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Waiting For A Queer Change: Gender Identity Through Performative Waiting and the Boudoir Chronotope in *Call Me By Your Name*

Gregory R. Clarke

Bachelor of Education

**This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts Honours**

**School of Arts and Humanities
Edith Cowan University**

2019

ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses André Aciman's novel, *Call Me By Your Name* (2007), in light of its portrayal of a nineteen-eighties gay relationship that is not entirely defined by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Rather than the abjection associated with illness and death, I focus on the narrative's evocation of pleasure and love for its protagonists, Elio and Oliver, who do not identify as exclusively gay. My argument focuses on Elio exemplifying *and* undermining Roland Barthes' trope of the lover-who-waits as historically 'feminine' in *A Lover's Discourse*. In doing so, I demonstrate how Barthes's work prefigures Judith Butler's gender performativity theory.

First, I trace performativity theory to its origins with J. L. Austin's theory of speech acts, considering its criticisms and developments. I then apply this to Aciman's protagonist, Elio, in the novel to argue that his waiting is a performative act that is 'doing' a gender. I analyse how the protagonist's waiting shifts, becoming a sexual enticement that is analogous to the historical space and literary trope of the boudoir. Finally, I draw upon Michel Foucault's work and the HIV/AIDS pandemic of the nineteen-eighties epoch to align the contextual origins of the French eighteenth century boudoir, and its English developments, to the historical setting of Aciman's novel. I consider the pathologisation of the female body during the eighteenth century and how that parallels the pathologisation of the queer body in the late twentieth century. I argue that the boudoir actually operates, both historically and in the novel, according to Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of chronotope.

My aim is not to demonstrate how Elio is 'female' or 'male' as he 'waits' in the 'boudoir', but how his identity exists outside the binary of male/female and straight/gay. I argue that Elio is a queer identity that aligns to Butler's performativity theory as he continually is 'doing' and 'undoing' gender. I conclude by reflecting how Aciman's novel refreshes queer literature, avoiding perpetuated 'coming out' narratives and HIV/AIDS themes: the novel ceases the wait for a literary queer change.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

i.   incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

ii.   contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

iii.   contain any defamatory material.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I want to acknowledge Associate Professor Susan Ash for her tireless commitment and support. It was her undergraduate lectures that formed the foundation for my literary interests and pursuit of knowledge. Without her support, not only would this body of work not exist, I would not have felt supported to pursue experiences that Susan 'opened the door' to. She has been a constant flow of inspiration and wisdom, always challenging me to read wider and pursue diverse philosophical avenues. Susan's empathetic care has not only supported me through this project: she has made it enjoyable.

Secondly, I wish to acknowledge my ever-supporting partner, Mathew. Without his continual care, support, and love, this project would not have eventuated.

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PREFACE

'Barthes is stimulated by thought as an onlooker is stimulated by a "spot of flesh" at the beaches. Knowing he may stare but not touch, speculating since he cannot possess. To the question "what would it be like to touch X's body?" the mind invariably asks "what is the meaning of this desire?" … As a result, the observer stares because he hopes to unlock the meaning of his desire.'[1]

'It's not love that excites me as a writer, it's wanting. We want to want other people. Sometimes, you see somebody's shoulders and you want to touch it. You don't know what it is but you want to kiss it.'[2]

Like many, I came to Aciman's novel *Call Me By Your Name* from the 2017 film by Luca Guadagnino. Forced along to the film by my partner, Mathew, I was not overly excited about viewing another queer narrative set in the nineteen-eighties epoch. I thought I knew what was coming: young, gay lovers dealing with a 'coming out' struggle that concludes with a severe dose of HIV/AIDS. I have viewed and read many queer narratives that centre on the HIV/AIDS pandemic of the nineteen-eighties. Personally, such narratives continue to perpetuate a framework that any gay identity within these times had contact with the disease, with dying friends, dying partners, and dying families. Countless publications and media outlets prejudicially positioned HIV/AIDS as the 'gay cancer' with descriptions of slow, painful, and undignified deaths.[3] It is a significant part of shaping any queer identity, to learn and respect the history, particularly those fighting for equal rights during arguably the most dangerous, derogatory epoch of queer history. I deeply appreciate those voices and I am not detracting from them. But I found myself asking: is this the *only* narrative?

As a queer person who has had their fair dealing of 'interpellations' along the way, I also feel it is paramount to grow past such narratives: respect the history, never forget it, but *use* it as a lesson to develop beyond the era of pathologisation and stigma. For me, watching a movie that I knew featured a gay/queer couple in the HIV/AIDS epoch was becoming predictable and wearisome. This is not what this history should be. It ought to function as an insightful remembrance, not an

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[1] Andrè Aciman, "Deliberating Barthes," *Social Text*, no. 11 (1984): 111.

[2] Andrè Aciman, "Writer Andre Aciman Describes Why Desire Trumps Love, Writing a Sequel to 'Call Me By Your Name' and What Makes Fiction Art," interview by Anushree Majumdar, 2019, https://indianexpress.com/article/express-sunday-eye/we-invent-the-language-write-andre-aciman-5575227/.

[3] Colin Clews, *Gay in the 80s: From Fighting for Our Rights to Fighting for Our Lives* (Leicestershire, England: Troubador Publishing, 2017), 232-35.

overbearing genre. What would black narratives be if they only existed within slavery? We need diverse narratives set within the nineteen-eighties to explore queer identities and families that are outside of HIV/AIDS.

I left the breezy Perth Rooftop movie theatre entirely mistaken. What I witnessed was a narrative centring on two queer characters that full-heartedly desired each other. There were no explicit references to HIV/AIDS, no public shaming, or 'coming out' scene. Rather, the 'coming out' scene was replaced with a refreshingly honest, tear-jerking conversation with the young protagonist's father, who advises him to follow his heart. This narrative was different: there was something about these characters that intrigued me. I began to question the representation of queer identities living safe, sexual relationships within the epoch of nineteen-eighties without having been categorised in relation to HIV/AIDS. Where were the representation of queer identities that were not entirely defined by this disease? Was the lack of these generic conventions of HIV/AIDS and 'coming out' narratives just an omission from the film writer, James Ivory?

Naturally, I turned to the novel thinking: 'how have I not read this yet?'. I had not even heard of the novel. Written in 2007, the novel was ten years old before the film was released.[4] It appeared to have flown under my radar, like many others, perhaps because the author himself is not (overtly) queer. Through first person limited narrative, I was able to gain insight of Elio's mind and intimately experience his feelings and thoughts. The reader can empathise with the world of Elio and Oliver and live their desires, witnessing their relationship develop and fracture, almost simultaneously. I was drawn to their carefree desire, particularly given the chronology of the narrative. The pair just loved.

Furthermore, Elio desires both Oliver and a young woman, Marzia, in the narrative. I was ecstatic to experience a queer character on a spectrum of sexuality, rather than adhering to a sexuality binary. What has been written about for decades was now starting to form in a popular literature. Queer identities are being represented outside the binary of straight/gay. I reflected on Judith Butler's theories from my undergraduate degree and how Aciman's novel adhered to Butler's aim to 'relax the coercive hold of norms on gendered life…for the purpose of living a more livable life'.[5] Queer discourse distorts the binary of male/female gender and straight/gay sexuality: that is, it queers it. I began to wonder how Elio queered his gender through performative acts. I

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[4] Luca Guadagnino, "Call Me By Your Name," (Sony Pictures Classics, 2017).
[5] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015/2018), 33.

investigated how Aciman's protagonist proceeds from gender performatives of 'male', to 'female', and finally to a 'queer' identity. This led to writing an academic paper titled '*Boys Will Be Boys, Until They Sleep With One: A Textual Analysis of Gender Performativity within the Novel 'Call Me By Your Name'*', which I presented at the *International Journal of Arts and Sciences' (IJAS)* academic conference in Freiburg, Germany 2018, and at the *International Conference on Gender Studies* at Cambridge University, England 2018.

Initially I explored ideas associated with gender performativity within the novel, but I also hoped to accomplish more than a simple analysis of gender 'doing'. My research led to considering Roland Barthes trope of 'waiting' and the role of the lover-who-waits for their desired. I began to consider how such a role functions as a performative identity, exploring how the role manifests in the novel through Bakhtin's concept of chronotopes. I then examined how the chronotope of the 'boudoir' might illuminate how Elio uses his bedroom in that process of waiting. This research has extended my original gender 'doing' conclusions and has tied closer to my original interest in the text: exploring how these queer identities function diversely to perpetuated narratives during the debilitating epoch of HIV/AIDS.

In the first chapter I map the progress of J. L. Austin's original performativity theory, within the realm of speech-acts. I consider how Judith Butler has developed Austin's theories within the context of gender and sexuality. I then move to Barthes's fragments of desire where he positions the trope of the lover-who-waits as historically 'feminine', which I apply Butler's performativity theories to understand how Aciman's protagonist 'does' a feminine gender. Finally, I elaborate on Bakhtin's theories of literary chronotopes by considering how his boudoir connotations of the *salon/parlour* chronotope function within the novel, shifting the protagonist's waiting into erotic enticement.

Chapter One: Theories of Performativity & Waiting

'And we find ourselves veering from the designated path, doing that partially in the dark, wondering whether we did on some occasion act like a girl, or act like enough of a girl, or act enough like a boy, or whether boyness is well exemplified by the boy we are supposed to be, or whether we have somehow missed the mark, and find ourselves dwelling either happily or not so happily between the established categories of gender. The possibility of missing the mark is always there in the enactment of gender; in fact, gender may be that enactment in which missing the mark is a defining feature.'[6]

'…someone else in my immediate world might like what I liked, want what I wanted, be who I was… no one my age had ever wanted to be both man and woman – with men and women.'[7]

Origins, Performativity Theories: J. L. Austin

J. L. Austin first theorised that performative acts originated from individual utterances of speech, which differed from constative statements, that is, those that can be proven true or false, such as 'they married on a Wednesday'.[8] Noting that some statements 'do' something rather than describe something, Austin argued performative utterances *produce* the outcome or action they name, as when the celebrant pronounces: 'you are now husband and wife'.[9] Rather than true or false, performative acts prove to be 'felicitous' or 'infelicitous', that is, successful or unsuccessful, depending on the circumstances in which they are uttered. Consider my marriage example. If the celebrant who utters the words is authorised to perform the ceremony, the act of marrying is successful and considered 'felicitous'. However, if the speaker does not have the authority to legally perform a marriage ceremony, the speech act fails and is deemed 'infelicitous'. There is now a significant body of literature on performativity theory, and the term has been transformed by Searle,[10] Bourdieu,[11] Derrida,[12] Sedgwick,[13] but perhaps most significantly by Butler whose work I

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[6] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 30.

[7] André Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name* (London, England: Atlantic Books, 2007/2017), 25.

[8] J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (London, England: Oxford University Press, 1962).

[9] Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 13.

[10] John R. Searle, *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1969/2011).

[11] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, ed. John B. Thompson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[12] Jacques Derrida, *Limited inc*, trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman, ed. Gerald Graff (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988).

[13] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the closet* (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 1990)., but notably Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (London, England: Duke University Press, 2003).

draw on here.[14] Nevertheless, Austin's original insights are valuable as they have formed the foundation for these developments.

As I have indicated, Austin originally shaped performative statements as counterparts to 'constative' declarations.[15] This binary of performative/constative utterances presented challenges which led Austin to later consider that 'perhaps indeed there is no great distinction between statements and performative utterances'.[16] He consequently expanded his analysis of performative utterances beyond verbal speech acts, theorising how performative actions can also be carried out without utterance, either written or spoken.[17] This is a point taken up in the work by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick on affect,[18] and Peggy Phelan on photographs.[19] In the latter case, the point is, as Laura Levin states, 'to think about photographs as speech acts is to emphasize photography's contexts of reception' as well as the 'intersubjective relations that initiate the photograph's performative force and meaning'.[20] Indeed, Austin has been criticised for failing to sufficiently consider power relations within performative acts. For example, Bourdieu highlighted the significance of institutions and the power they hold over performative acts. He argued that Austin's thinking did not move beyond the linguistic paradigm that positions the speaker to '… possess in themselves the source of a power which in reality resides in the *institutional* conditions of their *production* and *reception'*.[21] For Bourdieu, while Austin emphasised the context of performative utterances, he failed to acknowledge the wider power relations and social, cultural constructs that inform how performative utterances are produced. In other words, a performative act is inflected by a complex matrix of social, cultural, and historical intersections. For instance, when the performative 'I name…' is actioned on Indigenous Australian land, who has the power to name and deem this performative felicitous? In short, without further investigation into land rights, the 'naming' may indeed prove to be a 'misfire' for some if not all individuals involved. Performatives can misfire for a number of reasons including through 'misapplication',[22] which covers the situation when land has been usurped from its original caretakers and renamed. The act can be considered 'abuse', although 'legal'.[23] Butler addresses such *institutional* complexities when theorising that the

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[14] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1990/2010)., Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter* (London, England: Routledge, 1993/2011)., and most recently Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly.*
[15] Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 3.
[16] Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 52.
[17] Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 8.
[18] Sedgwick, *Touching feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity.*
[19] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London, England: Routledge, 1993/2004).
[20] Laura Levin, "The Performative Force of Photography," *Photography & Culture* 2, no. 3 (2009): 329.
[21] Italics added: Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 111.
[22] Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 28.
[23] Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 16.

performative acts of gender are '… subtle and politically enforced performativity…', which will perpetuate differently across cultural intersections.[24] Like Austin, Butler's theories of performativity have pervaded academia, but are also critiqued, or even misunderstood, due to their complexity and developments over the recent decades.

Bodily Developments of Performativity Theories: Judith Butler

Butler developed Austin's concept of performativity within the context of gender and sexuality. Butler initally theorised gender performativity as twofold: firstly as '… the way in which the anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits as outside itself',[25] which focusses on the ways our anticipated gender is communicated to others to form our gendered identities; secondly, Butler declared that 'performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration.'[26] Here, Butler stresses that it is the repetition of gender performative acts which create a ritualistic effect denoting a person's gender. Perpetuated acts, such as wearing dresses and make-up, work eventually to create a gendered 'essence' within a specific cultural realm. As cultures morph and differ, the meanings of performative acts also fluctuate. Compare wearing a tartan kilt in Glasgow, Scotland to wearing a kilt in Los Angeles; the gendered meaning is disoriented and perhaps entirely lost. Butler states performative acts cannot be singular. Plausibly, when a 'male' wears 'female' attire for a festivity or gag, they are not achieving an authentic performative act of 'female'; the 'male' is not fully considered a 'female', which is precisely the matrix of the joke. The act would have to be carefully perpetuated to become 'ritualistic' and thus 'felicitous'. If depreciated to witticism, the gendered act lacks performative meaning as it becomes an ephemeral 'gag', which does not sustain the 'cultural duration' that the ritualistic performative requires to be understood.[27]

In short, Butler proposed that gender performativity is the physical appearance of one's 'gendered essence' through the repetition of performative acts, such as wearing gendered clothing specific to cultural contexts.[28] She also considered how performatives are mocked in parody and hyperbolic performances of norms, which exaggerate the binaries' 'phantasmatic status'.[29] Thus, a drag queen, who applies considerable hyperbole when overtly presenting a parodied gender, makes political

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[24] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 200.
[25] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, xv.
[26] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, xv.
[27] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, xv.
[28] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, xv.
[29] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 200.

commentary on the existence of such norms in the first place. This 'over' performance compares and contrasts to our subtle, everyday performative acts of gender that, generally speaking, reinforce such norms. In other words, for Butler, performative rituals work to construct our identities so that 'signification is not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition'.[30] Therefore, our identities, according to Butler, are not an innate construction, but a continuing formation that consists of repeated performative acts. To illustrate, one is not born a stereotypical 'female', expressing joy for ballet and the colour pink, but repeats performative acts that may solidify such an identity.

Butler positioned the heterosexual normative culture as one that operates through the strict binary of 'man' and 'woman', which are mostly '… compulsory performances, ones which none of us choose, but which each of us is forced to negotiate'.[31] It is within this binary where Butler argued our performative acts perpetuate gender norms. When individuals fall outside the binary, they carry out performative acts outside the normative which can result in acts of neglect, mistreatment, and even violence. Butler affirmed how gender performatives affect sexuality by demonstrating how certain homophobic discourses are attained through failed performatives of gender. To illustrate, when a gay male is deemed 'feminine' or a lesbian 'masculine', it is due to the terror of failing to complete the performative of a 'proper', binary gender.[32] Therefore, gender acts function simultaneous to sexuality intersections; they cannot be easily separated as 'sexuality is regulated through the policing and the shaming of gender'.[33] Thus, when analysing sexuality, gender must be taken into consideration as the two intersections exist in a complex, interrelated but flexible paradigm. Butler's work on the binary and heteronormative discourse aligns with Barthes' longing for '… a space outside the *doxa*; this imagined space, where the battle between binaries (such as "male" and "female") has ceased to rage, he [Barthes] sometimes called the "neutral," and there he [Barthes] wanted to rest…'.[34] It is as if Barthes was focusing in the same binary that Butler was, and he managed to prefigure Butler's theories by deeming the act of waiting as a signifier of gendered 'doing', as we shall see.

Relying on Austin's work, Butler investigates how performative phrases such as 'I pronounce you man and wife' are similar in their performative nature to those that create gender, such as 'it's a

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[30] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 198.
[31] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 181.
[32] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 182.
[33] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 182.
[34] Wayne Koestenbaum, "Foreword: In Defense of Nuance," in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2010), xi.

girl'.[35] Like the performative speech act, Butler positioned gender assignment of a new-born as a performative act that can be felicitous or later misfired. It is through such gender assignments that the performative act of naming 'a girl' is what 'initiates the process by which a certain "girling" is compelled'.[36] Indeed, social, cultural, and power contexts – the *institution* - begin to form around the gendered body, such as: the expectations of the child, the bodily appearance, the behaviour of that being, and the way in which *she* shall communicate. Butler concluded that:

> Indeed, there is no "one" who takes on a gender norm. On the contrary, this citation of the gender norm is necessary in order to qualify as a "one", to become viable as a "one", where subject formation is dependent on the prior operation of legitimating gender norms.[37]

Butler developed Austin's initial form of performative theory by stating that subjects are not always free to perform acts with complete agency, especially within gender binaries. They first are named through a performative act and then are set within, what Bourdieu deemed, an *institution* of social, political, and cultural intersections.[38] The intersections oversee how a body achieves future performative acts that solidify a particular gender through ritualist, performative acts such as wearing a dress and walking in a 'feminine' manner.

Butler argues that bodies which deviate from the gendered norms, through performativity outside the gender binary, are often neglected or abused. When gender is theorised as performative, one must focus on the '… consequences for how gender presentations are criminalized and pathologised, how subjects who cross gender risk interment and imprisonment, why violence against transgendered subjects is not recognized as violence…'.[39] Thus, based on their performative acts of gender, it is important to consider how and why bodies are damaged, criminalized, and pathologised, often through mental health discourses. In contrast, if we take Austin's illustrations of 'I bet…' or 'I name…' as performatives, the repercussions for deeming such utterances as infelicitous or misfired may not be perceived as so severe. However, in gendered acts of performativity, the deviations and misfires can cause disastrous consequences for precarious bodies and lives.[40] Butler intensified the political scope by stating that the violence

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[35] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 176.
[36] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 177.
[37] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 177.
[38] Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.
[39] Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004/2015), 30.
[40] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 27-28 & 56.

inflicted upon such deviant bodies are executed by the very institutions that are assumed to protect,[41] raising solemn queries into the 'bio-power' of our society.[42] Foucault explained 'bio-power' as the authoritative agency that governing institutions utilise to manipulate mortality rates,[43] as exemplified during the HIV/AIDS epidemic when an array of official institutions perpetuated misleading information regarding the origins of the disease, which resulted in catastrophic death counts.[44]

Butler's performative theories have garnered criticism from both liberal and conservatives alike, and notably from transgender communities.[45] Butler theorised that there is no natural gender and that gender is a performative act, which some have misunderstood as Butler suggesting that anyone can freely choose their 'gender' and perform such acts with total agency.[46] This is not the case as Butler clarified that '…what we are at first obligated to do is enact the gender that we are assigned, and that involves, at an unknowing level, being formed by a set of foreign fantasies that are relayed through interpellations of various kinds'.[47] Althusser defined 'interpellation' as the means in which bodies are hailed into social interactions from authoritative figures, which isolate the subject.[48] Thus, applying Althusser's term, the gender we are first assigned is an act of interpellation that we are obliged to carry out unconsciously at the beginning of our lives. Therefore, Butler was not suggesting that all bodies have full agency over what gender they are because the first occurrence of gender transpires through an unconscious interpellation. Butler argued that this gender is then enacted through ritualistic performativity and our assigned gender is reinforced, that is unless it deviates. It is this deviation that Butler primarily questioned: when a body deviates from the gendered and sexual norm, why do they experience violence, abuse, and tarnished rights? Butler even claimed that all bodies will deviate from the gendered norm at some stage as we '…find ourselves doing something else, doing ourselves in a way that was not exactly what anyone had in mind for us'.[49] Butler responded lucidly to such criticisms in stating:

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[41] Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 30.
[42] Michel Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley, vol. 1 (London, England: Penguin Books, 1976/1998), 140-44.
[43] Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality*, 1, 140-44.
[44] Paula A. Treichler, *How To Have Theory in an Epidemic: Cultural Chronicles of AIDS*, 2nd ed. (London, England: Duke University Press, 1999/2004), 95.
[45] Such criticisms are well documented by Prosser: Jay Prosser, "Judith Butler: Queer Feminism, Transgender, and the Transubstantiation of Sex," in *Second Skins: The Body Narrative of Transsexuality*, Gender and Culture Series (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998).
[46] Such comments were recently voiced by a professor in response to a paper I presented at the *International Conference on Gender Studies* at Cambridge University.
[47] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 30-31.
[48] Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1971/2001), 118.
[49] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 31.

To repeat: I do not mean to say that all of us choose our gender or our sexuality…but regardless of whether we understand our gender or our sexuality as chosen or given, we each have a right to claim that gender and to claim that sexuality.[50]

The historical, politically-entrenched realm of gender cannot be automatically suspended for someone to 'choose' their gender freely from birth. All people are born into diverse, complex masses of interweaving norms and archaic normative discourses; a subject cannot coexist outside of such discourse, for they are born within it and – usually – as a product of it (heteronormative discourse). Butler's emphasis is clear: we *ought* to have a right to claim what our gender and sexuality are regardless of the essentialist debate. This is significant to my thesis as Elio first has to enact his interpellated gender of 'male', but then experiments with partial agency from non-normative sexuality, thus, reinforcing Butler's notion of gender identity as never being 'settled once and for all'.[51] Rather, as I shall demonstrate in subsequent chapters, gender is continually being renegotiated and reconstructed through performative acts.

Finally, many have read Butler's work as a treatise against gender norms, which Butler has acknowledged in a recent explanation of her original aims in writing *Gender Trouble*.[52] Butler also clarified that the aim of such performativity theories was to 'relax the coercive hold of norms on gendered life…for the purpose of living a more livable life'.[53] Thus, Butler's performativity theories were formed with an overarching aim to create more liveable lives, free from stigmatisation, abuse, and violence. She called into question monolithic perceptions of essentialist gender and sexuality and subsequently turned her thinking of performativity toward the possibility and potential of plural acts.

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[50] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 60.
[51] Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 10.
[52] Sara Ahmed, "Interview with Judith Butler," *Sexualities* 19, no. 4 (2016): 487.
[53] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 33.

Performative Assembly: Judith Butler

In more recent writing, Butler has theorised a plurality to performativity theory in stating that when bodies get together, under certain political conditions, they act as a performative assembly. Butler draws upon multiple political and social demonstrations across history, including the Tahrir Square protests in Egypt, the global Black Lives Matter protests, and LGBTIQ+ Pride events. In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, Butler widens the scope from theories of gender, bodies, and precarity to thoughts on freedom and functional lives. This is significant to my thesis because the characters exist within one of the most precarious epochs for gay men, in the nineteen-eighties, at major risk of abuse, violence, and stigmatisation. The coercive norms are particularly heightened in the setting of Aciman's novel due to Rome's Catholicism. (There is also the issue of the two characters being 'secret' Jews,[54] however, the complete analysis of this religious conflict and context is beyond the scope of this thesis.) Interestingly, Aciman avoids popular ideologies and heteronormative discourse in his novel that is set in this damaging epoch; indeed, I will demonstrate that eliding the HIV/AIDS epidemic from the narrative refreshes queer literature.

Butler considers the theory of 'biopower',[55] simultaneous to the concept of 'necropolitics',[56] in providing reflections on power relations resulting in bodily harm or death, which is applicable to my studied context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.[57] This leads Butler to consider how protest movements function beyond individual notions of performativity, theorising what occurs when utterances are pluralised:

> If performativity has often been associated with individual performance, it may prove important to reconsider those forms of performativity that only operate through forms of coordinated action, whose condition and aim is the reconstitution of plural forms of agency and social practices of resistances.[58]

This develops performativity theory from individual to plural performative acts. Butler examined how bodies as a collective 'assembly' developed Austin's singular verb performative into a first-person plural with 'we protest…' or 'we name…'. Such developments supply a fresh scope of how

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[54] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 19-20.
[55] Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality*, 1, 140-44.
[56] Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003).
[57] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 11-12.
[58] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 9.

collective bodies function through performative utterances, verbal and non-verbal. Pride marches illustrate how subjects take to the streets in political protest and celebration, where the assembly of bodies are '…exhibiting its value and its freedom in the demonstration itself…'.[59] By merely presenting at the rally, the subjects achieve a plural performative of 'we protest', bridging Butler's plural performative theory and Austin's notions of non-verbal utterances as the performative occurs through the collective presentation in the street. The point is that by simply presenting together, subjects can achieve a non-verbal performative, 'performing' an act beyond their mere presence: 'we protest'.

Butler compares the notions of 'freedom of speech' to 'freedom of movement', which appears imbalanced.[60] Butler suggests that 'just as free speech is considered "expressive freedom"', bodies have a basic human right to form an assembly out of 'expressive freedom';[61] however, this is denied to many, especially in light of the Black Lives Matter protests in America. Such protests were decimated due to their public visibility, yet Butler, applying Arendt's theories of public political sphere and human plurality,[62] reflects that such assemblies must take place within a public domain to achieve political worth. [63] She thus reinforces Bourdieu's notions that performatives are governed under particular *institutions* by affirming that bodies must appear 'in the midst of the political field' to be performative.[64] A theory of the plural performativity aligns with gender performativity, as Butler states: 'so, it is not possible to separate the gender that we are and the sexualities that we engage in from the right that each of us has to assert those realities in public, freely, and with protection from violence'.[65] Butler is not just concerned with how we perform gender and sexuality at an individual level, but rather how we sustain the right to assert identities within the public sphere without harm. A rich way of demanding such freedom and protection is through public assembly, when displaying affection towards a loved one in a public sphere or presenting at pride events or rallies. Notably, the former intimate 'assembly' of lovers risks violence and abuse, harming precarious bodies mentally and physically. This is significant to my thesis as Oliver and Elio take their first-person performatives into the public realm of Rome to declare their non-verbal assembly in protest of heteronormative discourse. However, the complete analysis of this will occur in an additional project as it proves beyond the scope of this thesis.

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[59] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 18.
[60] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 22.
[61] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 22.
[62] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958/2018).
[63] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*.
[64] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 11.
[65] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 57.

Finally, Butler developed the formation of a public body in stating that '…there are other ways of conferring and acting that do not presuppose the occupation of the same ground. There are bodies that assemble on the street or online or through other less visible networks…'.[66] Thus, bodies can form an 'assembly' through non-geographical means, such as telephone calls and online communication. Thus, by simply joining a social media group or following an online account, a performative is being actioned. For instance, if I join a social media account that is rallying against the live exportation of animals, I am acting within the performative 'I protest', which within the wider 'assembly' of the online account, acts as 'we protest'. This aligns with Butler's notion of the 'true space' which exists only between bodies and '… means that as much as any action takes place in a located somewhere, it also establishes a space that belongs properly to alliance itself'.[67] Therefore, the alliance of those against live exportation of animals develops a 'true space' in which they can performatively act as an assembly because they have subscribed to an online group. This supports Arendt's theory that freedom and political action must occur in a public platform between or among the people to achieve 'excellence'.[68] I will argue that Elio and Oliver create a 'true space' between themselves, notably through the boudoir trope, where the two are able to achieve their performative identities safely and declare their love of one another, an act which will deconstruct the dominant understanding of the boudoir as an exclusively private space, and eventually overflow into the public arena.

To summarise, performativity theory has sequentially developed from Austin's speech acts to Butler's bodily, gendered acts. Austin originally theorised performative acts as verbal and non-verbal deeds that could be proven felicitous or infelicitous, depending upon the circumstances in which they were uttered. His performatives did not encompass concepts of identity as they merely achieved a way of 'doing things', such as betting or naming. Butler developed such notions within the intersections of gender and sexuality, suggesting bodies 'do' gender by carrying out performative acts that are similar to speech acts theorised by Austin. Butler also advanced performativity theory by pluralising it and declaring that bodies come together, through various methods, to establish an assembly that functions as a political performative. The 'assembly' is perhaps even more useful than individual notions of performativity because of the political, public sphere in which numerous bodies act together.

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[66] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 135.
[67] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 73.
[68] Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 49.

Waiting Trope: Barthes

Barthes is a celebrated French scholar and theorist, renowned for his semiotics and literary philosophies. In *A Lover's Discourse*, Barthes catalogues 'fragments' of desire; the text was an immediate success and rapidly became a French bestseller.[69] Heath considers the text ground-breaking in creating a new literary mode that is neither analysis or autobiographical.[70] The publication launched Barthes into the public limelight, becoming an academic-Kardashian of the French celebrity world as he was inundated with magazine interviews.[71] Wayne Koestenbaum urges the reader to consider Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse* as a 'jar of nuances: trapped fireflies' that describe the 'general experience of being in thrall to love's categories'.[72] Koestenbaum considers Barthes' aim to 'liberate love's subtleties, and observe their play'.[73] The fragments are in reference to Barthes' personal experiences and a wide span of literature: from Nietzsche, Plato, and mostly *Sorrows of Young Werther* by Goethe. In *A Lover's Discourse* Barthes avoids specific types of loving relationships to focus instead on a '"feminized" position, or a wounded one',[74] which I shall draw parallels upon in relation to performativity theory to consider how the protagonist in *Call Me By Your Name* functions queerly.

Koestenbaum describes Barthes's *A Lovers' Discourse* as '… frothing but courtly. We can only marvel at the ease with which he queers amorousness without making a big stick out of sexual orientation.'[75] Koestenbaum could be describing Aciman's novel: frothing, but courtly; Aciman 'queers amorousness' without mentioning sexual orientation, homophobia, or the stigmatised HIV/AIDS pandemic of the historical context. I will argue that Elio's characterisation and behaviour traits align to many of Barthes' fragments of desire. These include: '*to write*', as he understands and reflects on his desire by writing his diary;[76] '*habiliment*', as Elio is provoked by Oliver's swimsuit clothing and seduces Oliver by wearing it too;[77] and '*irksome*', as Elio develops a robust jealousy over Oliver when he is in company with others and occupied with work duties.[78] However, two fragments became of particular interest as Barthes's correlated them to gender:

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[69] Stephen Heath, "Barthes on Love," *SubStance* 11/12, no. 37-38: A Special Issue from the Center for Twentieth Century Studies (1982): 100.

[70] Heath, "Barthes on Love," 101.

[71] Koestenbaum, "Foreword: In Defense of Nuance," xiii. & Heath, "Barthes on Love," 100.

[72] Koestenbaum, "Foreword: In Defense of Nuance," ix & xii.

[73] Koestenbaum, "Foreword: In Defense of Nuance," x.

[74] Koestenbaum, "Foreword: In Defense of Nuance," xi & xiii.

[75] Koestenbaum, "Foreword: In Defense of Nuance," xii.

[76] Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, trans. Richard Howard (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1978/2010), 97.

[77] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 127.

[78] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 110.

absence and *waiting*. Barthes theorises and applies the trope of 'waiting', attributing 'feminine' qualities to the one-who-waits. He is aware of the existing gendered paradigm of waiting when he writes: 'Historically, the discourse of absence is carried on by the Woman: Woman is sedentary, Man hunts, journeys; Woman is faithful (she waits), man is fickle (he sails away, he cruises).'[79] He develops implications associated with the historically entrenched role of the female as one-who-waits. The 'feminized' subsists as the 'sedentary', passive role in waiting for the active male lover to return. Barthes continues: '… any man who utters the other's absence *something feminine* is declared: this man who waits and who suffers from his waiting is miraculously feminized.'[80] Thus, the waiting 'female' is not necessarily a woman. Barthes theorises that it is the act of waiting, specifically being the passive one-who-waits, which is 'feminine'. In other words, in terms of Barthes semiotics, the act of waiting becomes a sign: the signifier, one-who-waits, is attached to the signified, 'feminine'.[81] I argue that Barthes prefigures Butler's performativity theory in stipulating how an act carries gendered meaning, connotating a gendered 'doing'. That is, through the waiting act, something beyond the mere action of waiting occurs: a gendered performative takes place. I consider how the gender performative of 'female' waiting is enhanced through the gendered chronotope of the boudoir.

Chronotope: Bakhtin

Mikhail Bakhtin is a celebrated scholar who did not adhere to strict confinements of academic disciplines.[82] Although he is most renowned for his literary theories, Bakhtin did not view himself as a literary theorist.[83] His works are known for consisting of an 'open-ended play of ideas going in multiple directions'.[84] Bakhtin coined the term *chronotopes* in the celebrated essay '*Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Historical Poetics*' written in the nineteen-thirties; although the essay was published in 1975 – the year of his death – and it was only translated into English in 1981.[85] Thus, albeit dated at time of writing, the chronotope essay is fairly contemporary to English literary theory. There is a pleasing parallel between the discovery of his work in English and the chronological setting of Aciman's novel to which I apply his theories.

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[79] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 13-14.
[80] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 14.
[81] Terms originally coined by Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, but later developed by Barthes as Chandler discusses: Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics*, 2nd ed. (London, England: Routledge, 2007), 14 & 54.
[82] Lakshmi Bandlamudi, *Difference, Dialogue, and Development: A Bakhtinian World* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 1.
[83] Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 3.
[84] Bandlamudi, *Difference, Dialogue, and Development: A Bakhtinian World*, 2.
[85] *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*, ed. Nele Bemong et al. (Gent, Belgium: Academia Press, 2010), iii.

Bakhtin defined the term *chronotope* as literally meaning *time-space*: 'the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature'.[86] Despite developing the term from Einstein's *Theory of Relativity*, he extends the term's meaning in literary criticism as an 'almost' metaphor.[87] Bakhtin analyses the chronotope through Greek Romance, the Roman Novel, and the Biographical Novel, while dipping into other subgenres, authors, and archetypes. Bakhtin reflects how there are a multitude of chronotopes that are interwoven within one given literary work.[88] He states that the meaning of chronotopes is 'not dead, it is speaking, signifying (it involves signs)', effectively tying the notion of *chronotopes* closely to Barthes's semiotic work.[89] Bakhtin's chronotope theories are often criticised for their openness and vagueness, however, it is their malleability that enables his theories to be applied to a multitude of scholarly disciplines.[90] Chronotopes have facilitated connections in 'literary communication with concrete imaginative units and generic patterns.'[91] Through such connections, I link Elio's bedroom to the eighteenth century boudoir, considering how the generic conventions of the space in French and English novels align to Aciman's fiction.

Bakhtin develops the chronotope of the 'parlor and salon' in relation to Stendhal's nineteenth-century fiction, exploring how the chronotope entails 'the secrets of the boudoir' where 'webs of intrigue are spun'. [92] Here Bakhtin does not explicitly deem the boudoir a chronotope, but alludes to it in conjunction with the parlor/salon. Interestingly, the Stendhal novel, *Armance*, that Bakhtin makes direct reference to is not merely included in Aciman's novel: it carries pertinent romantic meaning for the protagonist and his lover.[93] Therefore, I develop Bakhtin's associations of the boudoir as a chronotope of its own, comparing the context of the initial boudoir in eighteenth century France to the milieu for queers during nineteen-eighties. This *time/space* provides an increase in sexual agency and power for Elio, which enables him to wait differently, sexually enticing Oliver through the metonymy of the boudoir architecture and context.

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[86] Mikhail M. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Hisotrical Poetics," in *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, Slavic Series (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1981/2008), 84.
[87] Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Hisotrical Poetics," 84.
[88] Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Hisotrical Poetics," 252.
[89] Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Hisotrical Poetics," 252.
[90] *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*, iii.
[91] *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*, iii.
[92] Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Hisotrical Poetics," 246-47.
[93] As Oliver sets off to collect his copy of *Armance*, Elio joins him and purchases two copies of the novel, writing a message inside Oliver's: 'For you in silence, somewhere in Italy in the mid-eighties.' Also, Elio then reflects how in years to come he wants Oliver to return to the novel and feel 'something as darting as sorrow and fiercer than regret… hovering like a vague, erotic undercurrent' and remember a specific kiss when he had 'given him my spit in his mouth because I so desperately wanted his in mine.' Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 105.

<div align="center">****</div>

In the coming chapters I analyse how waiting is a literary trope often used in romantic fiction to depict female characters. I discuss how time spent waiting contrasts concepts of regular passing time, and how waiting can reveal or 'awaken' aspects of characterisation. Further to this, I consider how waiting within the context of desire is not necessarily passive as it can be beguiling to wait for a lover. I argue that Elio's perpetual acts of waiting constitute gender performativity, extending Barthes's definition of the 'miraculously feminised' one-who-waits through the application of Austin and Butler's performativity theories.[94] I then reason that Elio's consistency to the effete waiting role is enhanced through his anxiety when waiting for Oliver; he aligns, I will argue, to Barthes's concepts of the 'tumult of anxiety'[95] and the lover losing a 'sense of proportions'.[96] Finally, applying Bakhtin's concept of the chronotope, I consider how Elio's use of his bedroom resonates with the *boudoir*, shifting his anxious waiting into an active enticement. I draw parallels between the treatment of women in eighteenth century France and the pathologisation of homosexuals/queers during the HIV/AIDS pandemic of nineteen-eighties in the aim of associating the context of the boudoir chronotope.

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[94] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 14.
[95] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.
[96] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.

Chapter Two: The Waiting Trope

'The being I am waiting for is not real… And if the other does not come, I hallucinate the other: waiting is a delirium.'[97]

Waiting: Mechanical Time to Literary Trope

Schweizer reflects how waiting contrasts the mathematical concept of time which explains common notions of waiting: why waiting is considered a 'waste of time', why we attempt to 'kill time', and how the powerless are positioned to ritualistically wait to reinforce their lack of agency.[98] Thus, waiting is a tool to produce social and political power, reinforcing or diminishing a subject's agency. Waiting cannot be discussed merely in terms of mechanical time as it can stretch and manipulate our conscious perception of time passing.[99] Unlike time spent non-waiting, which ticks along within our daily lives, waiting entails a qualitative shift in our perception of passing time. Thirty minutes of watching your favourite film is a relative thirty minutes; it is not the equivalent of thirty minutes in the dentist chair.[100] In waiting we 'awake to the repressed rhythms of duration and thus also to the deeper dimension of our being.'[101] We become vividly aware of the time passing and 'awaken' to this deeper sense of being present. Such 'awakening' use of waiting is evident throughout fictional literature, and may be used as a trope to represent a growth or 'grounding' of characters.[102] I will argue that this waiting trope is analogous to Aciman's crafting of Elio's growth and 'grounding' as a lover**.** That is, in this chapter, I will demonstrate that Elio's characterisation expands with more active traits as he experiments with his role of the waiting lover; in the last chapter, I explore how the chronotope of the boudoir, this *time/space* where he waits, contributes to an 'awakening' of his sexual desires.

Waiting is a social and political act that can form identity through political means and power directives.[103] Barthes begins to reflect on mundane, quotidian waiting at banks, doctor's surgeries,

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[97] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 39.

[98] Harold Schweizer, "On Waiting," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (2005): 779.

[99] Schweizer, "On Waiting," 781.

[100] See Wittmann's discussion on this: Marc Wittmann, *Felt Time: The Psychology of How We Perceive Time*, trans. Erik Butler (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 60-61.

[101] Schweizer, "On Waiting," 778.

[102] Crangle positions Gertrude Stein's female protagonist, Mrs Reynolds, using the act of waiting in attempt to calm and ground herself. Sara Crangle, *Prosaic Desires: Boredom, Laughter, and Anticipation* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 160.

[103] Ghassan Hage, "Introduction," in *Waiting*, ed. Ghassan Hage (Carlton, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 2009), 1 & 3.

and airports, concluding that '*To make someone wait*: the constant prerogative of all power, "age-old pastime of humanity"'.[104] Although there is a power imbalance between the one-who-waits and the apparent 'absent' one, the degree to which the one-who-waits has agency is ambiguous.[105] Barthes theorises that waiting carries innate feminine qualities: should you wait, you are feminized.[106] Such a 'female' trope of waiting is palpable throughout literature, such as Gertrude Stein's novel, *Mrs Reynolds*, that uses the 'unresolved waiting' form as the central crux of the narrative;[107] Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, where Jane is expected to wait for Mr Bingley;[108] and Charlotte Bronte's protagonist in the romantic classic *Jane Eyre* who declares her love for Mr Rochester by declaring that she will wait for him.[109] The female subject who ought to wait is perceivable as: she who *waits* within her confined, domestic area; she who *waits* for a go-getting male to return home; she who *waits* for a man to propose; she who *waits* for a male hand to dance.[110]

Within the context of desire, waiting is not necessarily passive. Erotic literature thrives on the moments spent waiting, toying with the mind's image of the desired and the imagined reunion upon the amorous arrival.[111] Barthes considers how waiting under the instructions of a loved one can be exhilarating: 'Waiting is an enchantment. I have received orders not to move.'[112] Here Barthes positions the passive act of waiting as one that is 'enchanting': waiting that is an enthralling activity that one relishes. When ordered to wait by the lover, Barthes considers how excitement grows in anticipation for the return of a loved one. This can result through mere thrill of pleasing the lover's demand of waiting, or out of expectation of sexual gratification in return for their committed waiting. Thus, the waiting for an amorous subject may be a symbolic declaration of loving devotion of the absent; the waiting may serve as a loving pledge to the absent lover. This adheres to Walsh's notion of 'the terrible delicious ache of waiting': waiting is a terrible ache, yet enjoyable.[113] There is a hybridity felt by the waiting lover as the delay in the beloved's arrival is

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[104] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 40.

[105] Hage, "Introduction," 2.

[106] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 14.

[107] Crangle, *Prosaic Desires: Boredom, Laughter, and Anticipation*, 21.

[108] Mrs Bennet demands: 'you will *wait* on him, of course… it will be abominably rude if you do not wait on him.' Italics added: Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1813/1918), 341.

[109] 'I will be your companion – to read to you, to walk with you, to sit with you, to *wait* on you…' Italics added: Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1864), 464.

[110] Susan Ash, "Waiting to Dance," in *The Space Between: Australian Women Writing Fictocriticism*, ed. Heather Kerr and Amanda Nettelbeck (Western Australia: University of Western Australia Press, 1998).

[111] 'Erotica is devoted to the quality of the time spent waiting. It plays with the question of how lovers fill that time waiting. It asks about how we remember and picture the beloved, and what we imagine will happen when the beloved finally arrives.' Carey Ellen Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic, and the Song of Songs* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 44.

[112] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 38.

[113] Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic, and the Song of Songs*, 9.

experienced as 'terrible', yet it is 'delicious' because they recognise what gratification awaits them, should they wait correctly. Barthes extends the hybridity with his didactic tale of the mandarin and courtesan, demonstrating how waiting signifies a lover's commitment:

> 'A mandarin fell in love with a courtesan. "I shall be yours," she told him, "when you have spent a hundred nights waiting for me, sitting on a stool, in my garden, beneath my window." But on the ninety-ninth night, the mandarin stood up, put his stool under his arm, and went away.'[114]

Barthes' mandarin tale provides an amusing irony in demonstrating how close lovers can be to fully realising their potential. It denotes the experience of two people yearning to be together but failing, representing where most of the lover's time is spent: in hope, longing, and waiting.[115] The mandarin failed the test of love as the final night proved too arduous. The mandarin was not a worthy lover as he did not fulfil the stipulated duration. Barthes positions the true lover, then, as the one-who-waits and fulfils their waiting duties specified by the amorous. Waiting for a loved one substantiates the commitment and symbolises the capacity of desire for the absent amorous. Barthes reinforces the lover as wholly 'languished in the waiting, in the want',[116] who may not attain their desired even after suffering the hours or days of waiting. He illustrates that even in the final moments of waiting, the one-who-waits may surrender their waiting and forfeit their desired.

Aciman uses the trope of the lover as the one-who-waits throughout *Call Me By Your Name* with a protagonist who uses waiting to achieve his erotic outcomes.[117] Aciman begins the trope by devoting long sequences to Elio observing Oliver, noticing such intricate details:

> … despite a light tan acquired during his brief stay in Sicily earlier that summer, the color on the palms of his hands was the same as the pale, soft skin of his soles, of his throat, of the bottom of his forearms, which hadn't really been exposed to much sun.[118]

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[114] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 40.

[115] 'Watching two people yearn to be with one another and not get together is heartbreaking, honest, and what much of life is given over to, the waiting and the hope.': Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic, and the Song of Songs*, 107.

[116] Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic, and the Song of Songs*, 79.

[117] Similar to his most recent protagonist: Andrè Aciman, *Enigma Variations* (New York, NY: Picador, 2017).

[118] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 5.

Elio often takes on a position from the side-lines; he remains at a distance from his beloved, carefully observing. Elio takes the entirety of Part One of the novel to 'hang-back' and observe Oliver.[119] The subtitle of this section is, 'If Not Later, When?', which is an homage to a conversation where Elio declares he almost had sex with Marzia in aim of evoking jealousy in Oliver. However, Oliver does not react as expected to Elio's baiting assertion, replying: 'Try again later'.[120] Oliver's flippant reply 'stings' Elio as his desired, for whom he waits; Oliver appears to encourage him to sleep with another.[121] Oliver's suggestion seems to cut short Elio's amorous waiting. However, Elio continues to wait for Oliver and does not effectively 'try again' until some sixty-six pages later.[122] As Elio remains in Aciman's crafted 'side-lines', waiting, we read through the intimate lens of the first-person narrator, Aciman's trope of the waiting lover, witnessing the accretion of 'intense loneliness and longing burning' in Elio's psyche.[123] Aciman thus portrays a young man's desires, first characterising Elio as a withdrawn lover who waits and surveys the object of his passion before managing to achieve his desired outcomes.[124]

Elio's 'Feminine' Waiting Role

Throughout the novel, then, Elio primarily waits for his lover, Oliver, in a ritualised form which feminises Elio, according to Barthes' paradigm.[125] On a day where the pair are alone in the family house, Elio waits for Oliver to visit. Elio states: 'I'd waited and waited in my room pinioned to my bed in a trancelike state of terror and anticipation… one more minute of this and I'll die if he doesn't knock at my door…'.[126] As he waits 'pinioned' to his bed, Elio stews on his feelings for Oliver, wondering if his desire is mutual or a mere product of his overthinking. Elio's feelings of 'terror and anticipation' heighten his suffering in waiting, which reflects Barthes's point in two ways: he becomes 'the man who waits *and* who suffers from his waiting' who is thus 'miraculously feminized'.[127] I would argue that Barthes prefigures Butler's gender performativity theories by positioning the act of waiting as producing or 'doing' a gender, but we can backtrack even

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[119] Similar to his protagonist, Paul, in *Enigma Variations* who spends 'tens of pages observing a young man while creating hypothetical conversations': Dan Calhoun, "In a Lonely Place, Watching," *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 24, no. 2 (2017): (No Page Numbers Given).
[120] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 51.
[121] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 51.
[122] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 117.
[123] Calhoun, "In a Lonely Place, Watching," No Page Numbers Given.
[124] Drawing further parallels to Aciman's recent protagonist in *Enigma Variations*: Calhoun, "In a Lonely Place, Watching."
[125] There are numerous examples of Elio's waiting for Oliver: Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 14, 42, 45, 94, 120, 21, 26, 27, 53, 65.
[126] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 14.
[127] Italics added; Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 14.

further.[128] In Austin's terms, Elio's waiting achieves more than the objective act: his waiting utters 'I lovingly pledge myself to you' or in other words 'I love you'. Elio's waiting is 'doing' more than merely waiting as expressed in Barthes's fable of the mandarin who waits to demonstrate his love for the courtesan.[129] We can understand, then, this 'figure of waiting' that Barthes names as a form of the non-verbal performative that Austin originally theorised.[130] Austin exemplifies non-verbal performatives through the placement of a bet when placing coins within a slot machine; it uses no verbal speech act, rather an action that produces a performative 'doing'.[131] When considering Bourdieu's notion of the contextual *institution* of the performative act,[132] the social norm surrounding the role of lover-who-waits is gendered as the 'historically entrenched role of the female'.[133] Thus, as he waits for Oliver, Elio also utters 'I am feminine' as he is 'doing' a gendered performative that is produced within the performative paradigm of 'institutional structures and broader social worlds'.[134] Should the act of waiting be ritualistically repeated it will reinforce the gendered value.[135] Elio's gender identity is not merely imprinted on him: it is the ritualistic waiting that 'produces' his fluctuating gendered identity,[136] that demonstrates Barthes's notion of 'miraculously' becoming feminine.

Elio's role as lover-who-waits modulates through several contexts of waiting. For example, before the two have consummated their desires for one another, they write short notes to each other. When Oliver replies, to organise a rendezvous at midnight, Elio displays an inner conflict over his response:

> 'Say nothing and he'll think you regret having written.
>
> Say anything and it will be out of place.
>
> Do what, then?
>
> Wait.'[137]

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[128] Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, 60.

[129] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 40.

[130] Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 8.

[131] Austin, *How To Do Things With Words*, 8.

[132] Italics added: Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, 111.

[133] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 14. And in conjunction to the aforementioned literature: Gertrude Stein's novel *Mrs Reynolds;* Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*: see page 19 of thesis

[134] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 64-65.

[135] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 198.

[136] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 29.

[137] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 121.

Elio validates his role as the one-who-waits by passively 'waiting out' the hours of late morning, afternoon, and evening, until the time comes that his lover stipulated and they shall meet. Thus, at times, Oliver deliberately creates the scenario of waiting. The compositional placement of 'wait', standing alone, on one line on the page, emphasises Elio's deduction of waiting. Aciman crafts a nabla shape, or inverted triangle, on the page, drawing attention to Elio's decision to 'wait'. The structure is symbolic of Elio's thought process: he begins with a wide range of considerations and, as his options narrow down, his thinking reduces to the single possibility of waiting. This figurative arrangement reinforces Barthes' notion of the waiting lover being in a 'futile or immensely pathetic' situation; even after Elio ponders on his options of ceasing his waiting by addressing Oliver, Elio remains with the result of waiting.[138] His thought process is cyclical, alternating between thoughts of not-waiting and waiting, which he confirms when reflecting: 'I knew this from the very start. Just wait.'[139] Oliver exacerbates Elio's experience by luring him with only partial invitations, which sustain Elio's frustrating waiting cycles. For example, Oliver stipulates a time that the two shall next meet but neglects to mention a place. Effectively this doubles the waiting as Elio has to wait for the actual appointment, but also the arrival of additional information to make the meet possible. Oliver thus exemplifies Barthes's claim that the 'other' for whom one waits, wields the 'constant prerogative of all power' in making Elio wait.[140]

As the novel progresses, Elio's waiting for Oliver evolves into a ritualistic behaviour that reinforces his effete performative. After anticipating their meeting all afternoon and evening, the clock strikes midnight and Elio waits and considers:

> 'At midnight there wasn't a sound coming from his room… I hadn't heard him come back. He'd just have to come to my room, then. Or should I still go to his? Waiting would be torture.
> I'll go to him.
> I stepped out onto the balcony for a second and peered in the direction of his bedroom. No light. I'd still knock anyway.
> Or I could wait.'[141]

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[138] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.
[139] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 121.
[140] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 40.
[141] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 126.

Similar to the beginning of Elio's day, he follows an identical thought process that also results in his decision to wait. The language structure of the opening lengthy deliberations that result in staccato decisions that are analogous to the nabla model aforementioned. Firstly, he arrives at the decision to 'go to him', which motivates Elio to observing Oliver's empty bedroom. Then, upon being startled by his seemingly vacant room, Elio reaches the conclusion that he 'could wait'. This thought pattern provides insight into Elio's psyche, indicating that the role of lover-who-waits becomes his default position as he repetitively waits, demonstrating a performative utterance of 'I commit to you' or simply 'I love you' towards Oliver. As specified, it is precisely this repeated 'doing' of a performative that Butler developed into gender theory. The repeated performative act of waiting reinforces and enhances Elio's 'feminine doing', reinforcing Butler's ritualistic 'doing' of gender.

Anxious Waiting with No Sense of Proportions

Elio additionally adheres to the historically feminine role of lover-who-waits by correlating to Barthes's notion of experiencing extreme anxiety and losing a sense of reality through waiting. Barthes positions 'waiting' for the lover as the 'tumult of anxiety provoked by waiting for the loved being, subject to trivial delays (rendezvous, letters, telephone calls, returns).'[142] Barthes discusses this anxiety, produced in the space between designation and actual arrival (or the end of waiting), as the struggle between '…that of the reference and that of the allocution: you have gone (which I lament), you are here (since I am addressing you). Whereupon I know what the present, that difficult tense, is: a pure portion of anxiety.'[143] Within the structure of waiting for a desired, there is the commotion of anxiety present through trivial delays, stretching the lover's waiting periods and increasing their anxious spans of time. There is also a tense conflict between the lamenting past act of leaving and the falsehood of 'presence' as the absent is addressed, thus demonstrating Barthes' point that the lover-who-waits will experience a heightened 'tumult' of anxiety.[144]

From early in the novel, as Elio waits for Oliver's return, he experiences anxieties of waiting as a recurring tumult of feeling. Two aspects intensify Elio's apprehensions in waiting: the homosexual nature of the relationship and age gap. Elio contemplates:

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[142] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.
[143] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 15.
[144] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.

'Not knowing whether he'd show up at the dinner table was torture. But bearable. Not daring to ask whether he'd be there was the real ordeal. Having my heart jump when I suddenly heard his voice or saw him seated at his seat…'[145]

Elio's apprehension in waiting for Oliver is a crueller category of anxiety as he deems it a 'bearable' form of 'torture'. In contrast for Barthes, an anxiety that is unbearable denotes a torture that is expected to end, ostensibly by the removal of the stimuli or by serious implications of the subject's health. Paradoxically, a 'bearable' torture, for example, waterboarding, is ceaseless and perpetual without a definitive ending of suffering. Accordingly, Elio's 'bearable torture' in waiting for Oliver's return stipulates a perpetual anguish, aligning to Barthes' 'tumult of anxiety' in waiting for his beloved to return.[146] However, for Elio, his 'real ordeal' is that as the lover-who-waits, he cannot seek after Oliver. The nature of their queer relationship appears to disable Elio's agency as he cannot freely appear too keen for Oliver. Given the context of nineteen-eighties Catholic Italy, a queer relationship is challenging in itself, set in one of the most homophobic epochs in history, within a perceivably rigid, inflexible religious nation. Thus, the taboo to taking up a queer sexual relationship with an older man might offer reason for Elio's reticence. However, the narrative does not focus on the context as a barrier, but on Elio's own incapacity to cease his waiting and take charge. The novel heightens the tumultuous anxiety of waiting by focusing on Elio's interior experiences as he becomes increasingly woeful when Oliver does not present, adhering to Barthes 'futile' and 'immensely pathetic' definition as his waiting proves fruitless with Oliver still missing.[147]

As Elio's waiting continues, the swelling anxiety of the lover-who-waits is matched by an increase in irrational thinking. Barthes expresses this experience as a decreasing sense of reality, resulting from the anxiety of the lover's perpetual waiting for their desired:

'I am waiting for an arrival, a return, a promised sign. This can be futile, or immensely pathetic… a woman waits for her lover, at night, in the forest; I am waiting for no more than a telephone call, but the anxiety is the same. Everything is solemn: I have no sense of *proportions*.'[148]

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[145] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 41-42.
[146] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.
[147] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.
[148] Italics in the original: Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.

Within the context of desire, waiting always projects the possibility that the desired one may never appear, increasing anxiety beyond a rational threshold. Unlike waiting for your typical appointment in a bank, the desired subject carries no obligation to present and resolve the anticipation. The potential lack of resolution heightens the waiting anxiety as the lover-who-waits imagines the unnerving possibility of perpetually waiting for their desired. The robust urge to be present with an absent lover carries considerable anxiety in the anticipation; the 'terrible delicious ache of waiting' comes with such erotic yearning that is unparalleled with quotidian waiting scenarios.[149] Barthes compares the ominously menacing gothic forest trope to anticipating a phone call from a lover, correlating the uneasiness of the gothic as analogous to the anxiety of waiting for a lover.[150] The evaluation appears incomprehensible and merely incomparable, but this is Barthes assertion precisely; in short: waiting for a loved one carries an anxiety that is devoid of scope and logic. The lover-who-waits loses their 'sense of *proportion*'; 'everything is solemn' due to their anxiety-ridden waiting. [151] This indicates that the waiting lover does not totally lack proportions, rather they have no *sense* of them. The lover-who-waits beings to shift into a surreal realm: 'I am waiting, and everything around my waiting is stricken with unreality…'.[152] The waiting lover cannot grasp a *sense* on rationality or logical deliberations due to the exasperating futility of yearning, yet continuing to wait, for their desired.

Elio's persistent, even hyperbolic waiting for Oliver reflects Elio's lost *sense of proportions*. At the beginning of Part Two, he fabricates Oliver's sexual activities beyond logical scopes, informing the reader of Oliver's series of flirtatious flings over the course of a month and how Oliver's '…cock had been everywhere in B. Every girl had touched it, that cock of his. It had been in who knows how many vaginas, how many mouths.'[153] Elio considers how Oliver has had a series of sexual flings that has resulted in sexual experiences across the town. Elio's hyperbolic statement that 'every girl had touched' his penis demonstrates an additional depletion in Elio's *sense of proportions* as he disproportionately exaggerates Oliver's promiscuity, particularly given the timeframe of a month. Elio is disturbed at Oliver's sexual possibilities and embellishes Oliver's sexual experiences to spite him as Elio still yearns for his company and body. Oliver verifies that Elio's overstatement of his sexual partners is utterly fictitious when Oliver later declares he has slept with no other

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[149] Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic, and the Song of Songs*, 9.
[150] Carol Senf, "The Evolution of Gothic Spaces: Ruins, Forests, Urban Jungles," in *Dracula: An International Perspective*, ed. Marius-Mircea Crisan (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 263.; Fred Botting, *Gothic*, ed. John Drakakis, The New Critical Idiom, (London, England: Routledge, 1996/2015), 2, 5, 7.
[151] Italics in the original: Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.
[152] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 38.
[153] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 67.

person than Elio.[154] Such examples of Elio losing a *sense of proportions* further codes a stereotypically emotionally-driven 'feminine' identity that is contrasted to the virile logic of 'maleness'. As Elio continues to adhere to Barthes's considerations of the waiting lover who is historically feminised, he continues to engender female qualities through his perpetual performative waiting.

Elio recognises that he has lost his sense of proportion in waiting, as 'everything is solemn: I have no sense of proportions'.[155] Elio histrionically considers macabre possibilities of killing and even paralysing Oliver, in order to end his 'immensely pathetic' waiting.[156] Among his intensifications is an irrational wish to cripple Oliver in order to terminate his agonising waiting: 'If I didn't kill him, then I'd cripple him for life… If he were in a wheelchair, I would always know where he was, and he'd be easy to find.'[157] Elio's fantasy would enable him to exchange subject/object roles, effectively making Oliver the lover-who-waits, and Elio the one with the power to inflict the tumultuous anxiety of waiting. Elio's waiting for Oliver parallels Barthes's murky notion of 'everything is solemn'[158] as Elio continues his irrational considerations in pondering his 'wanting' Oliver to die,[159] in committing of self-harm, and even suicide.[160] Aciman, thus, subjects Elio to a train of 'trivial delays'[161] that trigger his melodramatic thoughts while waiting, which manifests in a pattern of fatal solutions. In turn, this heightens Elio's repetition of the effete performative as he ritualistically performs the feminine act of waiting, uttering 'I am feminine'. However, Elio will disrupt his own recurrent performative identity, demonstrating that his gender designation is not 'settled'; that he is 'constantly in the process of being remade'.[162] Ironically, through his attempt to disrupt the waiting role, Elio only further adheres to Barthes's model of the feminine lover-who-waits, as we shall see.

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[154] Elio's exaggeration and anxiety in believing that Oliver is sleeping with many others is disapproved as he finds Oliver sitting alone when Elio believes he was sleeping with others. Oliver alludes he knew that Elio thought he was with other lovers, but affirms that he was always alone. Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 153-54.

[155] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.

[156] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.

[157] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 42.

[158] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.

[159] 'I wanted him dead too, so that if I couldn't stop thinking about him and worrying about when would be the next time I'd see him, at least his death would put an end to it.' Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 42.

[160] 'Then it hit me that I could have killed myself instead, or hurt myself badly enough and let him know why I'd done it.' Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 42.

[161] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 37.

[162] Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 10.

Disrupting Waiting

Barthes explicitly conflates the position of waiting with love:

> "'Am I in love? – Yes, since I'm waiting.' The other never waits. Sometimes I want to play the part of the one who doesn't wait; I try to busy myself elsewhere, to arrive late; but I always lose at this game… The lover's fatal identity is precisely: *I am the one who waits.*"[163]

Barthes seems to present a syllogism: if I wait, I am in love, and then explores its variations: if I am in love, I wait; if I do not wait, I am not in love. Thus, the lover-who-waits may attempt to play the 'part of the one who doesn't wait', yet these 'games' will prove futile. For example, they may deliberately arrive late themselves as Elio does, attempting to disrupt his waiting.[164] However, he does not succeed in terminating his habit of waiting for Oliver:

> … I had become so used to finding him waiting for me that I'd grown bold and didn't worry too much about when I got up. That would teach me… I stayed in my room. Just to prove a point…. I came downstairs much later. By then he had already left… We stopped talking.[165]

The novel by this point has established that significant sexual interactions occur when the pair are together at the dining table, including sexual touching, flirting, and discussion.[166] By attempting to get Oliver to wait at this previously erotic site, Elio both tries to enhance Oliver's sexual anticipation and prove Oliver 'loves' him, by manipulating Oliver into the anxious lover-who-waits, but he loses the game. This is because, the waiting 'game' denotes an individual's internal struggle, directed at waiting for a desired object or person. In the realm of sexual desire, it is not so much a case of the desired 'other' intentionally making the Elio wait. Rather, when 'in love', the time spent apart is a tumult of anticipation to be reunited, regardless of what the absent is doing. The lover attempting to reverse their waiting position is futile since the waiting is internal and

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[163] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 39-40.
[164] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 39-40.
[165] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 45.
[166] Sexual discourse often occurs around the family table: Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 50-52, 83.

subjective.[167] Thus, as Elio realises he cannot rid himself of the waiting role, he changes the way he waits.

<div align="center">****</div>

Barthes deems the act of waiting 'historically female', prefiguring Butler's performativity theories by positioning the act as 'doing' gender.[168] Elio confirms this point as he ritualistically reiterates his waiting act, thus shaping a gendered 'enactment' through this performative waiting.[169] I argue that he is femininised through his perpetual waiting, not to declare Elio 'female', but to reflect on Elio's waiting capacity to perform what is an effete gender role. I do not argue that Elio is innately 'feminine'; nor do I argue that he 'chooses' his gender through waiting. Rather, as Elio repeats the waiting act, he enacts an 'undoing' and 'redoing' of his expected gender, shifting the 'feminine' and 'masculine' norms as he creates new possibilities of remaking his gendered identity outside the binary; he is both masculine and feminine.[170] Aciman may have employed the waiting trope to reinforce Elio as the inexperienced and younger counterpart in the relationship, particularly to illustrate their age gap, which has surprisingly become a controversial topic.[171] The young Elio first waits, then attempts to rid himself of the role by assigning it to Oliver, which fails. Elio appears fatally 'stuck' in the feminised role of the lover who waits.[172] In the next chapter, however, I explore how Elio considers other modes of waiting. With its adjoining balcony to Oliver's room and peekable fixtures, Elio uses the setting of his bedroom to take back power. That is, he begins to wait enticingly by staging his waiting body, using his bedroom like an eighteenth-century boudoir.

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[167] Schweizer, "On Waiting," 781. Schweizer 781

[168] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 13-14.

[169] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 32.

[170] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 32.

[171] Elio is seventeen and Oliver is twenty-four when they first met: Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 9 & 21. See Bloomer's discussion: on the controversy Jeffrey Bloomer, "What Should We Make of Call Me By Your Name's Age-Gap Relationship?," in *Slate* (The Slate Group, 2017). https://slate.com/human-interest/2017/11/the-ethics-of-call-me-by-your-names-age-gap-sexual-relationship-explored.html. Also, see the illuminating comparisons to 'straight' couples in films that lacked such controversy: Jacob Ogles, "19 Straight Films Where Call Me By Your Name's Age Gap Wasn't an Issue," in *The Advocate* (Pride Publishing).

[172] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 39-40.

<u>Chapter Three: The Boudoir Chronotope</u>

The word's etymology [boudoir] suggests male attempts to limit and qualify those female "occupations" demanding "meditation and solitude"; boudoir stems from the verb *bouder*, which means "to sulk" or "to *pout.*" Thus the room creates a place for female sulking.[173]

He'd unlatched the partly opened door to the balcony from the outside, stepped in – we weren't quite on speaking terms that day; he didn't ask if he could come in… This was when I raised my arm to greet him and tell him I was done *pouting*, no more *pouting*, ever, and let him lift the sheets and get into my bed.[174]

Origins of the Boudoir

According to early French sources of 1752, the original definition delineated the boudoir as a small cabinet-like dwelling for women to go to *sulk* and *pout*,[175] which the etymology of the noun 'boudoir' supports, deriving from the French verb 'bouder', also meaning to sulk and pout.[176] According to Lilley, when women were 'moody' or typically experiencing premenstrual tension, they customarily visited their boudoir to purge their emotions by 'pouting'.[177] A coining definition of the boudoir was depicted by Nicolas Le Camus de Méziéres, a celebrated eighteenth century French architect. He described the boudoir in explicit architectural terms, illustrating the boudoir as an 'alcove or rather recess ten or twelve feet deep… Glasses all around; a well-proportioned dome in the center of the ceiling; and a bed placed directly beneath, detached on every side and decked *à la Polonaise*…'.[178] Le Camus even stipulated a strict colour scheme for the boudoir, approving only white and blue as 'admissible colours' since red was 'too harsh; yellow would create unpleasing reflections; green would appear too serious.'[179] Le Camus's determination of the boudoir focuses extensively on architectural detail, but he did not neglect the purpose of the space, regarding the boudoir as the 'abode of delight', where the dweller 'seems to reflect on her designs

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[173] Italics added: Nicole Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," *Literature Interpretation Theory* 15, no. 2 (2004): 106.

[174] Italics added: Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 216.

[175] Ed Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53, no. 2 (1994): 194-95.

[176] "Boudoir," in *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. Angus Stevenson and Maurice Waite (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2011), 164.

[177] Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," 197.

[178] Nicolas Le Camus de Méziéres, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Arts with Our Sensations*, trans. David Britt, Texts & Documents: A Series of The Getty Center Publication Programs, (Santa Monica, CA: The Getty Center of the History of Art and the Humanities, 1780/1992), 117.

[179] Méziéres, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Arts with Our Sensations*, 117.

and to yield to her inclinations'.[180] Lilley claims that the boudoir was not initially sexualised,[181] but Le Camus's comments suggest otherwise with his conclusion that the initial French boudoir had an overarching 'aim for the ultimate perfection: let desire be satisfied without impairing enjoyment.'[182] Thus, even with such a detailed manuscript of specifically architectural requirements, the boudoir was defined, in its nascence, as an erotic space.

The boudoir evolved over time as flexible space that adapted to its contextual surroundings and inhabitants' needs, thus operating as both a place and a concept in France during the eighteenth century.[183] Shadowing Barthes's analysis with Sade, I shall not only focus on the message that lay within Elio's waiting, but *how* that message is formed.[184] The French boudoir was a fitting place for eighteenth century women to carry out their domestic *waiting*. According to Reynolds, the boudoir empowered women with their first private space,[185] providing unprecedented female agency which concerned men.[186] Such agency permitted women to wait on *their* terms: reading novels, plotting erotic advances, or being sexual.[187]

Schweizer considers how Kate Croy, in Henry James's novel *The Wings of the Dove*, grows impatient of waiting and decides take charge:

> The waiter no longer perceives the hour as a line along which times moves independently of her but as a duration which she must embody and traverse. The hour no longer moves but she moves it. She is the hour that moves.[188]

The characterisation development in James's novel signifies the transformation from passive to active waiter as Kate Croy takes control over her waiting, enduring the anticipation in a way that is lively, even vigorous. Schweizer's analysis reinforces Barthes reflections:

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[180] Méziéres, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Arts with Our Sensations*, 115.
[181] Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," 195.
[182] Méziéres, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Arts with Our Sensations*, 118.
[183] Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," 193-95.
[184] 'In *Sade/Fourier/Loyola*, he [Barthes] succinctly described his hermeneutic method: "I listen to the message's transport, not the message." Banish the message. Preserve the exaltation that surrounds it.' Koestenbaum, "Foreword: In Defense of Nuance," x.
[185] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 105.
[186] Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," 197.
[187] Melissa A. Deininger, ""'Il Est de Certaines Choses Qui Demandent Absolument des Voiles": The Space of the Boudoir in the Marquis de Sade," *Style* 48, no. 4 (2014).
[188] Schweizer, "On Waiting," 782.

Absence persists – I must endure it. Hence I will manipulate it: transform the distortion of time into oscillation, produce rhythm, make an entrance onto the stage of language… Absence becomes an active practice….[189]

Thus, in the waiting process, a shift may occur into an active form of waiting. The one-who-waits takes control, and rather than passively observing the time tick by, the one-who-waits begins to *use* their waiting time. As the space/concept dispersed across shores, the revolutionary boudoir empowered such an active shift in waiting on a public scale.[190] The boudoir enabled women to progress from their passive waiting in the shared domestic space, which was subjugated by the male, into an active, private pursuit of time. Thus, the boudoir provided agency for eighteenth century women to actively manipulate their time in absence of their beloved.

Melissa Deininger argues that the early sexual connotations of the boudoir developed alongside the fictional novel with 'modern notions of the boudoir as a site of female power and seduction'.[191] The boudoir was defined specifically as a female space that was used privately.[192] With the emergence of the novel, French noblewomen of the last half of the eighteenth century began to expect an education through their marriage with access to books and a private space for reading.[193] The boudoir became a timely space for this educative reform in two ways: the act of reading is often solitary and, therefore, the boudoir was a useful space to go when 'sullen' and wishing to read; it also provided an opportunity for authors to write about the boudoir to provoke political and social change as exemplified by Marquis de Sade. Sade's notorious *Philosophy in the Boudoir* explores libertine politics, explicit rape, sexual torture, and notions of ultimate grotesque, all transpiring within the 'egalitarian' boudoir space.[194] Thus, boudoirs can be heightened and even life-threatening places due to the self-governing agency of the space. Albeit at an excessively contrived level, Sade's boudoir reinforces Le Camus's coining definition of letting 'desire be satisfied without impairing enjoyment':[195] the boudoir is an unrestricted space to explore one's deepest desires, free from restrictive societal frameworks and judgement. Unlike Le Camus, a definition taken from Sade's fiction of the boudoir would not focus on the decorative or

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[189] Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 16.
[190] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants."
[191] Deininger, ""Il Est de Certaines Choses Qui Demandent Absolument des Voiles": The Space of the Boudoir in the Marquis de Sade," 563.
[192] Deininger, ""Il Est de Certaines Choses Qui Demandent Absolument des Voiles": The Space of the Boudoir in the Marquis de Sade," 564.
[193] Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," 195.
[194] Marquis de Sade, *Philosophy in the Boudoir*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (England: Penguin Books Ltd, 1795/2011).
[195] Méziéres, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Arts with Our Sensations*, 118.

architectural features of the space, rather its capability of functioning as a flexible, private space that provides the occupant with agency to sulk, pout, or fuck. Sade purposefully omits descriptive features of his characters' boudoirs, enabling his readership of mostly women to reconstruct the sexually explicit and libertine acts in their boudoirs.[196] Literary fiction has thus dominated boudoir discourse, acting as a blueprint for readership to follow.[197] Sade's notable novels, *Justine* (1791), *Juliette* (1799), *Philosophy of the Bedroom* (1795) all feature boudoirs that are flexible in their definition and confirm a significance of the specific boudoir's contextual surroundings.[198] As the boudoir assimilated into England, the English boudoir paralleled the French shift from an architectural emphasis to an adaptive, metonymic space based on the dweller's necessities.

English Literature and The Boudoir

Reynolds explores how the boudoir was a metonymic representation of 'Britain's struggle to define the rights and wrongs of woman, the nature and redress of her difficulties.'[199] The boudoir became a symbol of the Victorian revision of femininity, sexually, and female education, and was thus immersed into the elite British homes in aid of mimicking the French modernisation of female agency. The significance of the boudoir in Victorian England is tangible when considering William Lazenby's continuation of a magazine considered pornographic at that time, *The Pearl*, under the title *The Boudoir*.[200] As the boudoir became an English house-hold staple in architecture and literature, it gained a heighted erotic and fetishised status during nineteenth century.[201] It was this version of the boudoir that disseminated throughout privileged England from French architectural trends and novels.[202] Following de Sade, female English authors, such as Maria Edgeworth and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, developed the literary boudoir from the once architecturally rigid room to a 'fluid and intermediary space' for individual practice.[203] Although diverging from Le Camus's extensive list of architectural boudoir features, including 'looking glasses', a 'chimneypiece', and a

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[196] Deininger, ""Il Est de Certaines Choses Qui Demandent Absolument des Voiles": The Space of the Boudoir in the Marquis de Sade," 565-66.
[197] Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," 198.
[198] Deininger, ""Il Est de Certaines Choses Qui Demandent Absolument des Voiles": The Space of the Boudoir in the Marquis de Sade," 564-68.
[199] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 103.
[200] Title reads: 'William Lazenby's licentious and decadent continuation to his classic Victorian erotic periodical The Pearl, brimming with debauched tales and bawdy lyrics.' *The Boudoir: Volumes 1 & 2: A Magazine of Scandal, facetiae etc.*, (Locus Elm Press, 1880/2015).
[201] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 103.
[202] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 103.
[203] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 104 & 20.

'daybed/ottoman',[204] French and English literature drew closer to Le Camus's concluding thoughts on the boudoir as a space for sensual delight and ultimate desire.[205]

Reynolds' analysis of 'Belinda', a novel published by English/Irish writer Maria Edgeworth in 1801, considers how the boudoir functions as a place of protest against normative values. Reynolds states that '… the boudoir's semantically freighted space recuperates the "pathological" in female sexuality suggested by Lady Delacour's boudoir and places it firmly within the margins of domestic (re)productivity and respectability, bringing it out of the closet, so to speak.'[206] Reynolds positions the boudoir as a space for political and social change; it develops the female sexuality from 'pathological' to respectful, within the 'female' domestic realm. Thus, the female reclaims her identity from the pathological in her private space. Fittingly, Reynolds uses the queer metaphor of 'coming out of the closet' which parallels the development of the female body as 'pathologised' to then being regarded beside 'productivity and respectability' with the queer 'pathologised' body that analogously develops 'productivity and respectability'. [207]

I shall argue that Aciman's protagonist, Elio, effectively 'comes out of the closet' as he transforms his waiting role by using his bedroom analogous to the boudoir of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Analogous to Edgeworth's characters, Aciman's Elio uses his domestic boudoir to progress the extremely 'pathological' views of gay/homosexual sexuality that existed within the deadly epoch of nineteen-eighties. In turn, this develops the condemned sexuality into a 'domestic productivity and respectability' as the reader witnesses Elio maintain a relationship over decades with another male.[208] Aciman's novel breaks down the binary of straight/gay, which brings queerness 'out of the closet' in a best-selling novel. What moves me in this novel is how it enables queer relationships and sexualities to be perceived as non-pathologised within the nineteen-eighties. Thus, whether Sade's protest for libertine political freedom, Edgeworth's protest for female recognition, or Aciman's protest for queer identification: the boudoir functions as a political chronotope that protests societal values and norms.

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[204] Méziéres, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Arts with Our Sensations*, 115-18.

[205] Méziéres, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Arts with Our Sensations*, 118.

[206] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 117.

[207] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 117.

[208] By the end of the novel, Elio and Oliver maintain a relationship that has spanned decades, and now Aciman's upcoming sequel develops their relationship further. See: Hunter Harris, "André Aciman Is Officially Writing a Call Me By Your Name Sequel," in *Vulture* (New York, NY: New York Media LLC, 2019). https://www.vulture.com/2019/03/call-me-by-your-name-sequel-find-me-andre-aciman.html.

Paralleled Contexts: Pathologised Bodies

The boudoir is analogous to Bakhtin's discussion of the chronotopes, the *road* and the *encounter* as ritualised *time/spaces* that connects people 'who are normally kept separate by social and spatial distance can accidentally meet'.[209] The boudoir functions similarly, but within the domestic space of Elio's familial home. The boudoir is the convergent site of three distances that align with Bakhtin's '*road*': the spatial distance of Oliver in America and Elio in Italy; the temporal distance in their controversial ages of Elio at seventeen and Oliver with twenty-four years of age; and the social distance of heteronormative discourse and homophobic ideology during the HIV/AIDS pandemic that enforces the separation of their male bodies. A salient consideration in my application of the boudoir chronotope is the etymology of 'chronotope', considering the paralleled *time/space* of the original eighteenth-century French boudoir and that of Aciman's protagonist in nineteen-eighties. Thus, to apply the boudoir as a chronotope, I explore the historical *time/space* that underpins the eighteenth-century context of the boudoir, which I argue is comparable to the nineteen-eighties context of Aciman's novel.

Foucault states that at the beginning of the eighteenth century: '… the feminine body was analysed – qualified and disqualified – as being thoroughly saturated with sexuality; whereby it was integrated into the sphere of medical practices, by reason of a pathology intrinsic to it…'.[210] During this epoch, women were pathologised as the weaker, overtly sexual body. Indeed, according to Stephanie E. Libbon, the eighteenth century was the beginning of the female body being truly defined in contrast to the male body.[211] As interest in female rights increased during the prelude to the French revolution, women were subjected to medical analysis that resulted in a hybrid conclusion: they were qualified yet disqualified. Women were sanctioned as capable – or 'qualified' - individual bodies, biologically functioning and necessary for reproduction, however, they were simultaneously disqualified as preposterously erotic and emotional, thus inferior to virile men.[212] The 'medical' practices investigated organs, muscles, nerves, and skeletons seeking to provide 'ontological evidence' to support the notion of 'natural inequality' and to 'designate specific social roles for both men and women.'[213] French physician Pierre Roussel claimed in 1775 that the female

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[209] Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Hisotrical Poetics," 243.

[210] Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality*, 1, 104.

[211] Stephanie E. Libbon, "Pathologizing the Female Body: Phallocentrism in Western Science," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 8, no. 4 (2007): 80.

[212] '… the female labelled as more sensitive (i.e. emotionally reactive) and the male as more physical (i.e. tending toward the more muscular reactions)…' Libbon, "Pathologizing the Female Body: Phallocentrism in Western Science," 83.

[213] Libbon, "Pathologizing the Female Body: Phallocentrism in Western Science," 82.

body was prevented from higher thinking and education due to their finer, thinner physiques. Roussel's prejudicial assertion led to renowned medical physician Paul-Victor de Séze claiming in 1776 that higher thinking was harmful to women as it 'disrupts their proper functioning'.[214] As Foucault demystified the eighteenth century pathologisation of women, he illuminated the 'medical' examinations as ostensibly predetermined with misogynistic bias. Foucault's writings carry a grim irony as the history he was revealing would soon repeat: it was due to similar pathologisation and biases that assisted the HIV/AIDS proliferation[215] that caused Foucault's death.[216]

Analogous to women in late eighteenth century, the male homosexual body was scrutinised and pathologised during the late twentieth century by damaging preconceived ideologies. Sontag describes the HIV/AIDS pandemic as the '… perfect repository for people's most general fears about the future' leading to '…predictable efforts to pin the disease on a deviant group or a dark continent.'[217] Comparable to the black African body, the HIV/AIDS pandemic drew upon public 'fears' of homophobia to stigmatise and pathologise the male gay body. Media publications created and simultaneously reinforced smearing untruths of HIV/AIDS such as 'gay bug', 'gay cancer', and 'gay plague.'[218] Sontag discusses how this metaphor of 'plague' assisted in the societal judgment of the global spread of the viruses.[219] Thus, the stigma and pathologisation of queer bodies only served to increase the proliferation of the disease.[220] The disease's severe escalation provided a 'perfect repository' to reinforce prejudicial homophobic ideology, similar to the escalation of misogyny in the eighteenth century.

The 'gay' male identity has been historically and damagingly deemed 'promiscuous' since the fourteenth century.[221] Understandably, detrimental rhetoric during the HIV/AIDS outbreak played upon this harming 'promiscuous' stereotype.[222] Parallel to Foucault's writing of the eighteenth century female body, it is the gay/homosexual male body that was analysed 'as being

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[214] Libbon, "Pathologizing the Female Body: Phallocentrism in Western Science," 82.

[215] AIDS spread was particularly heighted by homophobia in France: see Simon Watney, *Imagine Hope: AIDS and Gay Identity*, Social Aspects of AIDS, (London, England: Routledge, 2000), 81-82.

[216] While there is significant debate around his cause of death (see David Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (London, England: Hutchinson, 1993), 474-80.), Foucault's partner of twenty-three years and a colleague confirmed that AIDS was Foucault's cause of death: James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1993), 24-25.

[217] Susan Sontag, *AIDS and its Metaphors* (London, England: Penguin Group, 1988/1990), 92.

[218] Clews, *Gay in the 80s: From Fighting for Our Rights to Fighting for Our Lives*, 232-35.

[219] Sontag, *AIDS and its Metaphors*, 54.

[220] Sigall K. Bell, Kevin Selby, and Courtney L. McMickens, *AIDS* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 95.

[221] Kane Race, *The Gay Science: Intimate Experiments with the Problem of HIV* (London, England: Routledge, 2017).

[222] Anthony M. Petro, *After the Wrath of God: AIDS, Sexuality, and American Religion* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 13 & 45.

thoroughly saturated with sexuality; whereby it was integrated into the sphere of medical practices, by reason of a pathology intrinsic to it…' .[223] Thus, similar to French eighteenth century women seeking their boudoir in 'retirement of disease' from pathologisation, gay males such as Elio would seek similar protection in their private, domestic sphere.[224] Clews even describes the HIV/AIDS pandemic as the 'convenient weapon of the 'gay plague'.[225] Thus, the 'medical' findings are regarded as 'predictable efforts' to shift the disease blame to the queer population. It was this binary that implied gay 'lifestyle' caused this killer disease, positioning the 'innocent' victims as 'us' and the less sympathised, AIDS-initiators as the gay 'other'/them.[226] Reasonably, the binary of 'us versus them' offers an opportunity to reinforce hostile ideology as it permits a shifting of frustration and blame to 'the other', efficiently defusing responsibility from the speaker.

A further correlation between contextual forces of the boudoir in eighteenth century France and Aciman's novel in late twentieth century are the comparisons of 'population' power. Foucault states that:

> 'One of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eighteenth century was the emergence of "population" as an economic and political problem… Governments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a "people", but with a "population," with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses…'[227]

A 'great innovation' of eighteenth century was the fresh capability to consider a general population. As sexuality within a population became a topic of interest, public discourse on the topic grew. The need to control and review the populations sexual relations also developed, resulting in the need to control and 'police' sex.[228] The HIV/AIDS pandemic in the nineteen-eighties effectively 'grew' a realisation of an emergent 'population'. The awareness of this 'population' influenced governments to look beyond individual cases and deal with the 'population' at large. The matters that Foucault highlights during the eighteenth century: 'death rates', 'life expectancy', 'state of

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[223] Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality*, 1, 104.
[224] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 115.
[225] Clews, *Gay in the 80s: From Fighting for Our Rights to Fighting for Our Lives*, 263.
[226] Clews, *Gay in the 80s: From Fighting for Our Rights to Fighting for Our Lives*, 235.
[227] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 25.
[228] Foucault states that: 'In the eighteenth century, sex became a "police" matter… A policing of sex: that is, not the rigor of a taboo, but the necessity of regulating sex through useful and public discourses.' Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality*, 1, 24-25.

health', and 'frequency of illnesses', resurfaced as pressing issues in the nineteen-eighties. When discussing the discovery and worry of syphilis and the hysteria of its populated spread, Sontag considers how 'AIDS has revived similar phobias and fears of contamination among *this* disease's version of "the general population"….'.[229] Thus, towards the end of twentieth century, governments, the media, and the public at large again drew upon the idea of a 'population' to fear the HIV/AIDS pandemic. There was also a specific public concern within the eighteenth century of children Elio's age commencing in sexual activities,[230] which parallels the contextual fears within the novel's epoch as a young seventeen-year-old engages in a sexual relationship with an older man during the HIV/AIDS epoch.[231] The boudoir chronotope shares contextual parallels of *time/space* between the female body in the eighteenth century and the gay/homosexual body during the nineteen-eighties through pathologisation and heightened interest in the populations sexuality.

Similar to Reynolds discussion of nineteenth century English authors, *Call Me By Your Name* is 're-fashioning it [the boudoir] to reflect cultural anxieties about gender and sexuality at historical moments when these anxieties ran especially high.'[232] The boudoir chronotope provides Aciman's characters with a sense of sexual agency, free from the strict gender/sexuality constraints that were present during the nineteen-eighties. Analogous to women in eighteenth century France and British women circa nineteenth century, Elio's queer relationship within the setting of the twentieth century Italy and America provides a context of social and political reformation regarding gender and sexual agency of pathologised identities. Rather than women, however, the marginalised in this more contemporary context is non-heteronormative sexuality. The decade of the nineteen-eighties was one - if not *the* - most vehemently deadly epochs for homosexual/queer men.[233] In this historical context, when queer men were pathologised, Elio and Oliver also seek a private space that provides agency to affirm and act upon their tabooed desires. Similar to how the boudoir 'recuperates the "pathological" in the female sexuality' in Edgeworth's novel *Belinda*, the boudoir chronotope in Aciman's novel delivers a 'free' space for recuperating same-sex desire,[234] reinforcing Butler's notion of the performative 'true space' that belongs to Elio and Oliver's loving, performative acts.[235]

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[229] Italics in the original: Sontag, *AIDS and its Metaphors*, 27.
[230] '… the sex of the schoolboy became in the course of the eighteenth century – and quite apart from that of adolescents in general – a public problem.' Foucault, *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality*, 1, 28.
[231] Such age fears and controversy continue to cause discussion, as mentioned previously on page 29 of this thesis.
[232] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 104.
[233] Watney, *Imagine Hope: AIDS and Gay Identity*, 81-83.
[234] Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 117.
[235] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 73.

Boudoir as Waiting Chronotope

Deininger reflects how Sade's characters use the boudoir to 'recapture this lost supremacy in the face of societal chaos'.[236] Similarly, Elio uses the boudoir to reclaim lost power from his heteronormative society. Other than his emerging sexuality, Elio would be an upper-class citizen of his society: exceptionally educated, widely read, multi-lingual, a classical musician, and from a wealthy family. Elio forms a sense of 'lost supremacy in the face of the societal chaos' of the nineteen-eighties as Oliver informs him of the taboo and shameful nature of their relationship. As Elio and Oliver publicly embrace for the first time, Oliver states: 'We can't do this – I know myself. So far we've behaved. We've been good. Neither of us has done anything to feel ashamed of. Let's keep it that way. I want to be good.'[237] This initial sexual encounter, positions their sexual relationship as shameful and prohibited. The qualitative 'good' sets up an oppositional binary, with Oliver, the aged, experienced counterpart, setting up their amorous relationship as an antithesis of 'good' to the inexperienced seventeen-year-old Elio, as something to feel ashamed of. Upon Oliver's reflection on their public behaviour, the pair agree to refrain from discussing their relationship any further.[238] Denied any legitimacy to his desires, Elio seeks a private domain to 'recapture this lost supremacy'; his teenage-bedroom evolves from the site of painful waiting into a seductive boudoir where the lover-who-waits experiments with a rich exploration of his sexual desires.[239]

In one day, Elio uses his bedroom both to sulk over Oliver and then to entice him sexually. After an embarrassing nose bleed, Elio 'mopes' on his bed and considers how strong his desire is for Oliver, which brings tears to his eyes: '…tears I wished to drown in his pillow, soak in his bathing suit, tears I wanted him to touch with the tip of his tongue and make sorrow go away.'[240] The prohibition Oliver has placed on their relationship, thus, first evokes the original usage and etymology of the boudoir. Elio aligns to the space's erotic definition when his sorrow results in sexually heightened images, and he considers three progressively erotic ways to wipe away his tears. First, drowning his tears in Oliver's pillow reflects Elio's desire to be in Oliver's bed, where Oliver would comfort Elio physically and freely. Secondly, soaking his tears in Oliver's bathing suits metonymically resonates as a contiguous part of the desired Oliver. Reminiscent of Cézanne's

[236] Deininger, ""Il Est de Certaines Choses Qui Demandent Absolument des Voiles": The Space of the Boudoir in the Marquis de Sade," 567.
[237] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 82.
[238] 'No speeches, nothing, not a word.' Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 103.
[239] Schweizer, "On Waiting," 778.
[240] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 85.

series on 'bathers'[241] and Robert R. Bliss's artwork,[242] Elio's sexual interest in Oliver's bathing suits is erotically striking and consistent throughout the novel with eighteen sensual references to bathers.[243] Elio appreciates that the bathing suits have been in contact with Oliver's genitals as he wears the suit, rubs his face inside it, smells it, kisses it, and then wishes to find a hair to lick inside the garment.[244] Elio contemplates a bodily act that is explicitly sexual with oral enjoyment as he considers Oliver tonguing away his pouting tears.[245] Thus, Elio begins to use his bedroom as a boudoir to both sulk and sexually fantasise about Oliver, allowing him to 'recapture this lost supremacy'.[246] As Oliver censors Elio on both activity and discourse of their relationship, Elio remains as the waiting lover, anticipating Oliver's next move. Similar to the treatment of eighteenth-century French women, Oliver leaves the emotional Elio in the boudoir chronotope to purge his sorrow through 'pouting' considerations. Elio, however, will develop his sexual fantasises while waiting, establishing a queer jouissance.

'Jouissance' derives from the French verb 'jouir', meaning 'enjoy',[247] however, Jacques Lacan defines jouissance as: '… the kind of enjoyment beyond the pleasure principle (including orgasm) denoted by the French *jouissance* is well enough known by now to the English-reading public to require no translation.' [248] Dylan Evans, a Lacanian Psychoanalysis, tracks Lacan's use of 'jouissance' throughout his work, particularly through untranslated volumes. Evans affirms that the sexual connotations of 'jouissance' becomes clear in Lacan's work from 1957, where '… Lacan uses the term to refer to the enjoyment of sexual object (Ec, 453) and to the pleasures of masturbation (S4, 241), and in 1958 he makes explicit the sense of *jouissance* as orgasm (Ec, 727).'[249] Similar to the boudoir door, which I shall later discuss, a peach that Elio brings to his bedroom/boudoir functions as a sexual metonym for the male body.[250] Neither Ovid and T. S. Eliot's characters dared to eat 'the peach', signifying that they never obtained their pleasure, which

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[241] Paul Cézanne, *Bathers,* 1890. Oil on Canvas.

[242] Robert R. Bliss, in *Artnet*. http://www.artnet.com/artists/robert-r-bliss/.

[243] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 5, 14, 19, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 33, 41, 42, 54, 61, 65, 85, 92, 109, 220.

[244] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 61.

[245] Similar to Walsh's analysis of erotic desire experienced as 'oral enjoyment': Walsh, *Exquisite Desire: Religion, the Erotic, and the Song of Songs*, 91.

[246] Deininger, ""'Il Est de Certaines Choses Qui Demandent Absolument des Voiles": The Space of the Boudoir in the Marquis de Sade," 567.

[247] "Jouissance," in *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. Angus Stevenson and Maurice Waite (12th, Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2011), 767.

[248] Italics in the original: Jacques Lacan, *Ècrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1966/2006), 761.

[249] Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (London, England: Routledge, 1996/2006), 93.

[250] Anus metonymic of the male: 'The anus becomes not only a metaphor… but also a metonym for the male body itself.' Jonathan Kemp, "Schreber and the Penetrated Male," in *Deleuze and Queer Theory*, ed. Chrysanthi Nigianni and Merl Storr (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 155.

bears sexual significance for T. S. Eliot's persona, Prufrock.[251] Aciman resolves and extends the literary metonym as Elio masturbates with the peach and Oliver later consumes the semen-infused fruit. Elio's sexual agency is heightened through the boudoir chronotope as he discovers a queer jouissance through his now erotic waiting:

> … I'd pierced the fruit along the crease that reminded me so much of Oliver's ass…[I] gently brought the fuzzy, blush-colored peach to my groin, and then began to press into it till the parted fruit slid down my cock…The peach was soft and firm, and when I finally succeeded in tearing it apart with my cock, I saw that its reddened core reminded me not just of an anus but of a vagina, so that holding each half in either hand firmly against my cock, I began to rub myself, thinking of no one and of everyone…[252]

Here, in this 'boudoir', Elio goes beyond daring to eat the Prufrockian peach and reaches a queer jouissance that aligns with all three Lacanian definitions. Firstly, through the comparison of Oliver's anus, the peach becomes a sexual object that is contiguous of the desired body, Oliver. The fruit is also a symbol of Elio's queer desire at it is metonymic of both Oliver's anus and Marzia's vagina, positioning Elio's jouissance as queer. While waiting in the boudoir, the fruit enables Elio to transcendentally fulfil his anticipated sexual enjoyment of penetrating Oliver, without directly engaging with the absent body of Oliver. Thus, Elio reaches a jouissance through the sexual object of the peach,[253] which prepares Elio to subsequently penetrate Oliver just pages later.[254] Secondly, the peach creates jouissance through pleasures of masturbation as Elio erotically presses and rubs himself with the split peach, reaching a sexual climax.[255] Finally, the masturbation concludes in an orgasm, adhering to the third Lacanian definition.[256] Perhaps Elio's advice for Prufrock is to be bolder, and rather than following in the indecisive hubris of Hamlet, take charge of his 'peach' and go beyond, far beyond, just daring to eat the 'fruit'. Thus, through Lacan's concept of jouissance, in addition to Oliver eating the semen-infused peach[257], Elio adheres to Le

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[251] CF: Ovid, *Ovid's Erotic Poems: Amores and Ars Amatoria*, trans. Len Krisak (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 61. and T. S. Eliot, *Prufrock and Other Observations* (London, England: The Egoist LTD, 1917), 15.

[252] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 146.

[253] Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 93.

[254] 'Just because he'd let me be his top last night.' Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 157.

[255] Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 93.

[256] Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, 93.

[257] '[Oliver] dipped a finger into the core of the peach and brought it to his mouth… I watched him put the peach in his mouth and slowly begin to eat it, staring at me so intensely that I thought even lovemaking didn't go so far.' Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 146.

Camus's boudoir definition in the boudoir 'aim for the ultimate perfection: let desire be satisfied without impairing enjoyment.'[258] Elio thus finds new, erotic ways of waiting in his boudoir that metonymically bring him a substituted version of his desired, absent body. He ceases from merely 'pouting' or sulking, as he sexually fantasises and, thus, calls his absent amorous into a phenomenological state of 'present'.

Elio also advances beyond a waiting of 'pouting' and sulking as he sexually positions himself and intentionally ensures Oliver has access to him. As Elio feels 'pinioned' in his room while waiting, he strategically considers: 'I had learned to leave my French windows ajar, and I'd lie on my bed wearing only my bathing suit, my entire body on fire.'[259] Elio responds to Oliver's absence passionately as he concocts a plan to sexually entice Oliver. His clothing consists of mere swimwear that is tight-fitting, revealing apparel, as Elio later confirms.[260] Elio waits in his eroticised dress wear with his 'body on fire', signifying potent sexual yearning for Oliver that he may perceivably see as an erection. Thus, Elio is signifying to Oliver that he is primed for sexual activity. Elio's bedroom carries boudoir associations with ajar French windows, ensuring his nearly-nude, urging body is visible and accessible to Oliver upon his return. Elio is now actively waiting as he plots an erotic entrance and sexualised offer for Oliver. Similar to Maria Edgeworth's novel, Elio aligns with notions that 'the *boudoir* was configured as a locus of conspiratorial plotting on the part of women, a dangerous site of feminine influence and erotic commerce…'.[261] Thus, he waits differently to his previous passivity and lost sense of proportions; he now actively schemes and strategizes while waiting. Bakhtin's chronotope theory reinforced such notions of the boudoir entailing 'conspiratorial plotting' as he considered how 'the secrets of the boudoir' entailed a space/time where 'webs of intrigue are spun'.[262] Elio begins to actively wait by explicitly 'plotting' through 'erotic commerce',[263] shifting his gender performative to an additionally 'active' type of waiting that is logical and deliberate. Elio is 'intentional' and specific about his sexualised bodily placements and ensures access is available for Oliver, leaving a clear entrance to his bedroom and awaiting body.

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[258] Méziéres, *The Genius of Architecture; or, The Analogy of That Arts with Our Sensations*, 118.

[259] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 14.

[260] 'Just as he probably didn't care or notice each time my eyes wandered along his bathing suit and tried to make out the contour of what made us brothers in the desert.' Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 19. CF: 'How often had I stared at his bathing suit while his hat was covering his face? He couldn't have known what I was looking at.' Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 27.

[261] Melissa Hyde et al., *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Melissa Hyde and Jennifer Milam, Women and Gender in the Early Modern World, (Routledge, 2003), 101.

[262] Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Hisotrical Poetics," 246-47.

[263] Hyde et al., *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, 101.

Boudoir Metonymy: Threshold of Doorway

Schweizer reflects how Henry James's character in *The Wings of the Dove* begins to perceive objects in her bedroom in a different light: 'Each object is dragged out of its invisibility to have its particularity exposed to the curious, indifferent gaze of the waiter who finds in the accidental phenomenology of things only a mirror image of her own fortuitous existence.'[264] The lover-who-waits stumbles across this 'accidental phenomenology' of their self, through objects that previously appeared ordinary and conventional. Such consciousness of phenomenology links to Crangle's conception of Stein's female protagonist reaching an 'awakening' through waiting.[265] Schweizer confirms that '… the waiter's own body is included in this phenomenology of estranged objects.'[266] While waiting, the subject's consciousness of conventional objects bares a realisation of the waiting body's agency. Thus, as Diaconoff emphasises the structural significance of the boudoir architecture in relation to the sexual body, Crangle's 'awakening' of the dweller's body through bedroom objects perceivably functions within the boudoir.[267] Elio stumbles across this kind of 'accidental phenomenology' through a poetry book and his bedroom door, which will ultimately accompany him on his way to an 'awakening' of his sexual body and its relations with others.

While boudoirs have diverse aesthetics and structural features, the functions of 'pouting' and sexually scheming has remained. Diaconoff declares that the one essential feature of a boudoir is the symbolic and 'structural prop' of the door:

> … in the typical boudoir seduction scene of literature and art, the single requisite structural prop is the opening, passageway, or door that simultaneously carries sexual, psychological, and ideological import. Conventionally, the door is a structural signifier, a specially inflected challenge for the male who must penetrate and transgress it. [268]

The boudoir door is not merely a literal door; the entrance carries figurative, conceptual meaning. The metonymic door can represent the internal 'open' feelings of the occupant, in addition to the

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[264] Schweizer, "On Waiting," 783.
[265] As previously discussed on page 18 of this thesis: Crangle, *Prosaic Desires: Boredom, Laughter, and Anticipation*, 160.
[266] Schweizer, "On Waiting," 784.
[267] Suellen Diaconoff, *Through the Reading Glass: Women, Books, and Sex in the French Enlightenment*, ed. Michelle A. Massé, SUNY Series in Feminist Criticism and Theory, (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), 134.
[268] Diaconoff, *Through the Reading Glass: Women, Books, and Sex in the French Enlightenment*, 134.

signification of their 'open' body, primed for sexual intercourse. 'Inflected challenge' denotes a task for the male to 'penetrate' the occupant's mood first, the psychological, to ensure they are primed for sexual penetration, the physical. In other words, the door becomes a symbol of the dweller's current psychological state, an opening which the male must 'penetrate' first, before sexual penetration can commence. Diaconoff's sexualised diction with the verb 'penetrate' reinforces the metonymy between the status of the door and the penetrative status of the inhabitant. The difference between the comparing metaphor as opposed to the substituting metonym is of significance here as the door becomes contiguous of Elio's body. The doorway goes further than being a metaphor that is 'like' Elio's 'open' body: it is substituting his anus. This intensifies the erotic affiliation with the object, aligning to Schweizer's concept of 'accidental phenomenology' that creates a 'mirror image'.[269] Thus, if the door is closed, the inhabitant is psychologically 'closed', 'pouting', and not of disposition for sexual advances. Conversely, if the entrance is open, then the dweller is not only open to viewed, but also 'open' and emotionally ready for exchanges, be it conversation or sexual. The bedroom door carries a significant threshold that has be documented throughout literature since Ancient Greece, notably with the tale of Candaules and Gyges; Candaules dishonestly 'penetrates' the bedroom threshold to show off his undressing wife to Gyges, which results in his death.[270] Thus, the boudoir door perpetuates and even heightens the threshold since the space is an erotic private domain that only 'privileged guests' are able to gain access to.[271] In the novel, Elio considers how Oliver cannot bring himself to 'penetrate' his bedroom's threshold as he walks by his windows and door, knowing he wants to stop and enter, but does not, a point to which I return below.[272]

Fittingly, *threshold* is another chronotope, one that Bakhtin defines as the 'highly charged with emotion and value' that 'can be combined with the motif of encounter'.[273] Here Bakhtin demonstrates how two chronotopes function simultaneously, combining the chronotopes of *threshold* and *encounter*: it is the *threshold* that must be penetrated for the *encounter* to occur. Bakhtin

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[269] Schweizer, "On Waiting," 783.

[270] Alex Purves, "In The Bedroom: Interior Space in Herodotus' Histories," in *Space, Place, and Landscape in Ancient Greek Literature and Culture*, ed. Kate Gilhuly and Nancy Worman (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 104-05.

[271] Deininger, ""'Il Est de Certaines Choses Qui Demandent Absolument des Voiles": The Space of the Boudoir in the Marquis de Sade," 569.; Also adheres to Lilley: 'The occupant would certainly admit her "dear friend," and men were also allowed entrance, but only if they had been specifically invited.' Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," 193.

[272] 'I recognized him by the inflection of his footfalls up the stairway to our balcony or on the landing outside my bedroom door. I knew when he stopped outside my French windows, as if debating whether to knock and then thinking twice, and continued walking.' Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 39.

[273] Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Hisotrical Poetics," 248. NB: Bakhtin on occasion used the terms *motif* as a synonym for *chronotope*. *Bakhtin's Theory of the Literary Chronotope: Reflections, Applications, Perspectives*, 6.

confirms that the *threshold* carries metaphorical meaning to 'the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (or the indecisiveness that fails to change a life, the fear to step over the threshold).'[274] Throughout the novel, three chronotopes overlap (*boudoir, threshold*, and *encounter)* to function simultaneously as Elio waits for the 'moment of crisis' where Oliver accepts his boudoir offer and makes a 'decision that changes' both their lives. It is Elio's earlier, indecisive waiting that halts their relationship from sexually progressing; once Elio becomes decisive and penetrates Oliver's bedroom door *threshold*, then the two finally have sex.[275]

Elio erotically entices Oliver by deliberately removing the 'inflected challenge' of the *threshold* in the boudoir door, ensuring he is visible and sexually positioned for Oliver's return home. Elio reflects: 'I had left my bedroom door *intentionally* ajar, *hoping* that the light from the foyer would stream in just enough to reveal my body. My face was turned toward the wall. It was up to him.'[276] Elio '*intentionally'* leaves his bedroom door ajar, developing his earlier efforts of leaving his window unlocked in aim of Oliver 'penetrating' the threshold of his window, before penetrating him.[277] He now actively opens an entrance, subtracting the challenging threshold, '*hoping'* for Oliver to see his bare body and accept his erotic offer. 'Reveal' connotates that Elio is nude and that the light will not merely illuminate his appearance, but 'reveal' his 'body'. While toying with the threshold of the door, Elio actively creates a sexualised mise-en-scène that parallels the boudoir convention of the dweller charming as the 'to-be-looked-at-ness'.[278] Reynolds applies Mulvey's notion of women playing a 'traditional exhibitionist role' under a male gaze, signifying a 'to-be-looked-at-ness' in the boudoir.[279] A voyeurism forms over the viewing the dweller's iconographic 'to-be-looked-at-ness', creating an erotic dualism: the private space and the exploitation of this space through the desired gaze. Such sexual curiosities for voyeurism and scopophilia are palpable in contemporary erotica with popular content toying with the private/public dualism and voyeurism.[280] Elio removes any

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274 Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes Toward a Hisotrical Poetics," 248.

275 Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 133-34.

276 Italics added: Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 96.

277 '… all I wanted every night was for him to leave his room, not via its front door, but through the French windows on our balcony. I wanted to hear… the sound of my own window, which was never locked, being pushed open as he'd step into my room after everyone had gone to bed, slip under my covers, undress me without asking, and after making me want him more than I thought I could ever… work his way into my body…' Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 25.

278 Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 110.

279 Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narraitve Cinema," in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989/2009).

280 See Paasonen's chapter on voyeurism with narrative elements and focalization of pornography: Susanna Paasonen, "Visual Pleasures: From Gaze to Grab and Resonance," in *Carnal Resonance: Affect and Online Pornography* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), specifically 172-76, 79-82.; 'It may just as well be that [pornography] viewers do not want to be in control of the images unfolding but take more pleasure in being overwhelmed by them.' Paasonen, "Visual Pleasures: From Gaze to Grab and Resonance," 180.; and for a more detailed discussion on public/private dualism of pornography with 'ambient screens', see Ryan Bowles Eagle, "Ambient XXX: Pornography in Public Spaces," in

'transgression' from Oliver's entrance, ensuring that Oliver does not face the 'inflected challenge' of having to penetrate the boudoir's threshold. As it was the threshold to Oliver's bedroom that stopped Elio entering and thus kept him waiting, his removal of the threshold barrier demonstrates how far Elio has come with his waiting role.[281] The metonymy is compelling as he arranges himself for penetration, laying with his face towards the wall: leaving his penetrable 'open' anus facing the metonymically 'open' door, both awaiting simultaneous 'penetration'. Elio shifts from 'waiting on' Oliver, to actively enticing and inviting Oliver by sexually removing the threshold of the bedroom door and applying the metonymic boudoir door. Although the final line: 'It was up to him', appears passive in surrendering his sexual power to Oliver, Elio has thoughtfully created the sexual proposition. In the absence of Oliver, Elio slips into 'hysteria of seduction' adhering to Barthes's notion of the waiting lover uttering 'I *invoke* the other's protection, the other's return: let the other appear, take me away.'[282] Elio does not merely wait for Oliver to arrive and act upon him: Elio 'intentionally' creates an active sexual offer for Oliver to respond to. After constructing the sexual offer, it is now 'up to him [Oliver]' to accept or decline. Elio's bedroom also parallels the definition of a '*locus amoenus* for pleasurable sexual encounters'[283] as he uses the space as a multi-purpose site for sulking, enticing, and fucking, as Oliver accepts his offer and enters.[284]

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Just as Diaconoff argues regarding the boudoir, Elio uses his bedroom door as a 'structural prop' for sexual developments,[285] while further reinforcing common boudoir narratives by strategically guiding Oliver's possessive gaze onto his naked body.[286] Elio's bedroom functions akin to the chronotope of the eighteenth-century boudoir, adhering to generic patterns of boudoir literature found in the fiction of France and England. The boudoir provides a safe space within the HIV/AIDS epoch to declare and enact their desire; their waiting and sex are performative in ritualistically 'doing' gendered and sexual identities. Elio's performative act of waiting now shifts

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New Views on Pornography: Sexuality, Politics, and the Law, ed. Lynn Comella and Shira Tarrant (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015).

[281] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 126.

[282] Italics in the original: Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, 17.

[283] Deininger, """Il Est de Certaines Choses Qui Demandent Absolument des Voiles": The Space of the Boudoir in the Marquis de Sade," 569.

[284] Oliver enters Elio's bedroom/boudoir and leaves a note that sets up their midnight rendezvous, which entails their first sexual encounter. Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 119.

[285] Diaconoff, *Through the Reading Glass: Women, Books, and Sex in the French Enlightenment*, 134.

[286] See Reynolds discussion on Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* and Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess*: Reynolds, "Boudoir Stories: a Novel History of a Room and its Occupants," 119.

into an act of enticing and welcoming Oliver by removing the threshold of the doorway. Elio's gendered 'doing' of waiting becomes overtly sexualised and brings a layer of erotica to Elio's role of the lover-who-waits. This enhances his gendered performative as his sexuality heightens through his waiting act; he becomes gendered and actively sexualised during his ever-changing waiting.

AFTERWORD

This project has not been linear and has included following allusions in the novel from Lucretius to Proust. Although this reading did not make its way into the final analysis, I recognise that I gained insights beyond the ideas and philosophies presented in this thesis. I have authored an academic paper on the gender performativity within Aciman's novel and now a thesis on the trope of waiting and boudoir chronotope. However, there remains philosophical avenues beyond the scope of this project, including: how the triangulation of Elio/Marzia/Oliver aligns to René Girard and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's theories of mimetic desire;[287] how Elio's sexual positioning and Oliver's desiring gaze align with Barthes semantics and cinema theories;[288] and, most pressingly for me, how Aciman's characters act as a 'performative assembly' in protest of restrictive, Catholic Rome.

As an afterword, I wish to write a few words about how Butler's theory of a performative assembly may also function with a couple rather than crowd. That is, Butler focusses on protests and pride marches to theorise how a group of people in the public sphere may achieve more than mere presence: in appearing, they utter a collective performative, often 'We protest'.[289] I would argue that Elio and Oliver also exemplify Butler's concept of the assembly demonstrating a 'collective rejection of socially and economically induced precarity', particular within the context of the pathologising HIV/AIDS pandemic. They reflect Butler's notion that 'what we are seeing when bodies assemble on the street… or in other public venues is the exercise – one might call it performative – of the right to appear, a bodily demand for a more livable set of lives'.[290] As Elio and Oliver embark on a trip to Rome, their loving relationship leaves the boudoir and takes to the streets.[291] For the first time the reader experiences the pair freely demonstrating their love in the public realm. Both Oliver and Elio are aware of their presence in public and Elio knows that Oliver stops kissing him to observe if people are around them, ensuring that they are safe.[292] Thus, the pair are aware of their precarity in the public sphere. As they kiss and sexually embrace with Elio's

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[287] René Girard, *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel : Self and Other in Literary Structure*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1976). and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Gender Asymmetry and Erotic Triangles," in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1985/2016).

[288] Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (Kent, England: Atlantic Books, 1997). and Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (London, England: Vintage Publishing, 1980/2006).

[289] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*.

[290] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 24-25.

[291] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 205-07.

[292] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 205.

leg 'coiled around' Oliver,[293] the two are 'doing' a plural performative, thus forming an 'assembly' together. Their kissing and sexualised embrace is a 'coordinated action' that functions as a plural form of agency, promoting a social resistance against homophobia and restrictive ideologies of the nineteen-eighties epoch. [294]

The *institution* of context surrounding their performative act enhances the utterance of 'We protest' as they are situated in the Catholic capital of Italy; they protest in the most public of spheres that connotates the epicentre of stereotypically rigid, homophobic ideologies during the prejudicial HIV/AIDS epoch. Analogous to Butler's reflections of Pride marches where 'assemblies' take to the streets in celebration and political protest, Elio and Oliver's erotic presence in the Italian capital is '…exhibiting its value and its freedom in the demonstration itself…'.[295] As the pair knowingly kiss and physically embrace in the public sphere, they utter a performative of 'We protest', protesting their right to be visibly together in the centre of the public domain. Butler's most contemporary interests and theories in performativity theory are of relevance here as I reflect how Elio's intersections of gender and sexuality are constructed beyond his individual level, considering that Elio and Oliver declare their right to queer identity within the public sphere without harm. Particularly within the contextual paradigm of the nineteenth-eighties HIV/AIDS pandemic that prejudicially pathologised queer identities, Elio and Oliver's bodies 'call for justice' through their assembled presence on the street.[296] Whether their interjection is verbal or not, they utter 'we are not disposable… we are still here, persisting, demanding greater justice, a release from precarity, a possibility of a livable life'.[297]

[293] Aciman, *Call Me By Your Name*, 205.
[294] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 9.
[295] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 18.
[296] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 25.
[297] Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*, 25.

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