

**Sea Changes:
Representations of Fluid Adolescence
Through Literature and Cinema**

Dissertation

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Note on references

The titles of primary texts (novels, short stories, poems, feature films, short films) are given in the original. When a work is mentioned for the first time, the English translation of the title (when available) and the issue year are indicated in brackets. The titles of primary texts that are frequently quoted are indicated in parenthetical references with the abbreviations listed in the bibliography (for instance “*P*” for the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, or “*LQC*” for the film *Les quatre cents coups*). Whenever an English translation of a text is not available, I provide the original quotation and my translation into English in a footnote.

The dialogues from the Doinel films are quoted in English, and correspond to the subtitles provided in the DVDs used for the analysis, which are listed in the Bibliography. Anything that is written within square brackets has been added for a better understanding of the dialogue. Anything that is written within square brackets and in italics is an alternative translation that I think is necessary to provide whenever the English subtitles differ (even slightly) from the original. As for the films that are considered less frequently, I quote the dialogues in the original (e.g. in Italian), and I provide my translation in a footnote.

All the images are film stills taken from the DVDs listed in the Bibliography.

ADDITIONAL NOTE:

This doctoral dissertation has been written within a co-tutelle PhD programme between the University of Goettingen and the University of Udine (Italy). A first version of this dissertation is available on the online catalogue of the Università degli Studi di Udine.

1. Introduction

The analysis developed in the present study covers a timespan of slightly more than six decades, and embraces the media of literature and cinema. It begins with a focus on English literary Modernism of the 1920s, and gradually moves towards the French *nouvelle-vague* cinema production of the late 1950s and early 1960s. One of the main aims of this investigation is to delineate the characterising elements of a specific category of texts, both literary and cinematic, that I define as *fluid anti-developmental narratives*. Despite the apparent heterogeneity of these works, they do share fundamental traits from both a thematic and a formal point of view. First of all, they are linked together by the fact that their protagonists are adolescents and young adults who cannot, or refuse to, develop into what is commonly considered as mature adulthood. Secondly, this condition is determined and/or symbolised by these characters' peculiar attitude towards the element of water, which thus acquires a crucial narrative function. A third important common trait among these works is a characterising *fluidity*: this quality denotes not only the intrinsic liquidity of water, and the evolving – fluid – identity of the young characters, but also the narrative style that is used to present and describe them. This fluidity can also be applied to the category of fluid anti-developmental narratives itself, insofar as it encompasses different historical and cultural contexts, as well as different genres and media. In order to situate the genesis of this narrative category within a larger frame of reference, it is useful to consider it as a specific sub-genre of what is generally defined as *sea literature*.

Given the intrinsic protean character of sea literature, the selection of works analysed in the present study cannot be a complete or definitive one. Nevertheless, while the number of primary texts I have chosen is necessarily limited, it is intended to be indicative of the defining characteristics of fluid anti-developmental narratives. To begin with, one of the particularities of these texts is that, although they constitute a sub-genre of sea literature, the majority lack those elements traditionally linked to the very idea of a sea narrative: namely, distinguishing characters such as the sailor or the pirate, recurring topoi like, for instance, the ship as a metaphor for society, or motifs such as an adventurous journey at sea as a rite of passage. Nevertheless, water, and particularly the water of the sea, plays a crucial function both in the narrative developments and in the characterisation of the protagonists; this is the point of departure of my analysis.

Narratives of the sea take on a great variety of forms, embracing numerous epochs and

genres, as well as different media. The current critical debate in (cultural) studies on the sea, and particularly on sea literature, is exploring and re-discovering the sea not only in its crucial symbolic significance but also as a social, historical, and cultural space. As shall be elaborated on in chapter two, the majority of the contributions published so far call for an interdisciplinary and transnational approach, aiming at a global and broadly-encompassing view on the meaning of the sea. These studies are to be considered part of the recent “maritime turn in the humanities” (Kluwick and Richter 5), which developed from the spatial turn in the humanities that started in the 1970s.

The collection of essays edited by Charlotte Mathieson, *Sea Narratives: Cultural Responses to the Sea, 1600 – Present* (2016), is an excellent example of this turn. It aims to outlining the defining characteristics of the sea narrative, a genre that “works within and across a broad range of cultural forms” (10), and at the core of which there “is an ongoing, fluid renegotiation between the sea and the process of narration” (13). The varied and fluid interrelation between the sea, or water in general, and the production of narrations is particularly relevant to my investigation. The wide scope of this rich “renegotiation,” as Mathieson pertinently defines it (*ibid.*), provides enough space to answer some of the main questions in the present study: how does the narrative style of the texts analysed affect the characterisation of their young protagonists? More specifically, what can we deduce from the use of a ‘fluid style’ in relation to characters who are represented as ‘eternally adolescent’? And what does this condition imply?

The analysis of the fluidity of water as a metaphor for the adolescent identity intersects with a reflection on the very definition of an adolescent identity merging, on a theoretical level, spatial studies with gender studies. This intersection constitutes the frame of reference within which I have carried out the present research, which has its main focus on linguistic and stylistic variations in the texts selected. In the analysis of the fictional characters, I consider their condition of ‘eternal’ adolescence rather as ‘fluid’, ‘liminal’, or indeed ‘queer’. Discussing the concept of a *queer* adolescence, in chapter three, I apply the term in its broadest sense, or as indicating what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s calls “the open mesh of possibilities” (*Tendencies* 8), that is, the multiplicity of facets that the identity of every individual actually assumes. The adolescent’s transforming state, due to the liminal position between childhood and adulthood, and the related lack of a linear development, find a particularly fertile ground in the dialogue with the maritime space, and more specifically with liminal spaces between land and water such as seashores, river banks, or docks. As Doreen Massey acutely observes in her study *Space, Place and Gender* (1994),

[t]he identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple. And the particularity of any place is, in these terms, constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counterposition to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the

specificity of the mix of links and interconnections *to* that ‘beyond’. Places viewed this way are open and porous. (5)

The liminal areas between water and land fittingly represent these kinds of “open and porous” (ibid.) places, and they can therefore be aptly considered metaphoric and symbolic transpositions of queer, or indeed fluid, adolescence.

In referring to a fluid and queer adolescence, I am concentrating on the definition and representation of identities that do not necessarily adhere to pre-established, heteronormative social codes, and I consider the emotional, psychological (and, ultimately narrative) implications of this condition. One crucial aspect in the definition of queer adolescence is certainly the character’s sexual orientation. As shall be seen, particularly in the Bildungsroman of the English tradition, the achievement of mature adulthood is directly connected to the capacity and willingness of the adolescent to follow a heteronormative path, which implies marriage, reproduction, and child rearing. Significantly, the protagonists of the works analysed are not ready to take this path, and in the majority of the cases they actually remain in an apparently unresolved, or indeed liminal, situation. It should therefore not come as a surprise that a formal feature shared by many of these texts is the open ending, and in their formal features more generally, they can be understood as reflecting the ‘unconventionality’ of fluid adolescence. The investigation I conduct is itself characterised by a tendency to go beyond boundaries and fixed definitions; in particular, in addition to the “cross-genre and cross-cultural perspective” propounded by Mathieson (3), I adopt a trans-medial approach, aiming to highlight the rich “diversity of narrative forms that come into view in considering the idea of the sea narrative” (10).

Although the works I have selected cover a timespan of several decades, the developments of English Modernism, notably in the years immediately following the First World War, remain a constant point of reference throughout my investigation. This is indeed a key historical moment in developing an understanding of the great cultural, artistic, as well as social and political r/evolutions that occurred, on a global level, throughout the twentieth century. As Pericles Lewis observes in *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (2007), “[w]e are the heirs of the modernists – both of their literary and artistic achievements and of their historical situation” (xxii). The reference is to an epoch of rapid and widespread modernisation, as well as of great complexity. As a consequence of the massive industrial development that took place during the nineteenth century, numerous technological innovations¹ were introduced, which, by the end of the century, had changed the every-day life of the masses, but that had also “transformed people’s experience of time and space

1 Among them, Lewis lists the “electric light, the telegraph, the telephone, the portable camera, the cinema, the bicycle, the automobile, the airplane, and the machine gun” (11)

and of the possibilities of art” (11). In particular, modernist artists and writers were aware of living in an epoch that differed substantially from the previous ones, and they intended to represent its character of striking novelty through their works. The numerous avant-garde artistic movements that developed especially in the early twentieth century, together with the invention of photography and cinema, indeed contribute to the characterisation of this moment as *modern*. The revolution of modernity, though, occurred side by side with brutal conflicts and crises: the expansion of the colonial empires (particularly the British empire), the outbreak of the First World War, the dramatic after-war period, the great economic depression, the rise of dictatorships, and the tangible threat of a second global conflict.

The modernist aesthetic reflects the complexity of this historical moment. Therefore, the figure of the fluid adolescent, an individual in his/her formation, who rejects and wishes to go beyond pre-established norms, aptly symbolises this epoch of evolutions. Indeed, this figure fuses together the curiosity, the originality, and the enthusiasm of youth with the difficulties, the crises, and the uncertainties that equally characterise this phase of life and this historical period. The lack of a precise direction, and the impossibility or unwillingness to follow a linear path towards adulthood are in opposition to the bourgeois, Victorian, and *Bildung*-oriented culture of the preceding century. For this reason, the texts considered here are defined as narratives of *anti*-development, as shall be explained in chapter two. This label has been chosen to indicate that the psychological, intellectual, and spiritual growth of their protagonists does not follow the course of normative development. This is, in turn, also reflected in the modernist openness towards new conceptions of language, of the image, as well as in the re-reading of old myths and narrative traditions.

Characterised by the crossing of genres, and of spatial and temporal boundaries, the modernist aesthetic generously borrows from past traditions, often from the classical ones, while also projecting itself towards the future with innovative and ground-breaking ideas. In his famous essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919), Thomas Stearns Eliot argues that tradition has a “historical sense” (470), which the poet has to understand by becoming aware

not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of literature of Europe, from Homer and within it the whole of literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense [...] is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity. (ibid.)

The avant-garde mixture of the classical and the experimental goes hand in hand with a completely new approach towards language. Indeed, many modernists understood “the literary work as a

particularly sophisticated sort of language game, in which the relations among words were more important than the relations of words to nonlinguistic reality” (Lewis 10). In doing so, they “challeng[ed] the conception of language as straightforwardly mimetic” (ibid.), and many of them “organiz[ed] their literary works according to the nonreferential functions of language” and “wrest[ed] their own styles from the maelstrom created by the constant interplay between the referential and the nonreferential forces of the language” (ibid.).

The work of James Joyce is exemplary in this sense. The complete oeuvre of the Irish author challenges traditional conceptions of (literary) language, with the unconventionality of his writings gradually increasing from *Dubliners* (1914), Joyce’s first (and only) collection of short stories, to *Finnegans Wake* (1939), his last work. The novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), “represent[s] each stage of the boy’s [i.e. Stephen Dedalus] developing consciousness in the language through which the child himself perceives the world” (Lewis 123), including, from the very first pages, extensive reflections on single words, their sound, their musicality, and the sensations evoked by them, regardless of their actual meaning. This aspect is further developed in *Ulysses* (1922), which Lewis defines as “an extended meditation on how people view themselves in language” (173), and reaches an extreme point in *Finnegans Wake* (1939), “quel mostro de libro²” (*Selected Letters* 396), as Joyce himself defined it in a letter to Livia Svevo. From its very first word³, *Finnegans Wake* radically detaches itself from any narrative and linguistic convention.

The search for new and innovative means of expression and the distinctive internationalism that characterise the modernist aesthetic have to be paired with a fascination for the potentialities of the visual. Before and along with the affirmation of Modernism, other experiments in the visual arts were also developing towards a less mimetic, and altogether new, representation of reality. Among the most important examples, French Impressionism, together with photography, which developed almost contemporaneously, aimed at capturing and representing the ‘impression’ of a single moment, and the emotions evoked by the combinations of light and colour of an instant. French Symbolism also played an important role, fascinating many English poets in the 1890s, notably Arthur Symons. Symons was among the first to introduce English-speaking authors and readers to

2 Namely, “that monster of a book.” The letter, sent from Paris on “Calendimaggio” (i.e. 1st May) 1939, is written in Italian and in Triestino (both of which Joyce was fluent in), and it announces the imminent publication of *Finnegans Wake*, on the 4th of May 1939. Joyce also defined *Ulysses* as his “maledettissimo romanzaccione” (*Selected Letters* 271), an expression commonly translated as “damned-monster novel,” in a letter sent to Carlo Linati on the 21st September 1920, in which he also famously describes his work as “the epic of two races (Israel – Ireland) and at the same time the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life)” (ibid.).

3 Namely the Joycean coinage “riverrun.” While this is the first word of the novel, it actually continues from the novel’s last sentence (that ends without punctuation): “A way a lone a last a loved a long the” (*FW* 628). This remains unfinished unless it is completed by returning to the book’s first line: “riverrun, past Eve and Adam’s, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs” (*FW* 3). This confers to *Finnegans Wake* its characterising cyclical structure.

“a literature in which the visible world is no longer a reality, and the unseen world no longer a dream” (Symons 55), as he describes it in the introduction to his study *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899). The Irish poet William Butler Yeats was also inspired by French Symbolism, as was T. S. Eliot, for whom “the techniques of the French symbolists were decisive in [his] later formulation of English modernist poetics” (Lewis 47).

Of all the artistic innovations, though, the influence of early cinema and its increasing popularity had an impact on modernist literature, which is of significance for the present study. The definition of ‘early cinema’ generally refers to the productions from the 1910s through to the introduction of sound films, or “talkies,” in the late 1920s. Although it is common to date the birth of cinema to 1895, the year of the first screening by the Lumière brothers, it was actually in the 1910s that cinema as we conceive of it today took shape, as André Gaudreault argues in his volume *Film and Attraction: From Kinematography to Cinema* (2011). Before that, it is more appropriate to talk about a cinema of attractions, which “derived directly from [...] the culture of popular stage entertainment dating from the beginning of the twentieth century” (Gaudreault 48). More precisely, in his study on *The Cinema and the Origins of Literary Modernism* (2012), Andrew Shail marks 1911 as the birth year of cinema, drawing in turn on the arguments presented by Gaudreault, and by Gaudreault and Philippe Marion, about the “first” and “second birth” of the medium (cf. Shail 13). While in 1895 the kinematograph counted as one of the numerous new technologies introduced in those years, from 1911 on it evolved into “a distinct medium with its own characteristic image-regime” (Shail 33). The early cinema’s “regime of the image,” to use a definition given by Gilles Deleuze⁴, played a decisive role in the origins of literary Modernism. As Shail observes, the “metamorphosis” (ibid.) that occurred in 1911 constitutes “a basis for the change in currents amongst the literary imaginary that gave rise to the modes and methods of literary modernism” (ibid.).

While the interconnection between Modernism and early cinema is evident, the links between the literature of the 1920s and the cinema of the Post-World-War-Two decades, which are the main foci of my investigation, may appear less obvious. Nevertheless, there is a commonality of narrative devices, techniques, and topoi that, as I intend to demonstrate in my analysis, testify to the great modernist legacy on certain kinds of European cinema, from the late 1940s through to the 1960s, if not beyond.

As such, my corpus of cinematic texts is mainly limited to these decades. A choice that was in part determined by the emergence of television as a mass medium in the 1950s and 1960s, which itself had a profound influence on the language of cinema. Considered by some as no less than the

4 Cf. Deleuze’s studies *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*.

death of cinema (cf. Gaudreault and Marion 28), television certainly had a great effect on the reception of and relation with the (cinematic) image. Interesting considerations on this can be found in the collection *André Bazin's New Media* (2014), edited by Andrew Dudley; among the essays and articles by André Bazin published in the volume, numerous are dedicated to television. Although Bazin is remembered as a cinema critic, and one of the most influential of his epoch, and although he died in 1958, when the expansion of television in France was still in an initial phase, his analyses of this new medium are extremely lucid and even prophetic. One of his most passionate followers, and indeed a putative son, was the *nouvelle-vague* filmmaker François Truffaut, whose films I will analyse in detail especially in chapter four. In one of the interviews he conducted with Alfred Hitchcock in 1962, which were later collected in the volume *Le cinéma selon Hitchcock* (1966⁵), Truffaut provides further considerations on the role of television. In particular, the lack of plots, which Hitchcock noticed especially in the French films of those years, is described by the French director as

a trend that reflects the evolution of the public, the impact of television, and the increasing use of documentary and press materials in the entertainment field. All of these factors have a bearing on the current attitude towards fiction; people seem to be moving away from that form and to be rather leery of the old patterns. (203)

In the films that constitute Truffaut's "Doinel cycle," centred on the character of Antoine Doinel, and that are one of the main foci of my research, there are several references to the expansion of television and its effects. With the exception of the first film, *Les quatre cents coups* (*The 400 Blows*, 1959), where there is no direct mention of television (but numerous references to cinema), from the second episode television appears as a recurring, if secondary, element. For instance, the closing scene of the short *Antoine et Colette* (*Antoine and Colette*, 1962) shows Antoine watching television with Colette's parents (this activity helps to conceal the embarrassment due to the evident disappointment he has experienced in his romantic involvement with Colette, but also blocks any other kind of communication among them). In the following episode, *Baisers volés* (*Stolen Kisses*, 1968), Antoine tries several different jobs and by the end of the film he is working as a TV repairman. His ex-girlfriend Christine takes advantage of the situation and disables her television on purpose; she then manages to have Antoine repair it, and on this occasion they reconcile. Antoine and Christine eventually marry, as we get to know in *Domicile Conjugal* (*Bed and Board*, 1970), and, while there is no telephone in their house, they do have a television. Throughout the film, Truffaut mockingly refers to the language of advertising which by then, very much like television itself, had entered the every-day life of the masses.

5 Translated into English with the title *Hitchcock*.

Therefore, although the expansion of television was still in a relatively early stage in the 1960s, the bearing it had on the evolution of cinematic language, and on the reception of the cinematic image, is relevant and was important in the development of the *nouvelle-vague* cinema itself. Indeed, the interconnection and mutual influence between television and the New-Wave poetics not only played an important role then, but also for the evolutions of cinema after the 1960s. Nevertheless, the main focus of my research does not lie on the developments of cinema after the 1960s, but rather on the legacy that this cinema, and the *nouvelle-vague* filmmakers in particular, more or less consciously, carried from literary Modernism, and implemented in their cinematic narrative modes⁶. Indeed, this study covers a long timespan, especially given the intensity of the revolutions that substantially changed the production and the reception of literary and cinematic texts, and that, ultimately, also radically changed the way that people lived, then and now.

1.1. Structure of the Dissertation and List of the Primary Texts

This study is divided into four main chapters, from chapters two to five, followed by a conclusion. In chapter two, I introduce the theoretical framework within which I start my investigation, paying special attention to sea literature and to the developments of the studies related to the maritime environment in recent decades. After defining what I mean by *fluid anti-developmental narratives*, I outline the reasons that guided my selection of the primary texts analysed in the following three chapters. The literary texts will often be considered along with, and/or in comparison to, cinematic texts; still, chapter three is mostly dedicated to literature, and chapter four more centred on cinema.

The literary focus that opens my analysis in chapter three regards the concurrence of two transformations that took place between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century: on the one hand, the rise of “modernist sea narratives,” to use Cesare Casarino’s definition (*Modernity at Sea*), which replaced the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sea adventure tales; and on the other hand, the substitution of the traditional Bildungsroman by the modernist novel of formation, whose “youthful protagonists [...] conspicuously *do not grow up*,” as Jed Esty puts it in *Unseasonable Youth* (2 – emphasis in the original). I look at two examples that date back to the Victorian age, but that anticipate many of the characterising elements of fluid anti-developmental narratives: *Great Expectations* (1860 – 61) by Charles Dickens, and George Eliot’s

6 In particular, my main focus is on the commonalities that modernists and *nouvelle-vague* directors share in the representation of adolescent characters and of their “unseasonable youth” (cf. Esty), or rather fluid evolution, as I will explain in chapter two.

The Mill on the Floss, published in the same years.

However, the focus of my investigation is on the end of the Victorian age and the opening decades of the twentieth century. In particular, as far as the development of modernist sea narratives is concerned, the contribution of the Polish-born writer Joseph Conrad is decisive. An analysis of some of his sea-set novels and short stories will demonstrate that, as Casarino points out, the modernist sea narrative foregrounded many of the aspects that would become characteristic of literary Modernism itself (cf. Casarino 10), such as the non-linearity of the narration or the use of free indirect speech and of interior monologue, to mention but a few well-known examples. These unconventional and somehow revolutionary formal choices reflect the perplexity and confusion caused by the inexorable advent of what, at the turn of the century, was felt as a new and heterogeneous state of things.

Among the innovations introduced by the modernist sea narratives (which are also characteristic of fluid anti-developmental narratives), there is an important re-interpretation of the sea itself, and of the constitutive elements of this spatial, symbolic, and cultural dimension. An account of this change can be given by considering the narrative function of what Margaret Cohen has defined as “chronotopes of the sea.” Cohen clearly refers to the concept of the literary chronotope, first coined by Mikhail Bakhtin, and discussed at length in the essay “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel” (in *The Dialogic Imagination*, 1937 – 1938). Throughout my study, I will repeatedly turn to the ‘narrative tool’ of the chronotopes of the sea, which I will present mainly by analysing Conrad’s novel *Lord Jim* (1900), with references to his short novel “Youth” (1902), and *The Shadow-Line* (1915). The analysis of the chronotopes of the sea in these works by Conrad will be followed by an overview of how the same chronotopes are treated in the texts by Joyce and Virginia Woolf that I have selected. In particular, though, I will focus on the chronotope of the seashore, and on the peculiar connotation that it acquires in modernist prose and poetry.

Apart from the necessary reference to Conrad’s works, the focus of chapter three lies principally on texts by Joyce and Woolf, as towering figures of High Modernism. Their works are excellent examples of the overall negative representation of water and the sea⁷, which characterises modernist poetics, and an important aim of my research is to explore the ways in which this ‘water dystopia’ affects the characterisation of the young protagonists of the modernist Bildungsromane that I consider. In particular, my analysis here chiefly focusses on Joyce’s modernist novel of formation *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*⁸ (1916), as well as *Ulysses* (1922), in particular

7 Especially for Joyce; as far as the work of Woolf is concerned, the sea is represented both as a positive and as a negative dimension. As David Bradshaw points out, “although the submarine is occasionally represented as a place of security and peace in Woolf’s work, it is more commonly associated with isolation and annihilation” (“Purest” 101-102). In the analysis of Woolf’s works in chapter three, I will focus particularly on this negative representation.

8 Hereafter referred to as *Portrait*.

the first three chapters (or ‘episodes’, as they are more commonly referred to) of the novel, where the figure of Stephen Dedalus is predominant. Stephen’s evolution is one of the most definitive examples of what I define as *fluid adolescence*, and he will be the object of a detailed analysis at the end of the third chapter, as well as in the fifth chapter. There certainly are, in the work of Joyce, other relevant examples of fluid adolescence, some of which I analyse in the third chapter; from *Dubliners* (1914) I consider the protagonists of “An Encounter,” “A Little Cloud,” and “Eveline” (whom I compare with the figure of Gerty MacDowell from the “Nausicaa” episode of *Ulysses*). As far as Woolf’s work is concerned, I look closely at the main characters of the novels *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Moreover, one of her short stories, “Solid Objects”⁹ will be analysed in chapter four, when I discuss the cinematic character of some of Woolf’s texts.

There are at least two works by these authors, however, which I do not consider in the present study, although they could, possibly, have been included: Woolf’s *The Waves* (1931), and the already mentioned *Finnegans Wake* by Joyce. The degree of experimentation in these works is such that an analysis would exceed the limits of my research. Moreover, because of their very singularity, it is not easy (or even possible) to identify the characterising features of potential fluid adolescent characters¹⁰ in these texts, although they actually present a specific stylistic fluidity, and in both works sea and rivers often recur throughout the narration. In *The Waves*, the sea quite evidently holds a significant position, but its presence is limited almost exclusively to the interludes, which ultimately serve as a narrative framework. These evocative passages, rather impressionistic in style, do have a narrative function insofar as they reflect the emotional and psychological states of the characters in the corresponding section; nevertheless, they are not necessarily functional to the development of the plot, and/or to the characterisation of the protagonists. Rather, the references to fluidity in the novel, and in particular the movement of the waves, are markedly transposed in the prose style. Indeed, as Woolf famously noted in her diary, “I say I am writing *The Waves* to a rhythm not to a plot” (*DVW* 316). In *Finnegans Wake* too, the maritime and, in particular, the fluvial motifs are critically important. As William York Tindall notes in his *Reader’s Guide to Finnegans Wake* (1969), “[t]he ‘riverrun’ that begins the *Wake* and ends it comes to flood in chapter VIII” (140). This chapter is entirely dedicated to the central female character of the novel, Anna Livia Plurabelle, who embodies the river Liffey, but in which all the rivers of the world actually merge: “Anna Livia’s Liffey, the feminine creative principle, is the river of time and life” (30). It should therefore come as no surprise that the last word of the book is left to Anna Livia, the river-woman

9 The short story appears in the volume *A Haunted House*, which was published posthumously in 1944. Among the stories in this collection, “Solid Objects” is one of those that had already been published, between 1922 and 1941, in literary magazines.

10 For instance, in *Finnegans Wake*, the characters are constantly changing shape and names, regardless of their age, gender, and/or social status.

flowing into the sea (“I go back to you, [...] my cold mad feary father” [Joyce *FW* 628]), and at the same time takes us back to the beginning of her fluvial course, or riverrun.

The last section of chapter three will be entirely dedicated to analysing the evolution of Stephen Dedalus from *Portrait* to *Ulysses*. A distinctive style, which I define as *fluid*, reflects Stephen’s (equally fluid) psychological, emotional, and intellectual evolution, as I will demonstrate by means of a close reading of some crucial passages and scenes. Throughout the present study, Stephen will be compared to Antoine Doinel, the protagonist *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel*, a series of films by the *nouvelle-vague* film director François Truffaut. A more detailed analysis of Antoine will be conducted in the concluding section of the fourth chapter, as well as in the fifth chapter. Indeed, in the second half of my investigation, the focus gradually shifts towards cinema, although with frequent cross references to the literary works analysed earlier.

In chapter four I give an account of the important mutual influences between modernist literature and early cinema, although limiting it to a few exemplary cases (which also include references to Joyce’s and Woolf’s works, and to their personal inclinations towards cinema as a medium). The major part of my analysis in this chapter, however, will be dedicated to the evolution of the language of cinema after the introduction of sound in the late 1920s. I address the work of some French cinema directors of the 1930s, but, more importantly, I concentrate on the films of the decades following the Second World War, which combine a special attention to young or very young protagonists (as in the case of Italian Neorealism) with the employment of cinematic narrative modes that can be assimilated to specifically (literary) modernist techniques; an aspect that is particularly evident in the production of the *nouvelle vague*. I chiefly refer to the theoretical analyses of film conducted in the 1960s by Pierpaolo Pasolini, and in the 1980s by Gilles Deleuze, reflecting especially on their observations on the evolution of cinematic language before and after the Second World War. On the basis of their conclusions, I single out the passages that link the selected literary works of the 1920s to the selected films of the late 1950s and 1960s within a thematic and stylistic continuum (in particular with reference to my thematic focus on youth), which follows as much as possible a chronological order.

As mentioned, one of my main aims is to demonstrate that the young protagonists that feature in these works are represented, in both media, in analogous ways and by means of analogous narrative techniques and styles. The reference to the narrative function of water, and to the relationship between the characters’ evolution and their attitude towards water, will therefore always be present in my analysis. In this sense, the contribution of some 1930s French directors, such as Jean Renoir and Jean Vigo, who often conferred water a central position in the narrative development of their films, is important. I also briefly discuss the role of Swedish director Ingmar

Bergman, whose early films heavily influenced many *nouvelle-vague* filmmakers, as well as the decisive contribution of Agnès Varda, a forerunner of the *nouvelle vague* itself.

As far as cinematic productions after the Second World War are concerned, I refer to Italian Neorealism, which itself exerted an important influence on the *nouvelle-vague* filmmakers. At the centre of their films, numerous neorealist directors placed the figure of a child stuck in a standstill and often hopeless situation: the situation of the years immediately following the war. As an example of the neorealist fluid anti-developmental narrative, I look at Federico Fellini's *I vitelloni* (1953). While Fellini's directorial style is unique (and his works are not commonly considered neorealist), in this early film the neorealist influence is clear; more importantly, though the film is particularly relevant to the main focus of my research because the story unveils entirely in a seaside town, and the protagonists are young men, possibly in their early twenties.

The brief overview of Italian Neorealism serves as a necessary passage to the French cinema of the late 1950s. After a general introduction of the *nouvelle-vague* phenomenon, I concentrate on the work of François Truffaut, and on the figure of Antoine Doinel in particular. The five films that compose the "Doinel cycle" will be analysed in detail. The first 'chapter', *Les quatre cents coups*, is generally considered as the very first *nouvelle-vague* film. It presents us with a thirteen-year-old Antoine, and it is followed by *Antoine et Colette*, one of the four shorts that compose the omnibus film *L'amour à vingt ans* (*Love at Twenty*), in which Antoine, in his late teens, experiences what is probably his first romantic disappointment. In the next film, *Baisers volés*, Antoine is in his early twenties, and back in Paris after having been discharged from military service, he takes up a series of disparate jobs. He often meets Christine, who soon becomes his girlfriend, and to whom he proposes at the end of the film. In *Domicile conjugal*, they are married and their son Alphonse is born. Nevertheless, Antoine also engages in other relationships, thus causing the first disagreements and separations from Christine, which will eventually result in their divorce in *L'amour en fuite* (*Love on the Run*, 1979), the concluding film of the cycle. In the last two episodes Antoine is older, arguably an adult, although Truffaut himself admitted that the character does not really mature at the end of the cycle (cf. *T by T* 166). In the section of chapter four dedicated to the analysis of Antoine, I will show in which sense Truffaut's conclusion is right. Apart from the Doinel films, I also look at other fluid anti-developmental characters created by Truffaut, or adapted by him for the big screen, in particular, the protagonists of *Les deux anglaises et le continent* (*Two English Girls*, 1971) and of *L'histoire d'Adèle H.* (*The Story of Adèle H.*, 1975). In both films the presence of water plays a meaningful narrative function, and an important role in the development of the plot.

The comparison between Stephen Dedalus and Antoine Doinel is instrumental to the aim of the fifth chapter, which is to indicate (and summarise) the commonalities between modernist

literature and the New-Wave cinema. This will be pursued by means of a comparative analysis which will involve extensive close readings of the primary texts. Through this comparison, I will also single out the main qualities of the 'fluid style' that characterise the texts in which the two figures appear. However, to comprehend the centrality of the 'fluidity' that links together the (apparently heterogeneous) texts I examine in this study, it is necessary to introduce some important considerations on the symbolic and narrative functions of water, as well as on the developments of sea literature, particularly at the turn of the nineteenth century. This is the focus of chapter two.

2. Reflections on Water

An important commonality among the richly varied works analysed in the present study is the recurring motif of the protagonists' encounter with the element of water, which exerts a specific influence on their lives. In his essay "Forms of Time and Chronotope in the Novel" (1937), Bakhtin draws attention to the narrative importance held by the literary motif of the encounter, observing that, while, outside the fictional reality of the page, meetings take place in a multitude of ways and situations, in literature a meeting "may assume a multiply metaphoric or singly metaphoric meaning and may, finally, become a symbol (one that is sometimes very profound)" (98). Because of the universally symbolic relevance of water, an encounter with it acquires a rich metaphoric meaning in a narration. This meeting can take place, for instance, during a journey at sea, along a river, while strolling on a seashore, or indeed in a dream or a vision.

Apart from its multiple narrative potentialities, water also exerts an important function at the level of the characters' psychology. As Carl Gustav Jung argues in his essay "Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious" (1954¹¹),

whoever looks into the mirror of the water will see first of all his own face. Whoever goes to himself risks a confrontation with himself. The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the *persona*, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face.
(20)

In the reflecting surface of the water, one can meet his/her authentic self, and therefore the encounter with it in a narration often implies a symbolic meaning that is strictly related to the awareness of an individual's own self. As a liquid, water epitomises the inherent changeability and the transforming nature of human identity; at the same time, as Gaston Bachelard observes, "water is also a *type of destiny*, [...] an essential destiny that endlessly changes the substance of being" (*Water and Dreams* 6 – emphasis in the original). The *persona* Jung refers to is the mask worn in order to comply with specific social statuses, gender roles, class, age, and race differences, etc.; its (more or less conscious) imposition controls or even tames the transformational drives that find a quintessential representation in the eternally adolescent characters that are the object of my investigation. These characters find themselves in a moment of growth and evolution, and therefore their 'own face' is necessarily in transformation.

11 The essay was originally published in 1934, and re-published, after revision, in 1954. The translation I have used is based on the revised version (cf. Jung "Archetypes" 3).

The attitudes and behaviours that an adolescent, as an individual on the verge of adulthood, is expected to perform, as well as the choices he/she is expected to make, are very much aimed at the formation and definition of the *persona*. These include finding an adequate occupation and undertaking a career, after having concluded a formative period (or *Bildung*). More importantly, however, they also include starting a family and thereby becoming husbands/fathers and wives/mothers. The protagonists of the works that I consider, who range in age from their early teens to mid-twenties¹², emerge as unfitting for the role of future adults that they are expected to perform in society, and are thus represented as eternal adolescent. In this sense, the fact that their confrontations with water actually stop at the water's edge, confirms the riskiness of this encounter, as water is "the mirror [which] does not flatter, [but] faithfully shows whatever looks into it" (Jung "Archetypes" 20). On discovering the self that lies behind the flattering filter of the *persona*, they remain stuck; yet the reactions of these characters also indicate a more complex attitude.

All these characters, to varying degrees, feel the need to break free from the numerous constraints of society (such as family dynamics, a repressive school environment, a patriarchal system). Nevertheless, even after having seen or found their 'authentic' selves reflected in the mirror of the water, they seem unable to embrace and/or to accept the intrinsic fluidity of their identities; and in failing to do so, they also fail to reject the social conventions they originally intended to escape from. Being blocked at the water's edge, therefore, describes and transposes their liminal, in-between condition, as on the one hand they cannot 'grasp' their fluid selves, and on the other, they are also unfit (or indeed refuse to be fit) for the roles as adults that they are supposed to perform. Within this dynamic, the impossibility or unwillingness of the characters to cross the line that separates the land from the water is a discriminating factor: what is, then, the function of water in these narrations?

As shall be seen in section 2.2. (and, in closer detail, in chapter three), the answer to this question is interconnected with the evolution that the *Bildung* model, the fundamental structure of the nineteenth-century traditional novel of formation, underwent in the opening decades of the twentieth century. To understand this relationship, though, it is first of all necessary to consider an important transformation in sea literature in the late nineteenth century. Indeed, in many of the examples that I will consider, sea water holds a particularly significant role, both in the narrative development and in the life of the main characters.

12 With the exception of Antoine Doinel, whom we actually see growing older than his twenties; in the last film of the cycle, *L'amour en fuite*, he is in his mid or late thirties.

2.1. The Evolution of Sea Literature in the Late Nineteenth Century

Throughout history, the representation of the sea in literature has undergone numerous and significant transformations. The sea is and has been a crucial symbol in many cultures, and an extremely changeable one; the meaning of the sea in literature “changes in response to shifts of sensibility as dramatically as it does to shifts of wind and the phases of the moon” (Raban 3). At least since classical antiquity, the sea has been a fruitful source of inspiration for the production and transmission of stories, it suffices to think only of Homer’s *Odyssey*. Yet, in the British context, sea-related tales acquire a specific connotation; the presence and centrality of the maritime dimension have a crucial influence not only on economic and political matters, but also on cultural production in the British Isles¹³.

As Jonathan Raban observes in *The Oxford Book of the Sea* (1992), the sea in literature is “the supremely liquid and volatile element, shaping itself newly for every writer and every generation” (ibid.). As far as the generation of late-nineteenth-century British writers is concerned, the sea and the maritime environment acquire a meaning that differs significantly from the one it had had throughout the century, and particularly from the beginning of Queen Victoria’s reign, in 1837. This historical moment is indeed characterised by an important “shift of sensibility,” as Raban would call it, which also had a considerable effect on sea literature. In his monograph dedicated to *Maritime Fiction: Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels. 1719 – 1917* (2001), John Peck observes that the developments that concerned British sea literature “coincide[d] with the major changes in the country’s economic philosophy – a mercantile economy yielding to an entrepreneurial economy, then a bourgeois economy, before a return in the latter part of the nineteenth century to a neo-mercantilist economy” (20). During an epoch of stability and wealth such as the mid-Victorian period, in which Britain still counted as one of the leading naval forces on the globe, the focus of the traditional maritime narrative shifted from “compar[ing] and contrast[ing] the values of those who work at sea and the values of the members of the shore-based society” (140), to “everything that might represent a threat to the well-being of society” (ibid.). Consequently,

[a]t the point when the Victorians had assembled enough material wealth to feel secure, they not only started to worry about tangible threats to this security (such as the threat posed by the working class), but also, as they began to absorb the message of evolutionary thought, they had to take on board the idea of the absence of any grand design in life. It is the sea, the traditional

13 Significantly, the sea holds an important narrative and symbolic function in two of the earlier recorded texts of the English literary canon, the epic poem *Beowulf* (that presumably dates back to the eight century BC) and the poem “The Seafarer” (collected in the *Exeter Book*, which dates back to the tenth century BC).

symbol of chaos, that proves to be the most effective means of expressing this new awareness.
(144)

The (narrative) attention, therefore, gradually shifts from the colonial enterprises and journeys at sea in general, to the sea itself, so much so that by the end of the Victorian period the sea becomes the symbol and epitome of any possible source of danger that could threaten the stability of the country. As the “positive and energetic significance [of] the naval mission or trading enterprise at sea” (164) begins to fade away, the logic of the nineteenth-century sea tale radically changes, leading to the emergence of a new genre that, as noted previously, Casarino defines as the “modernist sea narrative” (cf. *Modernity at Sea*).

Instrumental in the “conceptualization of a world system that was increasingly arduous to visualize, the more multiple, interconnected, and global it became” (Casarino 10), modernist sea narratives are less concerned with the actuality of the life at sea, and more focussed on the subjectivity and the inner development of the protagonists. If we consider water as “the commonest symbol for the unconscious” (Jung “Archetypes” 18), it is telling that the shift of narrative attention towards the element of water itself is paralleled by the shift towards the subjectivity of the characters. The stories penned by the authors of modernist sea narratives indeed seem to exemplify what Jung describes as the revealing experience of seeing one’s “own face” reflected in the “mirror of water” (20); an image that, significantly, Joseph Conrad proposes in *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906), a memoir of his years as a sailor in the British and French merchant marine.

In her study *The Novel and the Sea* (2010), Margaret Cohen considers Conrad, Victor Hugo¹⁴, and Herman Melville as the authors who most conspicuously reinvented the sea tale, and who “transported the adventures of craft to other historical and imaginary frontiers of the later nineteenth century, including frontiers of speculation and art” (10). Their works, which also testify to the importance of the transition in which “the working age of sail receded” (180), account for those processes of transformation that equally occurred “in other Edge zones that, like the maritime frontier, were murky, unknown, and risky, but that were qualitatively different: situated at the level of language and the human psyche, rather than the physical world” (ibid.). In this particular moment of transformations, “art and thought” emerged as “modernity’s incompletely charted frontiers, which it was the novelist’s task to explore” (ibid.). Particularly in Conrad’s sea-set stories, the sea journeys that the characters embark on often turn into occasions for introspection and self-reflection; the sea routes followed by these characters almost always lead them far from their

14 Incidentally, Hugo’s *Les travailleurs de la mer* (1866) was crucial for the young Conrad, who considered the novel (which he first read in the translation authored by his father, Apollo Korzeniowski) as his “first introduction to the sea in literature” (Conrad “A Personal Record” 74).

originally established destination, thus forcing them to face “challenges that directly or indirectly defeat [them]” (Peck 170). With modernist sea narratives, the motif of the journey at sea as a rite of passage gradually fades away.

One of the consequences of the late-nineteenth-century literary shift of focus from the journey at sea to the sea itself, is that the “Edge zone” (Cohen *Novel* 180) of the seashore acquires a new symbolic and narrative meaning. Its liminality aptly symbolises the “murky” and “unknown” (ibid.) areas of the human psyche. In his seminal study *Le territoire du vide: L’Occident et le désir du rivage, 1750 – 1840* (1988), Alain Corbin retraces the most important developments of the narrative representation and idealisation of the sea and of the seashore, focussing on several (European) cultural contexts, but most of all on France and the United Kingdom. The English translation of the title, *The Lure of the Sea: Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World 1750 – 1840*, completely loses (and misses) the evocative and crucial reference to the semantic field of emptiness. Yet, notwithstanding this apparent loss, the translations of the book’s title into other languages actually highlight other relevant facets of its far-reaching field of investigation, as pointed out also by Roberta Gefer Wondrich (cf. “These heavy sands” 108-109). The English translation focusses on a yearning for the sea that is also hinted at in the German version of the title, *Meereslust: Das Abendland und die Entdeckung der Küste. 1750 – 1840*, while the Italian translation, *L’invenzione del mare. L’occidente e il fascino della spiaggia (1750 – 1840)*, directs the attention to the creation, or invention, of a certain image of the sea and of the seashore. The semantic richness that results from these translations emphasises the symbolic and narrative multifariousness of the sea and of the seashore, which are both, simultaneously life-giving and dangerous spaces.

As far as England is concerned, the spatial dimensions of the sea and of the shore gain (new) significance towards the end of the eighteenth century. Before that time, the attention towards the sea was chiefly driven by pragmatic interests. As John Mack points out, “the goal was to first establish and then to realize the potential of islands and coastlines which provided [the sea’s] margins” (*The Sea* 15). In a context of general exaltation of man’s control over nature, the sea was considered as “empty: a space[,] not a place” (16); particular admiration was instead directed to “the vision of the harbour, the activity prevailing on board ship, and the sailors’ victory” (Corbin 125) over the often uncontrollable force of the sea. This pragmatic vision of the maritime environment parallels a more poetic one, propounded in particular by the Romantics. By the mid eighteenth century, the overall “lack of sensitivity to the spectacle of the ocean” (124), gives way to a strong need for withdrawal and self-reflection, which in turn invites the “contemplation of Nature’s primitive forces” (125), and particularly of “any setting that demonstrates that Nature has sufficient

force to resist the pressure of civilization. From this desire of a compensatory tempo, the sublimeness of the ocean is born” (ibid.); and, together with it, also the *désire*, the *discovery/Entdeckung*, as well as the *invenzione* of the sea-shore, particularly as an ‘empty territory’. In this sense, the empty shore counts as one of the “incompletely charted frontiers” (Cohen *Novel* 180) of modernity; it is therefore not a case that the shores that appear in the majority of the works I analyse should be almost if not completely empty. In which sense ‘empty’, though? The space of the sea shore, as numerous studies dedicated to it have demonstrated¹⁵, is actually charged with cultural and metaphoric significance, as well as being a space of particular interest from a geological point of view. Therefore, when I refer to an ‘empty shore’ in the analyses that follow, I indicate a space which, despite the scant presence of people or objects, holds a strong semantic and cultural richness. This understanding of the empty shore is decisive in the development of my argument.

By the mid-eighteenth century, the beach had become a source of fascination especially because it satisfied geological interests and curiosity. On the beach,

more than anywhere else, it was possible to discover the multitude of temporal rhythms, to sense the duration of geological time, and to observe the indecisiveness of biological borderlines, the vagueness of different kingdoms, and the surprising transition that linked them to one another. (Corbin 97)

Subsequently, towards the end of the century, the “Romantic creative artists” (163) (re)valorised the sea and the space of the shore in meaningful ways¹⁶. As Corbin explains, they “were the first to propound a coherent discourse about the sea” (163), and they “made the sea-shore the favourite spot for self-knowledge” (164). In contemplation of the sea from the liminal strip of the shore, they would “hop[e] to discover – or, better yet, perhaps to rediscover – who they were” (ibid.); an attitude that links back to Jung’s aforementioned passage.

Nevertheless, throughout the nineteenth century “[t]he beach became incorporated in the rich phantasmagoria of borderlands from which perils and magic spells spring” (Corbin 168), thus strengthening the “acknowledgement [...] that the sea, especially in its nocturnal clarity, symbolizes the dark region of the subconscious, whose constant presence is revealed by coenaesthetic impressions” (ibid.). In Jung’s essay “Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious,” the encounter with one’s self is interestingly described as the confrontation with

15 An overview of the studies on this topic will be provided in section 2.3.

16 Among the Romantics, mention should be made of Lord Byron, who counts among Stephen Dedalus’ favourite poets. Byron was fond of sea bathing and swimming (famous is his crossing of the Dardanelles in 1810); he would also often spend time on the shore in contemplation, wandering, or indeed riding his horse (cf. Corbin 173-4). The sea and the shore are also celebrated in a number of his poems, as for instance in the fourth Canto of his *Childe Harold Pilgrimage* (1818) (cf. Corbin 175).

a boundless expanse full of unprecedented uncertainty [...]. It is the world of water, where all life floats in suspension; where the realm of the sympathetic system, the soul of everything living begins; where I am indivisibly this *and* that; where I experience the other in myself and the other-than-myself experiences me. (21-22)

Significantly, during the Romantic period the threshold between the land and the sea slowly “became a locus of horror” (Corbin 246). In particular, as Corbin observes, “[t]he sands, constantly worked over by restless underground waters, became treacherous through their commerce with this wily element, and they acquired a consistency that corresponded to the new uncertainty in values and in the social order” (ibid.). Corbin’s depiction of water as a “wily” “underground” force that causes “uncertainty” links back to Peck’s considerations of the mid-Victorian turn to the sea as a symbol of chaos and as a force threatening the country’s stability (cf. Peck 139-144). More importantly, though, the nineteenth-century conception of the beach as a “locus of horror” (Corbin 246), and of the sea as a potential threat (cf. Peck), also underlie the dystopic representation of the sea and of water itself in the modernist aesthetic. Indeed, these conceptions are crucial to understanding the peculiar relationship that the protagonists in fluid anti-developmental narratives have with the element of water.

2.2. Becoming Fluid: The Bildungsroman at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century

The redefinitions of sea narratives in the late nineteenth century have to be considered along with the transformations that, in the same period, were changing the traditional novel of formation, thus leading to the rise of the anti-developmental novel, also known as the modernist Bildungsroman. The volumes by Gregory Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (2006), and Jed Esty, *Unseasonable Youth* (2012), provide interesting and fruitful reflections on this genre, its origins and its developments. A characterising feature of the modernist Bildungsroman, which clearly emerges from both studies, is the fact that the young protagonists of these works never become adults or, as Esty puts it, that their development remains “arrested.” The fact that, notwithstanding an actual transformation of the main characters, theirs is still not acknowledged as a normative development, depends on the very connotation that the term *development* acquires in its Victorian/bourgeois acceptance, which is in turn at the basis of the traditional novel of formation. The underlying assumption, as already pointed out, is that the development of the individual on the verge of adulthood has to follow a determinate and pre-established linear path, which ultimately permits him/her to ascend the social ladder, and therefore to become socially ‘visible’. The logic of the

modernist Bildungsroman works towards the non-fulfilment of these *great expectations*.

The emphasis on this phrase obviously hints at Charles Dickens's 1860 – 61 eponymous novel, which belongs (at least chronologically) to the Victorian literary canon, but which actually undermines the Victorian logic of development. The same is true for George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), in which the non-linear evolution of the protagonists is paired with a depiction of water as dangerous and treacherous. These aspects, foregrounded in two popular Victorian novels, both of which I will consider in the next chapter, are characterising features of the fluid anti-developmental narratives I analyse, in which the protagonists' peculiar relationships with water symbolise and determine their uneven developments, which I define as fluid transformations.

The notion of a "transformation principle," as opposed to a "classification principle," was proposed by Franco Moretti in his seminal study on the (traditional) Bildungsroman, *The Way of the World* (1987). Based on their respective plot schemes, Moretti traces a distance between the Bildungsroman of the English (or "Anglo-Germanic" [8]) tradition and its continental counterpart. While the English novel of formation, where "youth is subordinated to the idea of 'maturity'" (8), is determined by the "classification principle" (7), epitomised in the "novel of marriage" (ibid.), the novels of the continental tradition, particularly French and Russian, are regulated by the "transformation principle," of which the "novel of adultery" (8) is the best representative. Moretti argues that "[w]here the transformation principle prevails and youthful dynamism is emphasized [...], youth cannot or does not want to give way to maturity" (ibid.). The transformation principle also fittingly applies to the modernist Bildungsroman, including that of the (modernist) English tradition; a tradition that, therefore, witnesses a major change by the beginning of the twentieth century, and particularly during the 1920s.

The effects of this change are significantly reflected in the works, as well as in the lives, of Joyce and Woolf. Indeed, these authors both challenged and detached themselves from what could be defined as a 'British paradigm': from an artistic point of view, with their innovative and unique styles, and with experimental and, in many ways, provocative works; and from a personal point of view, as a colonised subject, in the case of Joyce, and as a female writer in the case of Woolf. As far as Woolf's works of fiction are concerned, a representative character in this sense is that of painter Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), a projection of the author herself. As I will further expand on in chapter three, Lily's reputation as a woman artist is, in the eyes of middle and upper-middle-class members, on the one hand suspicious (and indeed underestimated), and on the other hopeless, as such an occupation (paired with her physical unattractiveness) precludes her any possibility of marriage. Indeed, in several essays, such as "Professions for Women," an abbreviated version of a speech she delivered in 1931 to the National Society for Women's Service (cf. Bradshaw *Selected*

Essays 236), Woolf openly criticised the limitations women faced in society. Here, she peremptorily declared her disapproval of the idealised Victorian image of women, arguing that “[k]illing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer” (“Profesisons” 142). The image of women as caring mothers and dedicated wives charged with protecting the domestic space, stands in contradiction with the very idea of a woman writer who is “impeded by the extreme conventionality of the other sex” (143). While an equally radical and openly expressed position is not ascribable to Joyce, in his works there are (more or less direct) denunciations of the typically Victorian conception of the family, and of sexual double standards. Most of Joyce’s female characters, even when mockingly represented, actually serve as a rejection of the unjust and difficult status of women. At the same time, there are numerous relationships in his works that stand out as utterly unconventional, such as the Blooms in *Ulysses*, to mention but one of the better known examples.

Yet, what equally stands out in the lives of the two modernists is their particular inclination towards the sea and the marine dimension in general; an inclination that they also transpose in their works. As Robert Adams Day notes in his essay “AquaCities” (1996), “Joyce [...] spent a lifetime close to water, and most of it in cities bisected by rivers: Dublin, by the Liffey; Rome, by the Tiber; Paris, by the Seine; Zurich, by the Limmat; and Trieste, washed by the Adriatic” (5). Almost the totality of Joyce’s works are set in Dublin¹⁷, therefore the waters of the river Liffey and of the Irish Sea have a prominent (narrative) role. Similarly, many of Woolf’s novels and short stories are set in London, crossed by the river Thames, but the sea is equally important in her production. For instance, her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, opens on the Thames, where the ship *Euphrosyne* is ready to leave for a transatlantic cruise towards South America. The marine landscape was definitely among her favourites, and, as David Bradshaw notes, “it seems likely that Woolf connected the beach [...] with the first thirteen years of her life” (“Purest” 101), and with the regular family holidays in St Ives in Cornwall, which were almost certainly a source of inspiration for *To the Lighthouse* (cf. 102)¹⁸.

As I aim to indicate in my research, both Joyce and Woolf also made particular use of water imagery in their representations of adolescent characters. In light of the development of the modernist Bildungsroman, and its already mentioned interconnection with modernist sea narratives,

17 With the exception of *Giacomo Joyce*, published posthumously in 1968, which is nevertheless set in the Adriatic port of Trieste.

18 For a list of other significant contributions on the presence of water in Joyce’s works, see chapter three. For Woolf, see, among others, the essay by David Bradshaw, “The Purest Ecstasy: Virginia Woolf and the Sea” (2009), and the essays by Patrizia Muscogiuri, “‘This, I fancy, must be the sea’: Thalassic Aesthetics in Virginia Woolf’s Writing” (2011), “Woolfian Seamarks: Commodified Women and the Racial Other on the Shores of Empire” (2014), and “Sea and Coast between Metaphor and History in Virginia Woolf’s Writing” (2014).

the majority of the young characters presented by the two authors have a peculiar relationship with water; an attitude that is crucial in their characterisations as fluid, liminal, and queer adolescents. As pointed out, while the works by Joyce and Woolf constitute the core of the literary texts that I will analyse, my selection of primary sources also includes other novels, short stories, as well as films.

2.3. Charting Uncharted Waters: Selection of Primary Texts

In this section, I outline the criteria upon which I have selected the primary texts for my investigation. In light of the far-reaching symbolic and narrative significance of water a much larger number of texts could have been selected, nevertheless, as pointed out above, I have chosen to focus on English *literary* texts. Given the pivotal role that the sea plays in the life and cultural production of the British Isles, it is particularly interesting to observe how the representation of the sea evolved in this cultural context, especially in a crucial historical moment as the turn of the nineteenth century, and during the 1920s. As illustrated above, literary Modernism and the modernist aesthetic provide important preconditions for the artistic production of the following decades, particularly those immediately following the Second World War.

There are obviously other authors outside the English canon whose contributions have been decisive in the literary developments that I analyse in the first part of my thesis. My references to them, however, shall be brief, as too detailed an analysis would take me far beyond the limits of this study. However, considering the focus on French cinema in the second half of this study, it is necessary at least to point out the importance of the mutual cultural exchanges between France and the British Isles that, especially throughout the nineteenth century, proved to be particularly fruitful. The two collections of essays, *The Literary Channel: The Inter-national Invention of the Novel* (2002), edited by Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever, and *Franco-British Cultural Exchanges 1880 – 1940: Channel Packets* (2012), edited by Andrew Radford and Victoria Reid, are insightful investigations on this aspect. The two studies may be seen as coterminous; while the contributions collected in Cohen and Dever's volume cover the nineteenth century, those in Radford and Reid's concentrate on the cultural exchanges from the end of the century, considering the 1880s as a "turning point in cross-Channel relations" (3). Apart from the influence of French Symbolism on English literature and poetry, which I have already mentioned, Gustave Flaubert, Victor Hugo, and Honoré de Balzac should also be remembered among the French writers who have been particularly influential in the development of English modernist literature.

The crucial role of Flaubert in the establishment of a modern/ist style is considered, for

instance, by Caroline Patey in her essay in *Franco-British Cultural Exchanges*, “Croisset-London and back, or, Flaubert’s Anglo-Saxon ghosts.” Here, Patey gives an account of Flaubert’s influence on Henry James, Ford Maddox Ford, Conrad, as well as on Joyce and Woolf who both “built and relied on Flaubert to work on rhythm and break free from plotting and the tyranny of narration” (167). Moreover, Patey also demonstrates how Joyce drew on some Flaubertian characters in the creation of some of his own, such as Gerty MacDowell in *Ulysses* (cf. 164) or Maria in the short story “Clay” (cf. 165). Another study that details the important influence of Flaubert on Joyce is Scarlett Baron’s *‘Strandentwining Cable’: Joyce, Flaubert, and Intertextuality* (2012), which also includes sections on the “cinematographic writing” (cf. e.g. 75-82) that distinguishes some of the two writer’s texts.

Thus, it may be argued that the reference to Joyce importantly opens the French-British dyad to a third (national, political, cultural, and spatial) dimension. Indeed, while it is true that during the nineteenth century “France established some of the foundations of the novel” (Fordham and Sakr 14), the genre subsequently developed not only across the Channel, but also across nations. In the introduction to the collection *James Joyce and the Nineteenth-Century French Novel* (2011), Finn Fordham and Rita Sakr note that, within “the complex literary-political transactions” that were taking place in the nineteenth century,

Joyce’s oeuvre triangulates the France-Britain-Ireland relationship and, through “artistic hospitality,” creatively opens history to streams of stories that flow from Paris, Rouen, Brittany and other cradles of the nineteenth-century *roman* across the English Channel and the Irish Sea. (13-14)

This cross-national perspective is, as seen, also adopted by Cohen and Dever in *The Literary Channel*. In the introduction, the editors retrace the “Inter-National Invention of the Novel” (cf. 3) through the analysis carried out by Lukács and Bakhtin. Bakhtin, in particular, identifies the novel with what is ‘new’, and therefore with what detaches itself from the canon and is, ultimately, unclassifiable. As observed by Michael Holquist, the translator of *The Dialogic Imagination*, for Bakhtin the term ‘novel’ corresponds to “whatever force is at work within a given literary system to reveal the limits, the artificial constraints of that system,” and “‘novelization’ is fundamentally anticanonical” (xxxix; also qt. Cohen and Dever 5). That is to say, “[t]he novel is a form whose very stability paradoxically depends on a project of instability,” as Cohen and Dever summarise (5). In Bakhtin’s analysis, “such instability is inseparable from linguistic instability represented in and by novelistic language, which is subversive because it is polyglot, ironic, and self-referential” (6). By stressing the importance of the novel’s “polyglossia” (Bakhtin *Dialogic* 61), Bakhtin ultimately “challenges the conceptual bases that would enclose novels within national traditions” (Cohen and

Dever 6), and “[o]nce the clear boundaries of national language are challenged, other accompanying distinctions are problematized as well: ‘nation’, for example, and literary canon” (ibid.). Polyglossia is also a characterising quality of many modernist texts in general, and of Joyce’s works in particular, and it epitomises the hybridity of the novel (cf. ibid.).

Equally ‘hybrid’ is the figure of the artist that the literary critic Cyril Connolly traced in a 1943 essay, “French and English Cultural Relations,” which is quoted in the introduction to the study by Radford and Reid, and which thus permits us to return briefly to the cultural influences across the Channel. “[G]eographically decentred, literally and metaphorically ‘on edge’” (Radford and Reid 6), hybrid artists are, in Connolly’s words, “perpetually haunted by a conviction of exile” (qt. ibid.), by “loneliness” and a “native hue of indecision” (qt. 7) that ultimately leads them to be “torn between conflicting vocations, not realizing that they have only one vocation, and that is to be torn” (ibid.).

Interestingly, this figure resembles that of Stephen Dedalus, or indeed of the young Joyce himself, whose own exile was almost lifelong, unlike that of his semi-autobiographical character. Nevertheless, even though Stephen’s exile finds a supposedly untimely conclusion with the return to his home country, his isolation and estrangement are perpetuated within the city of Dublin, thus still conveying a sense of exile. As David Spurr observes, “[i]n both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, Joyce suggests that a writer of Stephen’s sensibility and artistic ideals has no place in the modern world of literary production. His departure from the narrative in episode 17 (“Ithaca”) would seem to confirm his marginal, if potentially exalted status” (58). In this essay for the volume *James Joyce and the Nineteenth-Century French Novel*, “Joyce and Balzac: portraits of the artist in the age of industrial production,” Spurr focusses on the role of Balzac in the creation of the “modern urban novel” (43), whose characterising elements can certainly be found in Joyce’s oeuvre, which is almost entirely centred around the city of Dublin. Indeed, in his works Balzac explores “the conditions of survival in the contemporary urban setting, in which the private ambitions of fictional characters are subjected to the larger social and economic forces of modernity” (ibid.). This is particularly the case for aspiring artists like “Lucien de Rubempré, [who] like Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus, is a model of how not to succeed” (44).

As I will demonstrate, these aspects are also treated by Truffaut, notably in the Doinel films. Although Antoine does not feel the same need for ‘inter-national’ exile, he does wish to leave his home and break free from a series of social constraints. Yet, very much like Stephen, although he does succeed in obtaining a certain freedom, he is still always represented as an isolated and, ultimately, exiled character within the city of Paris. Moreover, like Stephen, Antoine also aspires to

be a writer and is greatly inspired by Balzac¹⁹. Another element that links Balzac, Joyce, and Truffaut, is the typically Balzacian technique of the return of characters in different works; Joyce adopts it, not only with Stephen, but also with several secondary characters, and another obvious example is the Doinel cycle by Truffaut.

The third nineteenth-century French writer whose crucial contribution cannot be overlooked, particularly to Modernism, is Victor Hugo. In his essay “Hugo’s There!?,” Fordham demonstrates that the life and work of the French author were highly influential for Joyce, thus drawing attention to a comparison that has seldom been considered as particularly complex or significant, and “shin[ing] a light on an undervalued correlative for Joyce’s attachment to free thought, to self-chosen exile, and an attraction for revolutionary politics” (62). Fordham also convincingly demonstrates that Stephen’s aesthetic theory owes much to Hugo’s classification of the narrative genres, as he presents them in the “Preface” to his play *Cromwell* (cf. 65-69). Apart from the elements portrayed by Fordham, it is also necessary to recall Hugo’s contribution to the late nineteenth-century evolution of sea literature, which eventually led to the modernist sea narratives, with Conrad as one of the main exponents (cf. Cohen *Novel* 10). While Hugo’s literary production is not considered in the present study, reference will be made to him in the section focussing on Truffaut’s fluid anti-developmental characters in chapter four, and in particular with reference to the character of Adèle Hugo, the writer’s youngest daughter, whose life Truffaut faithfully recounts in the feature *L’histoire d’Adèle H.* (1975).

Twixt Land and Sea: Recent Scholarship on the Sea and the Seashore

The French literary legacy and the inter-Channel cultural exchanges play an important role in the present study, as they also ideally connect the two main foci on literature and on cinema. The present investigation, which stretches across national borders, but also beyond the boundaries of literary canons and across media, is in line with the scholarly approaches of the past few decades in literary studies, spatial studies, and more particularly, in maritime studies. Numerous contributions have aimed at (re)defining the cultural function of the sea’s many aspects, provoking what Philip Steinberg has defined a “new wave of thalassography” (xvi), which has fruitfully “re-centred [the

19 Indeed, Balzac was also among Truffaut’s main literary influences; as he declared in an interview, for him Balzac had been a “great revelation [...], and the fact that the boy in *The 400 Blows* erects an altar to him is no accident. What I liked best was *La Peau de chagrin*, on account of the crazy things it depicts. These days I prefer *Le Lys dans la vallée*, *Les Illusions perdues*, and *Eugénie Grandet*” (Gillain 15). As far as *Le Lys dans la vallée* (*The Lily of the Valley*, 1853) is concerned, here Balzac narrates the love of a young man for a woman who is twenty years his senior. Antoine reads it at the beginning of *Baisers volés*, indeed somehow prophetically, as he later becomes infatuated with an older woman, and refers to the book in a love letter to her.

sea] as a site of history, geography and cultural activity” (Mathieson 2), and fostered investigation that encompasses a wide range of disciplines. Alain Corbin’s *Le territoire du vide* is an excellent example of this new wave, as are John Mack’s *The Sea. A Cultural History* (2011), Jon Anderson and Kimberly Peters’ edited volume *Water Worlds: Human Geographies of the Ocean* (2014), and Charlotte Mathieson’s edited volume *Sea Narratives: Cultural Responses to the Sea, 1600 – Present* (2016).

Other scholars have focussed more specifically on literary production connected to the sea. Apart from the cited studies by Margaret Cohen and Cesare Casarino, mention should be made of the collection of essays edited by Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun, *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (2004), and of the volume edited by Tricia Cusack *Framing the Ocean, 1700 to the Present* (2014). The majority of these texts encourage an interdisciplinary approach towards sea studies, trespassing national and cultural borders, going beyond the mythic and metaphoric representations of the sea and, as Klein and Mackenthun’s title reads, “historicizing” it; a goal that also inspired the volume edited by Anna-Margaretha Horatschek, Yvonne Rosenberg and Daniel Schäbler, entitled *Navigating Cultural Spaces: Maritime Places* (2014).

Apart from the trans-national approach adopted by Cohen and Dever, and by Radford and Reid in the above-mentioned studies, other contributions concentrate particularly on the sea in the British cultural context, such as Bernard Klein’s collection of essays *Fictions of the Sea: Critical Perspectives on the Ocean in British Literature and Culture* (2002). Among the volumes dedicated to the role of the sea in modernist cultural production, the study co-edited by Laura Feigel and Alexandra Harris, *Modernism on Sea: Art and Culture at the British Seaside* (2009) reflects on a variety of aspects connected to sea-side culture and the artistic production linked to the marine dimension, while John Brannigan’s *Archipelagic Modernism* (2015) explores both the symbolic and the concrete significance of the sea and of the maritime environment for modernist authors such as Joyce and Woolf. Joana Rostek’s monograph *Seaing through the Past* (2011), is dedicated to *Postmodern Histories and Maritime Metaphor in Contemporary Anglophone Fiction*, as the subtitle of her book suggests.

Finally, a more specific group is made up of those studies that focus particularly on the shore and the symbolic, narrative, and cultural potentialities of this “neutral space, neither properly terrestrial nor yet thoroughly maritime, awaiting a metamorphosis” (Mack 165). As argued both by Kluwick and Richter in the introduction to the volume *The Beach in Anglophone Literature and Cultures* (2015) and by Nicholas Allen, Nick Groom and Jos Smith in the introduction to *Coastal Works: Cultures of the Atlantic Edge* (2017), the beach is a relatively overlooked subject in literary and cultural studies regarding the sea. Nevertheless, apart from these two edited volumes just

mentioned, there are a number of contributions that have a particular relevance to the aims of the present research. The above-mentioned volume *Navigating Cultural Spaces: Maritime Places* presents a section of four essays dedicated to “Liminal Spaces,” all of which focus on different aspects regarding beaches and coasts. Other relevant contributions include Kasia Boddy’s “The modern beach” (2007), and Roberta Geftter Wondrich’s “‘These heavy sands are language’: The beach as a cultural signifier from *Dover Beach* to *On Chesil Beach*” (2012). Among this selection of works dedicated to the shore, Christoph Singer’s *Sea Changes: The Shore from Shakespeare to Banville* (2014) is the only monograph. Openly placed within the theoretical framework of spatial studies, it presents a theoretical approach that is particularly helpful for my investigation. To begin with, as in the case of the present study, Singer’s heterogeneous corpus is composed of works that share important “underlying similarities in themes and tone, in structures and motives” (16). A focal point of his research are “protagonists encountering moments of crisis, transgression, and sometimes transformation,” represented on or around “shores, beaches, coasts and riverbanks” (12), as in the majority of the texts I consider. These areas where the *terra firma* encounters the liquidity and constant changeability of water are fittingly described by Singer as hybrid, as places where “discourses of difference are in constant motion, and perpetual transformation” (15); of all these, the seashore is the most evocative and significant, as its “hybrid nature affects the symbolic and semantic understanding” (29) of this spatial dimension.

Many of the critical texts focussing on the seashore suggest that they understand it as a “contact zone,” to borrow Mary Louise Pratt’s famous definition for those “social spaces where cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other” (“Art in the Contact Zone” 34). More specifically, though, the “ambiguity of the beach creates and supports a field of binary oppositions that are constantly shifting and refuse to be mediated” (Singer 29). This constant shifting of binary oppositions calls for what Doreen Massey indicates as “a view of place [...] which stresses the construction of specificity through interrelation rather than through the imposition of boundaries and the counterposition of one identity *against* an other” (*Space Place Gender* 5). In particular, Massey focusses on

the radicalism of the dualistic distinction between space and time and the relationship of that not only generally to other dualistic formulations but also – and crucially – to the violent either/or distinction between polarized genders which is currently hegemonic in so much of western society. The argument is that it is the very form of such dichotomies which must be challenged.
(7)

This approach clearly constitutes an important point of reference for my investigation, especially in the analysis of what I refer to as fluid and queer adolescence. In the definition of fluid anti-

developmental narratives, the (fluid) interaction of identities of place and gender plays an important role and indeed, as Massey further observes, “just as personal identities are argued to be multiple, shifting, possibly unbounded, so also [...] are the identities of place” (ibid.), which are therefore to be considered and analysed “in terms of relations” (ibid.). Starting from these premises, and with the aim to analysing the spatial dimension of the sea in terms of relations, I turn to the primary texts I work with, and define more specifically the object of my research: fluid anti-developmental narratives.

2.4. Defining the Research Focus: Fluid Anti-Developmental Narratives

The forms of representation I consider in my investigation range from literary works of the 1920s to films of the decades following the Second World War. The texts that constitute the primary corpus of the present study are to be considered as a sub-genre of sea narratives, although some actually lack many of the traditionally definitive elements of this genre, such as sea journeys, sailors, and stories of life on board life²⁰. I have coined the definition of *fluid anti-developmental narratives* to illustrate those fundamental aspects common to the seemingly heterogeneous set of texts I selected.

To begin with, the term *narrative*, rather than *literature* or *novel*, was chosen to accommodate the focus on cinema. As far as the concept of *anti-development* is concerned, the prefix *anti-* refers to the condition of arrested development that characterises the protagonists in these narratives. As seen, theirs is a refusal or an inability to attain a predetermined norm that establishes what is commonly accepted as the status of ‘mature adult’. The kind of development denied in these texts is to be understood in its nineteenth-century (Victorian and bourgeois) form, which also designates the development that is at the base of “the English ‘family romance’ and [of] the classical *Bildungsroman*” (Moretti *Way* 7). The narrative structure and the plot developments in these types of novels aim at a conclusion that “establishes a classification different from the initial one but nonetheless perfectly clear and stable – definitive, in both senses this term has in English” (ibid.). Nevertheless, in the modernist *Bildungsroman*, and in fluid anti-developmental narratives, the story does not usually conclude with the protagonist having achieved a different classification, let alone a “clear and stable” (ibid.) one.

I will often refer to the evolution of fluid anti-developmental characters as being marked by a centripetal movement. As a matter of fact, a return to the centre is also implied in the normative

20 With some exceptions: Conrad’s novels and short stories, and Woolf’s *The Voyage Out*, which are discussed in the third chapter, as well as some films such as Vigo’s *L’Atalante*, presented in the fourth chapter, which is almost entirely set on board a barge.

development to which the classic Bildungsroman tends; the protagonists usually undertake a formative journey, far from home (or anyway in an environment that is not familiar), and/or are subjected to a formative period, so as to guarantee their inclusion and visibility in society on their return. As pointed out by Moretti, the conclusion is often a “definitive” one, and it generally corresponds to marriage (cf. *ibid.*), which is instrumental in determining the achievement of a socially acknowledged status. The teleological logic underlying the traditional Bildungsroman presupposes a linear, or rather an aligned, development aimed at the socially acceptable (re)classification of the protagonist. On the other hand, while the main characters I analyse do consider or undertake a (supposedly formative) journey, they also inexorably return back to a situation that is the same as, if not worse than, the one they originally departed from. Rather than following a linear, or aligned, developmental path, their development is non-linear, centripetal, and fluid.

Fluid is clearly a key term. As already pointed out, three different, but equally relevant, elements can be described as fluid: the identity of the adolescent characters, the intrinsic fluidity of water that, in turn, reflects and symbolises the adolescent identity, and lastly, the narrative style that characterises the texts considered. My investigation aims at highlighting the interdependence between these elements. In particular, I contend that the language of the modernist prose corresponds in many aspects to that of the *nouvelle vague* cinema, and I demonstrate this by comparing authors (writers and filmmakers) that have not often been considered together (notably, I compare Joyce and Truffaut, while Joyce has been more commonly compared with the director Jean-Luc Godard²¹). The *nouvelle-vague* aesthetic is strongly connected to literature; not only have novels often been the inspiration for the subject of films, but the very conception of a language of cinema, or what film director Varda calls *cinécriture*²², is defining of this movement.

Between the literary and the cinematic texts I analyse, there is a correspondence in the use of specific narrative techniques, and more generally, of the literary and cinematic languages. These analogous formal aspects reflect, both in the literary and cinematic texts, the young characters’ fluid development, highlighting, in the most important cases, their crucial relationship with language and its “liquidity,” as Bachelard defines it in the study *Water and Dreams*:

I shall stress the little noted fact that, organically, human language has a *liquid quality*, a flow in its overall effect, water in its consonants. [...] [T]his *liquidity* causes a special psychic excitement that, in itself, evokes images of water. Thus water will appear to us as a complete being with body, soul, and voice. (15 – emphasis in the original)

21 The points of contact between Joyce and Truffaut will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

22 “cine-writing”

These observations are helpful in defining the evolution of the protagonists of fluid anti-developmental narratives. Their transformations are visually and symbolically connected to water, and in particular to the sea, and they are indeed also appropriately evoked by the well-known phrase that has inspired the title of this dissertation, *sea change*.

The expression famously appears in William Shakespeare's late comedy *The Tempest* (1611), in Ariel's song (act 1, scene 2), and it refers to the almost magical transformations that the dead body of Ferdinand's father undergoes at the bottom of the sea.

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange
(ll. 563-565)

These lines illustrate a multiplicity of transformations that can aptly be associated with the concept of fluid evolution at the basis of my analysis. The protagonists of fluid anti-developmental narratives undergo a metamorphosis that does not comply with the kind of development expected for them. This condition can be defined as one of arrested development, symbolically translated in the immobility of the death by water, yet, as I contend, it also finds an apt metaphor in the fluidity of a "sea-change / Into something rich and strange" (ibid.).

The Shakespearean song not only describes a metamorphosis, but also recalls a shipwreck and death by drowning, two core elements of the play, which are also constitutive of the typically modernist conception of the sea and water in general. References to the dangerousness of water and of journeys at sea are indeed also leading subtexts of fluid anti-developmental narratives, together with another element that, as seen, is typical of the modernist imagery, namely the distorted or ambiguous representation of mariners. It should therefore not come as a surprise that the famous lines that open Ariel's song,

Full fathom five thy father lies
Of his bones are coral made
Those are pearls that were his eyes
(ll. 561-562)

reappear in several of the (literary) works I consider. A summary overview of three instances, from three well-known modernist texts, in which Ariel's song is mentioned, quoted, or remembered, is representative of the interconnection between these motifs (shipwrecks, death by drowning, and degraded figures of mariners) and the Shakespearean song.

A first example can be found in the fourth chapter of Woolf's novel *The Voyage Out*, when

Mrs Clarissa Dalloway converses with the steward of the ship *Euphrosyne*, Mr Grice. To Mrs Dalloway's romantic depiction of sailors, he very coldly replies with a telling rhetorical question that openly puts in doubt the image of the British as 'experts of the sea': "Pardon me. What does any man or woman brought up in England know about the sea? They profess to know; but they don't" (*VO* 49). Interestingly, talking to Mrs Dalloway about the multitude of "treasures" that can be found under the sea, Mr Grice is also reminded of the famous line "Full fathom five thy father lies" (qt. *VO* 50).

The same line also echoes in Stephen Dedalus' mind while he is strolling on Sandycove Strand, in the "Proteus" episode of Joyce's *Ulysses*, and he thinks about the corpse of a drowned man that had been found that same morning: "Five fathoms out there. Full fathom five thy father lies. [...] Found drowned. High water at Dublin bar" (*U* 3.470-471). "A seachange this[.]" thinks Stephen, "Brown eyes saltblue. Seadeath mildest of all deaths known to men" (3.482-483). Significantly, shortly afterwards, Stephen sees the threemaster as it approaches the port of Dublin, with the mariner Murphy on board, as we get to know in the "Eumaeus" episode ("– We come up this morning eleven o'clock. The threemaster *Rosevean* from Bridgewater with bricks" [16.450-451]). The character of Murphy is particularly worthy of attention, as I will elaborate on in chapter three. Indeed, as far as the representation of mariners in *Ulysses* is concerned, it surely stands out how in a novel inspired by one of the foundational sea epics of Western culture, that of the sailor is a surprisingly marginal figure. More than anything else, what is repeatedly emphasised throughout the novel is what a "[d]readful life sailors have" (13.1148), as Mr Bloom observes in the "Nausicaa" episode; "Sometimes away for years at the ends of the earth somewhere. No ends really because it's round. Wife in every port they say. [...] Smelling the tail end of ports. How can they like the sea? Yet they do" (13.1152-1153). The one-legged sailor who begs for money in the streets of Dublin, and who briefly appears in a couple of episodes, testifies to the roughness of this kind of life. Yet, the ambiguous figure of Murphy is also interestingly intertwined with the motifs of death by water, and thus of shipwrecks²³. It therefore seems appropriate that, at the end of "Eumaeus," after the meeting with the mariner, Stephen sings "and translate[s] *extempore*" (16.1817) some lines from the "old German song [*Von den Sirenen Listigkeit*] of Johannes Jeep about the clear sea and the voices of sirens, sweet murderers of men" (16.1812-1813). Nevertheless, Stephen jumbles the words of the last line, which becomes "*Und alle Schiffe brücken*" (16.1884) which could be literally translated as "And all ships *bridge*." Yet, as Jeri Johnson notes, "[i]t's as though Stephen mistakenly thinks *brücken* means 'are broken'" (957), which of course once again reminds the reader of

23 A motif that is also hinted at in "Proteus," when Stephen finds on the beach the "gunwale of a boat sunk in sand" (*U* 3.287).

shipwrecks and drownings.

Just as the body of the man found drowned in the bay of Dublin reminds Stephen of the “sea-change” sung by Ariel, so the appearance in T. S. Eliot’s poem *The Waste Land* (1922) of the “drowned Phoenician sailor” (l. 47) is immediately connected to another line from the Shakespearian song: “Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!” (l. 48). The same line is echoed later on, in the second section of the poem (cf. l. 125). More importantly, though, the Phoenician Sailor also reappears as the protagonist of the poem’s fourth (and shortest) section, significantly entitled “Death by Water” (cf. ll. 312-322). The fate of his body is thus described:

A current under sea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.
(ll. 315-318)

The image of the whirlpool is interestingly reminiscent of the centripetal movement that, as seen, distinguishes the evolution of the characters I will analyse, along with the fluidity that defines their identities.

One could therefore conclude, as Moretti does, that “in the late *Bildungsroman*” (*Way* 230), or modernist *Bildungsroman*,

youth looks for its meaning within itself: gravitating further and further away from adult age, and more and more toward adolescence, or preadolescence, or beyond. If twentieth-century heroes are as a rule younger than their predecessors, this is so because, historically, the relevant symbolic process is no longer growth but regression. (231)

Nevertheless, rather than regress, these figures advocate the fundamental fluidity of their identity, and therefore the multiplicity of possible alternatives to the main, “normative” path. In this sense, I embrace the position expressed by Gregory Castle who, in his study *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman*, maintains that by challenging a certain classic conception of Bildung (and development) the modernist *Bildungsroman* fosters the definition of “a productive nonidentity” (66), defended particularly by the figure of the artist, “the normative *Bildungsheld* of the modernist *Bildungsroman*” (23). In the next chapter, I focus in detail on the ways in which the definition of this figure is interconnected with the developments and important changes that appeared in sea literature between the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

3. The Fluidity of the Modernist Bildungsroman

In order to carry out my investigation on a particular form of sea narratives that developed in the course of the twentieth century, it is necessary to start at the end of the nineteenth century, when an important evolution in sea literature occurred. In his study *Modernism at Sea*, Casarino identifies three main versions of those “narrative forms of representation that coalesced in the nineteenth century around the problematic of the sea” (7), which he refers to as ‘sea narrative’, rather than ‘sea fiction’ or ‘sea novel’ (ibid.). These are the exotic picaresque, the Bildungsroman of the sea, and the modernist sea narrative, which he defines “as a laboratory for the conceptualization of modernity” (9), and which constitutes the actual object of his study. While the first two variations, based on already established narrative forms, “constituted the sea voyage and the world of the ship as no more than convenient backdrops and colourful literary devices” (ibid.), in the modernist sea narrative,

the sea voyage and the world of the ship [...] are [...] constructed as autarchic and self-enclosed narrative units and detailed as multifaceted and tension-ridden universes [...]. Under the spell of this emergent form, life aboard the ship becomes the central *telos* of the narrative and is revealed in all of its explosive economies of power – its disciplinary mechanisms, racial conflicts, nationalist chauvinisms, gendered roles, sexual desires and homophobic anxieties, brutal law enforcements, antinomies of work and leisure, hierarchical subdivisions and distributions of space, the whole multiform dialectic of capital and labor, and the forever impending possibility of mutiny. (ibid.)

Drawing on this taxonomy of sea narratives in her study *The Novel and the Sea*, Cohen agrees with Casarino’s claim that the chief authors of modernist sea narratives are Herman Melville, Victor Hugo and Joseph Conrad (cf. Cohen *Novel* 180).

The sea-set works of Joseph Conrad indeed count among the best examples of this narrative category, and they are thus also of great importance for the present study. In particular, two of his most famous novels, *Lord Jim* (1900) and *The Shadow-Line* (1915), together with the short story “Youth” (1902), will be central in the development of my analysis in this chapter. An aspect that characterises these works is that, while the spatial dimension of the ship and the sea journey do of course hold central positions, the protagonists of these stories never succeed in reaching their original destinations and often find themselves in standstill situations that allow for tormented self-reflection. As a matter of fact, unlike the protagonists of the fluid anti-developmental narratives I will consider in this and the following chapters, the protagonists in Conrad’s sea narratives (apparently) do not show the same aversion towards the maritime world. Indeed, the “bond of the

sea,” as the author famously defines it both in “Youth” and in another of his masterpieces, *Heart of Darkness* (1899), creates a certain acceptance and solidarity between those who work on ships. At the same time, though, this unavoidable connection with the sea ultimately proves to be the cause of their arrested development. The use of this phrase in the context of Conrad’s sea-set stories does not necessarily refer to the arrested development of an adolescent protagonist who does not mature, but, more generally, it designates a situation of stasis. Conrad translates this condition in a number of different ways across his works: in Kurtz’s madness and death in *Heart of Darkness*; in Jim’s banishment from his maritime career, his estrangement and, finally his death, in *Lord Jim*; or, in *The Shadow-Line*, in mysteriously adverse weather conditions that impede the continuation of the journey at sea. Nevertheless, while the protagonists in these sea narratives may not always be young or on the verge of adulthood, and therefore, may not initially appear to fit well into the category of fluid anti- developmental narratives, the majority of them demonstrate a lack of experience and/or unpreparedness for the positions of command they are appointed to, and the standstill situations they inexorably have to face are often the consequence of rash and hazardous decisions. In this way, these stories illustrate the interruption of a career that would otherwise be expected to follow a linear and ascending path. Conrad’s main characters symbolically see themselves reflected in the “mirror of the sea,” to use another of his famous phrases; a self-reflection that induces them to reconsider their identities and the actions they are carrying out. The failures and the uncertainties that these protagonists face are also aimed at denouncing the dreadful implications of the great European, and particularly British, colonial expansion. Indeed, by disrupting the paradigm of the traditional sea-adventure tales, these stories cast doubt on a certain British narrative of nationalist pride, chiefly based on the celebration of the British power over the seas and of the prestige of the colonial enterprise²⁴.

These aspects of Conrad’s modernist sea narratives are in turn crucial for a contextualisation and analysis of fluid anti-developmental narratives. As already pointed out, the prefix *anti-* refers to the protagonists’ failure to develop in a linear or (socially) prescribed manner, thereby also implying the negation of their careers. Colonial implications also play a role in this narrative logic, which is fundamental to the modernist Bildungsroman, also defined by some scholars as “anti-developmental novel” or “novel of uneven development” (cf. e.g.: Boes “Modernist”). This genre is the object of two studies that are undoubtedly relevant to the aims of my investigation: Castle’s *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* and Esty’s *Unseasonable Youth*. Both scholars provide thorough, useful analyses of the developments that the novel of formation underwent from the late

24 Nevertheless, it should be noted that the denouncement of the atrocities perpetrated by the imperial powers is not enacted by giving voice to the direct experience of the colonised populations. These, in Conrad’s works, are generally underrepresented or portrayed as ambiguous figures.

nineteenth century through to the first decades of the twentieth century, focussing extensively on the works of Conrad (especially Esty), Woolf, and Joyce. As already pointed out, the modernist Bildungsroman is principally a novel in which the “youthful protagonists conspicuously *do not grow up*” (Esty 2). Moreover, as Castle maintains, it is important to remember that “[t]he history of the *Bildungsroman* is the history of a genre in crisis” (30), and particularly so in the opening decades of the twentieth century. Indeed, by comparing these novels of formation, especially from the English tradition, with their modernist adaptations, it is possible to gain an insight into the wider social, economic, and political changes at the turn of the nineteenth century, a particularly delicate period of transition.

In their studies, Esty and Castle also connect developments in the Bildungsroman to the effects of an almost world-wide imperial (notably, British) expansion, and of the subsequent consolidation of a global industrial capitalism. Of course, the sea, and implicitly its narrative function, play a central role in imperialist expansion. Another important implication of the great imperial expansion is its effect on the conception and understanding of ‘nation’, as Esty in particular highlights. This becomes tangible in the opening decades of the twentieth century, when the role of the nation within the developmental logic of the traditional novel of formation changes significantly. As Bakhtin argues, in the traditional novel of formation, and more precisely in what he refers to as the “novel of emergence” (“Bildungsroman” 23), the growth of the individual and of the nation progress together: the protagonist²⁵ matures “*in national-historical time*” (25; emphasis in the original), he “emerges *along with the world* and he reflects the historical emergence of the world itself” (23; emphasis in the original)²⁶. Conversely, in the modernist Bildungsroman, the identity of the protagonist’s “private biographical future” with “the historical future” (23) is replaced by spatial, temporal and narrative boundlessness. As Esty observes, during the age of empire, which he frames between 1880 and 1920 (cf. Esty 21), the boundaries of the leading European countries were open to an international capitalism at the expense of the respective national economies, so much so that by the end of this period “[w]ith no other territory to annex, the European powers faced new pressure to cast the extant colonies as eternally adolescent, always developing but never developed enough” (22). Therefore, the failure of individual progress experienced by the protagonists of anti-developmental novels mirrors the failure of a discourse of global development: in these narrations, the tension between the open-ended temporality of global capitalism and the – physically and politically delimited – temporality of the nation is symbolically translated in the confrontation between youth and adulthood (cf. 5). Equally open-ended and boundless are, as mentioned, the

25 In his essay Bakhtin refers almost exclusively to a male protagonist.

26 See also: Esty 5; Castle 55.

narrative forms in which this “stunted,” “frozen,” or “unseasonable” youth, as Esty alternatively defines it, is represented.

Spatial, temporal, and narrative boundlessness, the fragmentation of the narration, and the multiplication and overlapping of points of view are some of the features that characterise Conrad’s style, and that also count amongst the defining traits of modernist narrative. As in Conrad’s sea-set stories, in the modernist Bildungsroman the predilection for plots of arrested development that revolve around alienated and disillusioned protagonists, replaces the logic of (bourgeois) social mobility that constitutes the driving force of, in particular, the English traditional novel of formation. As this is, of course, also the case for those modernist novels of formation in which the sea plays an important role, it is appropriate to return to Casarino’s concept of ‘modernist sea narrative’.

Constituting “a crucial laboratory for that crisis that goes by the name of modernity” (Casarino 1), the modernist sea narrative radically overturns the paradigm of the traditional sea adventures, in which long and dangerous sea journeys represent the occasion for the young protagonists to prove their valour. These journeys function as rites of passage at the end of which, back on dry land, the protagonists are acknowledged as mature adults, and thus achieve a socially respectable status. Nevertheless, as seen in the case of Conrad, towards the end of the nineteenth century, alongside the popular maritime tale, the modernist sea narrative emerged, which was much more introspective and mainly centred upon the inner development of the characters’ consciousness. These works were “constituted by the contradictory desires to register the rapidly disappearing past of preindustrial and mercantile practices and to produce the most advanced forms of representation of the emergent future and its new social relations” (10). The rapid consolidation of a global industrial capitalism also heavily influenced the “political economy of the sea” (4), with the almost complete replacement of sail-assisted with steam-powered vessels surely counting among the principal innovations that characterised this moment of transition and transformations. Conrad’s short novel *The Shadow-Line* constitutes an interesting example in this sense as it represents the opposition between the past and a rapidly evolving present. After having abruptly given up a secure job as a mate on board a steamship, the protagonist and unnamed narrator of the story is appointed commander of a sailing ship that, as he will soon realise, has been cursed by the previous captain. In doing so, he has left a job fitting for the present, and finds himself in a position of command aboard a sailing ship that, by then, is already obsolete. This example also demonstrates that the modernist sea narrative is functional to the “conceptualization of a world system that was increasingly arduous to visualize, the more multiple, interconnected, and global it became” (ibid.). The perplexity and confusion caused by the inexorable advent of such a new and heterogeneous

state of things is reflected in unconventional and, under many aspects, revolutionary narrative choices. As in Conrad's sea-set works, the authors of modernist sea narratives make use of numerous narrative techniques that would later become seen as quintessentially modernist (cf. *ibid.*), such as the absence of a reliable, omniscient narrator, a multiplicity of points of view, interior monologues, open endings, and, more generally, a focus on the subjectivity of the characters.

The rapid and indeed rampant expansion of modern colonialism not only had a significant influence on the transformation of the Bildungsroman, but it was also directly connected with the dystopic view and representation of sea, water and waterways that is characteristic of Modernism, and that stands in sharp contrast to the important symbolic and material place that (sea) water held, particularly in the British culture and imaginary. For the nineteenth-century English writers, "the sea was swollen with historical significance" (Raban 20), it "shaped and defined the nation. It was the terrain on which the Englishman's major wars had been fought, his road to the markets of the world, his route to Empire" (*ibid.*). Moreover, as it is easily inferable, for a rapidly expanding colonial empire, it is of primary import to guarantee a secure administration of ports and to have control over waterways. As Nels Pearson rightly observes, though, "it is also true that shipping ports and coastal infrastructures are often microcosms of the gross imbalances that exist between one locus of socioeconomic emergence and others, or between the subject populations of imperialism and the broader commercial system that it aggressively introduces" (628).

These "imbalances" are particularly evident in Ireland, a "semi-colonial" (Castle 57) country under British rule, in which "modernisation via colonisation preceded modernisation via industrialisation; colonisation was at least as devastating and destructive to any idea of stable organic society or to the continuity of tradition as the latter would ever be" (Cleary 7). In his study, Castle outlines the tensions between these phases of development in the novel of formation by carrying out a comparative study of the English and the Irish modernist Bildungsroman. This approach provides room for a fruitful contrast that will allow me to contextualise my discussion of Joyce's work. In a similar vein to Joe Cleary, Castle too points out that in Ireland, "modernization had been at best an uneven process, in large part because colonial rule tended to retard development in some sectors of society and to encourage it in others" (Castle 57). In this sense, the 'mailboat-sequence' in the opening episode of *Ulysses* offers a good example of how, in Joyce's novel, there is a "general tendency [...] to yoke the diverse elements of Britishness together with the imperial and monarchical state" (Brannigan 86), which in the "Telemachus" episode is represented by Haines, Stephen's British housemate. The "mailboat clearing the harbourmouth of Kingstown" (*U*

1.83-84) is first seen by Stephen, from the top of the Martello Tower²⁷. The passage of the boat is linked to the memory of his mother's death through the words of Mulligan, who, standing at the parapet beside Stephen, first invokes the maternal, life-giving force of the sea ("Our mighty mother!" [1.85]), and then, turning "abruptly his grey searching eyes from the sea to Stephen's face," he says "– The aunt thinks you killed your mother [...]. That's why she won't let me have anything to do with you" (1.86-88). The death of his mother is the reason Stephen returned from his voluntary exile in Paris, and is therefore one of the main causes for his condition of paralysis. It is therefore significant that, a few pages later, the same mailboat, or at least its "smokeplume" (1.575) is also seen by Haines, who is defined as "[t]he seas' ruler" (1.574). This epithet clearly alludes to the dominion of the British Empire, and in particular to its maritime supremacy, thereby connecting the sea "with political power, and with the material and symbolic forms of imperial domination" (Brannigan 86), which in turn is among the main causes of Ireland's paralysis. The work of James Joyce is clearly representative of the modernist reading of the sea, and the significance of the maritime and aquatic dimension in his production has been investigated extensively²⁸. A more detailed analysis of this aspect of Joyce's work will be carried out in the final section of this chapter, which focusses on the figure of Stephen Dedalus.

There are, of course, other excellent examples that testify to the overall negative representation of water that is typical of Modernist works, and according to which, rather than life-giving, water is a dangerous or even mortal element. In this sense, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) is emblematic. Considered one of the modernist works par excellence (its publication, together with Joyce's *Ulysses*, notably contributes to making 1922 the *annus mirabilis* of Modernism), one of its most recurring themes is that of "death by water." The first significant reference to this topos occurs in the first of the poem's five sections, "The Burial of the Dead," with the appearance of Phlebas, the "drowned Phoenician Sailor" (l. 47), the first card that Madame Sosostriis takes from her deck of tarot cards. The drowned sailor also reappears as the protagonist of the short fourth section, which bears the telling title "Death by Water." Here, the image of his body at the mercy of "A current under sea" (l. 315), also recalls the famous concluding lines of another of Eliot's poems, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1917), where the theme of death by water

27 Martello towers were forts, usually built along coastlines. From the top of these towers it was possible to catch sight of enemy armies approaching. The tower at Sandycove was built during the Napoleonic Wars to protect Ireland from French assaults (cf. Johnson 772); as Buck Mulligan explains, "– Billy Pitt had them built, [...] when the French were on the sea" (*U* 1.543-4)

28 An early contribution on this theme is Sydney Feshbach's essay "Literal/Littoral/Littorananima: The Figure on the Shore in the Works of James Joyce" (1985); additionally noteworthy are, among others, Katharina Hagen's monograph *Developing Waterways. Das Meer als sprachbildendes Element im Ulysses von James Joyce* (1996), Robert Adam Day's essay "Joyce's AquaCities" (1996), Roberta Geftter Wondrich's article "'All the Seas of the World': The Marine and Watery Element from *Dubliners* to *Ulysses*" (2006) and John Brannigan's chapter on "James Joyce and the Irish Sea" in his volume *Archipelagic Modernism* (2015).

returns distinctly: “We have lingered in the chambers of the sea / By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown / Till human voices wake us, and we drown” (ll. 127-130). Another topos related to water that assumes ambiguous connotations in the modernist aesthetic is the crossing of water. With all its (necessary) risks, such a crossing could become the central phase of a rite of passage, but here no change takes place, and the rite is therefore not completed. For instance, for the characters in fluid anti-developmental narratives, the crossing of a river or the ocean has almost always negative implications. Such is the case of Rachel Vinrace, the protagonist of Woolf’s first novel *The Voyage Out*. Rachel embarks on the *Euphrosyne*, which her father works on, and which travels from London to South America. During the stay in the South-American port of Santa Marina, Rachel becomes ill and dies. Another example is Joyce’s short story “An Encounter:” although the destiny of the two young protagonists is not as ominous as that of Rachel, the crossing of the water nevertheless does not conduct the boys to a safe shore. Having crossed the river Liffey on a ferryboat, they discover a puzzling and confusing reality on the opposite bank, where they feel disoriented, and where they eventually encounter an old man who harasses them.

While characteristic of Modernism, this kind of ‘water dystopia’ was already evident in some nineteenth-century works, including Dickens’ *Great Expectations* and Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss*. Although these novels are considered part of the Victorian literary canon, water acts, in both symbolic and tangible ways, as an ambivalent, threatening and, as in Eliot’s novel, fateful element. This connotation is loosely reminiscent of the “fear and repulsion” linked to the conceptualisation of the sea and the seaside in ancient and early modern times, as Corbin argues in the first chapter of his study (cf. 1-18). Moreover, the element of water is also strictly connected with the impossibility of the protagonists to climb the social ladder, an aspect that will later become a characterising feature of the modernist narrative (translated, for instance, in the Joycean ‘paralysis’), but that is already loaded with meaning in these nineteenth-century novels²⁹.

Social Immobility and Unfulfilled (Great) Expectations

In *The Mill on the Floss*, the narrative function of water is clearly linked to the impossibility of social mobility for the main characters. This is taken to the extreme in the case of the protagonist, Maggie Tulliver, who drowns at the end of the novel, an event that clearly anticipates the typically

29 In his essay “The Great Expectations of Stephen Dedalus,” Mark Osteen focusses on how *Great Expectations* questions the Bildungsroman logic paying attention to some motifs that are decisive in Dickens’ novel, which can be found in *Portrait*. Yet while noting that “Joyce celebrates and embodies Stephen’s fluid subjectivity through a constantly evolving style, as well as through numerous tropes of liquidity and flow” (Osteen 174), a point that I also strongly sustain and that I will elaborate on in this chapter, Osteen analyses the frustration of Pip’s expectations through motifs of fire and forging (cf. 170).

modernist motif of death by water as linked to arrested development, or ‘social immobility’³⁰. Eliot’s novel, though, is important not only for the peculiar narrative function of water, but also for the presence of a female main character. Indeed, as Castle observes, the transformations of the novel of formation during Modernism are the continuation of a tendency that, throughout the nineteenth century, had evolved especially in the *Bildungsroman* authored by female writers and/or centred on female protagonists. Castle looks at how the concept of *Bildung* changes from the classical novel of formation to the modernist texts, and stresses the crucial role played by George Eliot in this process. In doing so, Castle develops Moretti’s argument in *The Way of the World*: “[t]ogether with Jane Austen, she [Eliot] was the only novelist to dismiss the judicial-fairy-tale model and deal with the issues characteristic of the continental *Bildungsroman*: going so far, in fact, as to bring this genre to its natural conclusion” (214). Among the English novels of the nineteenth century, *Middlemarch* (1870) is “the only one which dares to deal with [...] the failure of one’s ‘vocation’, illustrated by Eliot’s inventive and rich phenomenology” (216). Moreover, Castle argues, Eliot led the way for a “critique of vocation as a gendered, class-specific expression of the dialectical structure of classical *Bildung*” (21), a critique that would shine through in the novels of formation of the 1890s. In this way, the novel of formation would set itself against “the very society it was meant to validate and legitimize” (23).

There are at least two episodes in *The Mill on the Floss*, both occurring in the concluding chapters, that illustrate the function of water, both in the development of the narration and in the arrested development of the protagonist. The first is the boat trip Maggie takes with Stephen Guest on the Floss. Despite their love, a relationship is impossible because Maggie is promised to another man. For this reason, she is at first reluctant to join Stephen for the trip, but eventually surrenders her otherwise strong will to her passion, and accepts his proposal. The stream of the river clearly stands as a metaphor for their feelings, as Stephen eloquently comments: “See how the tide is carrying us out, away from all those unnatural bonds that we have been trying to make faster round us, and trying in vain” (*MF* 431). Once she realises that Stephen is taking her too far from her village, though, Maggie nervously considers her deed:

The irrevocable wrong that must blot her life had been committed; she had brought sorrow into the lives of others, – into the lives that were knit up with hers by trust and love. [...] [S]he had rent the ties that had given meaning to duty, and had made herself an outlawed soul, with no guide but the wayward choice of her own passion. (436)

Rather than representing a rite of passage resulting in a positive transformation (or better life conditions), the boat trip is damaging for Maggie. As Stephen himself notes, she does undergo a

30 On *The Mill on the Floss* as an anti-*Bildungsroman* see: Esty 39-70.

significant change aboard the vessel: “Maggie had entirely lost her passiveness” (438). She strives to go back home, to “the haven toward which her mind tended. The sanctuary where sacred relics lay, where she would be rescued from more falling” (444). The resoluteness she shows while on board could actually guarantee an absolution from her sin. Yet, when she eventually reaches home, her brother Tom, offended by her behaviour, bans her from the house. A reconciliation between the siblings, though, takes place in the final chapter of the novel, when Maggie’s condemnation is accomplished, even though this is also at Tom’s expense. This episode represents the second meaningful example that attests for the narrative function of water in the novel, as it takes place during a terrible flood of the river Floss. Maggie reaches her brother’s house on a rowboat, and manages to rescue him, thereby also reconciling with him. Nevertheless, in the attempt to rescue other family members, the two drown together, carried away by the current of the overflowing river. Although Tom, unlike his sister, could “feel the difference between right and wrong” (449), and had managed to “conquer” (ibid.) his feelings and found “comfort in doing [his] duty” (ibid.), he is eventually doomed to follow the sister’s destiny³¹.

Also published between 1860 and 1861, Dickens’ *Great Expectations* is a significant example of how, in a Victorian “fairy-tale novel” (cf. Moretti) in which the opposition between good and bad is not clear, “the result is an out and out *paralysis of judgement*, making it impossible to deal with those ambiguous situations or questionable behaviors which, in adult life and in the ordinary course of events, are by far the most prevalent” (Moretti 187). This suspension of judgement ultimately determines Pip’s inability to achieve the status he desires, that of gentleman. In doing so, Dickens leaves no space for the story to end positively. In fact, as Moretti notes, “since the limits between good and evil characters in the same work are a little too blurred, not only is a ‘happy end’ impossible but so is any ending whatsoever, and Dickens has to write two of them and does not know himself which one to choose” (ibid.).

In *Great Expectations*, water holds a decisive narrative function in many instances, be it the water of the sea or of rivers, rain, storm, or of fog and mist. In the very first pages of the novel, Pip describes the “first vivid and broad impression of the identity of things” (*GE* 5) that he experienced as a child, and refers to the sea as “the *distant savage lair* from which the wind was rushing” (6; emphasis added). The blowing wind is a constant presence in the marsh, and it conditions the lives of its inhabitants; it is therefore all the more significant that it blows from the sea. On his first day of his apprenticeship as a blacksmith, Pip remembers how

31 A point made by Esty in *Unseasonable Youth* provides an interesting explanation for the tragic end that unites the two siblings at the end of the novel: “Tom not only foils his father’s oedipally driven economic scheme to remove him from the scene of the mill, but he also effectively bars himself from sexual or reproductive possibilities outside the family. Facing a similar familial and historical trap as his sister, Tom has no access to the relatively unfettered character formation of the conventional *bildungsheld*” (61-62).

at a later period of my “time”, I used to stand about the churchyard on Sunday evenings, when night was falling, comparing my own perspective with the windy marsh view, and making out some likeness between them by thinking how flat and low both were, and how on both there came an unknown way and a dark mist and then the sea. I was quite as dejected on the first working-day of my apprenticeship as in that after-time[.] (100)

It is telling that Pip feels incertitude and dejection on his first working-day, and that the sea, here depicted as a remote place³² that is hard to reach, contributes to the development of such feelings. This is not the kind of life Pip wishes for himself, and although a sensational event is to change the course of his life, he will eventually be doomed to return to the “windy marsh.” The event that changes his life takes place on a stormy and windy night, when he finds out that the mysterious benefactor who donated him his fortune is Magwitch, the convict whom Pip helped when he was a young boy. After having “been sea-tossed and sea-washed, months and months” (296), Magwitch finally manages to reunite with Pip, who, thanks to his donation, has the chance to move to London and fulfil his ‘great expectations’. Nevertheless, in the great capital, Pip’s expectations remain unfulfilled, and after enduring a series of misfortunes, he eventually joins his friend Herbert in Cairo. Here Herbert is in charge of a trading company and Pip works for him for eleven years. Once again, the sea assumes a central position, this time in the form of maritime trades. In the Victorian era, and more generally in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, the sea represented one of the main economic drivers, especially by virtue of the supremacy gained by the Royal Navy (cf. Peck 71), and therefore, “[w]hen Dickens turns to the sea” he mostly “reflect[s] the psychology of a trading nation” (72). In London, Herbert works as a Ship Insurer and aims to start trading “to the East Indies” (*GE* 169), as he will eventually do. At the same time, however, references to the maritime dimension in Dickens’ novels also “enable him to comment on how human identity and ideas about human identity were changing in the mid-Victorian period” (Peck 72).

Apart from the sea, the river is another pivotal aquatic element in Pip’s life, as it is for the protagonists in *The Mill on the Floss*. Indeed, in many of Dickens’ novels, the river (usually the Thames) is a recurrent element with a specific narrative function. For instance, in Dickens’ last completed novel, *Our Mutual Friend* (1864 – 65), the river water is directly connected with danger, with death and, through death, with profit. Rowing on “a boat of dirty and disreputable appearance” (*Mutual* 13) on the Thames, a man and his daughter look for corpses to rob before turning them over to the police, an activity on which they somehow manage to survive. If many find their death in the river, it also represents the main source of life for the poor figures on the boat. In *Great Expectations* death and the river are also significantly interconnected in the chapters that describe

32 Although we know that the marsh where Pip lives is only about “twenty miles from the sea” (*GE* 5).

Magwitch's flight from London. Due to his crimes, Magwitch was banned from England and sent to New South Wales. Once back in London, which he has returned to in order to meet Pip, he is soon in trouble. Still, Pip feels obliged to try his best to protect his benefactor, organising his escape from the country on a row boat down the Thames. On the second day of their attempted flight, they are attacked by Compeyson, another convict and one of Magwitch's great enemies. After a violent underwater fight, Magwitch returns with severe injuries that will soon lead to his death. Almost as a premonition, on the evening before the attack, the wind increases, and the sky is covered with clouds (cf. *GE* 404).

Like at the end of *The Mill on the Floss*, meteorological events often signal an important turn in the story in *Great Expectations*. For instance, when Magwitch arrives in London to rejoin Pip, his arrival is preceded (and somehow announced) by a violent storm. Along with clouds, rain and wind, the fog also plays a significant role, particularly in the concluding scene. In the second, less pessimistic ending that Dickens wrote, and which has become the official one, back in London Pip accidentally meets Estella, the great unrequited love of his youth, who now accepts Pip's friendship. In a concluding sequence shrouded in a "cold silvery mist" (*GE* 441) that ultimately symbolises the ambiguity of Pip's situation at the end of the novel, he sees "no shadow of another parting from her" (443)³³. Indeed, neither of the two endings of *Great Expectations* provides a definitive conclusion; a marriage between the two is not directly mentioned and the decision to remain friends with Estella seems to be chiefly driven by the hopelessness of their respective situations. If the conclusion(s) of Dickens' novel remains somehow ambiguous, the tragic ending of *The Mill on the Floss* does not leave space for doubt: Maggie's death by drowning is clearly caused by the "irrevocable wrong" (*MF* 436) she has committed.

In both novels, social mobility, which is the foundation of the (teleological) developmental narrative of the traditional *Bildungsroman*, is significantly put into question. This is particularly important in the case of *The Mill on the Floss*, as it is authored by a female writer and centres on a female character. Importantly, as Esty observes, "[t]he absence of a marriage plot for Maggie is the most important index of the novel's break from *Bildungsroman* conventions: without a husband, she cannot be recognized as a fully formed woman" (*Unseasonable* 61). In this sense, the figure of Maggie is an important precursor of (as well as a model for) fluid anti-developmental protagonists; as I will argue in the next section, their failure to attain the heterosexual norm, to marry and to procreate, constitutes one of the chief causes of their uneven development.

33 In the first ending, we learn that Estella, like Pip, has lived a life of hardship and sufferance, and is now married to a poor doctor.

3.1. Queer as the Sea

In his study, Castle focusses his attention on female writers and female characters, “doubly constrained in [their] pursuit of Bildung” (21), but also on the Irish modernist Bildungsroman, as opposed to its English counterpart, and as representative of the Irish semi-colonial context. Drawing on Castle’s argument, it is possible to introduce some examples from Woolf’s and Joyce’s works, which I will discuss below. At the same time, Castle’s arguments parallel those presented by Esty who, in his analysis on how the effects of modern imperialism in the colonised territories are represented in anti-developmental novels, focusses on a “raft of social others, such as women, natives, and queer subjects” (Esty 22). Most of the characters that feature in anti-developmental novels, he notes, are “driven by homoerotic investment, sexual indifference, homosexual panic, and same-sex desire,” thereby “suggest[ing] a deep epochal link between the queer/adolescent and the colonial/native as twin subjects of arrested-development discourse” (ibid.). The interrelationship of the term “queer” and “adolescent” is central to my investigation, as I aim to demonstrate the extent to which, in the anti-developmental narratives I analyse, the fluidity that characterises the queer/adolescent identity is indeed symbolised and reflected in the constitutive fluidity of water.

It is therefore necessary, at this point, to clarify my approach to the term “queer” in the present study, although a definition of “queer” defies its intrinsic non-definability. In the words of Judith Butler, “the term ‘queer’ is [...] never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage” (*Bodies that Matter* 173). Moreover, as Annamarie Jagose comments, “[b]y refusing to crystallise in any specific form, queer maintains a relation of resistance to whatever constitutes the normal” (99), thereby confirming itself as “always ambiguous, always relational” (96). In my investigation, I particularly draw on Sedgwick’s approach to the term. In her seminal work *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), Sedgwick makes an urgent call for “an account of sexuality irreducible to gender” (34). As she maintains,

it is [...] true to quite a range of contemporary worldviews and intuitions to find that sex/sexuality *does* tend to represent the full spectrum of positions between the most intimate and the most social, the most predetermined and the most aleatory, the most physically rooted and the most symbolically infused, the most innate and the most earned, the most autonomous and the most relational traits of being. (29)

In opposition to an idea of “sexuality” as the fundamental and unilateral definition a person’s identity, Sedgwick argues that “sexuality extends along so many dimensions that aren’t well described in terms of the gender of the object-choice at all” (35). When I describe the protagonists

of the works selected as queer, I do not refer directly to their sexual orientation, neither do I intend to affirm or demonstrate that their impossibility to ascribe to a heteronormative order necessarily implies homosexual tendencies. At the same time, though, as the present analysis is centred on adolescent characters, it cannot be ignored that adolescence is the phase of life in which sexual desires/drives become more pronounced, and therefore become meaningful at a narrative level. In the traditional English Bildungsroman, for instance, there is a great emphasis on the definition of the protagonist's sexuality and sexual identity, which are to follow a heteronormative path and thereby guarantee a normative happy ending, epitomised in the heterosexual marriage. The adolescent belongs to a minority group until he/she aligns with the dominant culture. In this way, though, the multifariousness of "the full spectrum of positions" (29) that an individual can assume is drastically reduced; and queer should therefore be understood as an attempt to describe the inherent fluidity of this "spectrum." Another definition of queer that is particularly fruitful for my analysis, can be found in Sedgwick's collection of essays *Tendencies* (1993):

That's one of the things that "queer" can refer to: the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically. (*Tendencies* 8)

A final image, which rounds out how I understand the term queer, is provided by Sedgwick in the "Preface" to *Tendencies*, where it indicates "a continuing moment, movement, motive – recurrent, eddying, *troublant*" (xii). The eternally adolescent protagonist of fluid anti-developmental narratives, who does not align with the dominant culture, and thus remains a member of an indeterminate group, aptly typifies this "eddying," "continuing moment [and] movement." The subtext in all the above-mentioned definitions of queer is a strong claim to the intrinsic fluidity of identities that is so strongly advocated in the characterisation of the protagonists of fluid anti-developmental narratives. This fluidity is in turn clearly epitomised in water, through which they have to confront themselves.

The recurring encounter of the protagonists with the sea and their attitude towards water are crucial to understanding their queer condition. As for its diegetic function, Esty argues that water, and specifically "the waterways of late Victorian or new Imperial capitalism[,] open at both the literal and symbolic levels to the boundless world of modernization unchecked and unbalanced by the soul-nation allegory" (143-144). As pointed out, in the modernist Bildungsroman the inner evolution of the (anti-)hero does not coincide with the formation of the nation and, as Esty further argues, the failure of these figures to develop into mature adults also symbolises the uncontrollable consequences and implications of global capitalism. In this way, the modernist Bildungsroman also

invalidates the logic implied in the happy end of the traditional novel of formation, which generally coincides with the protagonist's return to the fold after an educational journey, and his/her marriage. In fluid anti-developmental narratives, the attainment of maturity is constantly deferred. Here, the main characters often stem from family contexts and/or find themselves in situations in which the failure of heteronormativity becomes evident. This has a significant bearing on the standstill in which they find themselves, as the achievement of a socially recognisable status heavily depends on the fulfilment of the heterosexual norm, namely on the marriage of a heterosexual couple who then starts a family.

The dynamics of family relations exert a great influence on human sexuality. Commenting on Lévi-Strauss' essay "The Family," Gayle Rubin notes that "[k]inship systems rest upon marriage. Therefore they transform males and females into 'men' and 'women', each an incomplete half which can only find wholeness when united with the other" (*Traffic* 179). Moreover, "[e]ach new generation must learn and become its sexual destiny, each person must be encoded with its appropriate status within the system" (183). Not conforming to their normative, heterosexual "masculine" and "feminine" roles, the protagonists of fluid anti-developmental narratives systematically destabilise the uniformity implied by the heterosexual norm. Conformity to this norm is also a guarantee of social mobility, as "[k]inship and marriage are always parts of total social system, and are always tied to economic and political arrangements" (207). The Bildungsroman of the English (Victorian) tradition, for instance, rests precisely upon the paradigm of strong interdependence between heteronormativity and social affirmation. As Moretti maintains, the English Bildungsroman responds to the "principle of classification" (*Way* 7), as opposed to the "principle of transformation" (which he finds "in the trend represented by Stendhal and Pushkin, or in that from Balzac to Flaubert" [ibid.]). In the English Bildungsroman, strictly based on a "teleological rhetoric" (ibid.), the "narrative transformations have meaning in so far as they lead to a particular marked ending: one that establishes a classification different from the initial one but nonetheless perfectly clear and stable" (ibid.); marriage is surely "the definitive and classifying act par excellence" (ibid.). Beside marriage, education is also of great import. In his analysis of the concept of Bildung and of its evolution, Castle demonstrates that in the traditional Bildungsroman "the practices of Bildung that inspired thinkers like Humboldt and Goethe became rationalized and normalized; educational institutions, complete with a new pedagogy standardization, competence, and efficiency, became producers of viable citizens of the state" (Castle 55). Such a "pragmatic sense of Bildung" (19) is aimed at guaranteeing a certain success for the Bildungsroman's protagonists.

This pragmatism, though, loses its meaning in the modernist Bildungsroman, where the

protagonists do not achieve any significant success, and where the failure to conform or achieve this heterosexual norm is a significant aspect in this lack of success. Yet failure also “disturbs the supposedly clean boundaries between adults and children, winners and losers” (Halberstam *Queer Art* 3), thereby underlining the arbitrariness with which these categories are determined, and demonstrating that failure ultimately brings this indefiniteness to the fore. The arrested developments that feature in the modernist Bildungsroman are ascribable to those “ways of being and knowing that stand outside of conventional understandings of success” (2), which are the object of Jack Halberstam’s study *The Queer Art of Failure* (2011). Success, Halberstam argues, “equates too easily to specific forms of reproductive maturity combined with wealth accumulation” (2); subverting this equation, therefore, leads to the debunking of the pragmatic aspects of Bildung and of the “teleological rhetoric” (Moretti *Way* 7) at its base.

More importantly, though, this also determines a different conception of time and of its linear progression, which permits to consider the “continuing moment [and] movement” (Sedgwick *Tendencies* xii) that defines queer in a new light. As noted by Barber and Clark, for Sedgwick the “queer moment” is “defined as much by its own non-temporality as by the twists it gives [...] to all other temporalities” (4), to the point that “the felicitous impossibility of calculating a determinable span for the queer moment” (5) has to be acknowledged. “Queer time,” argues Halberstam, refers to “those specific models of temporality that” define themselves outside “the temporal frames of bourgeois reproduction and family, longevity, risk/safety, and inheritance” (*Queer Time* 6). A queer conception of time is “about the potentiality of a life unscripted by the conventions of family, inheritance, and child rearing” (2). By annulling the traditional (and normative) understanding of the passing of time and of time duration, the queer “continuing moment” (Sedgwick *Tendencies* xii) also subverts the function of time in the passage from adolescence to adulthood. “In Western cultures,” continues Halberstam, “we chart the emergence of the adult from the dangerous and unruly period of adolescence as a desired process of maturation” (*Queer Time* 152). As Bakhtin notes, in the “novel of human *emergence*” (“Bildungsroman” 21), “[t]ime is introduced into man, enters into his very image,” and “[e]verything depends upon the degree of assimilation of historical time” (ibid.). Nevertheless, “[q]ueer temporality disrupts the normative narratives of time that form the base of nearly every definition of the human in almost all of our modes of understanding” (Halberstam *Queer Time* 152). Therefore, “[t]he notion of a stretched-out adolescence[,]” just as in the fluid anti-developmental narratives analysed here, “challenges the conventional binary formulation of a life narrative divided by a clear break between youth and adulthood; this life narrative charts an obvious transition out of childish dependency through marriage and into adult responsibility through reproduction” (153).

Fluid anti-developmental narratives put in doubt the obviousness of the transition into adulthood, and some of the characters created by Joyce and Woolf constitute excellent examples in this sense. In the following section, I consider in particular the family dynamics presented in selected texts by the two modernists, which testify to the failure of heteronormativity. Special emphasis will be placed on the role that water plays in determining and representing these failures, and on how this has an impact on the uneven development of the characters.

Heteronormativity and 'Aquatic' Arrested Developments in Joyce and Woolf

The 'queerness' of Joyce's and Woolf's works is not only applicable to some of the plots and characters created by the two modernists, but also to their distinctive narrative styles. Joseph Valente, editor of the collection of essays *Quare Joyce*³⁴ (1998), highlights this aspect in his foreword to the volume:

Joyce's inclination and aptitude for queering the dichotomy between the 'queer' and the 'square/straight', [...] can be seen to accord closely with his much-celebrated subversion of the stylistic and generic properties of novelistic representation, sexuality constituting, as Jaques Lacan has shown, a primary 'cut' in the framing of all meaningful social forms. (4-5)

While Joyce actually showed prejudiced positions with regard to homosexuality, as observed by Valente, this attitude was ultimately "impossible to disentangle [...] from his experience of his own hybrid subject position, inasmuch as both are equally if differently delimited by the close reticulation of the Western discourses on sexuality, nationality, and race" (7). Moreover, Joyce eventually "grew to equate popular prejudices in general, and particularly those of English stamp, with arrant hypocrisy" (ibid.). As I pointed out in chapter two, Joyce (more or less directly) denounced the two-faced Victorian legacy of sexual morality through characters that challenged and put in doubt the very principles and myths on which that moral system was built, the family being one of the most important. Both in her essays and in her works of fiction, however, Woolf

34 This volume counts as one of the first collections exclusively dedicated to the relationship between Joyce studies and queer studies. Among the other numerous publications on this aspect, I should like to mention Colleen Lamos' essay "The Double Life of *Eumaeus*" (1999), Valente's "*Ulysses* and Queer Theory: A Continuing Story" (2006), Sheldon Brivic's chapter on "Entwined Genders in *A Portrait*" in his study *Joyce through Lacan and Žižek* (2008), and Barry McCrea's monograph *In the Company of Strangers: Family and Narrative in Dickens, Conan Doyle, Joyce, and Proust* (2011). As far as the work of Woolf is concerned, the investigation in this direction is also very wide, and I will only mention some of the indeed numerous contributions: Kathryn Simpson's article "'Queer Fish': Woolf's Writing of Desire Between Women in *The Voyage Out* and *Mrs Dalloway*" (2003), the essays published on the special issue of the *Virginia Woolf Miscellany* and entitled *Queering Woolf* (2012), Patricia Cramer's chapter on "Woolf and Theories of Sexuality" in the edited volume *Virginia Woolf in Context* (2012), and Melanie Micir's essay "Queer Woolf" in *A Companion to Virginia Woolf* (2016).

maintained a clearer and firmer position. Numerous Woolfian characters, particularly female characters, suffer discrimination and isolation, which are often determined by sexual double standards. Her works unveil the hypocrisy of the heteronormative logic at the base of Victorian (and, for that matter, Edwardian) society³⁵.

In the analysis that follows, I consider the ways in which the young characters of some of Joyce's and Woolf's texts can be described as queer, and on how this condition is interlinked with the presence of waterways, their narrative function and the characters' attitude towards them. Still, before engaging in a closer analysis, it is important to remember that the meaning of the word queer has changed dramatically over time. The word, as it is also understood today, came into popular use in the second half of the twentieth century. Probably deriving from the Low German "*queer*, across; *quere*, obliquity" (Skeat 492), the word was originally used only to indicate something "strange, odd" (ibid.). As an example, consider the use of 'queer' in the first chapter of Joyce's *Portrait*, which covers Stephen's childhood years. As Stephen begins to discover the reality around him, notably by means of the senses and of language acquisition, the word queer is used repeatedly. For example, the "oilsheet" (P 3) that Stephen's mother puts on the bed has a "queer smell" (ibid.); yet, "queer" (8) is also the word "suck" (ibid.), and a "very queer thing" (ibid.) for Stephen is to feel "cold and then hot" (ibid.), and to see the words 'cold' and 'hot' "printed on the cocks" (ibid.) of the lavatory. The word "Smuggling" (42), uttered by Athy, also sounds queer to Stephen who, even though he ignores its meaning, can guess that it defines something which is done clandestinely³⁶; "all the same it was queer what Athy said and the way he said it" (43).

I now move to the analysis of *fluidly queer* stories and characters in the texts of Joyce and Woolf, starting from *Dubliners*. In a letter to his editor Grant Richards, Joyce famously stated that *Dubliners* should constitute "a chapter of the moral history of my country," which he articulates "under four aspects: childhood, adolescence, maturity and public life. The stories are arranged in

35 Among Woolf's novels, *Orlando: A Biography* (1928) has repeatedly been looked at from a queer perspective. Although I do not consider this text in the present study, I should like to call attention to a detail. Orlando's sex change takes place in Turkey, far from his home country; after that, she spends a period with a group of gypsies, before deciding to sail back to England. Significantly, it is only during the return journey, on board the ship *Enamoured Lady*, "that she realise[s] the penalties and the privileges of her position" (*Orlando* 108). More precisely, it is only after having caught sight of "the chalky cliffs" (116) of the English coast that "she felt that however much landing there meant comfort, meant opulence, meant consequence and state, [...] still, if it meant conventionality, meant slavery, meant deceit, meant denying her love, fettering her limbs, pursing her lips, and restraining her tongue, then she would turn about with the ship and set sail once more for the gypsies" (ibid.). This is significant because it is as if only during the transitional phase of the journey at sea her transformation is fully accomplished. As shall be commented on below, this differs significantly from a specific rite-of-passage logic that regulates the traditional Bildungsroman, in particular if it implies a sea journey. At the end of the liminal phase, that is during the very passage, the individual that undergoes the ritual generally achieves a status that guarantees visibility, social recognition, and respectability; for Orlando, the logic seems to work in the opposite direction.

36 Incidentally, in this case the word most likely refers to "amorous homosexual behaviour" (P 288), as Seamus Deane explains in a note. On this episode, see also Valente *Quare Joyce* 52-55.

this order” (qt. *Dubliners* xxxi). “A Little Cloud” is the first of the “maturity” stories, and also the first in which a married couple is at the centre of the narration. The protagonist, Little Chandler, is married and has a child, yet he does not embody the role of the *pater familias*; rather, he demonstrates his inability to guarantee a decent life for his wife and son, and any trait of ‘manhood’ is absent in him, starting from his physical appearance:

[H]e gave one the idea of being a little man. His hands were white and small, his frame was fragile, his voice was quiet and his manners were refined. He took the greatest care of his fair silken hair and moustache and used perfume discreetly on his handkerchief. The half-moons of his nails were perfect and when he smiled you caught a glimpse of a row of childish white teeth. (D 49)

Moreover, the frail and shy Chandler is also submissive to his wife and feels like a “prisoner for life” (59) in his own house. In the tense concluding scene, where he is scolded for having come home late, having forgotten to buy a parcel of coffee as he was asked to and, finally, being unable to watch over his baby’s sleep, it becomes clear that Chandler fears his wife:

Little Chandler sustained for one moment the gaze of her eyes and his heart closed together as he met the hatred in them. He began to stammer. [...] Little Chandler felt his cheek suffused with shame and he stood back out of the lamplight. He listened while the paroxysm of the child’s sobbing grew less and less; and tears of remorse started to his eyes. (59)

Unhappy with his job and his “sober and inartistic life” (51), Chandler knows that he will never be able to realise his dream of becoming a successful poet, and in this sense the family clearly represents an obstacle for him. He is the exact opposite of his “wild” (50) friend Ignatius Gallaher, who went “across the water” (52) and made his fortune in London by working in the Press. Chandler deeply admires his friend’s courage and, in a casual conversation with him, becomes increasingly aware of the fact that he will never get any chance to change his life by remaining in Dublin. Moreover, even though, “[t]here was something vulgar in his friend which he had not observed before[,]” Chandler is convinced that “perhaps it was only the result of living in London amid the bustle and competition of the Press. [...] Gallaher had lived, he had seen the world. Little Chandler looked at his friend enviously” (53). The metamorphosis he observes in his friend makes the distance between the two even wider, but it also becomes a deterrent for Chandler, who with all probability will never go “across the water.” Lastly, it is significant that the very first sentence of the story brings Chandler’s memory back to the day in which “he had seen his friend off at the North Wall” (65), the dock from where Gallaher left to London. Indeed, the line/threshold of the port traces, from the beginning of the story, the distance between the two characters and their destinies.

The short stories collected in *Dubliners* describe situations of paralysis, and the episodes dedicated to adolescence stand out as particularly dramatic. Their protagonists find themselves in a decisive moment of their lives that should represent a turning point, yet their existences are all characterised by difficulties, unhappiness, and lack of affection, and their hopes for a better future are inexorably thwarted. Among them, “Eveline” is emblematic. In this story, Eveline’s inability (or unwillingness) to go “across the water” assumes a meaning that is much stronger than in “A Little Cloud.” As John Brannigan pertinently comments, “Joyce’s images of the Irish Sea in ‘Eveline’ signal an anti-maritime polemic” (*Archipelagic* 71). The nineteen-year-old protagonist is about to elope with her lover, the sailor Frank, who has promised to take her to Buenos Aires. Life in Dublin is difficult, her father is an alcoholic and after her mother’s death, Eveline took up her role in the family; not only does she take care of the younger brothers, but she also provides economic support for the maintenance of the household, as she is the only one who works in the family. Her escape would therefore be disastrous for her father and brothers, but at the same time Eveline does not want to follow in her mother’s footsteps and suffer the same fate. Nevertheless, the only perspective for her would be marriage: “in her new home, in a distant unknown country [...] she would be married – she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then” (*D* 24). Furthermore, another bitter implication revolves around the journey to “Buenos Ayres” (31) that Eveline is about to make; an implication that is not mentioned in the story, but of which the readers of the time were most likely aware. The phrase “going to Buenos Ayres” was then a slang for “taking up a life of prostitution” (Mullin 189); Eveline, therefore, seems to have little chance of a truly different future. In the last sequence of the story, when the couple is ready to embark, the view of “the black mass of the boat” (*D* 26) and the imminence of “the passage” (*ibid.*) scare Eveline, who refuses to follow Frank. The encounter with the sea has a clear influence on Eveline’s final choice, which, as Brannigan observes, “seems to be a revulsion from the worldliness of the seas, not just from the passage across the Irish Sea, or the credibility or otherwise of the sea-stories of her lover, but from her queasy proximity to the global web of ports and crossings which the ‘night-boat’ signifies” (*Archipelagic* 71).

Another young woman who is trapped within the limits of Dublin is Gerty MacDowell, who appears in the thirteenth episode of *Ulysses*, “Nausicaa.” The figures of Gerty and Eveline bear many similarities: they both play the role of mothers in their families (cf. *U* 13.325-326), they both have to come to terms with violent, alcoholic fathers, and for both the only possible chance to get out of this situation seems to be marriage. Yet what differentiates “Nausicaa” from “Eveline,” and what at the same time characterises the episode, is the highly parodic tone that, at least in its first half, mocks popular feminine literature, fashion magazines and advertising of the time, thereby also

providing a deliberately caricatured representation of Gerty. A “girlwoman” (13. 430), or a “womanly woman” (13.435), Gerty dreams of finding a “manly man” (13.210), who will become her “dreamhusband” (13.431). The great care she has taken in choosing the right dress and putting on the right make up clearly suggests that she intends to take advantage of every possible occasion for an encounter, even though the deserted Sandycove Strand where she is “on show” (13.775-776) does not seem to be a fitting place for this purpose. Indeed, an important element of “Nausicaa” is that it is entirely set on the beach at Sandycove, in Dublin. This significant setting contributes to the depiction of Gerty’s arrested development, or, better said, in representing her as stuck between two situations that are in fact unresolvable. On the one hand, her dire present condition, and on the other, the prospect of an improbable, if not impossible, marriage. As it becomes clear by the middle of the chapter, Gerty has a limp, and this physical dysfunction, which considerably reduces her chances of marrying, also translates in an evident and concrete way to her condition of paralysis. More specifically, the altered gait she is condemned to is not only an apt metaphor of impaired mobility, but also of a social immobility. Finally, the style of the story has a precise function in the characterisation of Gerty. Even though the whole episode is narrated in the third person, the reader is presented both with Gerty’s point of view and, in the second half of the episode, with Leopold Bloom’s perspective. Strolling by the beach, Bloom is attracted by the figure of Gerty and masturbates while gazing at her from a distance. The first half, with the detailed account of Gerty’s thoughts, fantasies, and dreams, is clearly in contrast with the second; we are presented with two separate perceptions of the same events. While Bloom’s presence induces her to keep dreaming about the ideal husband and the perfect marriage, his attraction to her is driven by pure bodily lust, a discrepancy that is further highlighted by Bloom’s misogynous musings after having realised that Gerty is limping, and that ultimately turns Gerty into an even sadder and more pathetic figure. As seen, both for Gerty and for Eveline, marriage seems to be the only possible solution for their condition of paralysis; a solution that, nevertheless, would not solve their difficulties, but rather doom them to follow their mothers’ destinies. Still, marriage would assure them an acceptable and recognised social position, which Eveline seems to refuse, and which Gerty appears to have no chance of achieving. Indeed, their resistance (intentional or not) to marriage, and thereby towards the heterosexual norm, is what ultimately determines their condition of arrested development; a condition that, significantly, is eloquently evoked in scenes set on the edge of the sea.

As for Joyce, water is a key element in Woolf’s life and work. As David Bradshaw notes, Woolf is, together with Conrad and Joyce, one of the few modernist authors “who was so deeply inspired by the sea or spent so much of his or her imaginative life beside or beneath its figurative depths” (Bradshaw “Purest Ecstasy” 101). In Woolf’s works “the sea is invested with [...] rich

symbolic value” (ibid.), and conceived of “as an emblem of the silenced and marginalized position of women” (ibid.). In this sense, it is useful to refer again to Rachel Vinrace, the protagonist of *The Voyage Out* who becomes fatally ill after having crossed the ocean. It may be revealing now to consider her death in light of her positions towards marriage and family. Conversing with Mrs Dalloway, who expresses the urgency of having a son (cf. *VO* 45), Rachel “determine[s]” that she “shall never marry” (56), a decision that contrasts clearly with the opinions and norms of many of the passengers on board the *Euphrosyne*. Representative of the British middle and upper-middle class, they are strongly convinced that an unmarried woman is doomed to endure a hard life and that maternity is “the crown, as one may call it, of a woman’s life” (117). The risk of becoming marginalised is therefore clear to Rachel, should she remain faithful to her convictions.

If, as Bradshaw maintains, the sea in Woolf’s work does indeed represent the marginal position of women in society, Woolf’s “handling of the sea” also “involves complex aesthetic, philosophical and political questions, which are elaborated so as to incorporate issues of identity, language and the body,” as Patrizia Muscogiuri argues (“This I fancy” 114). Another interesting example in this sense is the character of Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse*, a novel in which, as Woolf herself notes in her diaries, “the sea has to be heard all through” (*DVW* 34). The story is entirely set on the Isle of Skye, and the action, divided into three moments and chapters, stretches over a time-span of ten years. Lily Briscoe, in her thirties at the beginning of the narration, is a painter and a guest of the Ramsay family in their holiday house on the island. Although she cannot be defined as an adolescent character, the uncertainty of her social position does determine a sort of ongoing but troubled development for her; moreover, it has to be noted that her condition is clearly determined by the fact that she does not conform to the (normative) role of women. Lily’s talent as an artist is unrecognised and unappreciated by many who seem to agree with what Mr Tansley flatly asserts, “Women can’t paint, women can’t write”³⁷ (*TL* 44). For her part, Lily is aware of the low regard for her art and holds little hope for a successful career, so much so that she is convinced that the painting she will be working on throughout the whole novel “would be hung in the attics,” or that “it would be destroyed” (194). Yet she tenaciously persists in her aesthetic mission, and at the end of the novel she finishes her portrait of Mrs Ramsay. The host, who embodies the quintessential figure of mother and wife that Lily will never become, seems to share the attitude of many of the guests with regard to Lily as an artist, and while posing for the portrait, thinks that “one could not take her painting very seriously” (14). Furthermore, although Mrs Ramsay actually appreciates Lily for being “an independent little creature” (ibid.), she is also sure that “[w]ith her little Chinese eyes and her puckered-up face she would never marry” (ibid.). Like Gerty MacDowell in *Ulysses*, Lily’s

37 This can also be read as a reference to Virginia Woolf herself, of whom Lily is an autobiographical projection.

physical condition plays a crucial role, and her apparent lack of attractiveness lessens her chances of marriage. Notwithstanding the contrast between Lily and Mrs Ramsay, theirs is a relationship of deep mutual esteem, something which is made evident throughout the novel, and is further highlighted in Lily's fond memories of Mrs Ramsay after her death. Given her role as devoted wife and caring mother, the death of Mrs Ramsay is significant and should be considered along with some of the mother figures in Joyce's works. Apart from Eveline and Gerty MacDowell's dead mothers, Stephen Dedalus' mother is also crucial in this respect. Her death, which takes place after Stephen's departure from Ireland (in the period of time that separates *Portrait* from *Ulysses*), is repeatedly evoked throughout *Ulysses* and, more importantly, is crucial to the failure of Stephen's exile. A more detailed analysis of Stephen's mother and of her influence on his evolution will be carried out in the last chapter. For now, however, it is important to note that, like Mrs Ramsay, these 'normative' mothers are actually absent (or partly absent), and they live on mostly only in the memories of their children.

If Mrs Ramsay embodies the ideal of the woman-wife-mother, Mr Ramsay is undoubtedly the model of the man-husband-father; he has all the "[q]ualities that would have saved a ship's company exposed on a broiling sea with six biscuits and a flask of water – endurance and justice, foresight, devotion, skill" (30), as well as the reverence of his wife. These are all qualities that describe the lighthouse itself: stable, reliable, and necessary for the orientation of those coming from the sea, and a point of reference for those on land. Still, the figure of the father is represented in an ambivalent way, especially when considered from the point of view of his younger children, James and Cam, who have an adverse attitude toward him. At the beginning of the book, the siblings are six and seven respectively, but when the longed-for trip to the lighthouse finally takes place, in the third and final part of the novel, they are sixteen and seventeen. It was particularly James who, as a child, looked forward to the boat-trip so much; in fact, the narrative tension of the whole novel revolves around the (im)possibility of the young protagonist undertaking this journey. When it finally does take place, the trip is not welcomed with the same enthusiasm by the siblings. A closer look at their thoughts while they are on the boat headed towards the lighthouse with Mr Ramsay, provides with an interesting account of their development. To Lily, who assists in the preparations, while the father resembles "a leader making ready for an expedition," the children look "as if fate had devoted them to some stern enterprise, and they went to it, still young enough to be drawn acquiescent in their father's wake, obediently, but with a pallor in their eyes which made her feel that they suffered something beyond their years in silence" (143). In this passage there is a clear reference to the recent experience of the war, which has dismembered the Ramsay family; yet, it is equally evident that the "procession" (*ibid.*) towards the lighthouse also represents the crossing

of the 'shadow-line' between adolescence and adulthood that Cam and James do not feel ready for. This situation recalls the experience of the young protagonists in Joyce's "An Encounter." Here, the two schoolboys, who skip the lessons to explore the docks of Dublin, are eager to live new adventures, but having crossed the Liffey on a ferry boat, they find an undecipherable and dangerous reality. Similarly, when they were younger, James and Cam were excited about the idea of a trip to the lighthouse; yet in the last chapter of the novel, they felt obliged to join their father, who could not have endured their denial, and from the very beginning of the trip they "hoped the whole expedition would fail, and they would have to put back, with their parcels, to the beach" (151).

The particularly tense and conflictual relationship they have with their father is further highlighted by the fact that, on leaving for the trip, the siblings "vowed, in silence, as they walked, to stand by each other and carry out the great compact – to resist tyranny to the death" (ibid.). 'Tyranny', obviously epitomised in the figure of the father, could be easily substituted with 'patriarchy'; James, in particular, does not identify with the model of manhood that Mr Ramsay represents. At the same time, though, he feels a certain admiration for his father, which is possibly driven by the awareness that he will never be like him. Mr Ramsay will remain a remote figure of reference, just like the lighthouse, which always remains at a distance, radiating its light and catching the attention of those on the shore and at sea. Indeed, their ambivalent attitude towards Mr Ramsay is exemplified during the course of the trip: when they are approaching the lighthouse, despite his initial unwillingness to undertake the trip, James seems to be positively impressed by the sight of it and, for the first time in the novel, he seems to feel a kind of brotherly connection with his father. Yet, the way in which he describes the lighthouse and the feelings that this sight arises in him reveal something else:

So it was like that, James thought, the Lighthouse one had seen across the bay all these years; it was a stark tower on a bare rock. It satisfied him. It confirmed some obscure feeling of his about his own character. [...] He looked at his father [...] They shared that knowledge. "We are driving before a gale – we must sink," he began saying to himself, half aloud, exactly as his father said it. (189)

The sight of the lighthouse evokes in James images of sterility ("a bare rock") and death ("we must sink") and precisely in this moment, in which he discovers something "obscure" about himself, he feels closer to his father, thereby actually confirming an aversion with regards to what his father, and symbolically the lighthouse, represent. Unexpectedly, Mr Ramsay compliments James on his ability to steer the boat; it seems as if father and son have finally reached a bond of reciprocal respect, which will be sealed by the imminent landing on the shore together. Nevertheless, while we

are told that Mr Ramsay steps onto the shore, the book only infers that James and Cam will follow him: “[T]hey both rose to follow him as he sprang, lightly like a young man, holding his parcel, on to the rock” (193).

With Mr Ramsay’s agile jump, the narration is back on dry land, where Lily is gazing out to sea, trying to imagine how the trip to the lighthouse is going. While she apparently confirms that “[h]e must have reached it” (193), she is unsure if she has *actually* seen Mr Ramsay landing. When she looks down on the beach to see whether “that little company [was] setting sails,” “[s]he decided that there in that very distant and entirely silent little boat Mr Ramsay was sitting with Cam and James” (150; emphasis added). Moreover, by the time they have (probably) landed, “the Lighthouse had become almost invisible, had melted away into a blue haze” (193), making it therefore more difficult to discern what was happening. Ultimately, what remains uncertain in this concluding sequence of the novel is whether James and Cam have managed to cross the ‘shadow line’ or not. James and Cam stand out as particularly far from the canonical father and mother models represented by their parents, and by the end of the novel they are depicted as extremely far from following them. Furthermore, it is significant that the last word in the novel is left to Lily, who is also antithetical to the feminine role represented by Mrs Ramsay.

These examples, while not providing an exhaustive list of the arrested developments represented in the works of these two great modernists, are some of their most representative fluid anti-developmental characters. In this section, I have aimed to show how the fluidity of water, while defining the adolescent characters, is also (symbolically) functional in describing the failure of the heteronormative binary familial system. In the following sections, I will reflect on the distinctively modernist treatment of time and space. In the modernist aesthetic, the canonical conceptions and representations of time and space are also disrupted at a formal and stylistic level, as if aiming to embrace the “recurrent, eddying, *troublant*” (Sedgwick *Tendencies* xii) potentialities of a language devoid of conventions. This aspect will be considered in the concluding section of this chapter, and elaborated on in the following chapters. Now, however, it is necessary to cast a closer look at the forms in which the element of water, and the maritime environment in particular, are represented in fluid anti-developmental narratives.

3.2. The Chronotopes of the Sea in (Early-) Modernist Fiction: Conrad, Woolf, Joyce

An analysis of the narrative function of the marine environment cannot be limited to the presence of the sea or of the shore and their symbolic meaning. Indeed, particular attention should also be paid to the other constitutive elements of this environment, such as the ship and the dock (pivotal in the short story “Eveline,” for instance), or a river and its crossing (that, as seen, bears a particular meaning in “An Encounter”). In addition to these elements, water, in all its states and manifestations, such as rain, clouds, snow, or fog, also substantially contributes to the narrative development and to the characterisation of fluid anti-developmental protagonists. The multiplicity of aspects that are related to water is at the same time fruitful for my analysis and, indeed, so multifarious that it is necessary to select, among its constitutive elements, those which are more relevant to the aims of my investigation. To this end, and in line with the reflection on the modernist conceptions of time and space, the narrative tool of the literary chronotope can indeed be of help. In particular, I draw on Margaret Cohen’s identification of six “chronotopes of the sea.” Cohen adopts Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope to describe the most relevant variations of the maritime/aquatic dimension.

As the very term suggests, the literary chronotope refers to the close interrelatedness of time and space in literature, “fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole” (Bakhtin “Forms” 84). Chronotopes are also helpful in a reflection on the characterisation of fictional figures; as Bakhtin explains, being “a formally constitutive category [the chronotope] determines to a significant degree the image of man in literature” (85). As far as the chronotopes of the sea are concerned, waterways are well suited as literary chronotopes “because of the multiple aspects of seafaring where space is experienced as movement, as a vector conjoining spatial and temporal coordinates” (Cohen “Chronotopes” 648). Although fluid anti-developmental narratives are characterised precisely by the scarcity of seafaring, the chronotopes of the sea do not lose their relevance; their narrative function changes significantly, but it remains effective in determining “the image of man in literature.”

Cohen identifies “six waterside chronotopes across the history of the English and French literary traditions that date back to the novel’s prehistory in antique forms” (649): blue water (the open sea), brown water (the water of rivers), white water (dangerous waters), the island, the ship, and the shore. These are often decisive for the development of the plot even in novels that do not strictly belong to the category of sea narrative, such as *Great Expectations* or *The Mill on the Floss*³⁸. For example, in Magwitch’s flight on the river Thames in Dickens’ novel, his destiny is

38 Eliot’s novel is referred to as an example by Cohen too (cf. “Chronotopes” 656-657).

determined by the concurrence of brown and white water; similarly, with reference to his long journey from the remote penal colony in New South Wales to London, the joint presence of white and blue water contribute to making it particularly dangerous. Of course, brown water is also at the centre of narrative development in Eliot's novel, where the lives of the protagonists actually revolve around the course of the river and, ultimately, its flooding. A meaningful conjunction of brown water and the chronotope of the ship is at play when Stephen persuades Maggie to join him for the boat trip. In the concluding chapter, brown and white water coalesce to cause the death of Maggie and Tom.

Cohen maintains that the maritime chronotopes "prove to be remarkably constant across different subgenres of the novel," and "stable across each of these subgenre's historical transformations as well," including the "modernist novel" (649). Nevertheless, as I aim to demonstrate in the following, the function she ascribes to the chronotopes of the sea undergo significant change in modernist fiction. In particular, starting from an analysis of Conrad's *Lord Jim* (1900), which includes all the waterside chronotopes listed by Cohen, I will highlight how and in which measure the function of some chronotopes changes in modernist fiction, and particularly in the works selected for this study. Indeed, Conrad's use of this narrative tool has a great influence on its modernist transformations, thereby further confirming his position as an early modernist. As Peck reminds us, it should also be remembered that Conrad wrote his best known novels at "the end of *Pax Britannica*, the period of British naval domination of the world that extended from 1815 to 1914" (7). That is to say, the moment in which "the maritime character of Britain is losing its significance, and when, as a consequence, the maritime tale seems to be losing its capacity to embrace and sustain a broader analysis of society" (8). *Lord Jim* is, among Conrad's works, particularly representative not only of the transformations described by Peck, but is also an excellent starting point for an introduction to and contextualisation of 'fluid anti-development'.

The novel illustrates the implications that "the bond of the sea" has for the protagonists of Conrad's sea-set narrations. Jim is one of the many Conradian characters who, at a young age, are trusted to a position of great responsibility on board a ship, which reveals itself to be beyond their capacities. In his very first journey as chief mate aboard the steamship *Patna*, Jim demonstratively lacks all the qualities expected of a sailor, which "are synonymous with the national virtues[;] therefore the sailor's readiness to take risks [...] combine[d] with a sense of duty and responsibility" (Peck 170). The chronotope of blue water is obviously one of the most relevant in the narration. Characterised by its unpredictability, the open ocean serves as a test-bed for those who venture to sea. Such unpredictability is often also paired with the implausibility of blue-water happenings, which in Conrad's novels is generally accepted as true: as Cohen comments, in his works "blue-

water events are strange *and therefore true*” (“Chronotopes” 651).

As noted previously, while often appearing as an important narrative element in modernist fiction and poetry blue water seldom fulfils a test-bed-function, as few of the modernist characters considered here undergo sea journeys. The characterising unpredictability of blue water could possibly be one of the reasons for this avoidance. A more significant role in the modernist aesthetic is often played by the unfathomable depths of the sea. Such is the case, for instance, in the deaths by water that occur in T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and *The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock*. The images evoked in these poems are also echoed in Woolf’s *The Voyage Out*; in one of the hallucinations that torment Rachel Vinrace on her deathbed, she feels as if “she fell into a deep pool of sticky water, which eventually closed over her head. She saw nothing and heard nothing but a faint booming sound, which was the sound of the sea rolling over her head” (*VO* 363). The sense of immobility, which in these lines is clearly related to the effects of Rachel’s illness and impending death, is a recurring and prominent element in the fluid anti-developmental narratives I analyse, and in *Lord Jim* too.

Jim’s inability to pursue his career as a sailor, or, in other words, his arrested development, is epitomised by the threatening immobility of sea and air that stands out in the scene of the collision, occurred in mysterious circumstances. Abandoning the *Patna* after the accident is a mistake that will haunt Jim for the rest of his life; the centrality of this episode and the irrevocable consequences that it entails are emphasised in the description of the sea before and after it. If, in the first days of his duty on board, the “marvellous stillness” of the night gave Jim a “great certitude of unbounded safety and peace” (*LJ* 14), right after the collision “the calm sea, the sky without a cloud, appeared formidably insecure in their immobility, as if poised on the brow of yawning destruction” (22). During the agitation that precedes his crucial jump overboard, while a terrible squall menaces the crew and the passengers of the *Patna*, Jim desperately “shut his eyes in the certitude that the end was upon him already, and twice he had to open them again. Each time he noted the darkening of the great stillness” (94). Again, what stands out is the absence of movement that, as a curse, impedes the young chief mate to think, make decisions and eventually to fulfil his duties in that state of emergency. Marlow, the narrator figure in many of Conrad’s works who, for the most part of the novel, relates Jim’s story, comments: “from his relation I am forced to believe he had preserved through it all *a strange illusion of passiveness*, as though he had not acted but had suffered himself to be handled by the infernal powers who had selected him for the victim of their practical joke” (96; emphasis added). From the very beginning of *Lord Jim*, the chronotopes of blue and white water are significantly interconnected. Nevertheless, as seen, the dangerousness of white water is chiefly represented by its immobility rather than by the impetuosity of its elements, as

would be expected. An obvious exception is the mysterious cause of the incident and the squall hovering over the ship. Moreover, in the moments of agitation caused by the collision, time is indeed “in short supply” (Cohen “Chronotopes” 658) and the control over it is vital for the survival of the protagonists – another characteristic trait of white water –, after the sinking of the *Patna* time seems to stop and this immobility is for Jim the premonition of an unrelenting catastrophe that will decide his destiny.

When interacting with the chronotopic dimension of the ship, the tension caused by the unpredictability of blue water and the sinister stillness of white water yields to concrete, as well as symbolic, developments that contribute to determine the centrality of these three chronotopes in the succession of events that influence Jim’s life and career. In his famous lecture “Of Other Spaces” (1967), Michel Foucault defines the ship as “the heterotopia *par excellence*” (27). Heterotopias are real places that act as “counter-sites” insofar as, in them, “all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted” (24). As Cohen notes, as they are very often concerned with the development of their young protagonists into maturity, shipboard-narratives generally exert a rite-of-passage function (cf. “Chronotopes” 664). On board a ship, time and space are strictly intertwined, thereby constituting an apt terrain for the completion of such a rite. In this way, the ship complements one of the major characteristics of blue water, namely that of being a test-bed for those embarking on sea journeys. Nevertheless, this function undergoes a significant change in what Casarino defines as the modernist sea narrative. The definition of the ship as the quintessential heterotopia is “a claim that the modernist sea narrative understood well and made into its representational credo” (Casarino 13). Conrad’s maritime stories are an excellent example in this sense; through the image of the ship, the “real sites” that lay outside its limits are “simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted,” as Foucault would say.

Indeed, in Conrad’s work, the ship is still often conceived of as a reproduction of land-based societies, on board of which strict rules have to be respected in order to secure the well-being, and ultimately the survival, of its passengers. At the same time, though, this order is always somehow destabilised. Similarly, whereas the protagonists of Conrad’s maritime narratives recognise the ship as the necessary means to the successful conclusion of a rite of passage, the actual conclusion of these rites is always put in doubt or deferred. In the short story “Youth,” Marlow, here the narrator and main protagonist who recounts his first experience as a second mate, clearly states: “To me [the ship] was not an old rattle-trap carting about the world a lot of coal for a freight – to me she was the endeavour, the test, the trial of life” (Y 146). In an analogous way, to the young unnamed protagonist and narrator of *The Shadow-Line*, the title of which is suggestive of the sea voyage as a rite of passage, the ship is depicted as an object of near devotion: a “high-class vessel, [...] a

creature of high breed. [...] one of those creatures whose mere existence is enough to awaken an unselfish delight" (*SL* 49). Nevertheless, as Marlow further comments in "Youth," "there are those voyages, that seem ordered for the illustration of life, that might stand for a symbol of existence. You fight, work, sweat, nearly kill yourself, sometimes do kill yourself, trying to accomplish something – and you can't" (*Y* 140). Such is the journey narrated in "Youth," even though, after innumerable delays, the crew eventually reaches Bangkok, the original destination. This is, however, not the case in *Lord Jim* or in *The Shadow-Line*.

As mentioned, a common feature of most of Conrad's protagonists is that for their first experience of command, or at least appointment to an important position on board, comes quite unexpectedly. They are charged with great responsibilities, often without the necessary experience or preparation, and their expeditions are destined to fail. For the protagonist of *The Shadow-Line* who, for no apparent reason abruptly quits his job on board a steam ship, the command of the sail ship *Melita* comes "without the preliminary toil and disenchantments of an obscure career" (50). On taking such a position, he comments, "I discovered how much of a seaman I was, in heart, in mind, and, as it were, physically – a man exclusively of sea and ships; the sea the only world that counted, and the ship the test of manliness, of temperament, of courage and fidelity – and of love" (40). Nevertheless, his first experience of command turns out to be "full of tangled up business" (43), as Captain Giles had predicted before the departure. As if under a spell, almost the entire crew is infected by a contagious disease, with no medicine on board, and in a close to unreal immobility of wind and water that prolongs the standstill situation for over a fortnight. In *Lord Jim*, at the beginning of his duty on board, Jim seems ready to undergo his rite of passage. An external third-person narrator provides an eloquent description of him in the opening pages of the novel:

He was gentlemanly, steady, tractable, with a thorough knowledge of his duties; and in time, when yet very young, he became chief mate of a fine ship, without ever having been tested by those events of the sea that show in the light of day the inner worth of a man, the edge of his temper, and the fibre of his stuff; that reveal the quality of his resistance and the secret truth of his pretences, not only to others but also to himself. (*LJ* 7)

It is therefore telling that Jim leaves the ship exactly when the occasion for him would be most favourable to demonstrate his valour. His jump overboard is therefore charged with meaning; the abandonment of the ship and of its rigorous hierarchy ultimately determines, and once again underlines, his inability to move forward.

In the above-quoted passage, the first of the qualities used to describe Jim is "gentlemanly." Throughout the nineteenth century, the figure of the captain, or of the chief mate, is indeed frequently represented as a gentleman, as Peck comments (cf. 28). From the end of the eighteenth

century, such a figure had in fact assumed particular relevance as it “reconciled masculine aggression with the forbearance that is necessary in a fair and just society” (Peck 172). As an example, Peck cites the figure of Frederick Wentworth, the naval officer in Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*³⁹ (1817). Although the sea is only a backdrop element in the novel, the maritime rite of passage that Wentworth undergoes plays a central role in the narration; the fortune he makes thanks to his hard work in the Navy confirms his position as a gentleman, and can eventually marry Anne Elliot, the young protagonist of the novel who belongs to a superior social class. As early as in *Great Expectations*, however, there is an overturning of this ‘logic’. As a matter of fact, Pip’s biggest desire is to become a gentleman, as he reveals to his friend Biddy in a confession that, significantly, takes place by the river shore (cf. *GE* 119). The boy’s wish meets with the will of his benefactor Magwitch, who demands “that [Pip] be immediately removed from his present sphere of life and from this place, and be brought up as a gentleman,— in a word, as a young fellow of great expectations” (129). Nevertheless, as already seen, although Pip eventually moves to London and is educated as a gentleman, it always remains in doubt whether he is actually considered one, and in the end, his expectations and desires are not fulfilled. Jim’s case is similar: even though, when he takes the position of chief mate of the *Patna*, he “was gentlemanly, steady, tractable, with a thorough knowledge of his duties” (*LJ* 7), the moment he abandons the ship and escape onto a life raft, when his endurance and his human nature are tested by an extreme situation, his gentlemanliness is thrown into doubt (cf. *LJ* 106).

Finally, in regard to the function of the ship in *Lord Jim*, it is useful to consider the detailed and revealing reflections provided by Marlow, to whom Jim recounts his vicissitudes on the *Patna*;

There is something peculiar in a small boat upon the wide sea. Over the lives borne from under the shadow of death there seems to fall the shadow of madness. When your ship fails you, your whole world seems to fail you; the world that made you, restrained you, took care of you. It is as if the souls of men floating on an abyss and in touch with immensity had been set free for any excess of heroism, absurdity, or abomination. Of course, as with belief, thought, love, hate, conviction, or even the visual aspect of material things, there are as many shipwrecks as there are men, and in this one there was something abject which made the isolation more complete – there was a villainy of circumstances that cut these men off more completely from the rest of mankind, whose ideal of conduct had never undergone the trial of a fiendish and appalling joke. [...] Trust a boat on the high seas to bring out the Irrational that lurks at the bottom of every thought, sentiment, sensation, emotion. (*LJ* 107-108)

The passage highlights “the ship’s importance as at once an economic, political, and social microcosm” (Cohen “Chronotopes” 665) and, consequently, it underlines the distress that results from what is here described as almost a betrayal. Yet in the case of Jim, not only does the ship “fail”

39 For an analysis of the maritime elements and the importance of the Navy in *Persuasion*, see Peck 42-49.

him, but the entire (Western) society turns its back on him after the collision. Jim justifies his abandonment of the ship as responding to basic survival needs: “supposed I had stuck to the ship? Well. How much longer? Say a minute – half a minute. Come. In thirty seconds, as it seemed certain then, I would have been overboard; and do you think I would not have laid hold of the first thing that came in my way – oar, life-buoy, grating – anything?” (*LJ* 116). For jumping overboard, however, he is condemned “to toil without honour like a costermonger’s donkey” (135), as he will either run from or be excluded from any social and work environment in which there could be hope for an acknowledgement of his human qualities. “There is such magnificent vagueness,” Marlow further comments, “in the expectations that had driven each of us to the sea, such a glorious indefiniteness, such a beautiful greed of adventures that are their own and only reward;” yet “[i]n no other kind of life is the illusion more wide of reality – in no other is the beginning *all* illusion – the disenchantment more swift – the subjugation more complete” (*LJ* 115).

The Modernist Ship

These examples of the ship’s chronotopic function in Conrad’s works further confirm the decisive role he played in the transformation of the sea narrative. As Casarino comments, the modernist sea narrative “record[s] possibly the most glorious moment in the history of the ship,” yet it “is also thoroughly imbued with premonitions of a future in which this heterotopia would be inevitably relegated to the quaint and dusty shelves of cultural marginalia” (16). Casarino defines “the end of the history of the ship as the heterotopia par excellence of Western civilization” (*ibid.*). Indeed, in the modernist period, the form of the sea narrative comes to question itself, and, consequently, the chronotope of the ship, necessary to the very existence of the sea narrative, undergoes a similar change. In particular, the ‘modernist ship’ loses its rite-of-passage function altogether.

As I have observed elsewhere, this is particularly evident in Joyce’s work (cf. Spanghero “Ships”). As early as in *Dubliners*, ships and boats, in their symbolic and their material aspects, often function as signifiers of the arrested development of young Joycean characters. Such is the case, for instance, in the short stories “An Encounter” and “Eveline.” As already pointed out, in the first case, the crossing of the river on board a ferryboat does not correspond to a moment of development for the two schoolboys, but rather only enhances the “realization of the shoreline as a dangerously transitional space” (Brannigan 71); once on the opposite bank of the river, the enchanted atmosphere that surrounded the port before the passage is gradually dismantled and the reality around the young boys slowly becomes incomprehensible and eventually threatening. In

“Eveline” the annulment of the rite-of-passage function of the ship is even clearer as, in the final scene, the protagonist refuses to embark on “the night-boat” (D 31) and therefore to take the “passage” that would lead her to her new life with Frank.

For an understanding of the peculiar chronotopic function of the ship in Joyce, though, the example of Stephen Dedalus is again particularly useful to look at. Both in *Portrait* and in *Ulysses*, the marine dimension, and all its chronotopic variations, are functional to the representation of Stephen’s strong feelings of isolation, guilt, and melancholy. In particular, the appearance of boats and ships is often linked to images of immobility and of death, as shall also be analysed in the concluding section of this chapter. For instance, when Stephen is still a young boy at Clongowes Wood College, he remembers a vision of a ship, coming from England and approaching from a sea of “long dark waves rising and falling” (P 25), which carried the dead body of Charles Stuart Parnell. Such a gloomy atmosphere connoting the chronotope of the ship can be traced throughout the whole novel. In its closing passages, for example, Stephen resolves to leave Ireland to answer the call of “the black arms of tall ships that stand against the moon” (275).

Similar considerations with regard to the chronotopic function of the ship can be made, for instance, for Woolf’s novels *The Voyage Out* and *To the Lighthouse*. The first somehow seems to reconsider a Conradian maritime plot; while it does include a sea journey, the narration focusses very much on the emotional and psychological changes in the young protagonist. Moreover, for her, the conclusion of the journey does not correspond with the attainment of a different, socially respectable status. Quite the contrary, the trip turns out to be fatal for the twenty-four-year old (unmarried) Rachel, who dies in the South American port of Santa Marina. As a matter of fact, the ship is negatively connoted from the very beginning of the narration. On embarking for the cruise, Helen, Rachel’s aunt, looks “[m]ournfully” at the ship and at “the dark flag which the breeze blew out squarely behind,” and which appeared to her as “a sinister token” (VO 6): all obvious “presentiments” (ibid.) of how the story will tragically evolve.

A shorter, and not fatal, boat trip takes place in the final chapter of *To the Lighthouse*. As in *The Voyage Out*, while the two young siblings do cross the water, it remains unclear whether they actually reach their destination, namely whether (or indeed how) they conclude their passage. While they are apparently directed towards a destination that lies ahead of them, the trajectory of their journey seems to make them avoid it. Significantly, the images of death and sterility that cross James’ mind while he is in the boat contrast with the movement of the boat, which is supposedly following a straight trajectory. At the same time, James’ sister, Cam, muses about the wonders in the depths of the sea: “Her hand cut a trail in the sea, as her mind [...] wandered in imagination in that underworld of waters where the pearls stuck in clusters to white sprays, where in the green light

a change came over one's entire mind and one's body shone half transparent enveloped in a green cloak"⁴⁰ (*TL* 169). The two siblings retrace the attitudes that Muscogiuri identifies as definitive of Mr Ramsay and Lily, respectively towards the surface and the depth of the sea. Whereas Mr Ramsay "looks at the sea [...] with the detachment (and sterility, in his specific case) provided by his rationalism" ("This I fancy" 104), Lily, "in looking out to sea [...] is in fact looking for a 'message' or a 'vision'" (*ibid.*). Yet Lily is left with the last word in the novel, and while we know that she finally finishes her painting, we do not know whether Cam and James eventually achieve their goal of "resist[ing] tyranny to the death" (*TL* 151), nor whether they land on the shore and reach the lighthouse. These aspects, which illustrate the relationship between the young characters and the chronotope of the ship (in this case a boat), poignantly describe the function of the modernist version of this chronotope, and they have to be kept in mind when it interacts with the other marine chronotopes.

Among these, are the island and the river, both of which are also important in *Lord Jim*. More precisely, it is on the island of Patusan and in its eponymous settlement, both fruits of Conrad's imagination, that Jim has a chance to find redemption. Thanks to Marlow's intercession, Jim is sent to the trading post of the Stein & Co. in Patusan, in the Malay Archipelago. On the island Jim eventually becomes *Tuan* (i.e. "Lord") Jim and, at least apparently, regains his dignity; on Patusan he also finds confidence, admiration, and love. Yet far from being "a prime, 'empty' space of orientalist discourse, a fresh, untouched realm that can be shaped" where "nature appears a harmonious and pliable force" (Cohen "Chronotopes" 659), the island "was referred [...] especially as to its irregularities and aberrations, and it was known by name to some few, very few, in the mercantile world" (*LJ* 197). In other words, the island of Patusan contradicts the utopian view of an untouched space, in which an ideal social order can be established.

Significant in this sense is also the reference, in *Great Expectations*, to the island of New South Wales, where Magwitch is held prisoner. This remote space, only briefly mentioned in the novel, was surely well known among the Victorian readers as it was the first British penal colony, founded in 1788 in today's Australia. "Once the island matures," comments Cohen "the novelist has no more story to tell, unless its harmony is disrupted" ("Chronotopes" 661), and the cause of this destabilisation of order usually comes from across the water. The territory that would become New South Wales experiences the collapse of its original order and turns into a corrupted space after Western invasion/colonisation. Similarly, in Patusan the disruptive element arrives from Europe and

40 The references to the "pearls" and to the "change [that] came over one's entire mind and one's body" (*TL* 169) are clearly reminiscent of the famous song sung by Ariel in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, upon which I have already commented in chapter two ("Full fathom five thy father lies / Of his bones are coral made / Those are pearls that were his eyes").

is embodied by the Portuguese Cornelius, who has been appointed manager of the Stein & Co.'s trading post, but with scant success. According to Stein himself, Cornelius is "an unsatisfactory person in more ways than one, all being more or less indefinite and offensive" (*LJ* 199). Jim, who replaces Cornelius, also arrives from across the water, on a boat and via a river, yet he is, at first, welcomed and worshipped as a saviour. Having become a leading figure, he is able to establish a new order in keeping with the hierarchies that already exist on the island. As it will turn out, though without intending to, Jim ends up provoking another disruption that has fatal results for him: he is eventually considered a traitor and killed in controversial circumstances. Patusan, therefore, seems to count among those islands "that translate to land the brutal version of nature as the struggle for survival found on blue water" (Cohen "Chronotopes" 659). Although the settlement is deep in the forest and about forty miles from the sea, the (relatively) distant ocean is constantly perceived as a menacing presence. Moreover, the village where Jim settles is connected to the sea by a river, the next important chronotope that appears in the narration.

In *Lord Jim*, there are at least two journeys that are worth to be considered in further detail, one up and the other down river (much like in the structure of *Heart of Darkness*). The description of the upriver journey, when Jim first approaches the town of Patusan, provides a very evocative image of the sea, from which Jim is relieved to take distance:

At the first bend he left sight of the sea with its labouring waves for ever rising, sinking, and vanishing to rise again – the very image of struggling mankind – and faced the immovable forest rooted deep in the soil, soaring towards the sunshine, everlasting in the shadowy might of their tradition, like life itself. (*LJ* 222)

Although Jim has left behind the unceasing flow of the waves and has caught a first, and for him reassuring, glimpse of the "immovable forest," the wood itself is compared to "a dark sleeping sea of sombre green undulating as far as the violet and purple range of mountains" whence "the shining sinuosity of the river like an immense letter S of beaten silver" was clearly visible (238). And, a few pages later, "the great expanse of the forest" is again described as "sombre under the sunshine, rolling like a sea, with glints of winding rivers" (242). Still, Patusan turns into Jim's refuge, his "upriver retreat from a premodern lifestyle" (Cohen "Chronotopes" 656) that keeps him at safe distance from blue water, "associated with various aspects of social modernity (technology, industrialization, urbanization)" (*ibid.*), but most of all, a constant reminder of his human defeat. A similar resistance towards blue water is also expressed by Maggie, the protagonist in *The Mill on the Floss*, during her flight with Stephen. On the second day of their (by then forcedly prolonged) river trip, "assuring [Stephen] that she had had a good night's rest" (*MF* 438), Maggie explains that she "didn't mind about being on the vessel, – it was not like being on the open sea, it was only a

little less pleasant than being in a boat on the Floss” (ibid.). The mere idea of getting closer to the sea, and therefore further from her family and place of origin, is something that unsettles Maggie.

The second important river journey in *Lord Jim* is the one Jim makes together with Marlow, his guest on Patusan for a few days, to accompany him back from the village to the sea. This journey is an interesting counterpart to Jim’s first arrival at the settlement. The imminent farewell of the two men creates a tangible distance between them, which is made even more evident by their respective feelings during the trip. For Marlow, this becomes much more enjoyable after the first bend of the river, as they leave behind the “stagnant superheated air; the smell of mud, of mush, the primeval smell of fecund earth” and, “straight ahead, the forest sank down against the dark-blue ridge of the sea” (*LJ* 304). Marlow draws great energy from the “vastness of the opened horizon,” while Jim, “with his head sunk on his breast[,]” refuses to watch “as if afraid to see writ large on the clear sky of the offing the reproach of his romantic conscience” (305). Significantly, it is at the end of this journey that the shore appears in the narration. Cohen provides an accurate analysis of this chronotope, yet particular attention is needed for the peculiar reinterpretation of the seashore in the modernist aesthetic.

The Shore and the Modernist Shore

Like the ship, the chronotope of the shore undergoes significant transformations in early-twentieth-century fiction⁴¹. As Kasia Boddy comments, for many modernist writers “to engage with the problem of the modern beach was also to engage with modernism’s central concerns with space and time and meaning” (21). The sea-shore is the setting of several crucial scenes in the works selected for the present study, and it is particularly important for the characterisation of fluid anti-developmental characters. As a liminal space between the mainland and the open sea, the beach is, according to Cohen’s description, “a place where boundaries are tested, only to be reaffirmed rather than dissolved” (Cohen “Chronotopes” 661); an aspect that also bears significant similarities to the Bakhtinian chronotope of the road. In particular, the motif of the meeting is of great import on the road, as this is the site where “the spatial and temporal paths of the most varied people – representatives of all social classes, estates, religions, nationalities, ages – intersect at one spatial and temporal point” (Bakhtin “Forms” 243). These features could indeed also appropriately

41 Research on this topic has been carried out, among others, by Kasia Boddy in her article “The Modern Beach” (2007), by Roberta Geffer Wondrich in the essay “‘These heavy sands are language’: The beach as a cultural signifier from *Dover Beach* to *On Chesil Beach*” (2012), by Lara Feigel with Alexandra Harris in a co-edited volume *Modernism on Sea* (2010) and, more recently, by Ursula Kluwick and Virginia Richter in *The Beach in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures* (2015).

describe the Victorian beach. Thanks to the development of an efficient rail-road network that connected the cities to the coast, by the mid-nineteenth century the (English) beach becomes the centre of “a new profit-making system” (Corbin 72), where people from every social class gather to enjoy not only the healthy air of the coastal resorts, but also “the scope of the social network, and the wealth of cultural life” (ibid.).

A reference to the popularity of these British littoral resorts can even be found in *Ulysses*, when, in “Eumaeus,” Leopold Bloom thinks about organising for his wife Molly

a concert tour of summer music embracing the most prominent pleasure resorts, Margate with mixed bathing and first-rate hydros and spas, Eastbourne, Scarborough, Margate and so on, beautiful Bournemouth, the Channel islands and similar bijoux spots, which might prove highly remunerative. (*U* 16.518-522)

Indeed, Margate, together with Brighton, counted among the most popular seaside resorts of the time; both “English wateringplaces” (8.1074) are mentioned in the “Lestrygonians” episode of *Ulysses* as possible destinations for the concert tour. Memories of Margate also recur in Molly’s interior monologue in the last episode of the novel, when she recalls “those fine young men I could see down in Margate strand bathingplace from the side of the rock standing up in the sun naked like a God or something” (18.1355-1357). The fact that the Margate resort had mixed bathing certainly constituted one of its main attractions, thus also confirming the centrality of the motif of the encounter in the chronotopic space of the shore. This aspect is further confirmed by the popularity of the song “Seaside Girls” (composed in 1899 by Harry B. Norris), inspired precisely by the institution of mixed bathing, which is also one of the many recurring musical themes in *Ulysses*. Apart from the concomitant implications that it has for Bloom, as it reminds him of Molly’s affair with Blazes Boylan, the song clearly celebrates the opportunity to see and meet the “lovely” girls on show on the beach. Nevertheless, all these references recur in a novel in which the shore is generally represented as a deserted space. The one “seaside girl” who appears in *Ulysses* is Gerty MacDowell, who is “on show” (13.775-776) on Dollymount Strand. The “Nausicaa” episode, though, offers a rather degraded version of the seaside atmosphere celebrated in the popular song, and the beach is indeed almost empty.

The most significant transformation of the chronotope of the shore in the modernist fiction is precisely this: the shore is usually represented as an empty space. Another, probably less evident, contrast between the modernist shore and the popular resorts of the late-eighteenth and nineteenth century can be found in “Proteus,” an episode set entirely on Dollymount Strand, upon which Stephen strolls, almost completely alone. Among the few other people he meets on the beach are the

“Cocklepickers” (3.342), collectors of shells. As Corbin notes, in the 1760s it was “very popular to collect seaweed and shellfish, especially in Margate” (117); yet this does not seem to be a pastime for the gypsy couple Stephen sees, as they will probably try to sell those shells⁴². Moreover, they are also the owners of the dog that runs towards Stephen, but stops when it sees the dead body of another dog; these are all elements that make Stephen think about death, and death by water, as he remembers the news he has heard of a man found drowned in the bay of Dublin that very morning.

In such an isolated space as the modernist shore, meetings cannot have the same relevant function they have on the Victorian strand or, indeed, on the road. Nevertheless, as Bakhtin maintains, the motif of the meeting does “assume a multiply metaphoric or singly metaphoric meaning and may, finally, become a symbol” (Bakhtin 98). On the deserted (modernist) beach, the awareness of being in a space of constant transformations, where it is almost impossible to define the limit between the land and the sea, is particularly vivid. In its natural fluidity, the shoreline symbolises the intrinsic fluidity of human identity, and especially of adolescent identity. Therefore, the choice of this specific setting for pivotal scenes in the works considered here acquires an evident metaphorical meaning.

In *Lord Jim*, there is a single, brief but telling scene set on a shore. Jim and Marlow’s journey from the settlement of Patusan to the coast ends on a small white sand strip, from where Marlow continues his trip alone. Their last moments together are emotionally charged; strolling pensively on the beach, Jim compares his past condition and his present in Patusan, inferring a regret or longing for what he has left behind:

“You have had your opportunity,” I [Marlow] pursued.

“Have I?” he said. “Well, yes. I suppose so. Yes. I have got back my confidence in myself – a good name – yet sometimes I wish ... No! I shall hold what I’ve got.” Can’t expect anything more.” He flung his arm out towards the sea. “Not out there anyhow.” He stamped his foot upon the sand. “*This is my limit*, because nothing less will do.” (306; emphasis added)

Jim deliberately decides not to cross the line that separates him from a life at sea, withdrawing into the village, deep in the forest. From the beginning of the narration, we know that Jim “was a seaman in exile from the sea” (*LJ* 2) and that his is an exile that for many reasons is self-imposed, in order to escape from what had happened. After the crucial jump overboard, Jim is left with virtually no chances, and in order to escape, he turns his back on his life as a seafarer: “When the fact broke through the incognito he would leave suddenly the seaport where he happened to be at the time and go to another – generally further east” (*ibid.*). Yet, the destiny that awaits him in Patusan represents only apparently a better “opportunity” for him. When Marlow finally abandons

42 A reference to shells used as currency is made in the preceding chapter, “Nestor” (cf. *U* 2.212-216).

the coast, this is the last glimpse he has of Jim:

He was white from head to foot, and remained persistently visible with the stronghold of the night at his back, the sea at his feet, the opportunity by his side – still veiled. What do you say? What is still veiled? I don't know. For me that white figure in the stillness of coast and sea seemed to stand at the heart of a vast enigma. The twilight was ebbing fast from the sky above his head, the strip of sand had sunk already under his feet, he himself appeared no bigger than a child – then only a speck, a tiny white speck, that seemed to catch all the light left in the darkened world ... And, suddenly, I lost him ... (308-309)

This evocative description effectively defines Jim's condition of arrested development, emblematically portrayed "in the stillness of coast and sea" (309), on a shoreline, and in a standstill situation that does not seem to have any possibility of resolution.

In the majority of the fluid anti-developmental narratives I consider, the scenes set at sea usually correspond to key moments in the lives of the protagonists, moments in which their destinies seem to take a definitive turn. Eventually, though, these moments always result in their return to a previous state. The scenes set on the liminal spaces of the shoreline, but also on docks or river banks, epitomise in an evocative way that condition of "stretched-out adolescence" (Halberstam *Queer Time* 153) that links together Eveline and Gerty MacDowell, Little Chandler, Rachel Vinrace, Cam and James Ramsay, to some extent Lily Briscoe, and, of course, Stephen Dedalus.

3.3. Liminal and Queer Adolescents

In *Lord Jim*, the protagonist's condition of liminality unfolds tragically. For Jim, concepts such as success and career become so meaningless that, at the end of the novel, death stands out as his greatest opportunity:

He passes away under a cloud, inscrutable at heart, forgotten, unforgiven, and excessively romantic. Not in the wildest days of his boyish visions could he have seen the alluring shape of such an extraordinary success! For it may very well be that in the short moment of his last proud and unflinching glance, he had beheld the face of that opportunity which, like an eastern bride, had come veiled to his side. (*LJ* 384)

Notwithstanding the apparently privileged position he has gained during his stay in Patusan, Jim always remains "one of us," as Marlow often repeats, namely a white man, but most of all one of those for whom "the bond of the sea" ultimately represents a limitation. Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out* faces a similar destiny, notwithstanding the obvious differences in plot. She dies after

having reached another shore, namely after having trespassed her 'limit'. The other fluid anti-developmental characters considered here follow a similar path; still, very few of them eventually face death, as the general tendency in fluid anti-developmental narratives is to represent the young protagonists in a state of unresolved liminality, literally and symbolically "at the heart of a vast enigma" (*LJ* 309). In facing the sea (and, more generally, water), these characters find themselves standing at a threshold that is impossible for them to cross.

Indeed, the term 'liminal' derives from *limes*, the Latin word for 'threshold', which in turn is another of the literary chronotopes identified by Bakhtin. A chronotope that "is connected with the breaking point of a life, the moment of crisis, the decision that changes a life (*or the indecisiveness that fails to change a life, the fear to step over the threshold*)" (Bakhtin "Forms" 248; emphasis added). The threshold, continues Bakhtin, is "always metaphorical and symbolic, sometimes openly, but more often implicitly" (*ibid.*); in this sense, then, the liminal space of a shore, a dock, or a river bank, combined with its proximity to the elemental fluidity of water, can be read as a metaphor of the queer and liminal state of the adolescent characters I analyse.

Liminality also defines the intermediate phase that in traditional rites of passage marks the transition from one social, physical, mental, or emotional state to another, as specified in 1909 by the anthropologist Arnold van Gennep in his seminal study *Les Rites de Passage* (*The Rites of Passage*). His aim was to classify "all the ceremonial patterns which accompany a passage from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world into another" (*Rites* 10); in doing so he differentiates between rituals of separation, of transition and of incorporation, and he "propose[s] to call the rites of separation from a previous world, *preliminal rites*, those executed during the transitional stage *liminal* (*or threshold*) *rites*, and the ceremonies of incorporation into the new world *postliminal rites*" (21; emphasis in the original). In the 1960s, the anthropologist Victor Turner further developed van Gennep's research, focussing particularly on the structure and meaning of the liminal phases in rites of passage. In the famous essay "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in the *Rites de Passage*" (1967), Turner claims that the individual undertaking the liminal phase of a ritual is "structurally, if not physically, 'invisible'" (95), and that "[a]s members of society, most of us see only what we expect to see, and what we expect to see is what we are conditioned to see when we have learned the definitions and classifications of our culture" (*ibid.*). But the protagonists of the works considered here struggle with their inability to fit in with the appropriate social, political, and gender "definitions and classifications," and in this failure, they remain stuck in a situation of unresolved liminality, or of "permanent liminality" as Arpad Szokolczai has defined it (*cf. Reflective Historical Sociology*).

Intending to apply the structure of traditional rites of passage to modern societies, Turner

later coined the term *liminoid* to describe a certain feature of liminal phenomena in “the democratic-liberal societies which dominated Europe and America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (“Liminal to Liminoid” 84). Peculiar to modern consumer and industrialised societies, liminoid manifestations are usually enacted by “the solitary artist” (ibid.), “the individual innovator, the unique person who dares and opts to create” (75). The creative acts of the artist, continues Turner, “are often parts of social critiques or even revolutionary manifestoes – books, plays, paintings, films, etc., exposing the injustices, inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations” (86). Castle reaffirms Turner’s position defining “the artist, who by the late nineteenth century had become the most potent symbol of nonconformity and rebellion,” as “the normative *Bildungsheld* of the modernist Bildungsroman” (*Reading* 23). According to the scholar, underlying the modernist Bildungsroman is an ideal “of self-sufficiency achieved through aesthetic education” (24); this corresponds to the ideal of Bildung that originated in early nineteenth-century Weimar, and which contributed to the development of “specific modalities of resistance” (31) to (mid-)nineteenth-century pragmatic Bildung. As Castle explains,

[t]he aim of the modernist Bildungsroman is to put into play a Bildung process that harkens back to the classical mode, in which the goal is inner culture, but also inevitably confronts the impossibility of either a unified, harmonious consciousness or a unified, harmonious relationship with the social world. This impossibility results, or *can result*, in a productive nonidentity[.] (66)

The concept of “productive nonidentity” is counterbalanced by that of “productive failure,” by which “anything that might give any indication of a problem with the system or with narrative, paradoxically serves as a reliable index of the system’s otherwise persistent and reliable success” (64). Moreover, the return to an aesthetic-spiritual conception of Bildung leads to an awareness of the “artifice of the self,” thereby “constitut[ing] the only available freedom from the so-called freedoms of bourgeois subjectivity” (67).

In considering both nonidentity and failure as positively productive, Castle’s view also permits a direct link to queer, and in particular to Halberstam’s positions in *The Queer Art of Failure*. Halberstam, who defines “failure as a way of refusing to acquiesce to dominant logics of power and discipline and as a form of critique” (88), argues that “[f]ailing is something queers do and have always done exceptionally well” (3). In his study, he considers a series of artistic expressions, aiming “to explore alternatives and to look for a way out of the usual traps and impasses of binary formulations” (2). An analogous function is fulfilled by the modernist Bildungsroman, where “the binomial categories collapse, and failure becomes an index of

successful alternative representations of social and cultural subjectivities” (Castle 71).

Such is the case of Joyce’s modernist Bildungsroman *Portrait*. Indeed, Castle’s study stems out of work on *Portrait*, particularly by considering it “in terms of its peculiar failure to conform to the strict generic demands of the Bildungsroman form” (1). It is easy to see protagonist Stephen Dedalus as the “normative *Bildungsheld* of the modernist Bildungsroman” (23). Yet Stephen is also a prototypical figure of the fluid anti-developmental protagonist; in the following section, I aim to illustrate his development, or ‘fluid evolution’, from *Portrait* to *Ulysses*.

3.4. The case of Stephen Dedalus’ “Incompatibility” with “Aquacity” (*U* 17.247)⁴³

In a conversation with friend and artist Frank Budgen, Joyce famously declared that during the writing of *Ulysses*, he found that the character of Stephen Dedalus had lost some relevance: “he has a shape that can’t be changed” (Budgen 107). However, while in *Ulysses* Stephen may indeed appear as a static character, from the beginning of *Portrait*, when he is first introduced to the readers as “baby tuckoo” (*P* 3), until the “Ithaca” episode in *Ulysses*, when we see him for the last time, his “shape” has changed significantly. Nevertheless, the transformations he undergoes do not describe a linear trajectory of development, but follow rather an uneven course that can indeed be defined as *fluid*. This is particularly relevant because the non-normativity of his growth is (symbolically) interconnected with Stephen’s “incompatibility” with “aquacity” (*U* 17.247).

Throughout Joyce’s fiction the maritime dimension maintains a decisive role in determining the impossibility of a linear (and predictable) development for his protagonists. As Brannigan observes, “whenever any of Joyce’s principal characters approach the Irish Sea, or consider its shores and crossings, they turn back” (*Archipelagic* 69). This is particularly true of the *young* Joycean characters, as seen, for instance, in the cases of Eveline, Gerty MacDowell, and Little Chandler. Among them, though, Stephen is exemplary, and his aversion towards water – very much in line with the dystopic representation of water characteristic of the modernist aesthetic – is repeatedly pointed out⁴⁴. As he confesses to his friend Cranly in *Portrait*, the sea counts among the things he fears the most, together with “dogs, horses, firearms, [...], thunderstorms, machinery, the

43 I have illustrated many of the aspects concerning Stephen’s evolution in an earlier article (see Spanghero “Incompatibility”), on the basis of which I have developed this section of the dissertation.

44 This repulsion is further confirmed by the mythological subtext that links Stephen to Icarus, who dies by drowning. As Katharina Hagena notes, “[d]ie Parallelen zum Mythos von Dädalus und Ikarus zeigen deutlich, wie sehr Stephen Dedalus die irische Insel als Gefängnis betrachtet. Beider Flucht führt schließlich über das Meer, wobei der eine stirbt, der andere scheitert” (17). My translation: “The parallels with the myth of Daedalus and Icarus clearly show that Stephen Dedalus considers the Irish island as a prison. The flight of both is eventually conducted over the sea; the one dies, the other fails.”

country roads at night” (*P* 264). We also know that “his flesh dread[s] the cold infrahuman odour of the sea” (181). Further confirmation of his attitude is to be found in *Ulysses*, where Stephen is mockingly referred to by Buck Mulligan as the “unclean bard [who] makes a point of washing once a month” (*U* 1.475) and where he is also described as a “hydrophobe” (17.237).

Stephen’s peculiar relationship with water, though, is also further reflected in Joyce’s style and stylistic variations throughout *Portrait* and *Ulysses* (and in particular the first three chapters, which mainly centre on Stephen). More precisely though, as I intend to show in the analysis that follows, the fluidity of language and of the unique Joycean style is significantly linked both to the fluidity of Stephen’s identity and to the intrinsic fluidity of water. As noted by James Naremore, in *Portrait*, just as “nearly in the whole body of Joyce’s work,” the style is “designed to suggest the ambiance of character” (332); in fact, it “not only takes us into Stephen’s rather florid imagination,” but it also “gives us a clue to the attitude Joyce has towards his hero” (335). A pertinent observation that ideally harks back to some of the considerations Stephen exposes in *Portrait* when discussing his aesthetic theory. On that occasion, Stephen observes, incidentally making use of an eloquent marine metaphor, that “[t]he narrative form is no longer purely personal [because] [t]he personality of the artist passes into the narration itself, flowing round and round the persons and the action like a vital sea” (*P* 233). As a matter of fact, because Joyce provides us with a portrait of the artist, it is not easy to identify the main traits of Stephen’s character at first; indeed, he is probably the most evident example of a Joycean protagonist of whom we do not have a physical description. As Seamus Deane rightly comments, “[w]hen Stephen takes flight, he is leaving behind not only Ireland but also the nineteenth-century novel and its elaborate apparatus for the siting and description of character” (*P* xliii). Nevertheless, the frequent description of Stephen’s emotions, behaviours, reactions, and, ultimately, of his thoughts, also allows us to have a fuller understanding of his personality. This process continues in the polyphonic *Ulysses*, where the variation of style helps the reader to understand who is the subject and/or the narrator of each episode (or even each paragraph). The leap from the Dedalian style of the “Telemachiad” episodes to “Calypso,” where the character of Leopold Bloom is first introduced to the reader, serves as a clear example. From the often obscure stream of consciousness of Stephen, the narration abruptly switches to a decidedly more prosaic tone: “Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls” (*U* 4.1).

These stylistic contrasts, though, are already common in *Portrait*. The narrative rhythm of the novel is characterised by what I define as a ‘tidal evolution’, thereby also translating into marine terms Hugh Kenner’s famous observation that each chapter in the novel “works toward an equilibrium which is dashed when in the next chapter Stephen’s world becomes larger and the

frame of reference more complex” (121). As a matter of fact, though, these abrupt changes also occur within the single chapters, thus establishing a “sequence of rises and falls for Stephen’s development” (Riquelme 116) throughout the novel. Indeed, at a first reading, the style of *Portrait* seems to undergo a substantial transformation from the first to the last chapter, describing an evolution that, supposedly, is in line with Stephen’s psychological, intellectual and artistic growth. However, a more attentive reading reveals the style progresses in a non-linear manner, a manner characterised by sudden changes and repetitions that help underline Stephen’s fluid development into a young man.

Some of the most significant scenes for Stephen’s growth, both in *Portrait* and in *Ulysses*, have clear connections with the maritime environment or are set by the sea. This detail surely contributes to emphasising Stephen’s condition of liminality, or, better said, of permanent liminality. In *Reflexive Historical Sociology*, Szokolczai acknowledges that his concept of permanent liminality “is inherently paradoxical, if not a contradiction in terms” (211). Indeed, while “[l]iminality is defined as a temporary situation” (ibid.), it “becomes a permanent condition when any of the phases in this sequence [i.e.: the phases of separation, liminality and reaggregation in the rites of passage] becomes frozen, as if a film had stopped at a particular frame” (212). In particular, Szokolczai describes the liminal phase in terms of the “actual performance or the ‘staging’ of the ritual [during which] individuals all play certain roles” (213); he argues that if a ritual “becomes frozen” in this central phase, “the ‘play’ character of the ritual disappears. [...] Individuals are required to identify with the roles they are supposed to play all the time, all their lives, and their role will *become* their life” (213). This assumption significantly recalls Butler’s position on the relationship between gender and performativity. “Gender is the repeated stylization of the body,” she claims in *Gender Trouble* (1990), “a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (33). As Jagose summarises: “gender is performative [...] because, through reiteration, it consolidates the subject. In this respect, performativity is the precondition of the subject” (86). ‘Performativity’ should not be confused with ‘performance’; indeed, as Butler insists in *Bodies that Matter* (1993), “the regularized and constrained repetition of norms,” “is not performed *by* a subject,” but “is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject” (95). What stands out in the case of Stephen, though, is both his inability and unwillingness to act out, and therefore also to reiterate and renew, the role attributed to him. Being ‘*a young man*’, he is expected to become a mature adult; yet he is also ‘*the artist*’⁴⁵, “symbol of nonconformity and rebellion” (Castle 23), and “the individual

45 The emphasis on the indefinite and definite articles points to their relevance in the full title of Joyce’s novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

innovator, [...] who dares and opts to create” (Turner “Liminal to Liminoid” 75), “exposing the injustices, inefficiencies, and immoralities of the mainstream economic and political structures and organizations” (86). Nevertheless, a subtler subtext reveals, not without an equally subtle irony, that Stephen actually fails to pursue his mission as an artist, all the while apparently trying to remain faithful to the image of the artist he declares himself to be.

Indeed, throughout *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, it remains uncertain whether Stephen matures into a man, and whether he eventually becomes the poet he aspires to be. Ironically, Joyce has the rebel artist noting in his diary, on the eve of his voluntary exile from Ireland, “Mother is putting my new secondhand clothes in order” (*P* 275). This entry, in the triviality of its content and of its tone, stands in sharp contrast to the resolution that Stephen so unambiguously presents to Cranly: “I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, be it my home, my fatherland or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use – silence, exile, and cunning” (268-269). Incidentally, these two contrasting sentences also bring to the fore the oppositions between the figures of the mother and of the father⁴⁶, a recurring Joycean motif that, with regard to Stephen, stands out from the very first page of *Portrait*.

In his thorough analysis of the role that the paternal figure has for Stephen, Edmund Epstein maintains that by the end of “Circe” in *Ulysses*, Stephen has finally managed to free himself from the yoke of the numerous symbolic father figures (cf. Epstein 4) and “throws open the door of creation to himself” (157). Melissa Edmundson writes that, in the same Ulyssean episode, Stephen also “free[s] himself from [...] his mother’s influence over him” (245), thereby “renew[ing] his artistic potential” (ibid.). Nevertheless, Edmundson’s assumption seems to be contradicted in “Ithaca,” the episode that follows “Circe,” and the last in which Stephen appears in the novel. On leaving Bloom’s home, he hears the bells of St. George’s church, which remind him of the prayers recited at his mother’s deathbed (cf. *U* 17.1230-1231). Interestingly, it should be noted, as Edmundson does, that the death of Stephen’s mother and the ensuing sense of guilt he seems to feel, are repeatedly evoked by images of drowning. Furthermore, it is significant that Stephen’s mind goes back to the death of his mother precisely when we see him for the last time in the novel, particularly because one of the first memories that come into Stephen’s mind when we first meet him at the beginning of *Ulysses* is his refusal, at his mother’s deathbed, to kneel down, thus denying her her last wish. His mother’s death, as already pointed out, determines Stephen’s return to Dublin after having voluntarily left his “fatherland,” where he would not have been able to mature as an artist.

46 A more detailed analysis of this aspect will be carried out in chapter five.

In order to understand the kind of development that Stephen undergoes, it is necessary to consider in particular his transformation from *Portrait* to *Ulysses*, and, more precisely, the fourth and fifth chapters of *Portrait* and the first three chapters of *Ulysses*. Several meaningful moments, which are also directly connected to the maritime environment, occur in these chapters, where what I have defined as the tidal pattern that characterises the style of both works, is also particularly distinct and meaningful. Among the episodes that mark the development/Bildung of the aspiring artist, the scene on Dollymount Strand in the fourth chapter of *Portrait* is one of the most important. Here Stephen resolves to “create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul” (*P* 184), and meets (or has a vision of) the bird-girl, who embodies his idea of art and beauty. After having considered several possible sources for his inspiration – from an idealised image of Mercedes, to an ambivalent fascination for Emma, through a (presumptive) religious vocation –, Stephen seems to identify his ideal muse or projection of the self in the girl on Dollymount Strand. Indeed, the creature Stephen sees on the shore can be interpreted as a projection of his own artistic self. The girl appears to be “like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird” (185); she is described as a hybrid winged creature, thereby also symbolically translating Stephen’s particular condition. The fact that she has the features of a bird suggests that the girl is able to take flight, and as we know, Stephen will declare himself ready to “fly by [the] nets” of “nationality, language, religion” (220). Furthermore, in her half-human, half-animal form, she reflects Stephen’s own hybridity, as he has become neither a man nor an artist yet. On the one hand, the scene on Dollymount Strand describes the decisive moment in which Stephen acknowledges his artistic talent and ambition, translating them into the image of the girl. On the other hand, though, throughout the book there are several moments in which Stephen equally seems to recognise the path he has to take. These passages are often characterised by similar traits, especially in terms of style. Indeed, the scene in the fourth chapter is anticipated in several earlier instances. In some ways, then, these moments of revelation are stylistically codified: there are (almost word-perfect) repetitions of specific words and phrases to describe these decisive moments throughout the novel. This aspect may infer that these events have all been of equal importance for Stephen; yet these repetitions also suggest that his growth and progressive development are indeed characterised by an uneven (and somehow repetitive) course. It is worthwhile beginning by considering the passages that describe the appearance of the bird-girl.

On Dollymount Strand, Stephen is alone, “unheeded, happy and near to the wild heart of life. He [is] alone and young and wilful and wildhearted” (185). The brief, yet intense interaction between him and the girl is thus presented:

She was alone and still, gazing out to sea; and when she felt his presence and the worship of his eyes her eyes turned to him in quiet sufferance of his gaze, without shame or wantonness. Long, long she suffered his gaze and then quietly withdrew her eyes from his and bent them towards the stream, gently stirring the water with her foot hither and thither. The first faint noise of gently moving water broke the silence, low and faint and whispering, faint as the bells of sleep; hither and thither, hither and thither; and a faint flame trembled on her cheek.
—Heavenly God! cried Stephen's soul, in an outburst of profane joy. (186)

What certainly stands out in the description of this scene is the loneliness of the two figures, as well as the silence that surrounds them, two details to which I will return later. Moreover, in this paragraph, as in other moments of particular intensity in *Portrait*, the syntax is considerably simplified and marked by the repetition of sentences, phrases (e.g. “hither and thither”), and single words (e.g. “eyes,” “gaze,” “faint”). All these features are even more evident and meaningful in the famous passage that follows:

He turned away from her suddenly and set off across the strand. His cheeks were aflame; his body was aglow; his limbs were trembling. On and on and on and on he strode, far out over the sands, singing wildly to the sea, crying to greet the advent of the life that had cried to him.

Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. On and on and on and on! (186)

This ecstatic moment at the end of the fourth chapter is closely connected to Stephen's final decision to leave Ireland, clearly expressed in the fifth chapter. It is therefore useful to consider at least two of the diary entries that conclude the novel.

The first is particularly important because of its clear maritime reference (and, possibly, setting), coinciding with the moment in which Stephen seems ready to undertake his journey:

16 April: Away! Away!

The spell of arms and voices: the white arms of roads, their promise of close embraces and the black arms of tall ships that stand against the moon, their tale of distant nations. They are held out to say: We are alone. Come. And the voices say with them: We are your kinsmen. And the air is thick with their company as they call to me, their kinsman, making ready to go, shaking the wings of their exultant and terrible youth. (275)

The fact that Stephen is able to see ship masts (“the black arms of tall ships”) suggests that he is close to the coast or, in any case, facing the sea, thereby evoking the setting of the scene in chapter four. The second of the diary entries I would like to refer to, which is also the second last in the novel, is Stephen's solemn declaration:

26 April: [...]

Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge

in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race. (275-276)

This can be seen as the climactic moment, both in the development of Stephen and in the narrative. And yet, the climax corresponds, almost literally, to a passage that appears early in the fourth chapter. When Stephen is asked by the director of Belvedere College whether he would consider becoming a priest, “[i]n vague sacrificial or sacramental acts alone his will seemed drawn *to go forth to encounter reality*” (172; emphasis added). In this moment, Stephen arguably thinks a religious vocation as one possible path for him. Nevertheless, it seems that what attracts him to priesthood is merely the privilege that such a position would give him; indeed, as the director assures, “[n]o king or emperor on this earth has the power of the priest of God” (171). Still, in reaction to this idea “[a] flame began to flutter [...] on Stephen’s cheek” (ibid.); as it did when he met the girl on Dollymount Strand: “a faint flame trembled on her cheek” (186), and “[h]is cheeks were aflame” (ibid.).

Moreover, some elements of these pivotal scenes from chapters four and five are also to be found in a significant passage in the second chapter. Here a young Stephen, who seeks in the streets of Dublin the idealised image of ‘his’ Mercedes, “want[s] to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image that his souls so constantly beheld” (65). The subtle reference to his ultimate decision to “encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience” (253) is clear; furthermore, it is surely revealing to observe how Stephen imagines this meeting:

a premonition which led him on told him that this image would, without any overt act of his, encounter him. [...] They would be alone, surrounded by darkness and silence: and in that moment of supreme tenderness he would be transfigured. He would fade into something impalpable under her eyes and then in a moment, he would be transfigured. Weakness and timidity and inexperience would fall from him in that magic moment. (67)

Stephen already foresees that this special encounter will take place when he is lonely (“They would be alone, surrounded by darkness and silence”) and that, almost without his agency, the “image” he seeks will be revealed to him. Furthermore, “the moment of supreme tenderness” in which, as Stephen imagines, “he would be transfigured” (67), comes true in chapter four when the image of the bird-girl “passe[s] into his soul forever” (186). Finally, once more it should be noted how, as in the passages considered above, the prose here becomes simpler and more repetitive; the recurrence of the phrase “in that moment,” for example, surely stands out, thereby also preparing the reader’s attention for the very instant, in the fourth chapter, in which the meeting will eventually result as decisive for Stephen.

Another pivotal episode in the novel is Stephen’s first encounter with Emma, who, as mentioned, becomes the object of his ambivalent devotion, thereby also replacing the “unsubstantial

image” of Mercedes. The famous scene on the tram is important in many respects: first of all, Stephen’s excitement is translated by an ‘aquatic’ simile: “[h]is heart danced upon her movements like a cork upon a tide”⁴⁷ (72). More importantly, though, in the next few lines there is another reference to the first of the above mentioned diary entries from chapter five:

He heard what her eyes said to him from beneath their cowl and knew that in some dim past, whether in life or reverie, he had heard their tale before. [...] Yet a voice within him spoke above the noise of his dancing heart, asking him would he take her gift to which he had only to stretch out his hand. (ibid.)

Significantly, what Stephen reads in Emma’s eyes is defined as a “tale,” a word that returns in the conclusion of the novel as the “tale of distant nations” (275) offered to Stephen by the “tall ships” (ibid.), to whose appeal he seems to respond. Their “black arms” (ibid.) are “held out” (ibid.) to welcome him; if he wanted to take their “gift” (72) he would only have to “stretch out his hand” (ibid.), as the voice within him suggests, at the end of the quoted passage from chapter two. Interestingly, this passage is also echoed in the scene already commented on in which Stephen meets the director of Belvedere: “He listened in reverent silence now to the priest’s appeal and through the words he heard even more distinctly a voice bidding him approach, offering him secret knowledge and secret power” (172). This further confirms that the narrative peak that is apparently reached at the end of the novel is nothing but one of the climactic points that, as Kenner infers (cf. 121), will be inexorably followed by an anti-climactic fall.

The opening of *Ulysses* is undoubtedly among the most important of these anti-climactic falls, which clearly reveals the centripetal movement that characterises Stephen’s development. Indeed, notwithstanding his determination to leave his country, at the beginning of *Ulysses* we find him “displeased and sleepy” (1.13) on top of the Martello Tower overlooking Sandycove Strand, and therefore back in Dublin, after what we will learn to have been a short stay in Paris. Two brief references to the journey he has undertaken (necessarily by ship) can be found in the novel; in “Proteus,” Stephen remembers his arrival at “the slimy pier at Newhaven” (3. 195-6) on his way back to Ireland, with a “[r]ich booty [...]”; *Le Tutu*, five tattered numbers of *Pantalon Blanc et Culotte Rouge*; a blue French telegram, curiosity to show: —Nother [*sic.*] dying come home father” (3.196-9). The second mention, in “Scylla and Charybdis,” clearly linked to the end of *Portrait*, openly refers to the Greek myth of Daedalus and Icarus: “Fabulous artificer. The hawklike man. You flew. Whereto? Newhaven-Dieppe, steerage passenger. Paris and back. Lapwing. Icarus. *Pater, ait.* Seabedabbled, fallen, weltering. Lapwing you are. Lapwing be” (9.952-4). The numerous

47 This also recalls another simile from a few pages earlier, this time in the port of Dublin: “[Stephen] passed unchallenged among the docks and along the quays wondering at the multitude of corks that lay bobbing on the surface of the water in a thick yellow scum[.]” (P 69)

references to death and to immobility in relation to Stephen that often recur in the “Telemachiad” episodes, suggest both his unsuccessful attempt at exile and his equally unsuccessful career as a poet. Moreover, these images are, in turn, often also linked to the maritime environment, as seen with reference to the passage of the mailboat.

Among the opening chapters of *Ulysses*, “Proteus” is particularly important for an understanding of Stephen’s development (and his failures). Set entirely on the seashore, it also serves as a fitting counterpart to the vision of the bird-girl in the fourth chapter of *Portrait*; moreover, in “Proteus” too, while walking and musing on Sandymount Strand, Stephen experiences a sort of vision that inspires him to write a few verses. Ironically, though, at first, he is unable to find a piece of paper to write on (cf. *U* 3.404-407); not a new situation for the would-be poet who, already in *Portrait*, when he is about to compose his villanelle, resolves to jot it down on a packet of cigarettes (cf. *P* 237) as he cannot find “paper and pencil [...] on the table” (ibid.). Earlier in the novel, when he writes his first poem to “E — C —” (73), his verses do not describe what he meant to express⁴⁸. Significantly, after having finished his composition, Stephen “went to his mother’s bedroom and gazed at his face for a long time in the mirror of her dressingtable” (ibid.); quite literally, this act can be read as the desire for, or the necessity of, self-reflection, and it is meaningful that it is so closely linked to (or indeed interdependent with) his failed composition. If, on this occasion Stephen looks for an image of himself in the mirror, in the fourth chapter he seems to find this reflection in the surface of the water⁴⁹. Stephen also often thinks about the inefficacy of his verses and/or the impossibility for them to be understood by a potential reader. In *Portrait*, he considers sending his villanelle to Emma, who inspired it: “If he sent her the verses? They would be read out at breakfast amid the tapping of eggshells. Folly indeed!” (241). Similarly, in “Proteus,” he wonders: “Who ever anywhere will read these written words?” (*U* 3. 404-405).

Nevertheless, it is worth looking at the verses Stephen composes because, although they only appear, in the “Aeolus” episode when Stephen thinks about them (cf. 7.522-525), in “Proteus” we can follow part of his creative process. To begin with, the vision Stephen has on Sandycove involves a vampire, the protagonist of his poem: “He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, *his bat sails bloodying the sea*, mouth to her mouth’s kiss” (3.397-398; emphasis added). Like the bird-girl in *Portrait*, the vampire is another hybrid (winged) creature, and in this case it is undoubtedly a fruit of Stephen’s creation, which is significantly seen with bloody sails hovering over the sea.

48 Here he also remembers (probably) his very first failed attempt to write, after the Christmas-dinner discussions. On that occasion he wanted to dedicate a poem to Parnell, “[b]ut his brain had then refused to grapple with the theme” (*P* 73).

49 The interpretation of the bird-girl as a transposition of Stephen himself is thus further reinforced.

The correlation between the sails and the bat wings of the vampire is interestingly reminiscent of a detail that appears in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), a novel that, with all probabilities, Joyce had read, and that might have counted as one of the sources of inspiration for the allusions to vampires in *Ulysses*⁵⁰. In the sixth chapter of Stoker's novel, the cargo ship aboard of which Count Dracula travels to England approaches the harbour of Whitby "with all sails set" (Stoker 73); an image that eloquently evokes that of the vampire's wings. Moreover, the arrival of this "strange ship [...] knocking about in the queerest way" (72), is announced by "[o]ne of the greatest and suddenest storms on record" (72), as reported in the "cutting from 'The Dailytelegraph', 8 August" (ibid.), which Mina Murray inserts in her journal. These two details indeed seem to be echoed in the first two lines of Stephen's poem: "On swift sails flaming / From storm and south" (*U* 7.522-523). Moreover, it should be noted that his poem is not only evoked in his memory in the "Aeolus" episode, but it probably also reappears in "Nausicaa,"⁵¹ the only other episode in the novel that is entirely set on the same Sandycove beach where Stephen scribbled down those few lines in "Proteus." Significantly, a bat flutters throughout the "Nausicaa" episode, thus subtly linking back to the vampire of Stephen's poem (cf. also Terrinoni *Occult* 145), but also recalling and emphasising, once more, Stephen's hybridity.

In addition to this, the numerous elements that clearly connect "Proteus" (and, in part, "Nausicaa") with the Dollymount scene in the fourth chapter of *Portrait* emphasise the interrelatedness between, on the one hand, Stephen's queer and liminal condition, and on the other hand the liminality of the shore, on which all these scenes are set. As Turner observes in the already mentioned essay "Betwixt and Between," liminal individuals

are at once no longer classified and not yet classified. In so far as they are no longer classified, the symbols that represent them are, in many societies, drawn from the biology of death, decomposition, catabolism, and other physical processes that have a negative tinge, such as menstruation (frequently regarded as the absence or loss of a fetus). (96)

These considerations confirm the liminality that characterises Stephen's condition both in *Portrait* and in *Ulysses*; yet they are also decisive in giving a further important connotation to the recurring images of death, non-birth⁵², or deferred re-birth, especially when connected to Stephen. Significant

50 While Enrico Terrinoni observes that it is "rather hard to find evidence that Joyce had read *Dracula*" (*Occult* 145), Valente suggests that he was familiar with it (cf. *Quare* 74). Indeed, the passing references to vampires throughout *Ulysses* appear to confirm Valente's assumption (cf. also Terrinoni 145-147).

51 "Mr Bloom stooped and turned over a piece of paper in the strand. He brought it near his eyes and peered. Letter? No. Can't read" (*U* 13.1246-1247).

52 In fluid anti-developmental narratives, references to miscarriages and to birth as a particularly painful experience, which could be fatal for both the mother and the baby, are relatively common. Examples can be found, for instance, in Woolf's *The Voyage Out* (cf. 118) and Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups*, which will be examined in the next chapter.

in this sense is a moment during the trip to Cork, in the second chapter of *Portrait*, in which Stephen sees the word “Foetus” carved on a desk in the college his father had attended as a student. By means of this word, the evocative image of the embryo is connected to Stephen the boy, not yet re-born as a man. This sheds light on Stephen’s relationship with language and its acquisition, on the links between meanings and senses, and on the (self-)representation of Stephen as an in-between individual⁵³.

There are a few more details in “Proteus” that are directly related to the marine dimension and are relevant to the characterisation of Stephen. The metaphoric representation of the vampire’s wings as “sails bloodying the sea” (*U* 3.397-398; emphasis added), apart from their (possible) link to Stoker’s *Dracula*, also precedes the approaching of the threemaster at the end of “Proteus” (cf. 3.503-505)⁵⁴. Whenever Stephen or another character in *Ulysses*, sees a ship or a boat, these always appear at a distance and, as Brannigan notes, “it is a routine facet of the novel that looking out at the bay invokes the notion of the sea as a border” (86); and I would add, it enhances the function of the shore as a liminal space. The appearance of the vessel in “Proteus” is also anticipated towards the middle of the episode by the sight of the “gunwale of a boat, sunk in sand” (3.287) lying beside the “carcass of a dog” (3.286), both of which also clearly emphasise the overall atmosphere of death and immobility throughout the “Telemachiad” episodes.

This atmosphere is recalled in the “Eumaeus” episode, when the maritime motif reappears, linking together Stephen, the mysterious threemaster, and the sailor D. B. Murphy, who has just reached the port of Dublin aboard that ship (cf. *U* 16.450-451). In Joyce’s works, as I outlined earlier, mariners are generally represented in a degraded manner, and in “Eumaeus” the presence of the sailor contributes to an altogether dire image of shipboard life. Murphy is an old seafarer who has grown weary of the life at sea, and who, incidentally, works on a sail ship, a type of vessel that was quickly becoming obsolete. Murphy’s yarns do not always seem credible to his listeners, including Bloom, who links the dubious credibility of Murphy’s tales to his physical appearance (“Our mutual friend’s stories are like himself [...]. Do you think they are genuine? He could spin those yarns for hours on end all night long and lie like old boots. Look at him”⁵⁵ [16.822-823]). In doing so, Bloom indirectly calls the body of the mariner into question. According to Cohen, the body of mariners, closely connected to the spatial and cultural dimension of the ship, “provides one

53 In a famous 1920 letter to his friend Frank Budgen, Joyce explains that the stylistic “progression” that characterises “Oxen of the Sun” harks back to “the natural stages of development in the embryo and the periods of faunal evolution in general. [...] Bloom is the spermatozoon, the hospital the womb, the nurse the ovum, Stephen the embryo. How’s that for high?” (qt. Ellmann 475).

54 The depiction of sails as wings also recurs in the above-mentioned diary entry from the fifth chapter of *Portrait*, where the “tall ships” seen by Stephen are “shaking the wings of their exultant and terrible youth” (*P* 252).

55 Bloom’s remark could also be read as a testimony of the decline that the literary genre of the sea-adventure tales was facing in those decades.

of the most extended opportunities for the narrative dramatization of human labor” (“Chronotopes” 665). Yet, here, rather than focussing on the body’s “power” or its “beauty” (ibid.), it is its exposure to the effects of time and of the life at sea that is openly revealed. The vulnerability of Murphy’s old body becomes the object of attention when, flaunting the tattoo on his “manly chest” (*U* 16.690), the sailor is forced to stretch his wrinkled skin, otherwise the image would be indistinguishable. Another sign of his age are the “pair of greenish goggles”⁵⁶ (16.1672) he has to wear to read. Almost as a matter of course, the weakness of a vulnerable body links to the topics of the conversations that follow the ‘tattoo episode’, which centre upon shipwrecks, deaths at sea, and the decline of Irish shipping.

The concurrence of what may, at least at first, appear to be minor details, serve to reaffirm the non-linearity, or indeed fluidity, of Stephen’s evolution. Both in *Portrait* and in *Ulysses*, this is denoted by the recurring reference to a peculiar aquatic and maritime imagery, a carefully and “complexly layered” (Riquelme 117) language, as well as the recurrence of determinate narrative techniques. The distinctive use of language is certainly of central importance for the characterisation of Stephen and, more general, in the definition of fluid anti-developmental narratives on several levels.

First of all, the experimental and revolutionary use of language that characterises literary Modernism (in turn influenced by the pioneering work of earlier authors like Conrad or Flaubert), opens to a reflection on the arbitrariness of meanings and signifiers. As seen throughout this chapter, this approach to language and the use of new narrative tools are also the expression of a historical moment of drastic change and of an epoch of quick and substantial transformations, the effects of which are reflected both in the overcoming of traditional narrative canons and in the emergence of an anti-hero or a *failing* hero, eloquently embodied in the eternally adolescent character. Lastly, and more specifically, there is an important correspondence between the formal fluidity, determined by the use of innovative narrative techniques, and the crucial presence of water in the texts examined, in turn linked to the relationship between this element and the fluid identity of the main characters.

Three main elements determined the transformation in the representation of youth in the Bildungsroman from the mid nineteenth century through to the modernist period: the evolution of sea narratives into modernist sea narratives, a significant transformation of the chronotopes of the sea and of their narrative function, and the re-invention of the spaces of the sea and of the shoreline.

56 Curiously enough, the “confused notion” (*D* 15) that the young protagonist of “An Encounter” had with regard to sailors having green eyes, is again transmuted in a degraded manner here; this old mariner has little to do with the ‘prototypical’ figure of an heroic seafarer (just as the sordid “queer old josser” (*D* 18) in “An Encounter,” notwithstanding his green eyes).

The fluid anti-developmental narratives examined above are defined within the convergence of these transformations. In the next chapter, I provide an account of the important evolutions that took place from the end of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the twentieth century, paying particular attention to the crucial effect these transformations had on the medium of cinema, both at the time, and in the decades that followed.

Cinema was then emerging and affirming itself as a distinctive medium with its own specific language and narrative techniques. While considering the developments of the cinematic language during the 1920s, contemporaneously (and interdependently) with literary Modernism, I will place my focus on the decades immediately following the Second World War, specifically on the cinema of the French *nouvelle vague*. In formally reflecting on language and style in cinema, I aim to demonstrate how a fluid style developed, which is closely related to the representation and characterisation of eternally adolescent, liminal characters in literature.

4. Fluid Development through Literature and Cinema

Focussing on cinematic texts, here I further develop the formal and linguistic analysis introduced in the previous chapter. The focal point of my analysis will be the cinema of the decades following the Second World War, particularly the cinema of the French *nouvelle vague*, which started in the late 1950s. Nevertheless, I will also concentrate on the most significant developments that the language of cinema underwent in the first decades of the twentieth century, as they are necessary to understand the mutual influences between the cinematic production of the 1920s and literary Modernism. The cinema of the *nouvelle vague*, in turn, later developed specific stylistic and thematic features that owe much to the modernist aesthetic, and I aim to highlight these important commonalities.

As a starting point, it may be useful to consider some elements that, already at a superficial level, testify for a correlation between literary Modernism and the French New-Wave cinema. First of all, in both cases the authors (writers as well as film directors) were self-consciously aware of the originality of their style and approach to their medium. More importantly, many *nouvelle-vague* filmmakers have themselves stated that they were influenced by literary Modernism.

In particular, Jean-Luc Godard, one of the initiators of the movement, has openly acknowledged the importance of the work of James Joyce in his production. A direct reference to Joyce occurs in Godard's film *Pierrot le fou* (1965), when the male protagonist, an aspiring novelist, announces (for some reason, mocking the way of speaking of the actor Michel Simon): "I've found an idea for a novel. No longer to write about people's lives, but only about life, life itself. What goes between people, space, sounds, and colours. That would be something worth while. Joyce tried, but one must be able, ought to be able, to do better" (36':39"-37':12"). Although this is only a passing mention, it is significant to find Joyce's name in a film in which literary references abound, and in which the motif of the escape towards the sea (which, by the sea, also ends tragically) is prominent. The influence of the Irish modernist on Godard's cinema has also been object of essays, interviews, and articles. In a 1966 conversation with the director, film critic Jonathan Rosenbaum analyses and discusses the correspondences between Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and Godard's eight-part project on the evolution of the concept of cinema *Histoire(s) du cinéma* (1988 – 1998)⁵⁷. Just as Joyce's last work "figuratively situates itself at some theoretical stage after

57 A position also recalled by Colin MacCabe in his study *Godard: A Portrait of the Artist at Seventy* (2003; cf. 315). Rosenbaum's interview, expanded with the results of a roundtable on Godard's *Histoire(s)* held in Locarno in 1995, was first published in 1997 in the French film journal *Trafic* under the title *Trailer for Godard's Histoire(s) du cinéma*. This version of the interview is also available on Rosenbaum's website jonathanrosenbaum.net.

the end of the English language as we know it” (Rosenbaum), so Godard’s *Histoire(s)* “projects itself into the future in order to ask, ‘What was cinema?’” (ibid.). As far as other contributions are concerned, in an essay eloquently entitled “Joyce and Cinema” (1978), Ruth Perlmutter demonstrates that some characterising elements of Joyce’s approach to language are actualised in the films of Godard. A more recent contribution is the essay by Louis Armand entitled “JJ/JLG,” which appeared in the 2010 edited collection *Roll Away the Reel World: James Joyce and Cinema*, and which focusses on the influences that Joyce had both on Godard and on Sergei Eisenstein.

In the present study, however, I consider the hitherto less explored links between Joyce and Truffaut, another central figure of the French New Wave. Unlike Godard, Truffaut never openly expressed a particular admiration for the work of the Irish modernist, and indeed, there are apparently few *direct* points of contact between the two. Nevertheless, Joyce and Truffaut share important commonalities in the representation of young characters, which are of fundamental relevance to the aims of my investigation. In particular, the character of Stephen Dedalus presents many similarities with that of Antoine Doinel⁵⁸, not least in their attitude towards water, and in the characterising fluidity of their psychological, emotional, and intellectual evolution, as I will point out in this chapter, and develop in detail in the next. Before focussing on these two fictional figures, though, I shall like to point out here some of the *indirect* links between Joyce and Truffaut that interestingly interlace their lives and works, through literature and cinema.

As for the majority of the *nouvelle-vague* filmmakers, literature counts as one of Truffaut’s great passions holding a privileged position in the creative process, both as a source of inspiration and as a point of reference. Indeed, in Truffaut’s films, not only do books and/or literary characters often play a major narrative role (as shall be seen in section 4.3.), but his filmography also counts several adaptations of novels. One of these is *Jules et Jim* (1962), based on the eponymous 1953 novel by Parisian novelist Henri-Pierre Roché, an author certainly known to Joyce, as he was one of his acquaintances in Paris in the 1920s (cf. Stam 15). Another writer that both Joyce and Truffaut certainly read is Anatole France. If Truffaut almost literally transposed a scene from France’s novel *Le livre de mon ami* (1885) in his film *Baisers volés*, reading France also inspired Joyce for the composition of “The Dead,” as Richard Ellmann informs (cf. *James Joyce* 252). Joyce’s last short story in *Dubliners*, in turn, has an important influence on Italian Noerealist film director Roberto Rossellini, who offers a (more or less explicit) rereading of “The Dead” in his film *Viaggio in Italia*

58 Antoine is the protagonist of *Les quatre cents coups*, the first of a series of five films by Truffaut, which are known as *Les aventures d’Antoine Doinel*, and are centred on the same character, who shares several biographical traits with Truffaut, and is always played by the actor Jean-Pierre L  aud. The films in this cycle will be the object of an extensive analysis at the end of this and in the following chapter. Apart from *Les quatre cents coups*, the other episodes that compose the cycle are the short *Antoine et Colette*, *Baisers vol  s*, *Domicile conjugal*, and *L’amour en fuite*.

(*Voyage to Italy*, 1954) (cf. Grønstad; Kevin Barry). It is likely that Truffaut came in contact with Joyce's text, or at least with Rossellini's idea behind it, as *Viaggio in Italia* played a crucial role in Truffaut's cinematic career. Indeed, after greeting Rossellini's masterpiece with great enthusiasm, Truffaut was invited to work as his assistant, a position he held for three years before his own debut as a film director (cf. Truffaut, *Films* 273) with *Les quatre cents coups* (1959), which is also generally considered as the first *nouvelle-vague* film.

Before considering the cinematic production, and cultural phenomenon, of the *nouvelle vague* in detail, though, it is necessary to give an account of the close relationship between literary and cinematic production in the 1920s, when both Modernism and early cinema were flourishing. Subsequently, in the following sections, I will outline an analysis of the structure of the language of cinema (4.1.), concentrating on the most important developments that took place after the second World War (4.2.), paying special attention to the birth and affirmation of the *nouvelle vague*, and finally, focussing on the figure of Antoine Doinel (4.3.).

Cinema and Modernism / Cinema and Modernity

The special affinity shared by early cinema and literary Modernism is largely based on their common focus on the (narrative) potentialities of the visual. Joseph Conrad, himself a precursor of Modernism, famously advocates the centrality of the sense of sight in the "Preface" to his novel *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897): "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel – it is, before all, to make you *see*. That – and no more, and it is everything" (Conrad, "Preface" 460). This newly discovered centrality of visual perception is to be understood within a broader context of major transformations that took place during the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, and that reached a climax with Modernism. As Laura Marcus observes, "Modernity created a new perceptual field, and cinema [...] a new form of literacy" (Marcus "Literature" 336). In his study *The Cinema and the Origins of Literary Modernism* (2012), Andrew Shail notes that the mutual influences of Modernism and cinema were triggered by "changes in the everyday mental landscape of the whole populations, changes in such basic conceptions as the substance of thought, the function of the senses, the nature of time, the dividing line between consciousness and matter and the purpose of language" (1). Such transformations exerted a "pressure [...] on the underlying and shared machinery that produces literary works" (ibid.), which, in turn, had important effects on the other "visual forms" (ibid.) that were developing in the same decades.

Other artistic movements, which flourished before the advent of cinema or parallel to it, showed a similar inclination towards the narrative potential of the visual. Among the most influential precursors, it is necessary to remember Impressionism, which originated in France in the 1870s, and photography, which emerged especially during the second half of the nineteenth century. More precisely, photography and the first pioneering cinematographic experiments retrace the developments of Impressionist art and literature. All these means of representation aimed at capturing a fragment of reality, while at the same time successfully representing “the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent” (Baudelaire 13), which Charles Baudelaire famously identified as the definitive characters of *modernity*. Another common element among these artistic forms is the centrality of light, which is of fundamental importance in impressionist art (famous for the distinctive and greatly innovative technique of painting *en plein air*), photography, and cinema.

The art of ‘capturing’ and representing movement finds its origin in the “Impressionist language” that aims at “arrest[ing] fragments of time from the narrative’s unrolling” (Banfield 120), and reaches its full development with the invention of cinema, which constitutes one of the most significant expressions of modernity. The achievements in the field of photography in the 1870s and 1880s directly influenced cinema in the first decades of the twentieth century. Among these, the pioneering experiments of the English photographer Eadweard Muybridge⁵⁹ represent a good example. In his collection *Animal Locomotion: An Electro-Photographic Investigation of Consecutive Phases of Animal Movements* (1887), Muybridge reproduces series of sequential frames that describe specific movements performed by animals and by humans (for instance, a horse jumping over an obstacle, or a person descending stairs). In 1878, he introduced the zoetrope, also known as zoopraxiscope, a cylinder-shaped rotating machine that projects images in a very quick succession, which constitutes a prototype for early motion-picture devices such as the Kinetoscope.

As far as the relationship between cinema and literature is concerned, while cinema “exercised an extensive unconscious influence on modernist writing” (Shail 36), many modernists were also *consciously* attracted to the new, developing medium. Although some writers, such as Conrad, were rather scornful towards cinema (cf. *ibid.*), many others acknowledged its great expressive capacities. Joyce, in particular, saw it as more than a mere means of entertainment, and was genuinely curious about the potentialities it offered.

Indeed, recent studies have illustrated not only the interest of the author in the new medium, but also the cinematic qualities in his writing. Thomas Burkdale’s *Joycean Frames: Film and the*

59 On the influence of photography on Modernism, and on Joyce’s *Ulysses* in particular, cf. also: Louise E. J. Hornby.

Fiction of James Joyce (2001), is one of the first monographs on these topics⁶⁰. It aims to consider “both how this nascent art may have offered Joyce new techniques, as well as showing how it also provides us more ways to explicate his fiction” (16). In numerous essays, Keith Williams has investigated the particular influence of proto-cinematic devices, developed especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, on Joyce’s work. Indeed, apart from *Ulysses*, commonly considered the most cinematic of Joyce’s works, Williams also concentrates on the cinematic character of his early works, notably *Dubliners* and *Portrait*⁶¹ (by comparing it also with the earlier versions of the novel, such as the 1904 essay “A Portrait of the Artist,” to which I will return below). Scarlett Baron also focusses on these aspects in her essay “Flaubert, Joyce: Vision, Photography, Cinema” (2008), as well as in the first two chapters of her monograph ‘*Strandentwining Cable*’: *Joyce, Flaubert, and Intertextuality* (2012).

Equally worth mentioning is the research carried out by Marco Camerani, which centres on the influence of early cinema on Joyce’s production. More precisely, as suggested by the title of his monograph, *Joyce e il cinema delle origini: Circe (Joyce and Early Cinema: Circe, 2008)*, he provides a detailed account of the marked cinematic character of the fifteenth episode of *Ulysses*, “Circe” and, in a later essay, of the thirteenth episode, “Nausicaa” (cf. Camerani “Joyce and Early Cinema”), analysing them, among other things, along with some of the most popular, and experimental, editing techniques used in early cinema. It should therefore come as no surprise that both “Nausicaa” and “Circe” were partly composed in Trieste⁶², where Joyce and his family lived for over ten years. The Triestine period constitutes the first significant phase of his voluntary exile from Ireland, playing a crucial role in both his personal life and his production, as thoroughly demonstrated in John McCourt’s in-depth study *The Years of Bloom: Joyce in Trieste 1904 – 1920* (2000). Joyce first arrived in the then great cosmopolitan Adriatic port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1904, together with his girlfriend Nora Barnacle. In Trieste, he regularly attended film projections in the city’s numerous cinema halls (cf. Camerani *Joyce e il cinema delle origini* 12). Joyce was indeed so fascinated by cinema that in 1909 he decided to establish the first Irish cinematograph in Dublin, the Cinema “Volta,” a venture that would soon turn out to be a failure. Notwithstanding this, his awareness of cinematic editing techniques had a significant influence on his work and his aim at a cinematographic rendering of written language.

60 Two more recent monographs on the relationships between Joyce and cinema are Cleo Hanaway-Oakley’s *James Joyce and the Phenomenology of Film* (2017) and Philip Sicker’s *Ulysses, Film and Visual Culture* (2018).

61 See, e.g.: Williams, Keith. “Time and Motion Studies: Joycean Cinematicity in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.”

62 Frank Budgen provides a clear indication as far as the work on “Nausicaa” is concerned, noting that it was “[b]egun in Zürich, *Nausikaa* [sic.] was completed in Trieste” (220). Regarding the composition of “Circe,” Ronan Crowley, for instance, notes that Joyce “began the earliest draft [of “Circe”] known to be extant shortly before he took his family from Trieste in July 1920 [...], but most of the episode was composed in Paris” (347).

In this sense, Camerani presents interesting and useful considerations on Joyce's cinematographic prose. His analysis of the 'literary montage' that Joyce constructs around the protagonists of his works, notably Leopold Bloom, represents a valid methodological approach for a more extended analysis of Stephen Dedalus, allowing us to better understand the kind of development he undergoes. When comparing Stephen with Antoine Doinel in the next chapter, I will pose particular emphasis on Joyce's cinematographic employment of language, and on how this contributes to making Stephen stand out as a 'fluid anti-hero'.

Apart from Joyce, Woolf undoubtedly counts among those modernists for whom cinema exerted a strong influence. Her attitude towards cinema may not always have been completely positive, especially in her critical writings, yet much of her production can be said to have a cinematic character. As Laura Marcus comments in her study *The Tenth Muse* (2007),

[c]ritical as Woolf was of the filmed novel, it was undoubtedly the case that she found in cinematic devices a way of bridging time and space in her fiction, with the continuity of objects through time and across space becoming particularly important in her work, from *Jacob's Room* through to *The Years*. (120)

This ambivalent attitude toward film is expressed in Woolf's famous essay "The Cinema" (1926). On the one hand, she denounces the failure of a collaboration between cinema and literature: "The alliance is unnatural. Eye and brain are torn asunder ruthlessly as they try vainly to work in couples" (173). On the other hand, however, she recognises cinema's great potential to reveal the "residue of visual emotion not seized by artist or painter-poet" (175). Over thirty years later, in his overview on "The Evolution of Film Language" (1958), the French critic and theorist of cinema André Bazin echoes and confirms Woolf's view: "The film-maker is no longer simply the competitor of the painter or the playwright; he is at last the equal of the novelist" ("Evolution" 88). And indeed, as Marcus claims, Woolf's position on cinema "can be situated as an early contribution to the development of a realist film theory, whose chief exponents were Sigfried Kracauer and André Bazin and which explored film as the tracing and duplication of the world" (*The Tenth Muse* 113). Woolf's essay was published only one year before the publication of *To the Lighthouse*, a novel in which the influence of cinema is strongly felt (cf. *ibid.* 143), and a work that, as seen, is of great import for the present study.

However, earlier works by Woolf also demonstrate the particularly cinematic character of her writing. Take, for example, the short story "Solid Objects," which appears in the posthumously published collection *A Haunted House* (1944). Apart from its cinematic character, in this text the marine setting also plays a crucial role, particularly in the opening scene on the seashore. The "small black spot" (Woolf "Solid" 69) moving on the seashore, which appears at the very beginning

of the story, becomes gradually discernible by means of what could be defined as a literary zooming in, and culminates in a detailed close up of the “persons of two young men:” their “mouths, noses, chins, little moustaches, tweed caps, rough boots, shooting coats, and check stocking, [...] the smoke of their pipes [...] up into the air; nothing was so solid, so living, so hard, red, hirsute and virile as these two bodies for miles and miles of sea and sandhill” (70).

Already in its title, this story confirms the importance of “the continuity of objects through time and across space” in Woolf’s writings (Marcus *The Tenth Muse* 143). Nevertheless, this insistence on (and interest in) objects also anticipates Béla Balázs’ considerations on the close up⁶³. In his 1924 study *Visible Man*, the Hungarian film critic maintains that “[w]ith the close-up the new territory of this new art opens up. It bears the name: ‘The little things of life’. [...] [T]he magnifying glass of the cinematograph brings us closer to the individual cells of life, it allows us to feel the texture and substance of life in its concrete detail” (Balázs 38). The first ‘solid object’ that John, the protagonist in Woolf’s short story, finds on the shore is a green “lump of glass” that, although eroded by the water of the sea, appears “so hard, so concentrated, so definite an object compared with the vague sea and the hazy shore” (Woolf “Solid” 71). As Balázs further comments, in a film “the director guides our gaze with the aid of the close-ups and also follows up the long shot with shots showing the hidden corners in which the mute life of things retain their secret mood” (Balázs 38). In the same way, in Woolf’s story the opening long shot on the “vast semicircle of the beach” (“Solid” 69), is followed by a close-up that takes us precisely to one of those “hidden corners” Balázs refers to. As if burrowing “a secret channel to the sea” (“Solid” 70), John digs his hand deep into the sand and he finds the lump of glass.

The use of such an in-depth close-up at the beginning, together with the fact that this opening scene is set on an almost deserted sea-shore, are of course particularly significant for this research, and they are functional in both the development of the narrative and the characterisation of the protagonist. John concentrates particularly on those objects which are “thrown away, of no use to anybody, shapeless, discarded” (72), as the very ‘shapelessness’ of these objects is for John “cause for wonder and speculation in the differences of qualities and designs” (74) that surround him, in the city of London. John’s search becomes so obsessive that it leads him to neglect any other kind of commitment or activity, ultimately compromising his potential political career. Like the objects he collects, which no longer serve their original function, he does not pursue his own original purpose. The annulment of any finality, together with the indeterminacy of ‘shape’ that characterise both the solid objects and John himself, are also clearly relevant to my argument on the inherent change in shape that characterises the fluidity of the adolescent identities studied here.

63 As Marcus also observes, although in regard to the short story “Kew Gardens” (cf. *The Tenth Muse* 129).

A third important testimony of the close interrelatedness between literary Modernism and cinema is represented by the publication, between 1927 and 1933, of *Close Up*, “[t]he first periodical to approach films from any angle but the commonplace” (qt. Donal et al. 9). The “group of literary intellectuals” (ibid. vii) involved in its realisation was formed, among others, by Kenneth McPherson, editor-in-chief together with the novelist Bryher and the poet Hilda Doolittle (better known by her pseudonym H.D.), Dorothy Richardson and the Russian film director Sergei Eisenstein⁶⁴. The period in which *Close Up* was issued coincides with the advent of sound films, or talkies, an innovation that in many cases had not been welcomed. With the introduction of sound, many of the intellectuals and critics contributing to the journal saw “the decline and fall of the universal language promised by silent films” (ibid.). As André Bazin commented in his aforementioned article “The Evolution of Film Language:”

Many of the best directors were understandably, though not justifiably, sorry to witness the disappearance of this perfect world of images. They felt that the cinema, having taken a certain aesthetic direction, had become an art that was supremely suited to what was known as the ‘exquisite unnaturalness’ of silence. The realism of sound was bound to upset matters. (65)

Indeed, the common goal for which the contributors of *Close Up* strove, was “to assess at a crucial moment of transition the aesthetic possibilities opened up by cinema” (Donald et al. vii). The articles and essays published in the journal reflect an early critical tendency, which aimed at showing how the medium “transformed the very fabric of psychic, gendered and racialized experience” (7), and how it expresses such transformations through its great aesthetic potential.

As I have illustrated, the close interrelation between early cinema and modernist literature, constitutes a necessary starting point for the analysis carried out in this chapter. The brief overview of some of the main protagonists of this mutual exchange, though, served as a necessary passage to the theoretical overview that follows. This, in turn, is needed not only to understand the developments that interested cinema in the second Post-War decades, and how these are linked to the modernist aesthetic, but also to contextualise the primary cinematic texts I consider within a historical as well as critical framework.

4.1. The Poetry of Reality: Cinema as a Language

As a starting point for the theoretical reflections discussed here, I consider Pier Paolo Pasolini’s contributions on cinema. I deliberately leave aside his unique and, in many ways, ground-breaking

⁶⁴ The Russian director also wished to shoot a film adaptation of *Ulysses* and had informed Joyce about his project in a meeting with the writer in Paris in 1929 (cf. Burkdall 7).

work as a film director, as approaching it would go beyond the scope of the present research. Rather, I examine the articles and essays on film that he wrote and published between 1964 and 1971, and which were later collected in the volume *Empirismo eretico (Heretical Empiricism, 1972)*, along with other critical essays on language, semiotics and literature. I will also address Gilles Deleuze's positions on cinema, particularly those presented in the volumes *Cinema 1: L'image-mouvement (Cinema 1: The Movement-Image, 1983)* and *Cinema 2: L'image-temps (Cinema 2: The Time-Image, 1985)*, which in many instances have been developed directly from Pasolini's arguments. In these two detailed studies, Deleuze discusses numerous theoretical approaches, he introduces new conceptual tools for a critical analysis of film, and provides an overview of many of the principal directors and films that have played a significant role in the development of the seventh art. Two passages in Deleuze's analysis are particularly relevant for the present research, and will be considered below: first of all, in his thorough analysis of 1930s French cinema, he brings to the fore the preference for water and waterways that characterises the work of many directors of this early French school; secondly, in his account of the main developments of cinema after the Second World War, he particularly emphasises the role of Italian Neorealism and of the French *nouvelle vague*.

Pasolini also repeatedly refers to these two cinematic movements, attributing both, but especially the *nouvelle vague*, to a tendency towards the *cinema di poesia*, "cinema of poetry," as he famously defined it in an eponymous article, in 1965⁶⁵. Pasolini bases his argumentation regarding the cinema of poetry on the "special and concrete relationship between cinema and literature" (*HE* 175), introducing his analysis with the question: "is the technique of the free indirect discourse possible in cinema?" (*ibid.*). Together with interior monologue, free indirect speech counts among the most characteristic narrative techniques employed in modernist prose. According to Pasolini, just as the direct speech in literature corresponds to the point-of-view shot in cinema, the cinematic equivalent of the free indirect speech could be defined as the "free indirect point-of-view shot [*soggettiva libera indiretta*]" (*HE* 176). Moreover, not only does the Italian writer identify a correspondence between literary and cinematic narrative techniques, but he also conceives of cinema as a language itself.

This position echoes that of French critic and film director Alexandre Astruc. Together with Truffaut's article "A Certain Tendency in French Cinema" (1954), Astruc's seminal essay/manifesto "The Birth of a New Avant-Garde: *La Caméra-Stylo*," published in the journal *L'Écran français* in

65 Here he argues that "the entirety of the most recent film production, from Rossellini, elevated to the position of a latter-day Socrates, to the '*nouvelle vague*', to the production of these recent years [...] tends toward a 'cinema of poetry'" (*HE* 174-175). Incidentally, Pasolini writes most of his critical contributions on cinema in the years in which the French *nouvelle vague* is at its height.

1948, was amongst the most influential texts on what, in a few year time, become the *nouvelle vague*. His position is clear:

To come to the point: the cinema is quite simply becoming a means of expression, just as all the other arts have been before it, and in particular painting and the novel. After having been successively a fairground attraction, an amusement analogous to boulevard theatre, or a means of preserving the images of an era, it is gradually becoming a language. By language, I mean a form in which and by which artists can express their thoughts, however abstract they may be, or translate their obsessions exactly as they do in the contemporary essay or novel. That is why I would like to call this new age of cinema the age of *caméra-stylo* (camera-pen). [...] By it I mean that the cinema will gradually break free from the tyranny of what is visual, from the image for its own sake, from the immediate and concrete demands of the narrative, to become a means of writing just as flexible and subtle as written language. (“Birth” 31-32)

Astruc’s words demonstrate how, already in the late 1940s, cinema was developing new expressive tools by means of an autonomous and articulated language. In the following chapter, I will discuss how new narrative techniques contributed greatly to the definition of the (new) language of cinema, which no longer had to rely solely on the “tyranny of what is visual” (ibid.).

What constitutes the language of cinema, then? In Pasolini’s words, cinema is “*the ‘written’ manifestation of a natural, total language, which is the acting of reality*” (HE 205 – emphasis in the original). On the basis of this assumption, in a 1966 article entitled “The Written Language of Reality”⁶⁶, Pasolini sketches an essential grammar of cinema. Phonemes and morphemes, the basic elements of written languages, correspond in cinema to what Pasolini defines as “kinemes” and “im-signs:” the objects, forms and acts of reality constitute the “kinemes,” which in turn constitute the image, or “im-sign,” namely the smallest unit of meaning in the cinematic language. The main particularity of this language is that the meaning conveyed by the im-signs results from the union of subjective images, such as those of memories and of dreams, with images that describe the most factual elements of reality; two moments that in written languages are separated, explains Pasolini. Similarly, the free indirect point-of-view shot does not only have a linguistic (objective) function, but it also contributes to the stylistic (subjective) variation of the cinematic narrative language. As Deleuze comments, it allows one to go “beyond the subjective and the objective towards a pure Form which sets itself up as an autonomous vision of the content” (*Cinema 1* 74). In modernist prose, and in the work of Joyce in particular, free indirect speech has precisely this function.

By means of free indirect speech, modernist writers were able to not only adopt the language of the characters, but also to express their consciousness, thereby enriching the narration at a stylistic level, and achieving a more faithful rendering of reality. The language of the narrator is not

66 The article was a reaction to cinema critic Christian Metz’s essay “Le cinéma: langue ou langage?” (“Cinema: language or language system?”), which was published two years earlier in the journal *Communications*. Metz’s position is that cinema is a language system (*langage*), while Pasolini contends that it is indeed a language (*langue*).

detached from the character's speech, and it therefore necessarily changes according to the variety of languages, idioms, and socio-psychological conditions of the character. In a reality as diverse as the Dublin of Joyce, for instance, this richness reaches extremely composite levels⁶⁷. And indeed, as Pasolini comments, Joyce “é entrato non nel suo “io”, ma nell’ “io” di un altro uomo, diverso da lui psicologicamente e socialmente: non ha detto cioè né “egli fece, egli andò”, né “io feci, io andai”, ma qualcosa che sta in mezzo: la mimetizzazione, la ricostruzione in laboratorio della corrente di pensieri di un altro essere umano studiato nella sua personale realtà⁶⁸” (*Le belle bandiere* 62-63).

In cinema, such a variety is obtained, at a formal level, by “allowing the camera to be felt” (*HE* 183), as Pasolini maintains, or by means of a “camera-consciousness,” as Deleuze defines it. In other words, the viewer has to be made aware of the use of the camera by means of editing and other techniques, such as freeze frames, tracking shots, zoom in, zoom out, and sequence shots. As Deleuze comments, “the perception-image finds its status, as free indirect subjective, from the moment that it reflects its content in a camera-consciousness that has become autonomous (‘cinema of poetry’)” (*Cinema I* 74). In this regard, it is necessary to highlight once more that the employment of ‘visible editing’ is also widespread in most of the literary production of the twentieth century. As Camerani observes:

risulta evidente che buona parte della produzione letteraria novecentesca si è giovata di un “montaggio visibile”, in cui è ben percepibile lo stacco, sia a livello formale che di contenuto, nella giustapposizione di determinate parole, frasi, sequenze, immagini, stili, toni, registri, idioletti, punti di vista, effetti sonori, generi letterari, persino materiali tipografici. Il montaggio di questo tipo presenta dunque elementi (intesi nel senso più ampio) che, accostati in modo da produrre una relazione particolare che ne faccia risaltare l’eterogeneità, introducono nel racconto di una storia [...] corrispondenze e significati ulteriori (intellettuali, metaforici, metonimici ecc.) debordanti dal principio costitutivo prettamente narrativo[.] (“Montaggio” 193)⁶⁹

Therefore, what becomes visible through this kind of editing, is the relationship between form and content, which, as pointed out both by Pasolini and Deleuze, also characterises the cinematic image.

As a matter of fact, the development of editing techniques, or montage, made possible by the

67 A different image is provided by Woolf, whose characters’ social origins are more homogeneous than Joyce’s, and stem mainly from the middle class or upper-middle class.

68 My translation: Joyce “has not entered his “I,” but the “I” of another man, who differs from him psychologically and socially: namely, he has neither said “he did, he went,” nor “I did, I went,” but something in between: the mimetism, the reconstruction, in a laboratory, of the stream of thoughts of another human being, observed in his personal reality.”

69 My translation: “It is clear that a good part of the literary production of the twentieth century benefited from ‘visible editing’, where a gap, on the level of both form and content, is quite evident in the juxtaposition of determinate words, sentences, sequences, images, styles, tones, registers, idiolects, points of view, sound effects, literary genres, and even typographic materials. This kind of editing, therefore, presents elements (in the broadest sense) that, when brought near to one another in order to produce a particular kind of relation that highlights their heterogeneity, introduce in the telling of the story [...] correspondences and other meanings (intellectual, metaphorical, metonymical) that go beyond the strictly constitutive principle of narrative.”

introduction of mobile cameras and of new kind of lenses, particularly in the 1940s and 1950s, constitutes a pivotal moment in the history of cinema. These technological innovations greatly contributed to the expressive potentialities of the medium. A mobile camera allowed for the introduction of a variety of new shots (long shots, close-up shots, and so on), which determined the qualitative character of the image. As Deleuze points out with reference to the cinematic image,

[k]nowing whether the image is objective or subjective no longer matters: it is semi-subjective[.] [...] It no longer marks an oscillation between two poles, but an immobilization according to a higher aesthetic form. [...] The camera-consciousness then takes on an extremely formal determination. (*Cinema I* 76)

Such an understanding of the image in cinema, and the acknowledgement of its double (or, in Deleuze's words, "semi-subjective") function, are crucial to the kind of analysis I carry out. This is not limited to the recognition of specific formal aspects and their necessary role in plot development, but also aims to highlight the tension between form and content, and to consider how this tension, in turn, determines the characterisation of the protagonists.

In particular, as in the literary texts considered in the previous chapter, in the cinematic fluid anti-developmental narratives analysed in this chapter, water holds a pivotal position, both from a symbolic and a literal point of view, and its intrinsic fluidity is reflected in the narrative construction and development, as well as coinciding with the defining trait of the characters' particular condition. Modernists in general, and Joyce in particular, have notably emphasised the intrinsic fluidity of language, and this holds true for the language of cinema too. When the camera-consciousness assumes an "extremely formal determination" (*ibid.*), it becomes functional in characterising the status of what Deleuze defines as the "perception-image," one of the three varieties of the "image-movement."

At this point, an explanation of these specific terms is necessary. In his analysis, Deleuze conceives of the image as "the set of what appears" (*Cinema I* 58). An image corresponds to the idea or the conception of a thing, more than to the representation of this thing. In particular, cinematic images, unlike the signs of other artistic languages, enjoy a unique status precisely because they reproduce movement "as a function of any-instant-whatever that is, as a function of equidistant instants, selected so as to create an *impression of continuity*" (5; emphasis added). Opening his analysis on the cinema with a reflection on Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (1896), Deleuze notes how, in the very early days of cinema, Bergson was already aware that the medium "does not give us an image to which movement is added, it immediately gives us a movement-image" (2). "The essence of a thing," continues Deleuze, "never appears at the outset, but in the middle, in the course of its development, when its strength is assured" (3). These

considerations shed new light on the non-resolving liminal condition in which, adolescent characters, like Stephen Dedalus, find themselves.

Indeed, Joyce makes a similar point in his essay “A Portrait of the Artist⁷⁰” (1904), the first draft of what would become *Portrait* in 1916. The opening lines of the essay read:

The features of infancy are not commonly reproduced in the adolescent portrait for, so capricious are we, that we cannot or will not conceive the past in any other than its iron memorial aspect. Yet the past assuredly implies a fluid succession of presents, the development of an entity of which our actual present is a phase only. [...] [T]he portrait is not an identificative paper, but rather the curve of an emotion. (“A Portrait” 257-258)

The idea of a continuous “succession of presents” does indeed anticipate the “absolute identity of image and movement” that Deleuze considers characteristic of the cinematic image (*Cinema I* 59). This notion is also reminiscent of a tendency towards a cyclical (instead of linear) narrative development that is specifically modernist, and markedly Joycean, and which, as seen, focusses especially on adolescent characters.

A cyclical, or rather centripetal, movement indeed characterises both the evolution of Stephen Dedalus and of Antoine Doinel, thereby marking an important correspondence between the two figures. Stephen’s return to Dublin, after his vain attempt to leave Ireland and “encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience” (*P* 275), is the most vivid example. As far as the episodes of the “Doinel saga” are concerned, these follow Antoine’s life from his early teens until he is thirty-five, but by the second-last film of the series, *Domicile Conjugal*, the viewer begins to doubt whether Antoine is actually ‘growing up’, and the question still remains unclear in the last feature, *L’amour en fuite*. Although here Antoine has reached an adult age, throughout the film there are several elements that strengthen the doubts about his maturity. The recurrent use of flashbacks, especially in this last episode, is an excellent example of how the tension between form and content contribute to the plot development in a significant way. On the one hand, at a purely formal level, having filmed the same actor (and character) over a period of twenty years provided Truffaut with precious material that he could use in the later films of the saga. On the other hand, the decision to insert determinate flashbacks at a precise point in the film is of course also a strategic one, as in the

70 Interesting considerations on the cinematic character of this essay have also been advanced by Burkdall, who notes: “In Joyce’s first attempt at self-portraiture on January 7, 1904, he describes memory and the mind’s images of the past in almost cinematic terms. The opening paragraph of his essay “A Portrait of the Artist” contains some language suggestive of film” (*Joycean Frames* 2). Moreover, Williams observes that in the 1904 “Portrait” “Joyce hypothesized a means for figuring both physical *and* psychological motion to present the rhythm of a consciousness developing over time equivalent to the way rapid photography (feeding into cinema) dissected and recomposed living motion, using such experiments as both technical precedent and guiding metaphor for the project he would eventually realize in the 1914-15 novel” (“Time and Motion Studies” 94).

very last scene of *L'amour en fuite*, which also concludes the whole “Doinel cycle.”

The flashback that overlaps with the concluding frames of the film shows Antoine in a rotor ride at a funfair. These images, taken from *Les quatre cents coups*, bring the viewer's memory back to Antoine's youth, thereby quite clearly putting him side by side with the (supposedly) adult Antoine. The circular movement of the rotor, although it is evoked at the end of the series, does not actually suggest a sense of conclusion. Moreover, the very title of the film, both in the original French (*L'amour en fuite*) and in the English translation (*Love on the Run*), suggests the idea of a movement rather than that of being the concluding “Act” of Antoine's story. Asked to explain⁷¹ why he had decided to conclude the Doinel cycle, Truffaut pointed out: “the ideas I get about Antoine Doinel, and the way [Jean-Pierre] Léaud plays him, are closely tied to adolescence; there's something in the character that refuses to grow up” (Cardullo⁷²). Although Truffaut claims that *L'amour en fuite* is a “recapitulatory” (*T by T* 165) film, and, unlike the previous films of the series, its ending is “conclusive” (*ibid.*), I would argue that inserting this specific flashback at the end of the whole cycle in fact leaves space for questions, and should therefore equally be considered an open-end. As in the closing scene of *Les quatre cents coups*, where the feelings of loss and uncertainty communicated by the freeze-frame of Antoine's close-up are not in tune with the unambiguous word “*Fin*” that appears on the screen, so the most vivid impression at the end of *L'amour en fuite* is given by the evocative force of the circular movement of the rotor, which does not suggest the idea of a conclusion, or of something definitive. Indeed, commenting on the evolution of the character of Antoine Doinel, Truffaut maintains:

I felt that the cycle as a whole wasn't successful in making him evolve. The character started out somewhat autobiographical, but over time it drew further and further away from me. I never wanted to give him ambition, for example. I wonder if he's not too frozen in the end, like a cartoon character. [...] Perhaps the Doinel cycle is the story of a failure, even if each film on its own is enjoyable and a lot of fun to watch. (*ibid.*)

Some of the aspects of Antoine that Truffaut suggests here, are also significant for Stephen Dedalus: first of all, the semi-autobiographical elements that the character shares with his creator, and secondly the failure to achieve their ambitions, which both have, although probably to different extents.

Another important correspondence between Antoine and Stephen results from a juxtaposition of the spinning-rotor flashback in *L'amour en fuite* with a sequence from the “Circe”

71 In his last interview, conducted by the critic Bert Cardullo in 1984. Available online on the website of *The New Yorker* <http://www.newyorker.com/the-front-row/truffauts-last-interview>

72 Truffaut gives an analogous answer during an interview on the set of *L'amour en fuite* in 1970 (available on YouTube: https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=MIBwkRRq_qA).

episode of *Ulysses*. Although they take place in completely different circumstances, in both scenes, the insistence of circular movement is of central significance. In “Circe,” Stephen and Leopold Bloom venture into Bella Cohen’s brothel in “Nighttown,” the red-light district of Dublin. Stephen and his friend Lynch end up dancing feverishly with some girls: “*Stephen, arming Zoe with exaggerated grace, begins to waltz her around the room*” (U 15.4030), until “*The couples fall aside. Stephen whirls giddily. Room whirls back. Eyes closed he totters. Red rails fly spacewards. Stars all around suns turn roundabout. Bright midges dance on walls. He stops dead*” (15.4151-4154). In this very moment of dizziness, the ghost of Stephen’s mother, which has been haunting him throughout the whole day, surprises him once again. Of course, his mother’s death was the main reason Stephen returned back to Dublin after his brief stay/exile in Paris, mention of which is also made in “Circe” (cf. 15.3873). The appearance of her ghost is therefore a further reminder of his failed attempts both to leave Ireland and to become an affirmed poet, and in a cinematic episode such as “Circe,” this apparition can also be read as a flashback. Both for Stephen and for Antoine, the tension between a “frozen,” as Truffaut calls it (cf. Cardullo), and a dynamic image of the characters is fundamental. In the essay “A Portrait of the Artist,” Joyce suggests that a portrait cannot be conceived of as static, as if captured in the “iron, memorial aspect” (257) of time, but it has to be understood as the “curve of an emotion” (258), and therefore as intrinsically dynamic. Hence the impossibility, expressed in much of the modernist narrative, to depict a definitive image of a character that could be outlined within the frame of a portrait or, indeed, within the limits of a screen.

Attempts to immortalise a character, his/her emotional state, and frame his/her identity, also repeatedly occur, and often fail, in the narrations of Woolf. For instance, in *To the Lighthouse*, Lily Briscoe is only able to finish the portrait of Mrs Ramsay after her death, at the very end of the novel. Lily’s canvas, though, reproduces an abstract portrait, “with all its greens and blues, its lines running up and across, its attempts at something” (TL 194). Although Lily is convinced that her art will not be appreciated or understood (“It would be hung in the attics, she thought, it would be destroyed” [ibid.]), she is finally satisfied with the result. But it is only in the absence of Mrs Ramsay, her model, that Lily can finally capture the image of her she intended to represent. The abstract painting evokes sensations and emotions rather than faithfully rendering reality: in this sense, it is certainly interesting that Lily completes her portrait by drawing a line across the canvas (“With a sudden intensity, as if she saw it clear for a second, she drew a line there, in the centre. It was done; it was finished” [ibid.]). Indeed, this last stroke recalls the Joycean “curve of an emotion,” the only element that can be definitive of a portrait.

The example of Lily is yet another confirmation of how the modernist narrative form tends

toward the neutralisation of any attempt to provide clear-cut representations. Frames are posed around characters who are more and more difficult to grasp, and rather than concentrating on their physical appearance, the focus lies on the succession of their thoughts, emotions, sensations. It is therefore not a case that the aquatic dimension and the maritime environment are often chosen as reflections of this constant flow of images and thoughts. The open expanse of the sea, as well as the potentially infinite variability that is intrinsic both to water and to the liminality of the sea-shore, radically annul the possibility of providing an “identificative paper” (Joyce “A Portrait of the Artist” 258) of the characters considered.

The Multiple Functions of the Cinematic Image

The act of framing is of course also one of the basic components of cinema, and I consider it as the starting point to introduce the three variations of “image-movement” proposed by Deleuze: the perception-image, the affection-image, and the action-image. His analysis corresponds, in many points almost directly, to Pasolini’s sketch of a grammar for the cinematic language and, starting from the definition of the ‘frame’, the two authors present similar argumentations. In the article “The written language of reality” mentioned above, Pasolini describes the frame as a set of kinemes that have been selected from the “objects, forms and acts of reality that we perceive with our senses” (HE 201), namely, from the entirety of kinemes. These “brute piece[s] of reality” (202) are described by Deleuze as an “infinite set of images” that “constitutes a kind of plane [*plan*] of immanence” (Cinema 1 58). This plane “is the movement,” “[i]t is a bloc of space-time since the time of the movement which is at work within it is part of it every time” (ibid.). Within this plane, determinate images are isolated from others, thereby forming “tableaux” (61): “an operation which is exactly described as *framing*” (62).

For Pasolini, the creation of a frame corresponds to the second of the four modes that constitute the grammar of the cinematic language, namely the *modo della sostantivazione*, or mode of creating substantives (cf. HE 207). This is articulated in a first phase, in which the kinemes are selected (that is, the very act of framing), and a second phase in which the substantives that compose the frame are constituted. For Pasolini then, the frame consists of an accumulation of relative clauses, of “something *which* is” (HE 208). In Deleuzian terms, in the act of framing, “[t]he thing and the perception of the thing [...] are one and the same image,” but “the perception of the thing is the same *image related to another* special image which frames it, and only retains a partial action from it, and only reacts to it mediately” (Cinema 1 63, emphasis added). It may be useful at

this point to consider that, etymologically, ‘substantive’ refers to that ‘that stands beneath’; according to the definitions given by Pasolini and Deleuze, the frame is therefore a collection of substantives, which in turn determine the perception of the images (or kinemes) that are framed. The first variety of the image-movement defined by Deleuze is the *perception-image*⁷³.

The other varieties of the image-movement identified by Deleuze, the *affection-image* and the *action-image*, correspond to the third and the fourth mode of the Pasolinian cinematic grammar respectively. In the *modo della qualificazione*, or mode of qualification (cf. *HE* 209), the images/frames acquire qualities through the use of the camera, and they therefore coincide with the creation of adjectives. According to Deleuze, in the affection-image “the movement ceases to be that of translation in order to become movement of expression, that is to say quality” (*Cinema 1* 66). Again, considering the etymology of ‘adjective’ can be helpful, as the word originally designates something ‘which is added’ to something else. A facial close-up is one of the most common ways in which the “movement of expression” (ibid.) can convey a certain affective quality to the image. The fourth and last mode theorised by Pasolini, the *modo della verbalizzazione*, or mode of verbalization (cf. *HE* 210), is realised through editing and can be said to correspond to the Deleuzian action-image. Perception is in fact “primarily sensory-motor” (*Cinema 1* 64) and so, Deleuze concludes, “just as perception relates movements to ‘bodies’ (nouns) [mode of substantiation], that is to rigid objects which will serve as moving bodies or as things moved, action relates movements to ‘acts’ (verbs) [mode of verbalisation] which will be the design for an assumed end or result” (65). As I will discuss in section 4.2., in the overtaking of “sensory-motor situations” (*Cinema 2* 3), Deleuze identifies the origin of another important transformation of the cinematic image that took place in the decades following the Second World War, and that found its full accomplishment in Italian Neorealist and in the French *nouvelle vague* cinema.

Before considering the important developments in the language of cinema in the Post-War decades, it is necessary to concentrate on one aspect of the perception-image that is particularly relevant to the present investigation, namely what Deleuze defines as “liquid perception.” The “predilection for running water” (*Cinema 1* 77) that was “common to all the members of the [Pre-War] French school” (ibid.), and that characterises the cinema of Jean Renoir and Jean Vigo in particular, plays a pivotal role in my argument, as these masters were highly influential for many *nouvelle-vague* directors. A curious testimony to the importance of water is the short *Une histoire d’eau* (1958), jointly signed by Truffaut and Godard: although it was “made in an unforeseen way, like an

73 A specific kind of perception-image, “liquid perception,” will be analysed in more detail below. Liquid perception was a typical feature of the Pre-War school of French cinema, one of the most inspiring movements for the *nouvelle vague*.

experiment in improvisation” (Truffaut *T by T* 55), this early stylistic experiment explores the technical and narrative potentialities of water, and seems to proceed directly from the Pre-War tradition, while at the same time anticipating some thematic and stylistic motifs that will characterise the *nouvelle vague* cinema.

To begin with, in *Une histoire d'eau*, a flood invades an urban area, making water stand out as an immobilising force. The story is set in the Île de France (literally the “Island of France”), which comprises the area surrounding Paris. While the reference to this territory as an “island” probably derives from the fact that the region is enclosed by rivers⁷⁴, in the film this geographical denomination acquires a more evident meaning: as a consequence of the flood, this area indeed turns into an island. Given that Paris is the *nouvelle-vague* setting par excellence, particularly in the Doinel films, to think of the city and its surroundings as an island becomes all the more significant, and can indeed be of help in the film analyses that follow. More importantly, though, in *Une histoire d'eau*, water clearly constitutes an obstacle, thus presenting one of the defining characteristics of fluid anti-developmental narratives. The film has little narrative development, although its essential plot significantly presents a young couple that, because of the flood, cannot reach Paris. The idea for the short originated when, witnessing the floods that had hit the region of Paris in 1958, Truffaut “thought it was a shame it should survive only in documentary” (Truffaut *T by T* 55). Apart from turning this circumstance to his advantage, the decision to consider this particular subject can be read as an almost literal anticipation of the ‘wave’ that would soon carry away the “*cinéma de papa*,” to use a Truffautian expression (cf. “A certain”), and open the season of the *nouvelle vague*.

The choice made by Truffaut is also in line with that tendency towards liquid perception that characterised the French cinema of the 1930s, in turn a fundamental point of reference for the *nouvelle vague* directors. As pointed out by Deleuze, for the French pre-War masters, the element of water satisfied several requirements:

abstract aesthetic requirement, social documentary requirement, narrative dramatic requirement
[...] firstly because water is the most perfect environment in which movement can be extracted from the thing moved, or mobility from movement itself. This is the origin of the visual and auditory importance of water in research on rhythm. (*Cinema I* 77)

Another important aspect related to water is the influence it exerts on the contiguous spaces inhabited by humans. The kind of life conducted by those who live by the water, be it by the sea or along riverbanks, is of course essentially different from the life of those who live on land. As Deleuze observes, “the limit of the earth and the waters becomes the scene of a drama where there

74 Namely the Seine, the Oise, the Marne and the Loing.

is a confrontation between, on one hand, the land moorings and, on the other, the mooring-ropes, the two-ropes and free floating cords” (78). Moreover, the “drama” Deleuze refers to, resulting from the tension of elements which is particularly strong in those intermediate zones where water and earth meet, is also relevant to the modernist aesthetic.

In his study *Archipelagic Modernism*, Brannigan develops precisely this point with regard to Joyce’s *Portrait*, arguing that in the novel “[t]he relationship between the sea and the land, and the daily drama which takes place on the shoreline, is figured as a contest between wild nature and human order” (76), which also includes a struggle between natural instincts and predetermined social conventions. As seen, the shoreline is experienced by many of Joyce’s protagonists as a dangerous space that they are not able, or not willing, to cross. The confrontation of earthly and liquid forces is also pivotal in several works by Woolf. In his research of shapeless objects, John, the protagonist of “Solid Objects,” distances himself from that “human order” Brannigan refers to. With his “Politics be damned!” (Woolf “Solid” 70), John clearly expresses this position right at the beginning of the story and, almost instinctively, he seems to look for an alternative path to follow in the “secret channel to the sea” (71) that he starts to burrow in the sand. The novel *To the Lighthouse* is another example of how, in a modernist literary text, the water of the sea satisfies both the “abstract aesthetic requirement” and the “narrative dramatic requirement” (cf. Deleuze *Cinema I* 77). Against the background of the First World War, an event that has substantial repercussions in the second half of the book, we witness the conflicts that affect the protagonists, all gathered on the Isle of Skye. Both on land and, in the third section of the novel, on water, the contact with the untameable force of water is immediate, especially for James and Cam Ramsay. As we have already seen, Woolf almost certainly made a deliberate choice to leave it unclear whether they actually land on the other shore or not, thus placing the emphasis on the contrast between what happens on land and what takes place on the water.

All these elements, which characterise much of the Modernist prose of the 1920s, can be found in the (French) cinema production of the following decade. Yet, before focussing more closely on the pivotal contribution of Jean Vigo and Jean Renoir, I should like to briefly consider the (symbolic and narrative) relevance of water and waterways in the production of two Post-War directors, Ingmar Bergman and Agnès Varda, who are equally decisive in the developments of the *nouvelle vague*.

A central figure in European cinema, Bergman was a great inspiration for many New-Wave directors, notably Godard and Truffaut. The diffused presence of water is a characterising feature of his early work in particular, starting with his first feature *Kris* (*Crisis*, 1946). Bergman’s style

gradually developed in this sense through *Hamnstad (Port of Call, 1948)* and *Till glädje (To Joy, 1950)*, culminating with *Sommaren med Monika (A Summer with Monika, 1953)*, which belongs to a series of films set in the Stockholm archipelago. The choice of location is decisive in Bergman's films, as the protagonists find in the topographical characteristics of the spaces they inhabit "a representation of important elements of their spiritual struggles" (Kalin 2). In Bergman's landscapes, "the moral and the visual are fused into one representation – [which is] both something that film does best and the key to the specifically filmic in Bergman's art" (ibid.).

Sommaren med Monika constitutes a turning point in the definition of the distinctive features of Bergman's films. After the film's release, Bergman "went on to forge a cinema that took him out of the periphery of European cinema and into its very core" (Orr 30). The film also became "the model for adventure and free spirit among the French New Wave" (15), and indeed, a direct reference to it can be found in Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups*, when Antoine and his friend René steal a postcard outside a cinema which portrays the famous image of a bare-shouldered Monika sunbathing (see Figure 1). According to John Orr, *Sommaren med Monika, Till glädje, Sommarlek (Summer Interlude, 1951)* and *Kvinnors väntan (Waiting Women, 1952)*, form a group of films in which "the power of topographical escape is everywhere" (28); an "escape" that has to be intended both as a rejection of the urban dimension (in this case, of Stockholm), and as the "reinstatement of something [Bergman] had left out of his ongoing pastiche of poetic realism – the fugitive theme" (ibid.). In contrast, the theme of the fugitive runs throughout Truffaut's Doinel films from the first episode, *Les quatre cents coups* (for which Truffaut had also considered the title *La fugue d'Antoine*, "Antoine's escape" [cf. Truffaut *T by T* 57]), to the last, *L'amour en fuite, Love on the Run*. The reference to *Sommaren med Monika* in *Les quatre cents coups* highlights, on the one hand Antoine's need to escape, and on the other, by means of the evocative image of a (short) summer of freedom by the sea, it anticipates Antoine's encounter with the ocean at the end of the film.

A further important element that connects Monika and Antoine, and which also corresponds to the cyclical and/or centripetal course that marks the evolution of Stephen Dedalus, is that their (attempted) escapes inexorably put them in a situation that is often no better, or even worse, than the initial one. In the case of Monika, the intense experience of a summer of love with her boyfriend Harry in the Stockholm archipelago eventually brings her back to the city, her point of departure. By the end of the summer, Monika is pregnant and returns to the capital to settle down with Harry. Nevertheless, she soon grows dissatisfied with family life and her role as mother and wife, and eventually leaves Harry and their daughter, thereby recreating the same complicated family conditions she had originally escaped from. In the Doinel films, although Antoine is indeed constantly "*en fuite*," he never really moves away from Paris, a detail that significantly links back to

the idea of Paris as an island, as seen in *Une histoire d'eau*. There are few meaningful exceptions, however, and in the entire series, we only see Antoine outside Paris three times.

The first, and most important, is the closing sequence of *Les quatre cents coups*, when he is in a reform school close to the northern coast of France, and from where he manages to escape. Free from familial bonds and school obligations, Antoine can start a life of his own. Nevertheless, in the opening of the next Doinel episode, *Antoine et Colette*, he is back in Paris, in a situation that is only apparently a favourable one. At the beginning of the third Doinel film, *Baisers volés*, Antoine is completing the military service somewhere on the outskirts of Paris (the Eiffel Tower can still be seen). In the first scene, he is in the military prison, with other fellow soldiers, about to be discharged. While he will soon return to the city centre, his isolation and the anonymous formality of the uniform he is wearing consign him to another spatial dimension. Nevertheless, although Antoine is a free man again, and although Truffaut's intention was to make a "funny" film (cf. Truffaut *T by T* 103), *Baisers volés* shows Antoine tied up in "the small happenings of life" (ibid.), which are not always necessarily so easy to deal with. Indeed, the closing scene is a good example of Truffaut's statement: "the same thing can be funny and sad all at once" (ibid.). We see Antoine and Christine in love and engaged, yet the lyrics of the Charles Trenet song that accompanies the credits⁷⁵, "Que reste-t-il de nos amours?" ("what is left of our loves?"), cast doubt on the future of their relationship. In the following Doinel episode, *Domicile conjugal*, the married couple is in a crisis, and in the final film, *L'amour en fuite*, they divorce. We also see Antoine outside Paris in *L'amour en fuite*. At the Gare du Lyon, he casually meets Colette, his first unrequited love and the co-protagonist of the short *Antoine et Colette*. She is on board a train headed towards Aix-en-Provence, and Antoine impulsively jumps on the train to meet her. They converse at length during the trip, yet after a heated discussion, an offended Antoine jumps off the train somewhere along the way, and returns to Paris. In all these cases, the movement described by Antoine is centripetal, as he always returns back to his 'centre', Paris. This connects Antoine both to Monika and to Stephen Dedalus. For all of them, the contrast between the urban and the encounter with the natural environment is strong and significant; all the more so when their 'flight' ends by the sea, an environment characterised by the coexistence of freedom and risk.

The relevance of the settings, and the opposition between the urban and the natural dimensions, also play a central role in the film of Belgian-born director Agnès Varda. Varda is considered by many a pioneer of the *nouvelle vague* (cf. Neupert 45, Vincendeau *Pointe Courte*), although she started her career as a film director independently of the other directors, and before its

⁷⁵ The very title of the film, *Baisers volés*, is taken from the lyrics of the song, which can also be heard during the opening credits.

official beginning⁷⁶. She said that at the time of her film-making debut, she had little to no cinema experience, and she had seen very few films. In fact, after concluding her studies in photography, she soon took up a job as the official photographer for the Théâtre national populaire (TNP) in Paris, where she met Philippe Noiret and Silvia Monfort, the actors who would star in her first feature film, *La Pointe Courte* (1955) (cf. Vincendeau *Pointe Courte*). Despite her initial inexperience, Varda's influence on developments in French (and European) cinema is unquestionable: not only does she "carr[y] on the spirit of the Italian Neorealists and anticipates the New Wave," but she "is also a transitional figure in bridging the gap between documentary and fiction film practice, creating a highly distinctive text" (Neupert 58). Her experience as a photographer, for instance, undoubtedly contributed to the documentary quality of many New-Wave films.

Moreover, the liminal space of the shore, and in general the marine environment, is of central importance in her films. Even the title of the 2008 documentary film *Les plages d'Agnès* (*The beaches of Agnès*), which looks back on her long and heterogeneous career, confirms this. The importance of sea and waterways already stands out in her early works, thereby also constituting an apt continuation of the great lesson of the French masters of the 1930s. *La Pointe Courte*, named after the small fishing village on the southern French coast where the film is set, is an excellent example to begin with. Its main protagonists are a man, native of La Pointe Courte but who lives in Paris, and his Parisian wife. At the beginning of the film, the woman reaches the small village by train to rejoin her husband after a brief separation. Against the background of this small village and of the life of its community of fishermen, the main protagonists meet to discuss their relationship, which, after four years of marriage, is facing a crisis. In the course of long and intense conversations, they first put in doubt their union, only to realise at last that they still love each other and cannot be separated.

It is of course significant that the solution to their marital crisis is reached in the small village by the sea and not in the capital; the majority of the dialogues between the two takes place in the open air and often by the water, which is present throughout the film (see Figures 2 and 3). The maritime setting plays a central role and, as Neupert notes,

every image seems potentially metaphorical, yet naturalistic. Over and over in *La Pointe Courte*, the seeming debris of the man's childhood village – barrels of stagnant water, broken pitchforks, even a dead cat washing up on the rocks – stand as enigmatic, often ambivalent backgrounds to the couple's discussions. (62)

76 Released in 1959, Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups* is usually considered the first New Wave film. Varda's first feature, *La Pointe Courte*, was released in 1955.

Neupert's description of the "metaphorical, yet naturalistic" (ibid.) character of the setting is reminiscent of Stephen's stroll on Sandymount Strand in "Proteus," during which he also broods over his childhood, his family, and in particular the death of his mother⁷⁷. In Varda's film, the scenes in which the protagonists converse are all shot in sharp sunlight. As Varda commented in an interview, "I really cared about the sun being so strong, because, I thought, so much sun is cruel and when a couple discuss [...] with an intensive light I think it's like being naked, in a way" (Varda "Close Up" 35':30"-35':44"). In *La Pointe Courte*, the function of water in the narration is ambivalent⁷⁸. Its inescapable presence, and the intensity of its influence on the surrounding environment and on its inhabitants, undoubtedly contribute to the protagonists feelings of being "naked," as Varda contends. The roughness of such a primitive space as the village of La Pointe Courte seems to induce them to expose their innermost emotions; this ultimately leads to the solution of the couple's crisis, but it could have also led to their definitive separation.

This fragile equilibrium is symbolically represented in the scene of the *joutes* tournament⁷⁹, considered one of the biggest events in the life of the village. Challenging one another on board their boats, the participants also challenge the laws of gravity in the attempt to keep their balance, and thereby win the competition. Young fisherman Raphaël is one of the winners and, thanks to this victory, he is finally able to convince the recalcitrant father of his girlfriend that he can be a valid husband for her (despite his recent imprisonment for fishing in a forbidden area). To return to the metaphor used by Deleuze, his ability to resist the "free-floating" forces guarantees him the stability of the "land moorings" (*Cinema 1* 78). The precariousness of the situation and its solution in favour of the young Raphaël reflect the dynamics of the relationship between the two main characters. While attending the boat race, the wife abruptly leaves her seat and disappears among the crowd, leaving her husband to fear that she has left him; however, as the viewer can infer, and as the husband soon finds out, she has only left her seat to buy two ice creams. After this episode, the conversations that take place between the two gradually approach a solution of their crisis; therefore, after successfully resisting the "free-floating" (ibid.) forces, they can return to the capital, and again rely on the "land moorings" (ibid.), far from the proximity of water.

While in *La Pointe Courte* Paris is only a backdrop that functions as a contrast to the main action, it is in the foreground in Varda's second feature, *Cléo de 5 à 7* (*Cléo from 5 to 7*, 1961), which would therefore not seem to follow the liquid-perception trend at a first sight because set entirely in the city, far from the sea. In a 'Ulyssean' manner, the film follows two hours in the life of

77 As seen, on the shore Stephen also sees the 'carcass' of a boat. Incidentally, in *La Pointe Courte* the couple takes refuge precisely in the hull of a boat.

78 As in the films by Vigo and Renoir examined below.

79 A type of jousting that takes place on water.

the young singer Cléo, who has been diagnosed with a severe illness, probably cancer, and who awaits the doctor's response. In this particular state, she realises that, for most of the people that surround her, she is merely a doll to be looked at (cf. Varda "Cléo" 37:40"-38:25"), and that nobody really cares about her emotional state nor seems to listen to her. Wandering in the streets of Paris, Cléo muses about life, death, health, and beauty.

The bleak feelings that torment her, and the chaotic variety of stories and impressions that the city offers, contribute to a stifling atmosphere, which only starts to open out in the final part of the film, when Cléo, shortly before the appointment with the doctor, rests in the Park Montsouris. Here she meets a soldier, on leave for a few hours, who is the only person with whom she has a sincere conversation, and who eventually accompanies her to the hospital. It is worth noting that they meet in a park, one of the few places where, in a big city such as Paris, the contact with nature is possible. More precisely, they meet in front of a small waterfall; apart from symbolising Cléo's stream of thoughts, the force of the water stream also induces her to confess her fears and hesitations to the stranger she meets there. As in the open-air scenes in *La Pointe Courte*, the sequences shot in the park in *Cléo de 5 à 7* are intentionally highly overexposed. As Varda comments,

as we shot in black and white, this lush green lawn was filmed with a green filter lens and in the black and white image it created a white, almost snow-like effect which suited this special encounter between a soldier and a frightened girl. I wanted it to be soft, somewhat unreal, even if the reality deals with her fear. ("Memories and Anecdotes" 6:35"-7:08")

The attention to these technical details further confirms Varda's sensitivity to the narrative potentiality of every stylistic choice.

Her first feature "firmly established Varda's reputation as a transitional figure in French cinema" (Neupert 57), as her work was tied to the past of French, and European, cinema, but would also become highly influential for the future of French and European cinema. Moreover, since the beginning of her career, Varda distinguished herself as "a new auteur who saw filmmaking as a specialized écriture process, synthesizing literary and cinematic codes and strategies. Varda even coined the term cinécriture for her brand of filmmaking, which features carefully constructed image-to-sound textual relations" (56), thereby foregrounding, together with Astruc's theorisation of the *caméra-stylo*, the distinguishing *nouvelle-vague* approach. More importantly for my thesis, however, is Varda's continuation of the inclination towards liquid perception that characterises the French cinema of the 1930s. So much so that Bazin "seemed to find it appropriate that the 1956 Paris premiere of *La Pointe Courte* was at the Studio Parnasse, which played it along with Jean Vigo's experimental documentary, *A propos de Nice* (1930)" (60).

A propos de Nice is characterised not only by the experimentation with various editing techniques, visual effects such as slow and fast motion, or the use of new types of shots, but also by its marine setting. Like the Victorian beach, the seafront in *A propos de Nice* is a place of heterogeneous encounters. The promenade along the beach is represented as the place where the bourgeoisie puts itself on show, yet “the very presence of water [...] allow[s] the bourgeoisie to be described as a monstrous body” (Deleuze *Cinema I* 80). In the film, water “reveal[s] the hideousness of bourgeoisie bodies beneath their clothes” (ibid.) by means of a clearly ironic attitude. The social and symbolic value of clothes is definitively neutralised in a sequence of images that shows a woman wearing different combinations of fashionable clothes, until she is shown completely naked. As Deleuze observes, in *A propos de Nice* “[t]he bourgeoisie is reduced to the objectivity of a fetish-body, a scrap-body, to which childhood, love, navigation oppose their integral bodies” (ibid.).

Conversely, in Vigo's first (and only) feature film, *L'Atalante* (1934), the clothes reveal “the softness and strength of the loved one's body” (ibid.). In *L'Atalante*, water acquires a completely different meaning than in *A propos de Nice*. Among the most influential French pre-war films, *L'Atalante* is, according to Deleuze, the one that best represents the tension between “the perceptions, affections and actions of men on land, and the perceptions, affections and actions of men of the sea” (*Cinema I* 79). I would, however, also add Renoir's short *Partie de campagne* (*A Day in the Country*, 1936), based on the eponymous short story by Guy De Maupassant (published in 1888).

In both films, the main role is played by the water of rivers, rather than that of the sea. According to Margaret Cohen, the water of rivers (namely, the chronotope of brown water) holds a specific narrative function, and throughout the nineteenth century, in coincidence with the major processes of modernisation, the presence of a river in a narration acquired a particular “social inflection” (Cohen “Chronotopes” 656). The opposed dimensions of “an upriver retreat from a premodern lifestyle and a downriver space associated with various aspects of social modernity (technology, industrialization, urbanization)” are “both contrasted and connected in the river's flow” (ibid.). Similarly, in *Partie de campagne* and in *L'Atalante*, the river serves both as a link and as a division between the city and the countryside. Its flow also symbolises and reflects the protagonists' curbed desires, thereby emphasising not only the city/countryside divide and the earth/water opposition, but also that “contest between wild nature and human order” (Brannigan 76) that Brannigan refers to with regard to Joyce's work, and which is just as relevant for these cinematic texts.

The narration in Renoir's *Partie de campagne* evolves around the constant flow of the river

Seine, which could thus be seen as one of the film's main protagonists. The flow of its water, which also crosses Paris, fills almost every scene. This reminds us both of the closeness and of the distance between the protagonists, a bourgeois Parisian family, and the people they meet in the countryside. The water of the Seine also metaphorically fosters the single, illicit encounter between the rower Henri and Henriette, the young daughter of the Parisian family. As seen in Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*, the force of the flowing water is here interpreted as a symbol of the protagonists' desires, which have nevertheless to be thwarted, as Henriette is already promised to Anatole.

For the young Juliette in Vigo's *L'Atalante*, the life on board the barge represents the means to discover a new world outside the small village where she was born and raised; the journey starts immediately after the wedding with Jean, captain of the *Atalante*. Together with the second mate, "Père" Jules, and the ship's boy, they travel across France, and Juliette fulfils her desire to visit Paris. Nevertheless, the capital soon turns out to be a threatening and dangerous place, all the more so because, against her husband's will, she ventures alone into the city. Therefore, if on the one hand, the flow of the river symbolises for Juliette a freedom of movement (in a broad sense) that she would not have had if she married someone from her home village, on the other hand, she soon feels confined in her new life⁸⁰ and endangered when she tries to escape it.

The scene that probably best represents the ambivalent meaning of brown water in Vigo's film is the famous sequence of the underwater dance (see Figure 5). After Juliette has abandoned the *Atalante* to discover Paris, Jean, desperately looking for her, plunges into the water and has a vision of his beloved wife, dancing and laughing in her bridal dress. While she is in fact entrapped in the city, he sees her moving freely underwater. An interesting counterpart to this scene is the only, brief sequence in *L'Atalante* that is set by the sea. This scene also illustrates how the river's flow and the open sea have different functions in the film. While Jean plunges into the river in search of Juliette, he does not look for her in the water of the Channel, when the barge reaches the port of Le Havre. On arriving there, Jean runs desperately towards the open sea, but once his feet skim the water, he stops and returns to the pier, hopeless and absent-minded. Cohen's description of the chronotope of blue water (the open sea), as subject to the "lawless disorder" ("Chronotopes" 650) of the forces of nature, may explain Jean's behaviour. Nevertheless, it also places Jean's attitude towards the sea in line with that of Antoine Doinel and Stephen Dedalus, thereby underlining once again the importance of the liminal space of the shore.

This scene in *L'Atalante* also recalls both the last sequence of *Les quatre cents coups* and Stephen's vision of the bird-girl on Dollymount Strand in the fourth chapter of *Portrait*, thereby

80 In this sense, the overhead shots in many of the scenes set inside the barge cabin strongly denote the interior of the barge as a stifling space (see Figure 4).

establishing a further important link between the literary and cinematic texts analysed here. These scenes support my contention that the interrelation of the chronotopes of blue water and of the seashore is crucial to the characterisation of the protagonists of fluid anti-developmental narratives. *L'Atalante* was a direct source of inspiration for Truffaut, who was “overwhelmed with wild enthusiasm for [Vigo’s] work” (*The Films in My Life* 23), and who counted it among the “ten best films of all time” (ibid.). It is therefore probable that the sea-set scene in Vigo’s feature inspired Antoine’s first encounter with the open sea at the end of *Les quatre cents coups*; notwithstanding the evident differences in the plot and between the characters, the two sequences closely resemble each other. In both cases the beach is deserted, both Jean and Antoine run towards the open sea, and both turn back, puzzled (see Figures 6-9). The main difference, and it is a significant one, is that, unlike *L'Atalante*, *Les quatre cents coups* closes here: the famous freeze-frame of Antoine’s confused face captures the instant in which he turns his back on the ocean.

Both scenes, particularly that in *Les quatre cents coups*, are in turn reminiscent of the episode set on Dollymount Strand in the fourth chapter of *Portrait*. Both for Stephen and for Antoine, the sea-set sequences represent two key moments in which their destinies seem to take a definitive turn, only to eventually result in their return to a previous condition. Far from being “intensely social space[s]” (Cohen “Chronotopes” 661), the beaches that Stephen and Antoine find themselves on are deserted. This emptiness, which can be understood as the distinctive portrayal of the shore in modernist literature, holds a great symbolic importance for many of the films considered, and for Truffaut’s feature in particular. In opposition to the bustling, chaotic and yet paralysing reality of the city, on the strand the individual can reflect upon herself/himself by reflecting (both symbolically and literally) her/his image in the “mirror of the sea.” The very geological features of the sea-shore epitomise the fluidity of identity that connotes adolescent protagonists in particular; for Stephen and Antoine the liminal, ever-changing, and deserted space of the beach reflects the intrinsic transformational character of their identities, which stands in a sharp contrast with their, at least apparent, resoluteness.

In her analysis of the chronotope of the shore, Cohen describes it as a space where “[t]he danger of boundary dissolution” (“Chronotopes” 662) is impending. As far as Stephen is concerned, it can indeed be inferred, as Robert Adams Day does, that “[h]e fears flow, change, dissolution, metamorphosis” (13), all of which he is confronted with on the beach, both in *Portrait* and in *Ulysses*. The space of the shore, though, can become even riskier due to its proximity to blue water, and therefore to the unpredictability and the arbitrariness of blue-water events (cf. Cohen “Chronotopes” 651-653). Nevertheless, in revealing to his friend Cranly his intention to leave Ireland and to pursue an artistic path, Stephen also declares himself ready to take a risk: “I do not

fear to be alone or to be spurned for another or to leave whatever I have to leave. And I am not afraid to make a mistake, even a great mistake, a lifelong mistake and perhaps as long as eternity too” (P 269). In a similar way, Antoine is resolute in his decision to leave his parents’ house and “live [his] own life” (*Les quatre cents coups* 34’:58”). Both Stephen and Antoine therefore wish, and seem to be ready, to trespass certain obstacles: the oppressive education system, family bonds, stifling social duties, and – in the case of Stephen – the nation’s borders. Nevertheless, they both end up inexorably entangled within them.

The scenes set on the beach are crucial to understanding this aspect, which is especially highlighted in the passage from the first to the second ‘episodes’ dedicated to Stephen and Antoine, that is, from *Portrait* to *Ulysses* and from *Les quatre cents coups* to *Antoine et Colette*. These passages are pivotal in the definition of the characters’ fluid development, and they highlight the particular tension between a static and a dynamic image of Stephen and Antoine. Incidentally, at a certain point in the creation of their characters, both Joyce and Truffaut realised that these had reached a stage in which they could not develop any further, at least not in significant ways. As Budgen remembers, during the composition of *Ulysses* Joyce felt that “Stephen no longer interests me to the same extent. He has a shape that can’t be changed” (Budgen 107). Similarly, Truffaut notes that “the cycle as a whole wasn’t successful in making him [i.e. Antoine] evolve” (Cardullo).

Nevertheless, these characters do evolve, as I have demonstrated in the case of Stephen Dedalus (3.4.). The evolution of Antoine will be the focus of section 4.3. below. Before I turn to that, however, it is necessary to note that the characterising traits of fluid anti-developments that I single out in *nouvelle-vague* films can already be found in some Italian Neorealist films from the late 1940s. That is to say, in those films that Deleuze defines as illustrating the “crisis of the traditional image of cinema” (*Cinema 1* 205), and that, in turn, played a crucial role in the formation of the *nouvelle-vague* aesthetic.

4.2. The Crisis of Action: Fluid Immobility between Neorealism and the *Nouvelle Vague*

In a rather summary list, Deleuze singles out a series of causes for the crisis of the traditional cinema, “which only had their full effect after the [second-world-]war,” such as

the war and its consequences, the unsteadiness of the ‘American dream’ in all its aspects, the new consciousness of minorities, the rise and inflation of images, both in the external world and in people’s minds, the influence on the cinema of the new modes of narrative which literature had experimented, the crisis of Hollywood and its genres... (*Cinema 1* 206)

The transformations that would eventually lead to what Deleuze identifies as a crisis of cinema had their outset in Europe with the Pre-War French school, and notably with the work of Renoir (cf. Insdorf 70). According to the philosopher, the major effect of this crisis resides in the abandonment of “the linkages of situation-action, action-reaction, excitation-response, in short the sensory-motor links which produced the action-image” (*Cinema I* 206).

These are replaced by the “mental image,” “*which takes as its object, relations, symbolic acts, intellectual feelings*” (198; emphasis in the original). According to Deleuze, one of the main triggers for this transformation is the innovation brought to cinema by Alfred Hitchcock (cf. *ibid.*). Especially after having achieved celebrity in the USA in the 1940s, Hitchcock’s contribution resulted as decisive in linking the post-war American cinema production to its European counterparts. More importantly, though, Hitchcock’s films played a pivotal role for the young critics of the French periodical *Cahiers du Cinema*, many of whom would later become *nouvelle vague* directors. In a moment in which, especially in Europe, the work of the British filmmaker was still underrated, these critics and future film directors enthusiastically supported it.

In the summer of 1962, Truffaut conducted a series of interviews with Hitchcock, later collected in the book *Le cinema selon Hitchcock* (1966⁸¹), one of the best known testimonies of this admiration. The following quotation, from one of these conversations, summarises a rule that is fundamental for the British director:

When we tell a story in cinema, we should resort to dialogue only when it’s impossible to do otherwise. [...] In writing a screenplay, it is essential to separate clearly the dialogue from the visual elements and, whenever possible, to rely more on the visual than on the dialogue. [...] [T]he screen rectangle must be charged with emotion. (61)

Hitchcock’s advocacy of “visual elements” and “emotion[s]” asserts Deleuze’s position on the preeminence of the mental image in Post-War cinema. Distinguishing itself for its “new, direct, relationship with thought, a relationship which is completely distinct from that of the other images” (Deleuze *Cinema I* 198), the mental image shares its definitive features with the distinctively modernist narrative technique of the interior monologue⁸².

First of all, the mental image “no longer refers to a situation which is globalising or synthetic, but rather to one which is dispersive. The characters are multiple [and] they are all caught in the same reality which disperses them” (207). This condition is tangible in the urban dimension

81 The first English translation was published with the title *Hitchcock/Truffaut*; it was re-edited and released again in 1983 with the title *Hitchcock*, which is the one I use here.

82 Moreover, to provide some temporal coordinates, it may be interesting to remember that Hitchcock started his first job in cinema in 1922, as an assistant director on the film *Woman to Woman* (cf. Truffaut *Hitchcock* 29), the same year Joyce published *Ulysses*. Three years later, in 1925, when Hitchcock directed his first film, *The Pleasure Garden* (cf. Truffaut *Hitchcock* 31), Joyce was already working on what would have later become *Finnegans Wake*.

(such as Joyce's Dublin, Woolf's London or, ultimately, the Paris of the New-Wave films), which often awakens in the young protagonists a yearning for escape. In these situations it becomes clear that "[t]he line or the fibre of the universe which prolonged events into one another, or brought about the connection of portions of space, has broken" (ibid.). Furthermore, within the urban space, the type of movements that prevail are "the stroll, the voyage and the continual return journey" (208). In particular, in fluid anti-developmental narratives, the "continual return" to a condition analogous to the one the protagonists originally wished to dissociate from is often determined by the encounter with the sea, or in general with the element of water.

While it is Hitchcock who initiated this process of evolution by "introduc[ing] the mental image into the cinema" (200), this transformation was carried on by the Italian Neorealist directors in the late 1940s, and was brought to a full realisation by the French *nouvelle vague* a decade later (cf. 212-213). In particular, in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Italian Neorealism gave shape to the main characteristics of this new image, as Deleuze contends:

In the situation at the end of the war, Rossellini discovered a dispersive and lacunary reality – already in *Rome, Open City*, but above all in *Paisá* – a series of fragmentary, chopped-up encounters, which call into question the SAS [situation-action-situation] form of the action-image. It is the post-war economic crisis, on the other hand, which inspires De Sica, and leads him to shatter the ASA [action-situation-action] form: there is no longer a vector or line of the universe which extends and links up the events of *The Bicycle Thief* [...] (212)

And it is ultimately with the French New Wave "that the voyage-form is freed from the spatio-temporal coordinates [...] and begins to have value for itself or as the expression of a new society, of a new pure present" (213). The connection and aesthetic continuation from Italian Neorealism to the French *nouvelle vague* are of great import, and the influence of the first on the second can be observed both from a thematic and from a formal point of view. The deep interconnection between these cinematic expressions also owes much to Bazin's direct involvement in both; just like the Post-War Italian film directors, Bazin, and later Truffaut, remains faithful to "an aesthetic of reality", an approach that recognizes the film's unique capacity to capture and reproduce 'real' experience" (Insdorf 19).

Another important common feature between these movements, and which is of great relevance to this thesis, is singled out by Deleuze in *Cinema 2: Time-Image*. In his analysis of the crisis of the action-image, Deleuze focusses on the role of the child in Neorealist films, "notably in De Sica (and later in France with Truffaut)" (*Cinema 2* 3). In these films, child protagonists live "in the adult world" and are "affected by a certain *motor helplessness*, but one which makes [them] all the more capable of seeing and hearing" (ibid.; emphasis in the original). Indeed, this "motor

helplessness” is reminiscent of the “arrested development” that defines the modernist Bildungsroman’s protagonists, illustrating again how fluid anti-developmental narratives link literary and cinematic texts together. And, as in the literary texts considered, this peculiar immobility does not only affect children, but also adolescents and young adults, in both Neorealist and New-Wave films.

An interesting example of a Neorealist fluid anti-developmental text is Federico Fellini’s feature *I vitelloni* (1953). Although Fellini is not generally associated with Neorealist cinema, this early feature has evident Neorealist influences (cf. Bondanella 23). More importantly, though, the film is meaningful in the context of the present study because it is entirely set in a seaside town during the low season, with the plot evolving around a group of five friends who are idly facing the beginning of their adult life. The dialect word *vitellone* defines “an immature, lazy young man without any clear notion of direction in his life” (22).

It is one of Fellini’s common tendencies to attribute a negative connotation to the sea (cf. Nepoti 37), which in *I vitelloni* is particularly emphasised by the wintry ambiance. In one of the opening scenes, the end of the summer and the conclusion of the tourist season are eloquently marked by a strong storm. An apparently diffused unhappiness and a desire to change the course of their lives affect the young protagonists, although none of them actually leaves the town, with the exception of Moraldo, as shall be seen. The whole film is characterised by an overall feeling of entrapment, emphasised by the constant presence of the sea, which holds a crucial narrative function, even in the scenes in which the setting is not openly marine.

Indeed, the sea and the shore are present in most of Fellini’s films, and they rarely serve as mere background elements. In particular, the character of in-between space proper of the shore is repeatedly emphasised in the scenes in which the beach is peopled by individuals who are, in some way, liminal. To mention but a few examples, in a brief sequence in *I vitelloni*, on the beach, the town fool finds the only safe place to guard the statue of an angel, which Fausto and Moraldo have entrusted him with. In *La strada* (1954), the young and gullible Gelsomina lives in a poor hut on the beach. In the dramatic opening scene, set by the sea, the rough street performer Zampanò visits Gelsomina’s mother to inform her of the death of her daughter Rosa, who used to work with him. He then convinces the mother to let Gelsomina go with him, so that she can take Rosa’s place and support him in his performances. The film closes with another emotionally charged scene on the beach, in which Zampanò cries for the death of Gelsomina. In the final scene of *La dolce vita* (1960), which I will further comment on below, what seems to be a huge sea monster is dredged up on the shore, drawing the attention of Marcello, the protagonist, and his friends. In *8 ½* (1963), the

beach is the dwelling place of Saraghina, “un’ enorme donna, proiezione quasi animale del desiderio sessuale”⁸³ (Nepoti 36), who performs a sensual dance in front an astonished group of boys. Lastly, in *Amarcord* (1973), the young nymphomaniac Volpina spends her days wandering on the beach.

To return to the beach in *I vitelloni*, though, some representative moments, which include sequences on the liminal space of the shore, also induce a reflection on the function and validity of the heteronormative paradigm. Consider two of these scenes, in which the motif of the meeting is intertwined with the space of the shore or, more precisely, of the empty shore. The first takes place in the depths of winter. We see the five *vitelloni*, shrouded in their heavy coats and scarves, standing on a pier and facing the sea, and hear the voice over “Adesso la spiaggia era deserta anche la domenica, ma noi andavamo lo stesso a guardare il mare”⁸⁴ (*Vitelloni* 23':10"-23':18"). Despite the desolate atmosphere, the contemplation of the open sea seems to relieve them and, maybe for a moment, they forget about the worries of the life ‘on land’. Yet as they head slowly back towards town, an unpleasant discovery is made by Alberto. On the beach, he accidentally meets his older sister Olga with a man; a relationship that neither Alberto nor their mother approve of, as the man, separated from his wife but actually still married, would probably never marry Olga. The relationship is therefore dishonourable, and it will never guarantee her a socially respectable status. Significantly, although Olga is a relatively independent woman – she is the only one in the family who has a job –, it is still seen as necessary for her to have a (respectable) marriage. Unable to endure this situation, the woman eventually runs away with her lover, leaving her family and the provincial town.

This contrasts to a marriage that *has to* take place, that between Fausto, the playboy of the group, and Sandra, Moraldo’s young sister, who is pregnant with Fausto’s son. As a future father, Fausto is forced to marry Sandra and, very much against his will, to find a job. In accordance with his temperament, though, he fails to do so and Sandra, tired of the husband’s infidelity and unreliability, escapes with their baby. In an intense and dramatic scene, Fausto looks in vain for his wife on the beach. Instead of Sandra, he meets a woman, whom he had tried to seduce a few days before, and who alluringly addresses him. However, desperate and worried about his wife and son, Fausto remains indifferent to the woman’s invitation. He therefore seems to have understood the harm he has caused Sandra and, when he finally finds her, they reconcile. In this scene, the shore is clearly represented as a place of potentially dangerous temptation, which Fausto, in this case, manages to resist. This motif, which is reminiscent of the function ascribed to the shore in the “Nausicaa” episode in *Ulysses*, is further developed by Fellini through characters like Saraghina and

83 My translation: “A huge woman, who represents an almost animal projection of sexual desire.”

84 My translation: “Now the beach was deserted even on Sundays, yet we would still go to watch the sea.”

Volpina.

Although Fausto and Sandra's relationship eventually takes a positive turn, the fact that, before their crisis and reconciliation, their union is (half-mockingly) considered a model, bitterly ridicules the value accredited to marriage. In the Carnival sequence, a drunk Alberto, complaining about his inconclusive life, seems to realise that the only solution to all his and his friends' problems would be to get married. "Ci dobbiamo sposare!"⁸⁵ (*Vitelloni* 51':19"-51':45") he repeats to Moraldo who assists him, and he alludes to Fausto's marriage as an example to follow. As mentioned, Moraldo, the most sensitive and mature of the group of friends, is the only one who, at the end of the film, leaves the small town⁸⁶, without any certainty other than the awareness that his friends will remain stuck in the reiteration of their days as *vitelloni*.

The character of Moraldo shares many meaningful traits with Fellini himself (cf. Bondanella 22). At the age of eighteen, Fellini left his native sea-side town of Rimini⁸⁷ for Rome in order to pursue his dream of becoming a journalist. As noted by Alberto Crespi, one of the director's later films, *Roma* (1972), could indeed be considered the continuation of *I vitelloni*, thus confirming the autobiographical character of Moraldo (cf. Crespi 56). More importantly, though, *I vitelloni* is also linked to another of the director's most famous films, *La dolce vita*. As Bondanella notes, "[w]ith his departure, Moraldo becomes the prototype of Marcello, the provincial who is the writer-journalist in *La dolce vita*, whom Fellini develops from a script entitled *Moraldo in città* [*Moraldo in the city*] that he wrote but never filmed" (122).

Assuming that Marcello in *La dolce vita* is a potential version of a grown-up Moraldo, it is useful to compare the end of *I vitelloni* with the famous last sequence of *La dolce vita*, which is set on a beach. First of all, both Moraldo and Marcello find, respectively in a young boy and in a young girl, a sincere friend for whom they feel affection, and who follows and accompanies them in the last scene. In *I vitelloni*, the young railway worker with whom Moraldo sometimes converses during his night wanderings, is the only one who bids him farewell when, at the end of the film, he decides to leave the town. In *La dolce vita*, while Marcello, among a small crowd, observes the 'monster' (a huge dead ray) stranded on the beach, his attention is caught by a young voice calling him. A girl whom he had met some days before is trying to tell him something, but they are separated by a small stream of water, and the sound of the waves and of the wind is so strong that their communication is impossible. Marcello then rejoins the group of his friends, and he bids farewell to the girl with a confused, yet telling, gesture of the hand. With the sound of the waves still in the background, the last frames of the film capture the close up of the girl's smiling face, first looking

85 "We have to get married!"

86 Apart from Olga, who is however a secondary character.

87 Rimini ideally is the set of *I vitelloni*, even though it is never named in the film.

in the direction of Marcello, and then slowly turning towards the audience (see Figures 10-13).

Apart from the correspondences with *I vitelloni*, this scene from *La dolce vita* also bears a striking resemblance with the closing sequence of *Les quatre cents coups*⁸⁸, which was released around a year earlier. Although both films have a chiefly urban setting, Paris in Truffaut's feature, and Rome in Fellini's, their last sequences are set on the shore. The endings of both films are open and marked by a pronounced sense of uncertainty and solitude. Antoine's puzzlement and feeling of insecurity when his escape ends in front of the ocean can be easily compared to Moraldo's insecurity as he leaves his hometown: both characters are left on the verge of a completely unknown phase in their lives. As far as Antoine is concerned, thanks to the episodes of the Doinel cycle that follow *Les quatre cents coups*, we learn what happens later. As for Moraldo, although Fellini never filmed the sequel he had written, a second episode in the life of a pseudo-Moraldo character can possibly be found in *La dolce vita*. The concluding scene, with Marcello on the beach, can therefore serve as confirmation that, even after having left the paralysing situation of the provincial reality, Moraldo/Marcello has not landed on a 'safer shore'. Like his fellow *vitelloni* remained stuck in their idle existences, in the big city Moraldo/Marcello had to face a deep moral decay, which, as Nepoti argues, is embodied in the stranded marine monster (cf. 36). Furthermore, the young boy at the station at the end of *I vitelloni*, and the young girl on the beach in *La dolce vita*, represent a projection of the protagonists' naïve, but also more authentic selves, from which Moraldo takes distance and with whom Marcello cannot communicate.

For Antoine and for Moraldo/Marcello, the flight from a condition of entrapment eventually results in failure. Once again, the paradigm of a failed escape, which evokes the "motor helplessness" proposed by Deleuze, is reminiscent of the case of Stephen Dedalus who, as I contend, has important and meaningful correspondences with the character of Antoine Doinel⁸⁹. As I have demonstrated, this immobility is more psychological, emotive, and social than it is physical, and it affects particularly adolescents and young adults.

88 Two other famous examples of direct camera address can be found in Bergman's *Sommaren med Monika*, and in Varda's *Cléo de 5 à 7*. These two examples closely resemble one another: in both cases, the close-up occurs half way through the film, marking an important turn in the plot and, more importantly, in the personality of the character. Moreover, in both cases the extreme close-up emerges from a black background, thus suspending the faces of the protagonists in an a-temporal and a-spatial dimension. By means of the freeze frame in *Les quatre cents coups*, Truffaut obtains an analogous effect.

89 Still, as a side note, it should be observed that the last scene of *La dolce vita* bears evident similarities with some sequences of *Portrait* and *Ulysses*. The enigmatic encounter of Marcello and the girl recalls the vision of the bird-girl in *Portrait*. The inability to communicate and to be understood, which torments Stephen particularly in "Proteus," finds a correspondence in the mute dialogue that Marcello entertains with the girl on the beach. Furthermore, the confusion and incertitude about the 'identity' of the stranded monster at the end of Fellini's film could be interpreted as the inability to read the "signatures of all things" (U 3.2) that Stephen repeatedly laments.

The prevalence of young protagonists in numerous *nouvelle-vague* films has to be inscribed within the social and cultural changes that took place in France after the war, and that in turn also favoured the development of the *nouvelle-vague* cinema altogether. Out of the trauma of the war, a new generation emerged that was diffusely aware that it was living in a historical moment that was, in many regards, *new*. Indeed, the “emphasis in advertising, fashion, literature, and cinema would be on novelty, change, and breaks from the past” (Neupert 15). Coined in 1957 by Françoise Giroud, journalist of the popular weekly magazine *L'Express* (cf. Vincendeau “Introduction” 6), the very phrase ‘*nouvelle vague*’ accompanied a series of surveys mainly targeted at young people, which aimed to reveal “what our new French generation – *la nouvelle vague* – is like” (qt. Neupert 14). Therefore, the idea of a ‘wave of novelty’ specifically referred to youth, even before it became the label of a cinematic movement, which in turn relied on young directors, young actors and protagonists, as well as on new (and newly interpreted) filming and narrative techniques.

A connected phenomenon that characterised the Post-War period, especially in Paris but generally in France, is the consolidation of a diffused *cinéphilie*, with the birth of numerous *ciné-clubs* and the publication of a growing number of periodicals dedicated to cinema. One of these periodicals, *L'Ecran français*, published Alexandre Astruc’s article on the “*caméra stylo*,” in 1948. With this important contribution, Astruc not only exerted a great influence on the *nouvelle vague*, but also contributed to “reviv[ing] the viability of critic-filmmakers” (Neupert 46), leading figures of New-Wave cinema. Indeed, in and around 1958, many young film critics also made their debut as film directors: Claude Chabrol with *Le beau Serge* (1958), Truffaut with *Les quatre cents coups*, and Godard with *À bout de souffle* (1960), to mention but a few well-known examples.

Yet apart from Astruc’s influence as critic and film-director, the figure of André Bazin is pivotal in this process⁹⁰, as his critical contribution substantially shaped the *nouvelle-vague* aesthetic. In one of his best-known essays, “The Evolution of Film Language” (1958⁹¹), Bazin outlines the principal stages in the development of the seventh art, starting from the important premise that cinema is a language, as the title clearly indicates. Without overlooking the essential role of silent cinema, Bazin sees the introduction of sound in the late 1920s as the first significant transformation of the medium. The decisive turning point, though, is represented by the cinema of

90 As briefly mentioned in chapter one, Truffaut owes much to Bazin, from a personal and from a professional point of view: “Since the day in 1948 when he got me my first job as a fellow film buff, I became his adoptive son and so I owe to him everything good that has happened in my life since. He taught me to write about cinema, he corrected and published my first articles, and it was thanks to him that I was able to get into directing” (Truffaut *T by T* 19). *Les quatre cents coups* is dedicated to the memory of Bazin, who died on the day that Truffaut started shooting it.

91 This essay appeared in the 1958 volume *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* but it actually puts together three articles that Bazin published in 1950, 1952, and 1955 (cf. “Evolution” 88).

the 1940s, as the technical innovations achieved by then (the introduction of sound, of colour, and of new equipment) permitted the development of a new style of cinematic language. Apart from his critical contribution, Bazin was also actively engaged in the opening and organising of one of the first *ciné-clubs*, “Objectif 49,” and in 1951 founded the journal *Cahiers du cinéma*, which had, and still has, a prominent role in cinema criticism. Indeed, if the experience of *Close Up* in the late 1920s had marked the beginning of a tradition of cinema criticism, in the 1950s the writers and editors for *Cahiers* set a significantly new course by “treat[ing] film (the medium, the directors, and the individual motion pictures) with the seriousness, respect, and passion traditionally reserved to the other arts” (Insdorf 20).

In its early days, the columns of *Cahiers* were often edited by young critics who were soon dubbed “the young Turks,” for their merciless and sharp criticism. Two of the best known among them were Truffaut and Godard, who both started their careers there in their early twenties, and would quickly become influential exponents of this new strand of criticism and of the *nouvelle vague* itself. In particular, Truffaut’s famous article “A Certain Tendency of French Cinema” (1954), together with Bazin’s views on the role of the film director and with Astruc’s manifesto on the *caméra-stylo*, dictated the aesthetic of the *politique des auteurs*.

The *politique* is a basic premise of the *nouvelle vague*, with antecedents in Italian Neorealism and in the cinema of the French Pre-War masters, and it is based on the centrality of the film director, who is at the same time also the author of the script and of the *mise en scène*, and who can thus create a much more personal style. The use of jump cuts, the non-chronological succession of events, open endings, freeze frames, close ups, iris transitions, and slow motion, are some of the techniques that characterise the grammar of the *nouvelle-vague* cinema. As Neupert notes, “Truffaut, like Astruc, prefers auteurs who do not simply look for cinematic equivalents of literary devices but who rework the very language of narrative with cinematic techniques” (48). Interestingly, many of these techniques, together with a particular attention to language and style, put the New-Wave experimental approach close to that of literary Modernism.

By means of what can be defined as literary montage, modernist authors induce the reader to reflect, more or less consciously, on the construction of the text. In cinema this corresponds to what Deleuze defines as the “camera consciousness,” or what Pasolini describes as “allowing the camera to be felt.” In Joyce’s *Ulysses* there are numerous examples of how the literary montage becomes evident, such as the “Wandering Rocks” episode. This episode retraces the movements of several main and secondary characters in the streets of Dublin, articulated in nineteenth sketches, or sub-episodes, which in the narrative fiction take place simultaneously; therefore, at the beginning of each sketch, time ideally goes back at “five to three” (*U* 10.2-3), when “[t]he superior, the very

reverend John Conmee S. J. reset his smooth watch in his interior pocket as he came down the presbytery steps” (10.1-2). Other instances in which the construction/montage of the literary text is openly revealed is when it becomes self-referential. In a brief passage in the “Sirens” episode, for instance, the narrating voice notes that “*As said before* he [Bloom] ate with relish the inner organs, nutty gizzards, fried cods’ roes” (11.519-520; emphasis added); this passage not only echoes the famous first lines of the “Calypso” episode⁹², but also clearly reminds the reader that the information has already been given. Another interesting example can be found in the last chapter, when Molly Bloom invokes the author: “O Jamesy let me up out of this” (18.1128-1129), where “Jamesy” is most probably Joyce himself. A similar effect in a film can be obtained when the actor or actress directly addresses the camera, and therefore also the audience. Apart from the obvious example of Antoine’s look in the concluding freeze-frame of *Les quatre cents coups*, famous camera addresses are to be found in Godard’s films; for instance, both in *À bout de souffle* and in *Pierrot le fou*, the character played by Jean-Paul Belmondo not only repeatedly addresses the camera, but also talks to the audience directly.

This technique was widely used in early cinema, and “[n]ot surprisingly, the French New Wave regularly referred to past film practice (via irises, direct camera address, pantomime, and so on), allusions inspired in part by a renewed desire to reassess current and past arsenals of ‘cinematic signs’” (Neupert 23). The introduction of new shooting modes also owes much to Vigo, to Italian Neorealism, and to the influence of documentarists⁹³. In addition, *nouvelle-vague* directors could profit from important technological innovations. Modern and lighter equipment, such as portable magnetic-tape recorders and portable cameras, became essential for the realisation of films that were almost exclusively shot on location. The use of this new equipment also led to a substantial re-definition of the film crew, often composed only of the film director and the camera operator (cf. Neupert 40), thus enabling significantly lower-budget productions.

The French cinema that developed in the 1950s, and that led to the affirmation of the New Wave, was therefore characterised by a conscious break with conventions, on the level of techniques, of production, and of themes. As Truffaut, in 1958, decisively maintains,

For there to be a true changing of the guard, with new blood coming in, the young filmmakers must make up their minds not to tread in the footprints of the “old” cinema. [...] We have to film other things, in another spirit. We’ve got to get out of the overexpensive studios [...] and

92 “Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liverslices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods’ roes.” (U 4.1-3)

93 Jacques Cousteau’s famous documentary on his pioneering oceanic studies, *Le monde du silence* (1955), is worth mentioning here. Some of the innovative filming techniques used for the documentary were later adopted by New-Wave directors (cf. Neupert 87). Moreover, the film counts as another testimony of the particular preference for water, which serves not only a documentary, objective goal, but also satisfies the narrative and aesthetic aims of the film.

invade the beaches in the sun where no filmmaker (except Vadim) has dared to plant his camera. Sunshine costs less than klieg lights and generators. We should do our shooting in the streets and even in real apartments. (*T by T* 199)

Thematically, in the majority of the New-Wave films, the “[b]ourgeois myths (especially those surrounding marriage, family and consumption practices) were taken to bits and denormalized” (Hayward 148). This tendency is a clear sign of the ‘generational *nouvelle vague*’ that had been portrayed in the 1957 survey in *L’Express*. Exemplary in this sense is Roger Vadim’s *Et Dieu... créa la femme* (1956), which Truffaut refers to above, and in which the marine setting is prominent. Shot in Saint-Tropez, the plot evolves between the docks and the strand. It also features a famous and controversial scene of seduction on a deserted beach, thus proposing a motif that reappears in Fellini, for instance. As Neupert pertinently observes, in Vadim’s film, the “combination (and commodification) of Bardot⁹⁴, location shooting, glossy production values, and a tale about amorality or at least new perspectives on morality fit everything *L’Express* had labeled as *nouvelle vague*” (Neupert 85).

The systematic destabilisation of the normative bourgeois paradigm goes hand in hand with a preference for weak and estranged protagonists, and in particular for children, adolescents and young adults. Juliette, the character played by Brigitte Bardot in *Et Dieu... créa la femme*, is an eighteen-year-old orphan; Michel, the protagonist of *À bout de souffle*, is a young criminal; in Chabrol’s film *Le beau Serge*, the eponymous protagonist is also young, and is forced to marry Yvonne because she is pregnant. Nevertheless, among them, Antoine Doinel is a prototype. Indeed, as Neupert comments, “[t]he two most universally recognized, iconic images of the New Wave would have to be Jean-Pierre L aud’s face in a freeze frame at the close of *The 400 Blows* and Jean-Paul Belmondo sauntering along the Champs  lyse s with Jean Seberg in *Breathless*” (161). Moreover, Antoine Doinel is also the most famous among the numerous young characters that feature in Truffaut’s films.

Truffaut’s Fluid Anti-Developments

Throughout his career, Truffaut showed a marked preference for young protagonists: from his early short *Les mistons* (*The Mischief Makers*, 1957), to *L’enfant sauvage* (*The Wild Child*, 1970) and *L’argent de poche* (*Small Change/Pocket Money*, 1976), as well as the Doinel cycle, of course. As Insdorf observes,

94 The film substantially contributed to the creation of the myth of Brigitte Bardot.

these films constitute a vision of childhood unequalled in the history of cinema for sensitivity, humor, poignancy, and respect for children themselves. With neither sentimentalism nor condescension, Truffaut captures the need for freedom and tenderness, the spontaneity and the frustrations of being a child in a society made by and for adults. (145)

In this way, Truffaut also equals his model Jean Vigo, “the only director to have rendered childhood with such poetic realism” (ibid.), notably in *Zéro de conduite* (1933).

Both in his articles and in his films, Truffaut “paid homage to the directors who ennobled ordinary experience, vulnerable individuals, daily language, and common emotions” (22). Children certainly count as vulnerable individuals, and “[t]he child in relation to society is, for Truffaut, the outsider par excellence” (151). Nevertheless, “Antoine Doinel, Victor (the wild child), and Julien in *Small Change* are doubly distanced because they are outsiders even to the ‘mini-society’ that children create for themselves in classrooms or playgrounds” (ibid.). This condition certainly reminds one of Stephen Dedalus’ peculiar childhood and youth. A passage from the episode of the trip to Cork, in *Portrait*, puts it very clearly:

He had known neither the pleasure of companionship with others nor the vigour of rude male health nor filial piety. Nothing stirred within his soul but a cold and cruel and loveless lust. His childhood was dead or lost and with it his soul capable of simple joys and he was drifting amid life like the barren shell of the moon. (*P* 102)

Indeed, another of the commonalities between Stephen and Antoine is their isolation. Moreover, as far as Antoine is concerned, the lack of affection for him and his solitude stand out as early as in *Les quatre cents coups*. Yet, before engaging in a closer analysis of Antoine, it is necessary for me to consider two later films by Truffaut that feature young adults: *Les deux anglaises et le continent* (*Two English Girls*, 1971) and *L’histoire d’Adèle H.* (*The Story of Adèle H.*, 1975). Apart from starring young characters who are vulnerable and, in some way, isolated, these films are relevant here for two more reasons: they are both directly connected to literature, although to different extents, and in both the sea holds a relevant symbolic and narrative function.

Les deux anglaises et le continent is an adaptation of the eponymous 1953 Henri-Pierre Roché novel (in 1956, Roché also published *Jules et Jim*, which Truffaut filmed in 1962). *L’histoire d’Adèle H.* is a biopic about the youngest daughter of Victor Hugo, one of the most popular French writers among the New-Wave directors, and for Truffaut in particular⁹⁵. The sea plays an important role in the film, as it did in Hugo’s life; and although Hugo was never a professional seafarer, sailing was one of his favourite leisure activities, paired by his marked predilection for maritime

95 After the birth of his son in *Domicile Conjugal*, Antoine Doinel solemnly declares: “He’ll be the writer I wanted to be. A Victor Hugo or nothing” (36:58”). Here Truffaut ironically plays on a famous declaration by Hugo himself, “I want to be a Chateaubriand or nothing,” but at the same time he clearly pays homage to the great writer.

literature (cf. Cohen *Novel* 190). More importantly, though, by the end of 1851, he went into exile on the Channel Island of Guernsey, where he lived with his family for over ten years. During that period he wrote, among other things, the novel *Les travailleurs de la mer* (*The Toilers of the Sea*, 1866), dedicated to the inhabitants of the island; this work, together with *Notre-Dame de Paris* (*The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, 1831) and *Les misérables* (1862), composes “a three-paneled triptych to different aspects of human ‘struggles’: with religion, with society, and with nature” (ibid.). Inner struggles, instead, tormented Hugo’s daughter Adèle who, in 1863, crossed the Atlantic Ocean against her family’s will, leaving Guernsey for Halifax in Nova Scotia.

In *Les deux anglaises*, the sea unites and at the same time separates the Parisian Claude (again played by Jean-Pierre Léaud) and the two English sisters Ann and Muriel. There are numerous and meaningful sequences set in Wales, in the cottage by the sea where the sisters live, and where Claude and Muriel fall in love. Theirs, though, is a union impeded by many factors: Muriel’s puritan upbringing, her introversion and determination, the refusal of Claude’s mother to consent to their union, and his short relationship with Ann. As Insdorf notes, Muriel “connects herself to water and [...] describes herself as ‘a river that rises and falls’” (128). Interestingly, the first time Claude and Muriel make love, many years after their first encounter, is in Calais. The busy and frenetic port, a crossing point that overlooks the water of the Channel, which in turn significantly divides France and England, serves as the background for an intensely longed-for but tormented union. On the other hand, the short and passionate love story between Claude and Ann, is set in an isolated place, by the calm and safe waters of a Swiss lake, in the centre of the continent. The numerous separations and re-encounters between the three protagonists mark the course of the film and determine the recurrent interruptions of the narrative rhythm, which therefore reflects their emotional perturbations. Many of these separations are imposed by the strong will of the mothers that, both for Claude and for the English sisters, exert a strong influence.

While for the protagonists of *Les deux anglaises*, who are orphans of the father, the paternal figure is overshadowed by that of the mother, in *L’histoire d’Adèle H.* the father of Adèle has a decisive command on her life. So much so that, although he is actually never shown, his presence is felt throughout the film. This film, which faithfully portrays the real life of Hugo’s daughter, is a testimony to Truffaut’s genuine interest in her story, and of his consideration for Hugo as a writer. As already pointed out in chapter two, Hugo’s work had an important influence on the transformations that interested sea literature in the late nineteenth century, thus also constituting a point of reference in the formation of fluid anti-developmental narratives. In this sense, it should be noted that the story of Adèle Hugo (both in reality and in the fictional adaptation) has significant similarities with that of (the fictional) Rachel Vinrace in Woolf’s *The Voyage Out*. Both young

women embark on a journey across the ocean and, on the American continent, both undergo an irrevocable transformation. Rachel dies in the port of Santa Marina, while Adèle loses her mental steadiness, first in Halifax and then on the Barbados Islands. Against the will of her family, and notably of her father, Adèle travels to America to follow Lieutenant Pinson, whom she madly loves, but who does not reciprocate her feelings. Therefore, as in many of the examples already commented on, in Adèle's case crossing the water does not represent the phase of a successful rite of passage, nor does it guarantee a normative linear development. While she eventually returns to Europe, she will never recover, and will spend the rest of her days in an asylum, as the voice-over at the end of Truffaut's film informs us.

Water often appears in dramatic scenes in the film. Indeed, the real Adèle Hugo feared water as a child, as Corbin reports:

Léopoldine Hugo [...] provides a minutely detailed description in her correspondence of the intense shock experienced by her younger sister, who bathed with her for the first time at Le Havre in September 1839. 'Dédé [Adèle] was terribly moved, she cried, shouted, trembled, scratched, and asked to go back so strongly that she was immediately taken back to her cabin, where she got dressed again.' A letter from Pierre Foucher indicates that the child finally managed in 1843 to overcome what her uncle considered to be faint-heartedness. (75)

In 1843, Adèle's older sister, Léopoldine, drowned at the age of nineteen. It could therefore be inferred that, if the young Adèle did at first get over her fear of bathing, as we learn from what Corbin reports, the tragic loss of the older sister in that same year probably brought back this repulsion. In Truffaut's film, the death of Léopoldine haunts the protagonist who, in her nightmares, seems to identify her sister's destiny. Adèle's sleep is often tormented by the images of herself drowning; images that, on the one hand, bring back the memory of her dead sister, but on the other, also significantly function as transpositions of her troubled emotional state. After Lieutenant Pinson refuses her, she notes in her diary:

At present, I want to think of my sisters who suffer in bordellos, and of my sisters who suffer in marriage. They must be given liberty and dignity, and thought for their brows and love in their hearts. I have the religion of love, I don't give my body without my soul nor my soul without my body. I'm still young, and yet it sometimes seems to me that I've reached the autumn of my life. (30:00"-30:40")

The "religion of love," though, becomes disastrous for Adèle, who eventually loses control of her own soul. As we learn from the woman who rescues her in Barbados, "[s]orrow has broken her, body and soul. If her body is now healed, her soul is perhaps lost" (1:29:54"-1:30:00").

On taking the audacious decision to cross the ocean, Adèle writes in her diary "This incredible thing that a young girl should step over the ocean, leave the old world for the new world

to join her lover; this thing I will accomplish” (1:31':56"-1:32':07"). In the film, these words are triumphantly uttered by Adèle facing the open sea she is about to cross. Significantly, though, this scene appears as a flashback at the end of the film, when we already know that, while she did find her lover, she did not join him, and was eventually brought back to the “old world;” in this way, her failure is further emphasised, and the ocean stands out “as the realm of the absolute and impossible” (Insdorf 134).

This last sequence importantly links Adèle to Antoine Doinel, “another character who yearns for the sea, but must stop, frozen, at the shore” (140). From a narrative and stylistic point of view, it is interesting to note that both films end with the close up of the protagonist. While Antoine’s face is immortalised in the freeze frame, in *L’histoire d’Adèle H.* the use of black and white in a film that is otherwise in colour⁹⁶ ideally consigns Adèle’s image to the past, crystallised in the moment in which she declares her original intent. As noted by Insdorf, “[t]he impulse for both Antoine and Adèle can be summed up in the title of the Balzac story that led the boy to worship the author: *La Recherche de l’absolu* (the search for the absolute),” which nevertheless “cannot be sustained in the arena of daily experience” (134). Still, both Adèle and Antoine persist in their search.

4.3. The Case of Antoine Doinel’s Centripetal *Fugue*

In his desire to express himself in an absolute way, Antoine recalls Stephen Dedalus who, in *Portrait*, famously declares: “I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as *freely* as I can and as *wholly* as I can” (*P* 268-269; emphasis added). Like Stephen, Antoine elects the written word as his principal tool for the achievement of freedom, at least of expression. The motif of writing recurs throughout Truffaut’s films, where the “consistent overlapping of experience with the articulation of it reinforces the degree to which they feed upon each other” (Insdorf 91). To mention but a few examples, there are several exchanges of letter both among the protagonists of *Les deux anglaises* and between Adèle and her parents. In addition, Claude writes a novel about a woman who loves two men, *Jerome et Julien*⁹⁷, in which he indirectly recounts his complicated relationships with the two English sisters; Adèle writes a personal journal, as does Dr Itard (played by Truffaut) in *L’enfant sauvage*, who records the child’s progresses. Finally, Victor, the wild child himself, learns how to write his name, thus performing the passage “from savagery into

96 With the exception of photos that accompany the voice-over in some moments of the film, such as images of Victor Hugo’s funeral.

97 Which is, incidentally, also a fictional transposition of Roché’s novel *Jules et Jim* that, as seen, has been adapted by Truffaut in 1962.

civilization” (Insdorf 131) by means of language. Interestingly, for Adèle, daughter of *another* Victor, the opposite is true, and her “gradual movement *away* from humanity,” is “enacted through language” (ibid.). Particularly in the letters to her parents, “Adèle lies about who she is, splitting herself into a number of identities, each one appropriate for an occasion”⁹⁸ (132).

If Adèle’s written words replace her real identity, in the Doinel films, the act of writing often stands out as Antoine’s main means of intellectual, and emotional, expression. A significant example is his marriage proposal to Christine, at the end of *Baisers volés*, which is posed by exchanging short messages written in a small notebook, and sealed with a bottle opener as engagement ring. His particular inclination for writing is developed, as early as in *Les quatre cents coups*, through his great passion for literature; a passion that Antoine shares with Truffaut. Indeed, beside the novels that Antoine so passionately reads, in the Doinel films there are numerous (more or less direct) references to literary works that had inspired Truffaut.

Apart from Truffaut’s fondness for Balzac in general, and for *Le Lys dans la vallée* in particular, *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* (*The Count of Monte-Cristo*, 1844) by Alexandre Dumas père should not be forgotten, as it was also inspiring for the young Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait*. While there is only a very brief reference to the novel in the short *Antoine et Colette*, in my view, it is a meaningful one. The panoramic shot that opens the second Doinel episode allows for a glimpse of a poster advertising a film adaptation of *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo* in the cinema next to Antoine’s apartment. A leading motif of Dumas’ novel is certainly that of revenge and of the liberation from a condition of entrapment. This sense of redemption and of control is also conveyed in the opening scene of Truffaut’s *Antoine et Colette* by means of the image of Antoine looking down from the window of his apartment onto the streets of Paris (he lives on one of the upper floor of a tall building). As the voice-over explains,

Antoine Doinel is now twenty⁹⁹ [*seventeen*], his adolescent pranks brought him before the judge. After escaping from the [reform school], he feels free. Antoine carefully organised a solitary and independent life. A music lover, he works in a record house. He finally fulfilled his adolescent’s dream to live alone, work and earn a salary, and depend only on himself (2’:30"-2’:51").

Nevertheless, he soon ‘falls’¹⁰⁰ from this position, putting in question his very freedom.

Another reference to a literary work can be found in the third Doinel film, *Baisers volés*.

98 Moreover, although it is not stressed in the film, the language Adèle Hugo used in her personal diary was cryptic, and the text was decoded only decades after her death (cf. Insdorf 139).

99 Probably in keeping with the title of the omnibus film, *Love at Twenty*, in which Truffaut’s short is included, here the subtitles indicate “twenty” as Antoine’s age in *Antoine et Colette*, nevertheless the voice-over says “seventeen.”

100 In the middle of the short, there is a clear reference to Antoine’s fall: in the darkness of a cinema hall, while watching a newsreel about a sky race, Antoine tries to kiss Colette who rejects him. His disappointment is transposed in the image of the skier who falls during the race.

Here Truffaut took inspiration from Anatole France's novel *Le livre de mon ami* (*My Friend's Book*, 1885). The film scene is an almost literal transposition of an episode narrated in the novel, in which the young protagonist Pierre Nozière, an autobiographical projection of the author, tells about his attraction to M.me Gance, a friend of his mother's. The episode takes place during a reception organised by Pierre's parents; after having performed one of Chopin's *Nocturnes* on the piano, M.me Gance asks the boy, enraptured by her talent and beauty, if he was fond of music: "I opened my eyes and I saw that she was looking at me. That look was my undoing. "Yes, sir," I answered in confusion" (France 164). Similarly, after a lunch at Mr. Tabard's, Antoine's boss in *Baisers volés*, M.me Tabard asks Antoine if he liked music, and Antoine, who in her presence can hardly speak, abruptly answers "*oui monsieur*." His embarrassment is such that he runs away at once, dashing down the stairs and leaving the house; and of course also openly revealing his infatuation with the woman.

In France's novel, though, the protagonist recounts a few pages later: "Six months after the frightful occurrence I have just related to you, I [...] was sent by my father for a holiday in the country," in Saint Patrice,

a little village on the coast of Normandy. Behind it is a forest, and on the seaward side it slopes gently down towards a sandy beach hemmed in between two cliffs. At the time of which I am speaking this beach was wild and lonely. The sea, which I then beheld for the first time; and the woods, whose peace was so healing, so benign, sent me into ecstasies. The dim expanse of woods and waters harmonized with the vague promptings of my soul. (166-167)

Much like Antoine at the end of *Les quatre cents coups*, Pierre discovers the sea for the first time at the northern French coast, in what is for him a completely new environment. Both characters are confronted by the sea while they are 'escaping', although they try to flee from very different situations. Indeed, for both, the maritime dimension is a source of fascination, representing an ideal or a destination to which they strive. When Pierre was a child, his grandmother, for whom he felt a special affection, "promised [him] that [he] should have a ship, a ship with rigging, sails, and guns at the port-holes" (France 52). And although he never owned that ship, he has fantasised about it for many years (cf. 53). So much so that the idea of the ship eventually became inextricably linked to the very memory of his beloved grandmother¹⁰¹: "I could see it then; I see it now. It is a toy no more, but a phantom. Silently it floats upon a misty sea, and upon its deck, lo! a woman is at her side, gazing before her with great, hollow eyes" (53). The "ecstasies" (167) and fascination aroused in Pierre by the sea (either imagined or experienced in person) are also found in the character of Antoine. Nevertheless, for Antoine, the maritime dimension repeatedly confirms itself as something

101 Significantly, the grandmother dies on board a ship while crossing the Atlantic Ocean (cf. France 59).

he longs for, but that he cannot really achieve; very much like Stephen Dedalus.

Indeed, Truffaut's homage to Anatole France is also relevant here because, as already mentioned, Joyce knew and greatly "respected" France's works (cf. Ellmann 373). As Richard Ellmann informs, "Joyce wrote Stanislaus that Anatole France had given him the idea for both stories ["Ivy Day" and "The Dead"]" (252). On another occasion, praising Italo Svevo, his Triestine friend and writer, Joyce commented: "Do you know that you are a neglected writer? There are passages in *Senilità* that even Anatole France could not have improved" (qt. 272). Although, to my knowledge, there is no evidence of Joyce actually having read *Le livre de mon ami*, an amusingly odd as well as meaningful every-day incident such as the 'oui-monsieur' episode' would have certainly caught Joyce's attention; indeed, his works are abundantly filled with such particular, everyday situations.

Apart from the account on Antoine's (and Truffaut's) literary preferences, Antoine's authorial aspirations become reality in *Domicile conjugal*, in which he starts writing a semi-autobiographical novel, which will be published in the final film, *L'amour en fuite* with the title *Les salades de l'amour*. Nevertheless, Antoine's writings, his talent and the expressive power of his written word (that is, ultimately, his creative capacities) are repeatedly put in doubt or neglected. This is another point in common with Stephen, whose artistic expressions are often misinterpreted or rejected. As far as Antoine is concerned, a telling example is the argument he has with Colette about his novel in *L'amour en fuite*, with Colette repeatedly contesting the accuracy of Antoine's versions of the events, particularly in regard to their relationship. Other significant examples, though, can be found in the previous films such as, for instance, the infamous plagiarism episode in *Les quatre cents coups*, in which Antoine quotes word for word a passage from Balzac's *La Recherche de l'absolu* in his French composition. Throughout the cycle, Antoine also sends dozens of letters and private messages, which often have an effect much greater than what he had originally presumed (as for instance in the case of the letters he sends to his parents in *Les quatre cents coups*), yield misinterpretation, or, in some cases, are not even read or answered. In *Antoine et Colette*, his love letter to Colette is treated rather coldly, thus confirming that his love is not reciprocated. In *Baisers volés*, we learn that while he was serving in the army, Antoine wrote so many letters to Christine (nineteen in a week!) that she could not answer all of them. Later on in the film, the message via *poste pneumatique* that he sends to M.me Tabard reveals his admiration and desire for her, and their meeting will ultimately cost him his job. Conversely, in *Domicile conjugal* a letter of recommendation gains him a job, but the letter had been written for someone else.

The relationship with language and the written word in particular, is of decisive importance

for Antoine.¹⁰² It develops in meaningful ways throughout his childhood and adolescence, thus becoming pivotal in the creation of his identity. Insdorf observes that in *Baisers volés* “Truffaut [...] uses repetition of writing motifs to signal Antoine’s growth” (74), yet, I would add, with a marked irony. Indeed, as Truffaut himself declared, “I would be lying if I said that Antoine Doinel was successful in his transformation into an adult. He has not become a real adult, he is someone in whom there remains a good deal of childhood” (*T by T* 166). Still, even if Antoine does not become a “real adult,” he obviously undergoes an evolution from *Les quatre cents coups* on. In analysing and presenting this evolution, as in the case of Stephen Dedalus, I pay particular attention to stylistic elements and recurring motifs, as well as to the presence and role of the sea. Before focussing on this spatial dimension, though, it is necessary for me to consider, more in general, Antoine’s relationship with the space he lives in, and his movements.

Although Antoine constantly moves within Paris, he very seldom leaves the city. While, at the end of *Les quatre cents coups*, Antoine is on the northern French coast, he soon returns to the capital, as we learn at the beginning of *Antoine et Colette*. This return to the ‘original centre’ is certainly reminiscent of Stephen’s return to Dublin at the beginning of *Ulysses*. Unlike Stephen, however, Antoine never openly expresses the need to leave the city or the country to mature artistically and express himself “freely” and “wholly” (cf. *P* 269). Nevertheless, in Paris he repeatedly ends up within the threads of numerous *nets*, to use a Dedalian/Joycean term. Like Stephen, who on leaving Ireland, breaks free from the “nets [...] that hold [his soul] back from flight” (*P* 220), in the final scene of *Les quatre cents coups*, Antoine escapes from the reform school by sneaking out of the net that delimits it. However, once back in Paris, although he does not live with his family, but alone, and he does not go to school, but he works to earn his money, he is still entangled within the constraints of society, in his unrequited love for Colette, and in the recurrent memory of his unhappy family situation, notably through the comparison with the caring family of Colette.

The most common image of Antoine is that of him running or wandering around the streets of the city. In his presentation of the mental image, Deleuze notes that the types of movement that prevail in the urban space are “the stroll, the voyage and the continual return journey” (*Cinema I* 208); these assume a specific relevance with regard to Antoine. In particular, as Karin Egloff comments in her monograph *Les adolescents dans le cinéma français* (2007),

Le concept de l’errance est cher aux adolescents qui se plaisent à explorer l’espace à la recherche d’un endroit où s’installer, un endroit différent de la symbolique sphère privée du

102 Overall, as Insdorf points out, “one of the reasons why Truffaut is so continually drawn to childhood is that it constitutes the origin of language acquisition” (168).

foyer. La sphère est un cercle intime, mais c'est aussi un cercle étouffant, un cercle vicieux. Les bienfaits de l'espace ouvert sont les prémisses de l'affirmation d'une certaine liberté et d'un certain *mouvement* du désir.¹⁰³ (7)

Antoine's constant "wandering" is therefore induced by the need to find his own dimension within space. Nevertheless, because he is "neglected by parents and mistreated by teachers" (Insdorf 152), he "is cut off – and therefore cuts himself off – from the two 'insides' where most children identities are formed home and classroom" (ibid.).

The sense of Antoine's "movement of desire" (Egloff 7) is also described by the camera: as Insdorf notes, "[i]nteriors are seen as enclosures of loveless authority, conveyed by a relatively static camera. Exterior shots contain panning, tracking, and the visual lightness that corresponds to the character's mobility in the setting" (152). The sequence on the train in *L'amour en fuite*, when Antoine meets Colette, is particularly meaningful. The train and the closed (somehow stifling) space of the wagon repeatedly appear in Truffaut's films. As Insdorf notes, it "serves to heighten the sense of stasis in movement, of a passenger's suspension as the world speeds past" (62). Moreover, the flashbacks that occur in the scene in *L'amour en fuite*, enhance not only the movement in space, but also in time. In the sequence in question,

[t]he flashbacks that begin in the train are particularly dynamic because, when we come back to the present, we are in a train in motion and thus all caught up in something moving ahead. That is the special pleasure we get from those films I call 'unrolling films'. Everyone knows that a film is an unrolling, unwinding ribbon. Because of that, films taking place entirely in a train, like Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*, or on a raft like Herzog's *Aguirre*, give us a special pleasure because it's cinema to the second power. (Truffaut *T by T* 168)

The "sense of stasis in movement" (Insdorf 62) in this train scene is also emphasised by the fact that this is one of the few instances in which Antoine is moving away from Paris, yet, as we know, his journey ends abruptly, and he will return to the capital.

As I will further highlight in the next chapter, the strong contrast between interior and exterior spaces also stands out in the representation of Stephen, who, like Antoine, perceives both the home and the school as "enclosures of loveless authority" (152). The domestic dimension in *Portrait* becomes less comforting and less intimate as the Dedaluses become poorer, and are thus constantly forced to change address. In *Ulysses*, Stephen is hardly ever at home; he leaves his room in the Martello Tower by the end of the first episode, firmly convinced that he would not spend the night there, and, after we last see him in "Ithaca," we actually do not know where he will eventually

103 My translation: "The concept of wandering is dear to adolescents, who take pleasure in exploring space in search of a place where they can establish themselves, a place that is different from the symbolic private sphere of the home. The sphere is an intimate circle, but it is also a stifling circle, a vicious circle. The benefits of the open space are the premises of the affirmation of a certain freedom and of a certain *mouvement* of desire."

go. Both Stephen and Antoine, therefore, seem to find in the urban space a dimension that could contrast the oppressive atmosphere of closed spaces. Nevertheless, for both, the city eventually becomes yet another enclosure within which they move without rest. Therefore, they look for “[l]es bienfaits de l'espace ouvert” (Egloff 7) elsewhere; and the most significant open space is, for both, the sea.

In Antoine’s case, the end of *Les quatre cents coups* constitutes the culmination of a series of references to the sea. These occur throughout the film, becoming more frequent toward the end, and coinciding with a stronger emotional and narrative tension. As noted above, in many of Truffaut’s films, water and the presence of the sea often acquire a decisive meaning, especially in relation to children, adolescents, and young adults. However, considering the centrality of the maritime environment and imagery for Stephen Dedalus, an objection that could be advanced is that in the *Adventures of Antoine Doinel* the scenes by the sea and/or the references to the marine environment are fewer than in *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, if compared on a strictly quantitative level. Nevertheless, the immediacy of the cinematic image, together with the employment of specific filming techniques, enhance the visual and narrative impact of even seemingly minor maritime or ‘aquatic’ details. Moreover, the last sequence of *Les quatre cents coups* is not only suggestive on a purely visual level, but it also confers an important connotation to the maritime references that precede and, in the other Doinel episodes, that follow it.

In *Les quatre cents coups*, the sea is generally referred to as a place that Antoine longs for, as if it epitomised his strongest desires, in particular his desire for freedom. Before the final sequence, however, the marine dimension is something he can only fantasise about because, as we learn from a conversation with his friend Renè, Antoine has never seen the sea (and has probably never left Paris yet). After having received a zero (that is, the lowest mark) in French composition, and having fled from school, Antoine does not dare to go back home, convinced that his father would send him to an academy, “something military” (*LQC* 54':10"), he explains to Renè. His friend remarks that at least in this way he “would have a uniform and a future” (54':12"-54':15"), but Antoine is not interested into that: “No thanks! If only it were the Navy¹⁰⁴! I’d like to see the ocean [I’ve never seen it]” (54':15"-54':22"). Later on, planning (and daydreaming about) an ideal future, he proposes to Renè to “find a beach, open a boat business” so that “no one will bother us!” (1:01':44"-1:01':48").

The image of a beach is again alluded to in a scene set at school, one of the places in which Antoine feels most entrapped, during an English lesson. By pure chance, Antoine has got to know

104 However, as we learn at the beginning of *Baisers volés*, Antoine eventually enrolls in the Army (oddly enough, as a volunteer), although he is discharged soon afterwards.

that his father is not his biological father, and he has also had a harsh quarrel with his parents because of the lie he has told about the death of his mother. In response, he sends his parents a letter, explaining that he will not return home. The school scene in question takes place on the following day, after Antoine has spent the night in a printing house. At school, the boys practice their English pronunciation, and have to repeat the sentences “Where is the father?” and “The girl is on the beach.” Although this sequence has an overall ironic tone, the subtext implied in these two sentences clearly refers to two of the film’s leading motifs: Antoine’s complicated family situation, and in particular his relationship with his father, and his wish to be independent, as projected in the image of the sea. While the teacher is repeating “The girl is on the beach,” trying to correct the pronunciation of a boy who keeps repeating “bitch” instead, the arrival of Antoine’s mother interrupts the lesson. For the first (and only) time in the film, she is worried about her son, whom she has not seen since the day before, and she demonstrates affection for him.

The references to the sea become more frequent in the last part of the film, as the tension gradually grows after Antoine is arrested for stealing of a typewriter. Shortly after the English lesson scene, the reference from Bergman’s *Sommaren med Monika* indirectly links back to a marine setting and to a desire for freedom (and to another “girl on the beach”). When, after Antoine’s arrest, the judge decides he should be sent to a reform school, his mother requests that he be sent to one by the sea (cf. *LQC* 1:20:53"). The moment in which Antoine has his first glimpse of the ocean should therefore (also symbolically) coincide with the achievement of his desires. Yet in this very moment, he also seems to realise that these desires, just as the texture of water itself, are not easy to define or to grasp.

In this sense it is correct to note, as Insdorf does in relation to Adèle Hugo, that at the end of *Les quatre cents coups*, the ocean represents “the realm of the absolute and impossible” (134), which Antoine seems to long for throughout the whole cycle. Antoine’s love of Balzac’s tale *La recherche de l’absolu* is indicative in this sense, as is the destruction by fire of the altar he build in devotion to Balzac: if water symbolises the goal of Antoine’s search, fire seems to erase it¹⁰⁵. The motif of the search for the absolute is proposed again in *Domicile Conjugal* where Antoine, in his job as a flower dyer, strives in vain to obtain “Absolute Red.” After failing to do so, he finds a job

105 In Joyce’s *Portrait* there is an analogous opposition between water and fire. In what is known as the “Fire Sermon,” which constitutes a substantial part of the third chapter of the novel, fire stands out as the force that, through suffering, would purify Stephen from his sins. However, the sea, and water in general, repeatedly symbolise or describe Stephen’s yearnings and desires. When, in the fifth chapter, he composes the villanelle, the protagonist of his composition, “the temptress,” appears to him, and “[h]er nakedness [...] enfolded him like a water with a liquid life: and like a cloud of vapour or like waters circumfluent in space the liquid letters of speech, symbols of the elements of mystery, flowed forth over his brain” (P 242). The ‘liquid images’ in this intense passage refer at the same time to the sensual experience of the seduction (or ‘temptation’), thus also connecting water to sexual fluids, and to the fluidity of Stephen’s stream of thoughts during the creative act.

in a hydraulic company run by the American Mr. Max¹⁰⁶. Antoine's task consists of manoeuvring model-boats in a model-harbour; an occupation that vaguely recalls, but by no means corresponds to the ideal life Antoine had dreamt about with Renè.

Still, the site of the model harbour where Antoine works is the set for some important scenes in the film. Here, for instance, Antoine receives the news of the birth of his son. Here he also meets Kyoko, the Japanese girl he has an affair with, an affair that causes the first separation from Christine. Throughout the film, the model boats manoeuvred by Antoine somehow replicate his (physical but also emotional) movements. As Antoine and Kyoko leave the site of the model-harbour on their first meeting, two small boats are seen moving side by side. In the following scene, it is Kyoko who briefly manoeuvres the boats, and on this occasion she also (intentionally?) drops her bracelet in the pond. This will be the pretext for their first private encounter, as Antoine will, quite literally, fish it up and bring it back to her the following day. Another short sequence that precedes the first intimate meeting with Kyoko shows Antoine manoeuvring two boats that clash, thereby predicting the imminent clash with Christine¹⁰⁷. When she finds out about Antoine's affair with Kyoko, a very short scene shows the model of the harbour at the hydraulic company, and thunder is heard in the background.

Of all these references to the marine environment throughout the cycle, however, the last scene of *Les quatre cents coups* is pivotal. Apart from the connotation it gives to the maritime references in the other Doinel films, its visual composition and impact also influence the perception of Antoine's evolution throughout. The choice of the setting and the use of the freeze frame particularly illustrate the condition of permanent liminality (cf. Figures 6-9).

As in the case of Stephen, this state is most effectively rendered in scenes on the shore, itself a permanently liminal space. As I shall elaborate on in the next chapter, I contend that the function of the freeze frame at the end of *Les quatre cents coups* is akin to the so-called Joycean epiphany. And indeed, the condition of "permanent liminality," as Szakolczai maintains, corresponds to the specific case in which the phase of a rite of passage "becomes frozen, as if a film had stopped at a particular frame" (212). Indeed, this most fitting comparison reaffirms the importance of the freeze-frame.

This is not, however, the first freeze-frame in *Les quatre cents coups*, as there were two mugshots taken at the police station after Antoine's arrest, which immortalise his face on the screen.

106 Although, as already mentioned, Antoine obtains the job by mistake. The recommendation letter that convinces Mr Max to hire him was actually written for someone else. This detail ironically underlines the inefficacy of the written word. Let alone the fact that the very job interview is reduced to a series of misunderstandings and odd interactions; contrary to what is proudly praised in the recommendation letter, Antoine's English is indeed poor.

107 Incidentally, after they argue, Antoine leaves the house, and rents a room in the same building he lived in at the beginning of *Antoine et Colette*.

By the time he is arrested, Antoine has already gained the freedom he longed for; expelled from school, he has left home. Nevertheless, the arrest blocks his flight towards freedom. When he flees from the reform school in the final sequence, and therefore (again) gains his freedom, his flight is arrested once more in the concluding freeze-frame. This detail hints at the fact that, as seen in the analysis of Stephen's evolution, a series of climactic and anti-climactic moments recur throughout the narration, thus giving an idea of the uneven and non-linear evolution of the character. The repetition of scenes, particularly by means of flashbacks, as well as the use of close-ups and freeze-frames, help rendering Antoine's fluid evolution, while at the same time modifying the perception of the narrative space and time¹⁰⁸. In this sense, the scene set in the amusement park, and in particular the sequence of Antoine in the rotor, requires further attention.

The apparently unstoppable movement of the rotor counterpoises the immobility of the freeze-frames that appear later on in the film, which in turn emphasise Antoine's forced immobility. Furthermore, inserted as a flashback at the end of *L'amour en fuite*, when Antoine is, or should be, mature, the scene becomes representative of a "good deal of childhood" (Truffaut *T by T* 166) that has remained in Antoine even in his supposedly adult years. The past, evoked by the 'rotor-flashback' in *L'amour en fuite*, has to be considered in parallel with the present of the film's last scene. This shows Antoine, now officially divorced from Christine, reconciling with his girlfriend Sabine. The last dialogue of the film, and Antoine's very last words in the whole Doinel cycle, are significantly spoken to a mirror. The reflection in the mirror is reminiscent of the last scene of *Les quatre cents coups*, insofar as the expanse of the ocean, the "mirror of the sea," induces the young Antoine to realise the uncertainty of his situation, as his puzzled look to the camera tellingly reveals. Similarly, in the last scene of *L'amour en fuite*, Antoine and Sabine address the camera as they talk to each other in the mirror, and they reflect upon themselves and their relationship:

S: You sure fooled me. If only I had known. Why didn't you tell me sooner?

A: I've concealed my feelings all my life. I've always been evasive.

S: You don't trust anyone

A: I trust you, Sabine, I really do.

S: There's no way to knowing if it will last, though.

A: Why not?

S: It might. Let's pretend.

A: Yes, [let's pretend]

S: [And then] We'll see

A: Yes, We'll see!

(1:27':14"-1:27':37")

108 As seen in the analysis of Stephen's evolution (in 3.4.), Joyce obtains an analogous effect not only through the repetitions of sentences, phrases, and words, but also through images and motifs evoked in particularly meaningful moments.

Once again, then, Antoine openly accepts the idea of *acting as if* the relationship with Sabine could work; yet the direct allusion to Antoine as a child through the rotor-flashback confirms that he has failed, and is failing, to conform to the role (of mature adult, father, and husband) he is supposed to 'perform'. The "whirling of Antoine's ride in the amusement park" (Insdorf 176), which Insdorf reads as a transposition of his "desire for flight" (ibid.), also underlines this failure.

As Insdorf's monograph on Truffaut was published in 1978, one year before *L'amour en fuite* was released, she was not able to discuss the rotor sequence as a flashback in the final scene of this last film¹⁰⁹. Nevertheless, in her analysis she compares "[t]he Truffautesque impulse to both capture and animate" with the "texture" (ibid.) of John Keats's famous *Ode to the Nightingale*, where the desire to fly ("Away! Away! For I will fly to thee") is hindered ("Though the dull brain perplexes and retards..."). Thus, probably unintentionally, by placing side by side Antoine's desires and Keats' invocations, Insdorf also indirectly links Antoine to Stephen. Indeed, the famous lines from the *Ode to the Nightingale* are clearly alluded to by Stephen when, at the end of *Portrait*, he is about to leave Ireland¹¹⁰. As Insdorf suggests, the whirling of Antoine implicitly evokes the "desire for flight" (176) expressed in the Keatsian lines, and the same lines are probably intentionally quoted by Stephen when he takes the definitive decision to 'fly' away from his home country, following on the heels of "the hawk-like man whose name he bore soaring out of his captivity on osier-woven wings" (P 244).

The reference to Dedalus, the "old artificer" (P 276), and to the myth of Icarus, with whom Stephen obviously identifies, is also pertinent in regard to Antoine Doinel. In particular, as Truffaut explains, the episode of *Antoine et Colette* is supposed to "illustrate the moral: one risks everything by wanting too much" (*T by T* 79). And indeed, although Antoine is apparently in a position of control over his life at the beginning of the short, he soon 'falls' and has to come to term with the difficulties of life 'at street level'. In the closing sequence, the camera, accordingly, frames the last close-up on Antoine's face from above, thus clearly reversing the impression communicated at the beginning, and depicting him as vulnerable, rather than in control of his life.

One last important aspect concerning the rotor-ride sequence is the circular movement it evokes, and the repetition that is implied in the cyclical recurrence of an act, an emotion, a circumstance, or a behaviour, etc... Circularity and repetition are pivotal in Joyce's work, and in the

109 As a matter of fact, in a following edition of her monograph, *François Truffaut: Revised and Updated Edition* (1994), she does comment on this flashback. Still, she does not read it so much as a confirmation of Antoine's protracted adolescence, but rather as "an image of the cinema itself, as the rotor recalls the kinetoscope (precursor of film). The dizzying visual rhythm blends past and present, characters and camera, kinetics and kisses – and the love of images on the run" (230).

110 The beginning of his diary entry on the 16th of April reads: "Away! Away! The spell of arms and voices: the white arms of roads, their promise of close embraces and the black arms of tall ships that stand against the moon, their tale of distant nations." (P 275)

characterisation of Stephen in particular, yet they also play a central role for Antoine; not only the repetition of particular acts in time, but also that of a centripetal, non-linear, fluid movement in space, in turn connected to an analogous emotional fluidity. Therefore, as the analysis of both Stephen and Antoine have shown, the manipulation of narrative time and space is strictly related to the formation of the characters' identity, as the insertion of the rotor-flashback at the end of *L'amour en fuite* demonstrates.

In conclusion, the importance of editing techniques, or montage, not only in cinema, but also in (modernist) literature is worth of scrutiny. Indeed, as shall be discussed in the next chapter, the use of specific editing techniques not only has an influence on the representation and connotation of narrative time and space, but also on the representation of the main characters and, more broadly, the reception of the story by readers and film-goers. The analysis I propose in the next chapter starts from these considerations, and it develops by focussing on the most important commonalities between Stephen Dedalus and Antoine Doinel, paying particular attention to the way in which they are filtered, both through the narrating voice and through the lens of the camera.

5. Towards a Common Style: Merging Literary and Cinematic Language

The characterisations of Stephen Dedalus and Antoine Doinel are interconnected with the specific narrative and editing techniques that Joyce and Truffaut respectively employ. My main aim in this, the concluding chapter, is to identify the most important common narrative techniques in the texts in which the two characters appear, and to observe in which ways these techniques contribute in connoting the evolution of the characters as fluid. This comparative analysis is aimed at illustrating the main characteristics of fluid anti-developmental narratives, taking the two fictional characters of Stephen and Antoine as representatives of them. The specific themes and motifs that define this narrative category will be treated by focussing on the structural patterns of the texts in question.

The chapter is divided into two main sections, dedicated to the categories of space and time. First of all, I consider the choice of settings, the characters' movements within them and their relationship with their surrounding environments. In the second section, I concentrate on the use of editing devices that alter the reader's and viewer's perception of narrative time, and on their function and effect on the development of the story and on the characterisation of the protagonists. In the concluding section of the analysis, the emphasis will fall once more on the rich complexity that connotes the spatial dimension of the seashore, particularly fruitful for the definition of fluid anti-developmental narratives.

As illustrated in the previous chapters, I focus on the fictional figures of young Stephen Dedalus and young Antoine Doinel to highlight the composite net of symbolic, thematic, and stylistic interconnections that link literary Modernism and the French New-Wave cinema. The hybrid and transformational figure of the adolescent is indeed an apt metaphor for the innovative force and the experimental character that connote these two important artistic movements. Moreover, the characters of Stephen and Antoine were created by Joyce and Truffaut early in their careers, and left a significant mark on their aesthetics and poetics. The ways in which literary and cinematic languages are used and articulated by the two authors bear striking resemblances, which can best be singled out by closely analysing the construction of their texts. As a starting point, it is therefore appropriate for me to consider the formal function of montage (or editing); indeed, the very word 'montage' derives from the French verb 'monter', which can be literally translated as 'to assemble', 'to build', or 'to put together'.

Although montage is generally considered typically cinematic, it does play a pivotal role in literature, and particularly in modernist literature. This is in large part determined by the important

mutual influences between the two media, as demonstrated in the previous chapter. The manner in which the succession of words and sentences are structured in a novel, as well as the succession of shots and scenes in a film, have a decisive influence on the readers' and viewers' reception of a text, thus also importantly affecting the characters' representations. Although (cinematic) montage permits the reproduction of movements and mental associations with great accuracy and verisimilitude, as the reception of the image is more immediate than that of the written word, modernist prose succeeds in getting as close as the written word possibly could to the rhythm of the cinematic image. Furthermore, both in cinema and in literature, montage makes a significant contribution to the overall tone and style of the text.

The pioneering editing experiments carried out by the Russian filmmaker Lev Kuleshov in the late 1910s and 1920s are an excellent demonstration of this. His name is most famously linked to the so-called "Kuleshov Effect," which is obtained by alternately juxtaposing the same close-up of an actor's face with different images. In one of his best-known experiments, he alternated the rather inexpressive facial close-up of a male actor with a plate of soup, a dead child, and an attractive woman. Depending on the image that followed the close-up, the expression of the actor would respectively communicate hunger, pity, or attraction. Importantly, these experiments were contemporaneous with the development of literary Modernism. As seen, a characterising feature of modernist texts is to interrupt and/or guide the narration by means of 'interferences' that, ultimately, reveal the presence and agency of the author, who is therefore responsible for the montage. Joyce's *Ulysses* is an indicative example in this sense: each episode has a distinguishing tone and style, because each one has been 'assembled' in a distinguishing way, so much so that to the expert *Ulysses* reader, a single paragraph can be enough to identify the episode in question.

The choice of words and the order with which sentences are put together in a literary text determine the writer's individual style. Similarly, in cinema, the ways in which the director "allow[s] the camera to be felt," to use Pasolini's words (*HE* 183), influence the spectator's perception of single frames and successions of shots, ultimately determining the director's style. In this regard, in his widely quoted essay on "The Evolution of Film Language" (1958), Bazin observes that "the signs and the principles of the evolution" of this language "must be sought [...] in the renewal of subject-matter and, in consequence, of the styles that were needed to express it" (73). Bazin refers in particular to the introduction, in and about 1940, of composition in depth¹¹¹. This technique, of which Jean Renoir and Orson Welles were pioneers and masters (cf. 77-78), is widely considered "a vital contribution to *mise en scène*: a dialectical advance in the history of film

111 Composition in depth is obtained by means of specific types of lenses, which allow the complete frame, including the background, to be in focus.

language” (84). Indeed, “it affects not only the structure of the film language but also the intellectual relationship between the spectator and the image, thus actually modifying the meaning of the film” (ibid.). What happens with editing, which produces meaning by juxtaposing individual images, is that such meaning is not to be found “*in* the image, but is merely a shadow of it, projected by the editing on the consciousness of the spectator” (67). Conversely, with composition in depth, which focusses in equal manner on all the elements that appear in the frame, the spectator is granted more liberty as to what to concentrate on, and can thus also derive more personal interpretations.

In other words, “[c]omposition in depth [...] brings ambiguity back into the structure of the image” (85), notably in the cinema of Welles, of Renoir, and of the Italian Neorealist directors (cf. ibid.), all of which in turn had an important influence on the *nouvelle-vague*. The factual, documentary-like character of many *nouvelle-vague* films (and, before them, of Varda’s work), allows for the introduction of numerous details that may seem to have no substantial role in the narrative development. Two brief scenes from two Doinel films will serve as examples. In *Antoine et Colette*, taking advantage of the fact that Antoine works at Philips’, Truffaut inserts a sequence in which he shows all the steps necessary for the production of a LP record. In *Baisers volés*, the viewer can follow the ‘journey’ of the letter that Antoine sends to M.me Tabard via *poste pneumatique* in a succession of shots of the underground pneumatic tubes. This sequence is also curiously reminiscent of a passage in the “Ithaca” episode of *Ulysses*, in which the ‘journey’ of the water from “Roundwood reservoir in county Wicklow of a cubic capacity of 2400 million gallons” (*U* 17. 164-165) all the way to Bloom’s “faucet” (17.162) is described in great detail.

Indeed, such a rethinking of priorities as to what can be included in the narration, and in particular the notion of an egalitarian and ambiguous composition, can be linked back to modernist literature. Numerous modernist texts include in the narration those trivial and minor details of every-day life that usually did not appear in novels and short stories. *Ulysses*, for instance, is certainly characterised by the abundance of long lists of objects and names, gestures, bizarre associations of thoughts, and so on. All these seemingly meaningless aspects actually reveal something about the psychological and emotional state of the characters; this, ultimately, is what constitutes much of the new subject-matter of modernist texts. Furthermore, this is also what characterises the cinema of the second post-war decades, when the crisis of the “action-image” (cf. Deleuze *Cinema 1*) favours the affirmation of the “mental image,” which in turn can be related to the modernist technique of the interior monologue.

First, however, it is worth returning to what Hungarian film scholar Béla Bálasz saw as the possibilities offered by montage, as some of his writings date back to around the time of the

developments in literary Modernism. Defining montage as “the ultimate refinement of work on film” (*Spirit* 122), Bálász expresses a position that is completely different from that expressed by Bazin. This divergence depends in large part on the different degrees of development that the seventh art had reached in the epochs in which the two critics were writing, the early 1930s for Bálász and the late 1940s for Bazin. For the aims of the present investigation, however, it is not so relevant to rank these specific editing techniques; rather, as noted by Hayward, “montage and deep-focus editing, while seemingly ideologically opposed, are about two different ways of reading film” (82), and as such I shall consider them.

As pointed out, in the above-quoted study *The Spirit of Film* (1930), Bálász emphasises the main function of montage, that is to loose, by means of the juxtaposition of images, “the tension of a latent meaning” (123) that is inherent in every image. He also enumerates different kinds of montage: creative, “when we learn something that the images in isolation do not show” (124); metaphorical, which puts in correlation “[i]rrational intangible ideas” (126); intellectual, which “provokes [...] definite, unambiguous thoughts” (127); and finally associative, which “can depict on screen the series of images that arise in our minds, the chain of ideas that lead us from one thought to the next. The internal montage of the conscious and the unconscious” (125).

Indeed, Bálász’s last considerations on associative montage in film find striking correspondences in modernist literature. Once again, *Ulysses* provides eloquent examples, as in the following passage from the “Telemachus” episode, which is one of the first glimpses of Stephen in the novel:

Stephen, an elbow rested on the jagged granite, leaned his palm against his brow and gazed at the fraying edge of his shiny black coat-sleeve. Pain, that was not yet the pain of love, fretted his heart. Silently, in a dream she had come to him after her death, her wasted body within its loose brown graveclothes giving off an odour of wax and rosewood, her breath, that had bent upon him, mute, reproachful, a faint odour of wetted ashes. Across the threadbare cuffedge he saw the sea hailed as a great sweet mother by the wellfed voice beside him. The ring of bay and skyline held a dull green mass of liquid. A bowl of white china had stood beside her deathbed holding the green sluggish bile which she had torn up from her rotting liver by fits of loud groaning vomiting. (*U* 1.100-110).

The narration seamlessly shifts from a description of what Stephen sees from his point of view to the memory of his mother’s recent death (the “shiny black coat-sleeve” suggests that he is in mourning). This memory has been triggered by the words uttered, shortly before, by Buck Mulligan’s “wellfed voice,” but also, more vividly, by the sight of the green water of the bay. The association of thoughts that this sight provokes in Stephen is certainly significant as far as the present research is concerned. Within the space of a few lines, the image of a maternal, life-giving sea is immediately associated with death, as well as, tangentially, with Stephen’s failed exile to

Paris and therefore to his stunted (artistic) growth. Moreover, the vision of his mother's ghost, together with Mulligan's direct accusations¹¹², renew in Stephen a peculiar feeling of guilt for her death, a feeling which reemerges in his mind several times¹¹³ throughout the day/novel, and even accompanies him in his very last appearance in the text, as seen in chapter three.

A few lines below, we find what is generally considered as the first instance of interior monologue in the novel: "Stephen bent forward and peered at the mirror held out to him, cleft by a crooked crack. Hair on end. As he and others see me. Who chose this face for me? This dogsbody to rid of vermin. It asks me too" (*U* 1.135-137)¹¹⁴. What is certainly remarkable about these lines is that, without any interruption or typographical indication, the point of view shifts from the third to the first person singular, thus providing a sort of close-up on the thoughts and feelings of Stephen. Significantly, one of the first close-ups of his face also coincides with the first example of interior monologue¹¹⁵, which can indeed be said to translate what, in cinema, Bálasz describes as "[t]he internal montage of the conscious and the unconscious" (125).

These examples can be referred to in order to highlight the important affinities and correspondences between cinematic and literary montage; I consider these as the point of departure for the comparison of Stephen and Antoine, which I conduct in the following pages. Before this, however, a note on their respective ages is necessary, as it sheds light on the way in which I will carry out my analysis.

In the "Circe" episode of *Ulysses*, Stephen remembers when, at Clongowes Wood College, he broke his glasses: "Must get glasses. Broke them yesterday. Sixteen years ago" (*U* 15.3628-29). If in *Ulysses* Stephen is "twentytwo" (15.3719), as he shortly after says, sixteen years before, at Clongowes, he was six years old; the episode he recalls in "Circe" indeed occurs in the first chapter

112 Mulligan refers to the death of Stephen's mother in these terms: "– The aunt thinks you killed your mother [...] – That's why she won't let me have anything to do with you. [...] You could have knelt down, damn it, Kinch, when your dying mother asked you, Buck Mulligan said. I'm hyperborean as much as you. But to think of your mother begging you with her last breath to kneel down and pray for her. And you refused. There is something sinister in you..." (*U* 1.88-94).

113 In a typically Joycean manner, the recollection of Stephen's vision/dream throughout the novel is marked by the almost literal recurrence of words or phrases. Some of the elements that never fail to be remembered are: the "loose graveclothes" that emanate an "odour of wax and rosewood," and the "odour of wetted ashes" of the ghost's breath.

114 An earlier trace of interior monologue is the isolated word "Chrysostomos" (*U* 1.26), which appears a few paragraphs earlier, and which refers to Buck Mulligan's "even white teeth glistening here and there with gold points" (1.25-26) (cf. Benstock 3). The Greek word *chrysostomos* means "mouth of gold" and, as we become increasingly familiar with Stephen's way of thinking through the course of the novel, we realise it is a typically Dedalian association. Still, this first instance of interior monologue is too concise to constitute an indicative example of literary montage.

115 Equally significant is that the close-up is reflected into a mirror. The motif of the mirror not only reflecting but also framing Stephen's face creates an ideal link with *Portrait*. As its very title suggests, the novel is supposed to provide an image of (the young man) Stephen as an artist; nevertheless, his maturity and artistic talent are repeatedly put in doubt. Stephen's attitude in *Ulysses*, interrogating himself about the image that other people see of him, is therefore consistent with his characterisation *Portrait*.

of *Portrait* (cf. *P* 50-51). In the third chapter, when Stephen is at Belvedere College, he is sixteen years old (cf. *P* 156), and by the end of the novel, when he is ready to leave Ireland, he is probably twenty or twenty-one. Indeed, in *Ulysses*, we get to know that the funeral of his mother, “Mrs Mary Dedalus (born Goulding), [was held on] 26 June 1903” (*U* 17.952); it is therefore shortly before that date that Stephen returned to Dublin, after spending a few months in Paris. If in *Ulysses*, which takes place on the 16th of June 1904, Stephen is twenty-two, he must have been twenty-one when he was in Paris, and he received the news of his mother’s imminent death.

As far as Antoine is concerned, when he first appears on screen in *Les quatre cents coups* he is about thirteen years old, which could approximately correspond to Stephen’s age between the second and the third chapters of *Portrait*. In the second Doinel episode, *Antoine et Colette*, Antoine is seventeen, as the voice-over at the beginning of the film states, and in the third, *Baisers volés*, he is probably twenty. The chief warrant officer who dismisses him from the army¹¹⁶ in the first scene of the film notes with astonishment that Antoine had enrolled to serve as a volunteer for three years; the “personal reasons” (*BV* 4:36”) for his choice are linked, with all probability, to the disappointment of the breakdown of his relationship with Colette. Supposing that Antoine enrolled when he was about eighteen years old (namely after the events presented in *Antoine et Colette*), and given that, because of his bad conduct, he was dismissed before the end of the three years, he must be about nineteen or twenty in *Baisers volés*. The film itself covers a timespan of around a year, and therefore by the end of it, when he proposes to Christine, he is in all probability twenty years old.

This film is therefore the last Doinel episode in which Antoine is around the same age as Stephen in *Ulysses*. More importantly, however, it is in *Baisers volés* that Antoine’s adolescent years supposedly come to a close, somehow confirmed by his marriage proposal to Christine. Nevertheless, the following episodes, *Domicile conjugal* and *L’amour en fuite* (in which Antoine is, respectively, in his mid-twenties and in his mid-thirties), show the dissolution of his bond with Christine, and repeatedly put in doubt his apparent adulthood. For these reasons, although I obviously consider the entire Doinel cycle, I pay particular attention to the first three films, which in many instances allow for almost direct correspondences between Antoine and Stephen. The two figures are also linked by numerous other aspects, such as analogous narrative devices, motifs, and the choice of similar settings.

116 In *L’amour en fuite*, Antoine informs Mr. Lucien, his mother’s partner, that he could not be present at her funeral because at that time he was serving in the army, and was being held prisoner. That was at the beginning of *Baisers volés*, making Antoine about twenty when his mother died, which is more or less how old Stephen was when his mother died.

5.1. Stephen's and Antoine's Movements in Space: Interior and Exterior Settings

A first important commonality between the first three Doinel films and the novels in which Stephen appears is a certain correspondence of the spaces and environments frequented by the two protagonists, whether habitually or occasionally. Both figures live and move primarily within cities, thus conferring a greater significance to the scenes set in non-urban spaces, and notably to those by the sea, as shall be emphasised at the end of this section. Equally important as the alternation between urban and non-urban settings is the alternation between scenes set in interior or exterior spaces. The way in which the ambience of these settings is rendered often translates the attitudes and the emotions of the characters with regard to these places, be it their house, the school, or the streets. The choice of settings is also closely connected to the camera movements, or, to put it in literary terms, to the points of view from which the stories are narrated and the way in which the narrating voice describes the settings. In the comparative analysis that follows, then, these aspects will often be considered jointly.

The opening scenes of *Portrait* and of *Les quatre cents coups*, the works in which Stephen and Antoine are first introduced to readers and viewers, show significant similarities and correspondences, apart from determining in great measure the overall tone of the novel and of the film. The protagonists' feelings of oppression and inappropriateness clearly shine through in the first two narrative sequences¹¹⁷ of both *Portrait* and *Les quatre cents coups*, both set at school and at home, thus already prefiguring their determination to escape. Even though differing in the way they are constructed, the first scenes, set at school, are highly important. Both the college in *Portrait* and the school in *Les quatre cents coups* are represented as places of discomfort and, especially for Antoine, of scarce affection. For different reasons, neither Stephen nor Antoine feel at ease at school.

Stephen first enters Clongowes Wood college at a very young age. The boarding school is far from his home, and during the first weeks he suffers because of the distance from his family, especially from his mother. Moreover, he does not integrate well with the other children, who often

117 In both texts, these first strictly speaking narrative scenes are preceded by a brief opening sequence. In *Portrait*, this roughly corresponds to the novel's first one and a half pages, which present the reader with a succession of impressions and memories of Stephen as a child. Among them, the most important are the "moocow" story that famously opens the novel, the songs his father used to sing, and the music played for him by his mother on the piano. The language used in these pages, and overall in the whole first chapter, somehow mimics a child's way of speech, and the childhood memories that the narrating voice recounts may not always seem to be connected with each other. In *Les quatre cents coups*, the introductory sequence consists of a series of tracking shots of Paris at street level. Each one shows the Eiffel Tower from a different angle, thus repeatedly confirming the location, which will be the same in the following films of the cycle. These shots are accompanied by the soundtrack and the opening credits, with the dedication to André Bazin.

make fun of and play unpleasant tricks on him (such as throwing him into the “square ditch” (*P* 7), an episode that is evoked a few more times throughout the novel). As the reader learns later on in the same chapter, another factor that contributes to making Stephen’s experience unpleasant at Clongowes, a Jesuit college, is the adoption of questionable didactic methods by the teachers. They have recourse to physical punishment as a common practice, as Stephen experiences to his own expense; the episode in which he is unjustly beaten with a pandybat is indeed very intense and emotional¹¹⁸, especially because the punishment was “unfair and cruel” (*P* 53), as Stephen repeatedly states afterwards.

The teachers in Antoine’s school also habitually impose their authority with rather punitive methods. The first scene of *Les quatre cents coups* opens with a close-up from above of the back of a boy smuggling the picture of a pin up around the class. The teacher discovers this ‘illicit traffic’ when the picture reaches Antoine’s desk (and in this moment he first appears in the film). He pays the consequences for this by being forced to stay in the classroom during the break. As an act of revenge, he writes on the wall of the classroom: “Here suffered Antoine Doinel, unfairly punished by a prof for a pin-up clad barely. So it’s now forsooth, eye for eye, tooth for tooth! [*Here suffered poor Antoine Doinel, unfairly punished by Petite Feuille*¹¹⁹, for a pin-up fallen from the sky. *Between us it will be eye for eye, tooth for tooth!*]” (*LQC* 6:00'-6:09"). Of course, he is punished for this, and made to decline in all tenses and modes the sentence: “I dirty the classroom walls, and I misuse French versification¹²⁰ [*prosody*]” (7:06"-7:16"). This punishment surely does not equal that suffered by Stephen in terms of physical violence, yet it tellingly indicates the surprising similarities between the school scenes in *Portrait* and in *Les quatre cents coups*. In particular, the authority exercised by the teachers and their relationship with the students do not seem to have changed much.

This is remarkable particularly with respect to *Les quatre cents coups*, considering that it was filmed over five decades after *Portrait* was composed. Throughout the film, the teachers often comment on the moral collapse that the French society is inexorably going to face, thus also criticising the inadequate educational methods used by parents¹²¹. What happens at home, though, is

118 The episode is also evoked in *Ulysses*, in the phantasmagoria of “Circe” (cf. *U* 15.3666-3676).

119 Literally “small leaf,” the nickname that the boys have given to the French teacher.

120 In French, the ‘verses’ Antoine writes on the wall are rhyming. This punishment could also be read as an early signal of how Antoine’s vocation as a writer is actually misinterpreted or indeed neglected.

121 In this respect, it should be pointed out that, although Truffaut is generally considered one of the less politically engaged *nouvelle-vague* directors (cf. Gillain 156, 164), in this film he clearly takes a position against this kind of educational and social system. The ‘new wave’ that was forming in those years in France aimed to sweep away the ‘old order’. Less than ten years later, Paris became one of the principal poles from which the great cultural revolution of 1968, in the wake of the student protests in the USA, spread throughout Europe. Curiously enough, Petite Feuille’s sarcastic comment on his students’ insolence, “What will France be like in ten years? [*How nice will France be in ten years!*]” (*LQC* 10:33"), prophetically predicts this epochal change. In 1968, in solidarity with the protests of students and workers, Truffaut, Godard, and many other French directors and actors became actively

hardly consolatory, either for Antoine or for Stephen.

Near the beginning of *Portrait* and in *Les quatre cents coups*, the first scenes at home are of particular relevance because they illustrate the relationship of the two characters with their parents. The first long narrative sequence at home in *Portrait*, in the middle section of chapter one, is the (in)famous Christmas-dinner scene, a moment that Stephen very much longs for: first of all, because the Christmas holidays are for him the occasion to rejoin his family; secondly, because on that particular Christmas day he is allowed for the first time to sit at the dinner table, instead of “waiting in the nursery [...] till the pudding came” (P 29) like his younger brothers and sisters. In this sense, the Christmas dinner represents a sort of rite of passage for Stephen, very much like his first day at college had been. Nevertheless, as the conversation around the dinner table very soon turns to politics, and particularly to the Parnell case, a tangible tension spoils the conviviality. Even though Stephen does not fully understand the words of the adults, he does understand the gravity of the discussion, as his “terrorstricken face” (P 39) at the end of the section eloquently demonstrates. More importantly, though, this scene stages the fall of two important reference figures for him: that of Charles Stuart Parnell, and that of his father¹²², whose we see at the end of the section, with “eyes full of tears” (ibid.).

The acceptance into the group of adults, therefore, marks a dramatic and meaningful moment for Stephen. From this scene on, the figure of the father reveals many weaknesses, and Stephen will gradually distance himself from him. The list of his father’s occupations, which Stephen compiles in chapter five, illustrates both the decline of the paternal figure and Stephen’s attitude towards him: “A medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a storyteller, somebody’s secretary, something in a distillery, a taxgatherer, a bankrupt and at present a praiser of his own past” (P 262). The father’s incapacity to manage his properties and capital, as well as his

engaged in organising a boycott of that year’s Cannes Film Festival. In the same year, Truffaut also shot *Baisers volés*, although the film itself is not openly political (apart from some passing references to the riots of those months in a few scenes). More importantly, however, the film was shot parallel to the “*affaire Langlois*” (direct reference to which is made in the opening credits), which in fact anticipated the events of May 1968. Henri Langlois was the founder and director of the French *Cinémathèque*, where he had collected thousands of films that, during the 1930s, he had managed to save from destruction and censorship. The uniqueness of the *Cinémathèque* was that those films were not simply guarded, but also regularly and publicly projected; the *Cinémathèque* had indeed been the ‘school’ of many future *nouvelle-vague* directors. When, in the February of 1968, the French government imposed another director for the *Cinémathèque*, thus dismissing Langlois from his position, protests soon arose, especially among young people, actors and, of course, the *nouvelle-vague* directors, among whom Truffaut was on the frontline (on Truffaut and the “*affaire Langlois*,” cf. Gillain 160-165).

122 As is later revealed, “the morning after the discussion at the Christmas dinnertable, [Stephen was] trying to write a poem about Parnell on the back of one of his father’s second moiety notices. But his brain had then refused to grapple with the theme” (P 73). Remembering this episode as Stephen is about to write his first poem “to E — C —” (ibid.), the narrator not only informs us about his first failed attempt to compose poetry, but also of his father’s inability or unwillingness to pay taxes, as the “second moiety notices” attest. As shall be seen, the father later becomes a tax collector himself (cf. 262).

alcoholism, eventually drag the Dedalus family into misery. An intense and touching passage from the fourth chapter provides a vivid image of their poor living conditions, which Stephen, being the eldest son, did not suffer from as much as his younger brothers and sisters. In the scene in question, Stephen's siblings are gathered near the kitchen table, in the "sad quiet greyblue glow of the dying day" (P 176), and one of them informs the older brother that they will soon have to move out again, with all probabilities to a poorer house. The sequence touchingly closes with his siblings singing the melancholy *Oft in the Stilly Night*, with Stephen "listening with pain of spirit to the overtone of weariness behind their frail fresh innocent voices. Even before they set out on life's journey they seemed weary already of the way" (177).

A similar condition of poverty and uneasiness characterises the apartment where Antoine lives with his parents in *Les quatre cents coups*. It is indeed so small that he does not have a bedroom of his own, but has to sleep in a sleeping bag on a couch in the corridor. After the opening scene at school commented on above, there is a rather long sequence set in this apartment. These first two sequences confirm that, as Insdorf rightly points out, for Antoine "home and classroom [...] are seen as enclosures of loveless authority" (152). While he is still alone in the apartment at the beginning of this scene, Antoine sits at his mother's dressing table where he fiddles with her hair brush, smells her perfume, and tries out her eyelash curler. Stephen does the same thing after having written his first poem for "E — C —" (P 73)¹²³; more importantly, though, as I noted in chapter three, the act of looking at his reflection in the mirror is again symbolically recalled in the fourth chapter when, on Dollymount Strand, he sees the reflection of his true self in the water. Similarly for Antoine, this moment anticipates the final encounter with the reflecting surface of the ocean. The short dressing-table scene is also worthy of attention because Antoine's face is reflected in three mirrors, from three different points of view (see Figure 14). This many-sided image of his face can be read as a metaphor of his equally many-sided, fluid identity. Moreover, the triple reflection contrasts with the self-aware and proud glance that his mother casts at herself in another mirror, just a few minutes later, in her very first appearance in the film (see Figure 15).

This first glance in the mirror confirms her attitude and character throughout the whole film, up until the last scene in which she appears. In the second-last sequence of *Les quatre cents coups*, she visits Antoine at the reform school, and the intensity of their conversation is emphasised by the use of extreme close-ups on her face and reverse shots on Antoine's face, as shall be commented on below. With the exception of one single sequence, she remains severe and unaffectionate towards her son, whom she never calls by his name. For his part, Antoine does not harbour a particular

123 "[H]aving hidden the book, he went to his mother's bedroom and gazed at his face for a long time in the mirror of her dressingtable" (P 74).

affection for his mother either; this attitude is tellingly confirmed in the episode of the lie, in which, faced with the urgency of making up an excuse for his unjustified absence from school, he tells the teacher that his mother has died. Nevertheless, his cold and loveless mother is redeemed in the last Doinel film, *L'amour en fuite*, when Antoine casually meets Mr. Lucien, her lover in *Les quatre cents coups*. The man tells Antoine of how his mother had actually loved him, albeit “in a strange way” (AF 1:02':15"), and he recalls her passion for books and literature, thus revealing a surprising commonality with the son. On this occasion, Mr. Lucien also takes Antoine to his mother's grave, and it is in this moment that her name is first made known. Indeed, in *Les quatre cents coups* she is never called by name¹²⁴, and in the other films of the cycle she never appears again, nor is referred to directly.

Antoine's gradual detachment from his father recalls to some extent Stephen's relationship with his father. It should be noted, however, that the man is actually Antoine's stepfather, a fact that he learns purely by chance. While at the beginning of the film his stepfather does not seem to be as hostile as his mother, by the end, and particularly after Antoine steals the typewriter¹²⁵, he becomes completely disinterested in Antoine's destiny, as his mother tells him during her visit to the reform school. Interestingly, like Stephen, who, on distancing himself from his father, appeals to an ideal (indeed mythical) paternal figure, Antoine seems to find, especially in the fathers of his girlfriends, important replacements of the father figure. As he reveals to a colleague in *L'amour en fuite*, “I don't fall for a girl [in particular], I fall for the whole family. [I love] the father, the mother. I love girls with nice parents” (AF 18':04"-18': 09").

This behaviour is likely to be ascribable to his troubled childhood. As Antoine confirms in the scene of the confession-like questioning with the psychologist at the reform school in *Les quatre cents coups*, his childhood has been marked first of all by his mother's absence and then by her lack of affection and interest in him. So much so that, as Insdorf notes, the women he meets later on in his life,

have to deal with the ghost of the mother that he mentally killed off in the first film. [...] While it is true that he learns how to make it on his own, he is scarred by his need for an absolute and all-defining love. Emotionally he remains an adolescent until – and to some extent, after –

124 The name of Stephen's mother is also mentioned only after her death. It appears a few times, both as May and as Mary Goulding, in “Ithaca” and in “Circe,” where it is the ghost of his mother who announces, “(With the subtle smile of death's madness) I was once the beautiful May Goulding. I am now dead” (U 15.4173-4174). The name is also remembered one last time in Molly's soliloquy, when she muses about Simon Dedalus, and recalls that “he was married at the time to May Goulding [...] hes a widower now” (18.1299-1300).

125 Another reason for the father's definitive detachment may also be linked to the fact that, apparently, Antoine had made known in the whole neighbourhood that the mother had a lover; or, at least, this is what his mother accuses him of. Of course, Antoine denies it; and although his word can be doubted, it is equally probable that the father already suspected something, as can be inferred by some comments he jokingly makes to Antoine's mother in the first scene at home. Therefore, I do not consider it the main reason for his father's behaviour towards him.

Fabienne Tabard's visit to his apartment in *Stolen Kisses*. In an older woman who offers him both the warmth and intensity which he was always denied, he seems to find the strength to then assume responsibility for Christine. (160)

It is certainly true that Antoine projects his need for affection on the women he encounters in his life, and I strongly believe, as Insdorf infers, that his emotional immaturity also continues *after* the visit from M.me Tabard. However, unlike Insdorf, I do not think that, after the encounter with M.me Tabard, Antoine's behaviour is particularly responsible, or in any case, not in regard to Christine. Although he does love Christine, on several occasions he acts rather impulsively without respecting her opinions and desires¹²⁶. Indeed, it is Christine who, after their separation, appears to be much more determined and responsible than before; probably because of this, Antoine touchingly confides to her, "You are my sister, you are my daughter, you are my mother," to which Christine replies: "I'd hoped to be your wife too" (*DC* 1:23':13"-1:23':21"). His attitude towards women is further confirmed by Liliane, one of the girlfriends he has after his separation from Christine, who firmly and slightly irritatedly notes: "He needs a wife, a mistress, a sister, a nurser, and I am incapable to fill all those functions at the same time. [...] It's not fair that everyone pays for his unhappy childhood (*AF* 1:18':48"-1:19':04").

This "absolute and all-defining" (Insdorf 160) affection Antoine longs for is reminiscent of Stephen's insisting need to know the "word known to all men" (*U* 3.435), as he repeatedly asks himself throughout *Ulysses*. In "Scylla and Charybdis," he concludes that the word is "Love, yes. Word known to all men" (9.429-30); or, more precisely, a mother's love, "*Amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, [which] may be the only true thing in life¹²⁷. Paternity may be a legal fiction" (9. 842-844). This telling distinction is certainly indicative of Stephen's relation to his parents. While the last words in *Portrait* are addressed to a father, it is the mythical "old father, old artificer" (*P* 276) to which Stephen ideally turns. In contrast, the last appearance of his mother in the novel is a very worldly and importantly revealing one; even though Stephen seems ready "to make it on his own," as Insdorf puts it with regard to Antoine (160), he remains dependent on his mother, and not only on an emotional level. At the beginning of chapter five, after he has had the decisive revelation/vision on Dollymount Strand, "he allow[s] his mother to scrub his neck and root into the folds of his ears and into the intersects at the wings of his nose" (*P* 189); moreover, on the eve of his departure from Ireland, his mother "put[s] [his] new secondhand clothes in order" (275). The intense bond between Stephen and his mother further explains the recurring presence of her

126 An eloquent example is the choice of their son's name. Without Christine knowing it, Antoine registers him as Alphonse, the name Antoine preferred but that, as he knew, Christine disliked.

127 Stephen's conclusion here echoes Cranly's words in the fifth chapter of *Portrait*: "Whatever else is unsure in this stinking dunghill of a world a mother love's not. [...] [W]hatever she feels, it, at least, must be real" (*P* 263).

ghost in *Ulysses*¹²⁸.

The complexity of the relationships that Stephen and Antoine have with their parents are tellingly interconnected with the feelings of entrapment and unease that they experience in the domestic space. In contrast to this, it is interesting to consider the representation of other interior settings, outside the familial sphere and the school, and in particular those spaces inhabited or frequented by the two characters in their independent lives, or in any case after the separation from their families. As far as Stephen is concerned, the analysis will chiefly regard *Ulysses*, while for Antoine I mainly consider the films after *Les quatre cents coups*. What can be observed for both characters is that, apparently, neither Stephen nor Antoine spend too much time in ‘their own’ apartments or rooms, where they seem to experience a certain restlessness. My focus on Stephen and Antoine’s dwelling places starts from the Martello tower, the setting of the very first pages of *Ulysses*.

The tower appears to be one of the first places where Stephen lives his independent life after returning from Paris. On the morning of the 16th of June 1904, though, he spends very little time in it, and his movements in the opening pages of the novel follow a descending trajectory that can be appropriately described as a fall, which is also reminiscent of the fall of Icarus. Being the opening episode of a book inspired by the Homeric hero Odysseus, it is not surprising that “Telemachus” is interspersed with references to the Greek classics; these references also ideally link back to Stephen’s invocation of the mythical Daedalus, the “[o]ld father, old artificer” (*P* 276), in the concluding lines of *Portrait*. An analogous impression of fall is also suggested in the crucial passage from the fourth to the fifth chapter of *Portrait*. After the climactic moment on Dollymount Strand, acknowledging and welcoming his artistic vocation, Stephen “climbed on the crest of the sandhill and gazed about him” (*P* 187). The following sentence, which opens the next chapter, overturns this state of both physical and spiritual elevation with a prosaic incipit that abruptly brings Stephen back to the debased living conditions of his poor home: “[h]e drained his third cup of watery tea” (*P* 188). This radical change of perspective is also subtly (and ironically) emphasised by the drastic shift from the water of the sea, contemplated by Stephen at the end of the fourth chapter, to the “watery tea” that opens the fifth chapter. Nevertheless, while in *Portrait* this descent only reinforces Stephen’s final decision to leave Ireland, his movements in “Telemachus” seem to describe a definitive fall. Although his position on the top of the Martello tower, overlooking the beach at Sandycove, might suggest the same resoluteness and self-awareness that Stephen shows at the end of *Portrait*, from his first appearance in *Ulysses* he is represented as rather aloof, “displeased and sleepy” (*U* 1.13); an attitude that is further emphasised by the contrast with the

128 Although the apparition is also a constant reminder of Stephen’s failed exile, as already pointed out.

exuberance and dynamism of his housemate Buck Mulligan. Stephen does not feel comfortable in the tower and, after leaving it in the morning, he decides: "I will not sleep here tonight. Home also I cannot go" (1.739-40). Indeed, in the rest of the novel, he never returns to his room, and therefore he also never occupies that supposed position of control again.

His day is chiefly spent walking in the streets of Dublin, and visiting places such as the newspaper offices ("Aeolus"), the national library ("Scylla and Charybdis"), the maternity hospital ("Oxen of the Sun"), the brothel ("Circe"), the cabman's shelter ("Eumaeus"), and finally Bloom's house ("Ithaca"). Overall, in these episodes the settings are not described in great detail, as the narration rather revolves around the conversations and the thoughts of the main characters. Still, with regard to Stephen, the atmosphere in "Eumaeus" and "Ithaca," where Stephen and Bloom finally interact, is different with respect to the other episodes in which the two characters only happen to be in the same place, but they actually do not speak to each other. As pointed out in chapter three, in *Ulysses'* last episodes the maritime motif reemerges, along with a series of elements and themes that appear both in the "Telemachiad" and in *Portrait*, and which are directly related to Stephen.

To begin with, the issue of paternity and of Stephen's attitude towards his father is addressed quite early in "Eumaeus," when Bloom tells Stephen that, earlier that day, he had met his father Simon, "[a] gifted man [...] in more respects than one and a born *raconteur* if ever there was one" (16.260-261). Stephen does not reply, but thinks back "to his family hearth the last time he saw it" (16.270), in the extremely poor family home. The episode of "Eumaeus" mainly takes place in a cabman's shelter where Stephen and Bloom converse, among others, with the mariner D. B. Murphy. This figure interlaces many crucial motifs connected with Stephen, as seen in chapter three. Apart from referring again to the paternal figure (after hearing that Stephen is a Dedalus, the mariner approaches him asking whether he knows Simon Dedalus, to which Stephen curtly replies "– I've heard of him" [16.379]), the sailor is also obviously connected with the maritime motif. In particular, the stories he tells about his innumerable sea journeys open a discussion about shipwrecks and the riskiness of life at sea. These themes importantly look back to Stephen's repulsion for water, openly made known by Buck Mulligan in the first episode ("– The unclean bard makes a point of washing once a month" [1.475]), occasionally referred to throughout the novel, and again remembered in the episode following "Eumaeus," "Ithaca," where Stephen is described as a "hydrophobe" (17.237). As far as "Ithaca" is concerned, an important aspect is that, declining Bloom's invitation to stay for the night, Stephen rejects any connection with a domestic space, as he had done in "Telemachus" (and, for that matter, in *Portrait* too). By the middle of the episode, he leaves Bloom's house, and we do not know where he will go from there.

In this respect there seems to be a difference with Antoine who, while escaping from his own home, feels comfortable in other houses. Already in *Les quatre cents coups*, he happily finds refuge in the house of his friend René; in the following films, the fact that he usually has a good relationship with the families of his girlfriends, and notably with the parents of Colette and those of Christine, also implies that he often visits them. In *Antoine et Colette*, he even moves opposite to their apartment in order to be in closer contact with the girl and her parents. Their house is indeed a place where Antoine feels happy and accepted; precisely because of this, when at the end of the short, Colette goes out with another man leaving Antoine alone with her parents, the humiliation he suffers is searing. An equally friendly relationship is that of Antoine with the Darbons, Christine's parents. In one of the first scenes of *Baisers volés*, Antoine is warmly welcomed by them, who also help him find a job after he has been dismissed from the army. Throughout the film, Antoine spends enjoyable moments at the Darbons', both in the company of the whole family and alone with Christine; and both their first kiss and Antoine's marriage proposal take place in that house. This pleasantness is protracted in the next film, *Domicile conjugal*, in which Antoine and Christine share an apartment as a married couple. In the first half of the film, the numerous domestic scenes convey a sense of happiness and harmony, which is nevertheless disturbed when the affair between Antoine and Kyoko is discovered¹²⁹. Therefore, even if Antoine, unlike Stephen, does find a certain comfort and balance in domestic spaces that are not his own, an element of disruption often hinders the apparent equilibrium he has found. This ultimately gives way to a feeling of unrest (and disillusionment) that leads him to abandon these places, arguably in search of a next haven.

As in the case of Stephen in the Martello tower, however, there are few scenes that show Antoine in his own apartments or rooms¹³⁰; these are often very brief and in almost all of them Antoine is alone. Yet there are a few exceptions worth considering: one is the already mentioned visit of M.me Tabard in *Baisers volés*, the other is a brief sequence in *Antoine et Colette*. Towards the end of the short, the two protagonists have a rapid but intense discussion during which Colette always remains on the threshold of the door, and Antoine is only seen in the reflection on the mirror¹³¹. The decision to represent their dialogue in this way is significant as it confirms Colette's

129 As already mentioned, after an argument with Christine, Antoine temporarily moves to a small apartment in the same building in which he lived at the beginning of *Antoine et Colette*; a very brief shot of him looking from the balcony on the street, instantly recalls the opening of the second Doinel episode.

130 With the exception of *Domicile conjugal*, in which Antoine and Christine live together after their marriage.

131 A portrait of Antoine that hangs on the wall above his bed can also be seen reflected in the mirror. The subject of the painting, a close up on his face partially covered by a turtle-neck jumper, is actually a frame from the scene in *Les quatre cents coups* in which, sitting in a cage at the police station, he waits to be transferred to the prison. This image can also be considered as a mirror itself; on the one hand, it is reminiscent of Antoine's past captivity, and on the other hand it reflects his present 'entrapment' in a non-reciprocated romantic relationship. Furthermore, it is significant that this particular image appears in this episode of the cycle, which is (or at least initially seems to be) about his independent life.

attitude towards Antoine, with whom she does not want to engage in an intimate relationship, and it emphasises Antoine's insecurity and emotional immaturity. Indeed, although he admits that he is annoyed by this ambiguous situation, that he will move back to his former apartment, and that he does not want to see Colette any more, in the next scene he visits her and her parents for dinner, and it is on this occasion that she eventually humiliates him. Antoine's inability to control his emotions is again referred to in the last scene of *L'amour en fuite*, in the conversation between Antoine and his girlfriend Sabine that, as seen, is spoken into a mirror.

As far as mirrors are concerned, there is another famous scene set in Antoine's apartment in *Baisers volés*, in which, looking at his reflection in the bathroom mirror, he obsessively repeats to himself his name, the name of Christine Darbon, and that of Fabienne Tabard. About this scene, Truffaut commented: "I wanted to avoid, at all costs, a scene with a confidant to whom Antoine explains his indecisions regarding the two women in his life. He repeats his name constantly to assure himself about his own identity, as if he were trying to clarify some thoughts" (Gillain 157). Indeed, this key also provides an interesting interpretation both for the already mentioned mirror scene in *Les quatre cents coups* in which Antoine sits at his mother's dressing table, and for the film's final sequence on the shore, when he sees his reflection in the water of the ocean. In all these circumstances, Antoine is apparently looking for confirmation of "his own identity, as if he were trying to clarify some thoughts" (ibid), but, as the last mirror scene in *L'amour en fuite* once again illustrates, no confirmation is at hand, and his bewilderment persists.

Returning back to the scenes set in Antoine's apartments, in *Antoine et Colette* and *Baisers volés*, it is worth comparing two similar shots in the opening minutes of the films. Whereas these shots bear striking resemblances to each other, one significant difference emphasises Antoine's insecurity. In the opening of *Antoine et Colette*, Antoine looks down onto the city streets from his apartment's window, suggesting a full control over his (now independent) life. The camera then moves from inside to outside the apartment, at street level, allowing for a view from below of Antoine on his balcony, which (also visually) conveys a sense of his self-aware position. As seen, though, this impression is soon proven to be wrong, and it is significantly contradicted in the final close-up from above of Antoine's disappointed face in the last scene of the short. In a brief passage early in *Baisers volés*, after Antoine has been dismissed from the army he returns to his apartment, and one of the first things he does is open his window out onto a stunning view of the Sacré-Cœur basilica of Montmartre. Unlike in *Antoine et Colette*, however, the camera remains inside the apartment, showing only Antoine's back. In light of this detail, an important analogy between this sequence and the end of *Les quatre cents coups* can be noted. At the end of *Les quatre cents coups*, Antoine escapes from a place in which he is held captive, and runs towards an independent life,

which, as the opening of *Antoine et Colette* shows, he manages to achieve. Similarly, in *Baisers volés*, Antoine has just been released from the military jail (wearing a uniform just like at the end of *Les quatre cents coups*), and he runs back to his apartment, which symbolises his independent and free life. Nevertheless, very much like at the end of *Les quatre cents coups* where Antoine is blocked in front of the sea, uncertain about the new horizon that opens before him, in *Baisers volés*, he seems to be blocked by the view of a new horizon as he opens the window of his room on his first day as a free man after the military service and the imprisonment.

In addition to these considerations, an attentive analysis reveals that the view of the Sacré-Cœur basilica is not merely a secondary detail. The tracking shot on this monument is repropose a few times, both in *Baisers volés* and in the two following films, and each time it is composed by a similar sequence of framings and camera movements: starting with a wide view of the basilica seen from a distance, the camera tracks to street level – where, almost every time, a sweeper passes by, spraying water on the street –, and then it either frames a building on the other side of the street (generally, Antoine’s apartment) or stops at street level¹³². Because this shot first appears in *Baisers volés*, its repetition in the next two films may also serve as an indication that what follows is somehow linked to Antoine’s emotional state in *Baisers volés*, when, as pointed out, his adult life is supposed to begin. Given that his maturity will be put in doubt in *Domicile conjugal* and in *L’amour en fuite*, the repetition of the Sacré-Cœur sequence serves as a signpost or reminder of his maturity, or lack of it. In *Baisers volés*, for instance, the same sequence introduces M.me Tabard’s visit (1:11:00"-1:11:18"), which not only costs Antoine his job, but also causes a temporary separation from Christine. The same Sacré-Cœur tracking shot returns in a brief sequence in *Domicile conjugal* (1:27:00"-1:27:08"), where it introduces the long scene of the dinner with Kyoko, during which Antoine repeatedly calls Christine to tell her how tense and at the same time boring his appointment is. Annoyed by Antoine’s behaviour, Kyoko leaves the restaurant and definitively abandons him. This moment forestalls the reconciliation with Christine at the end of the film, which is reminiscent of their engagement at the end of *Baisers volés*. In *L’amour en fuite* (52:23"-52:40"), the Sacré-Cœur tracking shot again makes a brief appearance, somehow linked to Antoine’s emotional impulsiveness as it follows the train scene with Colette, and Antoine’s abrupt jump off the train in the middle of the night, and it also introduces a scene in which he looks for Sabine, his girlfriend, to apologise for having been rude to her.

As these examples testify, then, the few scenes in which Antoine and Stephen are seen in ‘their own’ houses contribute a certain feeling of restlessness shared by both characters. This

132 Truffaut admits that the introduction of this scene had been “a bit of a joke, because the small truck that spills water comes from the way the Americans depict Paris. [...] All the same, it is a real shot, and the advantage of having this shot is that it indicates the time of the day – when one wants to show that it is very early” (Gillain 299).

condition ultimately leads them to wander the cities they live in, either in search of, or running away from, something. It is therefore worth considering the numerous scenes set in external spaces, and in particular the streets and roads of Dublin and Paris. Of course, the streets also lead the two characters to the sea, the crucial exterior setting, which I analyse at the end of the following section.

All the Roads Lead to the Sea

As seen in chapter three, the road is identified by Mikhail Bakhtin as one of the principal literary chronotopes. Bakhtin describes the road as

both a point of new departures and a place for events to find their denouement. Time, as it were, fuses together with space and flows in it (forming the road); this is the source of the rich metaphorical expansion on the image of the road as a course: “the course of a life,” “to set out on a new course,” “the course of history” (“Forms” 243-244)[,]

and, I would add, the course, or stream, of a character’s thoughts and emotions. The road is also animated by recurring encounters, both ‘real’ and symbolic (cf. Bakhtin “Forms” 98); on the city streets and roads, Stephen and Antoine also discover and explore sides of themselves.

It may be appropriate to start from the streets of Dublin, particularly in the second and third chapters of *Portrait*. After the Dedaluses move from a well-to-do neighbourhood to a much poorer one, Stephen sets out to explore the “new and complex sensation” (69) that Dublin has become for him. On these occasions, he experiences not only a new dimension of the city, but also of himself. As already seen, Stephen takes long walks around the docks of Dublin, in anxious search of an ideal woman (who, in this case, has the features of Mercedes from *The Count of Monte Cristo*), and unwillingly falling “prey of [the] restless foolish impulses” (ibid.) of his young age. Shortly after, Stephen meets Emma for the first time; their night walk to catch the last tram, and the short trip together deeply move him, and he later attempts to compose some lines of poetry inspired by this encounter. By the end of the second chapter, in “the maze of narrow and dirty streets” (106) of Dublin’s red-lights quarter (famously dubbed as “Nighttown” in *Ulysses*), Stephen has his first encounters with prostitutes, and “his own soul go[es] forth to experience, unfolding itself sin by sin” (110). These three important moments set in the streets of Dublin mark Stephen’s gradual perception of, and approach to, both his physical instincts and his emotional needs. As I emphasised in chapter three, the style used to describe some of these instants and encounters is repeatedly used in the description of other revealing moments, almost always linked to Stephen’s recognition of his artistic call.

In *Ulysses*, however, the streets of Dublin are above all the space where Stephen can find ‘refuge’ from the unpleasant atmosphere of the Martello tower. Although he visits some other places, like the library, the brothel, the camban’s shelter, and Blooms’s house, he spends most of the day walking the streets of the city. Even so, there are only few street scenes in which Stephen is represented (indeed, the novel is mostly focussed on Bloom’s urban wanderings); moreover, although the reader is aware that Stephen does spend time walking around the city, the chapters and passages in which he appears feature little movement, and rather centre on his stream of thoughts. This inertia ultimately emphasises his condition of paralysis in the city, and contrasts with the examples from *Portrait* seen above, in which Stephen is seen actively moving within the urban space.

A similar contrast can be found in the Doinel cycle, insofar as, after *Les quatre cents coups*, the scenes set on the streets of Paris are quantitatively less. As Insdorf observes, in the first Doinel film, the camera movements in the interior scenes, notably in school and at home, are visibly reduced, while in exterior scenes the camera has a greater freedom of movement that ultimately reflects the increased mobility of the character (cf. Insdorf 152). The streets of Paris, where Antoine can move freely, therefore become a substitutive environment for the often hostile domestic dimension, where his movements are limited. This can be deduced by the sequence in which Antoine spends a whole night outside, not daring to return home after his lie about the death of his mother is discovered. Notwithstanding the cold and the difficulties of finding a place to take cover, Antoine moves with relative ease around the city, and the scene in which he avidly drinks a bottle of milk¹³³, significantly (and symbolically) confirms that in the streets he can find that essential ‘nourishment’ that he cannot find at home.

The first important street sequence in the film, though, occurs earlier on, after the long scene at home considered above. On his way to school, Antoine meets his friend René; they play truant and go to the fun fair. Here Antoine takes the ride in the rotor and, for the first time in the film, he is happy and carefree. As seen in the previous chapter, Insdorf reads the spinning movement of the rotor as a transposition of Antoine’s “desire for flight” (176), and the fact that this particular exterior scene follows the first two, set at school and at home, makes it even more representative of his need for liberty. Nevertheless, after this joyous moment, an unpleasant and indeed compromising meeting awaits Antoine: he sees and is seen by his mother, who is with a lover. The brief scene is obviously extremely tense, especially because both are culpable, as Antoine is

133 In Truffaut’s film *L’enfant sauvage*, the only word that Victor, the wild child, is able to utter is “milk.” The director dedicates the film to Jean-Pierre Léaud, who plays Antoine Doinel, thus creating an interesting web of interconnections; a web that, as Insdorf pertinently observes, is strengthened in the closing of *L’enfant sauvage*, which “appears more ambiguous than optimistic since the camera “closes in” on Victor’s seemingly somber face, caught by the frame in a manner reminiscent of the last shot of *The 400 Blows*” (154).

supposed to be at school, and his mother at work. This accidental meeting has meaningful repercussions; when Antoine decides to leave his house he announces that he will explain everything to his parents in a letter. The mother, fearing that he might reveal her extramarital affair, tries (quite literally) to buy his silence. Nevertheless, as can be deduced from the severe words she tells him in their last encounter at the reform school, in one way or another the information has spread among the neighbourhood.

Several other scenes on the streets occur in the second half of the film, when Antoine spends most of his days outside with René, after they have both been expelled from school. In contrast to these moments, in which Antoine has acquired a certain freedom of movement, one of the last views of the streets of Paris in *Les quatre cents coups* is from his point of view, behind the bars of the police van that is taking him to prison. This moment creates a strong and meaningful contrast with the sense of freedom of the preceding sequences; a contrast that is certainly resolved with Antoine's final escape from the reform school and his rush through the country roads that ends on the seashore. The view of the ocean indicates that Antoine has achieved the liberty to live his life on his own. Nevertheless, the freeze-frame once again *captures* his image.

The analysis of this crucial moment invites us to look more closely at this key scene on the seashore, and to read it in comparison with the seashore scene in the fourth chapter of *Portrait*. As on the streets, on the shore both Antoine and Stephen discover something about themselves. Indeed, there are important correspondences between the chronotope of the road and that of the seashore; in particular, both spaces offer the possibility for meetings and symbolic meetings. This is certainly the case in fluid anti-developmental narratives, in which the protagonists often encounter their own selves on the seashore. Notwithstanding a certain correspondence between the road's and the seashore's narrative functions, however, the experiences of Stephen and Antoine on the shore differ significantly from their urban wanderings.

Although undoubtedly offering freedom of movement, the streets are still enclosed within the limits of the city, while the shore opens to an apparently limitless horizon, arguably granting greater freedom of movement and thought. Yet, as soon as Stephen and Antoine become aware of this unbounded horizon, they restrain themselves. As Insdorf observes, Antoine's escape from the reform school in the closing of *Les quatre cents coups*, "leads him to an exterior dead end – the edge of the sea. In his flight from *la mère* (mother) to *la mer* (sea), he remains on the periphery of things, with no living room to give shape to his freedom" (153). The fact that the beaches on which both Stephen and Antoine find themselves are empty (or almost), certainly emphasises their feeling of being "on the periphery of things" (*ibid.*); the very limitlessness of the landscape that opens in front of them ultimately holds them back.

After Antoine sneaks out of the reform-school playground, the sense of freedom, effectively conveyed by the use of the camera, contrasts with the impossibility of movement that had connoted the previous scenes, which culminated in the conversation with his mother. The camera follows Antoine's run towards freedom along the country roads that surround the school; when he catches the first glimpse of the ocean and gets closer to the open sea, both his movements and those of the camera gradually slow down. His feet briefly touch the water, and then he turns his back to the ocean. In this moment, his flight reaches an abrupt and absolute arrest, emphasised by the extreme close-up and freeze-frame that conclude the film.

With regard to Stephen, a similar decrease of dynamism results from the abrupt change of tone that connotes the passage from the fourth to the fifth chapter of *Portrait*. On Dollymount Strand, Stephen's movements correspond to the liveliness of his thoughts. Responding to his artistic vocation, and ready to pursue it, he strides

far out over the sands, singing wildly to the sea, crying to greet the advent of the life that had cried to him. [...] A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. On and on and on and on! (*P* 186)

The prosaic opening of the following chapter indeed dampens the positivity of this moment, yet, by the end of the novel, with renewed motivation, Stephen is ready to "greet the advent of life" (*ibid.*), or indeed to set forth "to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience" (276).

A similar slowing down both of Stephen's movements and of the narrative pace results from the comparison of the scene on Dollymount Strand with the "Proteus" episode in *Ulysses*, set entirely on the seashore. While at the end of *Portrait* Stephen's thoughts are decidedly projected towards the future, in "Proteus," although his thoughts run freely from the dawn of history to his contemporaneity during the stroll on Sandycove beach, Stephen is almost obsessively concerned about the events of the recent past and their influence on his present position, but rarely about the future. Along with the memory of his mother's death, he thinks back to the time of his short stay in Paris, and, crucially, to those aspirations that he had set out to achieve at the end of *Portrait*, and which in "Proteus" he puts in doubt:

Books you were going to write with letters for titles. [...] Remember your epiphanies written on green oval leaves, deeply deep, copies to be sent if you died to all the great libraries of the world, including Alexandria? [...] You were going do to wonders, what? Missionary to Europe after fiery Columbanus. (*U* 3.139, 141-143, 192-193)

Musing on his past, Stephen slowly approaches the water, until the "wet sand slap[s] his boots"

(3.265-266) and, with a movement reminiscent of Antoine's at the end of *Les quatre cents coups*, he stops and turns back. From that position he sees the Martello tower, and repeats to himself that he will not return there for the night.

Back to Dollymount Strand and to *Portrait*, though, there is another detail that has to be noted. After the great moment of revelation, Stephen walks for a long distance, until he reaches a small hill of sand, where he stops and "close[s] his eyes in the languor of sleep" (187), only to wake up at dusk. This moment can indeed be considered in parallel with the close-up and freeze-frame on Antoine's face in the very last moments of *Les quatre cents coups*. After Stephen wakes up, the narration abruptly cuts to the domestic setting that opens the fifth chapter of *Portrait*; similarly for Antoine, after the sudden interruption of the freeze-frame, his "adventures" continue in a completely different setting, at the beginning of *Antoine et Colette*. These two 'cuts' visually render the sense of the two characters' fluid evolution. First of all, these moments, which would arguably represent the culmination of a process of development and therefore a decisive turning point, only appear to result in a change of status for them. Stephen does leave Ireland to look for the longed-for liberty of expression and poetic creation, yet he soon has to return to Dublin. In the same way, Antoine's dream of becoming independent from his family and earning himself a living does come true, as the beginning of *Antoine et Colette* attests, yet, by the end of the film, his fall is evident, and its effects will be reiterated in the following episodes of the cycle. Secondly, the fluidity of the characters' identities is connoted, and indeed symbolically represented, by the very setting of the scenes, the seashore. As seen, the liminal area between the land and the open sea is in constant and fluid evolution, yet it is also marked by cyclical tidal movements. It therefore stands as a quintessential representation of the evolution of fluid anti-developmental characters, who are in a constant process of transformation, but at the same time cyclically returning to a condition that they had intended to avoid or to escape from.

The representation of the spaces in which the narration evolves and the choice of the settings, especially for the most significant scenes, are a crucially important decision for the authors of the texts, as I have shown. A closer look at the techniques used to construct these scenes, though, also allows for a reflection on how not only the representation of the narrative space, but also the manipulation of the narrative time exerts an equally crucial influence on the perception of the characters' evolution, as well as on the development of the plot. Indeed, even when the narrative is primarily linear, the use of techniques that alter the perception of the duration of time is never casual. When the attention of the reader and of the viewer is directed towards specific details or particularly relevant aspects, the sense of time while reading a book or watching a film is modified. Among these techniques, close-up shots are a good starting point for my analysis. A close-up may

focus on an object, thus providing a more precise vision and allowing closer perception of it; more commonly, however, the close-up focusses on a face. As the close-up allows the viewer to get closer to a character's emotional state and consciousness, it is particularly interesting to explore the function of this technique in texts in which the thoughts, feelings, and inner development of the protagonists are very much at the centre of the narration.

5.2. Fluid Temporalities: Close-Ups, Epiphanies, and Cyclical Returns

Several techniques can be used to intervene in the chronological succession and the duration of events in a narration. Among these, the most common are flashbacks and flashforwards or, in cinema, scenes shot in slow- or fast-motion, and freeze-frames, as I shall further comment on. These techniques modify the perception of narrative time, insofar as they change the order of the events or their speed. A close-up, however, works differently, in that it can alter the perception of narrative time even in cases in which the narrative progresses chronologically. Indeed, when in a novel or a film the focus shifts to a particular detail, be it a facial expression, an object, or a gesture, the reader or viewer is induced to slow down her or his pace. The writer and director intend to draw attention to a detail that is of special relevance, either because it is decisive for the plot development, or (as often in the texts in which Stephen and Antoine appear) because it can suggest something about the personality of the character.

In his studies on cinema, Deleuze insists on the coincidence between the facial close-up, the affection-image, and the face¹³⁴ (cf. *Cinema 1* 88). According to Deleuze, the affection-image is defined by a “movement of expression, that is to say quality” (66), and the close-up of a face is one of the most emblematic examples of this movement of expression. Affect results from the “combination of a reflecting, immobile unity and of intensive, expressive movements” (87) and, as Deleuze points out, the face itself can be intensive or reflexive. In the first case, “the traits break free from the outline, begin to work on their own account, and form an autonomous series which tends toward a limit or crosses a threshold” (89); while on a “reflexive or reflecting face [...] the features remain grouped under the domination of a thought which is fixed or terrible, but immutable and without becoming, in a way eternal” (89-90). As Deleuze concludes: “Just as the intensive face

134 Note that, starting from a consideration on the human face, Deleuze also applies the term ‘face’ to objects. In particular, he describes the (human) face as an “organ-carrying plate of nerves which has sacrificed most of its global mobility and which gathers or expresses in a free way all kinds of tiny local movements which the rest of the body usually keeps hidden” (*Cinema 1* 87-88). Therefore, “[e]ach time we discover these two poles in something – reflecting surface and intensive micro-movements – we can say that this thing has been treated as a face [*visage*]: it has been ‘envisaged’ or rather ‘faceified’ [*visagéifiée*], and in turn in stares at us [*dévisage*], it looks at us ... even if it does not resemble a face” (88).

expresses a pure Power – that is to say, is defined by a series which carries us from one quality to another – the reflexive face expresses a pure Quality, that is to say a ‘something’ common to several objects of different kinds” (ibid.). In both cases, the face and the affection-image altogether contribute to a certain affective *quality* of the image, rather than a sense of movement or dynamism.

This aspect can be read alongside the notion of “arrested development,” or better yet, of fluid evolution, which defines the fictional figures analysed here. While the narrative component is certainly important in these texts, they are mainly focussed on the protagonists’ spiritual and psychological evolution, and on their emotions and thoughts in significant moments in their lives. Furthermore, these texts also include (sometimes abundant) details that are not, or do not seem to be necessary to the development of the plot. All these elements may indeed give the impression of an apparent immobility, both of the protagonists’ growth and of narrative development. Yet as I maintain, these narratives evolve *fluidly*, often avoiding normative or predictable paths. In fact, fluid anti-developmental narratives very much aim to depict what Joyce defined as “the curve of an emotion” in his 1904 essay “A Portrait of the Artist” (“A Portrait” 258), and to what Balázs, in his 1930 study *The Spirit of Film*, refers to as “intensity.”

Balázs, in particular, highlights the correlation between the diffused use of the close-up and the preponderance of intensity over narration, or the actual development of the plot. His conclusion is that “the close-up has awakened our interest in nuance. (Or alternatively perhaps, our interest in nuance has given rise to the close-up)” (110). These considerations, which may have related to films of the late 1920s¹³⁵, are equally applicable not only to modernist literature, but also to the cinema of the decades following World War Two, and notably to the French New Wave. It is therefore worthwhile to consider Joyce and Truffaut’s use of the close-up. How often, in which circumstances, and to which ends do they employ it? In what follows, I try to provide an answers to these questions by analysing some significant close-ups of Stephen and of Antoine, but also of other characters, such as their parents.

Although Stephen’s face and his physical appearance are never described, his gestures, facial expressions, and movements are often very carefully presented, thus making an important contribution to his characterisation. Joyce’s mastery often consists in clearly sketching the main traits of the character’s personality without recurring to long and detailed descriptions, but rather favouring short sentences and vivid images. Meaningful examples of close-ups can already be found in the opening paragraphs of *Portrait*, as can several others in the first chapter.

135 Namely those that are still ascribable to the period of “early cinema,” and characterised by a certain degree of experimentation with the medium.

It is indeed fitting that the beginning of the novel includes so many close-ups because Stephen, here a young child, perceives the reality around him mainly through his senses. The first faces that appear in *Portrait* are those of the parents, seen from his point of view. Significantly, while the image of the father is framed by the sense of sight – we are told that his father “had a hairy face” (*P* 3) –, his mother’s face is presented through the senses of smell and sound¹³⁶: the first things we know about her is that she “had a nicer smell than his father” and that “[s]he played on the piano the sailor’s hornpipe¹³⁷ for [Stephen] to dance” (*ibid.*). A visual close-up of her face can be found shortly after, in an important scene that takes place on Stephen’s first day at Clongowes Wood College and that, as pointed out, constitutes one of his first ‘rites of passages’. On parting from his parents, he remembers that “when [his mother] had said goodbye she had put up her veil double to her nose to kiss him: and her nose and eyes were red. But he had pretended not to see that she was going to cry. She was a nice mother but she was not so nice when she cried” (*P* 5). The tears of his mother while she bids Stephen goodbye can be compared to those on the face of his father at the end of the Christmas dinner, another rite-of-passage moment. The scene culminates with a sentence that has the same effect as a shot/counter-shot in a film, and which concludes the central section of the chapter: “Stephen, raising his terror-stricken face, saw that his father’s eyes were full of tears” (39).

Aside from her tears, in the scene at Clongowes, the mother’s kiss is also significant. Indeed, this act is evoked shortly after the farewell, in a moment of embarrassment and confusion for the young Stephen. He is laughed at by his fellows schoolmates when he admits that he kisses his mother before going to bed, and he therefore starts musing about this particular gesture:

Was it right to kiss his mother or wrong to kiss his mother? What did that mean, to kiss? You put your face up like that to say good night and then his mother put her face down. That was to kiss. His mother put her lips on his cheek; her lips were soft and they wetted his cheek; and they made a tiny little noise: kiss. Why did people do that with their two faces? (11-12)

Once more, the maternal kiss is described mainly through the senses of touch and noise rather than that of sight. An interesting comparison can also be drawn between this kiss and that of the prostitute Stephen visits at the end of the second chapter. Apart from the use of close-ups, the narrative rhythm of the passage is telling:

136 In a 1914 letter to Joyce, the Triestine writer Italo Svevo noted: “Do you know that I have now discovered that Dedalus is not only an eyeing and looking animal but that he has also a strongly developed sense for smells?” (*Scritti* 119).

137 As also noted by Brannigan (*cf. Archipelagic* 75), this reference to the sailor’s hornpipe is an early indication of the importance of the maritime dimension for the young Stephen, and of the significant (symbolical) interrelatedness with the figure of the mother.

His lips would not bend to kiss her. He wanted to be held firmly in her arms, to be caressed slowly, slowly, slowly. In her arms he felt that he had suddenly become strong and fearless and sure of himself. But his lips would not bend to kiss her.

With a sudden movement she bowed his head and joined her lips to his and he read the meaning of her movements in her frank uplifted eyes. It was too much for him. He closed his eyes, surrendering himself to her, body and mind, conscious of nothing in the world but the dark pressure of her softly parting lips. They pressed upon his brain as upon his lips as though they were the vehicle of a vague speech; and between them he felt an unknown and timid pressure, darker than the swoon of sin, softer than sound or odour. (108)

Once again, rather than the sight, the senses mainly involved in this extremely intense close-ups are touch (the “pressure” of her lips) and sound (although “vague”). The first paragraph presents a chiasitic structure and is characterised by very short sentences and repetitions. This recalls the style of the first chapter, which mimics the language of Stephen as a child, and indeed what he seems to desire from the prostitute at first is a comforting and maternal love; eventually, however, he surrenders to her kiss. The chapter abruptly ends after this climax, thereby interrupting the narrative tension that has been built, as is common in *Portrait*.

The sudden shift from a highly emotional to an anti-climactic moment occurs not only at the end of a chapter or of a section, but also within chapters, and it is often paralleled by a change of style. An interesting example can be found in chapter five, in a passage in which Stephen expresses his contrasting feelings for Emma. Throughout this last chapter, the language reaches high levels of complexity as it reflects Stephen’s stage of maturity. Still, in this particular passage, the style undergoes meaningful changes, the sentences become shorter and the syntax somehow repetitive, reflecting Stephen’s agitation at the sight of Emma, who walks past him and his friend Cranly, apparently greeting only Cranly and ignoring Stephen. His restlessness is accompanied by a gesture of impatience: “He began to beat the end of his ashplant against the base of a pillar” (252), and even after Emma has passed by, his thoughts cannot part from her image. The sequence culminates with a vivid impression of her physicality and, again, of her smell. Yet this description is abruptly interrupted by an utter change of tone (and subject):

It was not thought nor vision though he knew vaguely that her figure was passing homeward through the city. Vaguely first and then more sharply he smelt her body. A conscious unrest seethed in his blood. Yes, it was her body he smelt, a wild and languid smell, the tepid limbs over which his music had flowed desirously and the secret soft linen upon which her flesh distilled odour and a dew.

A louse crawled over the nape of his neck and, putting his thumb and forefinger deftly beneath his loose collar, he caught it. He rolled its body, tender yet brittle as a grain of rice, between thumb and finger for an instant before he let it fall from him and wondered would it live or die. (253-254)

From the idealised image of Emma’s body, the narration shifts to “the life of [Stephen’s] body, ill

clad, ill fed, louse-eaten” (ibid.), and finally focusses on the fragile body of the louse itself. The oddly disturbing thoughts about the state of his own body and the still vivid image of Emma eventually lead Stephen to an extreme conclusion: “Well then, let her go and be damned to her! She could love some clean athlete who washed himself every morning to the waist and had black hair on his chest. Let her¹³⁸” (254). This conclusion also indirectly refers to Stephen’s repulsion for water, and in particular to his unwillingness to wash himself, another testimony of which can be found earlier on, at the beginning of the same chapter, when Stephen allows his mother to wash him (cf. 189), as well as at the beginning of *Ulysses* (cf. *U* 1.475).

Returning to the first chapter of *Portrait*, though, it may be useful to consider some of the close-ups that occur in the scenes set at school, such as in the ‘pandybat episode’, in which Stephen is unjustly punished by Father Dolan, the prefect of studies. The visual construction of this emotionally loaded moment contributes in a decisive way to representing Stephen’s perception of authority and his attitude towards it. Father Dolan believes that Stephen has intentionally broken his glasses in order to be exempted from writing his assignments during the Latin lesson; for his part, Stephen is convinced of his innocence, for he has indeed broken his glasses by accident. Still, Father Dolan is determined to punish Stephen for that “trick” (*P* 51). Looking up towards him, Stephen sees his “whitegrey not young face, his baldy whitegrey head with fluff at the sides of it, the steel rims of his spectacles and his nocoloured eyes looking through the glasses. Why did he say he knew that trick?” (ibid.). This last question, an early trace of Stephen’s stream of consciousness, significantly underlines his difficulty in understanding the situation and the words of the prefect¹³⁹. Still, he can describe the face of Father Dolan in great detail, probably because, convinced of his innocence, he still does not suspect he will be punished; a detail that increases the tension of the moment, even without substantially contributing to the overall “narrative extension,” to use Balázs’ words (*Spirit* 110).

Another moment that is visually and emotionally very tense although relatively irrelevant in terms of plot, occurs in the third chapter, when Stephen prepares himself for confession. This example can be compared with the scene above, because here again Stephen lifts his look towards something or someone that judges him from above, so as to underline his condition of submission.

138 This aspect is referred to again in *Ulysses*, in Molly Bloom’s monologue in “Penelope,” when she thinks about Stephen. Nevertheless, she has a highly idealised and completely distorted image of him: “Im sure hes very distinguished [...] besides hes young those fine young men I could see down in Margate strand bathing place from the side of the rock standing up in the sun naked like a God or something and then plunging into the sea with them why arent all men like that thered be some consolation for a woman” (*U* 18.1344-1349). She compares his image with that of “those fine young men” she used to see bathing in Margate, while we know that this would be highly improbable, as Stephen fears water.

139 The same goes for the questions in the above quoted passage, in which Stephen wonders if it is “right to kiss or wrong to kiss his mother” (*P* 11).

After a week-long spiritual retreat during which he could reflect about his deeds, Stephen is ready to confess: “He stood up in terror and walked blindly into the box. At last it had come. He knelt in the silent gloom and raised his eyes to the white crucifix suspended above him. God could see that he was sorry. He would tell all his sins” (*P* 155). The brevity of the sentences underlines his agitation, and the darkness that surrounds his face as he kneels down inside the confessional provides a vivid sense of this emotional turmoil¹⁴⁰; this unrest is certainly caused by the fact that, unlike in the *pandybat* episode, here Stephen is aware of his culpability.

Such awareness is also showed by Antoine in *Les quatre cents coups*. It is usually in scenes set at school, at home, or in circumstances in which he has to come to terms with the authority of adults, that he realises the weight of his misdeeds. These moments are generally represented by means of close-ups, as in the scene in which the lie about the death of his mother is openly exposed. As pointed out, he has used the lie as an excuse to justify his absence from school, thus also gaining the sympathy of the otherwise harsh teacher of French. Yet when a visit interrupts the lesson, Antoine rightly senses that the moment has arrived for him to pay for his lie. The camera zooms in from above on his frightened face as he holds his mouth staring at the door of the classroom; from the top of the door, he can see the eyes of his mother peering inside the room. Antoine is called to the door, his stepfather enters and slaps him on the face in front of his classmates. He then slowly returns to his desk, and the sequence closes with another close-up on his stricken face. Apart from providing further proof of Antoine’s reluctance to be at school, the scene also illustrates the dynamics between him and his parents, and particularly between him and his mother.

In this regard, there are two more important confrontations between Antoine and his mother. In both cases, the interaction between the two is built almost entirely on a succession of shots and reverse-shots, and on close-ups or even extreme close-ups. The first dialogue takes place around the middle of the film (cf. *LQC* 43':08"-44':40"), after Antoine has spent the night on the streets, not daring to return home after creating mischief. His mother, for the first and only time worried about her son, tries to understand the reasons for his behaviour, and, at the same time, she tries to know if he has told his father about her extra-marital relationship. Antoine had in fact written a letter to his parents informing them that he would not return home and that he would explain everything; meaning, by this, that he intends to quit school and earn himself a living. These words worry and upset his mother who, regretting not having studied herself, tells him that finishing school is essential for his future career; she therefore proposes to give him 1000 Francs if he gets one of the

¹⁴⁰ Incidentally, as seen, close-ups with a black background, therefore somehow suspended in space and time, famously occur half way through Bergman’s *Sommaren med Monika* and in Varda’s *Cléo de 5 à 7*. A similar effect is also given by the close-up and freeze-frame at the end of *Les quatre cents coups*, by the concluding close-up on the face of Adèle Hugo in Truffaut’s film dedicated to her, or even in the last frames of Fellini’s *La dolce vita*, which ends with the face of the girl who followed Marcello on the beach.

best marks in the next French assignment. Even in this rare moment of affection, then, she ultimately exerts her authority over him. Antoine's facial expression during their conversation, though, suggests that he is not very confident nor indeed convinced about her promises and her indulgent words.

In the second dialogue between them, which takes place at the reform school towards the end of the film (cf. *LQC* 1:29:35"-1:30:30"), her attitude is completely different. Nevertheless, the scene itself is constructed in a very similar way, with a succession of shots/reverse shots of the faces of Antoine and his mother, which effectively describe the relationship between them. The extreme close-ups of her eyes and mouth, seen from Antoine's point of view, underline her severity and detachment, and reveal a slight fright that he feels in her regard. During the visit he hardly speaks, and his facial expression changes from an apparently submissive look at the beginning of the conversation to a distressed look at the end, when his mother, with bitter sarcasm concludes: "You wanted a job? You'll see how much fun a foundry can be [*how much fun it is to work with wood and iron*]" (1:30:21"-1:30:30"). While the dialogue after he has spent the night away from home is the one occasion on which the mother appears kind to him, this last encounter reiterates the impressions that the viewer has of the characters and of their relationship when they first appear together in the film, shortly after Antoine sits at the mother's dressing table. On this occasion, their different personalities are particularly well symbolised in the contrast between the disjointed reflection of Antoine's face in the three mirrors, and the direct, self-aware, and determined look of the mother in one mirror. Moreover, on all three occasions, the differences between the characters are further emphasised through the skilful use of close-ups.

Close-up thus plays a decisive role in the readers' and viewer's perceptions of the protagonists' personalities and in the description of their interactions with other characters. It can also serve as a tool to understand and interpret not only the relationship of the characters with the surrounding space, but also the importance of the temporal dimension and how this is treated in narrative terms. In particular, the instances emphasised by means of a close-up are often perceived as crucial by the characters, even when these do not result as decisive in the progression of the plot. Such emphasis ultimately gives further insight into the protagonists' personalities and their emotional and psychological conditions. Indeed, close-ups are often employed in moments that for the characters are revelatory or, to use a term commonly ascribed to Joyce, *epiphanic* moments.

The word epiphany, deriving from the Greek for “to appear, to come into view,” is generally used in religious contexts to describe the visual manifestation of a divinity. The Joycean epiphany, however, refers to a different kind of manifestation. There is only one instance in which the author provides a clear definition for his use of the term, and that is in *Stephen Hero* (one of the early versions of what later became *Portrait*). Here ‘epiphany’ is described as “a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself. [...] [Epiphanies] are the most delicate and evanescent of moments” (*SH* 188). Among Joyce’s early writings is also a series of about forty sketches, composed roughly between 1900 and 1903, which were later grouped together under the definition, and the title, of *Epiphanies*¹⁴¹. These short compositions were intended to list those memorable “evanescent moments” that “it is for the man of letters to record [...] with extreme care” (*SH* 189), as Stephen further explains in *Stephen Hero*. The short stories that compose *Dubliners* are generally considered as examples of epiphanies; nevertheless, as Robert Scholes and Richard Kain note in their study *The Workshop of Daedalus* (1965), if critics agree on using this definition for *Dubliners*, they should do it in the awareness that Joyce would not have considered these short stories as such (cf. Scholes and Kain 4). Indeed, for the writer an epiphany corresponded to a real life event so remarkable for him that he would have to record it. Some of these sketches would eventually be included into a narrative work¹⁴², but they would then cease to be epiphanies, and become a constitutive part of the narration (cf. *ibid.*). Indeed, as Baron notes with regard to *Dubliners*, “Joyce’s epiphanies [...] ‘manifest almost nothing’, and the nature of what they do manifest remains ultimately unknowable, utterly contingent on interpretation” (*Strandentwinig* 71). This may also be due to the fact that, as Joyce’s brother Stanislaus notes in the biography *My Brother’s Keeper* (1957), the author’s “epiphanies became more frequently subjective and included dreams which he [James] considered in some way revelatory” (125). Still, when he first started recording these sketches, they were mostly “ironical observations of slips, and little errors and gestures [...] by which people betrayed the very things

141 Not only was the title *Epiphanies* not chosen by Joyce, but the very word ‘epiphany’ never appears again in his works, with the exceptions of the passages from *Stephen Hero* (a work which, nevertheless, he did not mean to publish), and the passing reference, in “Proteus,” to Stephen’s “epiphanies written on green oval leaves, deeply deep, copies to be sent if you died to all the great libraries of the world, including Alexandria” (*U* 3.141-143).

142 One emblematic case is that of the sketch listed under as number 30 in the collection *Epiphanies*. It is one of the few sketches that reappear in Joyce’s later works with almost no modifications; in particular, it appears in *Portrait*, and corresponds to the third last of the diary entries that conclude the novel, which I have already quoted in its entirety in chapter three. The original text in *Epiphanies* is the following: “The spell of arms and voices—the white arms of roads, their promise of close embraces and the black arms of tall ships that stand against the moon, their tale of distant nations. They are held out to say: We are alone,—come. And the voices say with them: We are your people. And the air is thick with their company as they call to me their kinsman, making ready to go, shaking the wings of their exultant and terrible youth” (qt. Scholes and Kain 40).

they were most careful to conceal” (124).

The interest in small actions that involuntarily render manifest specific emotions and/or reactions indeed characterises much of Joyce’s work. In “Circe,” for example, Stephen maintains that “gesture, not music not odour, would be a universal language, the gift of tongues rendering visible not the lay sense but the first entelechy, the structural rhythm” (*U* 15.105-107). Similarly, a preference for gestures over dialogues, apart from being necessary characteristic of silent films, is also fundamental in Hitchcock’s cinema: here, movements and gestures that ultimately display emotions are pivotal, and take priority over dialogue, which “should simply be a sound among other sounds, just something that comes out of the mouths of people whose eyes tell the story in visual terms” (Truffaut *Hitchcock* 222). This ‘rule’ is also attentively followed by *nouvelle-vague* directors, and by Truffaut in particular. On many occasions, his use of the camera, carefully attuned to the movements and emotions of the characters, provides more accurate information than the words those characters utter. Among the numerous possible examples that could be cited from the Doinel cycle, the ‘*oui-monsieur* scene’ in *Baisers volés* is one of the most emblematic. With his odd and at the same time naïve answer, Antoine indeed betrays his feelings for M.me Tabard; the effects of this brief but intense exchange between the two is importantly emphasised by the close-up of Antoine’s surprised and embarrassed face, the cut to his nervous hands dropping a cup of coffee, the reverse-shot of M.me Tabard, which reveals her confused expression, and finally of Antoine rushing outside the apartment and dashing down the stairs. As I have already hinted at in the previous chapter, this episode could have very well been the subject of a Joycean sketch/epiphany.

Joyce’s early sketches indeed show a marked cinematographic character. In their study, Scholes and Kain refer to the cinematic quality of Joyce’s early works, which they describe as reproductions of significant moments seen through “a kind of camera eye” (4), and subsequently “placed in an artistic framework and used to enrich with reality a fictional narrative” (*ibid.*). Of course, an “artistic framework” is also what a film director creates through the very act of framing and the application of specific narrative styles and techniques. In the Truffautian example just seen, for instance, the director records a significant moment (although not from real life, but from a novel), re-placing it within the artistic framework of a film.

Nevertheless, Joycean epiphanies are also photographic in a sense (cf. Baron “Flaubert, Joyce” 692), insofar as they record, or indeed *capture*, moments that are particularly worthy of attention. A good example of this can be found in *Stephen Hero*, in which Stephen chooses to illustrate to Cranly his concept of epiphany by referring to the Ballast Office¹⁴³ clock, which was

143 The Ballast Office was situated in the area of the Dublin port, and the particularity of the clock on top of it was the big ‘timeball’ that, inserted on a pole, would drop down at exactly 1 p.m., Greenwich time. This would nevertheless differ from Dublin (that is, Dunsink) time, twenty-five minutes earlier than Greenwich (cf. Johnson 820). A passing

well-known in Dublin at the time:

- [...] I will pass it time after time, allude to it, refer to it, catch a glimpse of it. It is only an item in the catalogue of Dublin's street furniture. Then all at once I see it and I know at once what it is: epiphany.
- What?
- Imagine my glimpses at that clock as the gropings of a spiritual eye which seeks to adjust its vision to an exact focus. The moment the focus is reached the object is epiphanized. (*SH* 189)

First of all, by choosing the clock, Stephen (or indeed Joyce) alludes to the centrality of time for an epiphany; secondly, the reference to the achievement of an “exact focus,” while certainly pertinent in cinematic terms, is also a notion that importantly links back to photography. As Baron observes, early cinema in particular “exploited the expressive possibilities related to variations in photographic focus, to suggest clarity or blurriness of vision, whether these be interpreted metaphorically or literally” (“Flaubert, Joyce” 692). Moreover, as Williams points out, “Joyce’s famous definition of ‘epiphany’ [...] hints at photography’s enhancement of organic vision and its defamiliarizations of mundane phenomena and experience through close-ups” (“Time and Motion” 94). Epiphanic moments are often rendered by means of narrative techniques that alter the perception of time, such as the close-up, as seen in some of the instances listed above, and the freeze-frame. Of course, this technique is a quintessentially cinematic one, yet I contend that its function is akin to that of the revelatory moments described in the Joycean texts.

The freeze-frame in cinema has an evident affinity with photography as it literally arrests, at a precise instant, the flow of images. This aspect should be considered in light of the fact that, as Baron notes, Joyce did not have a high consideration for photography as an art form (cf. “Flaubert, Joyce” 696). Indeed, in opposition to the “fluid succession of presents” (Joyce “A Portrait” 257) advocated in his 1904 essay “A Portrait of the Artist,” “[p]hotography [...] is frequently associated with stasis in Joyce’s work” (Baron “Flaubert, Joyce” 696). This “stasis” is not only reminiscent of the paralysis that characterises the short stories of *Dubliners*, but is also emblematic of Stephen Dedalus’ condition. Bearing in mind the coincidence between ‘epiphanies’, freeze-frames, and photography, as well as their symbolic link with paralysis or indeed arrested development, it can be productive to consider once again the crucial moments on the seashore in *Portrait* and in *Les quatre cents coups*.

In these scenes, which arguably correspond to revelatory moments, Stephen and Antoine seem to find the way to free themselves from the nets of conventions and express their artistic vocations by means of the written word. It would be plausible to think that they finally ‘take flight’

reference to this clock can also be found in *Ulysses*, in the “Lestrygonians” episode, when Bloom guesses it must be “[a]fter one. Timeball of the ballastoffice is down. Dunsink time” (8.108-109).

in the ever-changing and liminal space of the shore, which aptly symbolises that “fluid succession of presents” advocated by Joyce (“A Portrait” 257). Nevertheless, in the concluding instances of the scenes in question, the vivid impression of these moments of revelation is separated off in time and in space. In the case of Stephen, the abrupt change of tone and of setting distances the character and the reader from the atmosphere of the long sequence on Dollymount Strand. In the case of Antoine, the close-up of his confused expression (which is also strikingly reminiscent of the close-up at the end of his last conversation with his mother) and the use of the freeze-frame cast doubt on the actual achievement of his freedom. Moreover, after these supposedly epiphanic moments, the characters do not, or cannot, pursue the goals they set out to achieve, and their following experiences are in sharp contrast with the very revelations they have had. In particular, their efforts at expressing their artistic talent are regularly put in doubt or underrated.

As seen, the narrative texture of the works in which Stephen and Antoine appear is characterised by the succession of revelatory moments and incidental events that contrast them. Moreover, the frequency of such moments ultimately undermines their revelatory effect. This is one of the consequences of what, with regard to *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, I have indicated as a tidal evolution of the style. As Williams interestingly notes, “[t]he ‘individuating rhythm’ of Stephen’s developing consciousness is simultaneously *Portrait’s* underlying subject and form, in a reflexively structural sense” (“Time and Motion” 98). This specific rhythmic variation can also be found in the Doinel films, and particularly in *Les quatre cents coups*. Another effect of this tidal stylistic evolution is to emphasise the fluidity of Stephen’s and Antoine’s evolutions; as Richard Neupert observes with regard to *Les quatre cents coups*, “[w]ithout resolution of the various segments or even clearly defined desires and goals from scene to scene, the narrative structure undercuts any expectation on the part of the audience for complete and total resolution of this open-story film” (183).

The sea-set scenes make a significant contribution in connoting these stories as open and non-resolving, and should therefore be emphasised again. In order to advance some final consideration on these crucial sequences, it is useful to start from a brief passage in *Stephen Hero*, which is taken from a conversation between Stephen and Cranly on Aquinas’ aesthetic theories, and particularly on what the philosopher identified as the necessary qualities for beauty: “integrity, a wholeness, symmetry and radiance” (*SH* 189). On this occasion, Stephen also provides a further explanation of what he means by epiphany:

– Now for the third quality [i.e. radiance]. For a long time I couldn’t make out what Aquinas meant. [...] but I have solved it. *Claritas* is *quidditas*. [...] This is the moment which I call epiphany. First we recognize that the object is *one* integral thing, then we recognize that it is an

organized composite structure, a *thing* in fact: finally, when the relation of the parts is exquisite, when the parts are adjusted to the special point, we recognize that it is *that* thing which it is. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany. (190; emphasis in the original)

Indeed, we can take Stephen's conclusions as a key to re-reading the seashore scenes in *Portrait* and in *Les quatre cents coups*. To begin with, the proximity to the sea suggests that both Stephen and Antoine (metaphorically) see their reflections in the mirror of water, and can therefore recognise that they are "that thing which it is" (*ibid.*). As I have argued, Stephen's vision of the bird-girl on Dollymount strand may very well be a projection of his own soul, while the instant in which Antoine catches his first glimpse of the ocean marks the achievement of a longed-for destination. Reaching the sea should therefore coincide for both with the awareness and acknowledgement of a new horizon where their desires for freedom can finally materialise. In these moments their soul or, to use Jung's words, their "own face" ("Archetypes" 20), may indeed "seem to [them] radiant" (*SH* 190), or epiphanised. Nevertheless, the abrupt interruptions at the end of these scenes suggest the termination of any kind of movement towards a goal that lies ahead of them, and the actual meaning of these instants of revelations is soon (and repeatedly) put into question.

As I have intended to show in my investigation, however, it is not completely appropriate to consider these as moments of paralysis or arrested development, but rather as moments in an ongoing and fluid evolution. The liminal space of the shore, the locus of a continuous transformation, appropriately constitutes a symbol and a signifier of the characters' evolution. For Stephen and Antoine, the moments on the shore ideally represent the beginning of their path towards a full liberty of artistic expression. Yet the fact that they see a possibility for the realisation of this aspiration precisely on the shore also has another important implication, for, far from being a terrain on which they could leave their 'signatures', the shore is a space where their art would be inexorably erased by the water of the sea. The piece of paper on which Stephen jots down his poem in "Proteus," on Sandymount Strand, is accidentally found, in "Nausicaa," by Bloom, who nevertheless cannot decipher it. On those "heavy sands" that Stephen equals to "language" (*U* 3.288), he (intentionally?) leaves those few lines; significantly, an attempt at a creative act is repeated, on that very shore, by Bloom, who tries to write something on the sand, but soon gives up, as his message would, in any case, be washed away by the tide. The reiteration of this act on the shore, however, also suggests that that is a place on which words, or indeed texts, can be written and rewritten. In other words, the space of the shore can be seen as a metaphor of the very act of writing (and, for that matter, any creative act), which necessarily implies a long and fluid process of

weaving and unweaving¹⁴⁴. It should therefore not come as a surprise that neither Joyce nor Truffaut stopped their narrations after the climactic moments on the shore, for what follows these two seaside episodes is a succession of rises and falls, following the ‘curves of emotions’¹⁴⁵ that ultimately also influence the protagonists’ experiences of the spatial and temporal dimensions they live in.

In this regard, it is indeed appropriate that the last Doinel episode, *L’amour en fuite*, should be characterised by a continuous alteration of time, notably by means of flashbacks. Moreover, Antoine’s girlfriend, Sabine, repairs clocks and watches as a hobby, and, as becomes clear in the course of the film, she is a key figure who reunites the threads of Antoine’s past. More precisely, the actual motor of this final episode is the photograph of Sabine. Torn into pieces and thrown away, collected and recomposed, lost and found again, Sabine’s portrait reappears several times throughout the film, linking together the characters with whom Antoine has been related in the course of the entire cycle. Towards the end of the film, the same photograph becomes decisive in convincing her of Antoine’s feelings toward her, and in her agreement to ‘acting as if’ the prospect of their relationship were a happy and positive one. Their relationship also constitutes the inspiration for Antoine’s next novel, as we get to know during his conversation with Colette on the train. After he has sketched out the plot, which revolves around the love of the male protagonist for a woman, Colette asks whether the protagonist’s love is reciprocated, and Antoine has to admit: “[Well, frankly,] that’s where I’m stuck. She’ll probably respond to his love, but their affair is bound to wind up as usual. Disappointment, arguments, and a break-up” (*AF* 48’:39"-48’:51"). In light of the standstill of his relationship with Sabine, Antoine can only imagine, for his novel, the reiteration of a couple sentimental predicament what he knows well. Although at the end this situation is, at least apparently, disentangled, the rotor flashback from *Les quatre cents coups* in the last sequence clearly evokes the continuous return movements that characterise this last Doinel episode.

Similarly, an analogous rotatory movement was meant to be the foundation of Molly Bloom’s soliloquy, the concluding episode of *Ulysses*. As Joyce wrote to Frank Budgen, “[h]er monologue turns slowly, evenly, though with variations, capriciously, but surely like the huge earthball itself round and round spinning” (Budgen 269). After having followed the urban wanderings of Stephen, Leopold, and numerous other ‘Dubliners’, *Ulysses* closes with the wanderings of Molly’s thoughts while trying to fall asleep. The Joycean Penelope weaves and

144 It must not be forgotten that the very word “text” stems from the Latin “*textus*,” past participle of “*textere*,” which means “to weave, to fabricate.”

145 This phrase is inspired by the already-quoted passage from Joyce’s 1904 essay “A Portrait of the Artist” (cf. “A Portrait” 258).

unweaves the text providing her own images and impressions of the characters that have appeared throughout the day/novel, including Stephen. Similarly, in *L'amour en fuite* it is Sabine who, agreeing to reconcile with Antoine, indirectly has the last word on the text he is writing. Inspired by their relationship, the development of Antoine's next novel depends very much on this last decision.

The narrative and symbolic force of the cyclical movements, vividly evoked in the final episodes of Stephen's and Antoine's stories, links back to their beginnings. The metaphor of water, and of the sea in particular, has proven to be a fruitful tool of interpretation in this regard. The cyclical rhythm of these narrations indeed recalls that of the ebbs and flow of the tide, and leaves the question about the protagonists' destinies, which unfold in a "fluid succession of presents," both open and unanswered. The symbolism of water thus also mirrors the lack of linear development, both of the characters and of the texts. The constant intertwining of the chronological advancement of events with the personal time of the protagonists further strengthens this aspect, as does the crucial importance of the spatial dimension of the shore. Its very liminality, and thus the impossibility of defining this space in an unequivocal manner, turns it into a metaphor of the very fluidity that denotes the intellectual, psychological, and artistic growth not only of Stephen and Antoine, but also more generally of protagonists of fluid anti-developmental narratives.

6. Conclusions

This study has primarily been aimed at identifying a particular category of literary and cinematic texts, which I have defined fluid anti-developmental narratives. I have considered them as constituting a sub-genre of sea narratives on account of the crucial role played by water, and particularly by sea water, both in plot development and in the characterisation of the protagonists. An investigation of sea narratives can indeed open onto a vast and extremely diversified field of research; the prismatic, multifarious quality of these kinds of narratives is determined by a fruitful interchange between cultures, genres, and media which constitutes their narrative material. This rich diversity is also applicable to the group of texts selected for the present investigation, which cannot represent a definitive or complete collection of fluid anti-developmental narratives due to the sheer number of works that could be categorised as such. Rather, the analysis I have conducted here was targeted at delineating the main characteristics of these texts, at outlining the historical and cultural frame within which this narrative category has taken shape, and at drawing together the most representative works of this category.

Although they lack some of the thematic and formal elements that are generally ascribed to a narration centred on sea and/or sea journeys, fluid anti-developmental narratives not only feature the element of water, and the maritime setting in particular, but these elements also form the crucial points of encounter where thematic and formal aspects of the narration intersect. These works present young, mostly adolescent protagonists who do not follow a linear, socially prescribed path of development, but instead undergo a *fluid evolution*. The analysis I have carried out has hinged on this characterising fluidity, which not only describes the very identity of these young characters (who are confronted with the intrinsically fluid element of water), but is also reflected in the very style of the texts considered. That is, in all these texts, be they literary or cinematic, language is in fact employed to represent and articulate such fluidity.

The focus on the linguistic aspect of these texts has been one of the main threads of my analysis. Particularly during the first decades of the twentieth century, when modernist literature was flourishing alongside early cinema, the two art forms interacted in productive ways. Indeed, this moment has signalled the beginning of a mutual influence between literature and cinema, an interplay that would develop in significant ways throughout the century. More specifically, the numerous points of contact among the apparently diverse works I have analysed shed light on the

evolution of a research on language, which started roughly from literary Modernism in the 1920s, and developed in meaningful ways in (mainly European) cinematic production until the 1960s, if not beyond.

In chapters three and four I gave an account of the important linguistic transformations that took place in the period in question in the two media considered; in chapter five, I have analysed the correspondences between the literary and cinematic texts selected by comparing the characters of Stephen Dedalus and Antoine Doinel as representative examples. In considering them side by side, I paid attention both to the linguistic and stylistic variation of the texts in which they appear and to the relationship with language that the two protagonists have. During their adolescence, their relationship with language develops so as to become not only a means to express their emotions, but also their main tool for artistic creation. Both elect the written word as their principal channel of artistic expression: Stephen aspires to become a poet, Antoine a novelist. Although their talent as writers is often hardly recognised, this common trait is of fundamental importance, as the protagonists' acknowledgement of their artistic vocation, and the focus on their processes of artistic creation, serve to bring the importance of language also in the context of the fictional reality of the texts to the fore.

General Frames of Reference: the Languages of Literature and Cinema

Within the timespan covered in the present study, roughly stretching from the beginning of the twentieth century to the late 1960s, I have singled out some pivotal moments that provide a key to understanding the formation and evolution of fluid anti-developmental narratives. As a starting point, I considered the important relationships between Modernist literature and early cinema, and how their mutual influences led to a substantial re-shaping of both literary and cinematic languages, thus constituting a crucial point of reference for the subsequent transformations of both media. Obviously, the introduction of sound films at the end of the 1920s had a major effect on the evolution of the language of cinema; and within this context, I paid particular attention to the films of the French masters of the 1930s, like Renoir and Vigo, notably on account of their utilisation of the element of water in its numerous expressive, narrative, and symbolic potentials. The main focus of my film analysis, however, was on the developments of cinema after the Second World War. Without ignoring the fundamental contribution of Italian neorealist cinema, I have dedicated much of my analysis to the cinema of the French *nouvelle vague*.

The two poles of the temporal and narrative trajectory that I have outlined are therefore Modernist literature and French *nouvelle-vague* cinema. In chapter four in particular, I pointed out

some of the most important links between the two artistic movements, and on the basis of these similarities, I developed my arguments. A first, more evident point of connection is the strong interdependence of literature and cinema that characterises, in different measures, both modernist literature and the *nouvelle-vague* cinema. Apart from the fundamental inclination towards the expressive potentialities of the visual that is common to Modernism and to early cinema, the important mutual influences between them are also clear in the pronounced cinematic character of much modernist prose. An evident link with literature characterised in turn the cinema of the *nouvelle vague* from its very outset. Truffaut's filmography, for example, includes several film adaptations of novels (such as *Jules et Jim* and *Fahrenheit 451* [1966]), as well as films inspired by literary characters or by personalities who have had a close connection with the literary world (like *L'histoire d'Adèle H*). Indeed, *nouvelle-vague* directors, as well as pioneers and precursors of this cinema avant garde, repeatedly emphasised and advocated a fundamental bond between doing cinema and writing. Some of the most famous examples are Astruc's theorisation of the *caméra-stylo*, Varda's coinage of the *cinécriture*, and the *politique des auteurs*, propounded by *nouvelle-vague* directors and constituting the very foundation of the *nouvelle-vague* poetics and aesthetics. All these elements importantly concurred in defining the distinctive style of French New-Wave cinema, a cinema which flourished in a moment in which an enhancement of the cinematic language and its expressive potentialities was paralleled by important technological improvements. The utterly original language of New-Wave cinema, very much like that of modernist literature, resulted from a harmonious integration of traditional elements with new and ground-breaking narrative and expressive techniques.

Another fundamental aspect that I have intended to highlight is that, although literary Modernism and *nouvelle-vague* cinema were not contemporaneous, they did share a common experimental and innovative linguistic approach that is rooted in the heritage of literary and cinematic traditions. That is to say, while both modernist writers and *nouvelle-vague* filmmakers were consciously creating and developing a new language, they were also fusing traditional and ground-breaking elements together, tackling new themes and motifs, or proposing unconventional re-readings of canonical ones, as well as introducing new characters, notably the 'anti-heroes' of the works I have analysed. The linguistic approach, marked by a distinctive avant-gardism, which links together literary Modernism and the cinema of the *nouvelle vague* reflects how (pre)determinate social, political, and economic models were becoming obsolete. Modernism developed in the aftermath of the first global conflict, and the most important transformations in cinema, which would lead to the birth of the New Wave, took place right after the Second World War (notably with Italian Neorealism, which is in many ways the direct predecessor of the *nouvelle vague*). In other

words, it was in moments of profound and general crisis such as the two post-war periods that such models were decidedly questioned.

The Focus on Fluid Adolescence and a Note on the Function of Secondary Characters

In the works considered in my study, the representation and symbolic use of the sea and of water in general are subject to new and meaningful reinterpretations, which, to borrow Jonathan Raban's phrase, follow wider "shifts of sensibility" (3). The significant transformation that the narrative function of the sea underwent between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century signals one of these epochal "shifts." My analysis has focussed in particular on the relationship between these transformations and the introduction, or re-definition, of the figure of the adolescent protagonist.

To begin with, the characters considered in this study deviate from the model that is generally ascribable to the traditional novel of formation, or Bildungsroman. This genre witnessed significant growth and success throughout the nineteenth century, and particularly in the Victorian era, which chronologically precedes the starting point of my analysis. The end of this epoch and the trauma of the First World War contributed to undermine both the validity and the plausibility of the models and values that had dictated, often forcibly, moral and civil customs. I am referring in particular to the ideal and the idealisation of the family, the clear separation of gender roles within the family and within society, and the marked sexual double standard¹⁴⁶.

These aspects have been of fundamental importance in the development of my analysis of adolescent characters as individuals who are supposed to be on the verge of mature adulthood. In line with a Bildung-oriented bourgeois and Victorian paradigm, this condition is inherently linked to the formation of a family, and thus to the aim and process of becoming husbands and wives, as well as fathers and mothers. In the opening decades of the twentieth century, the modernist Bildungsroman contributes to supersede this normative logic, which already in the Victorian period coexisted with divergent experiences. The impossibility or unwillingness to develop into mature adults that links both the protagonists of modernist Bildungsromane and of fluid anti-developmental narratives, is paired in many instances with the protagonists' ambiguous, when not reluctant, attitudes towards marriage and child rearing and, ultimately, towards social, sexual, and moral conducts which are very much based on a patriarchal and heteronormative logic.

¹⁴⁶ Not to mention class discrimination and the ruthless exploitation of colonial territories and of the colonised populations, which I have touched on only indirectly in my analysis.

The textual analyses carried out in chapters three and four have shown that this is the case for most of the characters in fluid anti-developmental narratives. Many of the protagonists of these works come from troubled and/or oppressive family situations (as, for instance, Eveline in Joyce's eponymous short story, Gerty McDowell in the "Nausicaa" episode of *Ulysses*, or Monika in Bergman's film *Sommaren med Monika*), have negative experiences of their own marriages and families (as in the case of Little Chandler in Joyce's "A Little Cloud," or of the couples portrayed in Vigo's *L'Atlante* or in Varda's *La Pointe Courte*¹⁴⁷), or else cannot or do not consider marriage an option in their future (this is, for instance, the case of two Woolfian characters, Rachel Vinrace in *The Voyage Out*, and Lily Briscoe in *To the Lighthouse*). As far as Stephen Dedalus and Antoine Doinel are concerned, social duties and complicated family dynamics are perceived as two of the main obstacles that, ultimately, prevent their attainment of an absolute freedom of (artistic) expression. In particular Stephen Dedalus in *Portrait* and Antoine Doinel in *Les quatre cents coups* are resolute in their radical choices to break free from these constraints, or from these "nets," as Stephen famously puts it¹⁴⁸.

The protagonists of modernist novels of anti-development, therefore, give voice to a strong claim against an oppressive social and educational system, based in turn on a strongly normative model and revolving around the myth of the family. This protest becomes increasingly vigorous after the Second World War, ultimately culminating in the revolts of 1968. This historical moment also roughly coincides with the end of the timespan considered in my analysis. In chapter five I have briefly considered the 1968 uprisings in connection to some of the films analysed, as many *nouvelle-vague* directors and actors actively took part in the protests in France. In particular, I mentioned the case of Truffaut's *Baisers volés*, the third Doinel episode, which was shot in 1968. While at first this film does not seem to show visible signs of that moment of great transformations (the plot chiefly develops around the love story of Antoine and Christine, and ends, quite traditionally, with a marriage proposal), I think it is necessary to consider the Doinel cycle in its entirety in order to detect the traces of a period of momentous changes. Indeed, as early as in the first Doinel film, *Les quatre cents coups*, Truffaut openly denounces the oppressive social and educational system. Later on, the happy ending of *Baisers volés*, with a long shot of the newly-engaged couple walking hand in hand, is overshadowed by the lyrics of Charles Trenet's song, "Que reste-t-il de nos amours?", which accompanies it. This foreboding of separation becomes reality in the following two films, which show the definitive failure of Antoine's marriage with Christine. More generally, the characterisation of Antoine Doinel and his vicissitudes throughout the whole

147 Unlike in "A Little Cloud," in the two films the couples find a solution to their crisis.

148 Notwithstanding the fact that these aspirations are later frustrated.

cycle put into question the very bourgeois models against which students and workers were protesting in the late 1960s.

In the works analysed, secondary characters often serve to amplify (more or less directly) the main characters' radical thoughts that, at least ideally, drive their behaviours. The texts in which Stephen and Antoine appear, present a multiplicity of such characters, and it is often the case that, very much like the main characters, these secondary figures have detached themselves from pre-established norms and models. While analysing these figures lies outside the bounds of this research, I think that some of them may be worth of further scrutiny. Therefore, even though lacking the necessary space for an extended discussion, I would like to mention two highly pertinent examples in relation to Stephen and Antoine: Milly Bloom¹⁴⁹, the daughter of Leopold and Molly Bloom in *Ulysses*, and Sabine, Antoine Doinel's girlfriend in *L'amour en fuite*. As female characters, they can also be read as counterparts to Stephen and Antoine, male protagonists and the *foci* of my analysis.

The reader of *Ulysses* knows Milly Bloom almost exclusively through the words and thoughts of other characters. She is not in Dublin on the 16th of June 1904, therefore she never appears in the novel and she never speaks¹⁵⁰. The first direct mention of Milly occurs in the fourth episode, "Calypso," when Leopold Bloom reads a letter she sent to thank him for the birthday presents; she had turned fifteen the day before, and that was "[h]er first birthday away from home" (*U* 4.415-416). Milly is in Mullingar, in the county of Westmeath, where, as she writes in the letter, she "is getting on swimming in the photo business" (4.400-401). In Mullingar she also met a "young student [...] named Bannon" (4.406-407), with whom she is probably about to start a relationship. From her letter, and from the thoughts it provokes in Bloom, we can gather that Milly is a rather extroverted and emancipated girl; indeed, not only is she far from Dublin (the centre of paralysis, especially for Stephen), but she is also engaging in photography, an unusual occupation for a young woman at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Her father often thinks about her as a girl who is becoming a woman, repeatedly comparing this image with the memories of her as a child. Yet he also often thinks about Rudy, the son who died when he was only eleven days old, repeatedly trying to imagine his life "[i]f little Rudy had lived. See him grow up. Hear his voice in the house. Walking beside Molly in an Eton suit. My son. Me in his eyes" (6.75-76). Bloom's sad yearning for the son he did not have, and probably will never have, may even signal his slight regret at having *only* a daughter¹⁵¹: "Last of my race[.]" he

149 One of the most recent analyses of this figure is Katherine Ryan's "Milly Bloom as a Blind Spot in *Ulysses*," in which she also lists of the relatively scant literature on the character of Milly (cf. Ryan 33).

150 With the exception of a passage in "Circe," where, nevertheless, her appearance is only a vision or dreamlike projection of Bloom's mind (cf. *U* 15.3170-3171).

151 Ryan's article (mentioned above) analyses the figure of Milly in relation to Bloom's preoccupations with

muses later on in the novel, “Milly young student. Well, my fault perhaps. No son. Rudy. Too late now. Or if not? If not? If still?” (11.1066-1067). Milly’s mother, Molly, reveals contrasting feelings towards her in the soliloquy at the end of the novel. She seems to be jealous of her own daughter, a daughter who is now becoming an attractive young woman, who has many friends, and is fond of her father. Many of her daughter’s behaviours and attitudes are sources of irritation for Molly: “her tongue is a bit too long for my taste your blouse is open too low she says to me [...] and I had to tell her not to cock her legs up like that on show on the windowsill before all the people passing they all look at her like me when I was her age” (18.1033-1036). Milly’s popularity among boys, which arouses her mother’s jealousy, is also alluded to early on in the novel (long before the Blooms are introduced in the narration) by Bannon, the “young student” (4.406) from Milly’s letter, who, in a card sent from Westmeath to a friend, informs him that “he found a sweet young thing down there. Photo girl he calls her” (1.684-685).

The absence of Milly’s ‘voice’ in the novel (with the exception of her letter, which could be considered the only relatively direct form of presence), emphasises her distance from the city and the family. On the one hand, this leaves her no possibility to ‘redeem herself’ from the image that the others provide of her. Notwithstanding her emancipated, almost avant-garde occupation, she is still exposed to the risk of being assimilated into the object of photography itself; indeed, it is more plausible that the expression “photo girl,” used by Bannon, should refer to her as the object of his desires rather than as a young apprentice photographer. On the other hand, though, Milly’s very absence from the city also signals a certain independence.

I believe that the idea for the character of Milly may have matured, at least in part, during Joyce’s first stay in Trieste, from 1905 to 1915. In the cosmopolitan Adriatic city, and particularly thanks to his occupation as a private English teacher, Joyce came in contact with women who greatly differed from the women he could find in Ireland and who offered a new, different feminine model to his imagination. In *Giacomo Joyce*, published posthumously in 1968¹⁵², and Joyce’s only work that is not set in Dublin but in Trieste, he sketches out the figure of a charming and well-educated woman: “She speaks. A weak voice from beyond the cold stars. Voice of wisdom. Say on! O, say again, making me wise! This voice I never heard” (*Giacomo Joyce* 15). So strikingly different from the numerous figures of Irish women portrayed in Joyce’s works, from *Dubliners* to *Ulysses*, and even *Finnegans Wake*, this woman who “does the simplest acts with distinction” (5), remains somehow a mystery, and a source of fascination for the highly autobiographical narrating

inheritance.

152 Although the exact date of composition of this work is unknown, Joyce almost certainly wrote it while he was finishing *Portrait*, and before he had started *Ulysses*, as Ellmann notes in the introduction to the text (cf. *Giacomo Joyce* xv).

voice.

Equally mysterious is the identity of the charming woman in a photo, whom Antoine falls in love with in *L'amour en fuite*. Although we know her from the beginning of the film as Sabine, Antoine's girlfriend, around the middle of the film, Antoine reveals the story of the photo and of his desperate search for the identity of the woman he loved even before he had met her. As I observed at the end of chapter five¹⁵³, Sabine plays a pivotal role in the narrative development of *L'amour en fuite*. She also shares some important traits with Milly Bloom and, in part, with the unnamed woman in *Giacomo Joyce*, notably the initial mystery around her identity. From her first appearance in the opening sequence of *L'amour en fuite*, Sabine stands out as a significantly more independent woman than Antoine's previous girlfriends. More importantly, however, in a conversation with him in the last scene of the film, she clearly expresses her thoughts and needs:

I made love to you right away because I wanted to as much as you did. But later on, when I asked you what you expected from me you wouldn't answer my question. So I decided that I had to protect myself. [...] I knew what I expected from you, but when I realised you couldn't decide between life with me and life without me, I knew I had to be careful. I did my best to control my feelings for you. I failed. And since I hate suffering, I decided to stop seeing you. (AF 1:23:27"-1:24:20")

Although she admits having been fallen prey to Antoine's charm, she repeatedly and decidedly advocates her independence, in particular her emotional independence. In this way, she ultimately demonstrates that she is more mature than Antoine.

As pointed out, and as it can be deduced from the brief analyses sketched out here, these two characters emphasise some of Stephen's and Antoine's characterising traits. Milly's absence from Dublin and her creative occupation ultimately represent Stephen's strongest desires, thwarted by his (forced) return to his home country, while Sabine's emotional self-reliance and her independence counterbalance Antoine's instability and immaturity. As he admits at the end of the film, "I've concealed my feelings all my life. I've always been evasive" (AF 1:27:19"-1:27:22"). These observations give me the chance to revert to the main focus of my investigation, the figure of the 'fluid adolescent'.

The (Water)Ways of Queer Adolescence

Starting from the premise that all identities are fluid, and evolve fluidly, I have focussed my investigation on the analysis of adolescent characters as individuals in a phase of life that is

153 In chapter five, I considered Sabine side by side with Molly Bloom, on account of the similar narrative functions of these two figures; I now compare Sabine with Milly on the basis of their common traits as characters.

particularly marked by transformations. Apart from being a decisive time for personal intellectual, psychological, and emotional growth, adolescence is also a crucial phase because the body undergoes significant changes, which determine the beginning of a sexually active life. The importance of this development is directly linked to the common assumption that these sexual drives aim towards the validation of a heteronormative model, implying the formation of a family, childbirth and parenting. According to this view, the passage from adolescence to adulthood is decisive. However, this model does not, indeed refuses to, accommodate the “open mesh of possibilities” (Sedgwick *Tendencies* 8) that inherently constitutes the fluid multiplicity of each and every individual, and that is at stake in the phase of adolescence. The quotation from Sedgwick refers to her definition of *queer*, which I have applied in my analysis of eternally adolescent characters, especially by paying attention to the evocative and meaningful imagery of water as a metaphor and symbolic representation of this ‘queer fluidity’. Having established the interdependence between the adolescent identity and the element of water, I analysed in detail the texts selected as my primary corpus. My reading of these works, however, could not ignore the cultural significance of the sea and of water in general, and how these significances changed over time. Indeed, although they precede the development of Modernism, the changes in the representation and conception of water during the Victorian period are particularly relevant to my research.

Both a life-giving and a fatally dangerous element, throughout history, water and the sea in particular, have often been represented as dangerous, something to be both feared and respected. During the Victorian period, while still considered a dangerous environment, the sea also stood for progress¹⁵⁴, conquest, achievement; not only for the nation and its economy (greatly benefiting from the quickly expanding colonial empire), but also for the individual, notably the white male, for whom the journey at sea could represent the central phase of a rite of passage, and ultimately a passage to adulthood. After the conclusion of this ambivalently glorious epoch, and in the aftermath of the first global conflict, this positive conception of the sea gave way to what I understand as a diffused water dystopia, a distinctive mark of the modernist aesthetic. In the fluid anti-developmental narratives considered, this important shift becomes evident in the young protagonists’ aversion to water, and more generally, in their negative (and in some cases fatal) experiences with it. In light of the observations noted above on a queer and fluid adolescence, this idiosyncrasy should be considered along with the characters’ refusal or incapacity to comply with the predetermined (gender) roles they are expected to perform within society. Considering once

154 In this respect, it should be remembered that during this epoch the Channel was the centre of a lively and productive cultural exchange between England (and the British Isles in general) and France.

again the above-mentioned reference to rites of passage, such ‘resistance’ is what ultimately prevents these characters from successfully concluding the passage from adolescence to adulthood, and thereby confining them to a sort of invisibility.

In fluid anti-developmental narratives, this condition of unresolved liminality is effectively evoked and symbolised in scenes set on the seashore, the locus of a continuous transformation, and of crucial importance both for the narrative development and for the characterisation of the protagonists. This has been underlined in chapter five with particular emphasis in regard to Stephen and Antoine. Although, or precisely because, they move principally within urban environments, their escapes towards the sea gain a particular significance and play a central role in the representation of their fluid evolutions. In order to advance some observations on the space of the shore in this context, it may be useful for me to reflect on the concept of smooth and striated spaces, famously introduced by Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their 1980 study *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

The critics designate as smooth those spaces that are composed by forces and intensities, and as striated those regulated by measures and extensions (cf. 479). The sea, for instance, is described as the smooth space par excellence (cf. *ibid.*), in opposition to the city, the quintessentially striated space (cf. 481). Although opposites in their defining characteristics, smooth and striated spaces are in constant communication with one another. In particular, with regard to the apparent dichotomy between sea and city, Deleuze and Guattari argue that “the sea is a smooth space fundamentally open to striation, and the city is the force of striation that reimparts smooth space, puts it back into operation everywhere, on earth and in the other elements, outside but also inside itself” (481). Of course, the city and the sea are two spaces that are of great importance for Stephen and for Antoine; but it is the seashore that stands out as the key spatial dimension, both in their lives and at the level of narrative developments. In its constitutive hybridity, the shore is chiefly connoted by the constant alternation between smooth and striated, again affirming that the shore can rightly be considered a metaphor of the characters’ fluid evolution in relation to social spaces and dynamics. Moreover, as I highlighted at the end of the previous chapter, the shore’s nature as a cyclically transforming space also aptly stands as a metaphor for writing, or indeed of any creative act, which is necessarily the result of a complexly layered and careful process of production and revision.

If read according to Deleuze and Guattari, this very act, as well as the kind of evolution experienced by the characters, can be described as a constant passage from a smooth to a striated spatial, emotional and psychological dimension. This movement is repeatedly evoked in the narrations, both by means of strongly visual elements and in their stylistic variation. In *A Thousand*

Plateaus, Deleuze and Guattari provide two images to describe the main way by which striation can be overtaken: that of an arc, indicating the deviation from a linear path, and that of the spiral or vortex (cf. 489). These movements also importantly connote the evolutions and characterisations of Stephen and Antoine, and repeatedly emerge in the texts dedicated to them. Indeed, the deviation from a pre-determined (normative) path is what links not only Stephen and Antoine, but also the other protagonists of fluid anti-developmental narratives examined here. More specifically, however, the visual representation of deviation, which points to the image of an arc, also importantly suggests the image of a curve; an image that allows me to recall the “curve of an emotion,” which Joyce indicates as the only plausible way of portraying the adolescent artist, in his 1904 essay “A Portrait of the Artist” (258). Furthermore, as far as the function of the spiral or vortex is concerned, I have underlined the importance of cyclicity and circularity both with regard to Stephen (and indeed in Joyce’s oeuvre) and to Antoine. Yet the type of evolution that Stephen and Antoine undergo is also importantly reflected in the stylistic variation that characterises the texts in which they appear. The very structure and style of these texts constantly escape the limits of striation by deviating from canonical models, and repeatedly evoking or imitating a vortex-like movement. As I illustrate in chapter five in particular, this movement is obtained not only through images that allude more or less directly to circularity (such as the rotor sequence in *Les quatre cents coups*, which also reappears in *L’amour en fuite*), but also with the repetition of phrases, words, shots and framings, camera movements, or even by means of the reappearance of some characters in specific situations.

The centrality and indeed agency of language, which emphasises the inherent fluidity of the characters, acquires a further specific relevance in light of the fact that language is also a political and representational tool. Indeed, Modernism and the *nouvelle vague* cinema make an effective and conscious use of language as a tool, contributing to some of the most influential artistic, aesthetic, cultural, and social r/evolutions of the twentieth century. In this context, it can easily be understood that the figure of the adolescent becomes an important and symbolic point of reference.

Loosening the Moorings: Concluding Remarks on Fluidity

First of, in my investigation I intended to identify a specific sub-genre within the vast and multifarious category of sea narratives. The results of my research should therefore be considered a contribution to the ongoing engagement with this particular and richly layered category of narrations. Their productive complexity aptly responds to the aim of representing, and

understanding, an equally composite reality. In particular, as far as the present investigation is concerned, the focus on the interrelationship between literature and cinema has allowed me to shed light on some of the most important artistic and cultural transformations that marked the twentieth century, and which remain relevant today, especially as to the way in which we read reality through images. The legacy of Modernism cannot be separated from its bond with (early) cinema, nor from their common tendency towards an aesthetic heavily based on synaesthesia, which productively fuses visual and aural elements for the creation of new and innovative languages aimed at representing a rapidly evolving reality.

Starting from these premises, my investigation was intended to provide a contribution to the research on the relationship between Joyce's work and the medium of cinema. Rather than focussing exclusively on *Ulysses*, typically considered his most cinematic work, I have also included Joyce's earlier writings, notably *Portrait*. Without ignoring the cinematic character of much of his writing (nor his great fascination for cinema as a means of entertainment), I have mainly considered Joyce's influence on the cinematic production *after* him, namely on the French *nouvelle vague*, and particularly on the work of François Truffaut.

As mentioned, to my knowledge, there has been very little research on the comparison between the works of Joyce and Truffaut. My investigation, in particular, has revolved around the indeed numerous elements that Joyce and Truffaut share in the representation of young and adolescent characters. Indeed, as I have emphasised throughout this study, language acquisition, the development of a linguistic awareness, and the choice of the written word as the primary tool of artistic expression and representation of reality are fundamental for Stephen and Antoine. Moreover, language, language acquisition, and writing also constitute some of the main recurring motifs in Joyce's and Truffaut's oeuvres. In their works, these crucially relevant themes intersect with the recurrence to maritime settings and to an aquatic imagery; indeed, as Stephen puts it in the exposition of his own aesthetic theory, fluidity and water become a metaphor for the very figure of the artist, whose "personality [...] passes into the narration itself, flowing round and round the persons and the action like a vital sea" (*P* 233). In fluid anti-developmental narratives, this "vital" fluidity is epitomised by the unresolved (and unresolving) youth of the protagonists, and further articulated in the figures Stephen and Antoine as aspiring artists. Particularly in the timespan covered by this study, it can be argued that the semantic feature of fluidity has gained centrality and its significance has been reconsidered, becoming not only a fundamental aesthetic element, but also the symbol of an existential, human condition.

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Appendix: Figures



Figure 1 - Truffaut *Les quatre cents coups*



Figure 2 - Varda, *La Pointe Courte*



Figure 3 - Varda, *La Pointe Courte*



Figure 4 - Vigo, *L'Atalante*



Figure 5 - Vigo, *L'Atalante*



Figure 6 - Truffaut, *Les quatre cents coups*



Figure 7 - Truffaut, *Les quatre cents coups*



Figure 8 - Truffaut, *Les quatre cents coups*



Figure 9 - Truffaut, *Les quatre cents coups*



Figure 10 - Fellini, *La dolce vita*



Figure 11 - Fellini, *La dolce vita*



Figure 12 - Fellini, *La dolce vita*



Figure 13 - Fellini, *La dolce vita*



Figure 14 - Truffaut, *Les quatre cents coups*



Figure 15 - Truffaut, *Les quatre cents coups*