

**“Everything seemed very queer”:
Divergent Temporalities of Normative Relations in *Mrs.*
*Dalloway***

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ABSTRACT

Queer theory predominantly aligns normative relations to normative experiences of time and connects queer affiliations to queer temporal spaces. Heterosexuality, marriage, sexual reproduction, and the family are hallmarks of normative temporality, as they enact and maintain a progressive, future-oriented, genealogical timeline. However, normative attachments do not always follow queer theory's narrative of straight time. Closely observing the structure of normative relationships and, in terms of my study specifically, marriage, uncovers assumptions constructing the constitution of normative temporality. I discuss queer theoretical works by Lee Edelman, Jack Halberstam, José Esteban Muñoz, and others to see how current theories typically oversimplify normative relations' alignment to normative temporality. One way to view the shortcomings of the predetermined bond between normativity and normative temporality is modernist literature. For my study, I examine the temporality of social arrangements and, more specifically, marriage in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. As the novel transpires over a single day's time and is mostly told through the seamless shifts from one individual's consciousness to another's, *Mrs. Dalloway* enacts modernist literary features, and through this style, Woolf's portrayals of marriage challenge the progressive, linear narrative of normative temporality. *Mrs. Dalloway*'s depiction of Septimus and Lucrezia Smith's marriage and Clarissa and Richard Dalloway's marriage illustrates the temporal intricacies that compose marital relationships. Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage is degenerative, unhappy, and non-reproductive. While they participate in a heterosexual marital relationship, normative temporality does not encompass the particularities of their experiences. With the Dalloways, they maintain a long marriage, have a daughter, and participate in aristocratic society and national politics. The Dalloways seem to embody all aspects of normative life. And yet, as Clarissa and Richard have fulfilled the expectations of normative temporality, the question of whether they can progress further is unclear. By examining the novel's treatment of the Smiths' and Dalloways' marriages, I argue that heterosexual marital attachments are not always normative temporal spaces but are realms of complexity which can question rather than purely reinforce normative temporality's constitution.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Lee Edelman's *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* opens with two epigraphs: one from Jacques Lacan, whose theories are foundational to Edelman's work, and the other by Virginia Woolf, whose writing does not appear again in his text. In *No Future*, Woolf's only words are from a diary entry written a few months before her death on March 28, 1941, and Edelman's brief quoted passage from Woolf echoes his titular polemic, as Woolf notes, "Yes, I was thinking: we live without a future. That's what's queer..." Yet Edelman prematurely cuts off Woolf's account and fails to contextualize her entry. Woolf's January 26, 1941, account chronicles her state of mind, her current view of writing, and World War II. She notes her "battle against depression," speaks of beginning "to dislike introspection," and accounts for "a lull in the war," which may mark that "the greatest struggle is about to come" (*A Writer's Diary*, 364). Edelman's excerpt from her diary entry comes toward the end, with Woolf commenting on an indeterminate and worrisome pause in war, as there have been "[s]ix nights without raids":

It's the cold hour, this: before the lights go up. A few snowdrops in the garden. Yes, I was thinking: we live without a future. That's what's queer: with our noses pressed to a closed door. Now to write, with a new nib, to Enid Jones. (364)

Woolf writes while she prepares for the raids to occur or continue their recess. While uncertain, Woolf waits during "the cold hour" before day breaks for a future with two options—one with raids and one without. Edelman's argument centers around the illusion of futurity, as it is an always unreached and unreachable moment. His claims discuss the ways in which heteronormativity capitalizes on the future through the genealogical family and sexual reproduction, which is not accessible to non-reproductive queer bodies. Thus, queer individuals

do not have a voice, space, or presence in dominant politics and society, as these institutions are structured by normative realities and, in turn, futurity. Woolf's use of "we live without a future" does not necessarily oppose Edelman's claim, yet her statement possesses a more complicated temporal nature than Edelman recognizes.

In this diary entry, Woolf waits for a future; she is in a moment of suspension between anxiety and relief, war and silence, and life and death. Her mention of writing to Enid Jones expects a future of connection and communication.¹ Woolf does not solely denounce the reality of a future but speaks of her experience of it. Living "without a future" may signify the nonexistence of it or, perhaps, the uncertainty that follows a future. In terms of her entry's context, the present state of her world, nation, life, and art are perilous, devastating, and tiresome—questioning the possibility and even the merit of having a future. While Woolf's positioning of a future possesses multiple vectors, Edelman's use of the quote gives it a sense of continuance which it does not possess in its complete form. Edelman's quote from Woolf ends with "..."—a sign of an indeterminate future. Ironically, his formatting of the passage questions his claims concerning futurity. His counterargument to this would most likely continue to assert that the future is still an illusionary, ever-deferred endeavor. Yet, why give Woolf's entry an ambiguous extension into the future when it can be so easily finished?

If we continue Woolf's passage, as it originally ended, we understand more about Woolf's perception of the connection between being "queer" and living "without a future": "That's what's queer: with our noses pressed to a closed door." These "noses pressed to a closed door" are to sense a possible blitz. In this instance, queerness is the strangeness of life without

¹ In *Virginia Woolf: Interviews and Recollections*, John Henry Sharpe, the editor of the collection, gives a brief biography of Woolf's friend: "Enid Algerine Bagnold, Lady Jones (1889-1981), journalist, novelist and playwright, best known for her novel *National Velvet* (1935)" (21).

futurity, while waiting for mortality at a distance. This distancing can also be considered a type of separation. The “closed door” is not an open, accessible pathway but is a dividing, impassible blockage, protecting life or, perhaps, trapping it. There is one “closed door,” yet more than one nose. A community of sorts forms behind the door anticipating what is to come, which holds mortal consequences depending upon who is inside or outside the door and upon what happens beyond the door’s parameters. The queer appears to link to those behind the door, sheltering them from a potential raid. At the same time, the door separates the queer from the world as a measure of protection from an air attack to come—from the future.

Woolf’s January 26, 1941, account expresses more than a renouncement of a future; it speaks of a future’s immersing experience, its dangerous uncertainty, its multiplicity, and its queer quality. This is not to say that Edelman’s use of Woolf’s personal writing is incorrect, but it is to say that Woolf’s words necessitate more critical attention than a passing mention. In this same vein, present conceptualization of queer and normative temporalities demand closer examination, for the constitution and structure of these different or, in some cases, not-so-different temporal experiences go largely unquestioned. Also, by interrogating the type of relationships that are most frequently tied to one temporality over the other, assumptions constructing queer and normative temporalities become more apparent and, therefore, can become part of the critical conversation.

Modernist literature, including Woolf’s novels, typically concentrate on the mundanity of human consciousness, memory, and relationality. This focus on the everyday illuminates the intricacies of normative relationships. Within modernist narrative’s microscopic view, human affiliation are no longer abstract powers but are intricate, diverse entities, whether normative or queer. It is within this daily space that the complexities of normative attachments emerge,

uncovering normative temporality's mosaic composition rather than its presumed singular quality. Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* offers a literary avenue in which to accomplish this critique of normative temporality's attachment to normative relations through the novel's depiction of heterosexual marriage.

Mrs. Dalloway's narrative aesthetics and social relations do not entirely submit to the progressive, linear, genealogical, future-oriented timeline frequently attached to marriage. Marital commitments take on a degenerative quality for Septimus and Lucrezia Warren Smith and a stationary quality for Clarissa and Richard Dalloway. Yet the novel does not entirely queer marriage, for the story's end affirms these very relations. These affirmations take place through death and silence, problematizing what type of affirmation has occurred. Thus, the novel's construction of marriage complicates contemporary theories about normative and queer temporalities. Additionally, the novel's same-sex attachments follow temporal movements which simultaneously progress and pause in their development, resist and ratify institutional relationships, and dismantle and reinforce traditional gender roles. Queer relations, between Clarissa Dalloway and Sally Seton and between Septimus and Evans, interrogate the bond between non-normative relations and temporality, and in some scenes, these affiliations mirror normative structures, potentially fashioning a "homonormative" time. In the end, same-sex desire remains unfulfilled and stagnant, which coincides with queer theory's notions on the impossibility of same-sex passion and the indeterminacy of queer temporal experience.

Mrs. Dalloway's depiction of marriage provides a literary entryway into a more holistic view of the possibilities regarding queer and normative temporality. Modernist literature expresses an intense, embodied awareness of time and temporal experience, which heavily characterizes the aesthetic movement of modernism. Woolf's investment in temporality is not a

new observation and neither is it outmoded. The partnership between modernism and queerness is a constitutive element of modernist studies. Modernist aesthetic values and texts compose a large part of many queer theorists' archives. Critical conversations regarding the queer's relationship with the modern is vast in its scope, interests, and analysis. I locate my project within these fields to continue to explore modernism's and queerness's relationality. By employing a queer temporality lens to *Mrs. Dalloway*, I hope to offer an innovative methodology to explore and analyze social configurations in the novel. In so doing, this framework offers a way to examine how relationships are assembled, how they are enacted, and how the state of time and relations shape one another. Time does not determine relationality, and relationality does not determine time. They continuously interact and modify one another. It is an ever-shifting, ever-forming reciprocal relationship between the two, and queer temporality theories attend to these intricacies.

By using this critical lens, I illustrate the complex connections between attachments and temporality, whether normative or queer. By attending to the variability and contingencies of these temporalities in the novel, normative and queer temporality do not have to be forced into polarizing positions; rather they can both be simultaneous, multiple, and divergent. In other words, a temporality can embody traits of queer and normative temporalities and of other time intervals within the borders of the queer and the norm. In a roundtable discussion titled "Theorizing Queer Temporality," Carolyn Dinshaw, whose interests lie in medieval studies' intersection with queer historiography, brilliantly notes the trouble which follows linking one temporality with the other:

Maybe this is an index of the difficulty of reworking linear temporality: thinking nonlinearity over and against linearity is hard enough, but figuring out the criteria by

which different nonlinear temporalities might meaningfully be brought together--figuring out how to make heterogeneity analytically powerful--is exponentially harder. (186)

This is where I locate my project: determining how to complicate queer and normative temporalities as a meaningful and purposeful method that resists purely opposing these classifications against one another by looking at the particularities of relationships rather than their abstract formation. Ultimately, variables on both sides of time necessitate analysis to allow room for productive readings. Following the model of matching the type of relation to a type of temporality universalizes the terms of queerness and normativity. By attending to intricacies within relationality, general understandings of temporality, especially in terms of the normativity, become more nuanced. In turn, assumptions constructing normative temporality's automatic attachment to normative connections emerge as a point of critical review that resists abstracting experiences into isolating categories.

Mrs. Dalloway not only shows this phenomenon in action but also challenges my project's assertions. While the novel's depiction of heterosexual marriage fractures normative temporality, marriage is not completely rendered as queer, for the text's conclusion affirms marital commitment rather than defames it. What temporalities operate within the novel's context if marriage is not positive and progressive and yet is still upheld? In other words, *Mrs. Dalloway*'s treatment of marital relations abstains from making a particular claim on marriage, for it simultaneously follows and defies normative and queer temporal spheres. The difficulty of categorizing *Mrs. Dalloway*, as normative or queer, of its narrative form, and of its postwar setting culminate to fashion a text with numerous temporal considerations. The novel's portrayal of Septimus and Lucrezia Smith and Clarissa and Richard Dalloway, two heterosexual married couples possessing different histories and experiences and living during the same time and in the

same location, offer an intricacy to marriage with numerous promises and ramifications. Most significantly, these fictionalized pairings illustrate the heterogeneous temporalities of normative relations—no matter their economic class, age, accomplishments, or traumas.

Overview of Chapters

To provide context about my critical approach, the first chapter outlines the field of queer temporality studies by detailing major scholars' theories along with the contested nature of them. I also look to how queer theory and modernism link to one another, what is the centralizing normativity of *Mrs. Dalloway*, and how this standardizing force operates within the novel. The subsequent chapters consider the ways in which *Mrs. Dalloway* restructures the temporality of heterosexual marriage, an institutional relationship, which most queer theorists firmly ground in normativity. In the novel, the characters' insights into social attachments show that traditional relationships, like marriage, do not necessarily coincide with normative structures. In terms of queer temporality studies, marriage is most frequently aligned with normative temporality, which follows a progressive, linear, cohesive, and future-oriented narrative. Yet marriage in *Mrs. Dalloway* does not purely abide by this reasoning; the novel complicates it. The second chapter addresses these marital and temporal complications by attending to Septimus and Lucrezia Smith's marriage. In this chapter, I note the ways in which the Smith's marriage follows a degenerative time and primarily concentrate on the couple's temporal disruption of others, Lucrezia's slipping wedding ring, and their views of sexual reproduction. Altogether, Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage carries a decaying quality for most of the novel, and minor characters outside the couple's relationship perceive their "foreign" and "queer" nature, which affects these individuals' experiences of time and memory (Woolf 25). Near *Mrs. Dalloway's* ending, the non-progressive condition of their marriage forms into a more sustainable relationship.

Septimus's death does not cut off their marriage's generative potentiality, for Septimus and Lucrezia share a new understanding that strengthens rather than weakens their intimacy. However, the condition of intimacy after death also problematizes their relationship's degenerative and generative quality, as the novel questions whether intimacy is possible with or without one's passing.

The third chapter moves to examine the socially established marriage within the novel—Clarissa and Richard Dalloway's relationship. By closely considering the dailiness of this marriage, I claim that the Dalloways' marriage suspends and delays progress through Clarissa's temporal paralysis while walking through London, the narrator's description of Clarissa at home, and Richard's emotional silence toward his wife. Clarissa and Richard Dalloway's marriage is a quintessential component of their upper-class British identity. Like Septimus and Lucrezia, Clarissa and Richard's marriage does not enact a purely future-oriented developmental temporality. In contrast to Septimus and Lucrezia, Clarissa and Richard are an older couple, who have been married for decades and have one child. Rather than asking whether Clarissa and Richard's relationship has developmentally progressed, as it definitely has, the question is how can their relationship progress any further. They have essentially accomplished the steps of normative temporality—marriage, sexual reproduction, and enrichment of the nation—yet what happens after normative progression is complete?

Both Clarissa and Richard experience a sense of immobility and suspension within their marriage. While walking down the streets of London, Clarissa suddenly feels time decelerate and names herself as "Mrs. Richard Dalloway," containing herself to one identity, place, and temporality (10). Richard's silence toward Clarissa about the state of their marriage and his love for her place him in a state of repeated recognition and failure. He is continually aware of his

inability to communicate his affection, yet his silence persists—no development is achieved. Despite the traditional nature of Clarissa and Richard's marriage, their attachment's slow, suspended movement and even immobility contest queer theorists' recent conceptions of normative temporality. Similar to Septimus and Lucrezia, the novel's end affirms their marriage, for at the party, Clarissa and Richard share an intimate understanding of one another without the help of words. Silence still dictates the state of their marriage and questions the viability and sustainability of their marriage, as this affirmation occurs but does not coincide with normative temporality.

Ultimately, *Mrs. Dalloway*'s portrayal of Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage as well as Clarissa's and Richard's challenges the structure of normative temporality and its connection to normative relationships, for the novel's marriages are not solely abstract institutional forces but are vibrant, shifting connections. *Mrs. Dalloway*'s account of the particularities of marriage illustrates relationality's specificity, thus, illustrating the shortcomings of queer theorists' universalizing, abstract notion of normative temporality. In other words, the novel delivers a particular temporal and relational specificity through its enactment of modernist aesthetics. In turn, modernist aesthetic practices offer a literary style, which emphasizes marriage's temporal intricacies, and avoids oversimplified notions of marriage, its normativity, and its temporality.

At the same time, this does not automatically situate these marital relations as queer; rather, I argue normative temporality does not consider the various complexities which constitute itself. My study explores the ways in which *Mrs. Dalloway* showcases marriage as a relation driven by social and practical conventionality, yet this state-recognized connection does not follow the customary trajectory, conceptualized by queer temporality theorist, as progressive movement toward the future. Numerous scenes within the novel depict marriage as a

foundational element of post-War British society. However, marriage's significance does not inevitably tie it to a narrative of normativity and, more specifically, normative temporality. Yet, theories on queer and normative temporalities predominantly place marriage in the category of normative temporality as a universal understanding rather than a point of critical review. By examining the novel's treatment of the Smiths' and Dalloways' marriages, I argue that heterosexual marital attachments are not always normative temporal spaces but are realms of complexity which can question rather than purely reinforce normative temporality's constitution.

CHAPTER II

QUEER INTERSECTIONS: TEMPORALITY, MODERNISM, WOOLF, AND *MRS. DALLOWAY*

“Stepping Out” of Time: Queer Temporality Studies

In the introduction to *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*, editors Donald E. Hall and Annamarie Jagose note that tracing queer studies’ emergence is not their goal: “Telling a chronological organized account of queer studies’ emergence risks obscuring its multiple origins and influences. Single, linearly organized narratives cannot easily capture the sometimes inchoate energies of the various orders of political and scholarly work that mark the rise of queer studies” (xvi). In this way, the genealogy of queer studies itself echoes the nature of queer temporality—intricate, multiple, discordant, variate, and indeterminate.

Hall and Jagose continue, “In broad strokes queer studies is the institutionalization of a new—or at least newly visible—paradigm for thinking about sexuality [...] constituting a broad and unmethodical critique of normative models of sex, gender, and sexuality” (xvi). The centrality of queer theory, if one can be identified, is the “critique” of the normative. In this way, queer theory’s focus directly links to modernism’s investments. As an aesthetic movement, modernism focalizes around avant-garde art as a way to resist traditional narratives values and forms. The embrace of new and interrogation of the normal are both centralizing forces in queer theory and modernism. While the queer theory scholarship initially focuses on identity categories and practices relating to “sex, gender, and sexuality,” the present concerns of the field are much broader and more inclusive. Queer theory’s focus expands past sexualities, for recent criticism discusses queerness alongside race, class, disability, age, objects, aesthetics, geography, ecology,

politics, and society.² Queer theorists continuously interrogate the dichotomy between norms and queerness, and recently, a portion of the field invests their work in looking to queerness's pervading, restrictive connection to normativity. In 2015, Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson edited a special issue of *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* titled "Queer Theory without Antinormativity," attempting to offer conceptions of queerness separation from its normative counterparts. While this issue received sharp criticism from Halberstam and other queer theorists, the debate concerning normativity's and queerness relationship is ubiquitous to this theoretical practice, for queer theory oscillates between, revolves around, and affixes on the dynamics between the queer and the normative.³ Despite the field's expansive understandings of what is queer and what is normative, this dichotomy persists. Its existence is not entirely arbitrary. The classifications, like language itself, are superficial semantically, yet these terms signify complicated identities, which carry real social, political, cultural, legal, national, and global implications.

Within these labels, a universalizing effect transpires, whether certain attachments are automatically queer or normative due to their connection to or separation from institutionalized understandings of the world. Abstract notions of normativity and queerness hold significant value and provide a way to analyze the overarching social systems. However, labeling a relation as normative or queer carries certain connotations, which can predetermine the attachment rather

² See *The Routledge Queer Studies Reader*, edited by Donald E. Hall and Annamarie Jagose; *After Sex?: On Writing since Queer Theory*, edited by Janet Halley and Andrew Parker; *Queer Ecologies: Sex, Nature, Politics, Desire*, edited by Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands and Bruce Erickson; Tim Dean's *Beyond Sexuality*; Sara Ahmed's *Queer Phenomenology*; Amber Jamilla Musser's *Sensational Flesh: Race, Power, and Masochism*; Jane Gallop's "The View from Queer Theory" in *Age, Culture, Humanities*; and the special issue of *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* titled "Queer Theory without Antinormativity," edited by Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson.

³ See Halberstam's "Straight Eye for the Queer Theorist--A Review of 'Queer Theory without Antinormativity'" and Lisa Duggan's "Queer Complacency without Empire," which are both posted on the queer studies site *Bully Bloggers*.

than inform us. Examining the particularities of relationality can be a way to avoid oversimplifying classifications and to explore the complications of social configurations, whether state-sanctioned or unrecognized, reproductive or non-reproductive, and normative or queer. In my analysis of *Mrs. Dalloway*, I work to expand current theorizations of normative temporality in order to complicate rather than simplify the connection between normative relationships and normative temporality.

Examining the consequences, positive and negative, of queerness and expanding present understandings of the queer constitute much of the work in queer studies. Queer temporality studies operates in a similar vein by analyzing how sexuality and sex acts shape an individual's and community's experience of time, how time structures sexuality and sexual practices, and how queer temporality differs from that of normativity. Many texts approach this subject through deconstructive, psychoanalytic, economic, postcolonial, and historical lens and have archives consisting of literature, film, visual cultures, memoirs, geographies, and social and political events across the medieval period to the contemporary moment.

Queer temporality scholarship is one of many subsets of queer theory, and much work has been produced on the subject. Queer temporality theorists, such as Lee Edelman, Jack Halberstam, José Esteban Muñoz, and Elizabeth Freeman, concentrate on the temporal experience of various queerness—decrepit gay men, transgender bodies, children's movies, contemporary theatre, and working-class dykes. They, alongside many other queer theorists, attend to the discursive, performative, political, and social multiplicity of queer bodies, beings, and doings. For my study, I focus on three major theoretical texts that hold their own genealogy, as they somewhat respond to one another: Edelman's *No Future*, Jack Halberstam's *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, and José Esteban Muñoz's *Cruising*

Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity. These three works are continuously put into conversation with each other due to their brilliant and differing arguments. Many other books concerning queer temporality inform my overall argument, such as Elizabeth Freeman's *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* and Heather Love's *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*. I choose these three texts for my primary focus due to their predominance in the field as well as the contested nature of their arguments. Additionally, these works analyze texts from the twentieth and twentieth-first century; thus, their archives more closely align with the context of modernism and, thus, Woolf's writings.

By focusing on the political present, various artistic mediums, and Lacan's psychoanalytic theories, Edelman's text argues that the social, which includes society and politics at large, revolves around the figure of the Child or the child itself. The Child culminates into his concept of "reproductive futurism," which is the elusive goal of the family to extend into the future through sexual reproduction (Edelman 2). This sense of futurity maintains "the rigid sameness of identity" for the purpose of continuing normative familial, social, and national values—an attempt to stabilize heteronormativity (21). Considering this, Edelman labels the future as fantasy, as the future never transpires but is always deferred and, therefore, unreachable and unreachable.

He asserts that queer bodies, due to their inability to sexually reproduce and, thus, to fit within normative society, possess no sense of a future and are associated with death. He marks, "That *queerness* names the side of those *not* 'fighting for the children,' the side outside the consensus by which all politics confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism" (3). While the social denies queerness's access to a social and political future reserved for heterosexual, married, and family-oriented individuals, Edelman claims queerness already opposes this future.

This rejection of and from queerness or, as he terms, the “negativity of the queer” should not be redeemed, but queer individuals would “do better to consider accepting and even embracing” this negativity (4). Renouncing the future as an exclusionary fantasy—but a fantasy nonetheless—allows queer bodies to possess a radical presentism beyond the social. Edelman is not calling for another system of “hope” and “affirmation” to replace the current structure of politics, as this would suggest that there is a future for which to be hopeful (4). Even queerness’s embracement of its negativity does not guarantee any “good” either, for any promise expects a future never to come (4). He suggests that we should enact the “surely impossible,” which is “to withdraw our allegiance, however compulsory, from a reality based on the Ponzi scheme of reproductive futurism” (4). To remove ourselves from a future-focused, heteronormative political and social reality is the goal, yet what comes after is as unknown and illusory as the future itself.

Halberstam’s text takes Edelman’s embracement of queer negativity, concentration on male homosexuality, and archive of canonical literature and films to task. Halberstam’s study centers on the ways in which queer temporalities and geographies are fashioned in the context of postmodern cultures and subcultures. Halberstam states that his work “seeks to unravel precisely those claims made in the universal from and on behalf of white male subjects theorizing postmodern temporality and geography” (4). Queer time is more than an opposition to the future for Halberstam; it marks various times and spaces of queer temporal experience in the hopes to lead to “new ways of understanding the nonnormative behaviors that have clear but not essential relations to gay and lesbian subjects” (6). Halberstam resists universalizing and, thus, reducing queer experience to one time and one space.

By examining queer lives of drag kings, punk bands, dyke subcultures, contemporary artists, mainstream films, drug addicts, and transgender bodies, Halberstam gathers an archive

that challenges heteronormative time, which Edelman also opposes, while simultaneously opposing the narrative of conventional life stages from adolescence to adulthood to old age. Individual's location, such as in urban or rural spaces, and individual's class status serve as important vectors of analysis for Halberstam when considering queer temporality's variability. Altogether, he asserts that queer bodies refuse traditional values relating to "longevity," and, subsequently, open new modes of being not related to normative understandings of intimacy, maturity, growth, and transformation (4). By including observations on transgender individuals and geographical and economic positionality, Halberstam widens the scope of consideration for queer temporality studies. He also recognizes the complexity and even unclassifiable nature of queer bodies, genders, sexualities, communities, and identities, which speaks to the multiplicity of queer times and places. Contradictory to Edelman, Halberstam does not advocate for queerness's embracement of negativity and asserts that queer radicalness is found in alternatives in the social rather than the eradication of it.

Directly opposing Edelman's text and further expanding Halberstam's considerations, Muñoz claims "that queerness is primarily about futurity and hope" (11). While Edelman's and Halberstam's study mainly focus on gender and sexuality identities, Muñoz's queer futurity is not solely localized around sexuality and gender, as it also considers racial identity in conjunction with sexuality, gender, and class. His archive consists of postmodern poems, contemporary art objects, queer dance, dramatic performances, and queer performativity to illustrate how queer futurity "is an ideality," a utopian concept, which rejects the present to look toward potential alternatives for "another world" (1). Muñoz clearly situates his books as an argument in the vein of "[q]ueer feminist and queer of color critiques," for these approaches "are the powerful counterweight at the antirelational" or queer negativity (17). His study is highly

influenced by philosophical thought from Kant, Hegel, and those in the Frankfurt School, and especially Ernst Bloch's ideas on hope and utopia. Muñoz holds that his work offers "both a critical affect and a methodology" around "the idea of hope," as an essential facet of queerness rather than a quality of heteronormativity (4). From the onset of his book, he proclaims queerness "as the warm illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality" and that "[t]he future is queerness's domain" (1). Futurity and utopia are idealities, much like queerness, which locates the present as "a prison house," instead of a radical, antisocial notion (1). Muñoz's ideas on queerness does not strip it from its social reality but finds it as "a performative because it is not simply a being but a doing for and toward the future" (1).

Like Halberstam, Muñoz seeks alternatives to queer theory's antisocial turn but does so by finding "a refunctioned notion of utopia in the service of subaltern politics" through "[c]ertain performances of queer citizenship" (49). He outlines the presentist notions usually connected to queer lives, yet then turns to ask, "But must the future and the present exist in this rigid binary? Can the future stop being a fantasy of heterosexual reproduction?" (49). Deconstructing dialectical relationship between the present and future illustrates the contingency between the two, thus, destabilizing queer theorists' frequent attachment of the queer to the present and the norm to the future.

To further highlight the need to address race in queer temporality studies, Muñoz recognizes Edelman's failure to acknowledge race's presence within his concept of reproductive futurism. Muñoz focuses his critique on Edelman's evaluation of an editorial entitled "A Parent's Bill of Rights" authored by Cornel West and Sylvia Ann (Edelman 111). Despite his praise for *No Future*, Muñoz denounces Edelman's assessment of the piece, as "it decontextualizes West's work from the topic that has been so central to his critical evaluations: blackness" (Muñoz 94).

Edelman's study of reproductive futurism not only ignores race in terms of futurity but also strips the racial considerations of a piece he criticizes when race is a major component of the essay's context. Consequently, Muñoz contends:

Theories of queer temporality that fail to factor in the relational relevance of race or class merely reproduce a crypto-universal white gay subject that is weirdly atemporal—which is to say a subject whose time is a restricted and restricting hollowed-out present free of the need for the challenge of imaging a futurity that exists beyond the self or the here and now. (94)

Edelman's attempt to offer a deliverance from the fantasy of the future through the queer subject renders a queer individual who is white, which limits the range of individualism of the "gay subject." In turn, this subject is temporally limited to the present due to the individual's whiteness and present-centered queerness. Race serves as a way to avoid the normalization of the "gay subject," for addressing race problematizes the "crypto-universal" whiteness that automatically becomes attached to the subject. Muñoz calls for queer theorists to expand their sexuality-focused concentrations to racial and class dynamics at play in queerness, which also develops queerness's considerations of temporality to go beyond solely the present.

Despite the various differences among Edelman's, Halberstam's, and Muñoz's arguments, they share a similar formulation of temporality. For these theorists, temporality is a force that shapes individual and communal sexual, gender, racial, social, political, economic, and aesthetic experience. These identities dictate the range of limitation and liberation of one's temporal experience. Edelman outlines how queer theorists approach temporality, as a time, history, and narrative, by saying, "[P]olitics conforms to the temporality of desire, to what we might call the inevitable history of desire... but also that politics is a name for the

temporalization of desire, for its translation into a narrative, for its teleological determination” (9). Once desire possesses a temporality, it has a history and, thus, an expected lineage and nature. This “teleological determination” of sexual desire and, in turn, identity marks who has access to one temporality over another, who is considered a full citizen, who falls short of political and social standards, and who has the right to life and desire and who does not. Ultimately, these considerations culminate into who is queer and who is not and what is queer temporality and what is not.

How do these theorists conceptualize non-queer time? Is non-queer time a contested subject, like queer time? If so, what are the various renderings of queer time? In comparison to the multiple, disputed nature of queer temporality, non-queer or normative temporality holds a single, established definition. Whether queer temporality signifies a radical presentism, spatially-focused postmodern existence, or utopian futurity, normative temporality follows one type of narrative—that of heteronormativity. Edelman terms this “reproductive futurism,” Halberstam calls it “reproductive time” and the “time of inheritance,” and Muñoz designates it as “straight time” (Edelman 2; Halberstam 4-5; Muñoz 25). Despite the various names, they all describe the constitution and structure of normative temporality, which is the term I use for my argument.

Early on in his text, Edelman positions the antithesis of his polemic, “as reproductive futurism: terms that impose an ideological limit on political discourse as such, preserving in the process the absolute privilege of heteronormativity by rendering unthinkable, by casting outside the political domain, the possibility of a queer resistance to this organizing principle of communal relations” (Edelman 2). In placing restrictions on how politics is discussed and who can discuss politics in this way, limitations on temporal discourse and experience follow. Entities of heteronormativity, such as heterosexuality, marriage, sexual reproduction, and family unit, are

monikers of an always progressive, linear, future-oriented genealogy, which champions the child in order to continue their “rigid sameness of identity” (21). The attempts to stabilize heteronormative values through sexual reproduction “is central to the compulsory narrative of reproductive futurism” (21). “[A] fantasy of the future” constitutes the normative temporality attributed to the heterosexual, marital, and familial relations, and queerness’s non-reproductive condition places queer temporality as presentist, offering a way to dismantle futurity’s unreality (11).

Halberstam and Muñoz align with Edelman’s connection of marriage, sexual reproduction, and the family to non-queer structures and times, although they approach normative temporality differently. Halberstam’s concept of normative temporality follows a similar trajectory to Edelman’s with its emphasis on “the conventions of family, inheritance, and child rearing” (Halberstam 2). Halberstam’s text discusses the “time of inheritance,” which signifies a customary passing-down of material possessions and ethical principles to provide a family-based link “to the historical past of the nation” and “to the future of both familial and national stability” (5). Thus, Edelman’s and Halberstam’s evaluations of normative temporality place the production of the child at the center, as it is a figure offering a false sense of standardized continuation of the family and the state. Halberstam explicitly notes, “Reproductive time and family time are, above all, heteronormative time/space constructs” (10). Again, heteronormativity possesses a strict correlation to reproductive or normative temporalities, a temporality only accessible to normative individuals and not those of a queer nature. Muñoz follows this line of thought as well, and he clearly outlines the differences between queer and normative time:

Queerness's time is a stepping out of the linearity of straight time. Straight time is a self-naturalizing temporality. Straight time's 'presentness' needs to be phenomenologically questioned, and this is the fundamental value of a queer utopian hermeneutics.

Queerness's ecstatic and horizontal temporality is a path and a movement to a greater openness to the world. (25)

Linearity or, essentially, straightness coordinates with heteronormativity and its temporality, and just as heteronormativity continuously regulates itself, normative temporality follows the same pattern. Queer time does not have this "self-naturalizing" quality, as it is not usually seen as a normalizing force.⁴ Unlike Edelman, Muñoz describes normative temporality as presentist and not solely future-oriented, yet like Edelman, Muñoz connects straight time to sexual reproduction, marriage, family, and children (22). Normative temporality slightly evolves from a purely future-focused perspective to an additionally present-focused view. The "rigid sameness of identity," which Edelman argues is an action toward the future, is also one of the present. Muñoz acknowledges that this doing is a constant, self-regulating process always occurring in the present, even if its purpose lies in future prospects.

Despite these theorists' different temporal definitions and approaches to normativity, the bodies attached to normative temporality go predominantly unquestioned—mirroring the "self-naturalizing" process of heteronormativity itself. Heterosexuality, heterosexual marriage, sexual reproduction, and the traditional family serve as the caricatures of normative temporality, and rightly so. Muñoz clearly and concisely states why he and other queer temporality scholars match normative bodies to normative temporalities: "Heteronormativity speaks not just to a bias

⁴ Muñoz recognizes how gay and lesbian culture, predominantly focalized around Western, white individuals, can produce its own set of standardization, termed "homonormativity." Jasbir K. Puar's *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* discusses homonormativity's relation to the nation, especially the post-September 11 United States, at length.

related to sexual object choice but to that dominant and overarching temporal and spatial organization of the world that I have been calling straight time” (154). The traits affixed to normative temporality, with the exception of Edelman’s futurity and Muñoz’s presentism, manifest as fundamental attributes rather than a sight for critique. Linear progression, genealogical and stabilizing continuance, narrative and universalizing dominance, and defiance against queerness define normative temporality across theorists’ divergent conceptions of queer temporality. Why is the constitution of queer temporality such a contested subject, while normative temporality is frequently treated as an accepted premise?

Queer temporality studies, like the antisocial turn in the field, is a debated topic among its constituents, as Edelman, Halberstam, and Muñoz illustrate.⁵ In 2007, Freeman curated a special issue of *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* titled “Queer Temporalities,” in which she hosted an email roundtable discussion among prominent queer temporality scholars, including Edelman and Halberstam, as well as Carolyn Dinshaw, Roderick A. Ferguson, Carla Freccero, Annamarie Jagose, Christopher Nealon, and Nguyen Tan Hoang. The conversations predominantly circulate around concepts relating to the theorists’ personal interest in the subject, definitions of history and time, views of anachronism and their functions, and thoughts on queer temporality’s empowering and negative potentiality. Their debate touches on normative temporality and its oppositional linear nature in comparison to queer time. Predominantly, their dialogue centers around interrogating the vast and multidimensional nature of queer time and queer temporality’s investment in the past, present, future, and other temporal frameworks. Thus, their conversation is more critical of queer time rather than that of the normative, for the normative appears to be an already established entity within the field. Their discussion briefly

⁵ See Edelman’s, Halberstam’s, Muñoz’s, Tim Dean’s, and Robert L. Caserio’s conference debate titled “The Antisocial Thesis in Queer Theory,” published in 2006 by *PMLA*.

turns to a critique of normativity in terms of “a homonormative time line,” introduced by Hoang and addressed by a few others in the roundtable (183). Hoang situates homonormative temporality, as queer individuals “who come out late in life” and, thus, have restricted access to gay culture due to their elderly status (184). Even non-normative temporalities possess a tendency to become an exclusionary standard, for “[w]e create our own temporal normativity outside the heteronormative family” (Hoang 184). And yet the established concept of normative temporality goes predominantly unchallenged by queer theorists.

“Husbands and Wives” and “Proportion and Conversion”

Modernist authors, especially Woolf, did not leave normative temporality and relations unchallenged. In her 1924 essay “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” Woolf makes a proclamation that is inextricable to understandings of modernism as an aesthetic movement, historical moment, and field of scholarship: “[I]n or about December, 1910, human character changed” (194). Shortly after these famous words, Woolf specifies what this change in human character entails by stating, “All human relations have shifted—those between masters and servants, *husbands and wives*, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature. Let us agree to place one of these changes about the year 1910” (195, emphasis added). For Woolf, marriage is an altered site at the hands of war and modernity. In *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*, Pericles Lewis remarks on Woolf’s categorization of human relations and links her use of “husbands and wives”—heterosexual marriage—to “[t]he problem of human sexuality” (88). While Woolf’s works, including *Mrs. Dalloway*, speak to the complexity and fluidity of human sexuality, her treatment of marriage extends beyond the bounds of sexual desire, sexual identities, and sexuality’s “problems.”

Mrs. Dalloway depicts heterosexual marriage and most certainly portrays the ways in which married individuals' sexualities are not predetermined by their marital status, as Septimus, Clarissa, and other characters experience same-sex desire in the novel. Queer readings of *Mrs. Dalloway* tend to focus on Septimus's troubled relationship with his deceased comrade Evans and on Clarissa's friendship with Sally Seton while at Bourton, and Miss Kilman's homoerotic desire for Elizabeth Dalloway. In other words, queer theoretical treatments of *Mrs. Dalloway* concentrate on the text's queer affiliations. Overall, Woolf's writings and life are prominent subjects of queer scholarship, but her autobiographical information frequently takes centerstage in critical conversations engaging with topics related to sexuality and queerness.⁶ Recent work opposes aligning Woolf's queerness solely with her life, for Melanie Micir's "Queer Woolf" in the 2106 edition of *A Companion to Virginia Woolf*, calls for queer readings of Woolf to examine her writing rather than defaulting to her biography. A tendency toward biographical readings also occurs in scholarship concerning Woolf and marriage, for writers predominantly focus on her marriage to Leonard Woolf in relation to her writing, mental illness, and relationship with Vita Sackville-West.⁷

Marriage, queerness, and temporality within Woolf's novels generate wide and diverse critical conversations. One common thread unites these different approaches into Woolf's work and life—her relation to the normal. Whether critics examine Woolf's fiction or biographical information, most of their questions centralize around the ways in which Woolf's works resist traditional modes of thought and being. This resistance toward normativity is a polemic concern

⁶ See Patricia Morgne Cramer's "Woolf and Theories of Sexuality" and Madelyn Detloff's "Woolf and Lesbian Culture: Queering Woolf Queering" in *Virginia Woolf in Context*, edited by Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman.

⁷ See Thomas Stephen Szasz's "My madness saved me": *The Madness and Marriage of Virginia Woolf*, Irene Coates's *Who's Afraid of Leonard Woolf?: A Case for the Sanity of Virginia Woolf*, Peter F. Alexander's *Leonard and Virginia Woolf: A Literary Partnership*, George Spater's *A Marriage of True Minds: An Intimate Portrait of Leonard and Virginia Woolf*, and Peter Dally's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: Manic Depression and the Life of Virginia Woolf*.

for literary modernism and queer theory, as both approaches reject and critique narratives of conventionality. Both critical styles frequently tie tradition to the past, not only as a state previous to the present but also as a non-progressive time in comparison to the present. The progressivity and radicalness of the present presumes much about the nature of the past, and in literary modernist studies and queer theory, scholars critique this assumed narrative of development. Work regarding queer theory without antinormativity and queer historiography question these the innovative nature of the present moment. Modernist scholars produce work in a similar vein which interrogates the revolutionary capabilities of modernist aesthetic practices; it is also important to note that modernist authors critiqued modernity during their own time. Thus, resistance toward normativities and the critique of one's own practice are foundational elements to modernism and queer theory as approaches and studies.

For instance, Davida Pines's *The Marriage Paradox: Modernist Novels and the Cultural Imperative to Marry* examines literary modernism's treatment of marriage and calls into question modernist novels' resistance toward this institutional force. She asserts that several great twentieth-century authors, such as Woolf, Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce, Nella Larsen, and others, acutely judge marriage and yet reestablish this relationship through the act of critique. The opening of Pines's monograph explicitly states, "The marriage plot is inescapable" (1). Her text traces the ways in which modernist novels present sexual fluidity, divorce, and marital discontent as a point of resistance toward marriage. Ultimately, Pines's argument finds that "the intent to critique the marriage imperative (the societal pressure for women, especially, to marry) and the marriage plot (the narrative of courtship and betrothal) results in the reinforcement of the same" (21). Pines's discussion on Woolf focuses on her late novel *Between the Acts* and claims

that the text's ending, which upholds marriage as an optimistic, affirmative life experience, undermines its investments in challenging the social and cultural practice of marriage.

While Pines's observations seem absolute and even "inescapable" to use her term, twentieth-century novelists' portrayals of marriage can be expanded beyond the dilemma of whether their protests dismantle or reinforce this institution. With Pines's analysis of *Between the Acts*'s narrative structure, the same can be said of *Mrs. Dalloway*, for *Mrs. Dalloway* criticizes marriage to then later confirm this relation as a valuable social arrangement. Reading the novel in this manner locates its centralizing norm within marriage. Yet, the novel specifically focalizes around the normativity of "Proportion" and "Conversion" (Woolf 97). The perilous forces of Proportion and Conversion explicitly speak to "British Liberalism's wartime rhetoric of rationalism and ratio," but these drives also attempt to create "unity" through temporality (Thompson 95). Hilary Thompson discusses how Proportion and Conversion operate as *Mrs. Dalloway*'s normative temporality in her essay "Time and Its Countermeasures: Modern Messianisms in Woolf, Benjamin, and Agamben." Thompson's primary thesis emphasizes the problems with overdetermined readings of Woolf's novel's endings. She uses Benjamin's and Agamben's theories as frameworks to illuminate how "Woolf shows herself uniquely foresightful: where [Benjamin and Agamben] see a history in which messianism strikes or stalls exceptionally, she projects a peopled dimension opened up by our extreme visions' interceptions" (87). In a section of her article, Thompson observes the ways in which *Mrs. Dalloway* invests itself in "saving time" through continuously pointing to the "asynchrony" of temporality with Big Ben's boom's discord with other clocks and life events in postwar London (94-5). Within this space of "asynchrony," Big Ben's and other clocks' times are not ends "so much as 'odds and ends' or remnants, the tasks that are left" (95). Thompson locates Proportion

and Conversion as sources which try to consolidate this residual time to a time of “unity” (95). The various temporalities of the novel—misaligned clocks, actual and fictional memories, and future visions—persistently dethrone the unifying force of Proportion and Conversion.

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Proportion and Conversion are not only the normalizing entities at work but also are temporal normalizing phenomenon. Dr. Holmes and Sir William Bradshaw project and enforce one’s “sense of proportion” as one’s “health” (Woolf 96). Dr. Holmes tells Lucrezia “to make [Septimus] notice real things, go to a music hall, play cricket,” but Septimus repeatedly calls him “human nature” throughout the novel (25). In *The Ethics of Modernism: Moral Ideas of Yeats, Eliot, Joyce, Woolf, and Beckett*, Lee Oser discusses how *Jacob’s Room* and *Mrs. Dalloway* oppose Aristotle’s ethical ideologies. Septimus’s naming of Dr. Holmes and Sir William as the “human nature,” casts them as advocates for good deeds as the cure for Septimus’s traumatic war experience. Thus, “human nature” is a restrictive force which guises itself as an ethical cure but, in fact, serves to standardize ethics, society, politics, and one’s consciousness. Proportion and Conversion encompass vast bounds of normalization, which place them as the dangerous regularizing forces that the novel’s individuals continuously confront in various forms and scenes.

While heterosexual marriage is a normative affiliation, it is not the centralizing normativity of the novel. Proportion and Conversion are the omnipresent standardizing powers at play for Septimus, Clarissa, and others, attempting to provide a sense of “unity” through regulating one’s experience of consciousness, affect, and temporality. *Mrs. Dalloway* manifests the developmental progression of normative temporality or straight time, which queer theorists conceptualize as related to the family, marriage, and child, in Proportion and Conversion. Holmes’s and Sir William’s discussions with Lucrezia about Septimus and Lucrezia’s discussion

about the doctors to Septimus are predominantly framed by aspects of normativity and normative temporality. When Sir William has an initial meeting with Septimus and Lucrezia, the narrator notes that Sir William's "father had been a tradesman, a natural respect for *breeding*" (Woolf 95, emphasis added). Soon after, Sir William tells Septimus, "Nobody lives for himself alone," and he does so while "glancing at the photograph of his wife in Court dress" (96). Sexual reproduction and marriage appear alongside Sir William and his investment in Proportion and Conversion. The regulation of "breeding" is another facet of Sir William's efforts toward standardization: "Worshipping proportion, Sir William not only prospered himself but made England prosper, secluded her lunatics, forbade childbirth, penalised despair, made it impossible for the unfit to propagate their views until they, too, shared his sense of proportion" (Woolf 97). For Sir William, those who do not possess "his sense of proportion" should "forbade children," which made it "impossible" for any values beyond or against the normativity to proliferate. Thus, those who "share" and "worship" Proportion and Conversion can not only procreate but can do so multiple times. In one scene, Septimus voices his intense dislike for Dr. Holmes, and Lucrezia fails to understand his judgement, as she saw him as "a kind man" who "had four little children" (90). Again, aspects of normative temporality, such as Dr. Holmes's multitude of children, surface throughout the novel's treatment of Proportion and Conversion and their agents

As the principle normalizing force of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Proportion and Conversion carry many ramifications to Clarissa's desire for "the privacy of the soul" and her detestation toward Miss Kilman, who devotes her soul to the suffocation of religion (Woolf 124). For the novel, the ultimate costs of Proportion and Conversion is Septimus's suicide. While Proportion and Conversion unify through authority and standardization, the moment when Septimus's death and Clarissa's party—two seemingly separate narratives—collide with one another acts as the

affirmed unity of human connection. Lewis remarks on how *Mrs. Dalloway*'s conclusion simultaneously upholds and criticizes postwar civilization's ways of life and coping:

[T]he novel achieves its real unity only in its conclusion, when Mrs. Dalloway learns of Septimus's death from his psychiatrist (one of the guests at her party) and feels a strange sympathy for him. It seems that the knowledge of his death prevents Clarissa from committing suicide herself... *Mrs. Dalloway* does suggest that the poor soldier's suffering and death somehow redeem the apparently trivial life of the hostess, who entertains nobility and politicians, the "old men" that postwar society held responsible for the war. Yet Woolf also seems to be criticizing the logic that would justify Septimus's death as worth while, a fair price to pay for "civilization." (113)

Lewis and many scholars position the novel's ending as a statement involving the war and its cost, which is a valid critical concern. However, Septimus and Clarissa's connection also speaks beyond the bounds of war and suffering. The affiliation occurs in both life and in death, shaping them as coexisting states within human relationality. The finality of death is put to question, for death is not closed off to a future but possesses one. How does their relation affect the temporality of the novel? How does this connection affect the novel's depiction of Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage, Clarissa and Richard's marriage, and marriage overall?

Following Septimus's death, Lucrezia comes to understand his pain and disdain for Dr. Holmes and Sir William: "'Let her sleep,' said Dr. Holmes, feeling [Lucrezia's] pulse. She saw the large outline of his body standing dark against the window. So that was Dr. Holmes" (Woolf 147). At the party, Richard continues to have trouble expressing his affection toward Clarissa, but despite his silence, Clarissa knows Richard's love for her through his words and care toward their daughter Elizabeth. Both marriages are affirmed, however, in different ways. In my

conclusion, I explore how Septimus's and Clarissa's marriages are not undermined by their failure to follow the trajectory of normative temporality but are sustained in the end. Suicide and silence maintain these marital relations, which are not considerations of normative temporality, but these non-normative acts confirm the normative relation of these marriages. Thus, the novel appears to preserve the normative through the non-normative.

At the same time, other married individuals surround Septimus's suicide, such as Dr. Holmes as well as his neighbor Mrs. Filmer, and attend Clarissa's party, such as Sir William and his wife. For instance, contrary to what Lewis notes, Clarissa does not learn about Septimus's death from "his psychiatrist," Sir William Bradshaw, but from his psychiatrist's wife, Lady Bradshaw. While Sir William discusses Septimus's end with Richard, Lady Bradshaw utters to Clarissa, "[J]ust as we were starting, my husband was called up on the telephone, a very sad case. A young man (that is what Sir William is telling Mr. Dalloway) had killed himself. He had been in the army" (179). From the narrative, it appears that Clarissa and Richard are simultaneously learning of Septimus's "case," and shortly after, Clarissa's connection to Septimus leads to her think, "It was due to Richard; she had never been so happy" (181). Considering this, Septimus's death leads to Lucrezia's understanding his hatred toward figures of "human nature," and whether this serves to give their marriage a future or acts as their marriage's final act is uncertain. On the other side, the novel upholds Clarissa and Richard's relationship while at the party, and at the end, they continue to live and be married to one another.

Lewis's final line about *Mrs. Dalloway* speaks to the concern of one marriage living, while one may be perished: "In her novel the living go on living, and they must recognize that the civilization that permits them to do so is the same one that allowed millions to die in the war"

(113). The same can be applied to marriage within the novel and simultaneously challenged by it. The novel does not completely dismantle Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage or Clarissa and Richard's, which does not necessarily render these relations as entirely stable or viable. Questions relating to these relations' sustainability and to other married individuals' presence within these scenes come to destabilize the nature of marriage's affirmation. Whether or not the novel's marriages end with the optimistic, progressive, future-oriented of normative temporality is not my focal interest, for the lives of these marriage that we see in *Mrs. Dalloway* speak to different temporal interests. Thus, my study is invested in *how* these relations are affirmed rather than *if* they are and examines how these marital affirmations follow and rupture normative temporality.

CHAPTER III

THE DEGENERATIVE MARRIAGE OF SEPTIMUS AND LUCREZIA SMITH

Twelve days after *Mrs. Dalloway*'s publication date of May 14, 1925, Virginia Woolf penned a letter in response to her "barrister friend" Charles Sanger's criticism of her new novel, saying *Mrs. Dalloway*'s characters are "too analytic and not sufficiently sympathetic... You do not make me interested in their fate" (Wussow 36; *Letters* Vol. III, 183). She wrote:

I expect you are right about the lack of sympathy, but in self-defence I must remark that I think the queerness of the method is partly responsible for your feeling this. I think, at least, that at first go off it is much easier to feel the technical qualities of an experiment than to get an emotion from it... Indeed, the reason why I inflict these experiments upon you is that I can't lie down in peace until I have found some way of liberating my sympathies, instead of giving effect to my analytic brain. (*Letters* Vol. III, 183-4)

Woolf admits that her characters' depictions may be perceived as uncompassionate and distant due to "the queerness of the method" and continues by commenting on how "the technical qualities" of her "experiments" elevate her mind of her own "sympathies." From Woolf's words, an excess of sympathy, rather than a lack of it, invents the novel's subjectivities. In terms of the novel's "method," she notes that it is one of "experiment" and of "queerness." The practice to which Woolf refers is her narrative technique of seamlessly shifting from one individual's consciousness into another's.

"[T]he queerness of the method" strongly ties to Woolf's investment in narrative experimentation and, thus, resistance toward traditional forms of the novel. I argue *Mrs. Dalloway*'s "queerness" goes beyond its style. The story's unconventional form, content, and organization create atypical relationalities and as well temporalities. More specifically, the

novel's arrangement of individuals and their attachments to one another questions the constitution and structure of normative and queer temporalities. Woolf thereby uncovers assumptions shaping the time of both normative and queer experiences. Through *Mrs. Dalloway*'s reorientation of relations and temporalities, the category of normative temporality no longer holds a sense of stability. While destabilization partly characterizes queer temporality, the novel's configurations of queer attachments problematize queer theories' separating traits between queer and normative temporalities. Both time classifications merge, blur, invert, and subvert through how the narrative tells the story, structures the relationships, and treats individual, communal, and standard time.

The Temporal Framework of *Mrs. Dalloway*

The entire narrative of *Mrs. Dalloway* transpires across a single day. Yet from the onset of the novel, time contours through narrative shifts of focus from one individual consciousness to another and from present to past and then future. After the opening line of Clarissa Dalloway purchasing "the flowers herself," Clarissa's thoughts turn to her maid Lucy opening the Dalloway home to incoming caterers (3). "For so it had always seemed to [Clarissa]," the simple swing of doors and "little squeak of the hinges" prompt her mind to return to her eighteen-year-old self at Bourton, her childhood home (3). While her mind is still in the world of Bourton, she mentions she had a sense "that something awful was about to happen"—an ominous prophecy from her younger self—and then muses about Peter Walsh mocking her interest in the outdoors. Past, present, and future enact with one another in the narrator's initial telling from Clarissa's consciousness. Clarissa's current focus on her party preparations leads to her reminiscing about her youth, which refers to her past anxiety about the future. Whether this worry is about the War to come or another event is unknown; in terms of temporality, Clarissa's former concerns still

possess a sense of futurity. Since her anxieties hold no specificity, her worries may still endure. Her recollection of Bourton does not randomly transpire but is instead “always” provoked by the sound of creaky hinges, indicating the ever-present potential for Clarissa to be mentally transported back to Bourton by this mundane noise. Thus, present sensory experience serves as a catalyst for evocations of the past. Also, “always” signifies an act that does and will occur, which gives it a future-oriented quality. Past, present, and future not only simultaneously occur but also are contingent upon one another in the novel’s opening passage.

In the next scene, the narrative transitions from Clarissa’s consciousness to Scrope Purvis’s, who thinks there is “a touch of the bird [Clarissa]... though she was over fifty, and grown very white since her illness,” as she crosses Victoria Street (4). From Purvis’s brief insight into Clarissa, the story returns to Clarissa’s mind contemplating living in Westminster and then sensing resonance of Big Ben’s chimes: “Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense (but that might be her heart, affected, they said, by influenza) before Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed. First a warning, musical; then the hour irrevocable” (4). From Clarissa’s perspective, a shared suspense falls over the Westminster community moments before Big Ben’s striking. This feeling of “pause” precedes the unavoidable notification of time’s passing—marking as well as deferring what is to come. Similar to the ambiguous nature of eighteen-year-old Clarissa’s prediction of “something awful was about to happen,” the suspended moment previous to the clock’s “warning” either or, perhaps, simultaneously signals to an apprehension and hyperawareness of the immediate future and the inability to stop time’s passing. Clarissa continues to consider the cacophony of urban experience as an optimistic space teeming with industrial technologies and sounds, which “she loved; life; London; this moment of June” (4). “[T]his moment of June” and “over fifty” are

proximate estimates of time rather than exact figures. The narrative predominantly gives approximations of days, months, years, ages, and durations of time, disabling temporal precision as a goal or even possibility. The intermixing of past, present, and future and ambiguity of calendar dates and lengths of time destabilize temporal categories, even though *Mrs. Dalloway*'s narrative timespan transpires in one-day period. The simultaneity and paradoxical nature of the novel's structural and individual temporalities constitute its treatment of time, which then impacts its representation of the individual, community, history, death, and other principal subjects.

These abrupt yet fluid indeterminate collisions of the past, present, and future and the oscillations between various individuals' perspectives initiate the narrative. While these temporal complexities occur throughout the novel, *Mrs. Dalloway* holds an overarching temporal dilemma that is not purely located in subjectivity—the proper lineage of the family in the aftermath of the Great War:

For it was the middle of June. The War was over, except for some one like Mrs. Foxcroft at the Embassy last night eating her heart out because that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin; or Lady Bexborough who opened a bazaar, they said, with the telegram in her hand, John, her favourite, killed; but it was over, thank Heaven—over. It was June. (4-5)

The Great War entrenches the narrative of *Mrs. Dalloway*, not unlike many other of Woolf's works. Near the novel's opening, World War I's atrocities are situated in a familial setting rather than one of national proportions. The deaths of young male soldiers disrupt the linearity of family ancestries, names, and property: "that nice boy was killed and now the old Manor House must go to a cousin." Although these inheritance lines are broken, they are soon rerouted within

the family sphere, for the property is going “to a cousin” and not to the state or other outside entity. From the onset, the normativity of family continuance and development is, at least, partially upended as many families lost their primary body for inheritance—their sons. Subsequently, to preserve their lineages, alternatives must be enacted, like an unnamed cousin’s place within inheritance.

While “that nice boy” and “John” are named as those who have passed, they are not directly connected to the sorrowful women mentioned. The terms “son” and of familial relations are not used to describe Mrs. Foxcroft’s and Lady Bexborough’s affiliations with the deceased. Mrs. Foxcroft and Lady Bexborough possess more specific names than those given to the perished soldiers, and the women’s social positions are clear from one’s location and the other’s title. Mrs. Foxcroft’s placement at the Embassy and Lady Bexborough’s establishment of a market speak to their upper-class statuses, yet how they know these men goes unstated. The uncertainty of these women’s place in the family, especially in terms of the departed’s lives, questions the normativity attached to the family unit. The stability of the family ruptures with the vast casualties of World War I, and the ambiguous positionings of Mrs. Foxcroft and Lady Bexborough with the dead soldiers further the unsettlement of the family unit. At the same time, family property, possesses, values, and name still continue, despite the lineage’s rerouted trajectory through “a cousin” becoming the figure of inheritance instead of the son. However, the family’s traditional genealogy is not fully salvaged; thus, normative temporality is not reinstated at the novel’s opening. World War I ransacked traditional understandings of the world, and the family is not immune to war’s destruction or questioning of the unquestioned. Traditional understandings of time and one’s experience of it follow this destabilization. The beginning of the novel complicates the role and construction of the family and, thus, normative temporality

itself. Development, progression, and linearity—hallmarks of normative temporality—no longer hold the same structure.

Considering Edelman's, Halberstam's, and Muñoz's conceptions of normative temporality as strongly tied to the family unit, the time in *Mrs. Dalloway* does not strictly follow this logic. Returning to Halberstam's formulation of the "time of inheritance," he also names it as "the time of 'what if,'" signifying the temporality of passing-down as a "hypothetical" kind "that demands protection in the way of insurance policies, health care, and wills" (5). In *Mrs. Dalloway*, the time of "what if" drastically changes from one of preparatory inheritance to destructive actualization. The war shatters "what if" and makes it an incomprehensible reality—spotlighting the arbitrary nature of planning for a future. This also connects to Edelman's view of futurity, as an illusory concept for heteronormative ends. Preparing for the genealogical future of the family and, thus, the child is a hopeless endeavor. Its very purpose lies in maintaining the stability of a hopeful heteronormative future, which, for Muñoz and others, is an "always already flawed temporality" (Muñoz 154).

And yet the developmental continuance of local, national, and global traditions is still present in London's "uproar" of economy, government, and society (Woolf 4). At the same time, these institutions are different after the War because the assemblage of the family, for most, does not include young adult sons. While the passage concerning how the death of "that nice boy" then bestows property to "a cousin" is brief and inconspicuous, the implications of this transaction are neither brief nor inconspicuous in nature. Rather to maintain and sustain the family unit, traditional understanding of lineages must be circumvented to alternative descents. The male "cousin" is not the ideal figure to possess the family property or heirloom. Yet this individual is an option which retains the family objects within the unit and can continue the

family name through marriage and sexual reproduction. Normative temporality still occurs in the family unit during the aftermath of the Great War, but the repeatedly progressive, continual, and linear nature of the family is ultimately restructured to accommodate conventional genealogical expectations. While the son is the prime heir, “a cousin” serves as a suitable alternative since he is still part of the family.

In terms of the temporality of the novel, the narrative follows Clarissa for a single day’s time, and like in the text’s opening, past, present, and future constantly interchange and intermix throughout, which is the focus of most critical thought. The reorientation of normative temporality needs to be attended to as well, for the family’s substitutions to preserve its normative structure affects temporality beyond familial relations. Attempts to continue orthodox familial lineage in a slightly unorthodox or unideal way presents itself as another temporal framework that can be used to explore and analyze the novel. The family unit is not the only normative relation affected by the siege of war, as this temporal shift also marks marriage. Understandings of marriage experience similar alternative temporal modes. Whether this shift is a result of the First World War, social changes, or the human condition is not my particular concern; rather I look to the temporality of marital relations in *Mrs. Dalloway* to distinguish how marriage connects or disconnects with normative and queer temporality frameworks.

Septimus and Lucrezia’s Imprecise Temporality

Septimus Warren Smith is a veteran of the Great War and married Lucrezia, a young woman from Milan, shortly after Armistice Day. Throughout the novel, Septimus constantly experiences horrific visions of the world and especially social institutions due to his shellshock from the war. He also sees his fallen comrade and friend, Evans, whom Septimus may sexually desire. Owing to Septimus’s ongoing mental instability, Lucrezia attempts to ease his suffering

and seeks outside help from Dr. Holmes and Sir William, figureheads of Proportion and Conversion. Much of Lucrezia's narrative tells of her isolation in London, unhappiness in marriage, and insecurity with Septimus's erratic behavior. Scholarship on war, trauma, madness, and memory in *Mrs. Dalloway* concentrates on the novel's portrayal of shellshock, queer desire, and homoerotic anxiety through Septimus.⁸ Critics also attend to Lucrezia's diasporic experience in Great Britain and her roles as a wife to veteran.⁹ While the couple, especially Septimus, has been the focus of much critical work across modernist studies and other disciplines, Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage as a site of degeneration and temporal suspension is rarely considered within analyses of the novel. From their first appearance, the temporality of marriage along with those surrounding them drastically changes.

During a great affair in the London streets when citizens try to discern who is the prestigious individual in the motor car, Septimus first appears, attempting to pass through the crowd. The initial description of Septimus gives brief details about his dress and, more significantly, marks particular temporalities attached to his body and perceived by others:

Septimus Warren Smith, aged about thirty, pale-faced, beak-nosed, wearing brown shoes and a shabby overcoat, with hazel eyes which had that look of apprehension in them which makes complete strangers apprehensive too. The world has raised its whip; where will it descend? (14)

⁸ See *Virginia Woolf and Trauma: Embodied Texts*, edited by Suzette A. Henke and David Eberly; Ariela Freedman's *Death, Men, and Modernism: Trauma and Narrative in British Fiction from Hardy to Woolf*; Erkin Kırıyman's "Representation of Traumatic Memory in the Narrative: Traumatic Pathologies in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*" in *The Arts of Memory and the Poetics of Remembering*, edited by Abbas Maazaoui; Michael Seidel's "The Pathology of the Everyday: Uses of Madness in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Ulysses*" in *Virginia Woolf: Themes and Variations*, edited by Vara Neverow-Turk, Vara and Mark Hussey; Sue Thomas's "Virginia Woolf's Septimus Smith and Contemporary Perceptions of Shell Shock" in *English Language Notes*; and Tonya Krouse's "Sexual Deviancy in *Mrs. Dalloway*: The Case of Septimus Smith" in *Virginia Woolf Miscellany*.

⁹ See David Bradshaw's "'Vanished, Like Leaves': The Military, Elegy, and Italy in *Mrs. Dalloway*" in *Woolf Studies Annual* and Jessica Meyer's "'Not Septimus Now': Wives of Disabled Veterans and Cultural Memory of the First World War in Britain" in *Women's History Review*.

Septimus's age is not precise number but is an approximation. Temporal accuracy and consistency, which is essential to a stable understanding of time, narrative, and linearity, is not accessible. His age at "about thirty" places him outside a place of certainty, unlike normative temporality, which holds a particular developmental process for human life. Septimus is within this aging process, yet his exact location within it can only be closely hypothesized. Time as a categorical, precise entity partially occurs with Septimus's introductory portrayal, as his age is numbered but without certainty. It is also important to note that the unknown, third-person narrator, whose perspective slips into the narrative throughout the novel, describes Septimus in this scene; thus, specific exterior qualities are not part of Septimus's internal dialogue.

Similarly, the narrator notes, after introducing Septimus and Lucrezia, "they had been married four, five years" (15). Even the duration of their marriage does not provide a definite timespan. Halberstam emphasizes the importance of "longevity" in terms of the family lineage and the "desired process of maturation" (Halberstam 4). Longevity signifies a passage of time, which Halberstam links to the process of human development and reproduction; this can also connect to the longevity of marriage. The precise number of years Septimus and Lucrezia have been married is not available, but the approximation is—"four, five year." The estimate of their marriage's duration is simultaneously vague and specific. It appears to give an option for the number of years: either four or five years. The formatting of the phrase does not follow the logic of an either-or option; rather, it suggests a continuance of time, as the narrator remarks "four, five years" with a comma separating the numbers and not a word. Septimus and Lucrezia's duration of marriage is not a polarizing time (either four or five years) but speaks to a fluidity of time, which still aligns with the value of longevity but not with precisely numbered longevity. Consequently, exact time categories, such as one's correct age or a couple's specific years of

marriage, are not concerns of the novel. The clarity and linearity of normative temporalities does not coincide with Septimus and Lucrezia's heterosexual marriage. Thus, normative temporality's traits do not automatically apply to normative structures. The narrator's mentioning of their marital time still shows that there is value in the duration of marriage, despite its inexactness. Normative value systems exist within the novel's world, but these systems do not exactly reflect the temporal expectations for heteronormative relations.

Moreover, the narrator's telling of Septimus provides further insight into his body's temporal resonance. For instance, the sense of uneasiness in his "hazel eyes" translates to a similar feeling for strangers who encounter him. Apprehension, along with its suspicious air, carries temporal significance. Apprehension aligns with a type of worrisome hesitation—a conscious stalling from a likely involuntary response. This deferral is so closely tied to Septimus's physicality that others experience the interruptive nature of his eyes. Septimus participates in a heterosexual marriage; subsequently, his body should enact normative temporality. Yet his body speaks on a different temporal register, so much so that strangers feel the suspension his "look" emits. Septimus's physicality challenges the progressive linearity of normative, for his own body gives "that look of apprehension" which transfer to those who see him. The interruptions of his own linear time, as a heterosexual married British man, ripple through others' temporal experience as well. Septimus's body possesses the power to cause temporal deferral in others, and his temporal force, along with Lucrezia, occurs later in the novel as well. From the onset, Septimus's physical appearance and gaze operate on an alternative temporal level than that of normativity, despite his participation in heteronormative relations.

Trying to focus Septimus's attention on a group of boys in the Regent's Park, Lucrezia implores him to "Look," so that he does not continue to talk to himself in public (Woolf 24).

While on her first visit to London, Maisie Johnson sees the couple and wonders if they can help her find Regent's Park Tube Station. Lucrezia replies by shouting, "Not this way—over there!" and "wav[es] her aside, lest she should see Septimus" (25). Maisie still sees Septimus, and her encounter with them speaks to how the couple affects outsider's temporal experience in the current moment as well as in the future-to-come. After their brief exchange, Maisie thinks, "Both seemed queer... Everything seemed very queer," and notices Septimus's and Lucrezia's immediate and lasting effect on her memory:

[T]his 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... (25-6)

Maisie's view of the couple marks them as different: Lucrezia as "seeming foreign," Septimus as "looking queer." They "gave her quite a turn," so much so that she will remember this image of the couple "quarrelling" or "parting for ever, perhaps." Along with her detection of their foreignness and queerness, she recognizes their social arrangement—a married couple. The normative structure of the heterosexual couple mixes with qualities outside the realm of heteronormativity. The "foreign" and "queer" are as immediately perceptible as the form of Septimus and Lucrezia's relation. Maisie avoids definitively labeling them as strange; Lucrezia "seem[s]" and Septimus "look[s]" to be so. While their social arrangement is clear and even

unquestioned, their natures as individuals are not as clear. Her view of them is an estimation, yet they have an intense effect on her and her temporality.

“[F]oreign” Lucrezia and “queer” Septimus imprint on her memory immediately through the “turn” they cause. The “turn” is one of unsettling surprise. This “turn” is also one in time, or more specifically, a “turn” toward the future and an attempt to turn away from the “foreign,” “queer” present moment. Similar to the stalling effect of Septimus’s eyes, Septimus and Lucrezia interrupt the progression of Maisie’s viewpoint. They pause her thoughts about the newness of London, her need for directions, and her pursuit of the tube station. The turn her thought to them in their “foreign,” “queer,” and “odd” demeanors, stalling her movement through London and through a progressive narrative. Septimus and Lucrezia’s failure to calibrate with normative temporal experience alters others’, such as Maisie’s, mental focus on time. Maisie’s thoughts are haunted by the couple, attempting to decipher the weirdness of this inconsequential meeting. Septimus and Lucrezia’s peculiar marriage suspends Maisie’s mental and physical development in the narrative. This interruption in the present translates to her conception of her future and her memory of it.

Maisie shifts from her consciousness’s view to the future, where she not only thinks about what she will remember from this moment but also how she will remember it. She thinks of this memory of “Regent’s Park on a fine summer’s morning fifty years ago” will “jangle again among” her others. Septimus and Lucrezia’s abnormal presence and behavior halt Maisie’s personal narrative and linger past their stalling effect. They become part of Maisie’s memory. The fact that they are a couple is not memorable, but the foreignness and queerness of their pairing is. The bizarre nature of the couple gives them a longevity, which is a trait usually reserved for normative relations and temporality. Normative temporality’s longevity is

frequently tied to the continuance of the family through sexual reproduction or inheritance systems. Septimus and Lucrezia are a heterosexual married couple, which coincides with normative temporal dynamics, but the longevity that they enact differs from these hallmarks of normative temporality. Maisie remembers Septimus and Lucrezia because of their vast difference and not because of their sameness. Her memory allows them to possess a longevity outside that of normative temporal spheres, despite their participation in normative attachments. In effect, Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage does not guarantee their contribution or placement to normative temporality.

Additionally, the couple's extraordinariness affects Maisie's entire perception of the scene and its surroundings—"Both seemed queer... Everything seemed very queer" (25). Their queerness permeates everything for Maisie. All is rendered queer by Septimus's and Lucrezia's queerness. Despite Septimus and Lucrezia's visibility as a couple, which is apparent to Maisie, they rupture the stability of other's experience of time in the present and future. Consequently, they have access to a future, but this future is not attached to ties of kinship and is attached to a stranger walking through Regent's Park. Normative temporality's interest in the future and longevity persists in Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage, yet the objects of this continuance are not connected to the family or conventional local, national, or global systems. These objects are Lucrezia's "foreign" and Septimus's "queer" natures and attach to a random woman's memory. They disrupt the perpetuation of "the rigid sameness of identity," which characterizes normative temporality, as well as traditional narrative structures (Edelman 21).

Maisie notes multiple times that this is her first time in London, a prominent life event, which becomes a backdrop event to her encounter with the couple. An inversion of values occurs relating to memory. In a traditional narrative arch, Maisie's trip to London would be the focus

rather than her brief and even tangential scene with Septimus and Lucrezia. And yet they leave such an impression on her that her own story's context is no longer the focus of her episode. Septimus's and Lucrezia's "odd" behavior is the scene's center and occupies Maisie's memory rather than her ostensibly important life experience. The expectations for remembered events does not follow a conventional value system. Septimus and Lucrezia's relation aligns with this upturned value system as far as their marriage's failure to synchronize with progression and then alignment with degeneration. Maisie perceives the potential decay of their marriage, while trying to discern why one seems "foreign" and the other appears "queer." She estimates that they were "quarrelling, perhaps; parting for ever, perhaps; something was up, she knew." The decline of their marriage is perceptible; it is not hidden, despite Lucrezia's attempt to shield Septimus from Maisie's sight.

Once she continues to try to discern the entire scene—knowing "something is up," but not what—she recognizes that this event is incomprehensible, as "she join[s] that gently trudging, vaguely gazing, breeze-kissed company" (26). Despite her seamless return to the normalcy of the park and London life, Maisie "positively felt she must cry Oh!... Horror! Horror!" because her interaction with Septimus and Lucrezia changes everything around her—"all seemed, after Edinburgh, so queer" (26). Even the mundane quality of Broad Walk, including "the stone basins, the prim flowers, the old men and women, invalids most of them in Bath chairs," are part of this new "queer" world for Maisie (26). Her entire perception of the area, its objects, and its people alter under her view of Septimus, Lucrezia, and the irrevocable "turn" they give her. Septimus's and Lucrezia's non-developmental marriage affects their own sense of normative temporality as well as others. It also carries resonates across time, as it will serve as a memory for Maisie. These linger effects transpire through Maisie's observations of

London following their encounter. Although Septimus and Lucrezia enact a normatively structured relation, their attachment does not follow normative temporality and undoes the normative time of others' narratives in the present and future.

After Maisie's view, the narrative's perspective changes to Mrs. Dempster eating her lunch at Regent's Park and thinking of her own experience with marriage and family. Mrs. Dempster sees Maisie's reaction toward Septimus and Lucrezia and internally remarks, "That girl... don't know a thing yet" (26). The older woman continues by pondering her own marriage and internally speaking to Maisie, "Percy drank. Well, better to have a son... You'll get married, for you're pretty enough... Get married, she thought, and then you'll know" (26). Mrs. Dempster understands marriage as a relationship which commonly includes behavior like Septimus and Lucrezia's acts—guising issues in public, appearing to end their attachment, and, ultimately, being unhappy. These qualities are not "foreign" and "queer" to Mrs. Dempster's marriage and her view of it. Rather she advises Maisie that once she is married, "then you'll know"; then Maisie will know that Septimus and Lucrezia's attachment is not an exception of marriage but an example of it. With this, Mrs. Dempster's insights also links to the temporal manner of marriage. Then the non-progressive, interruptive, and lingering temporality of Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage constitutes the connection rather than resists it. From the older woman's comments, marriage possess a degenerative appearance, like Maisie notes, the couple may be "parting for ever, perhaps." This composes marriage for Mrs. Dempster, who is married herself, while Maisie finds this strange and does not have experience with marriage. A married woman sees Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage as normal, and an unmarried woman marks them as "foreign" and "queer."

The text does not advocate for one woman's perspective over the other's. With Mrs. Dempster's commentary and our knowledge of Septimus and Lucrezia's circumstances, the narrative positions Maisie as a naive, assuming newcomer to London who does not yet know of the complexities of life. In Mrs. Dempster's case, the narrative tells us in an aside that she is someone "(who saved crusts for the squirrels and often ate her lunch in Regent's Park)" and also remarks on her "hard life" and desire for "the kiss of pity" upon her face (26). In these brief episodes, Woolf renders these women as multifaceted individuals whose perspectives both speak to truths about the scene. Through the "queerness" of Woolf's "method, which dismantles the continuity of narrative and individual perceptions, the continuity of marriage—a developmental, future-oriented, happy relationship—does not hold either. Others' views of Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage further illustrate how normative temporality's automatic connection to heterosexual marriage fails to account for the intricacies and, in this case, the realities of marital attachments.

Marital Unhappiness and Sacrifices

The introduction of Septimus, Lucrezia, and their marriage problematizes normative temporality's correlation to heteronormative structures, and Lucrezia's perceptions on acting as a wife further interrogate queer theorists' frequent bond between normative relations and temporality. Lucrezia's thoughts accomplish this through her dismantlement of the positivity and progression usually attached to heterosexual marriage and, thus, its temporality. Edelman, Halberstam, and Muñoz, whether in support or opposition, discuss the negativity assigned to queerness. In turn, a specific type of optimism becomes ascribed to normativity. Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, in their highly influential article "Sex in Public," identify this positivity as such: "the prospects and promises of heterosexual culture still represent the optimism for

optimism, a hope to which people apparently have already pledged their consent—at least in public” (556). “[T]he optimism for optimism” indicates heteronormativity’s assurance of an assurance that it will maintain its dominance, its righteousness, its stability, and its pervasiveness. In other words, this “optimism for optimism” acts as a hope for hope or as a desire for desire for normativity to properly work and continue to do so. Edelman’s concept of reproductive futurism points to the error in this type of reasoning, for this hope is based upon a make-believe future. While not naming the future as fantasy, Muñoz echoes Berlant and Warner’s logic, as he names straight time “an always already flawed temporality” (Muñoz 154). In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Lucrezia challenges the positive, developmental narrative of heterosexual marriage, being wife herself, and, subsequently, she interrogates marital relations’ link to normative time constructs.

When remembering the only moment Lucrezia saw Evans, Septimus’s dead comrade who was killed in the war, briefly at a shop, she thinks of her husband’s friendship with him and his current conversations with the deceased Evans. She notes, “But such things happen to every one. Every one has friends who were killed in the War. Every one gives up something when they marry. She had given up her home” (Woolf 64). The habitual positivity affixed to marriage and, thus, normativity temporality does not coincide with Lucrezia’s marital experience. Marriage does not solely consist of progress and benefits; it is also about loss, sacrifice, and lack. In Lucrezia’s case, she surrendered her native country of Italy to marry Septimus and move to England. Her remark shows that her case is not an exception to marriage but is the rule, for “[e]very one” experienced loss at the hands of the War and of marriage. Marriage is not an always optimistic, advantageous relation and, therefore, breaks normative temporality’s association with marriage. Lucrezia’s forced migration, in particular, spotlights the cultural

assumptions within normative temporality. Normative temporality champions the preservation of familial and national values through the persistence of the family through marriage and then sexual reproduction. As Septimus is from Britain, and Lucrezia is from Italy, they have cultural differences. Their marriage disrupts the “sameness of identity” that normative temporality pursues (Edelman 21). Lucrezia’s thought renders normative time’s involvement in place as a supposition. Halberstam concentrates on the significance of place in temporality, especially alongside queer temporalities, and notes that normativity time aligns with “heteronormative time/space constructs” (10). Part of maintaining heteronormativity and its temporality is the consistency of location to repeatedly produce a consistent, uniform identity. While Septimus and Lucrezia’s marriage follows a heteronormative model, which means it should align with normative timelines, their relation does not conform to this. More importantly, Lucrezia notes that she feels out of place in her marriage, where she should feel in place. The cultural and locational dissonances occurring in their marriage, alongside Lucrezia’s adverse view of it, muddles the linear, developmental, future-oriented traits of normative temporality. Lucrezia’s insight begins to show several assumptions that construct the relationship between normative affiliations and normative temporality.

The Persistent, Slipping Wedding Ring

Lucrezia’s perspective continues to challenge the affirmative nature of marriage and its temporal significance. Through Lucrezia’s moments of narration, marriage not only takes on an incongruous quality but also becomes a degenerative relationship. Shortly after Septimus’s and Lucrezia’s initial appearance, the narrator transitions to Clarissa Dalloway’s consciousness, but before this shift, the narrator discusses the unknown renowned “passing greatness” in the motor car, as “symbol of the state” (Woolf 16). The narrator continues discussing this figure who will

be of interest to classicists, for this reverential body “sift[s] the ruins of time” toward a coming future (16). The anonymity of the royal individual will only be known after time has passed, once “London is a grass-grown path and all those hurrying along the pavement this Wednesday morning are but bones with a few wedding rings mixed up in their dust” (16). In the times to come, wedding rings will be empty fixtures on bones among the dead’s ashes. This material symbol of marriage no longer holds significance in the future, for death rids it of meaning.

On the other hand, the wedding rings persist in the future and outlast human life. This marital icon continues throughout time, despite the deaths of its bearers, yet without human life, what can wedding rings and, thus, marriage mean “mixed up” with dust? On one side, marriage is a timeless entity, that does not submit to death, which shows the unsettling resilience of marriage and its objects. In this scene, marriage exists throughout the future, in a progressive linear development, much like normative temporality. Yet the wedding rings are such rigid figures, outlasting human life. Edelman notes that normative temporality’s purpose lies in reproducing “rigid sameness of [heteronormative] identity” (21). The marriage’s rigidness goes beyond human identity and existence, possessing a disturbing view of the future, where heteronormativity no longer needs humans to survive. Again, without humans, the meaning of the wedding rings is lost. Whether this is an ominous foretelling of normative relations’ and time’s “longevity” or emptiness is unclear (Halberstam 4). In either case, the narrator fashions marriage as an entity so progressive and pervasive, death cannot even destroy it. It is also important to consider that the coming future may be a return to a past, for London is not a fallen metropolis in this scene but returns to a natural state—“London is a grass-grown path.” In effect, this image predicts the erasure of human existence through the reemergence of lost natural

world. Altogether, the wedding rings still survive, outlasting normative temporality's forward-looking advancement and continuance of heteronormative structures, like marriage.

As a result, the wedding rings' progression is not generative or productive as it leads to death without the possibility of a lineage, a child. Without humans, marital symbols are purposeless and no longer hold the "optimism" frequently attached to heteronormativity and its temporality. In contrast to the narrator's telling of marriage and wedding rings' morbid persistence, Lucrezia's wedding ring does not possess a hyper-progressive quality toward death; rather her wedding ring depicts the potential degenerative nature of marriage. When thinking about her dependence on Septimus and his ambivalence toward her, Lucrezia remarks on Septimus's selfishness being a component of his manhood rather than his possible illness, "[f]or he was not ill. Dr. Holmes said there was nothing the matter with him" (23). She then comments on her physicality: "She spread her hand before her. Look! Her wedding ring slipped—she had grown so thin. It was she who suffered—but she had nobody to tell" (23). Lucrezia's shrinking form and her unhappiness and loneliness in marriage culminate in her slipping wedding ring. Lucrezia participates in heterosexual matrimony, and, in accordance with most queer theorists, she and her marriage should correspond to the linear, hopeful progression of normative temporality. Yet this is not so. Lucrezia's body progresses towards an ends of fragility and death and not one of optimism and longevity.

In a similar instance, Lucrezia's wedding band is the focus, and Lucrezia's perspective again speaks of Septimus's potential disorder alongside Dr. Holmes's repeated assertion that "there was nothing the matter with him":

When then had happened—why had he gone, then, why, when she sat by him, did he start, frown at her, move away, and point at her hand, take her hand, look at it terrified?

Was it that she had taken off her wedding ring? “My hand has grown so thin,” she said. “I have put it in my purse,” she said.

He dropped her hand. Their marriage was over, he thought, with agony, with relief. The rope was cut; he mounted; he was free, as it was decreed that he, Septimus, the lord of men, should be free; alone (since his wife had thrown away her wedding ring; since she had left him), he, Septimus, was alone... (66)

At this point, Lucrezia’s hand “has grown so thin” that her ring no longer fits. Her body cannot sustain wearing this symbol of marriage and of her position as wife. The increasingly degenerative quality of her physicality emphasizes the non-progressive nature of their marriage. Her deteriorating appearance does not elicit Septimus’s horrified response; it is the absence of her wedding ring. Although Lucrezia tells him she still has the band, this is no consolation. After Lucrezia’s words, the narrative transitions to Septimus’s view. He correlates Lucrezia’s absent ring to the end of their marriage, which he finds “with agony, with relief.” Lucrezia feels unhappy in their marriage, while Septimus feels confined. With the thought that their marital attachment is “over,” Septimus is “free” and then “alone.” Here, neither individual finds optimism in marriage; however, Septimus achieves brief solace when he thinks their marriage has ended. Ultimately, the site of Lucrezia’s wedding band should represent marriage as a desirable relationship, yet Septimus and Lucrezia’s marriage does not mirror heteronormative values and, in turn, does not continue them. Marriage takes on a degenerative, confining quality for the couple, leading to a disruption of normative temporality. The bond between marriage and normative temporality fails to account for the complexities within heterosexual relations, for a heterosexual relationship does not automatically assume a normative temporal structure.

The Want and Warning of Children

While both Septimus and Lucrezia as individuals and a married couple defy normative temporality's alignment with normative relations, each's attitude toward children problematizes this notion of resistance. Septimus and Lucrezia enact different logics to one's want of children and the other's warning against sexual reproduction. The options for sexual reproduction seem to fall into a binary of either for or against children. Edelman's argument opens with this predicament. He speaks to how abortion rights activist echo a similar argument as those against abortion, for they emulate their language of "fight[ing]" for posterity and thus a future. Edelman poses the question: "What, in this case, would it signify *not* to be 'fighting for the children'?" How could one take the *other* 'side,' when taking any said at all necessarily constrains one to take the side *of*, by virtue of take a side *within*, a political order that returns to the Child as the image of the future it intends?" (Edelman 3). What would it mean to not stand alongside and not participate in this system of the Child, sexual reproduction, and futurity? Edelman frames his entire assertion around this dilemma and champions the "unthinkable" or, in other words, the non-reproductive, radical presentist quality of queer bodies (3). *Mrs. Dalloway* tackles this same question but does so under different contexts and implications. Again, the binary of for or against sexual reproduction persists across the surface of Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage. Any yet, their reasoning for the positions for or against sexual reproduction are more complex than this polarizing thinking allows. The question is not simply how does one not support children? The inquiry becomes how can one support having children in this current world attempting to recover from the Great War?

Septimus's thoughts on his inability to feel proliferate throughout the novel. In one instance when he is thinking about his love of literature and Lucrezia is making hats, Septimus

reflects on his first reading of *Antony and Cleopatra* and ponders Shakespeare's view of sexual reproduction:

How Shakespeare loathed humanity—the putting on of clothes, the getting of children, the sordidity of the mouth and the belly! This was now revealed to Septimus; the message hidden in the beauty of words. The secret signal which one generation passes, under disguise, to the next is loathing, hatred, despair. Dante the same. Aeschylus (translated) the same. There Rezia sat at the table trimming hats. (Woolf 86)

From Septimus's reading of Shakespeare, Dante, and Aeschylus, human life's desire for continuance through sexual reproduction is "loathed" by these paramount literary figures across time and geography. Septimus suddenly realizes this insight, for "the message [was] hidden in the beauty of words." This veiled message expressing Shakespeare's abhorrence to "the getting of children" applies to Dante and Aeschylus, for it is "[t]he secret signal which one's generation passes, under disguise, to the next," telling of "loathing, hatred, despair." From Septimus's observation, the abhorrence toward sexual reproduction and "humanity" in general composes the fabric of literary history. Major authors use aesthetics—"the beauty of words"—to exhibit the grotesqueness human's mundane activities and needs.

Septimus's and these authors' attitudes toward "the getting of children" vehemently resist the civilization's want and need to preserve itself through familial lineages. Septimus himself aligns his own views with those of great canonical writers, as the narrative articulates Septimus's consciousness in this passage. This connection between Septimus and historically significant authors shows the timelessness of this quandary: Should humans support or opposes the continuation of themselves? This question seems to have a self-fulfilling answer since humans and their history persists. Septimus, along with his reading of these authors, interrogates the

ethical implications of continuing life filled with “loathing, hatred, despair.” Sexual reproduction and familial genealogies constitute normative relations and temporality, and their positivism goes unquestioned by normative relations and are highly criticized by queer theorists. Through Septimus’s thoughts, normative relations critique itself, for Septimus participates in a heterosexual marriage and yet does not unquestionably accept the ethical optimism of sexual reproduction.

During Lucrezia’s crafting of hats, Septimus’s thoughts partially respond to Lucrezia’s words and own thoughts, while still holding onto this line of interrogation toward sexual reproduction’s positive ethics. After Lucrezia remarks, “The English are so serious,” while holding Septimus, he thinks, “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” (87). Even the idealities used to place sexual reproduction as a righteous act, such as the “Love between man and woman,” are dismantled as “repulsive” and “filth” to Shakespeare and, in turn, Septimus. The fantasies which configure sexual reproduction’s morality do not redeem the ethical problem of children but intensify this quandary.

Then Septimus turns to Lucrezia’s stance on children and situates her as viewing is as an obligation of marriage. Children are a “must” for Lucrezia because Septimus and she “had been married five years.” Lucrezia’s marital commitment follows the commitment for a child. Septimus thinks back to when he and Lucrezia experienced the sites of London, like “the Tower,” “the Victoria and Albert Museum,” and “the King open Parliament” (87). He also remarks on the shops: “hat shops, dress shops, shops with leather bags in the window, where she would stand staring. But she must have a boy” (87). It seems that their rendezvous as a couple

would often culminate into the question of children. The narrative shifts to Septimus's memory of Lucrezia's questions about a child: "She must have a son like Septimus, she said. But nobody could be like Septimus; so gentle; so serious; so clever. Could she not read Shakespeare too? Was Shakespeare a difficult author? she asked" (87). Again, we see Lucrezia's discussion of children as a "must"—a compulsion, necessity, and requirement. Septimus and Lucrezia's child must not only be "a boy" but also be "a son like Septimus." Yet she then notes that "nobody could be like Septimus." Lucrezia dismantles her own desire for a specific child. This sentiment connects to Edelman's theory of reproductive futurism, as well as Halberstam's time of inheritance and Muñoz's straight time, for the "rigid sameness of identity" creates and sustains heteronormativity and normative temporality (Edelman 21). From Lucrezia's brief considerations of a child that mirrors her husband, this "sameness" ruptures; it is not possible—"nobody could be like Septimus."

Septimus responds to Lucrezia's compulsory want for a child by reiterating the ethical question of sexual reproduction, which first appeared alongside his readings of literary figures. In this instance, he focuses his inquiry on the present state of the world rather than on prominent authors. He internally states, "One cannot bring children into a world like this. One cannot perpetuate suffering, or increase the breed of these lustful animals, who have no lasting emotion, but only whims and vanities, eddying them now this way, now that" (87). Normativity has the facade of the positive political and social ethics by championing and protecting the family, children, history, futurity, and the state. Certainly, normativity's morality excludes bodies marked by marginalized genders, races, sexualities, classes, religions, and ages. As normativity and normative temporality serve to always safeguard the child, its lawfulness assumes legitimacy. Septimus's understanding of society upturns normativity's correlation between

ethical goodness and sexual reproduction, for “bring[ing] children into a world like this” is not a cure for immoralities and pain but feeds them. In this world ravaged by war, death, and decay, adding to the population of “suffering” is the unethical choice. Septimus points to how human genealogy functions to “increase the breed of these lustful animals, who have no lasting emotion, but only whims and vanities.” Human behavior acts upon crude, temporary desires without consideration of the past or foresight into the future. Why should humanity continue under the current conditions of the world and of human conduct? Why sustain a species of such inconsistency, immorality, and anguish? With Septimus’s reasoning, the moral choice to protect the children would be to stop producing children. With more new human bodies comes more suffering, death, and choices predicated on “whims and vanities.” In human’s attempts to establish permanence to their individual, familial, national, and global identities, they only reproduce the ugly temporariness which constitutes human desires and actions.

Lucrezia’s want for children continues: “At tea Rezia told him that Mrs. Filmer’s daughter was expecting a baby. *She* could not grow old and have no children! She was very lonely, she was very unhappy! She cried for the first time since they were married. Far away he heard her sobbing he heard it accurately, he noticed it distinctly; he compared it to a piston thumping. But he felt nothing” (88). Lucrezia considers children an expectation of marriage, which would alleviate her feelings of alienation and misery. There is a time limit on this possibility of children and, thus, this happiness, for her age affects her ability to reproduce and the social acceptability of her reproduction. For Lucrezia, the thought of having children as an old woman is synonymous with having no children at all. This time or age limit for sexual reproduction is a physical limitation but also a socially constructed one. Lucrezia’s desire for children emerges from a clear trajectory of normative temporality: she and Septimus have been

“married five years,” she is a young married woman, and she is unhappy and lonely. In order to fulfill her role as a wife and even young female, she should have children. The narrative of normative temporality follows a progressive development of happiness and hope; thus, sexual reproduction carries a promise of having this optimistic future. This is the future Lucrezia desires, but Septimus cannot offer her this because of the ethical implications of sexual reproduction in this postwar world. Even though he hears her crying “for the first time since they were married,” he cannot sympathize. Instead he measures her sobs against “a piston thumping,” attempting to connect with his wife; “[b]ut he felt nothing” (88). Septimus’s experience of war, destruction, and trauma curtails his ability to emotionally relate to other, but he also knows the dangers of these feelings. As a result, he does not want to continue this danger and “loathing,” and one way to prevent the future of death and suffering is to stop the source of futurity—children.

Soon after the narrative tells the couple’s thoughts on sexual reproduction, the primary normativity of the text—Proportion and Conversion—fully infiltrates into Septimus’s and Lucrezia’s lives, as they are faced with the crisis of being separated. During a visit to Sir William’s office, he privately recommends to Lucrezia that Septimus have “a long rest in bed” in home where he can be constantly “looked after” (94). Lucrezia replies, “Away from her?” and Sir William responds, “Unfortunately, yes; the people we care for most are not good for us when we are ill” (94). He explains that “he never spoke of ‘madness’; he called it not having a sense of proportion... [Septimus] threatened to kill himself. There was no alternative. It was a question of law” (94). Lucrezia dislikes this proposal of living separate from her husband, and “[cries], walking down Harley Street, that she did not like that man” (100). Following Lucrezia’s

statement, the narrator notes that the department store clocks on Harley Street mirror the nature of Proportion and Conversion:

Shredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing, the clocks of Harley Street nibbled at the June day, counselled submission, upheld authority, and pointed out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion, until the mound of time was so far diminished that a commercial clock, suspended above a shop in Oxford Street, announced, genially and fraternally, as if it were a pleasure to Messrs. (100)

Proportion and Conversion is focal normativity of the novel; thus, maintaining the sanity of marriage would appear to constitute part of its operation. And yet, Sir William, an agent of Proportion and Conversion, wants Septimus and Lucrezia to separate for his health, as “There was no alternative. It was a question of law.” Like the “[s]hredding and slicing, dividing and subdividing” of the shop clocks on Harley Street, Sir William does the same for couples who fail to exhibit “his sense of proportion.” The clocks are not only figures of Proportion and Conversion, as they “counselled submission, upheld authority, and pointed out in chorus the supreme advantages of a sense of proportion,” but also are ministers of normative temporality. The clocks require subjection to a centralizing force, just as normative temporality abides by a progressive, optimistic lineage invested maintaining the family and state. The clock’s and Proportion’s powers of division would seem to subvert its main objective of stability through standardization, as repeated social arrangements, like the family, preserve “the rigid sameness of identity” (Edelman 21). Septimus and Lucrezia are not the married couple which Proportion and Conversion desire due to Septimus’s inability to align with Sir William’s and normativity’s image. Subsequently, Septimus and Lucrezia maintaining their marriage resists these standardizing forces. Again, upholding marital relations composes normative temporality and

normativity, but only for certain bodies. Perhaps, when Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage is affirmed with Septimus's suicide, their marriage is not a site of normativity, as the powers of Proportion and Conversion want them to separate. I will return to the dynamics of Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage in relation to Septimus's suicide in my discussion of Clarissa at her party. Altogether, the degenerative nature of Septimus and Lucrezia's relationship may account for normativity's aim to separate them—to dissolve a marriage does not fit Proportion and Conversion's "sense" of it.

CHAPTER IV

THE PROBLEM OF PROGRESS IN CLARISSA AND RICHARD DALLOWAY'S MARRIAGE

While “the most exquisite moment” of one’s life frequently aligns itself alongside major heteronormative devices—having a child and marrying one’s partner—Clarissa Dalloway does not see these events in this manner (Woolf 35). Rather she finds this moment in her kiss with Sally Seton: “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!” (35). The scene of Clarissa and Sally’s kiss—the only explicitly physical and sexual same-sex act in the entire novel—evokes different readings from scholars of gay and lesbian literature, gender and sexuality studies, and queer theory. A contested topic within these approaches is Clarissa’s sexuality, for questions of her potential positioning as a lesbian, a sexually-fluid or bisexual individual, or queer person emerge. This line of thought also leads to questions about Clarissa’s temporal experience of the kiss and its place within her development as an adult. Kate Haffey’s article, “Exquisite Moment and the Temporality of the Kiss in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Hours*,” discusses how many critics of the novel attempt “to assimilate Clarissa’s and Sally’s kiss to a conventional stage in Clarissa’s development toward adulthood” (138). In other words, scholars try to position this kiss as a part of normative development, as an experience that Clarissa undergoes but that does not significantly influence her thoughts, memory, or life. Yet Haffey’s reading opposes the view of the kiss’s conformity by looking to the temporality of the kiss itself, as she argues the kiss’s time “offers strange and unpredictable forms of temporality” (138). She links Eve Sedgwick’s theory of the “queer moment” to Clarissa’s “most exquisite moment” of the kiss to note not only the physical but also temporal queerness of this physical intimacy.

Critics continue to debate the nonessential or radical nature of Clarissa's kiss, which connects to scholarship's focus on Woolf's and her writing's relationship to normativity. The collection of essays, *Virginia Woolf in Context* edited by Bryony Randall and Jane Goldman, engages with contemporary inquiries into Woolf's work and life through various disciplinary lens and addresses the issue of queerness in Woolf's writing in Madelyn Detloff's piece "Woolf and Lesbian Culture: Queering Woolf Queering." Detloff's primary argument asserts that criticism should avoid biographical queer readings of her novels and should instead enact textual analyses of Woolf's fictional queer individuals and events. Detloff locates Woolf's most pervasive and little-noticed queerness in her resistance toward Foucault's concept of biopower, and even marks Dr. Bradshaw and his "divine proportion," as "a good example of an instrument of biopower's insistence on discipline over unruly bodies" (350). In her essay, she also outlines what scholars consider the major queer premises of Woolf's novels:

Mrs. Dalloway, with its much commented-upon kiss between Clarissa and Sally Seton, to *Orlando*, an extended fantasy about Vita Sackville-West as played by a 350-year-old sex-changing noble, to *The Years* and its depiction of Rose's assault by a paedophile, to *Between the Acts*, which features an assortment of non-heteronormative characters who contemplate British history on the eve of WWII—Woolf scrutinizes and critiques conventional gender roles and heteronormative institutions, especially marriage and the paterfamilias-headed household. (348)

Woolf's critique of Western social and cultural norms arises in Detloff's cataloguing of criticism. Detloff states that this list is "suggestive and not exhaustive," but we see that Woolf's primary texts link to her critical probing of "marriage." Why are Woolf's critiques of marriage predominantly associated with characters' same-sex affiliations or heterosexual violence and not

her treatment of marriage itself? Woolf's offering of fictional alternative relations to marriage is certainly a way to undermine the absolutism and normalcy of this state-sanctioned. Yet, Woolf's depiction of marriage in *Mrs. Dalloway*—with the fairly young marriage of Septimus and Lucrezia Smith and the aged marriage of Clarissa and Richard Dalloway—provides a critical valence which simultaneously illustrates how this relationship simultaneously follows and challenges its normative image.

In comparison to Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage, Clarissa and Richard's partnership coincides with normative temporality's structure and values. They maintain a heterosexual marriage, have a daughter, actively participate in the government and uphold its policies, and exhibit aristocratic behavior; all these facets come to create a lineage of progressive, future-oriented development invested in continuing the family unit, the state, and their moral system. On the other hand, Clarissa and Richard's normatively generative narrative has a stopping point or, as I argue, is stalled. They accomplished the major cornerstones of normativity, such as marriage, sexual reproduction, and governmental participation, but what follows this? How are Clarissa and Richard to progress if there is nothing left to achieve in terms of normative temporality? Their internal thoughts and interactions with one another speak to this lack of progressivity, as in these instances, time is stuck, stalled, or suspended.

Scholars often theorize Clarissa's marriage to Richard differently, for most take approaches related to psychoanalysis, politics, gender and sexuality, and economics. Primarily, the debate falls along two sides, as to whether Clarissa's marriage is "pragmatic or dystopic" (Wolfe 145). Elizabeth Abel's *Virginia Woolf and the Fictions of Psychoanalysis*'s discussion on Clarissa's marriage asserts that Clarissa left Bourton, "a pastoral female world spatially and temporally disjunct from marriage," for "the sociopolitical world of (Richard's) London" (31).

Thus, Abel marks marriage as a limiting relationship in terms of one's psychological as well as gender and sexual experience. Similarly, Shirley Neuman's essay, "*Heart of Darkness*, Virginia Woolf, and the Specter of Domination," locates marriage as an oppressive device of patriarchal society but does so by arguing how *Heart of Darkness*'s critique of dominating systems is akin to *Mrs. Dalloway*'s. Lucio Ruotolo's reading opposes those of Abel, Neuman, and others alike, for Ruotolo's "*Mrs. Dalloway*: The Unguarded Moment" sees Richard as the source for her sympathetic portrayal, since he allows her time alone with her thoughts to foster "the privacy of the soul," as Woolf terms it in the novel.

In his book *Bloomsbury, Modernism, and the Reinvention of Intimacy*, Jesse Wolfe's chapter, "Woolf's Sane Woman in the Attic," "aim[s] to synthesize the insights of both critical camps into Woolf's portrayal of the Dalloway marriage, within the context of the reinvention of intimacy" (146). Wolfe attributes this "reinvention of intimacy" to Bloomsbury by showing "how the new century's transformed landscape of intimacy inspired, and was in turn enriched by, their ambivalent reactions to Victorian precedents, and how their ambivalence was one of their defining aesthetic strengths" (2). His chapter on *Mrs. Dalloway* "roughly" applies Freudian logic to the novel and claims that Clarissa's marriage to Richard is "a wise and healthy arrangement" (27). The ultimate reason for this claim is Clarissa's "freedom of choice" (Wolfe 162). The novel parallels Clarissa's marriage to Richard to her imaginary marriage to Peter Walsh through Clarissa's thoughts, which decide that Richard is the better option. Her relationship with Richard, while limiting, "helps her to retain her individual integrity, her grace, her material well-being" (163). Altogether, the novel traces Clarissa's decision process as to why Richard is the better partner for her than Peter, showing Clarissa's autonomy in terms of her choice of husband.

And yet, *Mrs. Dalloway*'s narrative does not trace Clarissa's marriage to Richard or even their engagement. Sally A. Livingston's chapter, "Virginia Woolf's Women, Trapped and Freed," in her study *Marriage, Property, and Women's Narratives*, observes:

Mrs. Dalloway is, quite clearly, a novel about marriage. Woolf presents a continuum of female experience from the yet-to-be married young woman (Elizabeth) to wives (Clarissa, Rezia Warren Smith, Sally Seton), to the widow (Lady Bruton), and, finally, to the unmarried women (Miss Kilman and Ellie Henderson). Woolf drops us into the middle of their lives, and instead of writing a linear marriage plot, we never see the courtships of the married women except in flashbacks that do not so much explain as describe. It is as if she is telling us that women simply find themselves married, married without contemplation or choice. (107)

Livingston highlights the apparent inevitability of marriage for the female characters of the novel, for even if they are single, they are clearly marked as such. More interestingly is the temporal implications of "drop[ping] us into the middle of their lives," which skews the "linear marriage plot." Despite marriage's major presence within the novel, its typical focuses—courtship, engagement, and marriage scenes—are predominantly absent. Marriage persists in the narrative through different forms and consciousnesses, but the text attends to the everydayness and routine of marriage rather than its spectacular moments. In other words, *Mrs. Dalloway* accounts for the daily underpinnings of marriage instead of its grandiose events, which pulls the emphasis away from the usual marriage plot and instead enacts marriage through characters' present perceptions and their memories, transpiring across a single day's time.

The daily treatment of marriage applies to Clarissa and Richard's coupling as well and, thus, accounts for the suspended nature of their relationship. Without noting traditional events

which signify marriage, the overall “linear marriage plot” is subsumed by Clarissa’s and Richard’s thoughts and interactions within one another within the period of a day. In this way, the narrative strips marriage of its conventional significance, and yet as Livingston states, “*Mrs. Dalloway* is, quite clearly, a novel about marriage,” but in a habitual, mundane manner rather than a dramatic, imposing one. Turning to normative temporality and its relationship to Clarissa and Richard’s marriage offers another critical lens to approach their pairing to illustrate the limitations of straight time’s constitution and the marriage narrative itself. Woolf’s portrayal of a thirty-year-old marriage adds complexity to normative temporality’s construction and considerations, for Clarissa and Richard have essentially completed the progressive lineage of straight time. With this, how does Clarissa’s and Richard’s experience as married individuals and as a married couple progress further in time?

Where to Progress from Here?: Clarissa’s Delayed Temporality

Running errands around London, Clarissa stops by a store to purchase a book for Evelyn Whitbread who is currently in a nursing home. In the shop, Clarissa muses about how she wishes “that indescribably dried-up little woman” would appear “a moment cordial” at her appearance (Woolf 10). This prompts her to note how she predominantly does acts for others, while “those people like Richard [...] did things for themselves” (10). While Clarissa wishes she was and had lived in this manner—“Oh if she could have had her life over again!”—she moves to another thought, which takes her to an imaginary, alternative life that she wish she would have pursued (10). If she had this opportunity to recreate her life, she would be like Lady Bexborough, for she is “the woman she admired most, Lady Bexborough, opening the bazaar” (9). Clarissa lists qualities of Lady Bexborough’s “very dignified, very sincere” appearance and demeanor and describes herself as an almost-complete contrast to her model: “Instead of which she had a

narrow pea-stick figure; a ridiculous little face, beaked like a bird's. That she held herself well was true; and had nice hands and feet; and dressed well, considering that she spent little" (10).

Following this, Clarissa considers the state of her present body, how she feels situated in society and how society situates her. This recognition revolves around her role as a wife, mother, and older woman, as someone who no longer knows how to develop in these normative spaces:

But often now this body she wore (she stopped to look at a Dutch picture), this body, with all its capacities, seemed nothing—nothing at all. She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible, unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having children now, but only this 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. (10)

Stopped at Bond Street viewing a Dutch picture, Clarissa divides herself; she is “not even Clarissa any more” but is “Mrs. Richard Dalloway.” Before this dissection occurs, Clarissa sees “this body she wore,” as “nothing,” feeling “invisible, unseen; unknown.” This “sense” of herself may partly result from comparing herself to her conception of Lady Bexborough. She perceives herself as “invisible, unseen; unknown” because there “is no more marrying, no more having children now.” Clarissa has attained marriage and a child, yet the inability to do these acts again, due to their single nature (her marriage to Richard) or her age (childbirth), makes her imperceptible, she believes, to others. Even though she recognizes that her body still possesses “all its capabilities,” it does not redeem her body, as a physical and social individual who is already married and already a mother and who cannot accomplish these events again. Clarissa’s productivity is inextricable from normative temporality’s lineage-maintaining expectations. She is and has been married and has a daughter; how can she continue to contribute?

There is still one option for her—“only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street.” While this progression is not monumental in comparison to marriage and sexual reproduction, it is still progress, “solemn” as it might be. This is a delayed version of progression, for which normative temporality makes no room. At the same time, straight time signifies a continuous, overall progressive development from marrying to having children to passing values of the state and normative relations to their offspring. Again, Clarissa has completed these milestones of normative temporality, and where that leaves her is within a stalled temporal space of being only one thing—“Mrs. Richard Dalloway”—with the “solemn progress” of the rest of the street. This “solemn progress” composes daily time which occurs between courtship, wedding, and childbirth. For Clarissa’s current moment, this slow, reflective progress comes after her achievements of normative temporality. This progress is also collective; she follows “this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street.” The unified communal aspect of this progress aligns with normative temporality’s goal of “the rigid sameness of identity” through reproducing and continuing the same state-governed systems. Even “this astonishing and rather solemn progress” somewhat aligns with normative values, for these bodies are most likely working, shopping, and participating in the nation’s prosperity in some way. Contemporary theories of straight time predominantly do not account for the daily progress that must take place to sustain itself or rarely consider what follows an individual’s completion of normative temporality’s acts. Clarissa’s questions asking what follows accomplishing straight time’s principles dismantle assumptions which construct normative temporality’s constitution.

Of course, straight time appears to be “complete” for Clarissa but is an always on-going process, which has no end. Its continuing depends upon individuals executing its major events of

normative relations. Once these actions are finished, it is unclear where Clarissa belongs in normativity's narrative. She feels this delayed sense of progression in the "nothing"-ness of her capable body through both visual ("invisible") and mental ("unknown") perceptions. Whether Clarissa's affective response to her and others' "solemn progress" while walking down Bond Street is a unique or habitual occurrence is indeterminable. In either case, Clarissa's name of "Mrs. Richard Dalloway" resonates with her as her total being in this moment of daily, slow progression. Normative temporality is more than the grand moments of weddings and childbirths, but also relies on the delayed progress of each day. Clarissa's position as an older wife and mother questions her place within straight time, for she finished the major events of progression. And yet this does not close off her sense of progress but delays it, while also emphasizing its communal quality. Normative temporality does not offer space for Clarissa to continue further but only renders her entire being as "Mrs. Richard Dalloway"—restricting her to one narrative. Even with this, the problem of progress after marriage and sexual reproduction still lingers with Clarissa's temporal experience. She is "Mrs. Richard Dalloway"—an agent of straight time—but where to continue from this point is uncertain.

The Nun, Child, and Virgin: Clarissa at Home

Throughout *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa navigates the urban space of London as well as her own home while her attendants prepare for her party. In these passages transpiring in her domestic space, the narrator's descriptions of Clarissa challenge her position as a wife, mother, and older woman. Instead, labels of nun, child, and virgin define Clarissa's presence at home. These identities operate on different temporal registers than those of matrimony and motherhood. Thus, the lineage-making, future-oriented normative time of marriage and sexual reproduction ruptures alongside these titles, for the absence of sex constitutes these titles either due to religious,

youth, or social reasons. This absence of sex emerges more intensely when applied to Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway, a married individual with a daughter.

Returning home from her errands in London, Clarissa shares a brief exchange with Lucy, one of her attendants, about Lady Bruton's lunch invite to Richard, which was not extended to Clarissa herself. While thinking about Lady Bruton's lunch gathering and its inaccessibility, she goes to the upper level of the house to her room, and the narrator chronicles Clarissa's movements with various titles which do not correspond to her own labels of wife and mother:

Like a nun withdrawing, or a child exploring a tower, she went upstairs, paused at the window, came to the bathroom. [...] The sheets were clean, tight stretched in a broad white band from side to side. Narrower and narrower would her bed be. [...] So the room was an attic; the bed narrow; and lying there reading, for she slept badly, she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet. (30)

The narrator characterizes Clarissa's movement of the stairs as a "nun" and a "child" and records her progress throughout the room, marking stopping points: "paused at the window, came to the bathroom." We then see Clarissa's "attic" room, with "narrow" bed, on which "she slept badly." Before her bedroom, the narrator notes the cleanliness of the sheets "tight stretched in a broad white band from side to side" of her bed," and the imagery of sheets appears again shortly after: "she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet." The narrator labels Clarissa, as she navigates her home and bedroom, a nun, child, and virgin. Each of these classifications carry specific connotations. While these figures are not specifically characterized, they all possess a significant common denominator—the absence of sex.

Yet, this is not the case for Clarissa herself; she has a daughter Elizabeth and, consequently, sexually reproduced. Her body is not completely sexless, as Clarissa has had

heterosexual sex. Through her sexual reproduction, Clarissa has participated in the lineage-creating, future-oriented temporality of heterosexuality. At the same time, the narrator uses oppositional terms to this normative temporality to situate Clarissa in her home and bedroom. A nun, child, and virgin are celibate figures who are expected not to engage in heterosexual or sexual activity at all. A nun's celibacy connects to her religious devotion, and this could also be said of virginity as well. At the same time, a nun's absence of sexual activity is expected to last the entire remainder of her life; whereas, a virgin is expected to be temporarily sexless. In terms of heteronormativity, marriage strips a virgin of their virginity in order to reproduce. A child also occupies this temporary celibate space as well, since the same expectation of the virgin applies, for marriage is the appropriate time and relationship to engage in heterosexual activity in order to have children. With the exception of a nun, normativity expects a child and virgin to have sex but only at the socially accepted time for matrimony.

Returning to straight time's investment and dependence upon sexual reproduction, these figures of sexual absence act as a temporal regression or stasis. How can normative temporality continue without sexual reproduction happening? Certainly, a virgin and child participate in normative temporality, as they are part of the genealogy and precursors to normativity's continuance. How can Clarissa be like a nun, child, and virgin, when her body is not virginal? More significantly, Clarissa obtains this virginal sense of herself through childbirth: "she could not dispel a virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet." Childbirth—proof of sexual intercourse—sustains Clarissa's "virginity," which encompasses her "like a sheet." She has a daughter and is virgin, placing two opposing states as one and as contingent upon one another. From the text's language, Clarissa's virginity is not temporary due to her reproductive sex act, which is the very thing that undermines one's ability to be a virgin.

Clarissa's virginal essence outlasts its temporal limits, for it continues to exist after the consummation of her marriage to Richard.

With normative temporality's emphasis on continuance, sexual reproduction is a clear site of progression, and the state of the virgin is short-lived because heterosexual sex is needed to maintain straight time and heteronormativity overall. Edelman theorizes this as reproductive futurism, Halberstam as the time of inheritance, and Muñoz as "an autonaturalizing temporality" called straight time (Muñoz 22). The persistent enactment of sexual reproduction is one of the focal components to normative temporality's composition. Clarissa's dissolved boundaries between virginity and motherhood problematize "the rigid sameness of identity" and "autonaturalizing" construction of straight time because progress is put to question (Edelman 21). Clarissa is a virgin and mother, not a virgin then a mother. Rather this narrative inverts itself, as Clarissa's specific "virginity" is "preserved through childbirth"; thus, sexual reproduction no longer follows virginity but happens concurrently. Moving back to virginity to motherhood or simultaneously occupying these two identities regresses and stalls developmental movement. Normative temporality has a clear narrative for female individuals: child to virgin to wife to mother. For Clarissa, virginity extends passes its conventional temporal limits and intensifies itself through childbirth.

The titles of a nun, child, and virgin culminate together to emphasize Clarissa's sexless life, and the mapping of her bedroom speaks to this as well. She rests in an "attic" bedroom, which is tangential to the main home, on a "narrow bed" alone. Clarissa and Richard sleep in separate bedrooms. The narrator notes that "Richard insisted, after her illness, that she must sleep undisturbed" (Woolf 30). Clarissa's illness partially attributes to the lack of heterosexual physical intimacy between them. Along with this, Clarissa's affinity of "a virginity preserved

through childbirth” wrapped around her “like a sheet” speaks to the sexless aspect of their marriage. At the same time, Richard and Clarissa have been married several decades; thus, their ability to have more children is unlikely. The age of the married couple affects normative temporality’s expectations of them, and this recognition of age received little attention as it is subsumed by lineage-creating aspect of straight time. In addition, the space in which the narrator marks Clarissa as a nun, child, and virgin is within her home, a place of upheld for its female domesticity and family. Yet this location traditionally associated with normative values comes to have this assumption undone due to Clarissa’s positions as a virgin and mother. In the novel’s context, the home is no longer a space focused around progressive development but is a place where Clarissa’s virginity and motherhood collide and coexist. The problem of progression with Clarissa’s dual identities results from the visibility of heterosexual sex acts as well as their lack. Edelman remarks on heteronormativity’s pervasive power to render the act of reproductive sex invisible, and notes that the child “whose mere possibility is enough to spirit away the naked truth of heterosexual sex” enacts the unseen quality of sex within normative temporality (13). Clarissa’s virginal and maternal status call attention to the absence and presence of sex within her marriage; thus, demystifying reproductive sex acts within straight time. This also serves to destabilize normative temporality’s investment in progress through sexual reproduction without recognition of the sex act itself. Clarissa’s simultaneous positioning as a virgin and mother challenge the developmental time of sexual reproduction and uncover the narrative of normativity—from child to virgin to wife to mother—through the hypervisibility of sex through its enactment and absence.

Changing Optimisms: Richard's Silent Affection

Mrs. Dalloway chronicles Richard's consciousness in a few instances throughout the narrative, and yet the insights into these thoughts, however brief, appear to align with the optimistic heterosexuality within normative temporality. Richard's political and aristocratic affiliations and emphasis on tradition make him a prime candidate as an agent of normativity, like Dr. Holmes and Sir William. Richard's conservatism and loyalty to the state do not extend into a standardizing force such as Proportion and Conversion. His views on appropriateness are quite strict. For instance, when Peter Walsh thinks of Clarissa and Richard interacting at Bourton, he remembers a moment, which speaks to Richard disapproval of non-traditional relationalities: "Seriously and solemnly Richard Dalloway got on his hind legs and said that no decent man ought to read Shakespeare's sonnets because it was like listening to keyholes" (73). At the same time, Richard's considerations of happiness complicate normativity's conception of optimism and its ties to straight time. Richard's reserved demeanor and traditional attitudes toward appropriateness should align him with normativity's optimistic, progressive, state-invested temporality. Richard's connection to normative temporality is not seamless as his failure to express his love to Clarissa carries temporal implications beyond the scope of straight time.

After having lunch with Lady Bruton and briefly shopping with Hugh Whitebread, Richard begins to make the journey home, with a bouquet of white and red roses, to tell Clarissa that he loves her. As he passes Buckingham Palace, he muses about the unsatisfying memorial to Queer Victoria; however, "he liked being ruled by the descendant of Horsa" (114). Richard's appreciation for England and its heritage comes through his insights, but the rest of this passage notes the ways in which Richard is invested in the past and its continuance: "[H]e liked

continuity; and the sense of handing on the traditions of the past” (114). He reflects on his own circumstances and names them as a “miracle” while, “walking to his house in Westminster to tell Clarissa that he loved her. Happiness is this, he thought” (114). Here happiness marks the enduring preservation of the past through inheritance, which fashions a sense of “continuity.” Happiness is also voicing his love for Clarissa to her. When he arrives home, he hands the flower to his wife, and Clarissa takes them and places them in a vase. In so doing, Richard thinks, “She understood; she understood without his speaking; his Clarissa” (115). He asks Clarissa, “But let us sit down for five minutes,” and what follows is not what Richard is hoping to accomplish (115). They discuss Lady Bruton’s lunch and Miss Kilman, but after their mundane exchanges, Richard internally considers, “(But he could not tell her he loved her. He held her hand. Happiness is this, he thought.),” and the narrator, intertwined with Richard’s consciousness, repeats, “He had not said, ‘I love you’; but he held her hand. Happiness is this, is this he thought” (116).

Richard’s view of happiness while walking through London focalizes around the creation, sustainment, and stability of national genealogies alongside his anticipation to verbalize his love for Clarissa. His perspective of optimism changes its constitution, once Clarissa and he interact with one another. Richard is not able to turn their talk of lunch, parties, and Miss Kilman to his aim of telling her “I love you.” Normative temporality upholds an optimism for heterosexuality, sexual reproduction, the family, and the state, and this optimism adheres to these strict conditions. Edelman addresses the “hopeless optimism” of reproductive futurism, as futurity portrays itself as “a reality guaranteed, not threatened, by time, sustained by the certainty that a ‘course of events’ is bound to continue its course in due course long after we are gone” (Edelman 35, 34). Normative temporality ties futurity and optimism together, for the future is a

space of positive hope for heteronormativity to continue and proliferate. In order to accomplish this continual optimism, the optimism must be consistent, rigid, and repeated.

We see Richard's concept of happiness or optimism alter due to the situation. He finds happiness in the posterity of the nation and his act of verbalizing his love for Clarissa. The constitution of happiness soon changes, as his conditions change. His happiness relocates to physical intimacy—"he held her hand"—and does not attempt verbal intimacy. The narrative of optimism is not singular or linear for Richard, despite his hyper-normative roles of being a heterosexual husband, father, aristocrat, and politician. With the modification of optimism's narrative, it cannot continue in the same way, as it is variant and situational. The normative temporality's aims appear to align with optimism, as it seems to be "a reality guaranteed," but there is no guarantee. Richard was going to tell Clarissa "I love you," but this statement went unspoken. The changes to what constitutes optimism disrupts the linear temporality which it is attempting to sustain; thus, optimism is only stable within the present moment. While normative temporality depicts optimism "not threatened, by time," the future and the changes that follow progressing into time undo optimism's sameness and, in turn, its lineage-creating capabilities.

While Richard's feelings were not explicitly vocalized, Clarissa understands his method of communication. After he departs for a committee meeting, Clarissa remarks on individual privacy of marriage:

And there is a dignity in people; a solitude; even between husband and wife a gulf; and that one must respect, thought Clarissa, watching him open the door; for one would not part with it oneself, or take it, against his will, from one's husband, without losing one's independence, one's self-respect—something, after all, priceless. (Woolf 117)

Perhaps, Richard's silence is his method of maintaining his "solitude" or his "privacy of the soul." Whether this is the case or not, Clarissa understands this distance and finds it an essential facet to marital relations. A "gulf" between husband and wife partially constitutes individual and marital "dignity" for Clarissa. The gap between Richard's love for Clarissa and his spoken "I love you" to her is not a hollow meaningless space but a space of reciprocal understanding and affirmation between Clarissa and Richard. The discontinuity of Richard's voice and feelings interrupts optimism's promise within normative temporality but do not hinder their marriage. These injunctions between optimism and normative temporality do not dissolve marriages into negative relationships. This dissonance shows the limitations of optimism and normative temporality on images of marital relationality. There are other possibilities outside this current theorization of straight time's optimism, for optimism does not have to be fixed and repeated in the same manner to be positive and hopeful.

Affirmed Marriages and Their Divergent Temporalities

The ending scenes of Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage and Clarissa and Richard's marriage should not be reduced to pure critiques of marriage as an institution and relationship. The same should be said of the entire novel as well. *Mrs. Dalloway* certainly critiques marriage but goes beyond solely scrutinizing this partnership. The novel affirms the marriages between Septimus and Lucrezia and between Clarissa and Richard, yet the ways in which each connection is affirmed differs and spotlights divergent temporalities simultaneously within and outside the bounds of straight time.

Shortly before Septimus commits suicide, Lucrezia and he share an intimate, joyful moment, while Lucrezia crafts hats and Septimus models them. As Septimus talks about the hats, Lucrezia thinks, "For the first time in days he was speaking as he used to do!," and continues,

“Not for weeks had they laughed like this together, poking fun privately like married people. What she meant was that if Mrs. Filmer had come in, or Mrs. Peters or anybody they would not have understood what she and Septimus were laughing at” (139-40). This rare occasion of laughter and comfort possesses an intimacy of understanding, for only Septimus and Lucrezia, husband and wife, knew what was transpiring in the moment. While trying on Mrs. Peters’s hat, Lucrezia remarks, “But I must look so queer!” but her tone soon changes when she hears a knock on the door, which may mean Sir William has arrived. Their conversation turns to Sir William’s desire to separate them. Lucrezia repeats throughout the passage that “Even if they took him, she said, she would go with him. They could not separate them against their wills, she said,” and “No one could separate them, she said” (144-45). Dr. Holmes calls, and while Lucrezia tries to prevent him from seeing Septimus, he pushes her aside. Septimus hears Dr. Holmes approaching, settles at the window, and thinks, “It was their idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia’s (for she was with him). Holmes and Bradshaw like that sort of thing” (146). The moment Dr. Holmes enters, Septimus cries, “I’ll give it you!” to the agent of Proportion and Conversion (146). Lucrezia does not lose her composure, like Dr. Holmes and Mrs. Filmer; instead she “ran to the window, she saw; she understood” (146). She soon starts to doze, and while Mrs. Filmer fans and holds her, she thinks, “Married people ought to be together, [...] But they must do as the doctor said” (147).

According to the physicians of Proportion and Conversion, Septimus and Lucrezia should separate in order for Septimus to receive the “proper” care. This idea of marital separation directly contrasts with the aims of normative temporality, for the norm to maintain its status as such longevity and sustainability of marriage is needed. Yet, agents of the primary normalizing force of the novel demand that Septimus and Lucrezia separate, that husband and wife no longer remain so. Septimus and Lucrezia refuse this command and stay together—“No one could

separate them.” Continuing together as a married couple directly opposes the demands of the normativity. On the other hand, not separating aligns with normative temporality’s values of longevity and perseverance, which is vitally central to its structure and power. Septimus and Lucrezia’s will to stay together as a partnership simultaneously resists and follows standards of straight time. Breaking up a marriage would rupture the progressive, future-oriented narrative of normative temporality. Remaining a couple puts normativity at risk, for their attitudes and behaviors should not be spread, despite their heterosexuality, marriage, and devotion to one another. Normative temporality does not automatically include heterosexual individuals or married couples; it determines the type of heterosexuality, marriage, sexual reproduction, and family can participate and proliferate normative temporality. Thus, normative relationality does not necessarily assume a normative time structure.

In the case of Septimus and Lucrezia, maintaining their relationship and reaching an intimate understanding of one another—“[Lucrezia] saw the large outline of his body standing dark against the window. So that was Dr. Holmes”—unsettles the standard while simultaneously participating and sustaining a normative standard (147). This understanding comes through Septimus’s suicide, physically ending their attachment. At the same time, Septimus’s death is Sir William’s and Dr. Holmes’s “idea of tragedy, not his or Rezia’s (for she was with him)” (146). Here, Septimus’s end is a “tragedy” in the eyes of normativity’s agents and not for himself or Lucrezia. As queer bodies are typically associated with death due to their non-reproductive quality, Septimus’s suicide can be considered a queer act. Septimus and Lucrezia’s childless marriage coincides with the queerness’s non-reproductive quality. Again, his death is not a “tragedy” to Septimus and Lucrezia—it is defiance. Septimus willingly ends his life not *for* normativity but *in spite* of it. Lucrezia comes to recognize Septimus’s views only after this death.

Thus, Septimus's passing is not an entire closing-off of life; rather his capacity to relate persists after his physical body's ending. Here, queerness is not limited to corporeal understandings of life, but endures beyond this. Septimus's suicide is the ultimate disruption of normative temporality through a fatality that ends in one realm and endures in another. Septimus and Lucrezia obtain an intimacy through death, which lives outside the bounds of normativity. While the novel affirms Septimus and Lucrezia's marriage, their relationship should not be regarded as one that results in reinforcement of the normative; rather their marriage illustrates the complex tensions within normative temporality and is assumed correlation to heterosexual marriage and its longevity.

Septimus's death is a moment of connection not only for him and Lucrezia but also for Clarissa and him and for Clarissa and Richard. While at Clarissa's party, Lady Bradshaw tells Clarissa of Septimus's suicide: "[J]ust as we were starting, my husband was called up on the telephone, a very sad case. A young man (that is what Sir William is telling Mr. Dalloway) had killed himself. He had been in the army" (179). In response, Clarissa withdraws from the party and considers why the Bradshaws should discuss death at her party, why Septimus took his own life, and why must "intolerable men" like Sir William exist (180). While deeply empathizing Septimus's life, suffering, and reasons, Clarissa turns her thoughts to Richard, their marriage, and temporality:

It was due to Richard; she had never been so happy. Nothing could be slow enough; nothing last too long. No pleasure could equal, she thought, straightening the chairs, pushing in one book on the shelf, this having done with the triumphs of youth, lost herself in the process of living, to find it, with a shock of delight, as the sun rose, as the day sank. (181).

Clarissa's connection to Septimus and his death affirms her relationship with Richard. She finds her happiness in marriage and her life, after sincerely considering Septimus's options, pressures, and dignity, for she knew Proportion and Conversion as Sir William worked to "[force] his soul" to death (180). To Clarissa, Septimus "had flung it away," but as a method of "defiance," "an attempt to communicate," and "an embrace in death" (180). In the face of this young man's resistant demise, Clarissa asserts her marital connection to Richard, declaring the optimism of their relation. However, the way in which Clarissa and Richard's marriage is affirmed troubles the normative promise of marriage. The novel's ending marks marriage's affirmation as contingent upon the death of a heterosexual, married veteran of the Great War. How promising can a marriage be if Clarissa's realization of her happiness with Richard transpires through a young man's suicide? In other words, how optimistic can a marriage affirmed by death be? This partially seems to suggest that one normative temporality's life requires another normative temporality's death. Similar to Septimus and Lucrezia's affirmed marriage in the face of death, conflicting tensions emerge within the ending scenes of these marriages that coincide and go beyond the bounds of normative temporality.

In the end, Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* affirms these marriages, but the cost and implications of these affirmations is still unclear. Whether these marriages conclude in a positive or negative fashion, resist or align with straight time, or enact or reject a temporal queerness are inquiries which arise from their divergent temporalities. The complexity and ambiguity of matrimony persists throughout the novel, especially in its conclusion, and in turn, extends the bounds of normative temporality's limited considerations. Ultimately, these marriages show that this state-sanctioned relationship does not abide by one singular genealogy. Instead, normative relations possess of queer and bizarre behaviors, whether momentary or lengthy. These periods of non-

normative acts influence their experience of time and time's construction of their connection. Normative temporality's constitution may be established by queer theorists, but this constitution does not contain or account for the multiplicity of normativities or normative relations' variabilities. To return to the beginning, Edelman's opening epigram of Woolf's words, which were written fifteen years after *Mrs. Dalloway*'s publication, "we live without a future: That's what's queer," speaks to marriage's uncertain future within *Mrs. Dalloway*. Marriages still have a future, but the nature, type, or structure of this future goes unspoken, like Richard's affection, and unknown, like Clarissa's body solemnly progressing up Bond Street.

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