Chapter 1
Sex(in') the City

Lefebvre and the Conceptualization of Space

The relation between society and space is well articulated in Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, which has been a seminal work within discussions of space in humanities scholarship. Making use of a Marxist approach, Lefebvre argues that modes of production play a crucial role in the creation of space, whereby social spaces are produced by individual and collective actions undertaken by subjects who *situate* themselves in a determined space, "in which they must either recognize themselves or lose themselves, a space which they both enjoy and modify".[1] The idea of the subject's location, as part of a whole that precedes them, implies a dialectical relation between perceived, conceived, and lived spaces.[2]

The first, the perceived space, is characterized by a mastering and appropriation of space by society, associating daily routine and urban reality. The idea of a perceived space operates within a system of knowledge and as a mode of production, since it explains space in terms of people's lives therein and about the way they make use of urban reality in their daily routine. Harvey refers to Lefebvre's perceived space as 'material spatial practices', describing it as the flow and transfer of money, goods, communication, people and labor power, which warrant production and social reproduction. For Harvey, material spatial practices are related to the statist and administrative divisions of communities and neighborhoods, and to the ways in which society makes use of land and private property.[3]

Lefebvre's second concept, the conceived space, reflects on the ways in which we give order and coherence to space by producing thoughts and narratives about it. Here, space is discussed within epistemological frameworks related to science, sociology, architecture, urbanism, and geography, for instance, all of which produce discourses and narratives about space through the use of language. The conceived space

1 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 35.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 33; pp. 38–39.

3 Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 218; 220.

also operates within a system of knowledge and mode of production; however, these representations of space prioritize space itself, instead of focusing on the relationship between individuals and their social spaces.[4] Harvey goes further into Lefebvre's notion of conceived space to add that this axiom of space production also consists of making maps that include social, psychological, and physical distances; these maps are also mental and exist within spatial hierarchies and produce spatial discourses.[5]

Lastly, Lefebvre describes the lived space which functions as a space that the imagination seeks to change and to appropriate through more or less coherent systems of symbols and signs. Unlike perceived and conceived spaces, lived space is not so much related to the daily relation between society and space and to the conceptualization of space itself as it is to mental space, to writers, philosophers, or 'inhabitants' who seek to appropriate space and describe it through cognitive and intellectual interpretation. Furthermore, lived space also consists in the unconscious embodiment of spatial codes and symbols that could imply social norms and discourses that are acquired by assimilation within a determined social space. This conceptualization of space implies the influence that social space has on the formation of a subject, since it is the cognitive interpretation of social norms that determines the conditions in which a specific space shall be lived.[6] Harvey describes lived spaces as "mental inventions" that consist of "codes, signs, 'spatial discourses', […] imaginary landscapes […] that imagine new meanings or possibilities for spatial practices".[7]

Harvey discusses Lefebvre's concepts by emphasizing the socio-economic aspects of capitalist space production. He relates and elucidates the concepts of perceived, conceived, and lived spaces with the ways in which capitalism molds social relations as a whole; this point of departure serves as a means to support his argument of time-space compression in postmodernism. According to Harvey, the shift from industrial to neoliberal capitalism in the late-twentieth century comprises "an intense phase of time-space compression that has had a disorienting and disruptive impact upon political-economic practices, the balance of class power, as well as upon cultural and social life",[8] accelerating consumption, emphasizing the ephemerality and volatility of products, the labor force, and production techniques. His analysis of time and space is, thus, based on how capitalism, and neoliberalism in particular, affects our time-space experience in culture and social relations.

The discussion of neoliberalism's effects on urban space and on sexual practices will be particularly relevant in chapters 5 and 6, in which I discuss Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library* and *The Line of Beauty*, respectively. As I will elucidate in more detail, I reflect on neoliberalism in Foucault's and Harvey's terms, in which they regard it as a method of governing that "liberat[es] individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private prop-

4 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 38–39.

5 Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 221.

6 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 40–41.

7 Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, pp. 218–219.

8 *Ibid.*, p. 284.

erty rights, free markets, and free trade".[9] Moreover, Harvey notes that neoliberalism "seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market",[10] thereby suggesting that all social relations become informed by the rules of the free market. Not only does the mode of production affect the ways in which we experience time and space, but it also influences the ways in which sexual practices are enacted. In *The Swimming-Pool Library*, for instance, the protagonist's sexual encounters are often measured in terms of profit, given that the narration of cruising in London puts forward a notion of gay culture that is imbued with the logics of individual freedom, competition, and entrepreneurship.

In this sense, Lefebvre's theories about the production of space can be extended to the relationship between sexuality, gender, space, and mode of production (i.e., capitalism), since his conceptualization of space outlines a complex network of actors who are involved in the formation of space. Firstly, the conceived space, which entails various forms of conceptualization about space, can be discussed in terms of governmental decisions regarding urban space, for instance. Having in mind the idea that the regulation of sexuality has been employed as an important technology of social control, as Foucault has prominently elucidated, it is accurate to say that it also became a relevant aspect in the constitution of space. Mapping and controlling deviant sexuality in urban spaces was not only devised by creating legislation and by augmenting law enforcement, but also by producing narratives that asserted the dangers of sexual immorality in the city; this is an issue that I will elucidate in the subsequent section of this chapter. Secondly, the perceived space, which consists of the ways in which individuals and groups of people use and appropriate the spaces that they inhabit, becomes particularly relevant in the production of the city's sexual subcultures. While legislation and governmental regulation sought to map and to control deviant sexualities in cities, the opposite motion was also at play: individuals who embodied non-normative sexual and gender identities began to appropriate space throughout history and, as Bell and Valentine put it, "*queered* the streets; […] queered the whole city".[11]

In London, a gay urban culture emerged in the eighteenth century and consolidated itself throughout the nineteenth century,[12] while a lesbian subculture was only made visible in the beginning of the twentieth century and was only consolidated in the post-war period.[13] It was from the 1970s onwards that cultural commentators, geographers, and historians began to write about sexual subcultures in London. These cultures, according to Avery, are a phenomenon very much attuned to the 'spatial turn' in the humanities.[14] For Avery, the most relevant collaboration of works that relate space, gender, and sexuality include the ways in which people "interrogate how spaces

9 *Idem*, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, p. 2.

10 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

11 Bell and Valentine, *Mapping Desire*, p. 18. Emphasis in original.

12 Cf. Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914*, pp. 7–41; Cocks, "Secrets, Crimes and Diseases, 1800–1914" in Cook (ed.) *A Gay History of Britain*, pp. 107–144.

13 Cf. Jennings, *A Lesbian History of Britain*, pp. 131–136.

14 Cf. Avery, "Structuring and Interpreting Queer Spaces of London" in Avery and Graham (eds.) *Sex, Time and Place*, p. 8.

create, promote, control or close down sexual identities, practices and communities – and how, in turn, these identities, practices and communities influence and structure particular spaces".[15] Avery's comment about the relationship between sexual identities and spatial practices summarizes the dialectic relationship between the perceived, conceived, and lived spaces: while the conceived space enfolds official, scientific, and social discourses about space, the perceived and lived spaces directly entail the ways in which individuals can challenge these discourses and can change the landscapes in which they circulate. Where the perceived space consists of people's daily routines in the city, and how they create certain rituals within certain spaces, the lived spaces are linked to individuals' mental and subjective spaces and their relationship to their environment; this relationship can also be reflected in the ways in which writers and journalists, for instance, write about those spaces and contribute to the construction of an identity about those spaces.

As I have noted previously, Lefebvre relates lived space to the ways in which individuals *interpret* and *construct narratives* about space and how space informs the subjects who inhabit it. In many ways, conceived and lived spaces overlap in their meanings and in the role that they play in the production of space. This is due to the fact that conceived spaces entail the ways in which scientific discourses define spaces, and the lived spaces consist in the process of producing and understanding these discourses, which are crucial for the subject's formation. Thus, I believe that the difference between conceived and lived spaces lies in the matter of product and process: while the conceived space speaks *about* space under the premise of research and science, the lived space indicates the intellectual and cognitive relationship between individual and space, meaning that it points to the process of interpreting and reflecting on an individual's spatial surroundings and how these surroundings actually form an individual. In reading Lefebvre's notion of lived spaces as constructions of spaces that can entail new spatial practices, Harvey also references the ways in which artists imagine and portray spaces.[16] This is a significant perspective in the ways in which I will conduct my literary analyses in this book, particularly in my readings of Waters' and Hollinghurst's novels.

In their novels, both Waters and Hollinghurst combine imaginary and realistic London spaces by depicting them according to the historical period in which their plot unfolds. In *Tipping the Velvet* and in *Affinity*, Waters focuses on histories of London that privilege a lesbian perspective, creating spatial practices that constitute a fictional lesbian historiography. This will be one of the main topics of discussion in chapter 8 of this book in which I discuss the importance of creating spatial references for lesbian history, which, in spite of their fictionality, nevertheless address the question of lesbian invisibility in cultural and historical discourses.[17] In *The Night Watch*, however,

15 *Ibid.*

16 Cf. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p. 221.

17 Cf. Doan and Waters, "Making up lost time: Contemporary lesbian writing and the invention of history" in Alderson and Anderson (eds.) *Territories of Desire in Queer Culture: Refiguring the Contemporary Boundaries*; Houlbrook, *Queer London*, p. 10 and Jennings, *Tomboys and Bachelor Girls*, pp. 7; 111.

Waters represents the Second World War as a possibility for the emergence of a lesbian urban culture, due to the relatively small financial and individual autonomy that women eked out during the war. In his turn, Hollinghurst creates a London that is almost exclusively inhabited by gay men; this is particularly evident in *The Swimming-Pool Library* and in *The Line of Beauty*. While gay culture is depicted on the streets of London in *The Swimming-Pool Library*, Hollinghurst shifts gay culture to affluent domestic spaces in *The Line of Beauty*, which account for the transformations in London's gay neighborhoods with the AIDS epidemic. In *The Stranger's Child*, the domestic sphere is reiterated, but this time in the form of the country house. In my reading, I trace a parallel between the country house, gay history, and literary tradition, arguing that the social hierarchies that are present in the pastoral estate privilege the bonds of gay men primarily, for they are able to thrive in their intellectual careers, whereas the female characters are excluded from the entitlement of intellectual and literary recognition.

Bearing in mind the dialectical relationship between the perceived, conceived, and lived spaces elucidated by Lefebvre, it becomes impossible to dissociate space from cultural, subjective, and historical practices, and from their imaginative forms of representation. In this sense, my analyses of Waters' and Hollinghurst's novels will examine the interconnections between London's history and geography with the city's histories of male and female homosexualities, concentrating on how the authors choose to represent both these spaces and their histories. What I wish to point out in my reading of Waters' and Hollinghurst's novels is how they articulate cultural, social, and literary histories through literary practices that combine discourses about London's sexual geographies and contemporary queer theories. Moreover, I am interested in the relationship between the characters and their spatial surroundings, and in the ways in which these spaces inform them as characters and their sexual identities.

Cook explains that, as homosexuality becomes a part of a visual urban experience, it not only attracts the eyes of men who want to partake in that subculture, but it also becomes attached to the identity of certain spaces in the city, which had been stigmatized by the immorality ascribed to homosexual identity.[18] The process of appropriating spaces in the city by creating meeting places and through the propagation of discourses about certain spaces can be read in terms of Lefebvre's notion of perceived, conceived, and lived spaces, as the daily routines of certain groups, their habits, their shared interests, their history, and the places in which they circulate become part of the fictional and non-fictional narratives about these spaces in the city. Thus, Lefebvre's prominent argument, which states that "(social) space is a (social) product",[19] summarizes the complex process of production of space, given that it stresses the view that space is intimately coupled with the social relations that inhabit it. The argument that Lefebvre advances also shows how discourses produced

18 Cf. Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914*, p. 12.

19 Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p. 26.

within and by these social relations create reflections and narratives about spaces, their inhabitants, and their identities.[20]

Lefebvre's argument contemplates how capitalism (mode of production) informs the production of space and the social relations that generate space. Although this is not the central topic of this book, shifts in capitalism have definitely played a role in London's sexual landscapes. Gay subculture continued to expand with the city's rapid urban growth throughout the nineteenth century and by the end of the century the "city's scale and complexity offered the possibility of evasion, of personal transformation and anonymity, and of encountering others who might not conform to the projected 'norm'".[21] The West End, for instance, came to be known in this urban context for "its reputation for cosmopolitanism, entertainment and consumption",[22] and also for its crowds and "risqué entertainments and an increase in prostitution on the main shopping streets".[23]

In discussing space through the dialectical relationship between perceived, conceived, and lived spaces Lefebvre interrelates notions of socio-economic shifts in history with the ways in which individuals appropriate spaces, how they write and reflect upon these spaces, and how spaces form them as subjects. I take these aspects into consideration in my readings of Waters' and Hollinghurst's novels, considering that the spaces that are presented are fictional constructions of real London spaces and their histories. I also examine their deployment of traditional spaces that are present in English literature and culture in addition to Waters' and Hollinghurst's representations of London and its sexual geographies and histories.

For instance, in my reading of *The Stranger's Child*, I argue that Hollinghurst's spatial configuration combines the country house and its social hierarchies with gay historiography and with the metaphorical space of literary tradition; in this novel, this space is dominated by white, upper, and middle-class men. In depicting gay culture in a rural landscape, Hollinghurst writes a version of gay history that begins in the countryside and moves on to the city, thereby challenging the metropolis as the birthplace of gay culture and the conventional premise of the pastoral as a trope of innocence and morality.[24] In this spatial construction, the shifting interpretations of the country house (as an indicator of social status) is conveyed in parallel with the changes in the perceptions of homosexuality throughout history: while in 1913 and 1926, two of the temporal marks presented in the novel, homosexuality is criminalized and the country house is considered a space of social prestige, in 1967, homosexuality is decriminalized and the country house is already going through the process of social

20 Although Lefebvre opened the debate in the field in the 1970s, other theorists have extensively expounded on the relation between social relations, space, time, politics and economy: cf. *Postmodern Geographies* (1989) by Edward Soja, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1990) by David Harvey, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) by Fredric Jameson, *Space Place and Gender* (1994) by Doreen Massey.

21 Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914*, p. 41.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 22.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

24 Cf. Williams, *The Country and the City*, pp. 46–54.

decay.[25] In contrast to the spatial and social transformations evident in the cultural symbol of the country house and in gay culture, the women in the novel, especially the protagonist Daphne Sawle, remain objects of exchange between the male characters.

As historical novels, Waters' and Hollinghurst's works contribute greatly to narratives about London's queer spaces and their ongoing transformations throughout history. While some of these spaces are already well known, as is the case for Hollinghurst's depiction of Soho and Hyde Park in *The Swimming-Pool Library*, other queer spaces are derived from popular literary tropes such as the prison and female domesticity in *Affinity* and the country house in Hollinghurst's *The Stranger's Child* and Waters' *The Little Stranger.* In *The Line of Beauty*, London is portrayed from the vantage point of a mansion in Kensington Gardens, which features the conservative environment of Tory politics under Thatcherism and suggests the ways in which the AIDS epidemic transformed gay culture in London. In *Tipping the Velvet*, Waters combines the West End's theatrical scene, more specifically male impersonation acts, with Judith Butler's theories about gender performativity, a topic that will be examined in greater detail in chapter 2. In *Tipping the Velvet* and in *The Swimming-Pool Library,* East London is constructed as a place for lesbian and gay encounters. However, while Waters' novel represents Bethnal Green as a space of socialist, feminist, and lesbian resistance in the late nineteenth century, Hollinghurst's text instead stresses the class conflicts and social inequalities in 1980s London.

The novels that I examine in this book contemplate spaces that often feature in historical accounts about gay and lesbian history in London; however, their deployment in fictions creates new meanings for those spaces by engaging them with renowned literary practices that pertain to the intertextual references that Waters and Hollinghurst deploy in their writings. Waters and Hollinghurst contextualize these spaces within the realm of literary history and historical fiction because, as Avery explains, literature has been an important source for "the circulation of ideas about queer spaces [in London]", playing a significant role "in the shaping of the queer capital".[26] While these discourses help to historicize the configuration of gay and lesbian cultures in London, they have also been used to control and regulate sexuality in the city, as I will discuss in the following section.

25 In *The Stranger's Child*, the most prestigious country house, Corley Court, becomes a boarding school in the 1960s. As Terentowicz-Fotyga points out, it was in the post-war period that country houses began to lose their social prestige, due to rationing in building supplies and therefore the difficulties involved maintaining such estates. While the 1950s saw the largest amount of country houses being demolished, legislation was passed in the mid-1970s that sought to preserve country houses as cultural monuments by investing in their maintenance as part of national heritage (Terentowicz-Fotyga, *Dreams Nightmares and Empty Signifiers*, pp. 23–24).

26 Avery, "Structuring and Interpreting Queer Spaces of London" in Avery and Graham (eds.) *Sex, Time and Place*, p. 13.

Mapping and Controlling Sexuality in London

Legislation drafted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Britain concerning sexual mores clearly displayed the state's interest in regulating sexualities on the streets –women's sexuality and sodomy in particular – by reinforcing moral values that strengthened traditional social structures regarding gender, class, and sexuality. Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753, for instance, sought to regulate clandestine marriages by passing a law that aimed to ensure that marriages throughout England and Wales were only valid if performed in a church, according to the banning rules, and with parental consent for men and women under the age of twenty-one.[27] The anxiety over clandestine marriages stemmed mainly from lawyers' increasing concern with the transfer of property, since any marriage performed by a priest using the Book of Common Prayer was recognized as lawful, which facilitated deception, the seduction of women, and interclass marriage.[28]

Ogborn discusses Hardwicke's Marriage Act in terms of sexual geographies, as he understands that "sexualities and the responses to them were spatially constituted across a range of different sites" in the eighteenth century.[29] According to Ogborn, clandestine marriages were deeply related to geography, since one of the primary debates on these activities revolved around the locations in which they took place. Although these sites could be found across the country, the Fleet was one of the places in London in which a large number of clandestine marriages were held. Located in front of the Fleet Prison, a debtors' detention institution, the area was known for its peculiar marriage shops that conducted non-normative unions; at times these included same-sex marriage, whereby one of the partners was cross-dressed so that they could pass as a heterosexual couple. Many of the ceremonies took place in the Fleet Prison's chapel and it was not uncommon that prisoners attended them as guests.[30] The Fleet presented its own subversive geography that conflated the presence of the law and its own disruption, the longing for sexual morality and its own failure.

Lynda Nead discusses the relationship between urban development in Victorian London alongside regulation over gender and sexuality, emphasizing the need to create order within chaos. She points out that two urban principles marked the city's development in this period: mapping and movement.[31] The idea of mapping can be related to Lefebvre's concept of conceived spaces, since it is intrinsically associated with the desire to make the city comprehensible and legible, freezing life in London streets by transforming it in terms of plain cartography. London's urban planning reflects the city as a human body, whose streets are its arteries and veins and whose organs should function effectively. Moving within the city was also related to the human body's circulation system, as "[m]otion and circulation in the urban body are

27 Ogborn, "This Most Lawless Space", p. 11.
28 *Ibid.*, pp.15; 25.
29 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
30 *Ibid.*, pp. 18–24.
31 Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, p. 13.

read as signs of health and morality".[32] A heart attack or a stroke can occur when there is an occlusion or a contingency within the movement of the blood, thereby disrupting the whole body's functioning.

Mort and Nead point out that sexuality in the city can appear as a topic of potential "cultural disturbance", since "[o]fficial geographies of immorality and obscenity have repeatedly been a focus for the attempted imposition of strategic order".[33] The process of mapping sexuality in the city functions as a means to both detect and identify sexual practices that pose a threat to daily urban life.[34] It is through the constant regulation and control of bodies, which are considered deviant and immoral, that it is possible to reinforce what constitutes the norm in the realm of kinship and sexuality: the image of the white, heterosexual middle-class family. In the late nineteenth century, immorality was ascribed to the figure of the prostitute and of the male homosexual. Prostitutes and gay men were the urban figures that most drew the attention of the authorities in the regulation of sexuality; this can be seen in the Contagious Diseases Act of the 1860s,[35] which regulated prostitution, and the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, which criminalized homosexuality among men in Britain under the premise of protecting boys from homosexuals' 'gross indecency'.[36]

The mapping of urban space and the attempt to make immoral behavior legible is also related to the control and regulation of the female body and of women's participation in the urban sphere. As Wilson notes, the anxieties about the increasing circulation of middle and upper-class women in the streets of London and in overcrowded environments pertained to an overall fear that they would engage in behavior that went against the idealized model of femininity; this model had been constructed on the basis of the image of domesticity, marriage, and motherhood. After all, taking part in metropolitan life also meant having contact with social environments that conflated and mixed all of the social classes.[37] The promiscuity conveyed by the interaction of people from different classes also caused difficulties in defining and identifying 'respectable women' on the streets and, according to Wilson, it was commonplace for unaccompanied women to be mistaken for prostitutes. Since the defining lines of the respectable woman were tenuous and opaque, public discourse often suggested that working-class women were one of the main sources of female immoral behavior.[38]

Wilson develops her work about women's lives in different cities by emphasizing their participation and circulation in urban space and by taking into consideration

32 *Ibid.*, p. 16.

33 Mort and Nead, *Sexual Geographies*, p. 7.

34 Cf. Matt Houlbrook's *Queer London*; Nead, *Victorian Babylon*; Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets*; Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City*; Walkowitz, *The City of Dreadful Delight* and *Prostitution and Victorian Society*.

35 Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, pp. 4–5. As Walkowitz notes, the Contagious Diseases Act was more interested in controlling the prostitute's active and exposed sexuality than actually preventing sexually transmitted diseases from spreading. This becomes clear from the fact that the authorities arrested prostitutes, while the men were left untouched and unbothered.

36 Jackson, *Child Sexual Abuse in Victorian England*, p. 105.

37 Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City*, p. 29.

38 Cf. Skeggs, *The Formation of Class*, pp. 42–50; Wilson, "The Invisible Flâneur", p. 104.

the fact that they actually represented a small portion of middle-class women.[39] The conflict between working- and middle-class women is clear in her depiction of the period, as the former were constantly demonized as the source of urban chaos because they worked outside of the home and were, therefore, the core reason for family disintegration. Wilson writes that: "Urban life overturned a symbolic natural order, and the linchpin of this natural order – the family – was the woman."[40] She discusses Edwin Chadwick 1842 *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Classes* by challenging the idea that the report was created solely to improve urban conditions and health among the lower income population. Wilson also suggests that its aim was actually to discipline, control, and regulate working-class behavior and gender norms that threatened the Victorian family ideal. She draws attention to the way in which Chadwick claims that the working-classes are a source of urban horror, especially working-class women who did not learn to implement a domestic economy properly because they began to work at an early age and, thus, could not meet the necessary requirements to take care of their husbands.[41]

Wilson argues that the main conflicts between the working- and middle-classes take place once the latter vehemently acts against the first's immorality; this is intrinsically related to cleaning, hygienic, and sanitary habits.[42] Moreover, the concern over prostitution and sexuality among the lower-classes became increasingly important: "[n]ineteenth century campaigns to curb the unsuitable enjoyments of the lower-classes were inextricably linked to attempts to restrain and domesticate disruptive sexuality",[43] which was widely projected onto the figure of the prostitute.

Legislation about sexuality aims to preserve strict gender roles that sustain the heterosexual family as the only possibility of kinship; it also strongly endorses male domination and homophobia as structural aspects of society, both in the regulation of homosexuality and of prostitution. The act of mapping deviant sexualities in the city displays a clear interest in locating transgressions as a means to know which places represent a greater danger for the social order. Nevertheless, the urge to appropriate heteronormative spaces has been crucial in the assertion of non-normative forms of gender and sexual identities as inextricable aspects of social space, in both cities and rural areas. In urban spaces, subjects who enact these identities have been socially marginalized in the city, creating a subculture that resisted heterosexist culture and slowly structured a set for new cultural identities to actively take part in urban life, particularly in the nineteenth century. The emergence of this subculture in the first half

39 Wilson mentions the roles played by the reformist professional classes in this process, mentioning the works of the philanthropist Octavia Hill and the journalist Josephine Butler, for instance (cf. Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City*, pp. 32–33)

40 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 35.

42 Wilson claims there is a direct linkage between hygiene and sanitary habits, since "morality was inextricably entwined with cleanliness, disorder with filth". She points out that "excrement became a metaphor and a symbol for moral filth", and this was often related to the working-class itself. Hence, "when they spoke and wrote of the cleansing of the city filth, refuse and dung, they may really have longed to rid the cities of the labouring poor altogether" (pp. 36–37).

43 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

of the twentieth century became even more evident in the city, and sexual liberation movements emphatically participated in the demand for rights for social recognition of the LGBT community by the end of the century. This community represented, at least partially, a group of subjects who presented non-normative sexual and gender identities.

Is it Queer? Gay and Lesbian Spatial Appropriations

The relationship between non-normative sexualities and spaces came to be a fertile field of discussion in the 1990s. Throughout most of this decade, the interdisciplinary field of queer studies also focused on gay and lesbian communities in cities, relating the lives of subjects and their relation to the spaces they inhabit in order to discuss aspects of resistance and/or assimilation, questions of identity related to specific spatial frameworks, the formation of communities and political bonds within these spaces, and the relations between the global and the local.[44] Ingram et. al, for instance, argue that queer spaces enable "people with marginalized (homo)sexualities and identities to survive and to gradually expand their influence and opportunities to live fully".[45] Bell and Valentine's and Ingram et. al's collections of essays about queer spaces assert that homophobia is a crucial point of departure to understand the necessity of creating bonds, relationships, and communities among subjects who support anti-homophobic practices and politics. The formation of queer communities reflects how space and identity come into play: subjects appropriate parts of the city in a movement of resistance against homophobic norms, thereby creating new identities for the spaces they come to inhabit and, simultaneously, asserting spatial (and political) possibilities for the enactment of their own identities.

The appropriation of space by gays and lesbians is often depicted as a collective history of coming out, in which the Stonewall riots in 1969 is considered a milestone in the political act of taking over public space. In light of this perspective, homosexual culture has its origins in an underground cultural scene, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, gradually emerging as a counterculture force throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Scholars such as Dianne Chisholm and Julie Abraham have followed this teleological view of spatial accounts of queer history and spaces. They focus namely on literary and biographical representations of gay and lesbian subjects and their emergence in the modern city, coining homosexual identity as essentially metropolitan.

Chisholm argues that queer spaces designate "an appropriation of space for bodily, especially sexual, pleasure" as a means to create heterotopias,[46] spaces that function as

44 Cf. Bell and Valentine, *Mapping Desire* and Ingram et al., *Queers in Space*.

45 Ingram et al., *Queers in Space*, p. 1.

46 Chisholm, *Queer Constellations*, p. 10. Here Chisholm refers to Foucault's concept of 'heterotopia', which will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter 4, when I discuss Kilian's concept of 'literary heterotopias'. In Chisholm's text, she mainly uses Foucault's term to designate spaces of sexual resistance within urban space.

sites of resistance. However, she contends that this subversion is never fully effective, given that it cannot completely subvert capitalist power structures. Chisholm relates the emergence of queer historiography to the increasing visibility of venues that served as meeting points for gays, lesbians, and trans subjects, represented by bars, saunas, baths, and clubs.[47] For Chisholm, the development of print culture in the nineteenth century enabled "the divulging of homosexual haunts in police reports and scandal literature, semi-autobiographical writing and realist fiction", which gave the "queer city […] graphic exposure for public consumption" and offered the possibility of "a historical re/collection"[48] about queer urban life. In analyzing historical and literary representations about gay and lesbian metropolitan spaces, Chisholm concludes that the act of collecting memories and narratives about these spaces hinders the possibility of queer subjects taking part in grand narratives of History (with a capital 'H'). This is due to the fact that homosexual subjects collect fragments of history, which she dubs "the trash of history",[49] and represent themselves as abject individuals who enclose themselves within the private sphere of queer spaces.

Although I agree with her that queer spaces are a crucial aspect of queer historiography, an issue I will discuss in greater detail in chapter 8, I dispute the fact that these historical and literary narratives are to be considered 'trash' or abject history. On the contrary, the queer histories that Waters and Hollinghurst narrate point to questions that touch upon the affirmative participation of homosexual subjects in history by situating gay and lesbian history, in London particularly, within the ideological and cultural frameworks of historical periods, such as the Victorian era, the Second World War, and Thatcherism. In their works, history and literature are devised to include gay and lesbian histories as part of England's history; they are not abandoned as an 'abject' part of it.

My aim with this book is to examine the historical narratives constructed within the fictional works of Waters and Hollinghurst, associating these narratives with the queer spaces that are represented. In my view, their works, in spite of their fictionality, can be considered a great source of historical narratives about gay and lesbian history in London, since Waters and Hollinghurst depict areas of the city, such as the West End, that were extremely relevant for the city's development of a queer culture. In many ways, my readings of their novels also draw from the works of literary scholars who have used literature to reflect on gay and lesbian culture and historiography.[50] Abraham, for instance, discusses queer spaces by tracing historical representations of homosexuality in various literary accounts of the modern city. She does not uphold a fatalist viewpoint on queer spaces and history as Chisholm does, even though she also uses historical research and literature to understand how homosexuality has

47 Cf., *Ibid.*, pp. 17–20.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 125.

50 Cf. Abraham, *Metropolitan Lovers*; Cook, *London and the Culture of Homosexuality, 1885–1914*; Munt, *Heroic Desire*; Sedgwick, *Between Men* and *Epistemology of the Closet*; Sinfield, *The Wilde Century* and *Gay and After*; Waters, *Wolfskins and Togas*.

influenced urban life in different cities. Abraham contends that the increasing representations of gay and lesbian lives in the city, beginning with the image of sexual deviants on through to their effective participation in politics and cultural movements, contributed immensely to the great cities' contemporary identities.[51]

She concentrates on figures such as Oscar Wilde, Radclyffe Hall, and Jane Addams to illustrate their cultural and historical contributions to the formation of the modern city. Abraham discusses the effectiveness of queer spaces in the metropolis, questioning if the formation of queer communities and spaces actually threatened heteronormative behavior or if they just increased homosexuals' isolation and marginality in society.[52] She considers the formation of communities among homosexuals to be crucial for the establishment of a network and for political activism in cities' histories. She draws attention to the ways queer life, as counterculture, threatened social orders in aspects regarding gender and sexuality by evoking literary figures to make her case for gay and lesbian cultural influence in normative history. Nevertheless, Abraham presents a restrictive perspective on gay and lesbian identities (the masculine lesbian and the effeminate gay), given that she fixates on Wilde and Hall as the main representatives of queer lives. Since Abraham suggests that homosexuals came to be *effectively* part of the city due to political allegiances formed in bars, clubs, saunas, or other places where gays and lesbians went and socialized, she automatically claims that *all* queer spaces involved social resistance. This view overlooks the intersection that these spaces presented in relation to other forms of subjugation, such as those entailed by classism and racism, for instance.

While Hollinghurst's works point to a desire to have gay literature and history recognized as part of a grand narrative regarding national history and literature, Waters' books involve questioning the very authority and homogeneity of totalizing historical and literary narratives. In her novels, Waters shows an awareness of the dangers of totalizing narratives, given that these narratives can efface the histories of subjects who have faced obstacles to speak out (i.e., women and homosexual subjects, working-class subjects). Waters' works suggest that, although it is relevant to give visibility to lesbian identity and culture, it is not crucial that they become part of a tradition or of grand historical narratives. In this sense, her historical novels foster the emergence of lesbian culture and history as part of English history; however, making lesbian history visible does not mean that it should comply with mechanisms of oppression based on class and race, for instance. Class is a pivotal aspect to be analyzed in her works, since she constantly refers to class culture as a formative axis of lesbian identity. However, as I will show in my reading of *Tipping the Velvet* in chapter 2, the representation of class in her debut novel is reduced to uncritical stereotypes of upper-, middle- and working-class women.

Waters constructs her lesbian characters as women who wish to challenge the social norms around them, particularly in terms of gender and sexuality. Where all of Waters' novels convey criticisms of the limited roles attributed to women in society, and portray positive representations of female sexuality, they sometimes lack critical

51 Abraham, *Metropolitan Lovers*, pp. 14–16.

52 *Ibid.*, pp. 100–104.

reflection about class relations. This is especially true in *Tipping the Velvet*. In Waters' debut novel, I argue that her representations of gender and sexuality denaturalize the binaries of male/female and hetero/homosexuality. However, while she does depict working-class culture in a positive way that evokes solidarity and a sense of community among the inhabitants of the East End, the class relations that are construed are often reproduced as rigid stereotypes of upper-, middle- and working-class women, as she renders class relations in the light of respectability and moralism.[53]

In my reading of queer spaces, I do not regard queer spaces as systematic sites of social and cultural resistance, since I take into consideration the ways in which these spaces articulate gender and sexuality with class and, in Hollinghurst's first novels, with race. As mentioned previously in this chapter, Chisholm and Abraham coin queer spaces as the result of a history of 'coming out' and as spaces that produce 'social resistance', even though Chisholm asserts that this resistance is restricted. It is true that queer spaces are crucial for the formation of communities, since, as Ingram et al. note, they have enabled homosexual life in many ways. Nevertheless, it is necessary to comprehend the factors that have made queer spaces a necessity for queer life by questioning the relationship that they maintain with parts of the city that are pervasively perceived as straight and by tracing their connection with other forms of social relations.

Regarding queer spaces only as a celebrative expression of gay and lesbian identities has the effect of restraining the political force that the term 'queer' has carried in terms of activism involving gender and sexuality. Judith Butler discusses the term queer as a "site of collective contestation" that should function as a means to disrupt the historicity of discourses by reflecting upon the historical aspects that they convey.[54] The term 'queer', once employed in a depreciative, shaming, and pathologizing way, had to be appropriated by the subjects whom it stigmatized in order to turn it against the insulting form in which it was used. The word's linguistic appropriation not only disrupted the homophobic historicity ingrained in the term 'queer', but it turned it in favor of subjects who enacted non-normative gender and sexual identities.

In this book, the word 'queer' will be employed to designate gay and lesbian sexualities and, as is the case in *Tipping the Velvet*, Nancy's non-normative gender identity. However, 'queer' will also be used as a verb in the sense that Butler postulates (i.e., as a means to subvert norms and historicity of discourses). This is particularly the case with my readings of Waters' novels, since her depiction of lesbian history challenges

53 Cf. Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender* and "The Appearance of Class: Challenges in Gay Space" in Munt (ed.) *Cultural Studies and the Working Class*. In her analyses of working-class culture, Skeggs notices that respectability features as a 'class signifier' in which a working-class community or subject can only be legitimated after they have proven that they are entitled to a 'respectable' image that goes against the usual images of danger, threat, and filth (p. 1). For Skeggs, respectability is a "property of middle-class individuals", who have historically "defined [themselves] against the masses" (p. 4). In so doing, they have become the image of respectability through which working-class individuals own their own legitimacy, since they can only prove their social value once they can prove that they can enter the realm of social respectability; this realm concerns the norms of domesticity, obedience, cleanness, health, and education.

54 Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, p. 228.

traditional definitions of literary genres, of historiography, and of the relationship between women and urban space. In *Tipping the Velvet*, for instance, Waters' representations of the theater and of nineteenth century male impersonation acts produce spaces that challenge the dichotomies of male and female gender identities, and of public and private spaces. In chapter 2, I discuss Butler's theories about gender performance in *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter* in order to examine the queer spaces that are constructed in the novel. As I will show, it is the protagonist's mobility and her ability to enact a gender identity that exists within the male and female categories that allow for the possibility of queer spaces to emerge. On stage, Nancy Astley's performance as a man also functions as a means to enact lesbian desire with her partner, Kitty Butler, while in the city Nancy's male performance grants her the possibility of taking part in a sexual underworld that is almost exclusively available to gay men.

Although *Tipping the Velvet* mostly conveys the notion of queer as a possibility for the disruption of norms, Waters also presents queer spaces in the sense introduced by Ingram et al., Bell and Valentine, and Chisholm: the 'Cavendish Club' in the West End is a meeting point for upper-class lesbians who enjoy the privilege of 'keeping' vulnerable girls as sex toys, and the pub 'The Boy in the Boat', located in the East End, is a meeting place for working-class lesbian women who are mainly involved with feminist and socialist movements. While the 'Cavendish Club' does not portray a site of political resistance, due to its exploitative characteristics, 'The Boy in the Boat' is introduced as a space that allows for the rise of feminist alliance and of political resistance.

In *Affinity*, the notion of queering spaces appears in Waters' representation of the prison, more specifically Millbank. As opposed to *Tipping the Velvet*, Waters' second novel focuses first and foremost on challenging class relations that are related to upper- and working-class femininity. It is the performance of spiritualism in *Affinity*, enacted by the medium Selina Dawes, that allows her to escape from prison and to break free of the teachings of Victorian upper-class femininity. Having been convicted for assault and murder, Selina is doomed to spend time at Millbank in order to learn the 'proper' mannerisms of domesticity, religion, and marriage. As a woman who has worked throughout her life, Selina uses her fame as a medium to convince one of the matrons to help her to escape. Selina also counts on her partner's help, Ruth Viger, to complete her plan, since Ruth works at the Prior residence, where lady Margaret Prior lives. The latter has been visiting the prison in order to collect information for a history book about Millbank and to do charity work with the prisoners. As Margaret struggles with mourning her father's death, she takes up her activities at Millbank as a means to overcome her depression. In Margaret's diary entries, the prison functions as a space that makes her think that she is entitled to a kind of freedom that the prisoners do not have. However, as she falls in love with Selina, Margaret comes to associate her life at home, under the scrutiny of her family, as a more severe form of surveillance than that experienced by the inmates at Millbank.

In my reading of *Affinity*, I contend that the parallel that Waters constructs in her novel between domesticity and imprisonment is problematic, since it suggests that the violence and oppression that prisoners undergo in jail can be compared to the oppression derived from ideal Victorian domesticity. I dispute the argument that

the prison can be regarded as a queer space that enables lesbian desire, as critics such as Braid, Llewellyn, and Pohl have conveyed.[55] Instead, I claim that it is Selina's use of spiritualism within the prison that enables the creation of a queer space that can free her from the oppression of upper- and middle-class norms of femininity, which are mainly constructed within the realm of domesticity and respectability. In this sense, queer as a means to disrupt norms in this novel addresses the imposition of strict norms of femininity that have informed upper- and middle-class notions of womanhood and that have been imposed upon working-class women as the only respectable model of female behavior.[56] While in the novel the home and the prison appear as institutions that disseminate these norms, it is only in prison that they can be resisted and subverted.

Lastly, Waters' representation of queer spaces as the disruption of norms and of the historicity of discourses is found in *The Night Watch* in which she employs the trope of the Second World War and urban destruction as a means to challenge traditional temporal and spatial frameworks. In an article about the novel, Mitchell discusses the queer temporality in Waters' fourth novel by claiming that conventional time frames are disrupted with the novel's backward temporality, since it begins in 1947 and it ends in 1941.[57] In my reading, I will examine the novel's queer temporality in relation to queer spaces. The queer spaces narrated in the novel mostly pertain to the ways in which the war breaks with the characters' perception of conventional space and time and how this affects their sexual and gendered practices in London. In this novel, most of the protagonists are queer, with the exception of Viv, who is a straight woman that has a relationship with a married soldier. In *The Night Watch*, Waters also introduces her first and only gay character, Duncan, who refuses to serve in the war and outlives his best friend in a double suicide attempt, which is supposed to be a heroic anti-war gesture.

Waters' re-working of queer spaces is mostly attuned to feminist political stands that vindicate female autonomy, affirmative representations of lesbian sexuality, and the possibility to challenge class norms and to create interclass relations, as I will discuss in my readings of *Affinity* and *The Night Watch*. In Hollinghurst's works, contrastingly, queer spaces correspond to spaces in which gay men cruise and socialize, and yet they do not yield possibilities for the disruption of social norms regarding gender, sexuality, class, and race. Instead, they expose classist, racist, misogynist, and conservative behaviors in these spaces and the ways in which they are reproduced by white middle- and upper-class gay men. While male queer spaces in his novels coin promiscuity and public sex as pivotal features of gay culture that have, at least to some extent, subverted traditional heteronormative standards based on the nuclear

55 Cf. Braid, "Victorian Panopticon: Confined Spaces and Imprisonment in Chosen Neo-Victorian Novels" in Ciuk and Molek-Kozakowska (eds.) *Exploring Space*; Llewellyn, "'Queer? I should say it is criminal!': Sarah Waters' *Affinity*"; Pohl, "Sexing the Labyrinth: Space and Sexuality in Sarah Waters' *Affinity*" in Mitchell (ed.) *Sarah Waters*.

56 Cf. Skeggs, *Formations of Class and Gender*, pp. 42–47.

57 Mitchell, "'What does it feel like to be an anachronism?': Time in *The Night Watch*", in Mitchell (ed.) *Sarah Waters*, pp. 85–87.

family, marriage, and monogamy, these spaces have also been informed by traditional masculinity, class domination, and by white privilege.

In the spaces that I analyze in both Waters' and Hollinghurst's novels, I attempt to tackle the power relations, namely those concerning class, gender, and sexuality, that are at stake in a social space as a means to understand the subject's stance within these relations, given that the interplay of the various social categories will form a subject in different ways. Haschemi Yekani et al. define categories "as effects of processes of constructions rather than stable entities", arguing that each category "is always already intertwined in multiple frameworks of inequality".[58] They suggest a 'corrective methodology' to propose new ways of looking at intersectionality and to contest the presumption of clear-cut intersections of identity categories. They demand a larger focus on the relations of inequality within the structures of identity politics in order to emphasize the idea that identity categories are always subject to transformations and always operate in relation to each other: some categories will stand out, while others will function as a backdrop for the identity in question; this depends on the specific context and social environment.

Evoking the concept of 'interdependencies', their article also points to the ways in which identity categories, when fixed within traditional disciplinary grids, can produce a politics of exclusion and oppression. Haschemi Yekani et al. suggest paying closer attention to the ways in which these categories are formed by keeping in mind "the simultaneity and multidimensionality of subjectivation, discrimination and the exertion of power".[59] As a term, interdependencies imply an approach to the problem of categories, shedding light on the intersection of power relations and of inequalities in which identity categories are imbricated and draw attention to the subject's multiple and concomitant positionalities within the social space in which s/he finds themselves. In fact, the authors call for the deployment of interdependencies in reflections that involve spatial, temporal, and social dimensions of queer studies, thereby claiming that sexuality must be thought about in relation to other forms of domination and categorization, such as class, gender, ability, and race.

The notion of queer spaces I aim to suggest here goes in a similar direction as elucidated by Haschemi Yekani et al. Since space is formed by various socio-economic forces, discursive relations, and identity practices, analyzing sexuality within spatial contexts demands greater attention to the ways sexuality, as a technology of power and regulation, interacts with other mechanisms of control. In the case of homosexuality, one must question the ways it can elide expressions of racism, sexism, or classism, for instance.[60] I understand queer spaces as spaces that are formed by historical, social, and cultural discourses and relations that question traditional norms

58 Haschemi Yekani et al., "'Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better.' Queer Interdependencies as Corrective Methodologies" in Yvette et al. (eds.) *Theorizing Intersectionality and Sexuality*, p. 80.

59 *Ibid.*, p. 90.

60 Haschemi Yekani et al. criticize, in a German context, how homosexuality and same-sex marriage are used as mechanisms of racism and xenophobia in Germany. They cite the 'Muslimtest', a test that was given for migrants applying for German naturalization, which initially posed a question about the acceptance of homosexuality, asserting that 'tolerance' of homosexuality was a Western accomplishment that the Muslim community has not yet achieved (pp. 84–85).

of gender and sexuality, which are based on heterosexuality, monogamy, marriage, and reproduction. However, the following literary analyses will also show that, even though queer spaces question heteronormativity, at least partially – since homosexuality is not a normative sexuality – they do not always challenge norms that constitute class, race, and gender relations. Drawing from Haschemi Yeakni et al.'s conceptualization of interdependencies, I also argue that it is important to insist on a notion of queer spaces that involve strategic political demands and that will denounce and confront inequality and subjugation in relation to other forms of oppression. In this case, it is not enough, in my view, to automatically consider gay and lesbian spaces to be subversive for openly displaying a sexual identity that diverts from heterosexuality, especially if they engage in practices that reinforce racism, classism, and sexism.

The existence of gay and lesbian spaces is certainly important for homosexual politics, socialization, and community formations, often offering comfort and a sense of belonging to those who are confronted with homophobic violence daily. Nevertheless, producing a space that embraces homosexuality does not necessarily mean a process of queering in the sense of challenging or subverting norms. At times, the queer spaces presented in Waters' and Hollinghurst's novels function within the paradox of sexual resistance and of reinforcing norms that already exist.

In Hollinghurst's novels, the notion of subordination to heteronormativity and to the ideal of 'normality' and 'respectability' is even stronger, given that the queer spaces he depicts are only modestly subversive in the sense that they allow for promiscuous sexual behavior. The queer spaces that Hollinghurst represents in *The Swimming-Pool Library* and in *The Line of Beauty* are deeply rooted in neoliberal ideology, consumerism, and political conservatism, which strongly influence the characters' relationships with the spaces in which they circulate. In *The Stranger's Child*, political conservatism, social tradition, and strict social hierarchies are devised in the portrayal of the country house, which I associate with a space of literary tradition and gay history. In my reading of Hollinghurst's novels, I examine his depiction of queer spaces in terms of homonormativity, which Lisa Duggan has defined as "a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions but upholds and sustains them", thereby producing "a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption".[61] In my reading of *The Stranger's Child*, I discuss homonormativity in light of Warner's and Mattilda's reflections about the concept which relates to the ways in which the gay movement and gay culture have sought recognition and respectability through social and political assimilation with heterosexist norms and culture.[62]

My analyses of *The Swimming-Pool Library* and of *The Line of Beauty* will reflect upon homonormativity according to Lisa Duggan's conceptualization, which correlates sexual politics with neoliberalism. She warns us against a politics of assimilation, in which gay political struggles are limited to heteronormative patterns of kinship and

61 Duggan, "*The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism*" in Castronovo and Nelson (eds.) *Materializing Democracy*, p. 179.

62 Cf. Interview with Ruiz, "The Violence of Assimilation: An Interview with Mattilda aka Matt Bernstein Sycamore", and Warner, *The Trouble with Normal*.

social relations (e.g., gay marriage). Moreover, she criticizes the shifts in sectors of the gay movement in the 1990s, as they moved closer to neoliberal ideals of governance which prioritize private assets, a free market, and set aside political engagement with social welfare. For Duggan, this political framework is antiegalitarian and it affects cultural politics in damaging ways by promoting sexual politics that understands gay equality "as access to the institutions of domestic privacy [marriage], the 'free' market, and patriotism".[63] A central aspect of neoliberal sexual politics entails the deployment of identity as an instrument of control and regulation through domesticity and marriage, in addition to transforming counterculture and subversive non-normative sexual spaces into niches of sexual consumptions. In this sense, gay and lesbian spaces can produce homonormative spaces that uphold other forms of oppression devised through class or race.

In *The Swimming-Pool Library*, for instance, Hollinghurst evinces the power of exclusion in male queer spaces, which are mainly located in West and Central London. While it is true that the queer spaces depicted in Soho and in Bloomsbury (i.e., the Corinthian Club) display the circulation of gay men from different class backgrounds, the relationships that Will Beckwith maintains with men of color and working-class men are depicted as demeaning and humiliating. In Hollinghurst's novels, interclass and interracial relationships between men bring out the ways in which gay culture also reproduces oppressive relations based on classism, racism, and misogyny.

Other scholars have discussed the relation of neoliberal capitalism and queer culture, drawing attention to the ways in which gay and lesbian spaces have increasingly undergone processes of gentrification and have drifted away from queer politics as resistance.[64] Andersson discusses consumerism and (male) gay culture, analyzing the appropriation of Shoreditch, in East London, as a response to Soho's gentrified queer spaces, which became increasingly concerned with displaying an environment of health and cleanliness due to the AIDS epidemic. Andersson points out that the AIDS epidemic strongly influenced the design and presentation of gay venues in Soho, as they came to favor white walls and minimalist furniture, for instance, as a means to create a 'clean' and 'healthy' environment that challenged gay spaces as "contaminated spaces".[65] In doing so, these establishments asserted restrictive spatial and cultural forms of gay identity, embracing commercial interests that uphold "Soho's more sanitised version of gay culture".[66]

The impact of AIDS on London's male queer spaces is a topic that will be analyzed in my readings of *The Swimming-Pool Library* and in *The Line of Beauty*. AIDS is not mentioned explicitly in Hollinghurst's first novel, but we can perceive the imminence of hysterical homophobia once gay venues, which are supposedly safe spaces for gay men to cruise, become spots for arbitrary police arrests. This happens as Will Beckwith's

63 *Ibid.*

64 Cf. Andersson, "East End Localism and Urban Decay"; Binnie, "Trading Places: Consumption, Sexuality and the Production of Queer Space" in Bell and Valentine (eds.) *Mapping Desire*, pp. 182–188; Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, pp. 62–65; Spade, *Normal Life*.

65 Andersson, "East End Localism and Urban Decay", p. 55.

66 *Ibid.*, p. 56.

best friend, James, goes to the Coleherne in Earls Court and is arrested by a policeman who tries to make a pass at him. While Will's autobiographical narrative portrays a 'gay lifestyle' that is characterized by hedonism, cruising and luxury, demonstrations of homosexuality in the city, including in places that are publicly renowned for their gay venues, are compromised by the increasing dissemination of homophobic discourses. These discourses are only narrated metaphorically in the novel. In *The Line of Beauty*, AIDS is categorically represented, and it directly affects the lives of the book's gay characters. In my analysis, I contend that the escalating persecution of gay venues and the establishment of neoliberal ideology in Thatcher's government alter gay life in London at large, given that the representation of queer spaces shifts to the realm of the domestic sphere. In this novel, the domestic spaces, mostly depicted through wealthy homes, are sites for cruising, sex, and promiscuity, and yet they also function as the stage for Tory politics and conservatism.

Queer Spaces and Literary Practices

I have previously discussed notions of space by taking London and the interdependence of class, gender, and sexuality in queer spaces into consideration. The analyses and critical works presented above point to specific epistemological productions of spaces that will establish sites in which the subject will form their understandings and enactment of homosexuality. In this section, I wish to discuss literature's potential as a space for representation of urban space, history, and their interdependencies. I am interested in the ways in which the intersections between class, gender, and sexuality are put forward in Waters' and Hollinghurst's novels and the ways in which they use historical fiction as a genre to recount gay and lesbian histories. Moreover, as the literary analyses of Waters' and Hollinghurst's novels will elucidate, the characters' relationships with their spatial surroundings deeply influence how they act out their gay and lesbian identities. Additionally, I contend that it is possible to reflect on how Waters and Hollinghurst employ queer spaces in order to convey queer historiography.

As I have noted in the introduction, Hollinghurst's *The Swimming-Pool Library* and *The Line of Beauty* have not been read as historical fiction, since they depict late twentieth century historical events, namely Thatcher's government. I argue that this focus has been overlooked because, in these novels and in *The Spell*, Hollinghurst writes about the late twentieth-century and the early twenty-first century respectively, and the traditional theories about historical fiction postulate that it is necessary that the author have temporal distance from the past in order to be able to represent it faithfully. In Lukács' seminal work *The Historical Novel*, for instance, he writes:

> [the relationship between past and present in] really great historical art, does not consist in alluding to contemporary events […] but in bringing the past to life as the prehistory of the present, in giving poetic life to those historical, social and human

> forces which, in the course of a long evolution, have made our present-day life what it is and as we experience it.[67]

For Lukács, the distance between past and present is a premise in writing historical fiction so that the author is able to study history and can provide representations of historical events that will entail the notion of progress in history and the idea that the world has somehow 'evolved' from the past until the present moment.

This is definitely not the case in Hollinghurst's first novels, as *The Swimming-Pool Library* was written and published during the AIDS crisis and during the Thatcherite government and *The Line of Beauty* came out in 2004, when the effects of Thatcherism were extended under Tony Blair's New Labour government. Although Hollinghurst wrote these novels based on his own memories and experiences from the 1980s, and does not conduct thorough historical research as Waters does, it is possible to consider his work to be historical fiction because he anticipates many features that are known to be part of late-twentieth century gay history: the depoliticization of the gay movement, the gentrification of gay neighborhoods such as Soho, and the struggle of gay men to be recognized as 'normal' and 'respectable' by being included in the heterosexual standard of marriage and the nuclear family.[68] In *The Stranger's Child*, the historical aspect of Hollinghurst's novels becomes even more evident, given that he specifically addresses historiography's blind spots through metafictionally representing the process of writing history by mocking, at least to some extent, the notion of progress in gay history. The notions of historiography that he articulates are deeply related to the trope of the country house, to gay history, and to the literary tradition, as I will show in chapter 7 through my reading of his 2011 novel.

In chapter 8, I closely examine Waters' and Hollinghurst's employment of history in their literary works by arguing that they pertain to the subgenre of historiographic metafiction, as theorized by Linda Hutcheon. She defines historiographic metafiction as a subgenre of the historical novel that consolidates itself under the postmodernist premises regarding the questioning of authority and of authenticity, fostering the ideals that enable the plurality of narrative voices.[69] Thus, Hutcheon asserts that historiographic metafiction narrates the histories of 'ex-centric' subjects who have been historically marginalized, thereby stressing "the implied recognition that our culture is not really the homogeneous monolith (that is middleclass, male, heterosexual, white, western) we might have assumed".[70] For Hutcheon, this subgenre of postmodernist historical fiction reflects upon the silences and loopholes of traditional historiography, which has often effaced the narratives of peripheral subjects, such as people of color, gays, lesbians, working-class subjects, and women.

Waters and Hollinghurst narrate the histories of lesbians and gay men by affirmatively associating their presence and participation in London's history. In this book, I

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67 Lukács, *The Historical Novel*, p. 53.

68 Cf. Duggan, "*The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism*" in Castronovo and Nelson (eds.) *Materializing Democracy*; Spade, *Normal Life*; Warner, *The Trouble with Normal*.

69 Cf. Hutcheon, *The Poetics of Postmodernism*, pp. 6–8; pp. 57–60.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

consider their works to be relevant contributions to queer historiography precisely because they engage with gay and lesbian culture by articulating historical events with literary texts that have dealt with homosexuality, either directly or indirectly. This becomes clear in my reading of the Jamesian narrator in *The Line of Beauty* and the connection that I make between the Victorian Gothic and Waters' use of spiritualism in *Affinity*.

In this book, I wish to analyze the ways in which Waters and Hollinghurst represent queer spaces and how they articulate it through London's history and with different English literary genres, authors, and styles. In my view, literature appears as a space in which it is possible to critically reconstruct spatial and social relations that do not necessarily mirror reality. Jurij Lotman, for instance, defines the work of art as "a finite model of an infinite universe".[71] For the Russian scholar, art provides the possibility to reflect infinite objects within a delimited space that constructs its own reality and spatial relations. Therefore, the depiction of the infinite reality in a finite one is always a process of *translation* that can never faithfully copy reality, but it creates its own *topos*, a spatial continuum in which objects found in reality are represented.[72] In this process of translation, the author can describe history and spaces by evoking the 'real', which in Waters' and Hollinghurst's works is conveyed by their representations of London and of history. However, this does not mean that their historical representations of the city is 'reality' itself, since they rely on language and on literary devices – such as the selection of historical events and of literary intertexts, and the choice of the kinds of narrator they wish to construe – to create a literary work that fictionally portrays London's history and geography. In other words, it is important to emphasize that Waters' and Hollinghurst's representations of London, and of its queer history, hinge upon fictionality to exist, and cannot simply be regarded in terms of the 'reality' or 'truthfulness' of historical facts.

A similar thread of thought can be traced considering the representation of urban space in literature by thinking about the translations of cities into literature. If, as Lotman contends, works of art are conceived through the process of translating reality (infinite objects) into the realm of the finite, then translating urban space into literary texts implies the construction of cities that will convey elements of the originals by which they are inspired; however, these originals will become transformed by giving them new meanings. In literary texts, cities are described through the portrayal of buildings, streets, nature, parks, or monuments, for instance, to acquire an afterlife that only represents reality by transforming spaces through the lives, actions, and gestures that characters engage with throughout the plot. In this sense, places could acquire very different meanings when represented in literature because of the spatial relations and appropriations that the author conveys in the construction of characters, genre, plot, and temporality.

The relationship between space and time in literature has been expounded by Bakhtin in the introduction of his concept of the chronotope, which consists in "the

71 Lotman, *The Structure of the Artistic Text*, p. 210.

72 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature".[73] Bakhtin emphasizes that space and time are inseparable categories, but he considers time to be a primary category in literature, since it is time that becomes artistically visible and palpable, whereas space functions in response to the plot's temporal movements. Bakhtin considers the chronotope to be a pivotal aspect in the construction of a literary work, given that it determines the genre and defines a narrative's artistic unity: the chronotope is, therefore, "the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied", providing the fundamental grounds for "the representability of events".[74] In spite of his constant emphasis that time and space cannot be separated, Bakhtin asserts that the chronotope's main function is to materialize time *within* space, thereby reinforcing the idea that the temporal is always prior to the spatial. Although space plays an important role in the narrative, Bakhtin suggests that it operates as static scenery, in which historical time and biographical time are developed. For Bakhtin, space always passively responds to the effects of time, suggesting that the spaces represented in a novel will be construed as a means to convey the temporal verisimilitude of a specific epoch or social relations that are at stake in the narrative.[75] The notion of the chronotope will be analyzed in chapter 4 in my reading of *The Night Watch*.

I take up Bakhtin's concept to reflect on the queer chronotopes in the novel that emerge alongside London's destruction in the Blitz and with the process of the city's reconstruction in the post-war period. Thus, I argue that the extraordinary circumstances brought about by the war disrupt the conventional measures of time and space, which are depicted by the characters' subjective temporal and spatial experiences during wartime in the novel. As I will further elucidate in my reading of *The Night Watch*, space is also a primary category in narrating history, not just time, since the characters' subjective perceptions of and experiences in the air raids and urban destruction also materialize the notion of chaos and of an overall expectation (that is not fulfilled) that there will be progress in terms of class, gender, and sexual relations once the war ends. This is also put forward through Waters' choice of narrator, since she deploys a heterodiegetic narrator that focalizes on each character and recounts their own imaginative and subjective interpretation of their environment.

The narrator employed in each of the novels examined in this book is also a central topic that will be explored in my literary analyses. Rimon-Kennan defines the narrator "as the agent which at the very least narrates or engages in some activity serving the needs of narration".[76] In *The Swimming-Pool Library*, Will Beckwith narrates his circulation throughout London in an autobiographical form, thereby conveying gay life in 1980s London through a perspective that evinces his social privileges and the commodification of gay culture. As I will demonstrate in my reading of the novel in chapter 5, Will's account of London is set out as an advertisement of 'gay life', as an object to be consumed, given that the narration of his life ironically portrays a

73 Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel", in *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 84.

74 *Ibid.*, p. 250.

75 Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 243; 250.

76 Rimon-Kennan, *Narrative Fiction*, p. 91.

hedonistic, glossy, and exaggerated sexualized city that is available to affluent, white, gay men. While he does relate the lives of gay men of color and from working-class backgrounds, these men are depicted merely as sexual objects that attend to wealthy gay men's sexual desires. It is in this sense that I associate his autobiographical narration of gay London with the figure of the neoliberal subject: he is egotistic and his sexual and affective relations are acted out to obtain individual profit; this points to the neoliberal premise of the rules of free market informing all social relations.

In *The Line of Beauty*, Hollinghurst's deployment of the Jamesian center of consciousness yields distinct perspectives on the protagonist Nick Guest's relation with the spaces in which he circulates, which mostly consists of a Tory and conservative social environment. In the first part of the novel, the Jamesian center of consciousness evinces the effects of neoliberal ideology upon the protagonist and upon his effort to belong to an upper-class environment, into which he was not born but only entered coincidentally. In the second part, the role of the center of consciousness indicates that Nick has apparently settled in within this milieu, given that the narrator ascribes Nick the role of confidant and interclass mediator. In the last part of the novel, the center of consciousness becomes secondary, as Nick becomes an object of surveillance and as he loses his position as a privileged observer. In *The Stranger's Child*, Hollinghurst ironically employs an omniscient narrator that can supposedly convey an impartial and universal historiography about the poet Cecil Valance and two country houses: Two Acres and Corley Court. By using metafictionality in his account, Hollinghurst describes the process of writing history, reminding us of the impossibility of obtaining a historical narrative that is neutral, given that all authors rely on the selection and interpretation of events in order to narrate history.

In Waters' novels, narration is devised as a means to evince subjective accounts of history, as I have noted in *The Night Watch*. *Affinity* is written in diary form, introducing accounts of the protagonists Margaret Prior and Selina Dawes. Their diary entries present two different temporalities in the novel: while Margaret's diary relates the fictive present, which includes her visits to Millbank prison and her life in a conventional Victorian upper-class home, Selina's diary features the fictive past prior to her imprisonment. The ways in which their diaries are devised in the novel are crucial for my analysis, since I contend that Selina's diary is constantly overlooked by critics because it does not put forward reflections, feelings, or personal memories that can offer the reader information about her self; it should be borne in mind that this is a primary characteristic of diary narration.[77] Instead, Selina's diary recounts her daily routines, her appointments, and financial information about her work as a séance leader. Since the reader has access to narration about the prison through Margaret's diary alone, which fulfills the premise of narration of the self, we are lured into falling into the trap of accepting the parallel between Victorian domesticity and incarceration as equal forms of female confinement. In focusing my analyses on both diaries, I dispute the construction of this parallel in order to argue that the apparent equality in surveillance and oppression within these two spaces, the Victorian home

77 Cf. Abbot, *Diary as Fiction*, pp. 18–21.

and the prison, can only be asserted because Margaret's diary is perceived as more reliable than Selina's.

In Waters' debut novel, *Tipping the Velvet*, London is constructed with an autodiegetic narrator-protagonist that engages with the city by enacting different gender identities that, as I will discuss in the second chapter, are informed by the social environments in which she circulates. These spaces consist of the theater, the West End, St. John's Wood, and Bethnal Green; the gender identities that Nancy Astley performs are strongly influenced by the class norms that these neighborhoods impose. In the following passage, Nancy finds herself walking around Leicester Square, where she had once been with her ex-lover, Kitty Butler, and their former manager, Walter Bliss. She sees the Shakespeare statue and remembers the day that Walter had taken them there, thinking about how her perception of London had changed since her arrival:

> How had my sense of the world changed, since then! I had learned that London life was even stranger and more various than I had ever thought it; but I had learned too that not all its great variety was visible to the casual eye; that not all the pieces of the city sat together smoothly, or graciously, but rather rubbed and chafed and jostled one another, and overlapped; that some, out of fear, kept themselves hidden, and only exposed themselves to those upon whose sympathies they could be sure. Now, all unwittingly, I had been marked out by one such secret element, and claimed by it as a member.[78]

In her translation of Leicester Square into literature, Waters evinces the queer and straight sides of the area. The translation of urban space, in this passage, exposes the blind spots of heteronormativity in the city, as her protagonist appropriates parts of London that are not necessarily perceived as queer.

As Avery notes, "urban spaces are often produced and enacted as [straight spaces]", yet "this 'straight space' has the potential to be contested and challenged, both implicitly and explicitly".[79] In Waters' novel, Nancy's mobility in the city and her ability to queer the sexual and identity categories that are imposed upon her allows for the portrayal of a queer subculture that is not always available to the 'casual eye'. As Nancy's narration shows, the memories of her arrival in London had only captured the straight side of Leicester Square. However, once she becomes a member of 'the secret element', she is able to recognize and partake in the area's sexual underworld. Waters gives voice to "hidden lesbian histories" and "insert[s] lesbian stories into history" [80] by contrasting the normal and the deviant in her depiction of Victorian London and by exploring the interdependencies of gender, class, and sexuality as categories that form space, determine its conditions, and limits her characters' power to queer that space.

78 Waters, *Tipping the Velvet*, pp. 200–201.

79 Avery, "Structuring and Interpreting Queer Spaces of London" in Avery and Graham (eds.) *Sex, Time and Place*, p. 9.

80 Mitchell, *Sarah Waters*, p. 6.

Urban mobility and the characters' ability to move through different spaces in the novel is another aspect that I engage with in my analyses, particularly in my examination of *Tipping the Velvet* (chapter 2) and *The Swimming-Pool Library* (chapter 5), and in my comparison between Hollinghurst's and Waters' novels in chapter 8. Michel de Certeau argues that walking in the city creates a "network of moving"[81] that enables the walker to explore fragments of urban space within the trajectories that they pursue. He considers the act of walking to be analogous to speech acts.[82] Like the speaker, de Certeau explains, the walker appropriates space in order to perform in it, as they take up different positions while walking, changing the ways in which they perform according to the spaces that they are going through, in the same way that one must perform language according to the interlocutor with whom they speak and to the environment in which they speak.[83]

De Certeau's reflections on the relationship between subject and space are particularly interesting in *Tipping the Velvet*, since Nancy's 'enunciations' are produced according to the possibilities that she encounters to appropriate space. The first part of the novel is marked by her circulation in London as led by her manager, Walter Bliss, who introduces her to Leicester Square, the second part of the novel is marked by her taking over her agency and by her exploring the city on her own terms. She rapidly realizes that, as an unaccompanied woman, her circulation in the city is compromised. Therefore, she decides to cross-dress as a man; this allows her to partake in a completely different geography of the city that is mainly marked by the West End's cruising world and, later, by Diana Lethaby's upper-class environment, where Nancy presents herself as Neville King.

The differences involved in circulating in the city as a man and as a woman are part of my discussions in chapter 8. In literature, it is impossible to dissociate the possibilities of urban mobility from the figure of the *flâneur*. In his renowned work *The Painter of Modern Life*, Baudelaire defines the *flâneur* as a man whose "crowd is his domain […] [whose] passion and […] profession is to merge with the crowd". The *flâneur* is a literary figure who gets "[t]o be away from home and yet to feel at home anywhere; to see the world, to be at the very centre of the world, and yet to be unseen of the world, such are some of the minor pleasures of those independent intense and impartial spirits".[84] Because the *flâneur* is a character who sees and is not seen, who is free to wander around the world and be a 'free spirit', it becomes obvious that this figure, in Baudelaire's perception, can only be a man.

This is precisely the point that feminist scholars such as Janet Wolff, Deborah Epstein Nord, Elizabeth Wilson, and Sally Munt have taken up in their discussions about the *flâneur*. Wolff contends that "the dandy, the *flâneur*, the hero, the stranger – all figures invoked to epitomise the experience of modern life – are invariably male figures".[85] For Wolff, since the modern city is ultimately experienced by male

81 de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 93.

82 Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 97.

83 Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 97–98.

84 Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*, p. 26.

85 Wolff, "The Invisible *Flanêuse*: Women and the Literature of Modernity", p. 41.

actors, according to the traditional definition of the *flâneur*, the city comes to be a male territory in which the female *flâneuse* is completely effaced. Wilson disputes Wolff's reading of Baudelaire's modern hero because Wolff overtly emphasizes a clear-cut separation between the private and public spheres in the Victorian period and in modernity and she reinforces the idealized notion of female domesticity and passivity. Wilson explains that many women in the late Victorian period, in spite of this ideal, circulated in the urban realm. Her main example is the creation of department stores, which, in her view, corresponds to an upper-class version of idling in the city.[86]

Moreover, Wilson calls attention to the fact that working-class women were often described as "violent, wild and bestial" by upper- and middle-class philanthropists and social workers due to the threat they posed to the ways in which they "thronged the streets",[87] and often frequented places such as pubs, theaters, and music halls. Apart from working-class women, Wilson notes that many middle- and upper-class female journalists and writers at the end of the nineteenth century took to the streets of London, participating in the city's bohemian and cultural life along with their male counterparts.[88] Nord also focuses on female journalists and writers to challenge the modern city's perception as a male domain, as she notes how female intellectuals acquire their "consciousness of transgression and trespassing, from the vexed sexuality [their] position implies, and from [their] struggle to escape the status of spectacle and become a spectator".[89] While Wolff stresses the idea of domesticity and passivity through the invisibility of the '*flâneuse*', Wilson and Nord both affirm a female presence in the modern metropolis, although they do recognize that women's circulation in the city does not pertain to the dominant model of the femininity of the period.

It is this perspective that Waters emphasizes in *Tipping the Velvet*, as she asserts the ways in which women actively took part in London's life, particularly in the theatrical scene in the West End and, later, in the feminist-socialist environment of Bethnal Green. In my reading, I contend that Waters appropriates the *flâneur*'s male gaze to create a cross-dressing *flâneur* who exists within the binary of male-female, and who becomes a lesbian *flâneur* in the third part of the novel. Sally Munt postulates mobility as a crucial aspect for explorations of urban space and for sexual experimentation.[90] In her words, "the lesbian *flâneur* signifies a mobilised female sexuality *in control*, not out of control".[91] It is Nancy's mobility, and her ability to perform, that enables the creation of queer spaces in the novel: these queer spaces are products of her narration, of her subjectivity, and of the ways in which she is able to appropriate the city's supposedly heterosexual spaces.

In my reading of *The Swimming-Pool Library*, the notion of the *flâneur* is conveyed by the practice of cruising. The association between cruising and walking in the modern

86 Cf. Wilson, "The Invisible Flâneur", p. 101.

87 *Ibid.*, p. 104.

88 Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

89 Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets*, p. 12.

90 *Idem*, *Heroic Desire*, pp. 37–38.

91 Munt, "The Lesbian *Flâneur*" in Bell and Valentine (eds.) *Mapping Desire*, p. 121, emphasis in original.

city was introduced in Turner's *Backward Glances*. He argues that, as a visual experience, the *flâneur*'s act of walking and gazing is indeed a gendered practice, much like Wilson, Wolff, and Nord contend; however, it should not be read exclusively through the binary of male/female positions, since not all men and women move through the city in the same way and, therefore, they inevitably create "different meanings in urban space".[92] For Turner, walking and seeing in the city is always a more complex and diverse experience and, thus, the cruiser can easily be (mis)taken for a *flâneur*.

Turner explains that the exchange of glances always depends on the possible interactions, and detecting a specific glance, a sexual glance, is a recurrent possibility. It is within this specific network of glances that Turner defines the cruiser as "every other street walker", whose real interests are not necessarily intelligible to all passers-by: "[h]e is the anonymous wanderer who bathes in the multitude […] in order to seek out another individual […] whose gaze will meet his own. The cruiser positively *longs* to be seen, but not by everyone, and not in all streets."[93] This is the kind of interaction that Will seeks on the streets of London and in the gay venues that he frequents. His highly sexualized narration of London hinges on the sexual possibilities that the city offers, and his privileged status of a white, upper-class gay man places him in a position of dominance in relation to the gay men of color and the working-class men with whom he flirts.

However, his success in finding sex with other men also depends on where he cruises: while his social privileges give him advantages in cruising in West and Central London, he does not obtain the same success in the city's working-class areas. As he approaches a teenage boy in East London, he is promptly rejected, as the boy clearly states that he is only interested in having sex with him in exchange for money.[94] Later, in New Cross, in South-East London, he exchanges glances with local skinheads, expecting them to show sexual interest in him, as a skinhead once did in Camden Town, but he is brutally beaten up.[95]

Hollinghurst's novels remind us that, in spite of the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1967, homophobia is perpetuated throughout history as a structural relation in society. In *The Swimming-Pool Library*, this is represented with the juxtaposition of Will's account of gay life in the 1980s with Lord Charles Nantwich's diary entries from the beginning of the twentieth century, in which he narrates encounters with prominent 'homophile' figures such as E.M. Forster and Ronald Firbank. Lord Nantwich epitomizes a previous generation of gay men who were persecuted and imprisoned because of their homosexuality, given that he himself was a victim of the 'gay witch hunt' in the 1950s. Not only is homophobia described in terms of violence and juridical prohibition in Hollinghurst's works, it also features in the construction of the female characters of his novels, particularly in both *The Line of Beauty* and in *The Stranger's Child*.

92 Cf. Turner, *Backward Glances*, p. 34.

93 *Ibid.*, p. 36. Emphasis in original.

94 Cf. Hollinghurst, *The Swimming-Pool Library*, pp. 133–134.

95 Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 174–175.

As Sedgwick has remarkably noted, male bonds have always been charged with homophobia and sexism. Since homosexuality has been historically related to homosocial bonds between men, the boundaries between sexual desire and friendship are blurred, and the corollary effects entail "an endemic and ineradicable state of [...] male homosexual panic [as] the normal condition of male heterosexual entitlement".[96] Because the lines between social and sexual are so tenuous, and because homophobia is a paramount aspect of (Western) masculinity, it becomes crucial that men can trace this boundary, which is performed by compulsory heterosexuality. In order to prove that a homosocial bond with another man is not homosexual, women constitute "an absolute of exchange value", they are the "ultimate victims of the painful contradictions in the gender system that regulates men".[97] Thus, Sedgwick contends that homosocial bonds and their intrinsic, compulsory heterosexuality are fundamental to the maintenance and reproduction of the patriarchal order, which enables homophobia. In discussing homosocial relations between men, Sedgwick sees a valuable source to reflect on the ways in which male bonding has shifted throughout history, in literature from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, showing how the features of homosexual panic, homophobia, and heterosexual compulsion remain key elements of these relationships.

The reproduction of elements of homophobia, heterosexual compulsion, and sexism in Hollinghurst's works suggest that, while there have been shifts in gay culture throughout history, there are still spaces in which homosexuality is not tolerated. On the one hand, his works affirmatively represent male homosexuality as part of a cultural, literary, political, and historical English tradition, since his gay characters circulate in conservative and traditional spaces such as the Oxbridge circles, the parliament and high-rank governmental positions; on the other hand, though, Hollinghurst points to the fact that the idea of 'sexual freedom', put forward by gay liberation movements in the 1960s and 1970s, is limited to specific historical and cultural circumstances. Where *The Swimming-Pool Library* portrays Will's supposedly free circulation in certain parts of London, *The Line of Beauty* depicts the ways in which AIDS, hysterical homophobia, and Thatcherism negatively impacted gay culture in London and restricted the possibilities of cruising.

In his works, Hollinghurst interconnects past and present by evincing the ways in which homophobia is systematically reproduced, even at times when there is no juridical prohibition regarding homosexuality and by dialoguing with literary styles, genres, and authors that have been coined as part of a 'homophile tradition'. In *The Line of Beauty*, for instance, he employs intertextual references to Henry James' works and to nineteenth century aestheticism to depict London under Thatcherite government and its consequences for the lives of gay subjects during that period. Like Waters, he relies on intertextuality to represent London, focusing predominantly on affluent and white parts of the city, spaces that bring out the class, gender, and racial privileges that mark most of his characters.

96 Sedgwick, *The Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 185.

97 *Idem*, *Between Men: British Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*, p. 134.

While Waters' translation of London into literature hinges on feminist and queer politics[98] by engaging with popular literary genres and by introducing female and lesbian characters in predominantly male plots[99] (e.g., the picaresque novel in *Tipping the Velvet*), Hollinghurst's intertextual references stem from canonical writers such as Oscar Wilde, E. M. Forster, and Henry James. As many critics have elucidated, Waters is one of the most acclaimed writers of neo-Victorian fiction, returning to the past to critically revise it and to engage with the nineteenth century's literary genres, such as the sensation and gothic novels, to include lesbian history within canonical tradition and to create a fictional lesbian historiography.[100] Not only does she reverberate the works of celebrated authors such as Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and the Brontës, but she also incorporates contemporary queer and feminist theories in her plot as well as in her characters' relationship to London. As I will discuss in greater depth in chapter 8, Waters' and Hollinghurst's intertextual references, and the ways they appropriate established literary genres and styles, are deeply informed by the gender differences ascribed to the literary canon, the participation of women in literature, and the ways in which male homosexuality has always been more visible in English culture than female same-sex desire.

As contemporary writers, Waters and Hollinghurst look back on English and literary history to reflect upon the ways in which gay and lesbian cultures have marked London's cultural geography. The depictions of places, buildings, and historical events are not only employed as sources to produce historical fiction, but also as means to insert homosexuality in English literature. In other words, Waters and Hollinghurst intertwine past and present in their constructions of London by simultaneously articulating historical and fictional narratives that provide different perspectives of gay and lesbian histories in the city. In the chapters that follow, we shall see the effects of translating London and its queerness into fiction, contemplating the ways in which these distinct authorial lenses recount gay and lesbian histories and their relation to London's sexual geography.

98 Cf. Jones and O'Callaghan, "Sarah Waters' Feminisms" in Jones and O'Callaghan (eds.) *Sarah Waters and Contemporary Feminism*, pp. 10–15.

99 Cf. Palmer, "Representations of Queer London in the Fiction of Sarah Waters" in Avery and Graham (eds.) *Sex, Time and Place*, pp. 82–83.

100 Cf. Armitt and Gamble, "The Haunted Geometries of Sarah Waters' *Affinity*"; Carroll, "Re-thinking generational history: Queer histories of sexuality in neo-Victorian feminist fiction"; Heilmann, "Doing It With Mirrors: Neo-Victorian Metatextual Magic in *Affinity*, *The Prestige* and *The Illusionist*"; Mitchell, *Sarah Waters*, pp. 5–8.