Queering Dis/Connection within the Pandemic Chronotope in Jodi Picoult's *Wish You Were Here*

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ABSTRACT: The COVID-19 pandemic reduced human mobility in a globalized world, altering experiences of time and space. It uncovered power structures and revived past narratives of disease emergence and collective memories of historic pandemics. Using a queer intersectional lens, this paper explores these transformed spatiotemporal dimensions and their effect on human dis/connection by employing the concept of the crisis chronotope (Parui and Simi Raj). It analyzes Jodi Picoult's *Wish You Were Here* (2021), examining connections during a crisis that made physical distance necessary. This methodological perspective highlights digital and physical dis/connections and challenges heteronormative temporality in the novel, redefining dis/connection within the pandemic chronotope.

KEYWORDS: Pandemic Literature; COVID-19; Queer Studies; Intersectionality; Space-time; Chronotope; Dis/connection, Memory

Introduction: Queering the Pandemic Crisis Chronotope

The COVID-19 pandemic produced the paradox of a highly globalized and digitally connected world where human mobility and physical contact were reduced to a minimum (Parui and Simi Raj 1433). This has led to a feeling of physical disconnection from the world which simultaneously has never been as digitally connected. In this context, Avishek Parui and Merin Sami Raj's idea of the crisis chronotope[1] addresses the departure and disruption of normative experiences of time and space and enables an analysis of the interconnections between perceptions thereof and the COVID-19 crisis (1432). This overall development has renewed and stabilized the problematic separation of public and private spaces (Low and Smart 2–3), which uncovered and enforced societal power structures. The enhancement of power dynamics for instance led to an increase in domestic violence, and amplified the precarity of isolated queer lives at home (Bowleg 917). Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be viewed without addressing the social inequalities unveiled by the crisis. Jodi Picoult's novel *Wish You Were Here,* I argue, queers heteronormative temporality and dis/connection within the crisis chronotope. It does so by exploring the uncertainty of the future and highlighting hopeful memories that envision a utopian future and thereby moves beyond linear understandings of temporality. The novel presents different forms of connection during the COVID-19 crisis, often at a physical distance. Within the crisis chronotope, the protagonist becomes aware of her privileges and challenges heteronormativity, forming deeper connections with herself and her community. This portrayal of COVID-19 and the development within the novel makes it a

[1] Chronotope is a narratological concept by Michael Bakhtin, that understands time and space as inherently interconnected (Parui and Simi Raj 1432).

relevant work to explore in the context of post-pandemic fiction. In order to provide a proper understanding of the pandemic's (spatiotemporal) context as well as the queer approaches this paper utilizes, in the following, I will introduce the concepts of crisis chronotope, connection, and resonance, and tie them together with aspects of queer temporality, spatiality, and history focusing particularly on memory and utopia. These concepts will provide the necessary framework for reading the novel through a queer lens, that enables an analysis of the transformed experience of space-time and therefore reality that the pandemic confronted the planet with.

Theoretical Framework: Dis/Connection, Crisis Chronotope, and Queer Theory

Dis/Connection in Space-time

The COVID-19 pandemic was, among others, a crisis of human connection, which was largely relocated and restricted to digital space. Connection, according to Kae Tempest, is both spatial and temporal, as it occurs along a sense of complete presentness and locatedness: It is "the feeling of landing in the present. […] A feeling of being absolutely located" (Tempest 5). Tempest highlights how the aspects of space-time and connection are interlinked. Hartmut Rosa accentuates that modernity, as a social formation, is culturally and structurally designed for the systematic expansion of global reach (Rosa, "Resonanz als Schlüsselbegriff der Sozialtheorie" 11). Society takes this expansion, both individual and collective, in cognitive, technical, economic, social, and political realms, as a measure for the quality of life. Technological development, for example, serves this principle of enhancement and is exemplified by smartphones, which allow access to friends, news, and images from anywhere, at any time (12). Rosa problematizes this attempt within modernity to constantly increase and improve the availability of and accessibility to the world by pointing to its paradoxical downside: With each increase in reach, the scope of the inaccessible and unavailable also grows (13). Additionally, the appropriated world becomes silent, by which he means that humans lose actual connection to the world by focusing on quantifying and increasing reach and control over it (13). This development is accompanied by the destruction and devaluation of this very world referring to environmental destruction and climate change (14). To counter the alienation from the world and self by creating compulsion for enhancement, he proposes the concept of resonance. Resonance is a feeling of connectedness to the self, others, and the world, and comprises potential transformation, self-efficacy, openness to hearing other voices, and using one's own voice, while considering power structures (14-30). In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rosa claims that the outbreak of the coronavirus represents a historically unparalleled rupture and slowdown of our usually accelerating time, chains of production, and interaction (Rosa, "Symposium: Social World and Pandemic" 1). This in turn affects how humans can resonate with each other and the world.

The Crisis Chronotope

Avishek Parui and Merin Simi Raj call the spatiotemporal shift of deceleration and isolation occurring due to the pandemic the crisis chronotope, which is defined as a "complex and contagiously connected spatiotemporal frame of ontological and experiential dis-orientation shaped by new subject-object assemblages in a shared defamiliarization of matter, metaphor and memory" (1433). Matter, here, describes the relations between subjects and objects in the physical world and attached social norms. This includes new material objects like masks, sanitizers, vaccines, with which humans had to interact. COVID-19 further made it necessary to lock down public spaces, making distance and touchless transactions the normative social practice (1433). This created a world in which partial visibility, susceptibility, and suspicion became mundane. In turn, these developments re-ontologized matter in personal and collective imagination and memory.

Metaphor is used to grasp the pandemic's uncertainty and is interwoven with both matter and memory. COVID-19 itself becomes a metaphor for "global contagion, crisis and panic, connecting as well as disconnecting subjects and objects" (1436). This metaphoric chronotope of the pandemic evolves into a complex memory of human space-time that replaces the pre-pandemic order of the constant acceleration of human life and societal transmission of data, capital, and commodities as the dominant chronotope (1435). Metaphors also function as a narrative device through which complex information and interpretation of the uncertain new reality can be processed. Symbols such as medical face masks, reproduce the new vocabulary of the pandemic. Thus, by using the crisis itself as a metaphor, these symbols contribute to the changed narratives. For example, in the early days of the outbreak, world leaders often referred to the pandemic as a war that must be fought together in an attempt to foster national unity (see e.g. Erll 866, Höll 194–95).

Further, the pandemic created awareness of the multiple temporalities simultaneously lived in, i.e., the physical body is locked-down at home, while the speed of contagion and policies to contain the virus are accelerated. At the same time, memories of the pre-pandemic world haunt the mind. Subjects experiencing the pandemic connect to similar earlier experiences and events in a different historical setting. Sharing the same crisis reality as well as collective memories of past crises further results in a feeling of planetary interconnectedness (1433; see also Erll 863). Parui und Simi Raj conclude that "[t]his experience […] is ironically produced out of a crisis which necessitates physical and social isolation that contributes to an ontological transformation of earlier experiences of reality, recognizability and tactility" (1439).

Accompanying this development, according to Parui and Simi Raj, is a reemergence of concealed chronotopes. These address social, environmental, political and cultural concerns that were suppressed by more dominant narratives (e.g. capitalism and heteropatriarchy) (1435). Therefore, the COVID-19 experience serves as a marker of access and privilege (1440). Queer intersectional realities and lives are endangered disproportionately during this crisis (Zwalf and Sperring 10–11), as David Caron summarizes fittingly:

> In the early years of the AIDS pandemic, the "culprits," the modern poisoners of wells, were similarly designated as geographical, social, or sexual others who, having disrespected national, cultural, or behavioral boundaries, were now putting the rest of us at risk; as unrestrained pleasure seekers who turned away from mature forms of sexuality predicated on reproduction and the family; as compulsive travelers without roots or commitment to home and country whose very mobility suspiciously resembled that of the virus itself. And of course, we are constantly reminded that the whole COVID crisis was triggered by someone in a distant, nonwhite country that didn't respect the foundational separation between civilized human and wild animal. (Caron 103)

Caron, here, draws a connection between the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the COVD-19 pandemic, criticizing the racialized and queerphobic ways in which societal norms are upheld or enforced in both pandemic contexts, stigmatizing already marginalized positionalities even further. This intersectional lens adds another layer of nuance to the discourse around power dynamics, mobility, and the pandemic, which I consider in the analysis.

Queer Memory, Temporality, and Utopia

Queerness has historically been pathologized and stigmatized, most prominently in the context of this paper, during and in the aftermath of the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Bernard 29–32).[2] Through early homophobic responses from medical professionals, public health officials and policy makers, homosexual promiscuity is viewed as pathological, relating the body vulnerable to HIV/AIDS to deviating sexual behaviors from the heterosexual norm (32).[3] This shared history of exclusion and stigma is remembered or even relived by queer people in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Holly Zwalf and Samantha Sperring also draw the comparison of the two pandemics. Besides noticing the similarities of contagion discourses and stigma attached to falling sick with COVID-19, they highlight the stark difference in media attention, solidarity, and the communication of COVID-19 affecting all people equally instead of Othering one group exclusively (Zwalf and Sperring 10–11).[4] Memories of the HIV/AIDS epidemic thus shape queer realities in the wake of COVID-19.

Jose Esteban Muñoz connects queer memory with a hopeful approach towards the future. He views queerness as potentially resistant to normative temporal structures and dominant collective narratives and memories: "Queerness is essentially about the rejection of a here and now and an insistence on potentiality or concrete possibility for another world" (Muñoz

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[2] In his recent work *Die Kette der Infektionen: Zur Erzählbarkeit von Epidemien seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, Andreas Bernhard investigates the narratability of past pandemics in the light of COVID-19, one of which is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. He shows how the inaction and homophobia of policy makers played a major role in the spread and death rate of the virus.

[3] Original quote: "Homosexuelle Promiskuität kann […] als latent pathologische Praxis beschrieben werden, so als wäre die Anfälligkeit für Immunschwäche im Körper disponiert, als gäbe es eine prinzipielle Verbindung von abweichender Sexualität und labiler gesundheitlicher Konstitution" (32).

[4] Even though this is communicated to the public as a strategy to foster solidarity, as shown above, already marginalized groups are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 (Bowleg 917).

1). This notion can be connected to Parui and Simi Raj's observation of the pandemic's effect that concealed chronotopes are coming to public consciousness again (1435). The possibility for another world, Muñoz claims, is rooted in memories and hope for the future. His "approach to hope as a critical methodology can be best described as a backward glance that enacts a future vision" (4). Further, Muñoz argues that concrete utopias relate to historical struggles (e.g. the HIV/AIDS crisis) which are actualized collectively. Memory and hope are interdependent then and rooted in an understanding of queerness as relational (Muñoz 3; 6). Past, present, and future, in this concept of queer utopian thinking and feeling, become simultaneous.

Jack Halberstam argues that in a capitalist society, subjects are expected to develop unambiguously from childhood to adulthood followed by the steps of marriage, reproduction, and death (Halberstam 2). He claims that this approach to temporality is an attempt to counter and control the uncertainties of the future (5). The pandemic, however, confronted humanity with a radical uncertainty of futurity. Queer lives have always faced this uncertainty, especially during and since the outbreak of the initially extremely deadly HIV/AIDS virus (2). Zwalf and Sperring experienced being COVID-19-positive as queering time by "positioning our bodies as sites of permanent contagion and subsequent stigmatization which I experienced as akin to homophobic attacks" (19). Thus, queerness, time, and contagion are innately linked due to queer history, memory, and temporality.

Coupled with time, space has arguably been queered by the pandemic as well. What Parui and Simi Raj call "experiential dis-orientation" (1433) within the spatiotemporal frame of the COVID-19 crisis, can be linked to Sara Ahmed's thoughts on sexual orientation. She examines the heteronormatively shaped space of sexuality and claims that it can be queered by leaving straight lines (Ahmed 555). The disorientation occurs when a direction is changed or disrupted, or when the meanings of spaces change – as in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ahmed's queer phenomenology does not attempt to counteract disorientation, but to allow "the oblique to open another angle on the world" (566).

Viewing this queer approach to space and orientation as interconnected with Muñoz and Halberstam's notion of queer memory and futurity aligns with the chosen concept of the crisis chronotope. The uncertainty of the future is embraced in Jodi Picoult's *Wish You Were Here* (2021) by holding on to a hopeful memory that lays out a utopic future and by eventually leaving straight lines. The novel examines different ways of forming connections throughout the COVID-19 crisis and at a physical distance. I argue that the novel creates virtual and physical dis/connections – of touch, time, space, and memories and thereby queers heteronormative temporality as well as the meaning of connection within the pandemic chronotope. I will begin by identifying the pandemic crisis chronotope in the novel according to the concept proposed by Simi Raj and Parui and analyze what it represents in the novel. Subsequently, I will show how temporality and dis/connection are queered within the pandemic chronotope, especially focusing on Diana's dream/utopia of Isabela Island during her comatose state. The next analytical chapter investigates the types of dis/connection Diana

experiences while reorienting herself and her life after waking up from her coma. Finally, I explore the aspects of memory and art within the novel, which will focus on Diana's changed career path, and the relationship with her mother revealing Diana's redirected definition of connection as collective resonance.[5] I will tie these aspects of analysis together in the conclusion, revisiting the theoretical framework explicated above.

The Pandemic Crisis Chronotope in *Wish You Were Here*

Wish You Were Here by Jodi Picoult follows the story of Diana, a middle-class *white*[6] art specialist in her late 20s living in New York City with her boyfriend Finn, a hospital resident. The story unfolds as they prepare to go on a trip to the Galápagos, where she expects a marriage proposal from him. Diana is next in line for a promotion and her career is perfectly on track, when the COVID-19 pandemic strikes. Finn, an essential healthcare worker, must stay behind, so Diana travels to the Galápagos alone. During her stay on Isabela Island, she meets two locals, Gabriel and his daughter Beatriz, with whom she explores the island. With limited activities available during lockdown, Diana reflects on her life in New York and realizes her dissatisfaction with her relationship, job, and the path she is taking in life. After nearly drowning, she wakes up in a hospital with Finn by her side. She learns that her Galápagos adventure was a coma dream caused by her severe COVID-19 illness. Upon recovering, Finn wants to resume their plans, but Diana's feelings and desires for their and her future have significantly changed. Struggling to separate her dream from reality, she finds that her experiences on Isabela Island feel more genuine than the harsh realities of the pandemic.[7] Ultimately, she breaks up with Finn and decides to pursue a new career as an art therapist, shaped by the lessons she learned during her dream.

For the first time, Diana's life schedule and plan is disturbed by the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The concept of crisis chronotope resonates with *Wish You Were Here* in multifaceted ways that reveal an underlying theme of the novel: rethinking connection, or in Rosa's words, resonance with oneself and the world through the deceleration of the pandemic (14). Both the sensations of space and time as well as the materiality of space-time noticeably change due to the pandemic. Early in the narrative, Diana observes a shift in space on public transport in New York: "Usually, I have to fight my way through tourists who are listening to

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[5] Even though this structure almost binarily separates the dream Diana has of Isabela Island while in a coma from the before and after of her COVID-19 infection, I choose this structure only to simplify. In fact, I argue not to view dream and reality as an opposing binary but as continuous and multiple – as are the worlds and realities Diana lives in.

[6] I italicize the word *white* to mark the construction of the concept of race and disrupt the normativity of *whiteness*.

[7] Here and in the rest of the article, when speaking of reality, I refer to the reality Diana lives in before and after she falls into a coma from contracting COVID-19. Even though the novel and Diana question what reality means and advocate for a multiplicity of realities, I refer to her life in New York as real and Isabela Islands as imagined or a dream to simplify.

someone singing for coins, or a violin quartet. Today, though, the platform is empty". Later they "make record time" driving through New York because "the city is a ghost town. Stores are shuttered and streets are […] empty" (Picoult 311). Mobility certainly has changed, and the city-space seems unfamiliar to the characters. Understanding space itself as matter, here, makes it visible as part of the defamiliarized world and existence the pandemic created. The emptiness of the city and more generally public spaces results in and constitutes re-ontologizing spatial and social norms during lockdown, which essentially shape the crisis chronotope.

The sensation of time passing has shifted, too: While Diana is in the hospital recovering from COVID-19, she reflects on how time feels to her: "It is hard to get a sense of time passing. Sometimes I am not sure if hours have gone by, or days. Instead, I begin to count the spaces between the fits of coughing that leave me spent and exhausted" (269). Further relating her experience to a changed sense of spatiality, she is shocked "to see so many people in one place, after so much time in isolation" (296) when she is relocated to another hospital ward after testing negative. Especially during and after her rehabilitation program when she is isolated in the hospital, she comments on the feeling of time progressing slowly and losing a connection to clock time: "Since the days in rehab bleed into each other, I mark time by progress" (308). Since the perception of time has changed, Diana finds other ways of measuring time that fits her present experience that deviate from established temporal devices. The crisis chronotope is characterized by time feeling slower due to the uncertainty of the pandemic's outcome and temporal closure. These reflections show space-time as a construct and situate the narrative within the pandemic crisis chronotope.

When Diana imagines being on Isabela Island, she repeatedly contrasts her experience of time now to before the pandemic, using the island as a contrasting space:

> I think of Manhattan – an island full of diverse, determined people hustling toward something better; a populace that doesn't sleepwalk through their days. But it feels like a lifetime away. Then I think about this island, where there is nothing but time. Where change comes slowly but inevitably. Here, I can't lose myself in errands and work assignments; I can't disappear in a crowd. (229)

This reflects the experienced shift between pre- and post-pandemic timeframes which, here, is felt as a different sensation of time passing. This is metaphorically expressed in the contrasting places Diana inhabits: New York and the Galápagos. The description of distinct pre- and post-pandemic times is in line with what Parui and Simi Raj observe about the transformation of collective memory differentiating between a pre-pandemic world of mobility, tactility, and intimacy, and a pandemic (or post-pandemic) world marked by uncertainty and vulnerability (1437). Additionally, the dominant narrative of capitalist acceleration, "hustling toward something better" or "losing myself in errands and work" (229) is confirmed to be the established order in Diana's life. The slowdown of time, then, also allows for the reemergence of her sense of self, which is increasingly linked to this defamiliarized and conflicting sensation of space-time. The newly experienced vulnerability

and uncertainty allows her to find herself again, and appear as an individual, not anymore lost in work or crowds. She further wonders "if that's the direction Finn's in. It feels like massive cognitive dissonance to be in this tropical paradise and to know, half a world away, New York City is bracing for a pandemic" (Picoult 54). This sense of dissonance foreshadows her increasing disorientation in the world, the disconnection from her former reality and her relationship which is caused by the uncertainty of the future the pandemic confronts her with. This experienced and existential disorientation is, as Parui and Simi Raj put it, caused by the transformation of subject-object relations (1433). Arguably, in the novel, this applies to subject-subject relationships as well: Until now, her gaze had been firmly fixed on Finn and their future, but now she has lost connection to him, as there is no internet access on the island. Meanwhile, locked within her own body and mind in a coma, she dreams of a utopian island where there is freedom, opportunity, and time to reflect on her life. Thus, both time and space are treated as constructs that change due to and during the pandemic, a construct that is reevaluated under these new circumstances. The narration thus captures the experience of the pandemic chronotope and shows that Diana's relationalities to the world, others, the sense of time and space, and herself, shift.

However, in some instances, the spatiotemporal contrasts have a clear racial undertone: "I think that this could not be any more different from New York City. It feels tropical and timeless, lazy, remote. It feels like a place where no one has ever heard of a pandemic" (Picoult 30). The racial implications of timelessness, laziness, and lack of education on world events are meant to further binarily contrast her utopic imagination of the island with the dystopic reality of the pandemic in New York. In the context of the crisis chronotope, the island is regarded as a remote and 'backwards' place because the virus has not yet impacted it the way it has affected urban spaces. For Diana, it feels safer to travel there than to stay in New York because she lives with a doctor. The island is then not only Othered as a tropical paradise, but as exclusive from the global route and reach of the virus. Therefore, in the novel, it is not the racial Other (like David Caron pointed out) but the *white* person who puts other people at risk by travelling, which Gabriel points out to Diana when they first meet: "'I'm on my way home. Like you should be. Or haven't you heard there's a pandemic?' […] 'Actually, yes, I have heard. My boyfriend is on the front lines treating it.' 'So you decided to bring the virus here'" (44). Gabriel reiterates Diana's internal bias and redirects it: He asks her if she has not heard about the pandemic pretentiously. Travelling to this remote island is viewed as safety measure for Diana who takes advantage of *white* privilege without regards for the risk she puts the islanders at. Her assumptions that the island has no internet connection, and that the population has an anti-LGBTQIA+ mindset (184), add to the racially loaded implications of a lack of technical advancement as well as a more conservative value system.[8] However, both

[8] Even though COVID-19 has exposed the scale and severity of online inequalities and injustices related to digital infrastructures and data systems, revealing that the ability to connect or disconnect is heavily influenced by socio-economic factors (Treré), Diana assumes and imagines these things within her unconscious dream, making it an unreflected and racially loaded thought.

the encounter with the locals, Gabriel and Beatriz, as well as the overlap between both worlds subvert the binarism and actively oppose her prejudices. Gabriel functions as the critical voice, reminding Diana exactly of that and exposing her internal bias. Gabriel initially calls Diana out on the assumptions she has about the island and the people living there, which inspires her to reflect on them: "I think about him sneering at me for being a tourist, for being American. I start to feel indignation percolating inside me, but then I remember that every time our paths have crossed, I've made poor assumptions about him, too" (108). The racial undertones noticeable when Diana is first confronted with a foreign culture and people mirrors the overall tone of the discourse around COVID-19. By creating Beatriz and Gabriel, Diana's internalized racism becomes apparent, which reflect both the rise of racist speech and violence in the crisis chronotope outside the dream world she created as well as the increased societal awareness of (racial) inequalities. The crisis chronotope therefore arises once again as a marker of *white* privilege.

Overlaps of representations of the crisis chronotope within and outside the diegeses are noticeable also in terms of temporality and spatiality: Diana's feeling of time slowing on Isabela Island as well as in recovery, and the turn to introspection reflect the lived experience in the historical context of the pandemic. Additionally, spatial aspects of the historical pandemic are incorporated in the narrative. Yet, for her, the sensation of being locked down is pushed to the extreme: She is not only locked down at home, but within her own body and mind in a coma, while the world around her moves on. Diana expresses this feeling in her dream, when she states that she is worried that "at home, the world is moving on without" (136) her and it feels like she is "in some parallel universe where [she is] aware of other things going on, but [she] can't respond or comment or even be affected by them" (99). The second quote emphasizes her confinement in her unconscious state, but also shows the overlap between the scenario she imagines and her actual condition. Instead of opposing, separate worlds, the two spatiotemporal dimensions of the story then are intricately intertwined. Temporality also changes in both fictional dimensions and Diana becomes aware of the multiplicity of temporalties she is living in: On Isabela Island, time moves faster, her stay lasts for two months, while feeling slower than in the ICU, when only ten days have passed since she was hospitalized (255). Not only temporalities are multiple then, but spatialities too as the two aspects are interdependent. Diana's experience of an alternate reality caused by the COVID-19 infection creates a different sense of time, through which the ontology of reality itself is questioned. Through the parallels and overlaps of the two worlds within the novel as well as of the incorporation of the non-fictional event of COVID-19, the dream of living on Isabela Island itself becomes a metaphor for the pandemic's reconfiguration of personal and collective experiences of space-time. According to Parui and Simi Raj, metaphors as a narrative device help process information and interpret the uncertain new reality (1438). In the novel, then, the metaphor serves to redefine boundaries and norms of reality and spatiotemporality.

Queer Temporality and the Dis/Connection on Isabela Island

Diana's experiences on Isabela Island offer a compelling example of how temporality and dis/connection are entangled and queered within the pandemic chronotope of the utopian dream Diana creates in the novel. The abovementioned aspects of crisis chronotope as a marker of privilege and revelations of power structures will be viewed through a queer temporal lens. These facets of pandemic space-time, I argue, are queered in *Wish You Were Here* first and foremost through the disruption of a heteronormative temporality and narrative.

One aspect of Diana's initial heteronormative mindset and temporal values is the reiteration of a perfectly scheduled plan for her life: "I wanted to be securely on a path to my career, to get married by thirty, to finish having kids by thirty-five […] Also, for the record, I'm perfectly on track" (7). Her temporality is firmly focused on a future that only includes heteronormative goals as well as capitalist understandings of success and what a good life should be. This resonates with Halberstam's argument that heteronormative temporality is centered around a future that follows the exact plan of marriage, reproduction, and death (2). In the pandemic, Diana's schedule is disrupted for the first time. Only the spatiotemporal reframing of her life lays bare the underlying insecurities Diana has, since her concern to meet her self-set deadlines becomes visible most clearly when the two-week lockdown on Isabela Island is extended indefinitely. She starts feeling restless and worries that the pause that the vacation and lockdown mean, will eventually lead to a complete stop (Picoult 100). Diana anxiously holds on to her goals in the beginning when the temporal ending of the lockdown is no longer certain. This resonates with Halberstam's claim that the solely future-oriented temporality of hetero-capitalism is an attempt to counter and control the uncertainties of the future (Halberstam 5). Instead of appreciating the time on the island, Diana feels the need to keep herself occupied in order to stop worrying about the potential change to her future plan. She suggests only "[w]hen I have no alternative, I sit by myself and wonder how far I've been blown off course" (Picoult 111). Diana has difficulty being by herself and staying present. She further reflects: "My life has been a series of telephone poles one after the other, benchmarks of progress. Without a road map of the steps that come next, I am floundering. I do not belong here, and I cannot shake the feeling that at home, the world is moving on without me" (136). Diana describes her plan as disconnected single milestones, but neither these steps nor she herself are connected to them or to each other. The opposite of Kae Tempest's notion of connection as being absolutely located and present is true for Diana: She feels spatiotemporally disoriented since the direction of her life has changed. In the onset of her stay on Isabela Island, she is not ready to leave straight lines and still dreams of a heteronormative future, an outlook that blocks her from seeing and feeling herself (Ahmed 561–562). Diana is thus not (yet) connected to her present self.

Helping her arrive in the present of Isabela Island most prominently is Beatriz. Beatriz is a fourteen-year-old teenager and Gabriel's daughter. Diana establishes a relationship with her

initially because she notices the self-harm wounds on Beatriz's arms and wants to help her (Picoult 73). She does so by telling her about art and creating art together with her. While growing closer, Beatriz confides in Diana and tells her why she feels depressed and lonely on Isabela Island even though she can stay with her father instead of her host family on the mainland: "Being here … feels like moving backward" (96). Diana understands Beatriz's feelings and initially thinks that they are in the same position since she is stuck on the island as well. But Beatriz tells her that she cannot leave after the lockdown is lifted. Diana then realizes "that I am going home to Finn, to my job, to that plan I set in place when I was her age. There is a profound difference between knowing your situation is temporary and not knowing what's coming next" (96–97). This again reflects the uncertainty of the future in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Diana's initial intention to hold on to the plan for her future. However, the crisis chronotope is queered through Beatriz's positionality. Later in the narrative, Diana learns that Beatriz's actual reason for staying on Isabela Island during the lockdown is that she fell in love with her host-sister, who eventually rejected her because of her conservative family. Beatriz is not out to her father and cannot be herself, which enhances her feelings of not belonging, going backward, and loneliness. She describes the feeling of being stuck with no other place to go to Diana: "I can't go back there. And there's nothing for me here" (180). Beatriz does not have a space she feels at home in. Additionally, for Beatriz, the temporal uncertainty has an existential quality – she does not even know if she can safely be herself on the island. This reveals a different, queer experience of the pandemic chronotope.

Another aspect of the consecutive disruption of heteronormative temporal narratives is shown by Diana's initial fascination with fairytales that changes over time. Diana repeatedly mentions fairytales in her account of Isabela Island and generally, her life. Diana relates the plot of fairytales to her own experiences, for example after having almost picked a poisonous apple on her first days on Isabela: "Poison apples, like a fairy tale. Except my prince is stuck in a hospital in New York City and the evil witch is a six-foot-tall galapagueño with anger management issues" (43). Comparing the temporally linear, predetermined, and famously patriarchal plots and cliché character inventory of fairytales to her own life and relationship, shows the narrow-minded, heteronormative mindset Diana has in the beginning of the novel. When she meets Beatriz, her mindset slowly starts to change. Beatriz repeatedly questions Diana's worldview by confronting her with a queer point of view. For example, Beatriz disrupts Diana's fairytale-oriented assumptions: When they build a sandcastle together at the beach, Diana thinks that Beatriz' figurine is supposed to be a princess in a tower "[w]aiting to be rescued?' [Beatriz] shakes her head. 'Fairy tales are bullshit'" (97). Beatriz counters Diana's expectation by questioning a model heteronormative narrative altogether and thereby queers it.

Moreover, Beatriz subtly nudges Diana toward using less heteronormative language. After telling Beatriz about her boyfriend, Finn, in the beginning, Diana asks Beatriz: "Do you have a boyfriend?' She flushes and shakes her head" (95) reproducing heteronormative language and

making Beatriz uncomfortable. Before Beatriz comes out to her, Diana asks: "Is there someone at school you wish you could be with?" (179). This gender-neutral question enables Beatriz to answer: "Yes […] But she doesn't want to be with me" (179). Though probably unconsciously, the second time Diana asks, she uses non-heteronormative language which opens up the space for Beatriz to come out and for the two to connect on a more personal and vulnerable level.

Additionally, Diana helps Gabriel reconnect with his daughter, and Beatriz to come out to her father. By spending time with Beatriz and Gabriel separately in the beginning, Diana learns about both their perspectives, which gives her the insight to help them empathize with each other. Diana first sees that Beatriz is self-harming and tells Gabriel about it. When Beatriz comes out to her father, he reacts lovingly and encourages her to stay with him, attend school online and gets her access to therapy sessions on Zoom (233). The digital space, here, provides the possibility of fostering a queer sense of belonging and feeling at home, which counters Beatriz's feeling of being stuck on the island. Once again, Beatriz sensitizes Diana towards her experience, when initially Diana responds to Beatriz reporting the good news by dismissing her fear of coming out to her father with a general statement: "The mind is an amazing thing," to which Beatriz responds: "Well, it's not like I didn't have a good reason to worry […] There are a lot of people in the world who'd hate me because I … like girls" (233). Diana then acknowledges that Beatriz is right (233). She experiences resonance and self-efficacy for the first time on Isabela Island by building her relationship with Beatriz, creating art with her, and helping her and Gabriel reconnect while having to confront her own assumptions.

A similar development and effect can be observed regarding Gabriel and Diana's relationship. When in the beginning, they dislike each other due to premature prejudices, Gabriel and Diana gradually grow closer exactly through their conflicts, recognizing and reflecting on these initial assumptions and Diana becoming more aware of her privileges. In the following weeks, Gabriel acts as Diana's guide. Gabriel shows Diana new paths on the island which they hike together. These paths manifest as a metaphor for new directions that could be forged, walked, and followed which resonates with Ahmed's thoughts on orientation: "Lines are both created by being followed and are followed by being created. The lines that direct us, as lines of thought as well as lines of motion, are in this way performative: they depend on the repetition of norms and conventions, of routes and paths taken" (Ahmed 555). This new dreamt-of thoughts and paths stick with Diana after she has woken up from her coma leading her to leave the straight lines she had been following. After they have spent some time together, Gabriel notices that Diana has changed internally since she first arrived, which sets her apart from other tourists: "Visitors come here saying they want to see Galápagos, but they don't, not really. They want to see what they can already see in guidebooks or on the internet. The real Isabela is made up of stuff most people don't care about" (203). This speaks to Rosa's concept of resonance. The slowdown of the pandemic helps Diana create this feeling of connectedness to others, and the world around her, and gives her the opportunity to consider other perspectives. Instead of checking off a destination from her bucket list, Diana forms

connections with the locals and converses with them. Instead of increasing her reach and control over the world, Diana increasingly lets go of control, and lets Gabriel guide her. Eventually, when Gabriel and Diana grow to desire each other and sleep together, she even lets go of her monogamous relationship. After they have been intimate, Diana feels, that "maybe I've been found" (218). Gabriel, in Diana's dream, mirrors Diana's own thoughts, doubts (mostly about Finn and their relationship), grief, and desires. Through creating Gabriel in her imagination, Diana is able to realize her own desires, and needs. In creating a resonant connection with Gabriel and feeling she has been found by him, she finds herself.

The more time Diana imagines spending on Isabela Island, the less sure she is about where she belongs, the direction of her life and her romantic relationship (227). Disconnecting from her previous plans and halting the acceleration of her life allows her to reflect on her heteronormative plan. In her utopian imagination, Beatriz and Gabriel represent the sexual and cultural Other. Beatriz and Diana's relationships with their parental figures also mirror one another. The narrative presents a daughter who feels unloved and abandoned by her mother and a daughter who lost her father. Through teaching Beatriz and helping Gabriel, Diana herself learns to allow multiple perspectives to exist simultaneously. They act as catalysts for Diana's internal transformation. Diana imagining her dream-world reminds of Muñoz's appeal that "we must dream and enact new and better pleasures, other ways of being in the world, and ultimately new worlds" (1). Diana does exactly that: She dreams of another world, which entails new pleasures, allows room for introspection and different ways of being in the world when her old ways do not align with her identity anymore. Her revelations about herself and her life further resonate with Muñoz's statement that "[q]ueerness is that thing that lets us feel that this world is not enough, that indeed something is missing" (1). Diana's heterotemporally oriented life is thus disrupted by the characters she invents herself, thereby creating possibilities for new, more fulfilling connections. The novel thus queers temporality by challenging linear, solely future-oriented narratives, and embracing uncertainty, multiplicity, and resonance instead.

Redefining Dis/Connection Through Diana's Post-coma Reality

After establishing the presence and implications of the crisis chronotope within the novel, as well as queer temporality and dis/connection between the characters on Isabela Island, I turn to Diana's reorientation after waking up from her coma. I explore how the utopia she created in her dream affects her new reality and connections during and after her recovery. When Diana wakes up from her coma, she feels alienated because the reality in which Gabriel, Beatriz and her identity-altering experiences on Isabela have never existed. During her quarantine she tries to make sense of what she thought was real and what everyone else describes as such. Due to her COVID-19 infection she must stay in quarantine, so in addition to feeling emotionally isolated from the reality she is in, she is physically isolated from other people: "I keep watching through the window, but I am the bug trapped in a jar" (255). This

description reminds of an earlier feeling of isolation and disconnection that Diana expresses to Finn in a postcard during her coma-induced dream: "It's like I am in some parallel universe where I am aware of other things going on, but I can't respond or comment" (99). Here, the isolation and inability to be an active participant in her life while in a coma, during quarantine, and stuck in a sick body is mirrored. This feeling of predetermination, Diana learns during her stay on Isabela Island, applies to her overall life since she follows a plan established by her younger self in accordance with societal norms. Yet, as opportunities to connect to the outside world retreat due to her coma which she translates to a lack of internet connection on the island in her dream, Diana turns inward and slowly starts to appreciate the newfound clarity this situation provides her with: "[B]eing stripped of everything – my job, my significant other, even my clothing and my language – has left only the essential part of me, and it feels more real than everything I have tried to be for years. It's almost as if I had to stop running in order to see myself clearly" (180–181). This process of resonant self-discovery is fostered by the lack of availability of and access to digital means of connection, highlighting Rosa's critique of constant availability and increase of global reach. The disconnection from her partner and former life, then, leads to a more profound and resonant connection to herself and the people around her on the island, which highlights the simultaneity of connection and disconnection and leads her to actively create her own reality.

The lack of connection between Finn and Diana, though, continues after she returns from Isabela Island and is therefore not only due to technical difficulties, but emotional disconnect as well. After she wakes up from her coma it becomes apparent that Finn is a driving force in pursuing the common goals they once set, and she meets his expectations by complying at first (329). Similar to Diana herself earlier in the story, Finn also uses fairytale metaphors, for example when referring to a house they imagine owning. When they virtually look at possible future homes, trying for normalcy, Finn says "Perfect for a fairy-tale ending" (289). However, Diana cannot relate to this dream and outlined future anymore because internally, she has changed and does not believe in following a fairytale formula. When she thinks about changing careers by getting a degree in art therapy, Finn calls her idea to go back to university a "detour on the way to everything we've dreamed about" (368). Diana disagrees with him "[i]nside, where he cannot see" (368). What Finn describes as a detour for her is a new path she wants to create. In this moment, she is dependent on him financially, as she has been let go from her job and is still recovering from the COVID-19 infection. When Finn proposes to her, Diana finally rejects him by saying: "You can't plan your life, Finn […] Because then you have a plan. Not a life" (401). She further reflects: "I am not the same person I was when Finn and I imagined a future … and I don't think I want to be" (401). Her identity has changed through her own imagined utopia and self-reflection, and she does not agree with the linear heteronormative life schedule anymore that Finn still tries to push. These contemplations echo Halberstam's statements about heteronormative temporality, which Diana disrupts by embracing the uncertainty of the future. This decision is based on both her memory of Isabela as well as hope for a better future, mirroring Muñoz conceptualizations of queer utopianism

and futurity. Diana eventually realizes that "[i]t is exhausting, trying to never step off the path, worrying that if I do, I'll never get back on track" (234). She changes her directionality in consequence of questioning hetero-temporality and viewing her heterosexual romantic relationship as the focal point in her life and future, which resonates with Ahmed's idea of disturbing the heteronormative orientation of space by leaving straight lines.

Instead of re-connecting with Finn after waking up, she actively seeks other connections, in which she finds more resonance, and receives more understanding and validation. Most prominently, she reaches out to Rodney, her best friend and co-worker, from her former job. Diana confides in him that she believes her dream was real. He is the first one to believe her by saying: "Just because someone else hasn't experienced it themselves doesn't make it any less real to you" (305). The validation and acknowledgment she receives from Rodney creates a resonant connection between them. Noticeably, it is the person who himself occupies the position of the Other as a gay Black man, who validates and believes Diana. With Rodney and Rayanne, his sister, Diana can speak about her thoughts freely, realizing the entanglement, flimsiness, and planetarity[9] of realities and space-time (358). Like with Gabriel, she connects most with the people she can vulnerably exchange thoughts about philosophical topics. Furthermore, by reaching out to other coma survivors on the internet, Diana finds solace in sharing experiences and coma dreams that seemed similarly real. Every person she meets during and after her recovery she seems to share a vulnerable conversation with (e.g., Kitomi Ito, hospital staff etc.), from which she takes a lesson on her search to find a "footing in this world" again while feeling a "tug back to that other place" (347). This shows Diana's changed approach towards human connection, valuing resonant connections more than receiving a promotion or being married before thirty.

Finally, Diana is confronted with the stigmatization of disease and fear of contagion within the pandemic crisis chronotope leading to disconnection. While COVID-19-positive, Diana yearns for people to talk to her and touch her. In her desperation, she talks to the cleaning worker, Cosima, at night even though she does not understand her and reflects after their encounter: "It strikes me that nobody willingly connects with us. Cosima, because she is beneath the notice of the medical staff; me, because I'm a walking potential death sentence" (268). Thus, she is aware of societal hierarchies and stigma and reflects on them in real time experiencing exclusion from society for the first time herself. Diana also notices this disconnect in relation to power structures in the digital space. She sees posts on Instagram that reflect different experiences of the pandemic. One of her friends shares "thumbs-up on planes, cashing in on cheap vacation deals. Another friend had posted a picture of her aunt, who died yesterday of Covid, with a long tribute. A celebrity I follow is doing a fundraiser for Broadway Cares / Equity

[9] I use planetarity in reference to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Planetarity is understood as an alternative concept to globalization, a term that is too strongly invested in universalism as well as capitalist and colonial projects of exerting control (Chakravorty Spivak 290). Planetarity, rather, allows alterity and difference to exist in the human and more-than-human world alike (291). This creates a different world-view centering interconnectedness rather than division.

Fights AIDS […] It's like there are two different realities unfolding at the same time" (321–322). In these observations her changed attitude toward both privilege and reality are reflected: After falling sick with COVID-19 herself, she believes in the possibility of multiple realities existing simultaneously while acknowledging that the dissonance of these experiences is a matter of privilege.

Noticeably, through her experience of isolation and sickness, mention of historical pandemics become more frequent. In addition to the AIDS fundraiser, she mentions the plague:

> The COVID ICU is like a plague ward. The only people allowed to enter my room are my doctor, Syreta, and the night nurse, Betty; […] Ninety-nine percent of the time, I am alone, trapped in a body that will not do what I need it to do. I keep watching through the window, but I am the bug trapped in a jar – peered at occasionally by people who are mostly just grateful I am no longer sharing their space. (255)

The illness makes her feel dehumanized and unwanted in other people's space-time. That is why, when Diana finally gets into physical therapy, to be touched by someone "so willingly and without fear" makes her extremely emotional and "nearly brings tears to [her] eyes" (266). The fear of touching someone who was HIV-positive was a prominent issue in the wake of the AIDS epidemic, which the narrative evokes. Although the ways to contract COVID-19 and HIV are different, due to stigma and misinformation, people especially feared touching gay men (Marshall et al.). In an article on queer practices of dis/connection during COVID-19 Mohammed Cheded and Alexandros Skandalis underscore: "Queer practices have been long infused with textural sensibilities[10] while, at the same time, touch and contact have been historically policed for queer people, whether this was performed through juridical or societal norms" (Cheded and Skandalis 342). Experiencing this isolation, Diana develops empathy with other marginalized memories and realities and connects her experience to collective memories of pandemics and epidemics. This new way of remembering and connecting the lived reality to historical events, arise in the crisis chronotope according to Parui and Simi as "located between lived reality and partial potentiality" (1438), due to the inconclusive temporal nature of the pandemic. Through revisiting the utopia Diana created on Isabela Island, she rethinks the meaning of reality and creates a different trajectory and potentiality of her future life and connections. The novel then treats crises as an opportunity to cultivate new forms of connection anchored in empathy, community, and resonance.

Queering Memory, Art, and Connection

When Diana is unsure about what is real after waking up from her coma, she holds on to her dream as a memory. Viewing Diana's dream as a memory, examining her transformed relationship to art and to her mother, reveals how memory, art, and connection are queered

[10] Textural sensibilities, here, mean physical touch, sensations, and contact.

and redefined within the pandemic crisis chronotope in the novel. Even though the medical staff and Finn do not believe her dream constitutes reality and want her to move on from her "hallucination" (Picoult 255) as quickly as possible, Diana cannot do that. Instead of dismissing the alternate reality she experienced while in a coma, she regards it as a memory. When a nurse tells her that her confusion could be COVID-19 fog, which can affect memory, Diana responds: "The problem isn't not remembering […] It's that I do remember. […] All my memories are of me in a different country" (257). Diana does not remember getting sick, but the memories of Galápagos are very clear and detailed. Diana still longs for the utopia she created herself, wishing to return to a place where she felt more connected and herself (258). She then tries to find a meaning of the dream: "Maybe the Galápagos wasn't something that happened, but something that is supposed to happen" (321). She considers this memory a lesson for her present life and enacts the utopian vision it provided her with. In this way, past, present, and future become interdependent and counter her linear future-oriented life before imagining this other world (373). Instead of creating a future solely based on hetero-temporality, she incorporates her (imagined) past and insights into her future plans and goals. Past, present, and future, instead of consecutive, become simultaneous here. Her hope for a better future is thus filled with and fueled by more resonant connections to others, the world, and herself. Diana's approach to temporality reflects Muñoz' description of the queer utopian feeling that is rooted in past memories and entails rejecting the unfulfilling present while believing in and taking action towards a better future (Muñoz 1).

Diana's new career path to becoming an art therapist is oriented towards her experience with Beatriz. Remembering their relationship and how she was eventually able to help Beatriz and Gabriel foster a more intimate relationship guides her in this decision. Diana notices Beatriz's mental health struggles and connects with her by showing and explaining art to her (e.g., Picoult 122–126). By teaching Beatriz about art, Diana herself learns about an experience of a young queer person who is affected differently by the pandemic and develops more empathy for, and awareness of, mental health struggles. This experience reveals her wish to help other people through creating art for herself. In *Cruising Utopia* (2009), Muñoz claims that the aesthetic in the arts can function as an access to the subconscious, or the not-yet-conscious (3). By connecting to Beatriz through art, Diana gains access to her own subconscious, allowing her to see her underlying wishes and connecting them to a utopian feeling. When she reflects on her dream after waking, she realizes that she wants to become an art therapist – to help people access emotions through art like she did with Beatriz, and perhaps herself (123–125).

This decision is further based on a passion she shared with her father: painting. After returning home from the hospital, Diana paints for the first time in years (Picoult 350). She paints a landscape of Isabela Island from her memory and completely loses the sense of time passing. The same night, she dreams about Isabela Island for the first time since waking up from her coma (353f.). This emphasizes Muñoz's idea that the aesthetic can be a way of accessing and imagining another utopian world (1). The notion of hope Muñoz employs is inspired by Ernst Bloch. Bloch argues that wish landscapes can be found in paintings and poetry, which then

extend into the "territory of futurity" (Muñoz 5). The remembrance and artistic expression itself have world-making potentialities according to Muñoz. Diana is not-yet-there, but later visits exactly the territory of utopia (Isabela Island) she had created in her mind and on canvas. She thereby literally realizes her dream. The last sentence of the novel "And I turn" (Picoult 409) hints at the utopian feeling Diana carries and the anticipatory approach towards the future, as it recreates the exact situation and way Diana first met Gabriel (409). This open ending emphasizes the imagination and hope for Diana and Gabriel's, albeit unrealistic, meeting in this post-coma reality.

Her new career path is further oriented towards strengthening community and social justice practices. In her new art therapy practice she opens three years later, she works through trauma caused by the pandemic with her patients, which they translate into art (407). Her work aligns with her personal story, bridging her identity with the experiences of her patients, and creates a resonant connection to herself, the world, and others. Together with her patients, she builds a monument that commemorates the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement, symbolized by the black fists on one of the monuments. This refers to the overlap of multiple global crises during the early pandemic. This act of remembrance, infused with the aesthetics of hope for a better future, highlights the potential of art to foster community and support global social justice movements. This again recalls Muñoz' argument that concrete utopias towards a queer future relate to historical struggles and are actualized collectively. Through her art, Diana not only processes her own memories but also cultivates a space where others can envision their hopes for a more just future inspired by a past of collective suffering within the crisis chronotope.

Apart from the changes she makes regarding her relationship with Finn and her career, Diana's attitude towards her mother significantly changes, a process that is also triggered by her experiences on the Galápagos. Diana wants to reconnect with her mother, who died in her coma dream. She had felt abandoned by her mother because she was a travel reporter, and Diana was primarily raised by her father. Now, her mother lives in a memory care facility because she has dementia. Before experiencing the imagined trip to Isabela Island, Diana took care of her mother only out of obligation. Once again, her experience on Isabela Island provides her with a different perspective, a different angle on the world, as Sara Ahmed would put it (566). Gabriel and Beatriz's conflict mirrors that of Diana and her mom's. By helping her friends resolve their differences and understand each other's point of view, she rethinks her mother's perceived absence. Further, she reconnects to her own childhood memories. Diana remembers an instance when her mother allowed her to take a picture of her with one of her cameras – letting Diana be part of her life and passion (Picoult 215). Until then Diana could only think of memories of her mother leaving or being absent-minded. Here, Diana's memories resurface from her subconscious while Diana is unconscious in a coma, which enables her to process the emotions of abandonment after waking up and eventually reconnect with her mother.

Another reason for her newfound understanding of her mother is her relating experience of illness that caused her to struggle with differentiating between reality and imagination. Her experiences thus increase her acceptance of different versions of reality and the simultaneity of multiple space-times:

> I move closer and press my palm against hers. There's a screen between us. Where are you? I wonder. The world that my mother inhabits, it's not this one. But that's not to say, it isn't real to her […] Now I know everyone has their own perspective on reality. Now I'm thinking that when we're in crisis, we go to a place that comforts us. For my mother it's her identity as a photographer. And for me - right now - it's here. (337–338)

Here, Diana addresses the crisis of herself getting sick with COVID-19 and recovering from a coma, which changes her entire life, and her understanding of her mom's dementia. Her own experience of crisis leads her to acknowledge another's crisis, allowing her to reconnect with her mother even though they are physically separated by glass. The last sentence of the quote further reflects how connection constitutes being absolutely located in the present (Tempest 5). Both time and space are considered here while Diana connects with her mother by accepting her and her reality, even though it is different to hers. Her experience of an alternate reality, being lonely and isolated from most of her known surroundings, gives her empathy and understanding to reconnect with her mother. She regularly visits her, not out of a sense of obligation anymore, but with a feeling of resonance. This shows a changed definition of connection. Through connecting to her own past and memories, she can connect with her mother in the present. Like with other decisions about her present and future life, Diana now considers her utopian memory to enact a future vision thereby queering her tempo-reality. Both art and memory, then, provide means to access the subconscious and queer temporality in the novel, ultimately enabling more resonant connections.

Conclusion and (Utopian) Outlook

The pandemic crisis chronotope, a concept suggested by Parui and Simi Raj, is constituted by the event of the pandemic disrupting normal life, including the experience and norms of time and space. In *Wish You Were Here*, the dream of Isabela Island becomes a metaphor for the introspection, reflection of privileges, and a changed sense of spatiotemporality that characterizes the crisis chronotope of the COVID-19 pandemic. Diana catches the virus herself and constructs a utopian space on Isabela Island in her coma dream that leads her to question her heteronormative lifestyle, temporality, and disconnected relationships. On the island, she meets Beatriz and Gabriel, builds a relationship with them and helps them connect, simultaneously drifting apart from Finn through physical distance and (digital) disconnection, which leads to an experience of a self-efficacious resonant connection to herself. When she holds on to her dream as a memory after waking up and consequently leaves Finn, she ultimately holds on to the utopian feeling and belief in a better future, as Muñoz describes. She reorients herself towards hopefulness for the future which is fueled by past experiences

and the unsatisfactory experience of the present in her career and relationship. In refusing to forget this utopian feeling, Diana enacts a future vision following her feelings and hope, both of which have become more conscious through her vivid imagination of the Galápagos. This echoes Muñoz's conceptualizations of queer utopianism which entails the interdependence of hope and memory. Diana, in Ahmed's words, indeed changes her directionality and leaves straight lines, embracing the uncertainty of the future towards creating more resonant connections (Rosa 11–12). While at the beginning of the novel, her life plans were aligned with what Halberstam would consider heteronormative values and capitalist ideas of success, now, her career is informed by her own passion and creativity. By practicing art therapy, she relates her experience to other people and the world and takes political action towards social justice, reflecting a turn towards understanding her own experience and the experiences of marginalized people collectively. When in the beginning she was not aware of her own privileges, prejudices, and societal power structures the pandemic disruption of normative space-time, her experience of Isabela Island and of isolation during her recovery made her question not only her life goals but her beliefs. This led to a queering of temporality and of the connections she formed from then on. This includes her mother, towards whom she finds a different way to connect, more grounded in the locatedness of the present by revisiting childhood memories, in line with Tempest's definition of connection. Ultimately, it shows her shifted emphasis on remembrance and hope for change towards a better, more just, queerer future built on resonance and (communal) connection.

Wish You Were Here resonates with Muñoz's approach of a hopeful futurity: From the crisis chronotope of the COVID-19 pandemic arises an imagined utopia that leads to an enactment of this hopeful future vision and turns away from individualist heteronormative temporality. Instead, Diana positions herself towards an awareness of collective histories and memory of shared suffering, a sense of belonging to the world, and community-oriented existence that actively participates in creating social justice and bettering the world in line with a transformed notion of connection to the world, friends and family as well as oneself in tune with Rosa's idea of resonance. This leads Diana to question and accept different versions of reality and multiplicity of spatiotemporal experiences that are interdependent to socio-economic positionalities within the crisis chronotope. The novel shows a way of living in a post-pandemic reality that is based on empathy, awareness and a consideration of the past, making it an important work in shaping the collective memory of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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