside down' of the conventional social order. That is to say, the kiss represents a moment where, instead of the sexual repression which was ultimately brought about following the Wilde trials, a sexual revolution, which would have overcome the repressive forces of Protestant morality and hetero-patriarchy, becomes legible.

Alongside this sense of queerness which I have suggested permeates Clarissa's memory of her kiss with Sally, the passage with which this chapter opened is also one which, particularly as a consequence of the intensity of Clarissa's feelings, disturbs the temporality of the novel in a number of inter-connected ways. In the previous chapter, I drew attention to the way in which the exclamation mark in 'Evans was behind the railings!' worked to disturb the temporality of the novel by indicating an intensity of emotion which persists from the past events described in the novel (Ricoeur's time of the narrative) in to the present from which the narrative is told (the time of narration) as well as potentially also the time of reading, directing a reader in how they should interpret the sentence. Thereby, the temporality of the narrative can be read as mirroring the non-linear temporality experienced by Septimus, which enables Evans's appearance in the first place. In Clarissa's memory of her kiss, we find

similar temporally-disturbing exclamations: ‘The whole world might have turned upside down!’ ‘The radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!’ ‘It was like running one’s face against a granite wall in the darkness! It was shocking; it was horrible!’ In this passage, four out of the eight sentences end in exclamation marks. Beyond their more obvious function in conveying Clarissa’s intense reaction to this ‘exquisite moment,’ what these exclamations also do is to, again, cause disturbances in linear time. However, in these exclamations the disturbance of time goes even further in its disruption of the temporality of the narrative than those uttered by Septimus, with Clarissa’s intensity of emotion, her excitement at the kiss and her disgust at Peter’s interruption, breaking through not only from the past of the time of narration and of the time of reading, but also from the narrative’s past, from thirty years previous to the time of her recollection, becoming re-experienced, re-felt, as the memory is rehearsed. With regards to the disturbance of linear temporality which can be found in Woolf’s construction of the memory, Haffey draws attention to the dual significance of Clarissa’s feeling that she had ‘been given a present’ noting that, ‘certainly, this figures the kiss as an expensive gift, both desired and unexpected. But let’s not ignore the other meaning of the word “present.” This is also a memory that becomes “present” as it is recollected,’ similarly identifying in the construction of the kiss a disturbance of linear temporality, a ‘present’ quality to Clarissa’s memory, as I have suggested above (Haffey 2019: 43-44). Whilst Haffey gestures to the dual significance of the word ‘present’ here, what she overlooks is the way in which Clarissa’s ‘present’ is detached from any fixed referent; it is left ambiguous what it is that prompts that thought in Clarissa. That is to say, whilst Haffey’s reading suggests that the kiss is a gift and the memory a temporal present, it can also be that Clarissa’s thinks of the kiss as a present (in both senses of the word), as well as that she thinks of the memory as a present (also in both senses of the word).

Further, in these exclamations we also find a disturbance to the narrative voice of the passage. Much of the quotation, as indeed the rest of the novel, is narrated with the ‘dual voice’ identified in the previous chapter, where the voice of a narrator and those of the characters being narrated blur into one, such as the sentence ‘Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips,’ where Clarissa’s subjective memory is mediated into a third person, seemingly-objective description. However, in those exclamations, the sentence becomes only a direct representation of Clarissa’s subjective experience; it is her voice, her intense reaction to the kiss, and to the interruption, which are represented in the exclamation marks. Further, the exclamations can be seen not only to disrupt the mediating force of the third person narrative voice, but also to disrupt the distinction between the adolescent Clarissa of Bourton

and the middle-aged Clarissa remembering. In those exclamations, it becomes impossible to discern if these are Clarissa's retrospective descriptions of the moment, or if they were her feelings at the time, if, indeed, they are not both at once. Which is to say, that Clarissa, as she remembers the kiss, is plausibly experiencing the exact same emotions she felt at the time; that the emotions bridge the temporal distance, thereby making the past imminent in Clarissa's present. In Clarissa's recollection of the kiss then, we find that at the level of the narrative Woolf repeatedly constructs the memory in such a way that past and present collapse, such that Clarissa is pulled back to Bourton.

In the prior chapter, I referenced Woolf's diary entry at the time of composing *Mrs. Dalloway* where she alludes to the tunnelling process, 'by which I tell the past by instalments, as I have need of it', which she deployed in the structure of the novel (*D2*: 340). In the above passage, we are again led down one of these characteristic tunnels into the novel's past. However, as I also suggested in the previous chapter, this tunnel from Clarissa's present to her past at Bourton can also be understood as one with many openings throughout the narrative, though it is not until the passage quoted at the start of this chapter that the full significance of these openings become legible to a reader.

The first opening of this tunnel occurs in only the second paragraph of the novel, when Clarissa reflects 'What a lark! What a plunge! For so it had always seemed to her when, with a little squeak of the hinges, which she could hear now, she had burst open the French windows and plunged at Bourton in the open air.' (*MD*: 3) As in the passage with which this chapter opened, a non-linear temporality again defines this quotation. The distinctions between Clarissa's present in London and her memory of Bourton have not, at this point in the novel, been constructed; there has been no reference to London, and there is no signal to the reader that Bourton is a space she inhabits only in her memory (this only coming in the next paragraphs reference to '[knowing] people who live next door to one in Westminster' (*MD*: 4)). Beyond this lack of framing, the distinctions between past and present are further collapsed in this moment as a result of the assertion that Clarissa 'could hear now' that 'squeak of the hinges.' As Haffey (2019: 38) notes,

This often-cited passage is quite clear in what it accomplishes: the rendering of past and present simultaneously in a single moment. The temporal location of this "little squeak" that Clarissa hears is quite ambiguous. Clarissa could "hear now" in the present of the story this sound, but the sound's origin seems to be located in the past as she "burst[s] open the French windows at Bourton" (1925, p. 3). The "squeak" could be her own door as she sets out that morning, it could be the sound of "Rumpelmayer's men" taking the doors "off their hinges" to prepare for the party, or

it could be the sound of the French doors opening at Bourton, a sound heard across time.

We find this ‘rendering of past and present simultaneously in a single moment,’ as Haffey describes it, constructed through the same methods as the quotation with which this chapter opened, through the deployment of free-indirect exclamations ‘What a lark! What a plunge!’ wherein it is again impossible to ascertain to whom, and to when, these exclamations belong. They are both what Clarissa thinks in the novel’s present, and what she thought at the time, ‘[bursting] open the French windows,’ the voices of the adolescent and adult Clarissa, collapsed into one.

Furthermore, at this point in the novel, the reader has been provided with no context as to why Bourton is referenced here, why Clarissa would recall it, nor why her memory of it is so powerful as to be able to intrude upon her present (of course, a reader may not even know to ask these questions, given the lack of context provided prior to Bourton’s mention). It is, therefore, only upon reading of the memory of the kiss that the potential significance of Bourton for Clarissa both in this first reference, but also elsewhere in the novel, becomes legible, that it was the place where she experienced ‘the most exquisite moment of her whole life,’ and where, following Whitworth’s argument, sexual freedom, and the queer revolutionary potential of a ‘world turned upside down,’ were still possible. As a result of this lack of context then, this first reference to Bourton works simultaneously to destabilize the narrative’s temporality, serving as both a flight (or, ‘plunge’) into the novel’s past, but also, through its creation of suspense, of a desire for the context which is so pointedly denied to the reader, it gestures towards the narrative’s future, and the explanation of Bourton’s significance which is to come.

As a result of the above narratological devices then, Woolf constructs Clarissa’s memory of the kiss in such a way that linear time becomes disturbed, in many of the same ways that Septimus’s experience of time could be seen to. Across Clarissa’s memories of Bourton, and particularly in her remembering of the kiss with Sally, distinctions between the past and the present collapse, the voice of the Clarissa of the novel’s past blurs with the Clarissa of the novel’s present; the memory is rendered both as something that happened then, and something which is happening again in the experience of its recollection.

In this chapter then, I will follow this connection I have identified above between Clarissa’s queer, ‘exquisite moment’ in Bourton and the disturbance of linear temporalities which it prompts across the novel. I will begin by situating the moment of the kiss within the

wider context of ‘moments’ in Clarissa’s narrative, arguing that the kiss is representative of only one in a series of queer ‘moments’ experienced by Clarissa and present in the novel, and that the moment is the unit of time in which Clarissa is able to experience her queer desires. I will then turn to draw on theorisations of queer moments by Eve Sedgwick and Sara Ahmed, in order to consider how such theories can help to illuminate the relationship between queer desire and such temporally disturbing moments. I will also seek to nuance previous readings of Clarissa’s queer temporality, arguing for the importance of reading Clarissa’s moments in relation to Woolf’s own concept of ‘moments of being’ as outlined in her autobiographical essay ‘Sketch of the Past.’ I will suggest that by reading the moments in *Mrs. Dalloway* against this essay, it becomes possible to explain some of the specific characteristics which constitute Clarissa’s experience of her moments, characteristics which cannot be explained solely through queer theory. I will consequently consider how Clarissa’s moments can be read as both ‘moments of being’ and queer moments, arguing for an inherent overlapping between the two; that queer moments as defined by Sedgwick and Ahmed are (or, at least, are anticipated by) moments of being.

2.1 ‘Only for a moment’

As I have suggested hitherto, there are a number of parallels between the temporality of Clarissa’s memories of Bourton and Septimus’s visions of Evans, with regards to both the characters’ respective experiences of a past which persists into their present, and how these moments work to disturb the linear temporality of the novel. However, there are also a number of key distinctions between these two characters’ experiences. One of these differences is in the emphasis placed in Clarissa’s narrative on the experiencing, and re-experiencing, of moments, with Clarissa and Sally’s kiss being specifically introduced to the reader as ‘the most exquisite *moment* of her whole life’ [emphasis my own].

This reference to the kiss as a ‘moment’ in the quotation with which this chapter opened, is framed by, and in conversation with, Clarissa’s reflection earlier in that third section of the novel:

Yet she could not resist sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman, not a girl, of a woman confessing, as to her they often did, some scrape, some folly. And whether it was pity, or their beauty, or that she was older, or some accident – like a faint scent, or a violin next door (so strange is the power of sounds at certain moments), she did undoubtedly then feel what men felt. Only for a moment; but it was enough. It was a sudden revelation, a tinge like a blush which one tried to check and then, as it spread, one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered and

felt the world come closer, swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure or rapture, which splits its skin and gushed and poured with an extra-ordinary alleviation over the cracks and sores. Then, for that moment, she had seen an illumination; a match burning in a crocus; an inner meaning almost expressed. But the close withdrew; the hard softened. It was over – the moment. (*MD*: 28-29)

In this passage, we find this braiding of Clarissa's queer desire and the temporal unit of the moment made even more explicit. Here, use of the words 'moment' and 'moments' to describe her interactions with women recur four times, in over half the sentences. It is specifically in these 'moments' that Clarissa is described as yielding, giving in, and being able to 'undoubtedly then feel what men felt.' In constructing her feeling as specifically 'what men felt' for women, the feeling is presented as specifically outside the spectrum of feelings women should feel for other women, beyond the bounds of, for example, friendship or pity, the other emotions gestured to in this quotation, which is to say, as queer. We seem to have some further indication of what this feeling might be, in that description of such moments which follows, where an overtly sexual imagery is deployed in its description. Clarissa describes these moments as being 'like a blush' which 'quivered,' and grows 'swollen,' before it 'gushed and poured with an extra-ordinary alleviation,' a description which is mirrored in the structure of that sprawling sentence as a result of the clauses being stacked on top of one another without a break, the lexical field and sentence structure combining to evoke the build and release of an orgasm. And, indeed, this sexual connotation to these moments continues following this sentence as the narrative voice states, 'the close withdrew; the hard softened,' clauses which could also describe a post-coital parting. Clarissa's feeling that 'men felt' then, in these following sentences is euphemistically presented as a sexual one, as one of Sapphic sexual contact and of orgasm.

Returning to the way in which Clarissa's memory of her kiss with Sally is described as 'the most exquisite moment of her whole life' then, this earlier passage frames the kiss with Sally in Bourton as only one in a continuum of such queer 'moments' between Clarissa and women, of which, the one in Bourton is perhaps the pinnacle, 'the most exquisite.' That is to say, when Clarissa refers to the kiss with Sally as a 'moment,' it is possible to read it as specifically referencing this earlier passage, and that construction of the memory as a 'moment' standing in to euphemistically signal the queer feeling, 'what men felt,' which Clarissa experienced, and re-experiences in that memory.

Indeed, such resonances between uses of the word 'moment' appears to be evoked again in a later passage where Clarissa reflects:

This was her favourite dress, one of Sally Parker's, the last almost she ever made, alas, for Sally had now retired, lived at Ealing, and if I ever have a moment, thought Clarissa (but never would she have a moment any more), I shall go and see her at Ealing. For she was a character, thought Clarissa, a real artist. She thought of little out-of-the-way things; yet her dresses were never queer. You could wear them at Hatfield; at Buckingham Palace. She had worn them at Hatfield; at Buckingham Palace.' (*MD*: 35).

In this quotation, the first use of the word 'moment' appears relatively innocuous, a common turn of phrase for having the time to go and see Sally Parker. However, the word is then repeated in that parenthetical remark, one which is contained within the same clause as 'thought Clarissa,' blurring whether it is her own voice or that of the narrator, where it is declared '(but never would she have a moment any more).' This remark muddies the meaning of Clarissa's 'if I ever have a moment.' Taken as the interjection of an omniscient third-person narrator, or else without consideration of the references to moments earlier in that section, the assertion that 'never would she have a moment any more' seems incongruous with Clarissa's narrative. One possible reading is that this aside implies she is so busy with her responsibilities as a hostess, wife, and mother, that she would never again have the time to visit Sally. However, such a reading fits uncomfortably with Clarissa's schedule as it is presented elsewhere in the novel; not least in that opening sentence: 'Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself,' which emphasises Clarissa's ability to select what labour she performs, that her servants will, under normal circumstances, take care of such tasks for her, suggesting that there is no material impediment to her being able to find a moment to see Sally Parker. Another reading of that sentence might be that it implies Clarissa is going to die, particularly suggested by that emphatic 'never.' However, again, this implication does not appear to fit comfortably within the context of the wider narrative; despite Clarissa's repeated meditations on death, as shown most clearly in her frequent repetition of the line from Othello, 'if it were now to die, twere now to be most happy', Clarissa does not, of course, die by the novel's close (*MD*: 31).

However, by reading this passage in relation back to Clarissa's earlier reflections on moments discussed above, the use of the word 'moment' in that parenthesis again stands to euphemistically signal queer sexual contact, and orgasm. Such a queer reading of the moment she would never have again, in comparison to the more surface level readings I have suggested, is comparatively more in keeping with Clarissa's narrative and characterisation in the novel; it is considerably more plausible that she may not (or, at least, does not anticipate herself to) engage in such queer encounters again. Indeed, such a queer reading is invited by

the text itself, with the dressmaker sharing the same first name, Sally, as the subject of Clarissa's 'most exquisite moment,' as well as in the disavowal of a 'queer' quality to her dresses. By opening the clause with that 'yet,' there is an implication that the dresses *ought* to be queer, or one might expect them to be so, as a result of this quality of Sally's to think 'of little out-of-the-way things,' as if the queerness Clarissa perceives in Sally would have the potential to spill over into her work.

2.2 'Never would she have a moment anymore': Clarissa's Queer Past (and Present)

In this queer reading of Clarissa's 'moments,' and the assertion 'never would she have a moment anymore,' we find a second, interconnected, distinction between Clarissa and Septimus's experiences of time and queerness becoming central, that of Clarissa's queerness being characterised by a backwards looking temporality. Typically, critics have sought to locate this past-oriented temporality experienced by Clarissa within the context of Henri Bergson's philosophical writings on time, and specifically with relation to his concept of duration (*la durée*) first proposed in his doctoral thesis of 1889, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, translated into English in 1910.

One such comparison between the temporality of *Mrs. Dalloway* and Bergson's philosophy can be found in Randall Stevenson's *Reading the Times*, wherein Stevenson suggests:

remembrance and recollection of past life, powerfully initiated by present thought and activity – as in *Mrs Dalloway*, or Proust's writing – can [...] be compared with Bergson's description of memories which 'crowd in upon our present occupation and are revealed by means of it' (Stevenson 2020; 100).

Similarly, Jesse Matz has suggested a Bergsonian parallel in Woolf's depiction of Clarissa's acts of remembering, arguing that:

Woolf seems to have shared this idea of duration and *Mrs. Dalloway* appears to pursue it: as Clarissa's present consciousness loses focus upon the moving present and resorts to living memory for its sense of direction, she seems to get back to what Bergson calls pure duration (Matz 2021: 168).

Both Matz and Stevenson then argue for a reading of Clarissa's acts of remembering as narrativisations of the experience of duration (*la durée*), reading the remembrances as instances in which distinctions between the past and present collapse, where the past usurps

the present as imperative, as the primary concern of consciousness. However, the two disagree on the nuances of this intrusion of the past. Whilst Stevenson suggests a symbiotic relationship between the past and present in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Matz argues that Clarissa ‘loses focus’ on the present and instead ‘resorts to living memory,’ implying that the present has no share in Clarissa’s consciousness during these remembrances, that it becomes subordinated to the past. I would suggest that Matz here overlooks the emphasis placed on the present as a catalyst for Clarissa’s acts of remembrance, which Stevenson identifies.

Across the two paragraphs which precede and inaugurate Clarissa’s recollection of her kiss with Sally, perhaps the clearest example of this role of the present in enabling Clarissa’s ability to recall her past can be seen when Clarissa asserts:

No, the words meant nothing to her now. She could not even get an echo of her old emotion. But she could remember going cold with excitement, and doing her hair in a kind of ecstasy (now the old feeling came back to her, as she took out her hairpins, laid them on the dressing-table, began to do her hair) (*MD*: 31).

Here, Clarissa moves from the emphatic assertion of the impenetrability of her past state in those first two sentences to, by the very next sentence, having ‘the old feeling [come] back to her,’ the cause for this change being specifically connected to her interactions with the present. Clarissa’s remembrance of her ‘old feeling’ is pointedly bracketed with a description of her actions in the present, actions which mirror those which she performed in the object of her memory, ‘doing her hair.’ It is through the repetition of the same actions in the present which she had performed in her past that Clarissa is consequently able to re-access the emotional state of that past event otherwise unavailable to her. What we find then is that the present does not become inconsequential nor ‘lost’ to Clarissa in her act of remembering. Instead, the present is integral to such remembrances, with her memories, as Stevenson suggests, made available as a consequence of her actions in the present.

Whilst Stevenson and Matz’s readings of Clarissa’s memories against Bergson’s philosophy do appear to offer a plausible model through which to read Woolf’s depiction of memory and the persistence of the past, I would suggest that such comparisons with Bergson’s thought are problematised by the specificities of Bergson’s concept of duration (*la durée*). In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson argues:

pure duration is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states In a word, pure duration might well be nothing but a succession of qualitative changes, which melt into and permeate one another, without precise

outlines, without any tendency to externalize themselves in relation to one another ([1889] 1910: 100).

The model of time which Bergson proposes in his concept of ‘pure duration’ then is one in which time is understood as not a succession of discrete events but a continuum ‘without precise outlines’ in which the ego (consciousness), is not separated from its past but carries that past with it. Of course, in such a view of time, parallels to Clarissa’s temporality, with its blurring of past and present, its voices of the adolescent and adult Clarissas ‘which melt into and permeate one another,’ seem clear. However, readings which interpret Clarissa’s temporality solely as a narrativisation of Bergson’s duration overlook that passage which provides the foundation for Clarissa’s memory of her ‘exquisite moment’ in which she describes ‘yielding to the charm of a woman,’ and which ends ‘it was over – the moment.’ There, we find Clarissa explicitly experiencing a temporality in which time is divided into discrete units, ‘moments.’ If Clarissa’s temporality was merely a narrativization of Bergson’s theory of pure duration, the ‘moment’ would not hold any relevance at all; it is a fundamentally incompatible model of time to that which Bergson describes. The fact therefore that Clarissa not only views her life in terms of ‘moments’ but specifically moments which can be ‘over’ troubles these readings which place Clarissa’s narrative firmly in a Bergsonian model.

Indeed, Matz (2021: 169) does go on to suggest that ‘there are limits to Woolf’s Bergsonism and reasons to question this familiar association.’ Instead, Matz proposes the philosopher Mary Sturt as offering a model which more comfortably fits with Clarissa’s temporality: ‘Sturt recognizes the value and the necessity of the practical view of time, aiming not for a romantic ideal of some escape into pure duration but a kind of compromise between that ideal and practical reality’ (2021: 169). In Sturt then, Matz identifies a model which is more readily able to account for Clarissa’s recourse to the language of ‘moments,’ her failure to entirely divest from the linearity and divisions of ‘the practical view of time.’ Of course, at the same time, Sturt’s use in reading Clarissa is limited, at least in Matz’s application, as it does not offer a reading of this emphasis on moments specifically, of why the moment, and not any other measure of time, is the unit which defines Clarissa’s temporality. Furthermore, Matz fails to account at all for why Clarissa’s moments of escape from linear, divided time, are so consistently tied to remembrances of queer experiences.

One critic who does attempt to account for the distinctly queer dynamic to Clarissa’s experience of time is Annmarie Jagose who, in ‘Remembering and Forgetting: The Memorialization of Homosexuality in *Mrs. Dalloway*’, proposes psychoanalyst Sigmund

Freud's theories of female homosexuality as a possible model for Clarissa's temporal experiences. Jagose draws attention to Freud's belief that homosexuality was the result of a failed process of sexual development, that the homosexual adult remains stuck in an earlier phase of this process, which in the heterosexual would be reconciled with and forgotten: 'properly contained in the past as the prehistory of heterosexuality, for Freud, homosexuality—and particularly female homosexuality—is fashioned after recollection: that is, homosexuality is committed to memory' (2004: 210). For Freud then, queer desire is an act of memory, the homosexual is constituted by their ability to recall a desire which ought to be, but isn't, forgotten in the process of sexual progression. That is to say, the homosexual is exclusively the subject of a backwards looking orientation. Cautious not to imply that Freud served as an influence on Woolf, Jagose does nonetheless argue for the construction of Clarissa's temporality as Freudian:

For Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, as for Freud, the remembering homosexual subject is invariably recast as the homosexual subject of memory. Increasingly, homosexuality is confined to the mnemonic register, its surfacing in the present a temporary glitch (2004: 211).

Jagose's comparison of Clarissa's temporality with Freud's theories is able then to overcome one of those limitations I suggested in relation to Matz's reading of the text through Sturt; namely, Freud's theories are able to account both for the past-oriented view of time experienced by Clarissa *as well as* the distinctly and specifically queer character of Clarissa's memories of kiss, acknowledging the integrity of queer in such a temporality. At the same time, Jagose's use of Freud begins the work of considering the momentary quality of Clarissa's temporality, reading these moments as 'temporary glitch[es]' in which Clarissa is able to access the queer desire which should remain confined to her past. However, Jagose, I would suggest, positions Clarissa's queerness too emphatically in the past; for example, when she refers to Clarissa's reaction to Septimus's death as a 'necrophiliac investment in homosexuality as past event' and as evidence of 'her continuing fantasy of homosexuality as quarantined from the present moment' (2004: 227, 229).

This idea Jagose proposes, of Clarissa's memories as in some way evidence of her attempts to 'quarantine' her queerness in the past, is one which recurs in readings of Clarissa's temporality. In "'A match burning in a crocus": Inexpressible Desire in *Mrs. Dalloway*,' Wendy Webber makes a similar claim when reading Clarissa and Septimus's queerness in relation to Eve Sedgwick's discussions of the closet, arguing that 'for both Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith, the closeting of queer desire is the placing of

that desire within the constraints of a past' (2004: 192). Whilst one might argue that Septimus does attempt to closet his desire in the past immediately following Evans's death, through his repression of grief and marriage to Rezia, by the time of the narrative, it is clear that any such attempts have failed. Queer desire does not remain closeted in the past, but forcefully and disturbingly makes itself everywhere apparent to Septimus in his present, with Evans appearing 'behind the railings!'

In Clarissa's narrative too, I would suggest, to read her recourse to memory as reflective of a repression of her desire, a quarantining or closeting of it, is to overlook the first two sentences of the passage in which Clarissa reflects on her momentary experience of feeling 'what men felt' (quoted on page 53). Central to this passage's construction of Clarissa's queer moments is that progressive verb 'yielding' coupled with the adverb 'sometimes,' which pointedly position such moments of 'yielding,' of feeling 'what men felt,' as both ongoing and spontaneous events. Further, in the following sentence we continue to find these moments constructed as ongoing, indeed specifically as events which happen to the adult Clarissa of the novel's present, in those references to 'a woman confessing, as to her they often did,' and the suggestion that these moments occur because 'she was older.' Of course, such a construction of Clarissa's moments is complicated by that assertion, considered above, that 'never would she have a moment anymore.' However, this is not necessarily out of keeping with the construction of such moments set up here. These moments are, as I have suggested, spontaneous events, over which Clarissa appears to have no control, unable to pinpoint what it is that inaugurates her experiences of 'feel[ing] what men felt.' It is then, perhaps, unsurprising that she does not believe she will have one again; that is to say, she cannot anticipate them, cannot plan for them, they are not an object of a future orientation. But, in not being an experience which she can project into the future, which she can anticipate, this does not consequently make them *exclusively* objects of the past, as Jagose and Weber suggest. Indeed, Jagose herself appears to undermine her criticism of Clarissa's attempts to cordon off her desire into the realm of the past when noting, 'memory is not the securing of the present against the past, the proof of their distinction, but the transformation of the past brought to bear on the present, the sign of their cohabitation' (2004: 229). In Clarissa's very act of remembering the past then, Jagose posits, her queer desire is consequently made present, undermining these readings which take for granted the exclusion of queer desire from the time of the novel.

Across these readings of Clarissa's moments and memories then, there is an inability to account entirely for the specific experience of time which we find in Clarissa's narrative.

Each of the above readings entirely overlooks the emphasis I have argued the narrative places on Clarissa's experiencing of time in the unit of the moment. It becomes necessary then to look for a model for Clarissa's temporality beyond the theories of Bergson, Sturt, or Freud. This model, I will suggest, is to be found in Woolf's own theoretical writings on time and memory, and specifically in her concept of 'moments of being.'

2.3 Moments of Being

Whilst some critics have previously suggested a connection between Clarissa's experience of time and Woolf's writings on 'moments of being,' these critics often fail to elaborate on what is meant by a 'moment of being,' as well as how Clarissa's memories specifically can be characterised as such. Bradley Clissold, for example, argues that 'these memories sustain Clarissa as moments of 'being' that she frequently returns to in her stream of consciousness to escape the cotton wool of daily life' (2004: 26). However, as suggested, Clissold does not go on to define what is meant by 'moments of "being",' why they are able to sustain her, nor the reason for their frequent repetition. The stability of Woolf's (particularly unstable) concept is taken for granted, and so too is its relation to Clarissa's memories. In this section of the chapter then, I will seek to correct the oversights of such previous readings, constructing a working definition of 'moments of being' through a close reading of 'Sketch of the Past' and, consequently, establishing Clarissa's various queer moments as narrativisations of such moments of being through a comparison of the two texts.

Woolf's 'Sketch of the Past' makes up the last and largest of the five essays posthumously edited, collected, and published by Jeanne Schulkind in the 1976 volume *Moments of Being*. In it, Woolf attempts a sketch at her own past, as a distraction from her laborious work on the biography *Roger Fry*, and, ostensibly, with a view of returning to them at a later date to develop into a memoir. Over the course of 'Sketch of the Past,' Woolf notes that, apparently arbitrarily, certain moments have remained with her as memories, whilst others have been entirely forgotten, and proposes a distinction between these different moments, categorizing those she remembers as 'moments of being' and those that have been forgotten as 'moments of non-being' (MB: 83). Although Woolf does not offer a strict definition of either of these terms, across the essay she does suggest some of the characteristics of such moments.

Woolf begins the essay by recalling some of her earliest memories, such as:

of lying half asleep, half awake, in bed at the nursery at St Ives. It is of hearing the waves breaking, one, two, one, two, and sending a splash of water over the beach; and then breaking, one, two, one, two, behind a yellow blind. It is of hearing the blind draw its little acorn across the floor as the wind blew the blind out. It is of lying and hearing and seeing this light, and feeling, it is almost impossible that I should be here; of feeling the purest ecstasy I can conceive. (*MB*: 78-79)

In this passage, as in the description of Clarissa's kiss with Sally, there is a pointed emphasis on the significance of Woolf's 'feeling,' her reaction to the moment, over the content of the moment itself. Despite the relative mundanity of the memory– the experience of falling asleep to the sound of the waves– Woolf ends by describing the way that moment made her feel as 'the purest ecstasy I can conceive'– just as the emphasis is placed on Clarissa's reaction to the kiss over the act of the kiss itself. Woolf then continues by turning to consider another memory at St Ives:

I stopped then going down to the beach; I stopped at the top to look down at the gardens. They were sunk beneath the road. The apples were on a level with one's head. The gardens gave off a murmur of bees; the apples were red and gold; there were also pink flowers; and grey and silver leaves. The buzz, the croon, the smell, all seemed to press voluptuously against some membrane; not to burst it; but to hum round one such a complete rapture of pleasure that I stopped, smelt; looked. But again I cannot describe that rapture. It was rapture rather than ecstasy. (*MB*: 80).

Here, there are a number of similarities to the earlier memory. The passage, again, is relatively mundane in nature; there is nothing in it that one might call significant to Woolf's life. As in the first passage also, we find an emphasis on the sensory. In the first passage Woolf described 'lying and hearing and seeing,' in this passage, 'I stopped, smelt; looked.' Yet, there is also a pointed difference between the two. Whilst in the first memory it was 'ecstasy' Woolf describes herself feeling, in this it is 'rapture rather than ecstasy.' Woolf recalls the language of the earlier memory specifically in order to distinguish it from the later. Despite the apparent similarity between the two emotions, such a distinction can be found to repay scrutiny. Ecstasy is defined as 'the state of being 'beside oneself', thrown into a frenzy or a stupor, with anxiety, astonishment, fear, or passion' (*OED*: "ecstasy (n.), sense 1,"). In contrast, rapture is defined as 'a state, condition, or fit of intense delight or enthusiasm' (*OED*: "rapture (n.), sense 1.a"). The emotions then might be distinguished from one another by both their intensity, ecstasy being defined as 'a frenzy or a stupor' whilst rapture is 'a state, condition, or fit,' as well as differences in the spectrum of feelings with which they are associated, ecstasy including 'anxiety, astonishment, fear, or passion' as opposed to rapture's 'delight or enthusiasm.' What is significant here is that despite pointedly constructing them

as different from one another, both are remembered by Woolf, both serve as examples of ‘moments of being.’ In this way, Woolf opens up the definition of moments of being, allowing it to include a broader range of experiences, though still all intensely felt (even if the degree of intensity differs). There is also, again, a clear parallel in the language Woolf uses for her description of this moment of being and that used in the description of Clarissa’s ‘moments,’ which are ‘swollen with some astonishing significance, some pressure or rapture.’

Indeed, this emphasis placed on the emotional reaction the two moments provoke in her over the contents of the moments themselves is one which Woolf draws attention to herself later in the essay: ‘but the peculiarity of these two strong memories is that each was very simple. I am hardly aware of myself, but only of the sensation. I am only the container of the feeling of ecstasy, of the feeling of rapture.’ (*MB*: 81). These two moments then, are both ‘peculiar,’ but also peculiarly memorable, because the ‘feeling of ecstasy, [...] the feeling of rapture’ consumes Woolf; she becomes ‘only the container’ for these feelings, emptied out of all other concerns or feelings.

Woolf continues to develop on this emotional quality of her description of moments of being elsewhere in ‘Sketch of the Past.’ Later, she notes:

As a child then, my days, just as they do now, contained a large proportion of this cotton wool, this non-being. Week after week passed at St Ives and nothing made any dint upon me. Then, for no reason that I know about, there was a sudden violent shock; something happened so violently that I have remembered it all my life. (*MB*: 84).

The emotion described in this passage differs quite significantly from those of the memories earlier in the essay. Now, Woolf distinguishes moments of being from moments of non-being through this concept of ‘a sudden violent shock’ that ‘happened so violently I have remembered it all my life.’ This repeated emphasis on the violence of the experience introduces a new current to ‘moments of being,’ still implying an intensity of emotion, but imbuing it with a sense of force, particularly a destructive force. The cause for this change in the tenor of Woolf’s description here may be explained by the three examples of such memories which follow. The first of these memories is of:

fighting with Thoby on the lawn. We were pommelling each other with our fists. Just as I raised my fist to hit him, I felt: why hurt another person? I dropped my hand instantly, and stood there, and let him beat me. I remember the feeling. It was a

feeling of hopeless sadness. It was as if I became aware of something terrible; and of my own powerlessness. I slunk off alone feeling horribly depressed. (MB: 84)

Here, then, the example Woolf gives is again different to those she had offered before. Instead of 'ecstasy' or 'rapture,' the memory ends with 'a feeling of hopeless sadness.' Of course, this memory also differs from the others in appearing to represent a significantly more obvious relation to Woolf's later life; appearing to anticipate her life-long commitment to pacifism, and her rejection of the masculine ideals which lead to conflict, which she would lay out in 1938's *Three Guineas*.

Another example Woolf offers of such a memory similarly seems to explain the description of these moments in terms of their violence, with Woolf recounting how:

Some people named Valpy had been staying in St Ives, and had left. We were waiting for dinner one night, when somehow I overheard my father or my mother say that Mr Valpy had killed himself. The next thing I remember is being in the garden at night and walking on the path by the apple tree. It seemed to me that the apple tree was connected with the horror of Mr. Valpy's suicide. I could not pass it. I stood there looking at the grey-green creases in the bark – it was a moonlit night – in a trance of horror. I seemed to be dragged down, hopelessly, into some pit of absolute despair from which I could not escape. My body seemed paralysed. (MB: 84)

Here, again, the tone of Woolf's memory is darker than those which came before. Whilst there is still an emphasis on the intensely felt emotion the events cause in Woolf, these emotions are again those of hopelessness, 'despair,' 'horror.' In a similar way to the passage describing the fight with Thoby, this memory also ends with Woolf in a state of physical passivity, her 'body seemed paralysed.' Here then, Woolf develops on the container-like quality attributed to the experience of those earlier emotions, suggesting that the intensity of these emotions so overwhelms her that she becomes physically inert. As she later comments: 'I only know that many of these exceptional moments brought with them a peculiar horror and a physical collapse; they seemed dominant; myself passive.' (MB: 85)

The second example Woolf gives of such 'exceptional moments' notably differs from the other two and complicates a reading of the 'violence' she attributes to these moments as being specifically connected to the memories' own violent contents. In that example, Woolf describes herself

[...] in the garden at St Ives. I was looking at the flower bed by the front door; "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. (MB: 84).

Here, Woolf offers a distinct contrast against those darker, more negative emotional states brought about by the two other examples. Instead of ‘a state of despair,’ this passage ends in ‘a state of satisfaction’ (*MB*: 84). We also don’t find Woolf in the same state of inertia which the other two emotional states left her in. Woolf suggests this difference may have been because ‘in the case of the flower I found a reason; and was thus able to deal with the sensation. I was not powerless. I was conscious— if only at a distance — that I should in time explain it,’ positing that she may have been older at the time of this memory than the fight with Thoby or Valpy’s suicide, and so ‘had a greater power through reason to provide an explanation’ (*MB*: 85). The similarity between these passages then can be located in the way that Woolf makes in all three a discovery or epiphany, even though in the first and last she is unable to make sense of them.

This epiphanic quality to such moments is one Woolf herself draws attention to, noting that whilst she still feels these shocks:

I feel that I have had a blow; but it is not, as I thought as a child, simply a blow from an enemy hidden behind the cotton wool of daily life; it is or will become a revelation of some order; it is a token of some real thing behind appearances; and I make it real by putting it into words. It is only by putting it into words that I make it whole; this wholeness means that it has lost its power to hurt me; it gives me, perhaps because by doing so I take away the pain, a great delight to put the severed parts together. (*MB*: 85)

Here, we see the sense Woolf has that such shocks are indicative of ‘a revelation of some order [...] a token of some real thing behind appearances,’ that they are moments in which some truth is revealed to her, some order. Alongside this however, we also find Woolf draw attention to the importance of her own role in the handling of the shock, that the revelation she has is made ‘real by putting it into words’ that ‘it is only by putting it into words that I make it whole.’ What Woolf makes clear then is that the ‘truth’ revealed to her in these moments is one which she herself fashions from the moment; that it is not, ‘real’ unless she is able to fashion it in to words, to construct an order out of it, ‘to put the severed parts together.’ This emphasis on her own involvement in fashioning a truth out of these ‘severed parts’ calls into question whether these moments themselves contain or impart a truth to her, or if such truths are entirely Woolf’s own construction in her attempt to make sense of them. Such a distinction does not, necessarily, change the constitution of Woolf’s moments of being however, as, certainly, the moments are connected in Woolf’s essay to a sense of revelation and epiphany, even if the meaning is only fashioned by Woolf after the fact.

Returning then to consider Clarissa's narrative in light of Woolf's later writing about her concept of the moment of being, we find a number of fundamental similarities between Woolf's moments of being and Clarissa's 'moments.' Above, I gestured to the parallels between Woolf's descriptions of her memories and Clarissa's moments with regards to their shared feeling of 'rapture' as well as the emphasis placed on the emotional reaction to the event over the event itself in both texts. However, these parallels extend also to this epiphanic quality which Woolf develops over the course of 'Sketch of the Past.'

In *Mrs. Dalloway* we see Clarissa's description of her kiss with Sally, as well as her wider 'moments' of queer feeling, characterised by a similarly revelatory and epiphanic experience to that outlined by Woolf in 'Sketch of the Past.' With regards to the kiss, Clarissa exclaims: 'the radiance burnt through, the revelation, the religious feeling!' Here, again, Woolf draws on the same word 'revelation' to describe Clarissa's kiss as she employs in the description of her 'blows' which 'will become a revelation of some order.' This revelation, of course, aligns with the earlier metaphor deployed in the description of the kiss, that it was a 'present,' one which can be unwrapped and revealed. However, by reading this exclamation in light of Woolf's revelatory moments of being, we can understand this revelation, and the gift itself, as being a gift of knowledge, some awareness which the kiss imparts upon her. Indeed, that final epithet, 'the religious feeling' further ties Clarissa's experience of the kiss to Woolf's later conception of a moment of being, in that 'rapture' and 'ecstasy' are both feelings with strong metaphysical associations, usually attributed to an experience of divine revelation, suggesting that Clarissa's 'religious feeling' can itself be understood as being such a feeling as Woolf connects to the experience of a moment of being.

Turning to Clarissa's wider reflections on those 'moments' with women when she 'undoubtedly felt what men felt' (quoted in full above) wherein Woolf engages in much the same discourse as she employs in discussing her moments of being: an emphasis on a 'sudden revelation' which bears an obvious similarity to 'sudden violent shock; the 'astonishing significance' and 'inner meaning almost expressed' paralleling Woolf's assertion that her 'blows' or 'shocks' are 'or will become a revelation of some order.' Indeed, drawing on Woolf's description of her own active role in making sense of these shocks, that 'I make it real by putting it into words,' we can understand this 'inner meaning almost expressed' as representative of a similar quality in Clarissa's moments. That is to say, Clarissa is unable, as Woolf is, to make sense of such moments, and therefore to 'make it real [...] make it whole.' Instead, she is only left with the 'inner meaning almost expressed' as Woolf suggests she herself would be if not for her ability through writing to transform the

experience in to meaning. There is also in Clarissa's description of these moments a similar sense of physical passivity to Woolf's inertia following her moments of being: 'one yielded to its expansion, and rushed to the farthest verge and there quivered.' 'Yielded' and 'quivered' here position the subject of such moments, Clarissa, as physically weak, as overcome by the force of the moment, unable to resist it, and so retreats 'to the furthest verge' where one is '[quivering].' 'Quivered' in this passage can be seen to suggest a dual meaning; both, to shiver or vibrate out of fear, in line with the idea of having 'yielded' and 'rushed to the farthest verge' in retreat, but also, of course, to vibrate or shiver with sexual pleasure. There is then, in Clarissa's description of her 'moments' a clear parallel to Woolf's claim that 'these exceptional moments brought with them a peculiar horror and a physical collapse; they seemed dominant; myself passive' (*MB*: 85).

Returning to 'Sketch of the Past,' it is also possible to find in Woolf's description of 'moments of being' a similarity to Clarissa's non-linear, past-oriented temporality, a temporality which can be, as I argued above, read as symptomatic of her experience of the kiss with Sally and these wider queer 'moments.' In 'Sketch of the Past,' Woolf describes how:

[...] those moments – in the nursery, on the road to the beach – can still be more real than the present moment. This I have just tested. For I got up and crossed the garden. Percy was digging the asparagus bed; Louie was shaking a mat in front of the bedroom door. But I was seeing them through the sight I saw here– the nursery and the road to the beach. At times I can go back to St Ives more completely than I can this morning. I can reach a state where I seem to be watching things happen as if I were there. (*MB*: 80).

Here then, Woolf describes herself as experiencing a kind of dual-temporality, where she sees the activity of her present 'through the sight I saw here,' drawing a parallel to the temporal collapse between Clarissa's past and present in her remembering of the kiss. Indeed, central to this 'state' is the fact that the past is not lost sight of for Woolf but is seen 'through' the sight of the memory, both co-exist in her subjectivity, the past colouring the present, as I have argued occurs in Clarissa's remembrances. This experience of temporal distortion is further built upon in that second to last sentence, when Woolf refers to her ability to 'go back to St Ives.' Woolf describes it as a return, a physical movement in to the past, not as a mere remembering of the time. This sense of it as a return to the actual moment is developed further in that final sentence, 'I can reach a state where I seem to be watching things happen as if I were there,' which is much the same experience that Clarissa appears to be having

when she remembers the kiss with Sally, her reaction to the kiss appearing to happen equally in her present as in her past, as if she were there.

Later, Woolf again emphasises and expounds upon this non-linear quality to the experience of moments of being, suggesting her own model of time in which she figures

[...] the past – as an avenue lying behind; a long ribbon of scenes, emotions. There at the end of the avenue still, are the garden and the nursery. [...] I feel that strong emotion must leave its trace; and it is only a question of discovering how we can get ourselves again attached to it, so that we shall be able to live our lives through from the start. (*MB*: 81)

Here Woolf presents a view of time in which the past and present are connected to one another, one where the past is not past but remains, persists, ‘as an avenue lying behind’ the present ‘a long ribbon of scenes, emotions.’ Further, Woolf emphasises the importance of ‘strong emotion’ in her view of this persistent past, that the past which remains is the ‘trace’ of the experience of these strong emotions. Reading Clarissa’s kiss with Sally as exemplary of such a moment of being then, we can begin to account for the distortion of linear time encountered in that passage through the model of time Woolf suggests characterise moments of being in ‘Sketch of the Past.’

2.4 Queer Moments

Whilst, above, I have suggested the ways in which Clarissa’s queer moments can be read as moments of being – a reading which elucidates both why Clarissa’s experience of time is characterised by the momentary, as well as why these moments take on the specific characteristics they do – it still remains necessary to consider what relationship there is between the moment (of being) and the queerness which I have identified as central to Clarissa’s moments. In order to engage in such a consideration, it becomes necessary to turn to later theorisations of queer temporalities, particularly in the work of Eve Sedgwick. In Sedgwick’s work, the relationship between queer and the momentary becomes of explicit concern. Therefore, by reading Clarissa’s temporality alongside Sedgwick, it becomes possible to shed light upon the relationship between queerness and temporality in the novel, and the specific characteristics that relationship takes on, namely the synthesis of a non-linear, past-oriented temporality and an emphasis on the momentary.

Perhaps the first theorisation of a relationship between queer and the momentary can be located in the forward to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s 1994 book *Tendencies*, ‘T-Times’ (the ‘T’ here presumably referring to the t-shirts Sedgwick describes seeing at a pride parade in

1992). There, Sedgwick, now famously, states that ‘something about queer is inextinguishable. Queer is a continuing moment, movement, motive— recurrent, eddying, troublant’ (1994: viii). In this forward, Sedgwick’s reference to a ‘moment’ is not so specifically referring to an individual experience of time, such as those found in *Mrs. Dalloway* or ‘Sketch of the Past.’ Instead, Sedgwick is referring (or, as I will go on to suggest, is *also* referring) to an epoch, a social temporality, the ‘moment’ in which she was living, in the wake of the AIDs crisis, and the increasing public demonstrations for queer rights. This socio-political context can also be used to read her subsequent descriptions of queer as a ‘movement, motive,’ characterising queer as a political force (though, similarly, Sedgwick does not necessarily mean to evoke *only* these definitions of movement and motive). Nonetheless, Sedgwick’s references to queer as ‘inextinguishable [...] a continuing moment [...] recurrent, eddying, troublant’ offer notable temporal metaphors for describing the subjective queer experience of time (and I will consider below how these have variously been taken up by later theorists of queer temporality).

To begin to unpack what Sedgwick’s discussion of the queer ‘moment’ implies then: to understand queer as a ‘moment’ which is ‘recurrent,’ is to suggest both its persistence, as well as its circularity; that it re-appears, makes itself felt again, not only once, but repeatedly— joining up past, present, and future (much like Woolf’s ‘tunnelling method’). Sedgwick appears to then use ‘eddying’ to modify this temporal metaphor. The *OED* defines an ‘eddy’ as ‘the water that by some interruption in its course, runs contrary to the direction of the tide or current’ (Adm. Smyth); a circular motion in water, a small whirlpool.’ (*OED*: “eddy (n.), sense 1,”). To consider the queer moment as ‘eddying’ then, Sedgwick draws attention first to its directionality, which is to say its ‘movement,’ as oppositional to the current, the forward flow. Queerness then, is positioned as interruptive, re-orienting, a diversion from the normal forward motion of time. Alongside this, Sedgwick re-emphasises, and also qualifies, this idea of the queer moment’s repetitive nature. If an eddy is ‘a circular motion,’ then, it follows, the queer moment is similarly circular, pushing one consistently over the same temporal terrain.

Finally, Sedgwick describes the queer moment as ‘*troublant*,’ a more ambiguous metaphor, particularly as a result of her specific use of the French, which can be translated into English in a number of different ways. *Troublant* can mean disturbing, uncanny, unsettling; qualities which queer temporalities, as we saw in Septimus’s narrative, certainly can be, particularly with regards to heteronormative scheduling. However, *troublant* can also be translated as arousing, endowing the queer moment with a distinct sense of sensuality. Sedgwick’s choice to use the French word then signals all of these potential translations

simultaneously. Consequently, it becomes necessary not to lose sight of any one of them in a consideration of the queer moment.

Following Sedgwick's queer moment further, we find Sedgwick herself emphasising the non-linear temporality of her queer moment immediately following that proclamation of queer as 'recurrent, eddying, troublant,' when she notes that 'the word "queer" itself means across—it comes from the Indo-European root - twerkw, which also yields the German quer (transverse), Latin torquere (to twist), English athwart' (1994: viii). In noting that queer shares etymological origins with the German word for 'transverse' and Latin for 'to twist,' Sedgwick emphasises the queer moment as a site of temporal disruption. Though she may not have been thinking about an individual experience of time here, Sedgwick still draws attention to the non-linear temporal qualities of queerness, pointing towards its ability to 'transverse' and 'twist' conventional, linear time.

Despite the way that queer 'moment' in *Tendencies* is primarily constructed to refer to an epoch, Sedgwick herself appears to anticipate, and encourage, a reading of such a 'moment' as an attempt at defining a queer temporality, to describe queer lived experience. We find such an application of the concept in *Tendencies*' opening chapter 'Queer and Now':

Survivors' guilt, survivors' glee, even survivors' responsibility: powerfully as these are experienced, they are also more than complicated by how permeable the identity "survivor" must be to the undiminishing currents of risk, illness, mourning, and defiance. Thus I'm uncomfortable generalizing about people who do queer writing and teaching, even within literature; but some effects do seem widespread. I think many adults (and I am among them) are trying, in our work, to keep faith with vividly remembered promises made to ourselves in childhood: promises to make invisible possibilities and desires visible; to make the tacit things explicit; to smuggle queer representation in where it must be smuggled and, with the relative freedom of adulthood, to challenge queereradicating impulses frontally where they are to be so challenged. (1994: 3).

Here then, Sedgwick's attention turns towards a (reluctant) attempt at trying to identify some of the ways in which such a 'recurrent, eddying, troublant' queerness manifests itself in the individual, lived experiences of queer subjects. In this description of 'many [queer] adults [...] trying, in our work, to keep faith with vividly remembered promises made to ourselves in childhood' as well as the various emotions attached to the experience of being a 'survivor,' Sedgwick proposes a queer temporality which is distinctly connected to the past, in which the past recurs, collapsing the distinctions between the queer subject's 'childhood' and 'adulthood.'

In Sedgwick's queer moment then, we begin to find clear parallels with the momentary experience of time had by Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway* and described by Woolf in 'Sketch of the Past.' Following Sedgwick's definition of the queer moment, we find her descriptions of such moments, 'recurrent, eddying, *troublant*,' aligning closely with Clarissa's memory of her kiss with Sally. In that passage, as I suggested in my opening reading of it, we find the 'exquisite moment,' that 'troublant' or, arousing, moment of queer sexual contact breaking through from the past, recurring, reaching across the years, disturbing linear time, to be re-experienced by the adult Clarissa. The moment of the kiss not only recurs, but re-directs Clarissa back towards it, pulls her against the forward current of time and into her past, as an eddy does. Indeed, taking the eddying metaphor further, we can see the structure of the Clarissa's narrative itself takes on such an eddying form in relation to the moment. That 'exquisite moment,' as I suggested above, is at various times throughout the narrative alluded to, beginning with the reference to 'the windows at Bourton' in the novel's second paragraph. Like an eddy or whirlpool, these allusions begin in that second paragraph with a relative weakness, though they do cause distortions in the temporality of the narrative, these are brief, and the 'exquisite moment' itself does not come in to view as the nexus or genesis of such distortions. In Clarissa's recollection of the kiss itself, however, we appear to reach the centre of such an eddy, where distinctions between the past of the moment and her present collapse entirely, the voices of the adolescent and adult, or past and present, Clarissa's becoming indistinguishable from one another— the moment experienced as though it was happening in the novel's present.

Furthermore, there is a clear parallel to the construction of Clarissa's memory of her kiss with Sally, and the collapsed distinction between the queer child and adult proposed by Sedgwick. In my opening discussion of Clarissa's memory of the kiss, I drew attention to the exclamations which punctuate (and puncture) the narrative there: 'the whole world might have turned upside down!' and 'it was like running one's face into a granite wall in the darkness! It was shocking; it was horrible!' These exclamations, I argued, work to collapse distinctions between an adolescent and adult Clarissa, making their voices and respective temporal positions indistinguishable from one another, mirroring the Sedgwickian collapse of queer child and adult.

However, in that moment *Mrs. Dalloway* offers an important complication to Sedgwick's argument, also. Whilst Sedgwick suggests that the connection between the queer adult and child involves the attempt to make-good on the promises of childhood in the 'relative freedom of adulthood,' in *Mrs. Dalloway* we find the 'relative freedom' being

instead positioned as belonging to the adolescent Clarissa. In the opening of this chapter, I quoted Whitworth's observation that Clarissa's memories of Bourton can be dated to before Oscar Wilde's trial for gross indecency, and as such a time when queer sexualities were relatively more permissible. Clarissa then is not a Sedgwickian queer adult, one who experiences a 'relative freedom' owing to her age. Instead, in *Mrs. Dalloway* 'relative freedom' is constructed as belonging to the adolescent Clarissa, to the inhabitant of the past.

Building upon this connection between queer adolescence and adulthood, in the previous chapter I drew attention to Jack Halberstam's claim that 'queer subcultures produce alternative temporalities by allowing their participants to believe that their futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience—namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death' (2005: 14). Halberstam would go on to expound on this idea in a roundtable discussion on 'Theorizing Queer Temporalities' published in *GLQ*:

Queer time for me is the dark nightclub, 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. It is a theory of queerness as a way of being in the world and a critique of the careful social scripts that usher even the most queer among us through major markers of individual development and into normativity (2007: 182).

In this later quotation, Halberstam re-orientates the direction of queer temporality. Now, queer temporalities constitute not only an ability to imagine alternative futures, but 'the perverse turn away from the narrative coherence' of linear, heteronormative scheduling, 'adolescence – early adulthood – marriage – reproduction – child rearing – retirement – death,' instead opting for 'the embrace of late childhood in place of early adulthood or immaturity in place of responsibility.' Halberstam's definition then emphasises queer temporality as a rejection of linear, coherent narratives of lifetimes, primarily situating such a rejection in terms of distinctions between adulthood and adolescence. Here, we find a number of those same qualities which constitute both Clarissa's memory of the kiss with Sally (as Haffey argues), as well as Woolf's moment of being. In 'Sketch of the Past' there is a similar rejection of such progressive narratives, a disturbance of distinctions between adolescent and adult, akin to the disturbance in the distinction between the adult and adolescent Clarissa's in her remembering of the kiss.

In a similar way to the description of the kiss, in Woolf's examples of her moments of being, all of which are drawn from her childhood, we find that these memories disturb

distinctions between the adult and adolescent Woolf, paralleling Sedgwick's and Halberstam's definitions of queer moments and temporalities. In Woolf's claim that 'at times I can go back to St Ives more completely than I can this morning. I can reach a state where I seem to be watching things happen as if I were there,' Woolf speaks to such a collapse between these two temporally distanced versions of herself (*MB*: 80). In this 'state,' Woolf re-experiences the memory; beyond merely remembering it happening, the experience of remembering is total. Further, the first sentence of this quotation sets up a privileging of these childhood memories over her adult ones. The sentence can be read in (at least) two ways, both as referring to her ability on other days, other mornings, to be able to more completely recall her memories. Or else, that at times she is more able to remember St Ives than she is able to recall the events of that very morning. Whichever way one chooses to read it however, across these memories, these moments of being, we see Woolf drawing attention to their ability to disturb time, to disturb distinctions between her adult present and adolescent past, to pull her back to childhood.

Alongside these more literal temporal distortions, there is a parallel in 'Sketch of the Past' with what Halberstam calls 'the perverse turn away from narrative coherence [...] the embrace of late childhood' in Woolf's privileging of adolescent memories and of adolescent knowledge. In the epiphanic qualities to her moments of being, discussed above, Woolf constructs the adolescent experience as a site of knowledge production. Though, as she notes, she may not have had the vocabulary to make sense of the experience at the time, 'in the case of the flower I found a reason; and was thus able to deal with the sensation. I was not powerless. I was conscious— if only at a distance — that I should in time explain it.' Through these memories then, Woolf disturbs normative, developmental narratives by constructing knowledge from her childhood as valid and important, as opposed to normative views of knowledge which privilege the ideas of the educated, mature subject and which dismiss children as inexperienced or uneducated (a view of individual development encapsulated in the narrative structure of the *bildungsroman*). At the same time, Woolf further destabilizes distinctions between adulthood and adolescence by presenting herself as linked, by these moments, across her life: 'I should in time explain it.' In this sense of future explanation, the adult Woolf is connected up with her childhood self, she serves to fulfil the expectations of the childhood Woolf, paralleling Sedgwick's fulfilment of promises. In carrying the experience forward in order to eventually 'explain it,' the adolescent and adult Woolf's desires are aligned, in the ambition of finding an explanation for this experience.

By reading Woolf's 'Sketch of the Past' against Halberstam and Sedgwick's definitions of queer temporality then, it becomes possible to understand Woolf's concept of 'moments of being' as a queer one. Although the examples Woolf gives are not specifically queer in content, they are all still turns away from normative, developmental narratives and from linear temporalities, as Halberstam and Sedgwick define queer temporalities to be. However, this is not to suggest that Woolf never *explicitly* connects her concept of moments of being with queer desire.

2.5 'Moments of Being: "Slater's Pins Have no Points"'

In 1928, three years after the publication of *Mrs. Dalloway* and a decade before Woolf would draft 'Sketch of the Past,' she published the short story 'Moments of Being: "Slater's Pins Have no Points"' in the journal *Forum*. Although the surtitle 'Moments of Being' was not included when it was published in *Forum*, it was present in Woolf's typescript of the story and was restored by Leonard Woolf when he published it in 1944's *A Haunted House*. What that full title suggests then, is that this story was drafted as a narrativization of Woolf's concept of moments of being, before she attempted to define that concept more fully in 'Sketch of the Past.' And, indeed, there are clear similarities between the form and content of the story and Woolf's later description of moments of being. From beginning to end the narrative takes place over only a matter of minutes, as Fanny searches for her dropped flower pin on her piano teacher, Miss Craye's living room floor— a series of impressions and reflections combining to form the complex of that moment, which culminates in the intensely felt experience of a Sapphic kiss between the two women.

However, another reason for Woolf's choice to include 'moments of being' in the title can be located in the conception of the story, which can be traced through her diaries in the years leading up to the story's publication. Writing in her diary on Sunday the 5th of September 1926, Woolf records 'as usual, side stories are sprouting in great variety as I wind this up: a book of characters; the whole string being pulled out from some simple sentence, like Clara Pater's, "Don't you find that Barker's pins have no points to them?"' (*DIII*: 133). What this diary entry suggests then is that in this story Woolf is fictionalising one of her own moments of being, her Greek tutor Clara Pater becoming Miss. Julia Craye, Woolf herself becoming Fanny Wilmot.

As well as being a story which is concerned with ideas of the momentary and moments of being, this story is also one which Woolf herself explicitly thought of and

referred to as Sapphic, writing to Vita Sackville-West on the 8th July 1927 ‘I’ve just written, or re-written, a nice little story about Sapphism, for the Americans’ (*LIII*: 397). Woolf again refers to the story in this way in her correspondence with Sackville-West on the 14th October 1927 when she notes: ‘sixty pounds just received from America for my little Sapphist story of which the editor has not seen the point, though he’s been looking for it in the Adirondacks’ (*LIII*: 431). It is unclear what point in this point-less story that Woolf believed the editor to have missed; though it is likely that she is referring to the very Sapphism which she presents in these letters as the defining characteristic of the work. Indeed, if this is the ‘point’ Woolf refers to, then her belief he had not discovered it seems likely, given that he would have been taking a considerable risk in publishing the piece; seven years prior, the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice had instigated the obscenity charges which prevented James Joyce’s *Ulysses* from being published in the United States, and would in 1929 bring similar charges, though with less success, against Radclyffe Hall’s lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness*— a novel Woolf herself would speak in defence of during its British trials.

Furthermore, it would be unsurprising if the editor of *Forum* had missed the Sapphic qualities of the story. Although, as Woolf suggests, this Sapphism is present throughout the text, it is only in the closing lines that that it becomes remotely explicit, as the narrator recounts:

She saw Julia open her arms; saw her blaze; saw her kindle. Out of the night she burnt like a dead white star. Julia kissed her. Julia possessed her.

‘Slater’s pins have no points,’ Miss Craye said, laughing queerly and relaxing her arms, as Fanny Wilmot pinned the flower to her breast with trembling fingers. (*CSF*: 220)

As I have suggested, it is only in the description of this kiss between the two women that the Sapphic qualities of the story become, to a certain degree, explicit. However, even in that moment, there is still an element of deniability to the queerness of the kiss, one which may have caused the editor of *Forum* to miss the point. Unlike Clarissa and Sally’s kiss which is specifically ‘on the lips,’ in this story Woolf pointedly leaves out any such description of where the kiss was placed. We are only presented with the matter of fact, simple past tense statement ‘Julia kissed her.’ Of course, even with such a deniability present in the description of the kiss, and without requiring access to Woolf’s letters in order to confirm the Sapphist intentions of the story, there is still a decidedly queer subtext to this moment. Indeed, it seems no coincidence that Woolf uses the adjective ‘queerly’ two sentences later to describe Julia’s laugh. Additionally, in that final image, Woolf elides

telling us whether Fanny is pinning the flower to her own breast or Julia's. Indeed, the two women are symbolically united in this use of the third-person pronoun 'her', linguistically emphasising their shared gender, and consequently the queerness of the kiss between them.

In this crescendo of a queer kiss, we find the narrative taking on those characteristics of a moment of being identified above: those intense, shocking, and physically exhausting moments, which we find mirrored in Fanny's 'trembling' fingers (paralleling Clarissa's 'quiver[ing]' during her queer moments). Furthermore, in 'Moments of Being: "Slater's Pins have no Points"' it is again through a queer kiss that what had hitherto only been a queer subtext to the story suddenly becomes (relatively) explicit; the kisses of both stories serving as revelatory queer moments for their characters and readers.

As I have suggested then, by considering the preceding story in light of its climactic lesbian kiss, it becomes possible to identify the Sapphic subtext which permeates the narrative. As Krystyna Colburn points out, it is possible to find such a subtext even in the very name Woolf chooses for 'Miss Julia Craye', drawing on Terry Castle's *The Apparitional Lesbian* to argue that 'a ghostly lesbian presence is at once evoked and elided through the use of the honorific "miss," a term underlining not only the unmarriedness of a major character but also her lesbian desire' (2004: 65). What Colburn picks up on here in this reference to 'miss' as 'underlining [...] her lesbian desire,' is the way in which the 'miss' of her name exemplifies her characterisation as not just unmarried but steadfastly resistant to marriage, because of her lesbian desire.

Earlier in the story, we find Fanny stating 'None of the Crayes had ever married. She knew nothing about pins – nothing whatever' (*CSF*: 216). Of course, there is the obvious phallic symbolism to the pins of this story, pins which pierce the contrastingly yonic flowers, and which Julia as a lesbian, would know 'nothing about.' However, reading the pins as a more literal symbol, their queer significance becomes much more dynamic than as merely punning signposts to the characters' Sapphic desires. The pins referred to here, and throughout the story, are florist's pins, used to keep flowers on ladies' dresses. As such, they are symbols of a particular way of dressing. They represent the rules of bourgeois respectability; one must have enough money to buy fresh flowers to pin to one's dress, one must follow (and be able to afford to follow) the fashions of the day to remain in good standing and suitably represent one's family, and, as a woman, one must dress a certain way to attract the gaze of men. In following the comment on none of the Crayes having married with Fanny's claim that Julia 'knew nothing about pins,' the text emphasises Julia's lack of knowledge as indicative of a distinctly queer way of being, one which not only rejects but

does not even need to learn the heteronormative, bourgeois rules which dictate the need and import of the pins, and the flowers which they pierce.

However, reading the flowers as the yonic counter-symbols to the phallic, piercing pins, a later moment where Julia picks up the flower takes on a significant lesbian symbolism:

She picked up the carnation which had fallen on the floor, while Fanny searched for the pin. She crushed it, Fanny felt, voluptuously in her smooth, veined hands stuck about with water-coloured rings set in pearls. The pressure of her fingers seemed to increase all that was most brilliant in the flower; to set it off; to make it more frilled, fresh, immaculate.' (*CSF*: 217)

Notably, this passage is again from Fanny's perspective, who imbues it with an almost blatant Sapphic eroticism. Not only is this Sapphism evoked by the yonic flower, but also in Fanny's gaze turning to admire the aesthetic qualities of Julia's hands, and her focus on the 'pressure' of their touch, which Fanny 'felt,' as though she were the one being touched, with the facets all combining to frame Julia's caress of the flower as euphemistically acting out a lesbian sexual encounter between the two. Building on the Sapphic symbolism of this passage in the flower's spontaneous and unexplained transformation from a rose at its first mention (*CSF*: 215) to now become a carnation. Transforming the flower Fanny had dropped from a rose to a carnation gestures towards the queer symbolism of that later flower, which was adopted as an symbol of homosexuality following Oscar Wilde's request for his friends to wear green carnations to the opening of *Lady Windemere's Fan*. Building on the queer symbolism of this quotation, Julia's pearl rings parallel the 'clitoral symbolism' identified by Paula Bennett in nineteenth-century American women's writing, where 'small, round, and frequently hard objects' represent encoded references to women's (and often Sapphic women's) sexuality (Bennett 1993: 236).

As Woolf's letters to Sackville-West suggested then, 'Moments of Being: "Slater's Pins Have no Points"' is a text riddled with Sapphic desire and symbolism. There is an obvious pattern which emerges in reading this story alongside *Mrs. Dalloway* and in relation to a consideration of 'moments of being'; that two of Woolf's fictionalised moments of being are centred around lesbian kisses. However, this story also presents a notable departure from *Mrs. Dalloway* in relation to its temporality; unlike Clarissa's kiss with Sally, Julia and Fanny's kiss is not framed as a haunting memory, one which distorts linear time and disrupts distinctions between past, present, and future, as Woolf's moments of being in 'Sketch of the Past' and *Mrs. Dalloway* do, or as Sedgwick and Halberstam's queer temporalities do also.

However, this is not to suggest that it does not disturb linear time at all. Whilst not doing so in the form of a memory, instead this story offers a representation of a queer moment of being as it is experienced in the moment by Fanny. As I mentioned in the opening of this section, the story's narrative takes place only over a matter of seconds. Despite this brief time period, Fanny's thoughts, and the focus of the narrative itself, range widely, moving through memories and observations, challenging that brevity, and proposing a radically expanded conception of the capacity of the present. Further, framing the story as depicting 'Moment of Being,' drawing on my discussion of 'Sketch of the Past' above, already fundamentally implicates the future, as a moment of being as Woolf defines it, is one which projects itself forward, to be remembered and re-experienced. At the same time, the narrative of the story frequently draws in the past, collapsing it in to Fanny and Julia's present. The clearest passage which evidences the temporal distortion of the story occurs near its end:

all seemed transparent for a moment to the gaze of Fanny Wilmot, as if looking through Miss Craye, she saw the very fountain of her being spurt up in pure, silver drops. She saw back and back into the past behind her. She saw the Roman vases stood in their case; heard the choristers playing cricket; saw Julia quietly descend the curving steps on to the lawn; [...] obstinately adhering whatever people might say in choosing her pleasures for herself. She saw Julia. (*CSF*: 220).

In this description of Julia's past being laid out behind her for Fanny to see, we find Fanny experiencing time in a way which distinctly pre-empts both the Sedgwickian queer moment, where time becomes non-linear and 'eddyng', as well as Woolf's own conception in 'Sketch of the Past' of the past as an 'avenue lying behind' the present. Further, it becomes difficult to divorce this temporal distortion from Fanny's Sapphic desire for Julia, particularly as a result of the distinctly orgasmic image Woolf uses here, where Fanny sees 'the very fountain of [Julia's] being spurt up in pure, silver drops,' as well as this idea of Fanny seeing Julia which closes the passage.

In 'Moments of Being: "Slater's Pins Have no Points"' then, we find Woolf, a decade before 'Sketch of the Past,' explicitly narrativizing her concept of moments of being, and doing so with a story which she characterises as specifically 'Sapphic.' In this story then, we find Woolf gesturing to the centrality of queerness to her conception of moments of being. Whilst, as I have argued above and will continue to consider in the remainder of this chapter, moments of being need not be experienced in relation to moments of queer desire in order to be understood as experiences of a queer temporality, what this story suggests is how Woolf's conception of moments of being was bound up with the experience of queer desire. As in

Mrs. Dalloway, Woolf gestures in this story to the way in which the experience of queer desire exemplifies the kinds of epiphanic, intensely felt moments which she defines as moments of being.

2.6 Moments of Queer Being

However, there still remains the question of why the moment is the temporal unit in which queerness is experienced by Clarissa, which is also the question of why Woolf herself uses a specifically Sapphic narrative in ‘Moments of Being: “Slater’s Pins Have no Points”’ to narrativize moments of being. Returning to a consideration of theories of queer moments which I began earlier in this chapter, in *Queer Phenomenology*, Sara Ahmed takes up the concept of ‘the queer moment,’ moving it towards her consideration of queer experience, and sexual orientations as (dis)orienting perspectives, describing it as one ‘in which objects appear slantwise and the vertical and horizontal axes appear “out of line”’ (2006: 66). Here, Ahmed moves the ‘queer moment’ away from referring to an epoch or societal context as Sedgwick uses it. Instead, Ahmed positions the queer moment as a discrete, subjective unit of time in which disorientation occurs before it is corrected or ‘overcome’ by the subject (2006: 66). In Ahmed’s queer moment then, queerness is a temporary state, one which must be ‘overcome,’ and put right, to remain ‘in line’ as a heterosexual. But, within such a state ‘objects appear slantwise and the vertical and horizontal axes appear “out of line”,’ or as Ahmed goes on to argue:

Queer orientations are those that put within reach bodies that have been made unreachable by the lines of conventional genealogy. Queer orientations might be those that don’t line up, which by seeing the world “slantwise” allow other objects to come into view. A queer orientation might be one that does not overcome what is “off line,” and hence acts out of line with others (2006: 107).

The queer moment, in Ahmed’s argument, is a way of being which, through its disorientated perspective, is also a site of revelation, where one is able to see what was not visible from the straight line, from the orienting line of heteronormativity. Here, we can begin to identify a connection to Woolf’s moment of being, those moments which are similarly revelatory or epiphanic, in which Woolf describes herself gaining some new awareness, whether or not she is able to make sense of it. At the same time, through Woolf, we can understand Ahmed’s queer moments as moments of being, moments in which the queer subject experiences the sudden ‘shock’ of ‘revelation,’ when new awareness, new knowledge is made available to the subject. Here then, Ahmed’s queer moments suggest an explanation for the relationship

between queerness and the moment (of being) in *Mrs. Dalloway*. If the queer moment is one in which awareness is gained, where the queer subject is able, through their disorientation, to see 'other objects' (in the way that moments of being allow also), it becomes clear why queerness would be a state which is fundamentally related to the moment of being and why it becomes an obvious site for Woolf's narrativizations of such moments. Because, in those moments when queerness becomes legible, the Ahmedian queer moment serves as a catalyst for the disorienting shocks and sudden revelations which define Woolf's moment of being.

We find these Ahmedian epiphanic disorientations occurring in those narrativisations of moments of being identified above in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Perhaps the clearest parallel between Ahmed's description of queer disorientation and Clarissa's narrative occurs in that exclamation following the kiss with Sally that 'the world might have turned upside down!' (*MD*: 32). In the opening of this chapter, I noted the allusion in this moment to the English Revolutionary song of that name, and the consequent connotation that allusion provides the exclamation of expressing a revolutionary potential to this queer kiss. By reading this moment through Ahmed's queer disorientation, however, the exclamation can also be seen to express the re-orienting nature of that kiss on Clarissa as a subject. To feel as though 'the whole world might have turned upside down' is to express a loss of one's sense of 'the right way up', to lose sight of the vertical axis, of the everyday ways of orienting oneself in the world. The kiss, then, reveals itself to be a moment which causes Clarissa to lose her bearings, to experience such a fundamental disorientation within the order and patterns of her subjectivity up to that moment that the metaphor which presents itself to make that experience externalised and communicable, is that of the world turning upside down. The temporality of 'might have' here is obscure, speaking to both the (unfulfilled) potential of the kiss, and its actual consequences. That 'the world might have turned upside down' as a result of this kiss but, ultimately, did not, stands simultaneously with a reading that, already, in the moment of the kiss 'the world might have turned upside down,' and that this upturning could explain the sensation Clarissa felt in its aftermath. Either way, the kiss is specifically constructed as a site of re-orientation, of an upsetting of order.

Immediately following this expression of disorientation, Clarissa expresses the feeling:

that she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it—a diamond, something infinitely precious, wrapped up, which, as they walked (up and down, up and down), she uncovered, or the radiance burnt through, the revelation,

the religious feeling! (*MD*: 32).

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the 'present' here is multivalent, equally standing as metaphorical gift and temporal experience. However, at the same time, it bears a clear parallel to Ahmed's description of queer moments of disorientation, as Ahmed suggests 'queer orientations might be those that don't line up, which by seeing the world "slantwise" allow other objects to come into view.' Inaugurated by the queer kiss and following the disorienting sensation that 'the world might have turned upside down,' in Clarissa's sense of having 'been given a present,' whether temporal or metaphorical, she is describing the experience of having been given an object, a new object, an object which only becomes available to her following the disorienting queer kiss. It is perhaps no coincidence that this object is described using the language of epiphany, of acquisition of knowledge: 'revelation' and 'religious feeling,' of course, mirroring the sudden acquisitions of knowledge characteristic of Woolf's moments of being. To follow a comparison between Ahmed's disorienting, 'slantwise' queer moment and Clarissa's 'exquisite moment' further, the simile Clarissa uses to describe Peter's interruption of that moment, that it was 'like running one's face against a granite wall' (*MD*: 32) is one of forceful reorientation; a 'shocking [...] horrible' collision with the solid, linear, upright, and obstructive, putting an end to the disorienting, epiphanic moment following the kiss.

Over the course of this chapter then, I have considered the significance of the moment as the temporal unit in which Clarissa experiences queer desire and of her backwards-looking temporality in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Nuancing previous readings of Clarissa's (queer) temporality, I have argued that, instead of Clarissa and Septimus's temporalities being merely mirrors of each other, they are instead uniquely constituted, particularly with regards to Clarissa's emphasis on the moment. Building upon this reading, I have argued for the importance of Woolf's 'moments of being' in reading Clarissa's experience of time in *Mrs. Dalloway*, showing how Clarissa's experience of the memory of her kiss with Sally Seton anticipates and exemplifies Woolf's characterisation of moments of being in 'Sketch of the Past'. Furthermore, through comparison with a number of contemporary theorists of queer temporalities, I have suggested the overlap between Woolf's 'moments of being' and the idea of 'queer moments,' specifically in their 'perverse turn' from developmental narratives, their recurrent, eddying disturbance of linear time, as well as in their disorienting and epiphanic qualities. The temporality of Clarissa's 'exquisite moment' then, her memory of her kiss with Sally Seton, can be understood as exemplary of this queer moment of being, as a moment

wherein, inaugurated by the 'yield[ing]' to queer desire, the world is 'turned upside down,' and new objects, new knowledge, are revealed, like 'present[s],' and which persists beyond its apparent end, collapsing the temporal distance between the adolescent and adult Clarissa's, to be re-experienced on the novel's June day, thirty years later.

3. Fugitive Queer Spaces

Developing the arguments made in chapter one regarding the ways in which Septimus's queerness is intertwined with his experience of time, I will begin this chapter by considering how that queerness is also presented in relation to his experience of space. I draw on Ahmed's discussions of queer spatiality to read Septimus's experiences of space in the novel, arguing that they are characterised by three interrelated sensations: immobility, disorientation, and hostility. Opening with a reading of Septimus 'unable to pass' in Bond Street (*MD*: 13), I consider how this episode can be read in relation to Ahmed's description of queer moments as 'block[ing] bodily action' (2006: 66). Furthermore, I draw on Crip theory in order to suggest how the episode speaks to contemporaneous attitudes which viewed physical disability as a form of queerness. I then turn to consider Septimus's experiences of disorientation, again with reference to Ahmed. I argue that Septimus's queerness causes him to be torn between locations, unable to securely inhabit any one space, focusing specifically on his sense of dislocation in his hallucinations of a mountain landscape whilst sitting in Regent's Park, as well as his inhabitation of the boundary between the boroughs of St. Pancras and St. Marylebone, and their respective cultural milieus.

The third sensation by which I characterise Septimus's experiences of space is in terms of hostility. Drawing attention to the terms of the Labouchere Amendment, which criminalised gross indecency between men in both public and private, I argue that Septimus experiences the world as universally unsafe, consistently imagining himself being hunted and punished, in evocations of the punishments for sodomy in Dante's *Inferno*, which Septimus is described reading in Italy. I also discuss how the doctors Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw weaponise space to punish Septimus's queerness, particularly in the form of the proposed rest cure, which specifically works by denying its subjects spatial freedom. I conclude my discussion of Septimus's spatiality by returning to his death on Mrs. Filmer's area railings, reappraising this moment from a spatial perspective. I suggest that these area railings represent normative divisions of private vs public, drawing on Berlant and Warner's discussion of the privatisation of sexuality. With reference to Michel de Certeau's tactic, I argue that Septimus's death on top of the railings can consequently be read as a subversion of these methods of spatial division, re-appropriating the railings to free himself from this space which has been made hostile towards him.

I will then turn to build on the queer phenomenological consideration of space explored in relation to Septimus, turning my attention to an arguably less obviously queer subject (though one who I will show certainly *can* be considered queer), Jacob Flanders in *Jacob's Room*. In this closing section, 'Jacob's (Dorm) Room,' I will consider how Jacob's queer experiences in Cambridge take place in a space which is constructed as a queer counterpublic, drawing on Berlant and Warner's discussion of such spaces. In so doing, I will nuance Kimberley Engdahl Coates's reading that 'in *Jacob's Room*, queer is rendered conventional as long as it stays within the safe confines of the halls and dormitories of Cambridge,' considering how the narrative can be understood as distinctly conscious of the relationship between the queer desire expressed in that space and the institutionally queerphobic society within which they occur (2016: 280). I will then consider how Jacob's resistance of his queer desire for Simeon in Cambridge can be understood as pivotal for his future experiences of such desires. I suggest that from this moment on he does not allow himself to feel that queerness again, instead complying with the demands made upon him by heteronormativity; a compliance which I argue ultimately leads to his death in the war.

3.1 'Unable to Pass': Septimus Smith's Queer Immobility

Our first encounter with Septimus Smith is in an image of stasis. A car has stopped on Bond Street, rumours circulate about who might be inside of it, and Septimus 'found himself unable to pass' (*MD*: 13). As I have suggested, in the most obvious sense implied by the context in which Septimus becomes aware of this inability 'to pass,' the phrase bears a clear spatial dimension, an experience of being unable to get past a physical block and to continue moving through the space around him. However, whilst the context of this quotation does most forcefully imply a spatial connotation, bound up with this specific phrase, 'unable to pass,' there are also a number of alternative connotations which gesture towards the themes which define Septimus's narrative (considered in chapter one and which I will continue to elucidate here). Beyond its more obvious reading as referring to an inability to get past the physical blockage of the car, we might also consider it as referring to an inability to get past a temporal event, to move on, particularly from Evans's death and the trauma of the war, which, as I argued in the previous chapter, haunts Septimus's narrative. Simultaneously, we might read 'to pass' as referring to the act of dying, passing on, something, we come to learn, Septimus wants to do, and ultimately does by the novel's closure, despite the attempts of Rezia, Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw to prevent this. We might also think of the obsolete

meaning of 'to pass' used in the 14th and 15th centuries, identified in the *OED*, which notes its meaning as a synonym for 'to care' ("Pass, V., Sense XI.51.a."). In reading such a connotation to the phrase, this introductory sentence foreshadows Septimus' fear after Evans's death that he is 'unable to feel.' Finally, 'to pass' could be understood here as referring to an inability 'to pass' a test, to measure up in some way. Specifically, we might consider such an inability to pass in relation to the use of the verb in a sociological context, as used by Nella Larsen in her 1929 novel *Passing*, that is, to appear to belong to a particular social group; as I will consider, particularly to pass tests of his masculinity and heterosexuality.

At the same time, the idea of Septimus having 'found himself' in this situation where he cannot pass also gestures towards multiple readings. In one way, it can be read as establishing the state of Septimus's mental health, pre-empting the reader's awareness of his 'hallucinations,' implying that he had been away from himself, had lost himself, and, upon returning to consciousness, found himself in this situation. We can also read it as indicative of Septimus's passivity in the events which have made him 'unable to pass.' Of course, in a reading of the sentence as referring to his inability to pass by the car, he was obviously not responsible for the car parking in front of him. However, across the other readings of 'to pass' that I have suggested, we might understand that the reason he is described as having 'found himself' in this situation, and 'unable to pass,' is because it is the result of forces outside of his control, or the actions of others, which have acted upon him, and which he has only just become cognisant of. What this first description of Septimus reveals then, is the way in which ideas of otherness, trauma, passivity, and the effect of external forces, are all interwoven with Septimus's experience of space from his very first appearance in the novel. Over the course of this chapter, I will trace these characteristics through Septimus's experiences and practices of space; revealing the specifically queer orientation from which they can be understood to originate.

Beginning then, with that first reading of Septimus's inability 'to pass', one which concerns itself with an experience of space, we find the idea that in that moment, space, for Septimus, has become impenetrable. Although Woolf doesn't explicitly state whether or not Septimus is physically disabled, this experience of space as had by Septimus, an experience of being 'unable to pass' through space, can be understood as an experience of disability. As Matt Franks notes in 'Crip/Queer Aesthetics in the Great War':

in one sense, sexual inversion was seen as a kind of contagious disability that could

be spread between soldiers and into the civilian population. In another, the mental and physical disabilities that the war produced were seen as a threat to sexual norms, since the war deformed soldiers' properly masculine, heterosexualized bodies and minds (Franks 2019: 60).

What Franks draws attention to then, is that in the rhetoric of disability, queerness, and veterans of the First World War, prevalent during the period in which Woolf was writing, queerness and disability were indelibly bound with one another. Septimus's experience of being 'unable to pass' in this passage then, can be understood to construct Septimus's experience of space with relation to such eugenic discourses. That is to say, this disabled experience of space is one which, at least contemporaneously, might have been seen as a fundamentally queer one.

This feeling of immobility can be seen to recur for Septimus later in the same passage, when we read:

The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose? (*MD*: 14).

Here, there is a repetition of this sense of space as something which Septimus can no longer pass through, though now the source of this disability is further obfuscated. In the first quotation it appears that Septimus is (on one level, at least) unable to pass because of the build-up of traffic caused by the mysterious car stopping on Bond Street. However, in this passage Septimus seems to locate the reason for his being stuck within himself: 'it is I who am blocking the way.' On one level, this thought can be seen to reflect a purely spatial experience, that Septimus views himself as being an obstacle, a disruption in the movements of those with whom he shares this space. However, at the same time it is possible to read in this reference to the 'I' which blocks the way, a pre-empting of Woolf's argument in *A Room of One's Own* where her narrator reads a book by a living male writer 'Mr. A' and comments that:

after reading a chapter or two a shadow seemed to lie across the page. It was a straight dark bar, a shadow shaped something like the letter 'I'. One began dodging this way and that to catch a glimpse of the landscape behind it. Whether that was indeed a tree or a woman walking I was not quite sure. Back one was always hailed to the letter 'I'. One began to be tired of 'I'. Not but what this 'I' was a most respectable 'I'; honest and logical; as hard as a nut, and polished for centuries by good teaching and good feeding. I respect and admire that 'I' from the bottom of my heart. But— here I turned

a page or two, looking for something or other— the worst of it is that in the shadow of the letter ‘I’ all is shapeless as mist (*AROO*: 75).

In this passage then, we find another instance of an ‘I’ blocking the way. However, in *A Room of One’s Own* we find Woolf associating this ‘I’ with the idea of a specifically masculine voice, a masculine perspective, one which has been ‘polished for centuries by good teaching and good feeding,’ this reference to ‘good feeding’ recalling the narrator’s observation earlier in the work that the food at the men’s college in ‘Oxbridge’ is of a much higher quality than that of the women’s college. Woolf’s ‘I’ in *A Room of One’s Own* then, can be read as a distinctly male ‘I,’ the ‘I’ which is the voice of patriarchal, heteronormative society, and which has been conditioned to perpetuate that society’s values, as Woolf’s narrator concludes, by ‘protesting against the equality of the other sex by asserting his own superiority’ (*AROO*: 76). In light of this argument regarding the nature of the male ‘I’ which blocks the way, which obscures and stifles that which lies behind it, we might read in Septimus’s thought a similar connotation. That is to say, instead of reflecting a corporeal state, that he is physically blocking the way, it reflects a sense of Septimus reckoning with the psychological blockage caused by his conditioned masculinity and the values which he, as a man, is supposed to perpetuate in the society which surrounds him and space in which he is stood. By turning to another passage from *A Room of One’s Own*, we can come to understand how these ‘masculine,’ heteronormative values which are embodied in the male ‘I’ can also be understood as the same values which promote the militarism and imperialism responsible for the First World War. As Woolf argues earlier in the essay:

[men’s] education had been in some ways as faulty as my own. It had bred in them defects as great. True, they had money and power, but only at the cost of harbouring in their breasts an eagle, a vulture, for ever tearing the liver out and plucking at the lungs – the instinct for possession, the rage for acquisition which drives them to desire other people’s fields and goods perpetually; to make frontiers and flags; battleships and poison gas; to offer up their own lives and their children’s lives (*AROO*: 30).

In identifying the cause for war in masculine values and masculine education then, we can come to read in Septimus’s reckoning with the narrative ‘I,’ a reckoning with the values of masculinity, which Woolf directly blames for the war. We may also note the ways in which such masculine values were also evoked to coerce men into joining the war effort; as Mark Hussey argues: ‘To ensure that only the most tenacious and thick-skinned men would avail themselves of the conscience clause the CO was feminised and pilloried in the jingo press’ (2016: 244). Furthermore,

the conscientious objector's appeal against being compelled to fight or, in the case of absolutists, against being made to take any role whatsoever in the prosecution of war, was often treated by both the tribunals and in the press as casting doubt upon the applicant's proper masculinity' (2016: 252).

Hussey also draws attention in that chapter to the way in which heterosexuality and patriarchal responsibility were simultaneously evoked in order to coerce men away from identifying as conscientious objectors and pacifist ideologies, quoting Nicoletta F. Gullace's argument that following the invasion of Belgium, British war propaganda 'summoned up the specter of ruined Belgium and hinted darkly at the possibility of invasion – an invasion that would mean the rape and mutilation of British women and children.' (Gullace 2002: 37). In light of both Woolf's own identification of 'masculine' values as the cause of war, as well as Hussey's consideration of the way in which masculinity and heteronormativity were evoked to coerce men to join the war effort, we are able to read Septimus's reckoning with the 'I' blocking the way as a reckoning with the militarist, capitalist, and imperialist values which caused the war, as well as the compulsory hetero-masculinity evoked to send him to battle, values which, ultimately, led to both his traumatising and Evans's death.

Considering then, this idea of the 'I' present in *A Room of One's Own*, and the spectrum of 'masculine' values it signifies, it becomes significant that following Septimus's observation that 'it is I who am blocking the way,' the perspective of the narrative voice changes. In the very next sentence, the perspective moves away from the reported speech which allowed that 'I' to enter the narrative, into a free indirect discourse constituted solely by the third person: 'was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there'. On one level, this movement works as a kind of narratological joke, with the narrative voice literally removing the 'I' that blocks the way. At the same time, it can be understood as reflecting an active resistance to the heteronormative, masculine voice which that 'I' could be seen to represent. This movement to the third-person, free indirect voice in this moment can therefore be read as a kind of queer re-orientation, reflecting both a rejection of the masculine values which that 'I' represents, as well as an attempt to create a discursively queer space, a narrative voice which makes room for the non-normative, queer perspective which Septimus can be understood to inhabit in the novel.

Mirroring this movement of the narrative voice outside of Septimus, we find the focus of the next sentence also moving outwards, turning towards the figures which occupy the space around him. As a consequence of this outward movement, we find Septimus's

experience of this space constituted by a self-consciousness over how he is perceived by those who share the space with him: ‘was he not being looked at and pointed at?’ Because of the dual voice at play here, the reader cannot answer the question posed, we do not know if Septimus *is* being looked at or pointed at; whilst the focus of the narrative has moved outwards, we still cannot see beyond Septimus’s perspective. We might wonder if he is not misconstruing the intrigue regarding who is sitting in the car as directed towards him, and doubt whether he is really being noticed at all in this moment. However, whether Septimus is actually being looked at and pointed at or not, what is revealed by this question is an understanding of how Septimus’s experience of the space is affected by his own psychology; that in this public space he is self-conscious of how he is perceived, and that he views himself as the likely subject of intrigue. That is to say, it reveals that his perceptions are mediated by a sense of difference.

Building on this idea of Septimus’s concern with how he is being perceived (indeed that he is being perceived at all), there is a clear parallel to the episode later in the novel where we are finally able to see beyond Septimus’s perspective and are actually provided access to someone’s perception of Septimus, when Maisie Johnson thinks of him as ‘the man looking queer’ (*MD*: 23). As discussed in chapter one, this view of Septimus as ‘queer’ can plausibly be understood to hold its homosexual connotations, given that such a connotation was in usage by the time of the novel’s publication. Indeed, such an understanding of the queerness Maisie Johnson is perceiving in Septimus, and that this queerness is the source of Septimus’s concern over being perceived by others in Bond Street, becomes likely when one considers the context in which Woolf was writing, wherein ‘sexologists at the time posited that inward sexual deviance was outwardly marked on the body’ (Franks 2019: 64). Indeed, as Foucault argues in *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge* ([1976] 2019: 20):

The nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form, and a morphology, with an indiscreet anatomy and possibly a mysterious physiology. Nothing that went into his total composition was unaffected by his sexuality. It was everywhere present in him: at the root of all his actions because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle; written immodestly on his face and body because it was a secret that always gave itself away.

Following Foucault’s and Franks’ discussions of late nineteenth and early-twentieth century views regarding the physiological effects of homosexuality then, Maisie Johnson’s registering of Septimus as ‘looking queer’ seems to confirm Septimus’s paranoia surrounding

his ability to be perceived. As also discussed in chapter one, this sense of Septimus as visibly marked by his queerness is suggested elsewhere in the novel. Later, Septimus describes himself as 'so pocked and marked with vice that women shuddered when they saw him in the street' (*MD*: 82), even more plainly paralleling Foucault's 'indiscrete anatomy' in the idea that Septimus's behaviour, his 'vice,' has led to external, physical changes that expose his nature, causing women to shudder at the sight of him. Indeed, this later quotation appears to specifically recall Maisie Johnson's reaction to Septimus, as she is the only woman in the narrative who react to the sight of Septimus. Thereby, the novel appears to specifically connect Septimus's 'vice' with Maisie Johnson's view of him as 'queer,' further emphasising the sexual connotation to both passages. Furthermore, there is also a parallel in this idea of Septimus as being visually marked out as queer in the ability for a reader to perceive Septimus's very name as alluding to his queerness through its numerical relation to Dante's seventh circle of hell where both those who have died from suicide as well as 'sodomites' are placed (see page 93).

In light of these moments in which queerness and disability can be seen to combine in Septimus's experience of space, it becomes necessary to consider the legal context of the period in which the book was written and is set, a context which would be fundamental to any queer experience of space at that time. As discussed in chapter one, the Labouchere Amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885 was still in force when Woolf was writing and when the novel is set. Under that amendment, it was declared that 'any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person' would be subject to up to two years of imprisonment with or without hard labour (*Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885*, 48 & 49 Vict., c. 69). What we find then is that this amendment contains a specifically spatial dimension, criminalising expressions of male homosexual desire (though the term 'gross indecency' was pointedly much less specific, allowing for an undefined range of sexual behaviours to fall within its purview) in 'public or private.' That is to say, under this law, the experience of space for queer men was fundamentally changed, all spaces in Britain were made explicitly hostile to them, and to engage in any queer act with another man which could come under the undefined term of 'gross indecency' in those spaces was to risk imprisonment and hard labour. In light of this context, Septimus's paranoia over how he is being perceived can be read as a fear of having his queerness be registered by those with whom he shares that space, and who may seek to evoke the law in order to punish that queerness.

Building on this idea of Septimus's experience of space in this passage as connected to his queerness, it is also possible to read a distinctly queer connotation to his perception of the world '[threatening] to burst into flames.' Over the course of the novel, we find the image of 'flames' recur three more times, all in relation to Septimus. However, in these later iterations, they are related to the sensation that he was 'falling down, down into the flames' (MD: 126). In light of these later instances, where the image of flames is attached to feeling as though he were 'falling', the flames Septimus imagines take on a hell-like connotation. This reading of the 'flames' in the novel as containing an infernal connotation is justified further elsewhere in the novel, when we encounter Septimus reading Dante's *Inferno*. Dante's poem describes Dante journeying through hell, guided by the poet Virgil. Following this allusion to Dante's work, it is possible to find a justification for reading the flames which Septimus fears as not only being the flames of hell but also being specifically bound up with his queerness. The seventh of the nine circles which make up Dante's vision of hell, the circle where those who have committed the sin of sodomy are punished (as discussed above), and which, as I suggested both earlier in this chapter and in chapter one, Septimus's very name appears to point us towards, is described by Dante as an expanse of sand, 'And over all that sandland, a fall of slowly| raining broad flakes of fire showered steadily' (Alighieri 1995: 110). In Dante's poem then, the image of flames is directly connected to the divine punishment of sodomy. By following Woolf's allusion to *Inferno* then, it is possible then to see how the fear of flames which recur with relation to Septimus's experience of space can come to be understood as representative of a specifically queer fear, that of a divine punishment for the sin of sodomy in the same form he would have read about in that poem.

In light of the ways it is possible to read Septimus's experience of space in the novel as bound up with his queerness and a queer perspective described above, we begin to see parallels to the idea of queer space described by Sara Ahmed. In *Queer Phenomenology*, Ahmed argues that a queer experience of space might be understood as moments in which 'objects appear slantwise and the vertical and horizontal axes appear "out of line." [...] they block bodily action: they inhibit the body such that it ceases to extend into phenomenal space' (2006: 66). Ahmed continues by suggesting that ultimately the queer subject will come to experience a kind of queer disorientation as 'queer unfolds from specific points, from the lifeworld of those who do not or cannot inhabit the contours of heterosexual space' (2006: 172).

Given Ahmed's suggestion that queer moments 'block bodily action,' it is possible to re-appraise that opening image of Septimus's stasis in Bond Street, his sense that 'it is I that

am blocking the way,' illuminating its possible interpretation as reflective of his awareness of his queerness. Through Ahmed, Septimus can be read as unable to move because the space which he inhabits is not made for him; he does not fit, 'blocking the way,' nor can he fit in, being 'looked and pointed at.' This idea, of queerness as preventing movement, which Ahmed suggests, and which can consequently be found in *Mrs. Dalloway* may, notably, also be traced back to the punishment of sodomy described in Dante's *Inferno*. In that poem, alongside the punishment of flames raining down on them, we also read that when Dante is talking with one of the sodomites, Brunetto Latini, Brunetto states that 'a member of this herd| who stops one moment lies one hundred years | unable to brush off the wounding flames,' explicitly connecting homosexuality with immobility (Alighieri 1995: 117). By considering this passage in light of Ahmed's description of queer experiences of space, and in light of the paralytic punishment for sodomy which we find in *Inferno*, we can begin to see how Septimus's stasis can be understood as related to his queerness.

Indeed, given this reading of his stasis as symptomatic of his queer relation to that space, it seems no coincidence that Septimus is only able to continue on his journey through London when his wife leads him on, stabilizing him, legitimizing him, forming the image of a heterosexual couple by taking his arm, 'though it was without feeling. He would give her [...] who had left Italy for his sake, a piece of bone' (*MD*: 14). In the use of free-indirect discourse in this moment, we find the text takes us beyond the surface of this image of heterosexual love which Septimus and Rezia offer to the perceiving gaze of the inhabitants of Bond Street, and, in doing so, subverts any kind of romantic connotation to this image. To begin with, this subversion occurs in the description of his offering his arm as 'without feeling,' a phrase which leaves little room for a reader to doubt the lack of romance at play in that moment and which also pre-empts the later description of Septimus realising after Evans's death that 'he could not feel,' queering this lack of feeling by connecting it to the symptoms of his grief for Evans (*MD*: 78). However, the image is then further subverted, by referring to that arm as 'a piece of bone,' an image which strips the limb of its flesh, and makes of it an essentialised and lifeless object, whilst, at the same time contributing to idea of Septimus as torn between life and death by symbolically making a living skeleton of him. There is perhaps also a sexual double-entendre at play in that reference to his bone too, with the *OED* identifying the earliest example of 'bone' being used as a euphemism for a penis in the 1654 newsbook *Mercurius Fumigosus* ("bone (n.1), sense III.11"). However, whether or not one reads into the image this sexual connotation, both readings can be seen to share the suggestion that Septimus's actions are only borne out of a sense of marital obligation, done

‘without feeling.’ Furthermore, in that reference to Rezia having left Italy to live with Septimus in London, the novel emphasises the subversive nature of the dynamic between the two characters; Rezia is, or at least should be, as ‘out of place’ as Septimus is, and yet she is the one who works to orient him, who leads them through London, directing him, like a child: “‘come on. [...] now we will cross’” (*MD*: 14).

3.2 Queer (Spatial) Disorientation

Whilst, as we have seen, Septimus’s experience of space on Bond Street is predominantly defined by the idea of immobility, and a sense of social and physical incongruence, there is simultaneously across his narrative a sense of disorientation. Throughout the novel, Septimus loses his place and experiences the world as unstable. We see this disorientation in that passage where we are introduced to Septimus, wherein he feels the world ‘[wavering] and [quivering]’ before him.

Given the way that Septimus is described to be perceiving space in this passage, in terms of its instability, and in light of the queer connotations of these passages, particularly with regards to the heteronormative hostility which they can be seen to contain, it is possible to find a parallel in this introductory passage with Sara Ahmed’s description of queer disorientation. Ahmed argues that ‘disorientation involves failed orientations: bodies inhabit spaces that do not extend their shape, or use objects that do not extend their reach’ (2006: 160). Ahmed expands on this idea of ‘spaces that do not extend’ the shape of queer bodies in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, arguing ‘Heteronormativity functions as a form of public comfort by allowing bodies to extend into spaces that have already taken their shape. Those spaces are lived as comfortable as they allow bodies to fit in; the surfaces of social space are already impressed upon by the shape of such bodies’ (Ahmed 2014: 148). Ahmed contrasts this against the ‘discomfort’ which queer bodies feel in such spaces ‘that do not take or “extend” their shape [...] partly as the proximity “shows” how the spaces extend some bodies rather than others’ (2014: 152). In the passage with which this chapter opened, it is certainly possible to understand the spaces Septimus inhabits as not extending his shape, as causing the discomfort which he experiences as ‘not fitting in’ both in terms of his sense of being ‘unable to pass’ and ‘blocking the way’ which point to a physical experience of being out-of-place, but also with regards to his sense of being ‘looked at’ which suggests an inability ‘to pass’ within the heteronormative society which surrounds him.

Furthermore, Ahmed suggests in *Queer Phenomenology* that ‘disorientation can be a bodily feeling of losing one’s place’ (2006: 160). Ahmed continues to state that disorientation is a ‘contact with things, but a contact in which “things” slip as a proximity that does not hold things in place, thereby creating a feeling of distance’ (2006: 166). In light of these two ideas, it becomes significant that we find Septimus’s experience of space is consistently characterised not only by the stasis we encounter in that scene on Bond Street but also by the idea of liminality, his being lost in between one place and another. This idea of liminality is made central to his time spent sitting in Regent’s Park, the place where he sits ‘on the green chair under the tree, talking to himself, or to that dead man Evans,’ for five of the novel’s twelve sections (*MD*: 59). Specifically, Septimus is described as sitting ‘on the Broad Walk’ (*MD*: 19). The Broad Walk is most obviously a liminal space in the sense that it is a space which people pass through, as Maisie Johnson looking for the tube station and Peter Welsh, who passes them by thinking ‘that is being young,’ do on their journeys through London (*MD*: 64). However, the Broad Walk is also, less obviously, a liminal space because it runs along part of the boundary between what were, at the time Woolf was writing, the metropolitan boroughs of St Pancras and St Marylebone. St. Marylebone’s significance here may be that this is the location of Harley Street, a street which has, since the 19th century, been home to a number of medical surgeries and indeed, is the site of Sir. William Bradshaw’s office. Given this medical association then, St Marylebone can be read as a site which both represents and, through the practices of the doctors like Sir. William Bradshaw who work there, enforces the ideals of heteronormative masculinity. By contrast, St. Pancras on the other side of the Broad Walk was the borough in which Woolf’s Gordon and Tavistock Square houses were located. St. Pancras then is a location intimately connected to Woolf, and by extension the Bloomsbury Group, a group we might understand as representing an openness and acceptance to queer identities; as Brenda S. Helt and Madelyn Detloff state in the introduction to *Queer Bloomsbury*, ‘the very phrase ‘queer Bloomsbury’ is in its way redundant, implying that there could somehow be a neutral or ‘unqueer’ Bloomsbury. We think such a distinction impossible’ (Helt and Detloff 2016: 5). Septimus’s location in Regent’s Park then places him in a space which represents the conflict he faces between traditional, heteronormative masculinity and his queer orientation, between the ‘treatments’ for his queerness to be found in St. Marylebone and the fundamentally queer community of Bloomsbury located in St. Pancras.

Indeed, the idea of being located between two places, which we find in Septimus’s location in Regent’s Park, comes to characterise Septimus’s experience of space throughout

the novel. Whilst Septimus is still sat in Regent's Park we encounter a long passage which we find to oscillate, or 'waver' and 'quiver,' between two entirely different spaces:

He lay very high, on the back of the world. The earth thrilled beneath him. Red flowers grew through his flesh; their stiff leaves rustled by his head. Music began clanging against the rocks up here. It is a motor horn down the street, he muttered; but up here it cannoned from rock to rock, divided, met in shocks of sound[...] and became an anthem, an anthem twined round now by a shepherd boy's piping (that's an old man playing a penny whistle by the public-house, he muttered) [...] This boy's elegy is played among the traffic, thought Septimus. Now he withdraws up into the snows, and roses hang about him – the thick red roses which grow on my bedroom wall, he reminded himself. The Music stopped. He has his penny, he reasoned it out, and had gone to his next public house.

But he himself remained high on his rock, like a drowned sailor on a rock. I leant over the edge of the boat and fell down, he thought. I went under the sea. I have been dead, and yet am now alive, but let me rest still, he begged (*MD*: 62).

In this passage, the events in Septimus's 'real' location of Regent's Park and its surrounding area, the sound of 'motor horn down the street' and 'an old man playing a penny-whistle,' are registered by Septimus as occurring in that space, but at the same time these sounds are transmuted by Septimus and woven into the fabric of this second location 'very high, on the back of the world.' The song played on the penny-whistle becomes an 'elegy' and the car horn an 'anthem.' Following the evocation of elegy here, this passage gestures, through the image of the 'shepherd boy' and Septimus as 'a drowned sailor', towards the tradition of pastoral elegies, such as John Milton's 'Lycidas' in which the speaker is a shepherd mourning the loss of another shepherd, the titular Lycidas, who has drowned. This pastoral tradition is one which Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson identify as a specifically homoerotic one in the introduction to *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*:

The pastoral tradition emphasizes rural simplicity and, indeed, paints the rustic life of the shepherd in the pasture as a sort of Arcadian, golden age of leisure and erotic play. In ancient Greece and Rome, much of that erotic play was between men, and [...] gay scholars and authors (and others) have used this homoerotic literary and artistic tradition to imagine a queer history, a queer space, and indeed a queer nature: the idealized, bucolic 'naturalness' of pastoral homoeroticism calls into question the idea that heterosexuality is the only 'natural' sex ground (Erickson and Mortimer-Sandilands 2010: 4)

Reading the evocation of this tradition contained within Septimus's hallucination in light of Mortimer-Sandilands and Erickson's evaluation of the pastoral tradition then, that hallucination takes on a distinctly queer dimension as an imagining of an alternative space to

the streets of London, a space fundamentally bound up with a tradition of queer erotic art and literature, an idealised space of queer erotic play.

Continuing to consider this passage's relationship to the idea of elegy, particularly given Septimus's having served during the war and Evans's death during it, Septimus's description of this second location contains a number of images which evoke the battlefields of World War One. First, the image of 'red flowers [growing] through his flesh.' Whilst it is unclear if this image is also later implicated in the reference to the roses on Septimus's bedroom wallpaper, it certainly can be seen, at least in its first appearance, to evoke the image of poppies growing in the former battle fields of Flanders, which have been worn as a symbol of remembrance since 1921, with Septimus imagining himself as one of those war dead 'through' whom the poppies grew. Furthermore, in the way the second space is described, as 'very high,' made up of 'rock,' and in how the shepherd boy 'withdraws up into the snows,' that the space seems to resemble a mountain. In "'Vanished Like Leaves": The Military, Elegy, and Italy in *Mrs. Dalloway*,' David Bradshaw considers how *Mrs. Dalloway* engages with the elegiac form, particularly with regards to the images of 'fallen leaves' which he traces through the history of poetry, including in Dante's *Inferno*. Bradshaw suggests that Evans 'must have been a casualty of the battle of Vittorio Veneto' as a result of the timeline of his death and the implication that Septimus was based in Italy during the war (2002: 120). Significantly, the battle of Vittorio Veneto was fought on a mountain, Monte Grappa, suggesting that the location of Septimus's second space is the battlefield on which Evans died. Given these images which point to the location of the second space which Septimus inhabits as a former battlefield of the war, that transmutation of the car horn to an 'anthem' can be reappraised as another instance of the evocation of the elegiac form, recalling Wilfred Owen's 1920 poem 'Anthem for Doomed Youth,' which takes as its subject the deaths and lack of proper burials of soldiers in the first world war.

Underscoring this vision then, is a queer-romantic subtext in Septimus's sensation of being torn between his physical location in Regent's Park and the society surrounding him which has ostensibly moved on from the war, whilst emotionally he is still stuck in Italy, grieving for Evans, and imagining himself as a corpse at the scene of Evans's death. This physical and psychological split consequently anticipates that statement of Septimus's towards the end of the passage, 'I have been dead, and yet am now alive,' which seemingly recalls the biblical resurrections of Lazarus and Jesus. Whilst this claim of resurrection could be read as simply indicative of his mental illness, a delusion of grandeur, by reading it within the context of the references to the war and Evans's death, it becomes a significant, and more

nuanced, window to his psychological state, metaphorically representing the intensity and persistence of his grief for Evans, leaving him feeling as though he died alongside him but is being forced to persist beyond that space and time, into his present in post-war London. Returning this idea of Septimus's being divided between living and dying, Rezia and Evans, as central to Septimus's experience of space, Septimus's persistent occupation of liminal spaces can be read as representative of this divide, and a symbolic representation of Septimus's purgatory. Indeed, this idea of Septimus's being torn between life and death is further reinforced by the repeated allusions to *Inferno*, where Dante is both alive and in hell, and the description of his arm as 'a piece of bone' when he gives it to Rezia, an image which symbolically makes a living corpse of him.

3.3 Hostile Space

Developing upon Ahmed's suggestion that queer 'unfolds from specific points, from the lifeworld of those who do not or cannot inhabit the contours of heterosexual space,' and in light of the legal context at play, it becomes possible to identify, alongside the immobility discussed in the previous section, an undercurrent of hostility which characterises Septimus's experience of space (2006: 172). Returning to that first image of Septimus 'unable to pass' in the middle of Bond Street, we find this sense of hostility appear in the way the world is '[threatening] to burst into flames,' which, as discussed above, suggests the threat of divine punishment for Septimus's queerness. Furthermore, in the way in which Septimus is shown to also be conscious of the inhabitants of this world's gaze on him, in his sense that he was 'being looked at and pointed at,' there is a parallel to the contextual hostility towards queer people in public spaces, as a result of the danger presented to them by the enforcement of the Labouchere Amendment. Indeed, this image of Septimus's paranoia recalls Oscar Wilde's experience, described in *De Profundis*, of a crowd 'laugh[ing]' and 'jeering' at him as he waited 'in convict dress and handcuffed' at Clapham Junction to be transported to Reading Gaol, having been convicted of gross indecency. ([1905] 2002: 87-88). Following this idea of hostile spaces through the novel, however, we find that the hostility which seems to be present in that moment on Bond Street is not contained only to 'public' spaces, as, indeed, we might anticipate given that homosexuality was explicitly outlawed in 'public *or* private' [my emphasis].

Later in the novel, an episode which mirrors the hostile experience of space had by Septimus on Bond Street occurs when Rezia is standing in the park, recalling a trip she and Septimus took to Hampton Court, and how after they returned:

He could hardly walk. He lay on the sofa and made her hold his hand to prevent him falling down, down, he cried, into the flames! and saw faces laughing at him, calling him horrible disgusting names, from the walls, and hands pointing round the screen. Yet they were quite alone (*MD*: 60).

Here then, there are a number of clear parallels between the sense of hostility in this experience of space, and the one Septimus has on Bond Street. Recurring in this episode are the references to ‘flames,’ accompanied here by a fear of falling, which (as I have argued earlier in this chapter) further evokes the idea that the flames of both scenes are related to divine punishment via the novel’s allusions to *Inferno*, in which hell is located beneath the earth. Alongside this, we also find the description of ‘faces laughing at him, [...] and hands pointing’ which clearly recalls the question ‘was he not being looked at and pointed at?’ as well as Oscar Wilde’s experiences following his sentencing, discussed above. Furthermore, in a similar way to how Rezia taking Septimus’s arm on Bond Street facilitates his movement through that space, here Septimus ‘made her hold his hand to prevent him falling.’ Again, Rezia is used to orient Septimus in this space, to make it safe and stable. And once again, this is achieved through an action which presents the image of heterosexual romance, holding his hand, whilst also subverting that image, in making Septimus child-like and Rezia maternal.

Therefore, whilst there are clear parallels between this passage and the one on Bond Street, this passage expands upon the presentation of that spatial hostility, moving Septimus out of the street and into the home, or what might be termed out of public and into the private. What this passage suggests then, is that this hostile experience of space is not limited to shared, public space, but that the judgment, or at least the paranoia over being judged, which Septimus felt on the street follows him even into this apparently private space, affirming the sense that *all* spaces are hostile towards him.

Looking at how this hostility specifically manifests here, again it is connected to Septimus’s ability to be perceived by others. In this passage, this perception takes the form of ‘faces laughing at him, calling him horrible disgusting names.’ Unlike the scene in Bond Street, however, this passage is a memory, one that the reader is made privy to through the use of free indirect discourse which orients itself around Rezia’s perspective. It is as a result of this point of view that Woolf is able to provide us with that final sentence of the quotation, ‘yet they were quite alone.’ If this passage were written from Septimus’s perspective, as the

one on Bond Street is, it may not be clear whether or not those faces were really there, whether anyone was in the room, laughing at him and calling him names. In this memory then, the novel confirms the sense that what is important in Septimus's experiences of being watched and judged by those with whom he shares space is not whether or not they are actually noticing him at all, but his own feeling that they are. The two characters might be 'quite alone,' but the hostility he fears is persistently present.

Another consequence of the perspective from which we receive this memory is that we are unable to know both what the names that Septimus is being called are, as well as who is categorizing them as 'horrible' and 'disgusting.' Given the perspective, we might presume this is Rezia's judgment of them, perhaps also that it reflects her unwillingness to repeat them. Of course, ultimately, Woolf as the author has chosen not to specify the names, this may have been in an effort to avoid censure, particularly if they were related to homosexuality. However, the omission also works to implicate the reader in both the judgment and construction of Septimus's identity; by leaving that difference unnamed it remains undefined, and therefore allows the reader the opportunity to presume what those names might be. If the reader does guess at those names, it becomes a reflection of their own ideas of difference, of otherness, reflecting their own concerns and anxieties. Indeed, in this way, the experience of reading this passage might be understood to mirror Septimus's experience of hearing the names. Given that no one is actually saying them, Septimus and Rezia being 'quite alone,' the names he hears serve as reflections of how Septimus thinks of himself, or, at least, how he thinks other people think of him. As a result of the absence of these names in the text then, it becomes possible to understand them as reflecting any number of differences, including queerness— particularly in light of the queer allusions which punctuate both this episode and Septimus's wider narrative, discussed above.

Building on this idea of Septimus's queer experience of space as defined by a sense of hostility, elsewhere in the novel we find space being policed by normative forces. One example of this hegemonic policing of space can be located in Sir William Bradshaw's suggestion that the way to 'treat' Septimus is to 'invoke proportion; order bed rest; rest in solitude; silence and rest; rest without friends, without books, without messages; six months rest' (*MD*: 89). In his treatment, Bradshaw seeks to physically reduce Septimus's space, and the possibility of his queer interactions with it, by putting him under the constant surveillance and 'care' of the normative state which seeks to fix him. Further, we read how if that does not work 'he had to support him police and the good of society, which, he remarked very quietly, would take care, down in Surrey, that these unsocial impulses [...] were held in control'

(MD: 91). By referring to the police here, we find Bradshaw's suggesting that freedom in space is a privilege granted by the state, one which can and will be, taken away when it is used in ways which are not deemed proper. Woolf herself would have been familiar with this normative policing of space from her own experiences being treated with 'a few weeks in bed in Jean Thomas's Twickenham nursing home' in 1910 and again from the 25th of July to the 11th of August 1913, in attempts to prevent her suicide (Bell 1972: 13, 16).

Furthermore, it is difficult to divorce this threat of incarceration, along with the hostile gazes which characterise his experiences of space, from Septimus's decision to finally jump from his window— forced to acknowledge an Ahmedian inability to 'inhabit the contours of heterosexual space.' Septimus's awareness of the way in which space is policed by hegemonic forces is revealed in his response to Bradshaw's plan, when he thinks 'once you fall [...] human nature is on you. Holmes and Bradshaw are on you. They scour the desert. They fly screaming into the wilderness. The rack and thumbscrew are applied' (MD: 88). Here, Septimus transmutes the doctors' treatments into medieval torture devices, 'the rack and thumbscrew' (devices which notably serve to prevent the victim's free use of space, and in the case of the rack literally straightens them out). At the same time, the doctors become bird-like scavengers, '[scouring] the desert,' and '[flying] screaming into the wilderness' in their hunt for him. Again, there is a queer allusion to *Inferno* here, with the description of how the doctors 'scour the desert' recalling the 'sandland' which Dante describes as comprising the seventh circle of hell. This idea of there being no space, even his own home, which is safe from the hegemonic forces which seek to correct him, is further evidenced in the moments before his death, when Septimus thinks of how Holmes 'would burst open the door' and 'get him,' literally breaking down the division between the public and domestic, forcefully entering the space in order to enforce normativity (MD: 133).

In Septimus's narrative then, 'the contours of heterosexual space' are made uninhabitable for Septimus as a result of the sustained hostility he experiences throughout the novel at the hands of the heteronormative society which both constructs and inhabits the spaces in which he lives. Furthermore, by revealing the consistency of this hostility across both public spaces, such as Regent's Park and Bond Street, and the supposedly private space of his home, the novel undermines the supposed distinction between such spaces, exposing such a construction of space as fundamentally intertwined with normativity, reserved only for those who are deemed to inhabit its contours in the correct way, as the Labouchere Amendment itself suggested it to be.

3.4 'Mrs. Filmer's Area Railings': Septimus's Spatial Subversion

In light of the unrelenting hostility we find in Septimus's experience of space then, Septimus is left with only one choice, to remove himself from the space which does not want him, and to '[fling] himself vigorously, violently down on to Mrs. Filmer's area railings' (*MD*: 134). In this act, Septimus make a queer use of the heteronormative space which surrounds him.

Railings, are, of course, first and foremost, a way of organising space; railings serve to divide 'here' from 'there', 'us' from 'them,' 'in' from 'out.' The very fact that they are identified as 'Mrs. Filmer's railings' (emphasis my own) indicates their connection to heteronormativity, associating them with the marriage of Mrs. Filmer, perhaps even implying that the property was once her marital home, as well as pointing towards their function in the organisation of the street; serving to demarcate the boundaries of that 'private,' marital property. Turning to Jack Halberstam's discussion of queer time and space, the railings, through their association to Mrs. Filmer, can be understood as representative of the kinds of heteronormative 'logic of capital accumulation [...] the normative values that make everyone else feel safe and secure [...] the organizations of time and space that have been established to protect the rich few' which Halberstam argues queer uses of time and space 'destabilize' (2005: 26).

In dying upon that boundary then, the image which concludes Septimus's narrative is one which braids together both the hostility and the disorientation which we have seen characterise his experiences of space throughout the novel. Septimus's use of space in that moment appropriates the spatial constructs used by the heteronormative society which is actively hostile towards his queerness, transforming the railings which seek to divide 'public' and 'private' and to sequester intimacy into a space in which it will not be seen. Thinking of Septimus's action in this way, there is a parallel between this use of space and Michel de Certeau's discussion of 'tactics' in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau's tactic is defined as 'a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus' ([1980] 2011: 36-37). De Certeau continues, 'the space of the tactic is the space of the other. Thus, it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It does not have the means to keep to itself, at a distance, in a position of withdrawal, foresight, and self-collection; it is a manoeuvre [...] within enemy territory' (2011: 37). Building on this, De Certeau emphasises the opportunistic and ephemeral nature of the tactic, writing, 'it operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage of "opportunities" and depends on them' and 'must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment' (2011: 37). We can see then, how

Septimus's spatial practice in his final moments can be understood as the practice of a tactic. We find the emphasis on the momentary, opportunistic nature of the tactic which De Certeau identifies, in the time constraint placed upon him by the encroaching normative force embodied in Dr. Holmes. This time pressure forces Septimus to decide what to do in the short space of narrative time before the door is forced open: 'he considered Mrs. Filmer's nice clean bread-knife with "bread" carved on the handle. Ah, but one mustn't spoil that. The gas fire? [...] Razors he might have got, but Rezia, who always did that kind of thing, had packed them' (*MD*: 133). Here we see Septimus 'accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment,' as De Certeau argues those who operate via the tactic do, with Septimus only resorting to jumping from the window when he realises that his other options are inoperable. We also find this sense of Septimus's spatial practice as '[playing] on and with a terrain imposed on' him, in his re-appropriation of the railings, a construct of the normative society, designed to separate space, to create a division between public and private, to perpetuate the heteronormative ideals of capital accumulation and hidden intimacy, instead using them to free himself from those forces. Further, given my reading in chapter one of the line 'Evans was behind the railings' and the possible suggestion that this means that he is waiting for Septimus beyond his eventual death on the area railings, Septimus can be seen to use re-appropriate the railings in order to replace the space controlled by the heteronormative forces symbolised by them, with a kind of queer afterlife, one which is not organised by the same hegemonic forces.

3.5 Jacob's (Dorm) Room– A Queer Counterpublic

Turning now to Woolf's 1922 novel *Jacob's Room*, we find in this earlier work quite different queer experiences and practices of space. Although feelings of disorientation still riddle the narrative, the key difference between Septimus's experiences and Jacob's, is that in Jacob's case, these experiences are not exclusively experienced alone. Furthermore, unlike Septimus, we find Jacob resisting the Ahmedian 'queer moment', and increasingly attempting to comply with the demands of heteronormative masculinity. As I argue, this compliance not only fails to keep him safe, but, ultimately, actively contributes to his death, leading him, the same way it does Septimus, to the battlefields of the First World War.

Published in October of 1922, Woolf's third novel *Jacob's Room* is often regarded as her 'first consciously experimental work' and a 'paradigmatic modernist text' (Zwerdling 1981: 894). However, it is also one of her most ostensibly homosexual, although the

character who one might more readily think of with regards to homosexuality in this novel is not its elusive protagonist Jacob Flanders, but rather his friend Richard Bonamy, who we are forthrightly told, ‘couldn’t love a woman’ (*JR*: 227). Whilst, given this more explicit queer characterisation, Bonamy may be a more obvious focus for this chapter, Kimberley Engdahl Coates in ‘Virginia Woolf’s Queer Time and Place: Wartime London and a World Aslant’ (2016) has already provided a thorough reading of Bonamy’s experiences of space in relation to Ahmed’s queer phenomenology. In choosing to focus my reading on Jacob then, I build upon the work begun by Coates, broadening the purview of a queer phenomenological reading of spatiality in the novel beyond the character which is most forthrightly presented as queer (in terms of its objects of desire), in order to suggest how Jacob’s character, despite his frequent heterosexual encounters throughout the novel, can also be read as (at least, briefly) inhabiting a queer orientation, and how this orientation affects his use of space.

As I have suggested above, unlike Bonamy, Jacob’s queerness is not rendered so blatantly. Indeed, it appears to elude even the other characters of the novel, as we find suggested in Bonamy’s lament that Jacob is ‘not of his own way of thinking—far from it’ (*JR*: 228). However, taking up the call of Woolf’s narrator towards the beginning of chapter three to ‘follow hints, not exactly what is said, nor yet entirely what is done’ (a reading practice which will be familiar to any who engage in reading queerly), Jacob’s queer orientation, as I will show, can soon be found (*JR*: 47). One of the first instances where we might note a particularly queer dimension to Jacob’s character, comes in Chapter III, during his time at Cambridge. Towards the end of that chapter, Jacob is at a late night gathering in one of the boy’s dormitory rooms. Whilst Jacob is smoking out of the window, the gathering appears to spontaneously dissolve:

Meanwhile behind him the shape they had made, whether by argument or not, the spiritual shape, hard yet ephemeral, as of glass compared with dark stone of the chapel, was dashed to splinters, young men rising from chairs and sofa corners, buzzing and barging about the room, one driving another against the bedroom door, which giving way, in they fell (*JR*: 71).

Already, there is a suggestion in this quotation of the particularly queer character of this gathering in that final image of the two men falling into the bedroom. Of course, we might write off this image as representing a kind of light-hearted, masculine play fight. However, the image becomes particularly queer when we carry on through the rest of the chapter and note that these men never seem to come back out of the bedroom, and the passage simply

concludes with Jacob 'left there, in the shallow arm-chair, alone with Masham? Anderson? Simeon? Oh, it was Simeon' (*JR*: 71).

Following this dissolution of the gathering, we encounter one of the novel's characteristic 'gaps,' a single-line break between the two paragraphs. In 'Mind the Gap: The Spaces in *Jacob's Room*' Edward L. Bishop advocates for the significance of this typographical structure as central to the intent of the novel. Bishop argues that 'between the manuscript and the published text Woolf made the decision to deny her narrator any access to Jacob's mind at all, and so rather than internal monologue it is the gaps that render the emotion' (2004: 39). Bishop also draws attention to the fact that Woolf had recently completed type-setting Hope Mirrlees's poem *Paris* whilst working on *Jacob's Room*, a poem which is similarly conscious of the effect of negative space upon the reader. Whilst Bishop is right to draw attention to the evocative qualities of Woolf's typography in the novel, I would challenge his claim that these gaps exist in lieu of the narrator having 'any access to Jacob's mind at all.' Below, I draw attention to one of several instances where the narrator directly relates Jacob's thoughts (see page 109). I would suggest then that the gaps in *Jacob's Room* serve a more complicated and versatile role than simply standing in for the omission of Jacob's perspective in the novel, as Bishop suggests.

Returning to the gap in the episode in the dormitory room then, a reading following Bishop's argument would understand the gap as relaying what Bishop refers to as 'spatial silence,' as a kind of pregnant pause, a tension experienced by Jacob upon discovering that he is alone in the room with Simeon. However, at the same time, the gap is, of course, a spatial construct, made up of physical space upon the page, as such it can also be understood as representative of a spatial experience had by the characters: a transcription of the newly discovered physical distance between them and other people, or else, the gap between the two men, the distance between them, a distance which Jacob will physically traverse in the course of the following section. In reading the gap as representative of the space between Jacob and Simeon, and between them and the world beyond the room, it becomes significant that this gap is the shortest in the novel, being only one line long, the others often being between two and three lines. What this brevity seems to emphasise then is how slight this division is, how short the distance, how easily it could be crossed, and consequently, how precarious this space.

Following the gap, we return to the same scene, a queer atmosphere now arising between the two characters:

It was the intimacy, a sort of spiritual suppleness, when mind imprints on mind indelibly.

“Well, you seem to have studied the subject,” said Jacob, rising and standing over Simeon’s chair. He balanced himself; he swayed a little. He appeared extraordinarily happy, as if his pleasure would brim and spill down the sides if Simeon spoke.

Simeon said nothing. Jacob remained standing. But intimacy— the room was full of it, still, deep, like a pool. Without need of movement or speech it rose softly and washed over everything, mollifying, kindling, and coating the mind with the lustre of pearl, so that if you talk of a light, of Cambridge burning, it’s not languages only. It’s Julian the Apostate.

But Jacob moved. He murmured good-night. He went out into the court (*JR*: 72).

Following the ‘hints’ of this passage, Jacob’s queer orientation begins to reveal itself here. This queerness is perhaps most forcefully communicated in the repeated reference to this atmosphere of ‘intimacy’ between the two men, clearly suggesting a particularly close, emotional relationship between them. However, ‘intimacy’ might also be understood as holding its definition as a euphemism for a sexual encounter here, its first recorded usage in such a way occurring as early as 1676 (*OED*: “intimacy (n.), sense 1.b”). This sexual dynamic between the two men in this passage is evoked further in this passage through the orgasmic image evoked by the suggestion that Jacob’s ‘pleasure would brim and spill down the sides if Simeon spoke.’ We might consider here how the gap before this section pre-empted this atmosphere, its isolation of the two figures mirroring the emotional intimacy which is about to occur.

Further, we can see the ‘intimacy’ mirrored too in Jacob’s use of space in this passage with regard to the proxemics of the scene, with Jacob physically moving closer, reducing the gap between the two, until he is described as ‘standing over Simeon’s chair,’ the physical closeness reflective of the emotional ‘intimacy’ shared between the two. At the same time, the text creates a kind of readerly disorientation in this moment, withholding whether Jacob is standing in front of, beside, or behind Simeon; to be ‘standing over’ his chair from the front would create a distinctly intimate spatial dynamic with Jacob, we might presume, leaning in towards Simeon, without the spatial division between their bodies that would be created by the back of a chair if Jacob were stood behind.

In one of the only queer phenomenological readings of Woolf to date, Kimberley Engdahl Coates gestures towards the queer dynamic of the use of space in this scene, arguing that ‘in Jacob’s Room, queer is rendered conventional as long as it stays within the safe

confines of the halls and dormitories of Cambridge' (2016: 280). Building on Coates's reading of Cambridge as a distinctly queer space, this construction of the university gestures to Woolf's life-long relationships with members of the Cambridge Apostles (as discussed in chapter one). As Todd Avery (2018: 17-18) argues in 'Bloomsbury and Sexuality':

a recognizably Bloomsburian fascination with sex as physical activity and with sexuality as a site of ideological contestation and transformation began to take shape at the turn of the twentieth century at Cambridge [...] at that time, G.E Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903) inspired what the proto-Bloomsburians understood as a radical challenge to the supposed naturalness of their Victorian sexual-ethical inheritance – and to the ostensible unnaturalness of their predominantly homosexual preferences.

In light of this context, it becomes possible to understand how for Woolf, Cambridge, particularly in terms of such male gatherings, would have been bound up with such distinctly queer spaces as the Apostles' meetings. Indeed, this scene can be read as echoing a meeting of the apostles, owing to the masculine and queer nature of this gathering which, as Avery suggests, defined the Apostles at that time. However, whilst it is possible for the reasons stated above to understand Coates' impulse to read these passages in such a way, it is necessary to nuance her suggestions that 'queer is rendered conventional' in this space, and that Cambridge is a 'safe' space for queerness to be expressed.

As I have suggested in my reading of Septimus's experiences of space, there would have been no space which is safe for queer men at the time the novel is set and was written; the Labouchere amendment explicitly outlawing gross indecency regardless of whether it is committed in public and private. Further, if we do read the community represented in the novel as drawing inspiration from the Cambridge Apostles, as Jesse Wolfe argues, the Apostles' members 'hovering on the verge of adulthood in a repressed and homophobic society– often harboured unspoken, or ambiguously spoken, erotic feelings for one another. Indirection and partial self-revelation were the DNA of apostolic culture' (2018: 34). What Wolfe's assessment of the Apostles' culture of 'indirection and partial self-revelation' with regards to their queer desires shows, then, is that queer was not safe, even at Cambridge; to reveal one's queerness to the wrong person was to risk legal and/or social retaliation, forcing the members who harboured them to take on practices of obfuscation for their protection. And, indeed, as I will show, such a culture and such practices are translated into the construction of this gathering in *Jacob's Room*.

In 'Sex in Public', Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner's consideration of the ways in which sex is mediated both in public and private and how this impacts queer uses of space, Berlant and Warner (1998: 558) argue:

[...] making a queer world has required the development of kinds of intimacy that bear no necessary relation to domestic space, to kinship, to the couple form, to property, to the nation. These intimacies *do* bear a necessary relation to a counterpublic – or an indefinitely accessible world conscious of its subordinate relation. They are typical of both the inventiveness of queer world making and of the queer world's fragility.

Berlant and Warner elaborate upon this idea of the 'fragility' of the queer world, arguing that this queer world is composed of 'sites whose mobility makes them possible but also renders them hard to recognize as world making because they are so fragile and ephemeral' (1998: 560).

Considering the construction and uses of space in the passages from *Jacob's Room* quoted above, I will suggest below how it is possible to find exactly this kind of fragility, ephemerality, and subordination to sites of heteronormativity in these episodes, revealing how the gathering in the dorm room 'bear[s] a necessary relation to the counterpublic.' That is to say, how the construction of the dorm room contains the characteristics identified by Berlant and Warner in their assessment of queer space, characteristics which are made necessary because the space outside that room is not safe; because the queer moments which occur in that room could not be expressed freely or safely in the space outside of it. However, this is not to suggest that queerness is 'safe' in the dorm room either; as I have argued, there would have been no distinction between public and private expressions of queer desire in the eyes of the law at this time. Therefore, as I will consider, even in the privacy of that dorm room, Jacob must still await a signal that Simeon can be trusted, that such desires may be acted upon without consequence.

Beginning with that first quotation, we can see how the space of the dorm room is constructed in terms of its fragility in the description of how 'behind him the shape they had made, whether by argument or not, the spiritual shape, hard yet ephemeral, as of glass compared with dark stone of the chapel, was dashed to splinters.' Here then, the text specifically constructs that gathering in terms of ephemerality, a quality which Berlant and Warner identify as characteristic of queer uses of space. At the same time, the text gestures to the gathering's fragility, in its sudden and spontaneous dissolution, through the simile 'as of glass [...] dashed to splinters.' Alongside these ephemeral and fragile qualities, the gathering

is simultaneously constructed as the kind of counterpublic defined by Berlant and Warner, a space which is conscious of its subordinate relation, with its ephemeral glass-like quality contrasted against the enduring ‘stone of the chapel.’ In contrasting the gathering against the image of the chapel here, the novel specifically evokes being a fundamentally Christian space as the gathering’s antithesis. Consequently, this simile not only gestures towards the enduring nature of religion in contrast to the ephemeral and fragile gathering, but also evokes the values symbolised by the chapel, values which contextually and historically brought about the persecution of queer people.

Building on this reading of the space as subordinate and ephemeral, we see such characteristics present also in the scene where Jacob and Simeon are alone in the room. There, again, this space is fundamentally constructed in terms of its subordinate relation to Christian values, particularly in that final reference to the historical figure of Julian the Apostate, which connects Jacob and the gathering with the last pagan emperor of Rome who rejected the rise of Christianity in the empire and whose very name refers to the idea of his opposition to Christian theology. This connection also serves to suggest the subordinate relation of this group, given that Julian was ultimately unsuccessful in preventing the rise of Christianity, implying that this group will also be defeated by Christian values. The fragility and ephemerality of the queer moment here is also suggested in that conditional ‘if’ in ‘if Simeon spoke,’ which emphasises the contingency of the queer feeling there. Indeed, Jacob, like Septimus, can be read as engaging in a De Certeauian practice of the ‘tactic’ here, a practice which ‘takes advantage of “opportunities” and depends on them’ and ‘must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment’ ([1988] 2011: 37). Indeed, this may explain Jacob’s movement ‘rising and standing over Simeon’s chair,’ which in its deployment of progressive verbs instead of simple or perfect past tense, indicates that these actions are incomplete, suggesting that Jacob is not finished and that he is awaiting an opportunity to conclude his action, ‘if Simeon spoke.’

Building on this idea of the opportunistic character of this scene, and in light of the queer dynamics at play in his uses of space throughout this passage, we might then reconsider those two declaratives which follow his standing over Simeon’s chair: ‘He balanced himself; he swayed a little.’ As a result of the way this sentence is organized, it is unclear whether Jacob has balanced himself *because* he is swaying, or if he is swaying *despite* his attempts to balance himself; the second of these implying a considerably greater feeling of disorientation, one which persists against his efforts to overcome it. What is clear, however,

is that Jacob *is* disorientated; the world has become unstable, he is unable to keep himself upright. Given the queer dimensions to be found elsewhere in this passage, we might consider how such a disorientation parallels an Ahmedian queer disorientation, an example of ‘the queer moment, in which objects appear slantwise and the vertical and the horizontal axes appear ‘out of line’ (2006: 66). Such moments, Ahmed continues, ‘must be overcome [...] because they block bodily action: they inhibit the body such that it ceases to extend into phenomenological space’ (2006: 66). Reading Jacob’s instability, his ‘swaying,’ as representative of his contingent queerness, a bodily experience of spatial instability which is representative of his ‘swaying’ between straightness and queerness. Whilst Jacob may not have yet fallen ‘out of line,’ these declaratives suggest Jacob’s attempts to ‘overcome’ the queer moment, to keep himself oriented; the outcome of which being contingent upon whether or not Simeon speaks. Which is to say, that ‘if’ can be read as the hinge upon which depends Jacob’s ability to overcome his queer moment, his disorientation, depends; that he is waiting for the signal from Simeon that it is safe, that his queer desire would not be punished or even that it might be reciprocated, if it is expressed. But nobody speaks, no such signal is given. As a consequence, Jacob retreats to his own room; safer in an act of resistance and of retreat, through which he is able to avoid the danger of revealing his desire and avoid persecution at the hands of heteronormativity.

Building on this reading of Jacob’s sudden flight from Simeon as reflecting a resistance of his queer feeling, this moment can also be understood as a turning point in Jacob’s narrative and characterisation. From this moment of flight onwards, if Jacob expresses a queer desire again it is never as close to being externalised. Instead such desires are consistently and quickly repressed in favour of following the role and behaviours demanded of him by heteronormativity. Perhaps the clearest example of this repression occurs when Jacob is sitting in the ruins of the Parthenon:

he wrote a telegram to Bonamy, telling him to come at once. And then he crumpled it in his hand and threw it in the gutter.

“For one thing he wouldn’t come,” he thought. “And then I daresay this sort of thing wears off.” “This sort of thing” being that uneasy, painful feeling, something like selfishness—one wishes almost that the thing would stop—it is getting more and more beyond what is possible—“If it goes on much longer I shan’t be able to cope with it. (JR: 243)

In this passage, Jacob’s desire for Bonamy to be with him is suggested but then in the very next sentence repressed, with the following paragraph showing Jacob’s attempts to convince himself of the reasons he was right to crumple the letter. In a novel which orients itself

around Jacob but rarely provides us access to his perspective, it becomes significant that this second paragraph offers us one of the only moments of direct access to the voice of Jacob, indeed, even the free, indirect narration here appears to bear his voice, in those declarations that ‘one wishes almost that the thing would stop—it is getting more and more beyond what is possible.’ The clarity of Jacob’s voice here can perhaps be located in both the intensity of Jacob’s feeling here, as well as the impossibility of his being able to express it to himself, an inability we can see in ‘Woolf’s use of unclear pronoun referents and innocuous nouns – the “thing” that is “beyond what is possible”’ (Coates 2016: 281). Whilst Coates reads this lack of clarity as a clear encoding of Jacob’s queer desire, it is necessary to note that other possibilities are made equally plausible by the obfuscation. Of course, ‘the thing’ might be his queer desire, growing beyond what is possible within the confines of a homophobic society. However, the text equally gestures to this ‘thing’ being the experience of being in Greece and Jacob’s feeling of guilt at his ‘selfishness’ in experiencing it alone.

However, as Coates suggests, there is a pointedly queer subtext to this episode of Jacob struggling to decide whether to write to Bonamy or not, given that earlier in the chapter the narrator describes how: ‘When bedtime came the difficulty was to write to Bonamy, Jacob found. Yet he had seen Salamis, and Marathon in the distance. Poor old Bonamy! No; there was something queer about it. He could not write to Bonamy’ (*JR*: 240). Again, the ‘it’ that is queer remains obfuscated here, gesturing both to the queerness of Jacob’s inability to write as inexplicable, whilst simultaneously suggesting that to write to Bonamy or even to think of him is what is queer, and that Jacob is attempting to resist such a queer impulse, refusing to succumb to that desire.

It is appropriate that the space in which Jacob is located during his later debate over whether to write to Bonamy is the Parthenon, the temple of Athena, goddess of war. In that space, Jacob is engaged in his own battle; a battle between succumbing to or resisting his queer orientation, of giving in to his desire and writing Bonamy to come, or, as he ultimately chooses to do, ‘overcoming’ such feelings, crumpling the letter, and complying with the demands of heteronormativity by going on to pursue the married Mrs. Wentworth. Of course, at the same time, the setting gestures to the idea of ‘Greek love’ which proliferated amongst the Apostles and the classical society’s invocation in their justifications of their own queerness (discussed above and in chapter one). At the same time, the setting also gestures forwards in the narrative, to the war which is soon to come and will end Jacob’s life.

I would like to conclude this section by considering Jacob’s resistance of his queer desires in light of Ahmed’s discussion of ‘lines,’ in order to illuminate how these acts of

resistance can be understood to set Jacob upon a certain path, a heteronormative path, that leads him to the battlefields of World War One, and ultimately to his death. Ahmed (2006: 16) suggests that:

Lines are both created by being followed and are followed by being created. The lines that direct us, as lines of thought as well as lines of motion, are in this way performative: they depend on the repetition of norms and conventions, of routes and paths taken, but they are also created as an effect of this repetition. To say that lines are performative is to say that we find our way and we know which direction we face only as an effect of work, which is often hidden from view.

In Jacob's resistances of his queerness, his leaving Simeon's side, his crumpling of the letter to Bonamy, Jacob can be seen to perform the line-creating work which Ahmed identifies. That is to say, in these moments Jacob repeatedly reorients himself towards the straight line of heteronormativity, resisting divergence from that line, an effortful resistance which works to lead him further along the straight line as he invests more time and work into his following of it.

Reading Jacob's resistance as setting him on this straight line, it becomes significant that whilst Jacob and Timmy have both died in the war by the end of the novel, the explicitly queer figure of Bonamy, who makes no such attempts to resist his queerness, survives. Whilst the novel does not specifically explain this survival (it is left ambiguous whether Bonamy is a conscientious objector or not— though it may be implied by his presence alongside Jacob's mother at the novel's close), given the intertwined cultures of queerness and conscientious objection, both within Bloomsbury and the public consciousness more widely, as considered earlier in this chapter, we might read Bonamy as representative of such a queer, Bloomsburian figure, and that it is his commitment to his queerness which actually saves him from dying as his friends do.

Emphasising this difference in Jacob and Bonamy's approaches towards their queer desires, in the section of the novel following Jacob's refusal to write to Bonamy, the narrative focus moves to Bonamy himself as he leaves the house of the sister of Jacob's Cambridge friend and, (to Bonamy's mind) Jacob's love interest, Clara Durant. As he walks away from her house, Bonamy:

got a very queer feeling, as he walked through the park, of carriages irresistibly driven; of flower-beds uncompromisingly geometrical; of force rushing round geometrical patterns in the most senseless way in the world. "Was Clara," he thought, pausing to watch the boys bathing in the Serpentine, "the silent woman? – would Jacob marry her?" (*JR*: 249)

In her reading of this episode, Kimberley Engdahl Coates draws attention, through Ahmed's queer phenomenology, to the experience of queer spatial disorientation in this moment, arguing:

Bonamy himself recognises, this "very queer feeling" has nothing to do with his own 'temperament' but is induced instead by the 'senseless' rush of 'geometrical patterns' he sees before him in the London square and the drive to be straight that such patterns demand. Patterns, which Bonamy also knows, at the level of society, orient Jacob's desire away from him' (2016: 281).

However, in her reading Coates overlooks the significantly queer pause in the midst of this moment 'to watch the boys bathing in the Serpentine.'

In *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957*, Matt Houltbrook notes:

Open-air queer culture assumed its most distinctive form around the bathing ponds provided by municipal authorities as part of the nineteenth-century drive for improving leisure facilities. Screened by a fence and – following the dictates of public morality– open only to men, the stipulation that bathers should be naked offered men an institutionalised and highly enjoyable opportunity to relax and watch each other [...] between the wars, the architect Montague Glover roamed the Serpentine, Hampstead Ponds, and Victoria Park, photographing the bathing youths he saw in a visual record of outdoor queer life. (2006: 55)

In light of this context then, we are able to come to understand Bonamy's pause as a specifically queer practice, echoing contemporaneous subcultures of queer voyeurism; the 'boys' Bonamy pauses to watch would be naked. As a consequence of these queer connotations it becomes possible to reappraise Bonamy's pause as representing a kind of queer re-affirming practice of space, a necessary subversion of the straightening 'force rushing around' in the heteronormative spatial organisation of the park, which Coates identifies in this moment. That is to say, in direct contrast to Jacob's suppression of his queer desire to write to Bonamy in the section prior, here the novel shows us Bonamy resisting the urge to straighten up, to concede to the demands and organising principles of heteronormative society in order maintain his queerness.

Regardless of why Bonamy survives the war, by having this queer character live, whilst Jacob, who resists his 'queer' desires dies, it becomes possible to read Jacob's decision to leave Simeon's side, to crumple that letter to Bonamy, to resist these queer moments and desires, as, at least in part, setting him on the path, the Ahmedian 'line,' which sends him to

war, and ultimately to his death. In following this line, Jacob is compelled by his allegiance to, and complicity with, the demands of heteronormativity, and coerced into fulfilling his hetero-paternalistic duty and affirm his proper masculinity through military service, as Gullace argues British propaganda constructed participation in the war as doing (see p.108).

Across my readings of both Septimus and Jacob's experiences of space then, I have drawn attention to the ways in which heteronormativity, compulsory masculinity, and militarism are intertwined in these character's narratives, and how these forces are presented as demanding the two characters' compliance, and, ultimately, their deaths (for Septimus, because he presents an affront and threat to their projects, and for Jacob as the price of their perpetuation). In the following chapter, I will consider the experience of Clarissa in *Mrs. Dalloway* as not only a markedly different, and specifically Sapphic, experience of space, but also as one which makes use of its compliance to heteronormativity, and consequently its co-dependant systems of militarism and masculinity, in order to secure Clarissa's safety within heteronormative space, at the expense of queer figures such as Septimus and Jacob. I will then turn to consider the equally Sapphic, but markedly different, space presented in Woolf's short story 'A Woman's College from Outside.' I will suggest how this space differs both from those inhabited by Septimus and Jacob, but also from the Sapphic space occupied by Clarissa – arguing that it represents an imagining of what a space beyond the purview of hetero-masculinity might look like.

4. Sapphic Sanctuaries in *Mrs. Dalloway* and 'A Woman's College from Outside'

Whilst, in the previous chapter, we found Septimus's experience of space to be predominantly characterised by hostility, despite the similarities in the presentations of their queer-romantic feelings, Clarissa Dalloway is not shown to experience this same hostility. Instead, I will suggest, as a consequence of Clarissa's complicity with heteronormativity, Clarissa is protected from those heteronormative forces which, I have argued, lead to the deaths of Jacob and Septimus, able to occupy a space where she can safely (re-)experience her queer desires.

4.1 Clarissa Dalloway's Queer Illegibility

As discussed in chapter two, Clarissa's queerness is most clearly suggested in the third section of the novel, when Clarissa has returned from Bond Street and retires to her room in the house's attic. It is in the rumination of how she came to inhabit this room, that her thoughts turn to how she had 'failed' her husband, Richard, a failure she associates with the fact that:

she could not resist sometimes yielding to the charm of a woman, not a girl, of a woman confessing, as to her they often did, some scrape, some folly. And whether it was pity, or their beauty, or that she was older, or some accident—like a faint scent, or a violin next door (so strange the power of sound at certain moments), she did undoubtedly feel what men felt (*MD*: 30-31).

As discussed in chapter two, there is already a queer connotation to this statement, particularly with regards to the idea of '[feeling] what men felt' which implies a sexual or romantic dynamic to her interactions with women. This queer dimension to the passage is further suggested by the idea of 'yielding' which fundamentally implies the failure of a sustained effort to resist such feelings, an effort which can be explained in light of the risk of punishment which characterise the responses to the expression of queer feelings in the novel (as found in the reactions of Dr. Holmes and William Bradshaw to Septimus's queer way of being).

Whilst in the above quotation there remains the potential to doubt Clarissa's queerness due to the relative obscurity of what might be meant by 'what men felt,' as the passage continues, the language used to describe Clarissa's feeling towards women becomes considerably more transparent. Soon after, we read, 'but this question of love (she thought,

putting her coat away), this falling in love with women. Take Sally Seton; her relation in the old days with Sally Seton. Had that, after all, not been love?' (*MD*, 31). Here, the language used to describe these experiences with women is transformed, with that feeling 'men felt' being specifically identified as 'love,' and what was before only an obscure 'yielding to the charm of a woman' is now 'falling in love with women.' Further, in this moment, the reflections on the general ideas of 'yielding to the charms of women' and 'falling in love with women' narrow to focus on one specific relationship, the one Clarissa had with Sally Seton.

Across the two quotations above, queer desire encroaches on the narrative voice, becoming more specific and more transparent as the narrative progresses, perhaps reflecting a psychological process by which Clarissa slowly 'yields' to her queerness, as she simultaneously moves closer to the memory of a time when she expressed those feelings, in her kiss with Sally. We find this (failed) attempt by Clarissa to distance herself from her queerness suggested as we continue through the narrative:

[...] she could remember standing in her bedroom at the top of the house holding the hot water can in her hands and saying aloud "She is beneath this roof.... She is beneath this roof!" No the words meant absolutely nothing to her now. She could not even get an echo of her old emotion. But she could remember going cold with excitement, and doing her hair in a kind of ecstasy (now the old feeling began to come back to her, as she took out her hairpins, laid them on the dressing-table, began to do her hair). (*MD*: 31).

Despite Clarissa's emphatic denial here: 'no the words meant absolutely nothing to her now. She could not even get an echo of her old emotion,' by the very next sentence, as the result of merely sitting down to do her hair in a mirroring of her past actions, 'now the old feeling came back to her.' In light of this sudden change of heart, from the exaggerated denials of feeling 'absolutely nothing...not even an echo' to suddenly having 'the old feeling' return, and experienced again in her present, Clarissa's denial suggests itself to be affected, a failed attempt to create a distance between her present and past selves, her queer adolescence and married, heterosexual adulthood.

This reflection of her relationship with Sally ultimately reaches its crescendo when Clarissa recalls 'the most exquisite moment of her whole life passing a stone urn with flowers in it. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down!' (*MD*: 32). In that last sentence, Clarissa's attempts to distance herself from her queer feelings for Sally have entirely failed. As I argued in chapter two, the presence of that exclamation mark reveals how the intense emotion she felt at the time, and which she claimed she could not even 'get an echo' of, is now re-experienced by her in her

present. We also see in this moment a parallel to Septimus's experience when the world 'wavered' and 'quivered,' with queer emotion again connected to spatial instability in the idea that 'the whole world might have turned upside down!'⁸

There is then a parallel between Clarissa and Septimus with regards to their intense, queer-romantic relationships with Sally and Evans, respectively. Indeed, in Clarissa's case this queerness is shown even more clearly. However, despite this clearly expressed queer encounter and feeling had by Clarissa, as she walks down Bond Street, only the section before we encounter Septimus doing the same, Clarissa:

[...] had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having children, but only this rather astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway (*MD*: 9-10).

In this passage, Clarissa feels none of the hostility which perpetually characterises Septimus's experience of space, and specifically the exact same space that Clarissa moves through in this moment. Instead, unlike Septimus whose experience is constituted by immobility and a paranoia about how he is being perceived and judged by those who share the space with him, Clarissa feels 'invisible.' Central to this difference is the novel's deployment of free-indirect discourse and the access it provides us to the subjective experiences of the two characters; it is not necessarily that Clarissa and Septimus are more or less observably queer than one another. Indeed, the only evidence we have that Septimus is perceived as queer by another being Maisie Johnson's comment which may or may not refer to his sexuality. Instead, what we are shown is how Septimus and Clarissa think of themselves, their own paranoias and preoccupations, their constructions of themselves. As such, we can read this passage in light of Clarissa's repeated attempts to distance herself from her feelings for Sally, and how this can explain why she does not feel the same hostility Septimus does in public spaces; because, as I will show in the rest of this chapter, she does not allow herself to live queerly, to occupy a queer orientation, which is, as we have seen in Septimus's narrative, experienced spatially as a queer disorientation.

One explanation for Clarissa's sense of invisibility can be located in relation to Terry Castle's argument (1993: 2) in *The Apparitional Lesbian*:

⁸ Whilst, in this chapter, I focus on Clarissa's feeling as though the whole world might have turned upside down as an experience of spatial, and sexual disorientation, there is also contained within Clarissa's sensation that 'the whole world might have turned upside down' a distinct revolutionary potential which I outline in my reading of the passage in chapter two (pp.59-60).

The Lesbian is never with us, it seems, but always somewhere else: in the shadows, in the margins, hidden from history, out of sight, out of mind, a wanderer in the dusk, a lost soul, a tragic mistake, a pale denizen of the night.

That is to say, Clarissa's invisibility can be read, through Castle, as specifically bound up with her queerness, that as a queer woman she is made invisible by a society which cannot acknowledge her existence because 'by its very nature [...] lesbianism poses an ineluctable challenge to the political, economic, and sexual authority of men over women' (Castle 1993: 62).

However, in Clarissa's experience of space the narrative locates her invisibility and marginality not in her queerness, but specifically in relation to her progress along the kind of schedule Halberstam argues heteronormative lives are ruled by, 'those paradigmatic markers of life experience— namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death' (2005: 14). We see this idea of Clarissa's invisibility being bound up with her compliance with heteronormativity suggested in the way that Woolf's semi-colons directly link the idea of Clarissa's sense of 'being invisible' with the fact that for Clarissa there will be 'no more marrying, no more having children [...] this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway.' Clarissa's experience of space then, is specifically gendered, connected to the markers which define how she is viewed by a normative society: her marital status, and the implication of her being post-menopausal, both of which directly relate to her lack of value in a heteronormative society which values women for their sexual desirability and reproductive capacity. That is to say, Clarissa views herself as invisible because she is actively aligning herself with and participating in a heteronormative scheduling, a scheduling in which she has now become obsolete, having married and become 'Mrs. Richard Dalloway,' and no longer able to produce children, leaving her of no value in the economy of heterosexuality.

The differences between Septimus and Clarissa's experiences of space and their senses of how they are being perceived then, reflects how they are differently gendered. Unlike Clarissa, Septimus is (of course) not a post-menopausal woman, and is therefore still, and perpetually will be, sexualised by society, always able, though unwilling, to contribute to its perpetuation through reproduction. Further, these gendered differences equally affect how their queerness is treated in early-twentieth century society, if it was acknowledged at all. If, as I have suggested in the previous chapter, we consider Septimus's view of space as hostile towards him because of the way in which public and private space was made hostile to gay men by the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, it becomes significant that there was no such law prohibiting homosexual acts between women, and therefore the spaces Clarissa

inhabits within the novel would not be hostile towards her queerness in the same way. However, whilst there may be a difference between how the two characters' queerness is legislated against, which can be understood to provide Clarissa with a relatively less hostile experience of space, this is not to suggest that if Clarissa's queerness was expressed or perceived in public it would not be treated with the same hostility as Septimus's. As Terry Castle notes:

when members of the House of Lords decided in 1921, for example, not to amend the anti-homosexual Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 to include acts of 'gross indecency between women, it was not because they deemed the threat of lesbianism an inconsequential one [...] but because they were afraid that by the very act of mentioning it, they might spread such unspeakable 'filthiness' even further. (1993: 6).

Which is to suggest that 'gross indecency between women' was still socially discriminated against, so much so that it could not be legislated against for fear that it might become more common. Building on the differences between Septimus's and Clarissa's queerness and how this translates to their differing experiences of time and space, we can also see that, unlike Septimus, whose encounters with Evans are consistently located outside of himself, oriented spatially 'behind the railings' and 'among the orchids,' or Jacob's which is experienced in the presence of another character, Clarissa's queerness is not experienced outside of herself in shared space inhabited by others where it may be perceived. It is in fact doubly hidden from view, taking the form of the memory of that kiss with Sally in Burton, with this recollection only occurring when she is lying alone in 'an attic room,' a space which is physically as far removed as possible from the rest of the household who occupy the lower floors.

Following this reference to the 'attic' in relation to Clarissa's room, there is a parallel to the consistent intertwining of Ancient Greece and queerness found in Septimus's narrative. The *OED* defines the word 'attic' as both the space at the top of a building but also something 'of or pertaining to Attica, or to its capital Athens; Athenian' ("Attic (adj.), sense 1,"). As in Jacob's Room then, we find the Greek goddess of war spatially evoked in this moment of conflict between Clarissa's conformity to heteronormativity and her latent queerness; however, in this moment the evocation of Athena can be seen to hold a number of other connotations central to the construction of Clarissa. First, Athena can be seen as a distinctly patriarchal symbol, born from the head of Zeus, without the involvement of a woman, she is a product of masculinity, and, as the rest of this chapter suggests, so is Clarissa. Further, as I have already mentioned above, Athena is the goddess of war, she is a military figure. By associating this queer moment with Athena then, Woolf introduces the

suggestion that the Clarissa's cordoning off of her queer desires, her repression of them, aligns her with militarism, the same militarism which (as I have argued above, and will explore further below) kills Jacob, Evans, and Septimus.

However, as I have suggested, what we find in the passage in the 'attic room' then, is that for Clarissa, a safe, 'private' space in which her queerness can be expressed (a space which eludes Jacob and Septimus), does exist. Ostensibly, the potential for her to find such a space can be understood as the result of her being a woman, because lesbianism wasn't criminalised, or acknowledged, in the same way as male homosexuality, as Castle notes. However, it is also possible to understand Clarissa's ability to experience such a safe space as equally the result of her having complied with the demands made upon her by heterosexuality: marrying, having a child, becoming 'Mrs. Richard Dalloway,' a compliance which masks her queerness, and makes her, and it, invisible.

In the distinction between these characters' 'public' and 'private' expressions of non-normative desires, we find a parallel to Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner's consideration in 'Sex in Public' of the ways in which sexuality is organised and controlled by heteronormative society. In that essay, they suggest that 'the normativity of heterosexual culture limits intimacy only to the institutions for personal life [...] by making sex seem irrelevant or merely personal, heteronormative conventions of intimacy block the building of nonnormative or explicit sexual cultures' (Berlant and Warner 1998: 553). In the way that Clarissa only allows herself to express her queer desire in the private space of her 'attic room' we find, in light of Berlant and Warner's argument, Clarissa actively benefiting from and perpetuating the heteronormative privatisation of desire. Whilst Septimus and Jacob are unable to find any space in which their queer desire can be safely expressed, the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 making no distinction between 'gross indecency' committed in 'public or private,' Clarissa does not face that same hostility. Instead, Clarissa can not only exist queerly within but even benefit from those heteronormative divisions of space: using them to allow the comfortable expression of her queerness in private, walking invisibly amongst the public, and making no attempt to challenge a system which benefits her, whilst at the same time that system punishes those like Septimus and Jacob, even when they too attempted to comply with its demands. Perhaps, this complicity is why we find Clarissa thinking, on hearing of Septimus's death:

it was her disaster—her disgrace. It was her punishment to see sink and disappear here a man, there a woman, in this profound darkness, and she forced to stand here in her

evening dress. She had schemed; she had pilfered. [...] And once she had walked on the terrace at Bourton (*MD*: 166).

Here the free-indirect narrative voice creates an ambiguity around whether this is Clarissa's own acknowledgement of her responsibility for Septimus's death or if it is the narrator who is assigning the 'disgrace' to Clarissa. However, reading this passage in relation to my argument above regarding Clarissa's compliance with heteronormativity and the invisibility and security this provides her, here the narrative gestures to the price of this complicity for those who are unable to hide their queerness. That is to say, whilst Clarissa is protected by the normativity which she has sustained and perpetuated through her 'schem[ing]' and 'pilfer[ing],' that normativity simultaneously punishes others, like Jacob, Septimus, and Evans. As such, she must face the consequences, the 'punishment' (though we may question to what extent we are supposed to sympathise with Clarissa's self-pitying here) of being 'forced to stand here in her evening dress,' safe and celebrated amongst figures such as the prime minister and Dr. Bradshaw, figures who wield heteronormativity to punish queerness and perpetuate the cultures of compulsory-masculinity and militarism, whilst 'here a man, there a woman' disappear as the price of the security she enjoys.

4.2 A Queer Space of One's Own– 'A Woman's College from Outside'

In this section, I turn towards Woolf's 1926 work of short fiction, 'A Woman's College from Outside,' a text which serves as both a bridge between, and contrast with, the practices and experiences of space performed and had by Jacob and Clarissa, considered above. I will suggest that in 'A Woman's College from Outside' Woolf constructs this titular 'Woman's College' as a kind of queer, feminine space, imagining an alternative to the heteronormative and masculine spaces which persecute and force into hiding the queer desires of Septimus, Jacob, and Clarissa across *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Jacob's Room*.

Although 'A Woman's College from Outside' was originally drafted as 'Chapter X' of *Jacob's Room*, it was ultimately cut prior to the novel's publication in what Edward L. Bishop refers to as 'part of a comprehensive pattern of post-draft revisions that sharpen the focus on Jacob' (1998: xiv). However, despite its excision from the manuscript of *Jacob's Room*, 'A Woman's College from Outside' did eventually appear in print four years after the publication of *Jacob's Room* and a year after the publication of *Mrs. Dalloway*, as part of the 1926 anthology *Atalanta's Garland*, 'published to celebrate the twenty-first anniversary of

the Edinburgh University Women's Union, and to aid the fund for its extension and endowment' (Anon 1926: V).

In its original place as part of *Jacob's Room*, what would become 'A Woman's College from Outside' would have served as a direct contrast to Jacob's masculine dorm room gathering. David Bradshaw reads this contrast between the two college gatherings as being primarily feminist in its intentions, reflecting the way that Woolf 'was at one stage minded to reinforce the injustice of the situation by leading the reader directly from [the men's] shenanigans to the calm and dedicated lucubrations of a Cambridge women's college' (2003: 22). However, I would suggest the story presents the contrast of a queer, feminine alternative to the isolated, counterpublic spatial practices of that passage in the men's dormitory which I considered in the previous chapter.

As well as this original relationship to what would become *Jacob's Room*, 'A Woman's College from Outside' can also be understood as a kind of proto-text for what would become Clarissa's narrative, most obviously with regards to the kiss which is shared between Angela and Alice and its similarities to the one between Clarissa and Sally, as well as in the various forms Angela's name takes over the course of the narrative and its relationship to Clarissa's concern, discussed above, with being only 'Mrs. Richard Dalloway,' both of which I will elaborate on below.

The most obvious parallel between the narratives of 'A Woman's College' and *Mrs. Dalloway* can be located in the kiss shared between Angela and Alice, a kiss which is also central to locating the queer perspective, and consequently a queer spatiality, within the story. Coming in the seventh of the eight paragraphs which make up 'A Woman's College from Outside,' the narrative actually moves its focus away from Angela and out of the window during the moments when the kiss occurs, only re-joining her at her own bedroom window after the fact:

'Ah,' breathed Angela, standing at the window in her night-gown. Pain was in her voice. She leant her head out. The mist was cleft as if her voice parted it. She had been talking, while the others played, to Alice Avery, about Bamborough Castle; the colour of the sands at evening; upon which Alice said she would write and settle the day, in August, and stooping, kissed her, at least touched her head with her hand, and Angela, positively unable to sit still, like one possessed of a wind-lashed sea in her heart, roamed up and down the room (the witness of such a scene) throwing her arms out to relieve this excitement, this astonishment at the incredible stooping of the miraculous tree with the golden fruit at its summit (*CSF*: 147).

As a consequence of the narrative movement out of and back into Angela's narrative via the window, the kiss is encountered by the reader only in the form of a memory, and indeed a particularly unstable one; Angela seemingly uncertain if there was even a kiss at all, or if Alice had 'at least touched her head with her hand.' This obfuscation contrasting Clarissa's more explicit kiss with Sally Seton, relayed through its series of simple past-tense declaratives 'Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips' (*MD*: 32). Despite the considerable difference, particularly with regards to their queer-romantic significance, of the two possible forms of contact, a kiss or a touch, Angela notably does not make any such distinction, whichever it was, the kiss or the touch of a hand, she is still 'positively unable to sit still, like one possessed of a wind-lashed sea in her heart.' In this way, actually emphasises the queer-romantic significance of this encounter, implying that the significance of this moment is not to be located in the act itself but in Angela's intense reaction to it. In this ambiguity surrounding the kiss/touch, the story in this moment can be seen to be figuring an alternative queer erotics, one which subverts the physical encounters central to heteronormative romance, where the kiss between lovers seals the marriage contract (indeed, as I will consider over the course of this chapter, this is not the only instance where the short story parodies marriage ceremonies), replacing it with one where the very touch of a hand to a head is imbued with equal sexual and romantic significance.

Notably, in the Berg collection's typescript of the story when it was still chapter x of *Jacob's Room*, the ambiguity of the kiss between Angela and Alice created by the clause 'at least touched her head with her hand' is not present. That clause was only added by Woolf in the published version, with the typescript reading as the unequivocal 'stooped, kissed her, and went to bed,' a phrasing which, in its three declaratives, clearly anticipates the description of Sally and Clarissa's kiss (BERG: Reel 11, M88).

Alongside this ambiguity over whether there was a kiss, there is a further ambiguity within the sentence about whether the kiss/touch is the cause for Angela's excitement or whether it is the anticipation of the trip to Bamborough Castle which Alice will write to confirm. As we progress through the text however, we encounter Angela

[... throwing] her arms out to relieve this excitement, this astonishment at the incredible stooping of the miraculous tree with the golden fruit at its summit – hadn't it dropped into her arms? She held it glowing to her breast, a thing not to be touched, thought of, or spoken about, but left to glow there (*CSF*: 147).

In this sentence then, it becomes clear that the cause for Angela's excitement is the (potential) kiss, with the metaphor of the 'incredible stooping of the miraculous tree with the

golden fruit at its summit' quite clearly standing in for the figure of Alice who 'stooped' to kiss Angela, and 'the golden fruit at its summit' implying Angela's lips.

Further, we find the second sentence retroactively justifying the necessity for this metaphorical morphing of Angela and the (potential) kiss through the declaration of the unacknowledgeable quality of the 'fruit,' a quality which parallels Clarissa's feeling after her kiss with Sally that 'she had been given a present, wrapped up, and told just to keep it, not to look at it' (*MD*: 32). As I suggested with regards to Clarissa and Sally's kiss, there is again an irony to the fact that by constructing this encounter as incommunicable, the text simultaneously gestures towards its queer nature, evoking the necessary invisibility of lesbianism and the potential consequences of its revelation. That is to say, it is the queerness of the encounter which makes it uncommunicable, and its incommunicability which implies it is queer.

However, despite this sense of the kiss as unacknowledgeable for Angela, I would suggest that what we are being presented with here should not be read as another instance of the repression of queer desire that I have found in Jacob's and Clarissa's narratives. The reason I suggest that this story is presenting a different relation to queerness is because of the new, optimistic, even idealistic, orientation towards the world that Angela takes on following her kiss/touch, one which can be understood as closely mirroring, and actually enacting the radical potential alluded to in Clarissa's sense following her own kiss that 'the whole world might have turned upside down!' (*MD*: 32).

We see this radical re-orientation towards the world brought about as a consequence of the kiss presented most clearly in the final sentence of 'A Woman's College':

Sucking her thumb like a child (her age nineteen last November), she lay in this good world, this new world, this world at the end of the tunnel, until a desire to see it or forestall it drove her, tossing her blankets, to guide herself to the window, and there, looking out upon the garden, where the mist lay, all the windows open, one fiery-bluish, something murmuring in the distance, the world of course, the morning coming, 'Oh,' she cried, as if in pain (*CSF*: 147-148).

In contrast to the queer experiences of space discussed above, in 'A Woman's College' then, we find the queer moment of the kiss ultimately leading Angela out to a 'new world,' a 'world at the end of the tunnel,' one Angela sees as so good that she cannot sleep as a result of her excitement, of her desire for it, with this anticipation of living within it guiding her to the window to witness its emergence from the night. Unlike Clarissa and Jacob's narratives, where we find queerness as defined by practices of spatial isolation, where queerness is

necessarily hidden from the gaze of those who might persecute it, Angela's queerness draws her to the world, to the window where she can both see the dawning of the new world radically transformed by her queer desire, and where she too can be seen, perceived, documented, by the narrator who witnesses her 'from outside.'

4.3 A Name of One's Own

Building on this idea of 'A Woman's College from Outside' as presenting a markedly different relation to queerness, and its depiction of the queer kiss as enabling a new, or to borrow Clarissa's phrase 'upside down,' relation to the world, in this section I will consider the significance of the frequent changes to the form of Angela's name over the course of the narrative. I will suggest that these changes in Angela's name reflect changes in how she is characterised, and her relationship to hetero-patriarchy, mirroring Clarissa's sense of being 'only Mrs. Richard Dalloway' as reflective of her status within an hetero-patriarchal economy (*MD*: 10).

Tracing the changes in Angela's name over the course of the narrative then, in the first instance, her character is first introduced to the reader simply as 'Angela' (*CSF*: 145). During the description of her family's support of her through university, however, her surname is added to form 'Angela Williams' (*CSF*: 145). Her name then changes again to 'A. Williams' within the institutional setting of the college, as it is written on the plaque of her dormitory (*CSF*: 145). Finally, her name becomes, amidst the reverie of her Sapphic kiss, 'Angela, her other name being Williams' (*CSF*: 147). Each of these iterations can be understood, like Clarissa's being 'Mrs. Richard Dalloway,' as reflective of Angela's varying relations to hetero-patriarchal forces which work to erase her identity outside of her relation to men. Such a reading of the changes in name is suggested by the narrative through the way that, in that second iteration, Angela's name changes to 'Angela Williams' as she thinks of her parents' support. In the addition of her surname then, Angela is symbolically identified in relation to her family, specifically her male ancestors, whose name she would have inherited along the paternal line. Indeed, the name pointedly constructs Angela as the property of her male ancestors through the masculine name William, and the possessive 's' at its end. What we find then is that Angela's name first shifts as she thinks of her debt to her father, emphasising her position within, and connections to, patriarchal forces.

Consequently, by the third iteration of her name, Angela's individual identity is almost entirely erased, as she becomes 'A. Williams' on the plaque attached to her bedroom

door. In the placement of that initial to before her surname, we see an emphasis on the erasure of Angela's identity within the institutional setting, with her name now reading as a Williams, an unspecified member of her family, defined by her paternalistic last name, again, emphasising its role in marking her by her relation to men.

In its final form, following the kiss with Alice, 'Angela, her other name being Williams' however, Angela can be seen to overcome the threat of disappearance represented by the encroaching importance of her last name, the same encroachment which made Clarissa only 'Mrs. Richard Dalloway.' Not only is Angela's first name reinstated, but typographically divorced from 'Williams,' separated by four words which simultaneously and subversively position the masculine last name as 'other' to the feminine, reinforcing the emphasis on alternative, feminine ways of being within the short story. Therefore, this transformation of Angela's name following her kiss with Alice symbolically inverts the heterosexual marriage ceremony, which erases Clarissa's identity beyond her relation to her husband, distancing Angela from her relation to male relatives.

Turning to the hand-corrected typescript of the story from when it was still chapter x of *Jacob's Room*, held by the Berg collection at the New York Public Library, we find the text originally containing a considerably more radical version of these transformations to Angela's name. There, Angela becomes, following the kiss, 'Miranda – her other name being Gilman,' with Gilman subsequently crossed through and Williams written in its place (BERG: Reel 11, M88). In this manuscript form then, not only is the typographical distance between Angela and her surname accentuated by the double dash in place of the comma which takes its place in the published version of the story, but Angela's entire name changes. In this earlier draft, Angela, meaning angel or messenger of god, becomes by the end Miranda, from the Latin *miror*, meaning to wonder at, or to admire, of course aligning her with the mirror in which she is first sighted through the window. Whilst Woolf would later cross through the change of surname, in its original form, that change further gestures to the transformative effect of the kiss. Whilst both Williams and Gilman share a common origin in the French *Guillaume*, the second version of Angela/Miranda's surname proposed by Woolf, Gilman, removes the possessive 's' implicit in the surname 'Williams,' suggesting the weakened claim upon Angela made by her male relatives following the kiss (and, indeed, making a 'man' of Angela/Miranda herself). In this original version of the transformation then, the name change emphasises the transformative effect of the kiss for Angela, estranging her from the Christian resonances of her first name and the claims of patriarchal ownership

implied by her last, accentuating the queer play on the marriage ceremony which I have argued characterises the name changes in the published version.

As I suggested at this sections opening then, it is possible to see in the variations on Angela's name over the course of the story how the story both reflect Angela's position within hetero-patriarchal society, and also enact a kind of queer and feminist turning of the world upside down; one where kisses between women lead to radical new relations to the world through the transformation of those women's identities and emancipation from identity erasing patrilineal ties, in an 'upside-down,' queer, parody of the marriage ceremony.

4.4 A Woman's College as Queer Space

Having considered the ways in which the kiss in this story can be read as enabling a queer transformation both with regards to Angela's characterisation as well as in her perception of the world around her, it now becomes necessary to consider how such a transformation is possible. This possibility can be understood as the result of the specific construction of the college as a queer, feminine space, one which stands in opposition to the masculine and heteronormative spaces which Septimus, Jacob, and Clarissa occupy and must navigate. Indeed, as a space which Jacob and Septimus as men could never have accessed, and which Clarissa sacrificed her admittance to as a result of her compliance with heteronormativity and her marriage to Richard. Earlier in the chapter, I drew attention to the description of the kiss, which we are only able to access through Angela's memory, the free-indirect narrative voice only re-joining Angela after the kiss itself has transpired:

'Ah,' breathed Angela, standing at the window in her night-gown. Pain was in her voice. She leant her head out. The mist was cleft as if her voice parted it. She had been talking, while the others played, to Alice Avery, about Bamborough Castle; the colour of the sands at evening; upon which Alice said she would write and settle the day, in August, and stooping, kissed her, at least touched her head with her hand, and Angela, positively unable to sit still, like one possessed of a wind-lashed sea in her heart, roamed up and down the room (the witness of such a scene) throwing her arms out to relieve this excitement, this astonishment at the incredible stooping of the miraculous tree with the golden fruit at its summit (*CSF*: 147)

This description of the kiss between Angela and Alice points to the considerably different relation to space had by Angela from the one had by Jacob and Clarissa. Unlike those two characters, Angela's queer desire is, as the narrative voice makes clear, experienced publicly; not only is it implied that the encounter between her and Alice occurred in full view of the other women, but also that she is standing at her window, observable in her queer reverie

from the narrator's position outside looking in. In this way then, the queer moment of this story is spatially constructed not in terms of a queer counterpublic as it is with Jacob, nor into the doubly hidden memory in an attic room as it is with Clarissa, but in public, or, at least, the public of the female space of the college.

However, as I have suggested, the construction of the college as a radically feminine space can be found even before Angela and Alice's encounter. Indeed, we find the college constructed as such a space in the very title of the published version of the piece, 'A Woman's College from Outside.' In that title, the college is identified as a space belonging to a woman, notably only one woman; it is not a *women's* college, a more traditional way of referring to the space in which the story is set. Given that it is 'A Woman's College' then, the title then reads in two ways, both as a college that a woman goes to, and as a college belonging to a woman. The potential for the latter of these readings of the title can be understood as reflecting the construction of space in this story, in this college, as distinct from the naturalised masculine spaces which constitute the setting of almost the entirety of *Jacob's Room*.

Continuing to the opening of the short story, we find Woolf's narrator stating:

if she needed space to wander, she might find it amongst the trees; and as none but women's faces could meet her face, she might unveil it, blank, featureless, and gaze into rooms where at that hour, blank, featureless, eyelids white over eyes, ringless hands extended up on sheets, slept innumerable women (*CSF*: 145).

Immediately then, the narrative begins by focusing on the potential the space of the college provides for this unspecified 'she,' drawing attention to the unique opportunity it provides for a woman to 'unveil' her face 'blank, featureless' as a result of the fact that 'none but women's faces' are able to meet hers. Within the walls of the college, the women are able to exist in a natural, non-performative way; without having to appeal to the heteronormative, patriarchal desires and demands which are placed upon women in the presence of men, that clause 'and as none but women's faces could meet her face' specifically constructing the space in contrast to those where men's faces can also meet hers. Again, the description of the college here pointedly inverts the marriage ceremony. The women's faces are 'unveiled' in contrast to how they would traditionally be dressed for a wedding, and their hands are 'ringless' unoccupied by a wedding band that symbolises their relationship to their husbands.

In light of this construction of the space as uniquely feminine, it becomes significant that Woolf opens with reference to this unspecified 'she' whose potential need for 'space to wander' the quotation addresses. The narrative voice never clarifies who this 'she' is

supposed to be: Angela, the titular ‘woman,’ or another character entirely. What is clear though is that it is specifically a woman. Indeed, we might read this ‘she’ as representing a kind of every-woman, any-woman, who might need space, a space where she can wander, where she can ‘unveil’ her face; which is to say, a space of her own.

The final way in which I will suggest the space is constructed as specifically feminine, in opposition to heteronormative, patriarchal constructions of and relations to space in the novels considered in this and the previous chapter, can be found in the presentations of the only two figures in the story described using masculine pronouns. The most obvious of these figures can be found in the form of Angela’s father, who is supporting her through college, sending her ‘cheques [...] tokens that even the lily no longer floats flawless upon the pool, but has a name on a card like another’ (CSF: 145). Whilst he is not presented as an especially aggressive representative of hetero-patriarchal force, in the vein of Sir. William Bradshaw in *Mrs. Dalloway*, as the only human figure in the book described with masculine pronouns, his presence in the otherwise exclusively feminine narrative emphasises his incongruity with the space of the college and the story itself. Further, there is a clear implication of the negative, even corrupting, effect of her dependence upon her father here; perhaps implying that this monetary tie in some way undermines the emancipation from the masculine world that Angela ought to represent. However, given that his only tie to Angela, and thus the only ‘flaw’ to be found in her, is through this financial help, we can come to understand Angela’s presence in the college as working towards the undermining of this connection; we are told explicitly that she is studying ‘at Newnham for the purpose of earning her living’ (CSF: 145). When she does achieve this goal, it will remove this final connection to this masculine figure, offering an opportunity for emancipation which is only made possible as a result of her being in this uniquely feminine space.

The only other figure in the narrative described with masculine pronouns is not a ‘man’ at all but an inanimate object personified as one, the ‘prim-voiced clock,’ which:

struck the hour—one, two. Now if the clock were issuing his commands, they were disregarded. Fire, insurrection, examination, were all snowed under by laughter, or softly uprooted, the sound seeming to bubble up from the depths and gently waft away the hour, rules, discipline (CSF: 146).

Drawing on the ideas of queer temporality which I discussed in chapter one and two, we find Woolf again speaking to the idea of heteronormative time in this quotation. In Woolf’s masculine personification of the clock, clock time is constructed as in opposition to, indeed as irrelevant to, the feminine space of the college and its woman occupants; it represents a

foreign, masculine scheduling which does not and cannot account for the feminine time kept within the college's walls. In this dissonance between masculine and feminine time, we find a parallel to the construction of time which Engdahl-Coates (2016: 278) identifies in the published version of *Jacob's Room*, where she suggests that in the characters of Mrs Jarvis, Mrs Pascoe, or Florinda, Woolf presents us with 'women for whom time is a material abstraction, one that regiments their lives according to patriarchal temporal frames grossly out of sync with their own experiences.' Further, there is an obvious parallel here between the discrepancies between Clarissa and Septimus's queer, non-linear relationship to time in *Mrs. Dalloway* and the forward progress of the chimes of Big Ben which punctuate that novel.

However, here we find an important distinction between the experience of time had by the women of the college and those of *Jacob's Room*; whilst Mrs. Jarvis, Mrs. Pascoe, and Florinda are, as Coates suggests, 'regimented' by patriarchal time, in 'A Women's College' this time, as I have suggested, is entirely disregarded, the masculine clock's commands drowned out by the laughter of the students. The fact that the women of the college are able to collectively resist the patriarchal, heteronormative imperatives of clock time in this way then can be understood as presenting the radical potential of feminine adolescence and frivolity to queerly overturn the masculine, heteronormative constructs which seek to control them; and once again reveals the way in which the college and the short story can be understood as imagining how a queer, feminine space might operate.

In light of these consistent constructions of the college as a space which is exclusively for women, and which, in its femininity, undermines or even outright rejects the authority of heteronormative and patriarchal systems of relation, it becomes possible to understand the college as a radical queer, feminine space from the very beginning of the story. It is because this space is constructed in such a way, because it offers an alternative to the masculine, heteronormative spaces which surround Clarissa, Jacob, and Septimus, that it is possible not only for the queer moment in the story to occur at all, but also for that queer moment to not require engaging in the tactics of avoidance and suppression performed by Clarissa and Jacob. Instead, while the queer moment does lead Angela to a new relation to the world, the space of the college sets the stage for this relation to be emancipatory and optimistic; bringing her to her window so that she may without fear turn her queer gaze upon it, and, as we see in the observations of the narrator, let this world turn its (feminine) gaze upon her queerness.

Of course, it is necessary to note that the optimism and sexual freedom suggested by the story is predicated on its specific form, as a short story. Owing to this limited capacity of

this form, a reader will never know what would happen if the narrative were to continue and follow her in the days or years after the kiss (as we are shown in *Mrs. Dalloway*).

Furthermore, above I gestured to the importance of the characters who inhabit this space being adolescents. As a result of this story's focus on such adolescent characters then, there is a clear parallel with Clarissa's narrative in *Mrs. Dalloway* wherein the adolescent Clarissa is constructed as possessing greater sexual possibilities than her adult counterpart (see p.88). One might question, therefore, if Angela would, were the story to continue, similarly lose the possibilities which she is in possession of at the time of the narrative and be forced in line with the demands of heteronormativity.

However, as I have noted, the narrative does not continue onwards; like the college, the story is self-contained, unaffected by the hegemonic forces which lie beyond its boundaries. It is *because* of this form then, I would suggest, that the story is able to so optimistically imagine the possibilities of such a feminine space and of the queer kiss, presenting the reader with a vision of how such a space might operate and the freedoms it would grant, without having to navigate how these potentials might interact with the world beyond – as Woolf does in *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Across this chapter then, I have considered how Clarissa and Angela interact with and make use of space in starkly different ways, especially with regards to their (re-)experiencing of Sapphic kisses. Whilst Clarissa makes use of hegemonic complicity in order to secure her invisibility, safety, and privacy, Angela's safety comes as a consequence of the specific, feminine space which she inhabits, a space which stands in resistance to hetero-masculine forces. In considering these characters' experiences of space, I have also drawn attention to the emphasis which is placed on sexual difference in relation to characters' experiences of space. Contrasting the relative comfort and safety of Angela and Clarissa against the hostility which I identified as characterising Jacob and Septimus's experiences of space, I have argued how this difference can be tied to contextual attitudes towards homosexuality amongst men versus women, with the former being outlawed and persecuted whilst the latter was deemed unacknowledgeable and consequently made invisible.

5. Queer Objects in *Orlando*

He—for there could be no doubt of his sex, though the fashion of the time did something to disguise it—was in the act of slicing at the head of a Moor which swung from the rafters. It was the colour of an old football, and more or less the shape of one, save for the sunken cheeks and a strand or two of coarse, dry hair, like the hair on a cocoanut. Orlando's father, or perhaps his grandfather, had struck it from the shoulders of a vast Pagan who had started up under the moon in the barbarian fields of Africa; and now it swung, gently, perpetually, in the breeze which never ceased blowing through the attic rooms of the gigantic house of the lord who had slain him. (*O*: 13).

The above quotation consists of the entire opening paragraph of Woolf's 1928 novel *Orlando: A Biography*. Dedicated to Vita Sackville-West, whose personal biography and family history served as the inspiration for the eponymous character, the novel follows Orlando across over three hundred years and several changes in sex, before ending at 'the twelfth stroke of midnight, Thursday, the eleventh of October, Nineteen hundred and Twenty Eight,' the day of the novel's publication (*O*: 300).⁹ In this opening paragraph, Woolf sets out what are to be several of the most prominent themes of the novel. First, by introducing Orlando with that aside, 'there could be no doubt of his sex,' Woolf inaugurates the novel's exploration, and destabilisation of sex and gender (alongside almost every other apparent binary raised in the novel). If there could be no doubt of his sex, then the biographer-narrator would feel no need to affirm that fact – a reader would have had no other reason to doubt Orlando's sex, when told that he is a 'he.' It is in the assertion of the impossibility of the doubt then, that Woolf inaugurates the possibility of doubting at all. Indeed, as the reader comes to learn in the course of the novel, Orlando's sex is anything but a settled matter. However, continuing through to the end of that sentence, the reader is met with a considerably more violent and disturbing image through which they are introduced to Orlando, his 'slicing at the head of a Moor.' Here, Woolf introduces another of the novel's central preoccupations and binaries: an exploration of the construction of white, British, Christian masculinity as (violently) defined in opposition to the colonised and orientalised, 'pagan' other.

⁹ Whilst *Orlando* is commonly understood as undergoing only one change in sex, that of man to woman in chapter III, my reading of multiple changes follows the narrator's assertion that 'her sex changed far more frequently than those who have worn one set of clothing can conceive' (*O*, 202). See also my discussion of Woolf's use of 'sex' as synonymous with contemporary understandings of 'gender' for further discussion of this reading (p.144).

Whilst I will continue to consider both of these themes in the course of this chapter, I would first like to draw attention to the way in which Woolf introduces the themes into the novel's narrative; in relation to material objects – Orlando's clothing and the objectified Moor's head. In the introduction, I drew attention to Woolf's critique in 'Modern Fiction' of what she called 'materialism,' the Georgian novelists' emphasis on representing the material world over 'the spirit' (see p.1) and suggested that Woolf sought a middle ground, one that presented not only the material nor only the spiritual. In this opening passage, we find Woolf reaching for this middleground, a method in line with the 'queer amalgamation of granite and rainbow' she described in 'The New Biography,' deploying material objects in this opening sentence to offer the reader insight into the 'spirit' of Orlando. With regard to Orlando's clothing, not only does it serve to obscure his sex, it is also specifically described as the clothing 'of the time.' That is to say, the clothing has not been chosen by Orlando to reflect his own tastes but is what he is expected to wear, what society compels him to wear – a relationship to clothing which will evolve as the novel progresses. In the case of the Moor's head, Woolf pointedly alludes to its symbolic role, drawing attention to its patrilineal provenance and consequently its symbolic value as an inherited object. However, the Moor's head is not only representative of Orlando's literal, material inheritance; it is also symbolic of his more general inheritances: the legacy of his familial relations, and the responsibility of furthering their projects of colonialism, patriarchy, and the accumulation of capital and status.

Through this construction of the Moor's head as an object which represents both Orlando's literal and symbolic inheritance, this episode can be understood as speaking to the concerns of Ahmed's queer phenomenology, specifically with regards to her concept of heterosexual objects. Ahmed's definition of heterosexual objects is borne from her discussions around heterosexual and queer orientations (see introduction). As in the construction of the Moor's head, the concept of inheritance underpins Ahmed's theorisation of heterosexual objects:

We can reconsider how one "becomes straight" by reflecting on how an orientation, as a direction (taken) toward objects and others, is made compulsory. In other words, subjects are required to "tend toward" some objects and not others as a condition of familial as well as social love. For the boy to follow the family line he "must" orientate himself toward women as loved objects. For the girl to follow the family line she "must" take men as loved objects. It is the presumption that the child must inherit the life of the parent that requires the child to follow the heterosexual line. Inheritance is usually presented as a social good: we inherit our parent's assets, after all, and if we inherit their debts then this is a sign of bad parenting and a threat to the line of descent. When parents imagine the life they would like for their child, they are

also imagining what they will “give” to the child as a gift that becomes socially binding. (Ahmed 2006: 85)

Here, Ahmed specifically constructs heterosexuality as an inheritance, as an orientation which is inherited by the child from the heterosexual family, within the heterosexual family’s home. The child is expected to follow in the footsteps of the parents, to return the gift of their lives with their lives, living as heterosexuals, and re-inscribing heterosexuality as compulsory: ‘So the gift, when given, produces the one who has received the gift as indebted and demands its endless return [...] The child who refuses the gift thus becomes seen as a bad debt, as being ungrateful, as the origin of bad feeling’ (Ahmed 2006: 86). For Ahmed, failure to follow the family line of heterosexuality is to risk familial and societal love.

From this idea of heterosexuality as an inherited orientation, Ahmed goes on to consider how certain objects, in the Husserlian, phenomenological sense (see page 6), are bound up with this inheritance, working to reinforce this orientation in the child:

Of course, when we inherit, we also inherit the proximity of certain objects, as that which is available to us, as given within the family home. These objects are not only material: they may be values, capital, aspirations, projects, and styles. Insofar as we inherit that which is near enough to be available at home, we also inherit orientations, that is, we inherit the nearness of certain objects more than others, which means we inherit ways of inhabiting and extending into space. The very requirement that the child follow a parental line puts some objects and not others in reach. So the child tends toward that which is near enough, whereby nearness or proximity is what already “resides” at home. Having tended toward what is within reach, the child acquires its tendencies, which in turn bring the child into line. The paradox of this temporality helps explain how orientations are effects of work, at the same time as they feel “as if” they were like “handedness,” as a way of being in the body, by being directed in some ways more than others. (Ahmed 2006: 86).

Here then, Ahmed offers her definition of heterosexual objects, as objects which are inherited by the child within the heterosexual home. These heterosexual objects, in their nearness, orient the child toward heterosexuality and heterosexual ways of being. Central to Ahmed’s construction of heterosexual objects here is the emphasis on such objects as not exclusively referring to the material (though they can be) but also to ‘values, capital, aspirations, projects, and styles.’ However, Ahmed is not suggesting here that heterosexuality is a quality of objects themselves. As she goes on to note:

Heterosexuality is not [...] simply “in” objects as if “it” could be a property of objects, and it is not simply about love objects or about the delimitation of “who” is available to love, although such objects do matter. And neither does “heterosexual objects” simply refer to objects that depict heterosexuality as a social and sexual

good, although such objects also do matter. Rather, heterosexuality would be an effect of how objects gather to clear a ground, how objects are arranged to create a background. Following Husserl, we could say that heterosexuality functions as a background, as that which is behind actions that are repeated over time and with force, and that insofar as it is behind does not come into view (Ahmed 2006: 87).

Heterosexual objects then are not necessarily literal objects which idealise or demand adherence to, heterosexuality— a kind of propaganda. Instead, heterosexual objects bear a dialectical relationship with Ahmed's concept of sexual orientations; heterosexuality makes heterosexual objects present, and in turn, heterosexual objects orient the subject towards heterosexuality. Heterosexual objects are the objects which are present within the family home, the objects which the child is surrounded by as a member of the family, and the objects which the family and society demand the child to inherit, endlessly repaying for that inheritance through the perpetuation of those objects, and their adherence to heterosexuality. However, central to these objects is Ahmed's emphasis on their invisibility, they '[do] not come into view.' That is to say, their presence and their enforcement of heterosexuality goes unnoticed— they are taken for granted, fading into the background of everyday, family life.

Returning to the Moor's head with which this chapter and *Orlando* open, this head can be seen to align closely with Ahmed's definition of a heterosexual object. The Moor's head is an object which is given within Orlando's family home, it is a part of his inheritance, passing down through the heterosexual (patrilineal) family line. In its presence within the family home, it directs Orlando's behaviour, his way of being; in his slashing at it, he is play acting the role of his father or grandfather, he is inheriting the life of the parent, re-inscribing their behaviour. At the same time, the Moor's head is not merely material, it is (as I have argued) symbolic, it is a symbol of a field of objects, of 'values, capital, aspirations, projects, and styles': colonialist violence, capital accumulation, and the honour, legacy, and social standing of his family. In this way, the Moor's head is a heterosexual object as an object which orients Orlando towards the family line and its perpetuation— the demand heterosexuality makes, through the family and society, to be endlessly repaid (through re-inscription) for Orlando's life.

In this chapter then, I will trace Woolf's use of material objects through the course of *Orlando*, particularly with regards to clothing, and to the inherited objects which populate Orlando's family home. Drawing on Ahmed's work on queer and heterosexual objects, I will suggest that in this novel, Orlando's relationship to the material objects which surround him/her can be understood as both influencing, and reflecting, his/her sexuality and gender, nuancing previous new materialist readings of the novel.

5.1 Majoritarian/Minoritarian Orlando

Above, I drew attention to the way in which Woolf uses the object of the Moor's head as a symbolic object, an Ahmedian heterosexual object, representative of Orlando's metaphorical inheritance of the intertwined projects of British masculinity and colonialism. In his 2013 book *Virginia Woolf and the Materiality of Theory: Sex, Animal, Life*, Derek Ryan employs the theories of new materialist thinkers such as Deleuze, Guattari, and Braidotti in order to offer a queer reading of *Orlando* which analyses the importance of objects in Woolf's presentation of Orlando's change from man to woman. There, Ryan considers how in the opening two chapters of the novel Orlando's desire as a man is linked 'to a majoritarian will to possess and gain status' (Ryan 2013: 117). In contrast, after Orlando changes into a woman, Ryan argues that this relationship to objects changes and her desire becomes 'minoritarian' (Ryan 2013: 119). By 'majoritarian', Deleuze and Guattari, who Ryan invokes, do not mean a group which makes up a simple statistical majority. Instead, their majority refers to a group which possesses power *over* a minority of their own creation. As Brent Adkins (2015, 167) states: 'man (especially European man) is the majority *par excellence*.' This is because, whilst there are statistically fewer men than women, and furthermore, statistically fewer European men than Asian, African, and American men, European men have created a minority out of these groups 'because [European men] are politically dominant' (Adkins 2015: 167). Building on this understanding of the majority, we may understand a majoritarian desire, as representative of 'a majoritarian will to possess and gain status,' manifesting as 'the wished acquisition by the subject of an object,' and an 'attempt to satiate the lack' (Ryan 2013: 117-118). That is to say, in his slicing at the Moor's head, with its various connotations of objectification, racism, and colonialism, Orlando can be understood as operating in a majoritarian mode, exerting power over a minority (the Moor), in a mock-display of colonial violence – the impetus of which is always the desire to acquire land and resources. In contrast to this majoritarian will, Ryan describes Orlando's relationships to objects after his transformation into a woman as minoritarian, which he defines in terms of 'the creation of new minoritarian connections and events. It is the conceptualisation of a desire as positive and productive, as simple as the creation of aggregates or contexts' (Ryan 2013: 118) (I will return to consider examples of this minoritarian desire after Orlando's transformation below). Deleuze and Guattari's terms of majoritarian and minoritarian can reasonably be aligned with the binaries of cis and

transgender, and heterosexual and queer, where cisgender and heterosexual are constructed as a dominant mode, one which constructs itself in opposition to and in terms of its dominance over the transgender and queer. The Moor's head then, is both an Ahmedian heterosexual object and a new materialist majoritarian one; it signifies both inheritance along genealogical lines and the perpetuation of the heteronormative family, as well as racial domination, dual significations which cannot be disentangled from one another. Whilst, as Ryan argues, Orlando's relationship to objects is for the most part constituted by a majoritarian desire to possess in the opening chapters, as evidenced by that act through which he is introduced to the reader, it is necessary to acknowledge that Orlando is not exclusively shown in majoritarian or heterosexual, terms prior to his transformation. Following that opening episode with the Moor's head, Orlando's attention turns to writing poetry.

He was describing, as all young poets are for ever describing, nature, and in order to match the shade of green precisely he looked (and here he showed more audacity than most) at the thing itself, which happened to be a laurel bush growing beneath the window. After that, of course, he could write no more. Green in nature is one thing, green in literature another. Nature and letters seem to have a natural antipathy; bring them together and they tear each other to pieces. The shade of green Orlando now saw spoilt his rhyme and split his meter. (*O*: 16).

In this passage, Woolf complicates her presentation of Orlando's interactions with the material world. The laurel bush, like the Moor's head, should be objectified by Orlando, subjected to his majoritarian will to possess and confined by the strict rules of his verse. Representing Orlando's future inheritance as part of the grounds of his ancestral home whilst simultaneously presenting a symbolic association with laurel wreaths associated with figures of high social status in ancient Greece, the emperors of Rome, and poet laureates such as Petrarch – the laurel bush here ought to again symbolise Orlando's inherited, majoritarian projects of class, power, and empire. However, Orlando's attempt to exert his will upon the laurel fails, he cannot write about it. Indeed, the laurel bush, as a symbolic example of the non-human, exerts its own force, a refusal to be made an object of, '[spoiling] his rhyme and [splitting] his meter.' As a result of this failed majoritarian encounter, Woolf subverts the laurel as an expected symbol of Orlando's intellectual and cultural dominance (to parallel his physical dominance of the Moor's head), and the majoritarian way of being set up in the opening sentence. Further, Woolf gestures to the queerness of Orlando's looking at the thing itself in his attempt to write, in the parenthetical aside '(and here he showed more audacity than most).' 'Audacity' here not only implies a sense of originality, but also a sense of recklessness, of impudence, or even immorality. For Orlando to actually look at the laurel

bush in itself and not to rely upon received, inherited conceptions of what it is, is to act out of line. To return to Ahmed's description of heterosexual objects as forming a background which '[does] not come into view,' Orlando's act of looking becomes a queer one— he is bringing into view what otherwise, according to convention, should remain unnoticed and unquestioned, he is bringing to the fore the background of his family home, and consequently finds it challenging him and undermining his inherited project of domination.

5.2 Orlando as Queer Writer

Indeed, writing (in the above episode, the attempt, and failure, to write) which inaugurates the destabilisation of Orlando's majoritarian way of being, is used by Woolf throughout the opening chapters to subvert and queer Orlando's presentation, associating him with queer and minoritarian desires. In the chapter following the above passages, the biographer tells us how Orlando takes great pains to hide his writing from the view of others:

The truth was that Orlando had been afflicted thus for many years. Never had any boy begged for apples as Orlando begged paper; nor sweetmeats as he begged ink. Stealing away from talk and games, he had hidden himself behind curtains, in priest's holes, or in the cupboard behind his mother's bedroom which had a great hole in the floor and smelt horribly of starling's dung, with an inkhorn in one hand, a pen in another, and on his knee a roll of paper. Thus had been written, before he was turned twenty-five, some forty-seven plays, histories, romances, poems; some in prose, some in verse; some in French, some in Italian; all romantic, and all long. One he had printed by John Ball of the Feathers and Coronet opposite St. Paul's Cross, Cheapside; but though the sight of it gave him extreme delight, he had never dared show it even to his mother, since to write, much more to publish, was, he knew, for a nobleman an inexplicable disgrace. (O: 71).

Here, the act of writing is constructed as pointedly shameful, something which a 'nobleman' ought not do without compromising their status (as I will suggest, as both 'noble' and 'man'), and consequently something Orlando is forced to engage in only in secret. '[Hiding] himself behind curtains, in priest's holes, or in the cupboard behind his mother's bedroom which had a great hole in the floor' in order to engage in the act of writing, Orlando's use of space here constructs him as a (literally) closeted figure, hiding his identity as a writer in a way that parallels the concealing of queer sexualities. Indeed, Woolf's imagery here is distinctly rectal with its 'priest's holes' and the 'great hole in the floor' which smells 'horribly of starling's dung,' further aligning Orlando as closeted writer with the trope of the closeted homosexual. Further, in describing how Orlando had 'never dared show' his manuscript 'even to his mother,' Woolf constructs his mother as the most likely figure in his family to be receptive to

his writing (though pointedly not receptive enough for Orlando to actually show it to her), suggesting a femininity to the act of writing.

Building on the femininity identified above in Woolf's characterisation of Orlando as a writer, there are a number of parallels between Orlando as writer and the way Woolf describes women writers in *A Room of One's Own*. Written in October of 1928 and born out of two talks given at Newnham and Girton colleges in Cambridge that same month (the month when *Orlando* was first published), in *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf presents women writers, and by extension women generally, as minoritarian figures, silenced by the societal expectations of their gender and the laws which enforce them, symbolised by the imaginary figure of William Shakespeare's sister, Judith. Woolf imagines how this figure, despite being 'as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog to see the world' as her brother, is 'not sent to school.' Instead, she is made busy with domestic labour, laughed out of the theatres by the male actors, impregnated by the poet Nick Greene (who shares his name with another fictional poet in *Orlando*) and, ultimately, dies by suicide (*AROO*: 49). If she did write, Woolf notes, she would only have been able to 'scribble some pages in an apple loft on the sly [...] careful to hide them or set fire to them.' (*AROO*: 49). In her description of Judith Shakespeare then, we see clear parallels to Woolf's description of Orlando. Both of these figures write in attics, both hide their poetry from the world, both interact with, and are ultimately undermined in their poetic ambitions by, the figure of Nick Greene (in Orlando's case, pointedly *before* he becomes a woman).

Indeed, this image of female writers needing to hide their writing recurs throughout Woolf's work. Later in *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf similarly describes how Jane Austen 'hid her manuscripts, or covered them with a piece of blotting paper' as visitors enter the common sitting room where she writes (*AROO*: 67). Further, in Woolf's final novel *Between the Acts* (1941) the image once again recurs, with the character of Isa hiding her poetry 'in the book bound like an account book in case Giles ever suspected' (*BA*: 12). In a similar way to Orlando, Isa is also a figure associated with ideas of queerness and the subversion of gender binaries, her appearance found lacking when compared against those of Sappho, the classical lesbian poet, and, in a destabilisation of her femininity, 'the beautiful young men whose photographs adorned the weekly papers' (*BA*: 12).

Building on this feminisation of the way in which Orlando is constructed by Woolf prior to his transformation through his writing, turning again to *A Room of One's Own*, we find Woolf raising the idea of androgyny in relation to the figure of the writer. Towards the end of the essay, Woolf discusses Coleridge's idea of an androgynous mind, that 'it is fatal

for anyone who writes to think of their sex. It is fatal to be a man or woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly' (*AROO*: 102). Here, Woolf raises the view that the writing of anyone who is 'a man or woman pure and simple' is as a result inferior. Instead, androgyny, the blurring of the sexes into 'woman-manly or man-womanly,' is positioned as characterising the consciousness of the best writers.¹⁰ Whilst, as Brenda S. Helt argues, Woolf may ultimately undermine the ideal of the androgynous writer as one which ignores the material realities of living in a sexed body (Helt 2016: 120-126), the figure of the androgynous writer raised in 'A Room of One's Own' provides an important context for reading Orlando's queer characterisation. Following Helt's suggestion that *Orlando* is a 'companion piece' to 'A Room of One's Own' across which Woolf interrogates the ideal of the androgynous writer, Orlando can be read as the embodiment of this androgynous figure (Helt 2016: 120). As such a figure, Orlando's consciousness, as 'woman-manly or man-womanly' is essentially constituted by its queerness, falling outside of hegemonic binaries of identity. Therefore, Orlando is positioned through this context, from the novel's opening, and specifically in relation to his role as a writer, as a queer figure, one already possessing the femininity which only finds *external* expression through his transformation.

Building on the queerness and femininity which I have suggested Woolf evokes in her description of Orlando as a writer, drawing on Ahmed, the act of writing can itself be understood as a queer object for Orlando. Whilst Ahmed's conception of queer objects is enigmatic, she does lay out some parameters of what defines such an object. In her longest passage discussing queer objects, Ahmed (2006: 91) argues:

It is not that the heterosexual subject has to turn away from queer objects in accepting heterosexuality as a parental gift: compulsory heterosexuality makes such a turning unnecessary (although becoming straight can be lived as a "turning away.") Queer objects, which do not allow the subject to approximate the form of the heterosexual couple, may not even get near enough to "come into view" as possible objects to be directed toward. I think Judith Butler (1997b) is right to suggest that

¹⁰ Woolf's view of androgyny as it is presented in 'A Room of One's Own' has been the subject of a long and contentious critical history with readings mirroring wider shifts in Woolf studies. Representative of earlier and more pessimistic readings of Woolf's evocation of androgyny is Elaine Showalter's claim that 'androgyny was the myth that helped [Woolf] evade confrontation with her own painful femaleness and enabled her to choke and repress her anger and ambition' (Showalter [1977] 1982: 264). However, later, post-structuralist critics tended towards a more positive interpretation of Woolf's evocation of androgyny for its destabilisation of binaries of sex and gender, such as in Toril Moi's rebuttal to Showalter that 'far from fleeing such gender identities because she fears them, Woolf rejects them because she has seen them for what they are. She has understood that the goal of feminist struggle must be precisely to deconstruct the death-dealing binary oppositions of masculinity and femininity' (Moi [1985] 2002: 13-14).

heteronormativity demands that the loss of queer love must not be grieved: such loss might not even be admitted as loss, as the possibility of such love is out of reach. Queer objects are not “close enough” to the family line in order to be seen as objects to be lost. The body acts upon what is nearby or at hand, and then gets shaped by its directions toward such objects, which keeps other objects beyond the bodily horizon of the straight subject.

For Ahmed then, queer objects are those which the heterosexual child may not even be in proximity to at all, and certainly should not be able to acknowledge as objects. Lying outside the heterosexual family home, these objects are unable to be seen or mourned. Furthermore, queer objects ‘do not allow the subject to approximate the form of the heterosexual couple’; in interacting with queer objects, the queer child deviates from the straight line, they act out of line, and fail to honour the gift of inheritance. As suggested above, Ahmed’s definition of queer objects remains underdeveloped in comparison to her discussion of heterosexual objects. However, we may presume that certain qualities of heterosexual objects hold true to their queer counterparts. Namely, if heterosexual objects bear a dialectical relationship, appearing as a consequence of compulsory heterosexuality and in turn reinforcing compulsory heterosexuality, then queer objects can also be understood as existing in such a relationship. That is to say, the possibility of the queer subject to register queer objects as potential objects at all is the result of a queer orientation; as Ahmed (2006:107) writes:

Queer orientations are those that put within reach bodies that have been made unreachable by the lines of conventional genealogy. Queer orientations might be those that don’t line up, which by seeing the world “slantwise” allow other objects to come into view. A queer orientation might be one that does not overcome what is “off line,” and hence acts out of line with others.

Here then, it is the queer orientation, the slantwise view at what lies beyond the straight line, which first allows ‘other objects to come into view.’ However, if queer objects ‘do not allow the subject to approximate the form of the heterosexual couple,’ then, once sighted as a result of the ‘slantwise’ perspective, queer objects work to reinforce the queer orientation, leading the child further away from the straight line, the form of the heterosexual couple.

Returning to the passage describing Orlando as writer, it becomes possible, through Ahmed, to see how the act of writing in this passage is constructed as a queer way of being, a diversion and affront to the familial line. Whilst there is a certain humour to the narrator describing Orlando as being ‘afflicted’ with the love of writing, by describing his desire to write thus, that desire is pointedly constructed as unhealthy, out of the ordinary for a ‘normal’ child. This construction is built upon when Orlando’s desire for paper and ink is contrasted

against more conventional desires for the child, ‘apples’ and ‘sweetmeats.’ Moving into the third sentence, the reader is told how Orlando ‘[steals] away from talk and games’ in order to engage in writing. Here, the act of writing becomes specifically positioned as a turn away from socialisation, from engagement with the family, and his duties as a son and nobleman. Such ‘talk and games’ can also be understood as a time where the child would be exposed to heterosexual objects, immersed in the discourse of the family, and instructed in their expected behaviours. However, it is in the final sentence, when we are told that ‘he had never dared show [his poetry] even to his mother, since to write, much more to publish, was, he knew, for a nobleman an inexplicable disgrace’ that writing is most forcefully constructed as out of line, as queer. In that closing comment, the act of writing becomes a rebellion and a failure. Orlando knows that he should not write, that to do so threatens his status as a ‘nobleman’ (meaning, as I have suggested above, his status both as ‘noble’ and ‘man’), as well as that in doing so he is failing to fall in line, to meet the expectations of perpetuating his inheritance—as Ahmed argues, at the risk of social and familial love; pointedly referring to his mother, one half of the heterosexual couple which Orlando is supposed to imitate as heterosexual child, the act of writing is constructed as something which ‘even’ she could not accept or understand, failing, as it does, to keep in line, to imitate her shape, and therefore risking her affection for her son.

Above, I suggested that queer objects can be understood as bearing a dialectical relationship with queer orientations; that they are visible only from an already present queer viewpoint, but that consequent engagement with them reinforces that queer orientation by preventing the child from imitating the form of the heterosexual couple. As I have already suggested, tracing Woolf’s construction of the writer through her oeuvre positions Orlando the writer as already transgressing hegemonic definitions of masculinity prior to her transformation, revealing a femininity and androgyny which makes her eventual change in sex retrospectively inevitable.

Following Orlando’s engagement with the act of writing beyond her change in sex, we can see how the dialectical engagement with the queer object of writing works to alienate her from the heterosexual objects which she inherits:

“I am growing up,” she thought, taking her taper at last. “I am losing my illusions,” she said, shutting Queen Mary’s book, “perhaps to acquire others,” and she descended amongst the tombs where the bones of her ancestors lay.

But even the bones of her ancestors, Sir Miles, Sir Gervase, and the rest, had lost something of their sanctity since Rustum el Sadi had waved his hand that night in the Asian mountains. Somehow the fact that only three or four hundred years ago

these skeletons had been men with their way to make in the world like any modern upstart, and that they had made it by acquiring houses and offices, garters and ribbands, as any other upstart does, while poets, perhaps, and men of great mind and breeding had preferred the quietude of the country, for which choice they paid the penalty by extreme poverty, and now hawked broadsheets in the Strand, or herded sheep in the fields, filled her with remorse. She thought of the Egyptian pyramids and what bones lie beneath them as she stood in the crypt; and the vast, empty hills which lie above the sea of Marmara seemed, for the moment, a finer dwelling-place than this many-roomed mansion in which no bed lacked its quilt and no silver dish its silver cover.

“I am growing up,” she thought, taking her taper. “I am losing my illusions, perhaps to acquire new ones,” and she paced down the long gallery to her bedroom (*O*: 160-161).

In this passage, we see Orlando engage with objects which literally and symbolically represent her heterosexual inheritance. ‘The bones of her ancestors’ as physical objects, inherited by Orlando as a part of the estate, simultaneously represent the genealogical line, successful heterosexual couples who have ‘made it’ and in making it, have gifted Orlando her life and lifestyle, standing as the representation of what Orlando ought to aspire towards – to be buried amongst them, to perpetuate this line with her own children, and accumulations of status and material. However, Orlando then compares this to the image of the poet, a figure who pays a ‘penalty’ for their turn away from the projects of these ancestors in the form of ‘extreme poverty.’ However, this penalty does not deter Orlando, who ‘for the moment’, would prefer the ‘vast, empty hills which lie above the sea of Marmara’ over the ‘many-roomed mansion.’ That is to say, in this passage, Orlando rejects the heterosexual objects she has inherited, physical and metaphorical, which earlier in the novel she had proudly partaken in (as exemplified by the opening passage of slashing at the Moor’s head), instead embracing the out of line project of poetry, which does not and cannot allow her to approximate the forms of these heterosexual couples. Further, just before this episode of disillusionment, Orlando announces that ‘the poet’s [...] is the highest office of all’ (*O*: 160). Such a declaration positions the act of writing poetry in a hierarchy above what might more traditionally be thought of as ‘offices,’ Orlando’s titles, his ambassadorship. In this declaration then, Orlando’s view of poetry is reversed from the beginning of the book, where he viewed it as ‘an inexplicable disgrace,’ his change in sex seemingly enabling him to reassess his values and desires, to break free from the fear of losing societal and familial love which drove him to hide and sublimate his poetic ambitions.

However, in the paragraph following this episode, Orlando’s mind changes again:

She leant out into the damp night air. She heard a fox bark in the woods, and the

clutter of a pheasant trailing through the branches. She heard the slow slither and flop from the roof to the ground. “By my life,” she exclaimed, “this is a thousand times better than Turkey. Rustum,” she cried, as if she were arguing with the gipsy (and in this new power of bearing an argument in mind and continuing it with someone who was not there to contradict she showed again the development of her soul), “you were wrong. This is better than Turkey. Hair, pastry, tobacco – of what odds and ends are we compounded,” she said (thinking of Queen Mary’s prayer-book). “What a phantasmagoria the mind is and meeting-place of dissemblables! At one moment we deplore our birth and state and aspire to an ascetic exaltation; the next we are overcome by the smell of some old garden path and weep to hear the thrushes sing.” (O: 162-163).

Here, Orlando appears to turn back on her recent disavowal of her inherited objects, disowning her desire to be in Turkey, and reaffirming her love of the ancestral home. Whilst the objects of ‘hair, pastry, tobacco’ act upon Orlando in this passage, prompting her to reflect on the seemingly random composition of a life, and afterlife, and the consciousness which latches on to and imbues with symbolic meaning such material fragments, it is not such inherited objects which prompt Orlando’s emotional change. Instead, the emphasis here is placed on Orlando’s attachment to the natural world, the smells and sounds which fill the grounds at night— suggesting that this change of heart is not, as it first appears, a complete disavowal of her disillusionment with her inheritance, but of her desire to be elsewhere; a change of heart spurred by a personal history (instead of a genealogical one) and relationship with the natural environment. Indeed, in the following paragraph Orlando returns to work on writing her manuscript for her poem ‘The Oak Tree,’ revealing that her new-found freedom from the constraints of approximating her ancestors suggested by her disillusionment with her physical inheritance *does* persist through the remainder of the narrative.

In this section then, I have suggested how poetry itself serves as a queer object in the narrative. By tracing Orlando’s relationship to writing, not only through the novel but through Woolf’s wider oeuvre, it becomes possible to see how writing is constructed as a queer, androgynous activity, one which compromises Orlando’s position as ‘nobleman’, failing as it does to re-inscribe the lives and values of his parents and ancestors, and leading him away from his heteronormative inheritance. Furthermore, I have suggested that Orlando’s characterisation cannot be so neatly divided into a male and female, majoritarian and minoritarian, or a cis/hetero and trans/queer Orlando. Instead, I have suggested how Orlando’s queerness can be found in the novel from the opening pages, and that the transformation merely externalises a challenging of, and dissatisfaction with, his inherited and socially proscribed roles as a noble and man, which exist in Orlando from his childhood.

5.3 Orlando and Clothing

Building upon the consideration of Orlando's relationship to objects both prior to and after his transformation, particularly with regard to the way in which Orlando's transformation causes a change in Orlando's relationship to his inheritance (both material and symbolic), I will now turn to consider how Orlando's change in sex affects, and is affected by, his interactions with clothing—drawing out the dialectical relationship between orientations and objects which I outlined above.

With some of the guineas left from the sale of the tenth pearl on her string, Orlando bought herself a complete outfit of such clothes as women then wore, and it was in the dress of a young Englishwoman of rank that she now sat on the deck of the *Enamoured Lady*. It is a strange fact, but a true one, that up to this moment she had scarcely given her sex a thought. Perhaps the Turkish trousers which she had hitherto worn had done something to distract her thoughts; and the gipsy women, except in one or two important particulars, differ very little from the gipsy men. At any rate, it was not until she felt the coil of skirts about her legs and the Captain offered, with the greatest politeness, to have an awning spread for her on deck, that she realised with a start the penalties and the privileges of her position. (*O*: 141).

The above passage opens chapter four of the novel, following Orlando's change from a man to a woman, as she embarks on her return to England after a period living amongst a gipsy caravan in Turkey. The narrator's claim here, that Orlando 'had scarcely given her sex a thought' up until stepping on the boat is a provocative one, particularly given that, within the time of the narrative, a number of days have passed since the transformation. Of course, the narrator's claim is somewhat called into question by the fact Orlando pointedly purchases 'a complete outfit of such clothes as women then wore' to wear on her journey, implying at least some level of conscious thought about her change. It is not then, as is perhaps implied by the narrator, that Orlando is unaware of her change in sex, that she has not registered it at all. Instead, the narrator seems to suggest that the significance of this change, the consequences of it for her life and the way that she lives it, do not occur to her until this moment.

The narrator suggests the causes of this new self-consciousness regarding her change in sex to be both the constricting sensation of her skirts at her legs as well as the behaviour of the captain towards her. The first of these, the feel of her skirts, offers an explicit consideration of the role of the material object in Orlando's transformation. The skirt parallels the Ahmedian queer object, one which, as a nobleman, should not have even come into view as a potential object with which Orlando could have an interaction; to wear a skirt

is to act out of line, to reject the inherited project of masculinity, a refusal to approximate the masculinities of her forefathers— as she had tried to do in the novel's opening. To wear a skirt is to engage with femininity, to experience a sensation which only women (specifically English women of the period) would have felt. Further, with regard to the dialectical relationship of queer objects, it is an object which she has chosen because of his transformation (because she is a woman and it is what 'women then wore'), but it is also an object which re-enforces that transformation, that deviation from the straight line, prompting her to realise what it means to be a woman, internalising the change of sex.

In the second of the suggested causes of Orlando's realisation of her change in sex, the narrator's reference to the actions of the Captain offering to spread the awning for her, which is to say, in his treating Orlando as a woman, the novel introduces the significance of others' perception to the construction of sex and gender, a significance which we similarly find in Husserlian phenomenology. In 'Husserl and Queer Theory,' Lanei M. Rodemeyer discusses Husserl's conception of the *Leib* (body), noting that 'for Husserl, we experience our bodies in (at least) two ways. The first is my sensory body, my body as phenomenon; the other is my body as objective, as part of an objective world' (Rodemeyer 2017: 322). Furthermore, Rodemeyer summarises Husserl's analysis of the objective body as suggesting 'I cannot know my own body objectively until I have intersubjective experience— only through the eyes of others, as it were, [...] can I apprehend my body as an objective, material thing in the world' (Rodemeyer 2017: 321). Here then we find in Husserl's phenomenology concepts which align closely with what Woolf appears to be suggesting in the opening of chapter four. Orlando is shown to experience her female body not only sensorially and subjectively in the feel of her skirts, but also objectively through the intersubjective experience of the Captain's perception of her.

Although the interaction with the captain co-produces Orlando's awareness of her sex, this interaction is not the first intersubjective experience Orlando engages in after her transformation, having lived with the 'gipsy[s]' before boarding the boat to England. However, as the biographer notes, 'the Turkish trousers which she had hitherto worn had done something to distract her thoughts; and the gipsy women, except in one or two important particulars, differ very little from the gipsy men' (*O*: 141). Here, the text presents another idea which may be accounted for by Rodemeyer's queering of Husserlian phenomenology. Rodemeyer notes that 'the Objective world is accessible only through the 'perspectives' of intersubjective groups, such as nations, cultures etc' (Rodemeyer 2017: 323). That is to say, Rodemeyer conceives of groups with certain shared 'perspectives,' and it

is only in an interaction with someone who belongs to another perspective that the behaviours and attitudes of a perspective reveal themselves as specific to that group. In *Orlando* then, we find Woolf suggesting how Orlando is only made aware of her objective, material body as female when the culture in whose perspective she is emerged (in this case, the English culture of the captain) becomes one which places significance upon one's sex, and which treats individuals differently based upon their sex.

Despite Orlando's interactions with feminine objects and her own feminine objectivity in the eyes of others being constructed as the genesis of her awareness of her change, a similar emphasis is not placed on the importance of biological differences in the construction of 'sex' in *Orlando*; her transformation is primarily constructed throughout the novel in terms of dress and of consciousness, both in Orlando's perception of the world and in other's perceptions of Orlando. Whilst we are made aware later in the novel of Orlando carrying and giving birth to a child, it is necessary to note that the child doesn't return to the narrative after it is born – undermining an expected narrative of motherhood as her feminine obligation or priority. Furthermore, even after her transformation, Orlando occupies a liminal space between man and woman with the biographer commenting on the struggle of recording this time in Orlando's life as 'her sex changed far more frequently than those who have worn one set of clothing can conceive', again reasserting the significance of dress and appearance in the construction of 'sex,' over biological difference (*O*: 202). Therefore, whilst Woolf does appear to somewhat acknowledge biological definitions of womanhood, such definitions are not prioritised in her presentation, and may in fact be understood as undermined as a result of their marginalisation within the work. In Woolf's prioritising of the material, and of Orlando as (woman) perceiver and (woman) perceived, over biological categorisations then, we may understand what the text refers to as 'sex' as aligning more with a contemporary conception of gender put forth by post-structuralist thinker Judith Butler in their books *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993). In these works, Butler explored how the 'biological' category of sex is actually a result of the social category of gender, arguing that gender is a result of performances which mark out bodies as men's or women's, and that the biological idea of 'sex' was an attempt to posit why such a difference in the way people act in the world occurs. Madelyn Detloff explores how one might interpret Orlando's change in terms of Butler's conception of gender, explaining it as the disruption of what she calls 'the logic of cultural intelligibility as a parallel set of heteronormative expectations whereby a person is recognisable as a physiologically and psychologically 'normal' human being' (Detloff 2012: 345-6). With regard to Orlando, this would mean that he is 'a male man with XY

chromosomes, who acts in a masculine manner, desires feminine women, (implicitly or explicitly) identifies as heterosexual, and has sex with women' (Detloff 2012: 346). We can see then, how Orlando's change in sex may instead be understood as '[troubling] the presumption that if one is born a certain sex (male), that one inevitably must live one's life as the corresponding gender (a man)' (Detloff 2012: 348).

Building upon the exploration of Woolf's use of objects in this construction of Orlando's gender, in chapter four the biographer describes how Orlando 'was becoming a little more modest, as women are, of her brains, and a little more vain, as women are, of her person. Certain susceptibilities were asserting themselves, and others were diminishing' (*O*: 172). Here, *Orlando* parallels Ahmed's consideration of the way in which queer orientations require effort, repetition, and reinforcement, that the more one interacts with queer objects, the more they are diverted from the straight path (see p.184). The more time Orlando spends as a woman, her consciousness consequently becomes more feminine, taking on these new characteristics, emotions (vanity and modesty), and 'susceptibilities'.

Woolf's use of the word 'susceptibilities' here might most obviously be understood as referring to a state of heightened emotion, a definition which is semantically aligned with the modesty and vanity of the sentence prior. However, 'susceptibility' can also mean one's ability to be influenced or harmed, and it is this idea of influence that is important to consider here in relation to the preoccupations of queer phenomenology. It is possible to understand this 'susceptibility' as speaking to Ahmed's conception (via Husserl) of intentionality as oriented; the idea that 'the nearness of such objects, their availability within my bodily horizon, is not casual: it is not just that I find them there, like that. Rather, the nearness of such objects is a sign of an orientation I have already taken toward the world,' and how 'bodies come to "have"' certain orientations over time and that they come to be shaped by taking some directions rather than others and toward some objects rather than others' (Ahmed 2006: 58). With this idea in mind, we may interpret Woolf's description of these 'susceptibilities' as representing how through the repeated womanly orientation which Orlando takes towards the world, she becomes susceptible to an awareness, to an influence, of certain objects upon her consciousness as opposed to others, reinforcing this direction towards the womanly.

This interrogation in *Orlando* of the role of material objects (clothing) as being both a symptom of her transformation as well as reinforcing that transformation, is further explored when the biographer-narrator debates whether it is the clothes that affect the expression of gender or if it is the change in gender that leads to the change in clothes:

For example, when Captain Bartolus saw Orlando's skirt, he had an awning stretched for her immediately, pressed her to take another slice of beef, and invited her to go ashore with him in the long-boat. These compliments would certainly not have been paid her had her skirts, instead of flowing, been cut tight to her legs in the fashion of breeches. And when we are paid compliments, it behoves us to make some return. Orlando curtsied; she complied; she flattered the good man's humours as she would not have done had his neat breeches been a woman's skirts, and his braided coat a woman's satin bodice. Thus, there is much to support the view that it is the clothes that wear us and not we them; we make them take the mould of arm or breast, but they mould our hearts, our brains, our tongues to their liking' (*O*: 172-173).

Here then, the narrator again gestures to the dialectical relationship of material objects and their role in leading Orlando further towards femininity in her behaviours. It is, the narrator suggests, because she is dressed as a woman and not as a man that the captain treats her in a certain way, and consequently that this treatment requires a certain, feminine, response from Orlando. Describing Orlando's behaviour, the narrator emphasises the sense of obligation, the demand upon Orlando to behave as a woman made by the captain's treatment of her – 'behoves' and 'complied' specifically pointing to this idea of Orlando's response as compulsory. However, despite the emphasis given in the above quotation to the importance of clothing on reinforcing Orlando's change in sex, the biographer then moves on to argue that:

the difference between the sexes is, happily, one of greater profundity. Clothes are but a symbol of something hid deep beneath. It was a change in Orlando herself that dictated her choice of a woman's dress and of a woman's sex. And perhaps in this she was only expressing rather more openly than usual – openness indeed was the soul of her nature – something that happens to most people without being thus plainly expressed. For here again, we come to a dilemma. Different though the sexes are, they inter-mix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place, and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is the very opposite of what it is above. Of the complications and confusions which thus result everyone has had experience; but here we leave the general question and note only the odd effect it had on Orlando herself' (*O*: 173-174).

Here, the narrator appears to disavow the emphasis placed on clothing in the quotation prior, instead affirming that Orlando's change is 'one of greater profundity,' that the transformation is solely internal, and that the clothing is only a symbolic surfacing of that interior change: 'it was a change in Orlando herself that dictated her choice of a woman's dress and of a woman's sex.' Alongside this disavowal, the narrator echoes Woolf's own conception of the androgynous mind laid out in *A Room of One's Own*, the 'man-womanly' mind as the ideal for a writer. However, as Helt draws attention to (2016, 123), the narrator makes a much

more sweeping claim, that all human beings experience this ‘vacillation,’ troubling the very idea of a fixed binary of sexes existing at all. Orlando’s change becomes not fantastical or mystical, but instead a mundane, commonplace occurrence, a reality of life for ‘every human’, one which Orlando is merely more openly and plainly expressing and realising. Throughout this chapter, I have drawn attention to Ahmed’s conception of queer orientations as a matter of becoming, of continual, repeated efforts of resistance to straightening devices and the societal demand to straighten up:

For lesbians, inhabiting the queer slant may be a matter of everyday negotiation. This is not about the romance of being off line or the joy of radical politics (though it can be), but rather the everyday work of dealing with the perceptions of others, with the “straightening devices” and the violence that might follow when such perceptions congeal into social forms. In such loving and living we learn to feel the oblique in the slant of its slant as another kind of gift. We would not aim to overcome the disorientation of the queer moment, but instead inhabit the intensity of its moment (Ahmed 2006: 107).

Though Ahmed is talking specifically about lesbians in this passage, the emphasis on the effort required to inhabit ‘the queer slant’ in the face of societal demands to straightening up and overcome the queer moment remains constant throughout her more general discussions of queer experience in *Queer Phenomenology*. Through this passage, it becomes possible to account for the quotidian nature of Orlando’s change that the narrator describes it; that although ‘everyone’ might experience a vacillation in their sex, societal demands to remain on the straight line, to conform, prevent the majority of individuals from inhabiting that queer slant.

Returning however to the role of clothing and the arguments the novel puts forth with regard to its role in Orlando’s change, whilst these two passages appear to show the narrator moving from one side of the argument to the other without settling on a decision, it is possible, through Ahmed’s queer phenomenology to understand how the two sides of the argument are not mutually exclusive. Building upon Ahmed’s sense of queerness as a ‘moment,’ an orientation which temporarily brings queer objects into view, queer objects, for Ahmed, aid the queer subject in their resistance to society’s straightening impetus, with an interaction with these objects consequently preventing the queer subject from ‘imitating the form’ of the heterosexual couple. That is to say, as I have suggested above, that there is a dialectical relationship between the queer subject and object, that it is an inherent queerness which brings queer objects into view, but that in the pursuing of these objects the queer orientation is sustained and reinforced. Therefore, through Ahmed, it becomes possible to

understand that Orlando's transformation is not *either* a matter of his clothing making her a woman, or of her womanliness making her choose women's clothing, as the narrator proposes, but a matter of both processes working in tandem. It is because of her femininity, her queer orientation (which I have traced through the novel, in the course of this chapter) that Orlando is led to women's clothing. However, in choosing that clothing, in living with and *in* that clothing, Orlando's change is reinforced and deepened, not only through subjective experiences, but also through the intersubjective interactions Orlando has, the change in others perception of, and behaviour towards, her which in turn engender certain feminine behaviours in her.

In this chapter then, I have drawn on Ahmed's discussions of queer objects in order to interrogate both Orlando's relationships to material objects, as well as his relationship to his inherited objects (in the Ahmedian sense) of patriarchy, class, masculinities, and colonialism. Beginning with the opening sentences of the novel, I suggested how the reader's first introduction to Orlando immediately presents the importance of Orlando's dress and its relationship to his sex, as well as his relationship to the aforementioned inherited objects through his interaction with the literal inherited object of the moor's head as an attempt to imitate the form of his forefathers, continuing their projects. I then drew attention to Ryan's previous reading of Orlando's characterisation as divided between a majoritarian, male Orlando and a minoritarian, female one. Through close reading of Orlando's engagement with the writing of poetry through the pre-transformation chapters of the novel, I complicated such a reading, suggesting that this writing of poetry in fact represents an Ahmedian queer object, one which Orlando should not, but does, engage with, and which consequently leads him away from being able to imitate the form of his parents. Building upon this reading, I compared Orlando's presentation as a writer in the novel against Woolf's descriptions of writers across her wider oeuvre, specifically with regards to her androgynous mind discussions in *A Room of One's Own*, in order to draw out the inherently feminine and queer construction of the writer Orlando prior to the transformation.

In the final section of this chapter, I turned to consider Orlando's relationship to clothing after his transformation. Beginning with Orlando's first time wearing women's clothing as she boards the ship bound for England, I read this passage through Rodemeyer's queering of Husserlian phenomenology to illuminate how this episode emphasises both the importance of Orlando's subjective experience of her femininity in 'the feel of her skirts,' as well as the inter-subjective encounter of the captain's perception of her as a woman (drawing attention to the national, cultural, and temporal specificities of such an encounter), as equally

engendering a movement further towards her femininity. I then continued through the novel to build upon this reading in order to draw out the dialectical relationship between Orlando's sex and clothing, suggesting that, despite the narrator's inconclusive debate about whether Orlando chooses women's clothes because of her changes or whether she continues to change because she is living in those clothes, Ahmedian phenomenology allows us to read both as occurring in the course of the novel. That is to say, it is because of her change that she chooses women's clothes *and* that her wearing of these clothes reinforces this change, leading her further towards the womanly.

Coda: 'Everything Seemed Very Queer'

Over the course of this thesis then, I have drawn on queer phenomenology's preoccupations with subjectivity and the ways in which queerness is not only a matter of objects of desire but how one experiences the world, in order to illuminate how Woolf's novels, short fiction, essays, and autobiographical writings work to imagine and construct ways of being which resist and critique hegemonic constructions of time, space, and materiality. In so doing, I have shown the, hitherto overlooked, value of queer phenomenological thinking, in the reading of Woolf, working throughout the thesis to nuance and develop upon previous readings of the temporality, spatiality, and materialisms of Woolf's novels.

In a mirroring of the circular, eddying quality of Sedgwick's queer moment discussed in chapter two, this coda returns us to the quotation included in the title of the thesis. In the introduction, I suggested how the inclusion of Maisie Johnson's thought that 'everything seemed very queer' in this thesis's title gestured towards the role of *Mrs. Dalloway* in the subsequent chapters, as the text from which the majority of those chapters advance. However, in this coda, I would like to return to that quotation in light of the arguments made across those chapters to suggest how that quotation also works to symbolically connect those arguments, particularly when that quotation is placed back into the context of the episode from which it is excised.

In choosing to close this thesis with a discussion of the quotation included in its title, I gesture back to the reading of 'Modern Fiction' included in the introduction, as well as to Sedgwick's 'recurrent, eddying, *troublant*' queer moment. In the introduction, I drew attention to the 'spasm of rebellion' felt by the narrator of 'Modern Fiction' as an Ahmedian queer moment, a resistance to the demands and logics of conventional narrative. In chapter two, I drew on Sedgwick's queer moment to read Clarissa's re-experiencing of her kiss with Sally as paralleling the kind of non-linear temporality described by Sedgwick, where moments recur, circle, and go against the current. In this coda then, I have sought to honour and emulate the resistances to hegemonic discourses which I have considered throughout the thesis. In my own circling back, pulling the thesis and the reader back to the quotation in the title, I resist the logics of linearity, of beginning, middle, and end, and of closure, refusing the convention of a conclusion and opting instead for something which gestures towards the

persistence of queer moments, as well as Woolf's 'tunnelling method' employed in the structure of *Mrs. Dalloway*, inviting the reader to travel back into the past of the thesis.

Both seemed queer, Maisie Johnson thought. Everything seemed very queer. In London for the first time, come to take up a post at her uncle's in Leadenhall Street, and now walking through Regent's Park in the morning, this couple on the chairs gave her quite a turn: the young woman seeming foreign, the man looking queer, so that should she be very old she would still remember and make it jangle again among her memories how she had walked through Regent's Park on a fine summer's morning fifty years ago. For she was only nineteen and had got her way at last, to come to London; and now how queer it was, this couple she had asked the way of, and the girl started and jerked her hand, and the man—he seemed awfully odd; quarrelling, perhaps; parting for ever, perhaps; something was up, she knew; and now all these people (for she returned to the Broad Walk), the stone basins, the prim flowers, the old men and women, invalids most of them in Bath chairs—all seemed, after Edinburgh, so queer. And Maisie Johnson, as she joined that gently trudging, vaguely gazing, breeze-kissed company—squirrels perching and preening, sparrow fountains fluttering for crumbs, dogs busy with the railings, busy with each other, while the soft warm air washed over them and lent to the fixed unsurprised gaze with which they received life, something whimsical and mollified—Maisie Johnson positively felt she must cry Oh! (for that young man on the seat had given her quite a turn. Something was up, she knew).

Horror! Horror! She wanted to cry. (She had left her people; they had warned her what would happen.)

Why hadn't she stayed at home? She cried, twisting the knob of the iron railing. (*MD*: 23-24).

This quotation, taken from the second of *Mrs. Dalloway*'s twelve sections, follows Maisie Johnson's thoughts after she asks directions to Regent's Park tube station from Septimus and Rezia. It is, we can infer, this couple who 'both seemed queer,' and, as I suggest in chapters one and three, Septimus who Maisie describes as 'the man looking queer' (see pages 36, and 91). This use of the adjective 'queer' throughout the passage is (characteristically of its deployment in Woolf's writing) ambiguous and multivalent, suggesting both the sense that everything seemed odd or strange, as well as that everything seemed out of keeping with the hegemonic confines of gender and sexuality. This latter reading becomes particularly relevant in light of my readings of Septimus's characterisation within the context of post-war masculinities (see chapters three and five). Reinforcing the ambiguity of queer's meaning in this passage is its repetition throughout. The word queer is repeated five times (almost half of its twelve appearances across the entire novel) across its first four sentences. By repeating 'queer' in this way, the text works to both obfuscate its meaning—moving it from the potentially more obviously sexual connotation in relation to Septimus, to a considerably more ambiguous meaning in its description of 'everything'—whilst simultaneously emphasising its

significance— signalling the emphatic queerness of this moment to the reader. At the same time, this repetition mirrors the movement of Maisie Johnson’s queer feeling over the course of the episode. Whilst her ‘queer’ feeling is inaugurated by the interaction with the queer seeming couple (although, towards the end of the passage, it appears to be Septimus alone who has given her ‘a turn’), by the very next sentence this queer feeling spills over to affect her perception of ‘everything’ around her— lingering well beyond the moment of the interaction. Over the remainder of this coda then, I will suggest that in this movement of Maisie’s queer perception, and the effects of her encounter with Rezia and Septimus, we find an experience which exemplifies and echoes the experiences of queer moments, queer disorientation, and queer objects, which I have considered over the course of this thesis.

In the introduction and chapter two, I outlined Ahmed’s concept of queer moments, those moments ‘in which objects appear slantwise and the vertical and horizontal axes appear “out of line,”’ (Ahmed 2006: 66). For Ahmed, the queer moment is a moment of disorientation and reorientation, one in which the subject temporarily loses sight of the straight line. At the same time, in inhabiting such a queer moment and its consequential (dis)orientation, the subject becomes able to access alternative objects and bodies:

Queer orientations are those that put within reach bodies that have been made unreachable by the lines of conventional genealogy. Queer orientations might be those that don’t line up, which by seeing the world “slantwise” allow other objects to come into view. A queer orientation might be one that does not overcome what is “off line,” and hence acts out of line with others. (Ahmed 2006: 107)

In chapter five, I then introduced the role of queer objects in the experiencing of queer moments, drawing attention to the dialectical relationship between queer orientations and objects: that the subject first experiences queer disorientation in order to sight such objects, but then in sighting and interacting with them, the subject is led further away from the straight line of heterosexuality. In Maisie Johnson’s encounter with Septimus and Rezia in Regent’s Park then, we find an experience which clearly parallels Ahmed’s queer moments and objects.

First, Maisie is shown to already be experiencing the disorienting effects of London, in the very fact that she is asking directions of Rezia and Septimus. It is as a consequence of this already-present physical disorientation that the couple come into Maisie’s view at all. However, in encountering them, and specifically Septimus, Maisie is led further from the

straight line, from being able to orient herself, until the queerness of ‘everything’ reveals itself to her, and she is left horrified and overwhelmed by the experience.

In the long quotation then, it is Rezia and (to a greater extent) Septimus themselves who serve in this encounter as queer objects; it is their queerness which disorients Maisie, which brings about her ‘turn’, and reinforces her queer moment. This sense of Septimus, Rezia, and subsequently the whole of London, being experienced by Maisie as queer objects is emphasised in her final reflections ‘(She had left her people; they had warned her what would happen.) Why hadn’t she stayed at home?’ There, the disturbing, disorienting queerness of London is directly contrasted against the comfort and familiarity of home. Her decision to leave (a decision which suggests an already present queer orientation, in her desiring of a life outside of the one given to her along family lines), has led her to experience the ‘horror’ of what lies beyond the straight line and the familial home. The reader is left to presume what Maisie had been warned about: the horrors of London, or that she would fail to build a life there, perhaps. Whatever the warning, in connecting it with the fact of her leaving through that semi-colon, it is clear that this warning was voiced in an attempt to dissuade her from going— a kind of hegemonic warning of the consequences and punishment she would face for straying away from the line (punishments, I have argued in chapters one and three, we see enacted on characters who experience similar queer moments in both *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Jacob’s Room*).

Concurrent with this queer moment and disorientation, there is (in parallel to the queer moments of being I considered in chapter three) a gesture towards Woolf’s ‘moment of being,’ when Maisie thinks ‘should she be very old she would still remember and make it jangle again among her memories how she had walked through Regent’s Park on a fine summer’s morning fifty years ago.’ Here, we find Maisie, in an echoing of Woolf’s recollections of her experiences of moments of being in ‘Sketch of the Past’ (see page 67) projecting this queer moment forwards into her future, with an awareness that it will remain of significance to her. Furthermore, there is an obvious parallel to Clarissa’s ‘exquisite moment’ which ‘jangle[s]’ amongst Clarissa’s memories from decades previous, over the course of the narrative.

Finally, and intertwined with the queer, disorienting effect of Maisie’s interaction with Septimus, a queer spatiality is evoked throughout the passage, particularly through the use of the spatial metaphor, ‘that young man on the seat had given her quite a *turn*’ [emphasis my own] as well as her perception that ‘all seemed, after Edinburgh, so queer,’ which gesture to an experience of queer disorientation akin to those considered in chapters two and three. In

repeatedly referring to the effect of her encounter with Rezia and Septimus as ‘a turn’ the text emphasises the spatial dimension of this moment. To be turned is to be reoriented, to face in a different direction. Of course, Maisie might have literally been turned off her course having received directions to the station. However, the turn also gestures to the queer effect of the encounter, turning Maisie’s gaze away from the straight line and consequently bringing into focus objects which fell off that line, objects which horrify her in their queerness. In the latter of these quotations, there is an ambiguity in the temporality of that ‘after.’ It can both be read that everything seemed queer in comparison to Edinburgh, as well as that something in Edinburgh happened which has consequently caused everything to seem queer. This ambiguity again gestures to the sense that Maisie is both already inhabiting a queer orientation prior to her encounter with Septimus, as well as that London is a distinctly queer space— a queerness which causes her original disorientation, bringing Septimus and Rezia into view.

Building upon this spatial disorientation, the passage closes with Maisie ‘twisting the knob of the iron railing.’ Here, the railing, of course, gestures towards the other mentions of railings in *Mrs. Dalloway*— the railings which Evans is seen behind (which are, presumably, the same railings Maisie twists here) as well as those which Septimus will eventually die upon. Indeed, this echoing of Septimus’s queer visions continues later in the passage through the references to ‘sparrow fountains’ and ‘dogs busy with the railings,’ recalling Septimus’s earlier visions in that same space of Sparrows singing in Greek and the dog which transforms into a man, emphasising the sympathy between Maisie and Septimus’s orientations and lines of vision. However, Maisie’s final act of twisting the railings again gestures to a number of simultaneous readings. One reading is that it suggests Maisie’s disorientation and the idea that she is using this linear and upright object to reorient herself, to get her bearings, and restore her balance. However, it also reads as though Maisie is literally twisting the knob of the railing, breaking it and making it sit out of line, gesturing towards her own queering effect on the city which surrounds her.

In this episode then, we find the concerns of this thesis, exemplified by, and mirrored in, Maisie Johnson’s queer feeling in Regent’s Park: the queer temporalities of chapters one and two, the queer disorientation and spatialities of chapters three and four, as well as the queer objects of chapter five. At the same time, this episode symbolises both the form of the thesis, as well as my experience writing it. Each chapter of this thesis is (inspired by Ahmed’s emphasis on the work of remaining disoriented, and the inhabitation of the ‘spasm of rebellion’ in ‘Modern Fiction,’ discussed in the introduction) an effortful inhabitation of a

queer moment, a moment of disorientation. Each of these moments are inaugurated by an encounter with the queer objects of Woolf's texts. It is in the encounter with these texts and the queerness, and queer ways of being, which are already present within them that the object of queer phenomenological thinking consequently comes into view; an object which leads each chapter further from the straight line, revealing only additional queer objects within the texts. Finally, in the writing of this thesis, I enact my own twisting of the iron railing, leaving a mark of this queer experience, disseminating the queer effect of encountering Woolf's texts and, perhaps, leaving a trail to lead subsequent readers away from the straight line, the straight reading of Woolf, and towards the subversive queer potentials contained within her writing.

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