

Women in Motion:
Following the *Flâneuse* through
Mrs. Dalloway and *Voyage in the Dark*

by

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For my Aunt Toni, who may have lost the ability to walk, but whose unfailing patience, kindness, and sense of humor have, like the walking *flâneuse* figure, inspired and guided me throughout my completion of this project.

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Abstract

The *flâneur*, or the male walker and observer in the city streets, is widely recognized as a prominent figure in the history and literature of modernity. However, his female counterpart, the *flâneuse*, has long been the subject of controversy; many theorists have labeled her a fictional or invisible figure, irrelevant to the historical development of the modern metropolis. Nevertheless, the *flâneuse* remains an important catalyst for critical debate regarding women's roles in the modern city, both as walkers and as publicly recognized urban citizens.

This thesis examines this intersection of historical invisibility and critical significance as it appears in two British modernist novels: Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and Jean Rhys' *Voyage in the Dark* (1934). In my analyses of various female characters, I use the *flâneuse* as a heuristic device and explore how these characters use their walking activities through the *public* space of the city to reflect upon their *private* thoughts, memories, hopes for the future, and relationships with other characters.

The three chapters of this thesis use the *flâneuse* device to qualify this private/public connection. Chapter One analyzes the urban movements of two daughter characters, Elizabeth Dalloway from *Mrs. Dalloway* and Anna Morgan from *Voyage in the Dark*. Their rides through London on buses and trains unite the public space of the city with the private space of the vehicles. In doing so, Elizabeth and Anna's travels redefine the *flâneuse* figure as a woman who not only walks, but takes advantage of more modern forms of public transportation, as well as more modern opportunities for female independence and freedom in the city.

Chapter Two compares the *flâneuse* activities of two competing mother-figure characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa Dalloway and Miss Kilman. These characters' walking activities reveal the instabilities of the mother-daughter binary; as an alternative mother figure, Miss Kilman triangulates Clarissa and Elizabeth Dalloway's mother-daughter relationship, transforming it from a private (within the family) same-sex association into a public (outside of the family) homoerotic relationship.

Chapter Three re-examines these mother-daughter dynamics on a national scale, specifically in terms of the relationship between 'Mother England' and her colonial subjects. To do so, it compares two opposite-sex walking figures, the *flâneur* and *flâneuse*. Peter Walsh from *Mrs. Dalloway* displays a masculine freedom from participation in mother-daughter relationships, as well as a national freedom from an allegiance to either the British Empire or its Indian colony. These freedoms are mirrored in Peter's role as an ideal *flâneur* figure, detached from and ambivalent towards the people and places around him. Conversely, Anna Morgan's gendered roles as neglected daughter and reluctant mother-to-be are compounded by her national perspective as a colonial outsider in London. Her failure to adapt to these three roles reflects itself in her inability to embrace her *flâneuse* activities as a walker and mover around London. In this chapter, I also suggest that *flânerie*, the activity of street walking, transforms Peter's private male fantasy as a "colonizer," or employee of the Empire, into Anna's public reality as a "colonized" woman and outsider in England.

By considering these characters in terms of their *flâneur* and *flâneuse* behaviors, I ultimately describe how the activity of walking not only facilitates characters' geographic movements, but comes to define their experiences in the city of London, both in their private family roles and their public, nationally recognized identities.

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INTRODUCTION

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY DEVELOPMENT OF THE *FLÂNEUSE*

*The east wind blows in the street to-day;
The sky is blue, yet the town looks grey.
'Tis the wind of ice, the wind of fire,
Of cold despair and of hot desire,
Which chills the flesh to aches and pains,
And sends a fever through all the veins.*

*From end to end, with aimless feet,
All day long have I paced the street.
My limbs are weary, but in my breast
Stirs the goad of a mad unrest.
I would give anything to stay
The little wheel turns in my brain;
The little wheel that turns all day,
That turns all night with might and main.¹*

This thesis investigates the dynamic relationship between women and the city. Specifically, it answers the question, “How and to what end did women begin walking around the public space of the modern London metropole?” The above stanzas, taken from a longer poem by Amy Levy entitled “A March Day in London,” act as a richly descriptive beginning to my exploration of the historical and literary significance of women as urban walkers. At the time Levy’s poetry collection was published in 1889, London had undergone nearly a century’s worth of urban planning and modernizing redesign. These

¹ Amy Levy, “A March Day in London,” in *A London Plane-Tree* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1889), 19, accessed October 15, 2010, http://books.google.com/books?id=3WU7AAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=a+london+plane-tree&hl=en&ei=a6GDTfeTB6Gx0QG565zgCA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false.

efforts, which reshaped everything from London's geographic layout to the social and gender norms of the city's inhabitants, made it possible for women to, for the very first time, safely enter the public space of the city and "[pace] the street" freely. However, Levy's connection between the speaker's "weary limbs" and "mad unrest" reflects the fact that spatial movement "from end to end" of London not only serves as a practical means of transportation, but also facilitates a movement or change within the speaker's mind, like the "little wheel that turns in [her] brain."

Historically, female walkers have also achieved far more than movement from "end to end" of London; their walking movements have affected the culture and history of the modern city. From the early nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, the act of walking in the city evolved into a historically and sociologically significant type of movement. During this time, three phenomena laid the foundations geographically, theoretically, and socially for the appearance of twentieth century urban movers: the construction of a "modern" London that facilitated people's movements around the city; women's entrance into the metropolis as active and publicly recognized citizens; and the development of an aesthetic and critical discussion about the *flâneuse*, or the female urban walker. This thesis analyzes these phenomena in the context of two novels that were written by women during the later part of this modernization era: Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Jean Rhys' *Voyage in the Dark*. These novels provide an excellent opportunity to analyze the *flâneuse's* role within a literary context; both are set in the city of London, feature detailed descriptions of the city's

geography, and spend a significant amount of time tracing female characters' movements in and around the city streets. The *flâneuse* also serves as the methodological core of this thesis; in analyses of both texts, I use the *flâneuse* as a heuristic device to compare and contrast these characters and to connect their outward geographic movements in the public space of the city with their private, mental developments. Specifically, I explore the ways in which these characters use their walking and moving activities to reflect upon their own "turning wheels," including private thoughts, memories, hopes for the future, and relationships with other characters.

It is impossible to fully characterize the *flâneuse* without first describing her male counterpart, the *flâneur*, who emerged as "a new kind of public person" and "a key figure in the critical literature of modernity and urbanization."² In her article "The Invisible *Flâneur*," Elizabeth Wilson notes that the word '*flâneur*' "may be derived from the Irish word for 'libertine'" and that the nineteenth-century edition of the *Encyclopaedia Larousse* first defined the *flâneur* as a "loiterer" or "fritterer away of time" who could "only exist in the great city, the metropolis" because his various activities—shopping, strolling, and observing—occurred within and were made possible by the hustle and bustle of the city itself (93-4). Wilson cites an anonymously published article from 1806, which features a character named M. Bonhomme, as one of the earliest examples of a "typical *flâneur*." He possesses seven defining characteristics but remains, first and foremost, "free from

² Elizabeth Wilson, "The Invisible *Flâneur*," *New Left Review* 191 (1992), 93. Hereafter cited in the text.

familial . . . or mercantile responsibilities to roam Paris at will” and thus “spends most of his day looking at the urban spectacle” (94). Second, M. Bonhomme tends to loiter in “cafés and restaurants,” and third, he spends much of his time observing “the behavior of the lower classes of society.” Fourth, M. Bonhomme “is interested in dress as a vital component of the urban scene” (94). Fifth, while he may occasionally notice and observe women of various social classes, especially prostitutes, these women “play but a minor role in his life” (94). Sixth, M. Bonhomme is, in many ways, a marginal figure or “solitary onlooker,” yet remains, seventh and finally, a “gentleman” who “[retains] at least some private wealth” (95).³

This thesis argues that these characteristics imbue the *flâneur* with feelings of “masculine freedom” and detachment that no female *flâneuse* in either *Mrs. Dalloway* or *Voyage in the Dark* can ever truly possess (Wilson 98). Feminist scholar Janet Wolff makes an even more extreme claim in her article “The Invisible *Flâneuse*: Women and the Literature of Modernity,” in which she denies that any *flâneuse* figure, whether historical or literary, has ever truly existed.⁴ She asserts, “The literature of modernity describes the experience of men,” and argues that the *flâneuse* figure has been “invented” and “rendered impossible by the sexual divisions of the nineteenth century” (37). Wolff discusses how scholars and writers like Georg Simmel, Charles Baudelaire, and Walter Benjamin have all analyzed “the

³ Another excellent example of the *flâneur* as a “marginalized” yet “gentlemanly” figure can be found in Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “A Man of the Crowd.”

⁴ Janet Wolff, “The Invisible *Flâneuse*: Women and the Literature of Modernity,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 2, no. 37 (1985): 37-46, accessed July 20, 2010, <http://tcs.sagepub.com/content/2/3/37>. Hereafter cited in the text.

world-view which the city-dweller develops"; Simmel focuses on the "impersonality" and "hostility" of money-driven metropolises, while Baudelaire and Benjamin's texts center on the figure of the *flâneur* who repeatedly appears within these impersonal cities and their hostile inhabitants (37-42). However, Wolff notes that although these writers do an excellent job of describing the male street walker's role in the city, they fail to acknowledge the presence of a female street walker or *flâneuse*. Furthermore, she argues that the term *flâneuse* cannot be defined simply as any woman who walks in the street. Woolf acknowledges that women participated in the public sphere as shoppers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but she posits that the seemingly public activity of shopping was no more than an extension of the private, domestic sphere to which women were largely confined at this time. Although Wolff acknowledges the fact that the distinction between public and private spheres was largely "incomplete" and varied based on women's class positions, she remains committed to her conclusion, "It is not at all clear what a feminist sociology of modernity would look like" (45).

Although her argument provides a historical basis for my claim that the *flâneur* is freer and more detached than the *flâneuse* characters in Woolf and Rhys' texts, Wolff has also prompted many critics to disagree with her conception of the "invisible *flâneuse*." For example, in *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity*, Deborah Parsons uses close readings of several literary texts, including several written by Jean Rhys, to develop more historically expansive definitions of the *flâneur* and *flâneuse*. She states,

“[Janet] Wolff ignores the important point that the *flâneur* is not only a historical figure but also a critical metaphor for the perspective of the modern artist.”⁵ Parsons expands upon this distinction, noting, “Whereas Benjamin’s *flâneur* increasingly became a metaphor for observation, retreating from the city streets . . . to a pace of scopie authority yet static detachment, women were entering the city with fresh eye, observing it from within,” by walking around the city as writers, artists, shoppers, and even as prostitutes, the original female “streetwalkers” (6).

Because the *flâneuse* remains, first and foremost, a walker in the streets, a consideration of her emergence as a historical figure begins with an analysis of the city streets themselves. Urban historian Richard Sennett describes how in the early-to-mid-nineteenth century, London evolved into a city defined by movement and thus an apt location for the *flâneur* and *flâneuse* to begin their urban rambles.⁶ In *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*, Sennett notes that London exuded a “sense of fullness and public order” due in large part to its preeminent urban architect John Nash, who formed the city into one that promoted order and individualism while discouraging the formation of organized groups in the city. For example, the construction of Regent’s Park and Regent’s Street in the 1820s “gave a new meaning to motion” (328). Sennett writes, “The pressure of linear pedestrian movement on Regent Street made, and still

⁵ Deborah Parsons, *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5. Hereafter cited in the text.

⁶ Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994), 328. Hereafter cited in the text.

makes, it difficult for a stationary crowd to form, to listen to a speech, for instance. Instead, both street and park privilege the individually moving body” (328). Furthermore, he argues that construction of the Underground in 1863 formed London into a city resembling the human body, in which the “arteries” and “veins” of the subways transported people in and out of the metropolis and opened up the city’s center to mass consumption and a mixing of class boundaries in the city streets (334). Not surprisingly, once the newly designed geographic space of London began privileging these “moving bodies,” the *flâneur* and *flâneuse* appeared as expert, purposeful circulators around the “arteries” and “veins” of London’s streets.

Urban sociologist Georg Simmel, who was writing during the time period that Sennett’s text discusses, remarks on the potentially hazardous effects of life in this modern, movement-driven city.⁷ In his seminal work “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” Simmel introduces a binary opposition that other scholars have subsequently challenged, expanded, modified, and qualified: the conflict between urban society at large and the urban citizen in particular. He argues that society, which includes “the weight of historical heritage and the external culture and technique of life,” has become significantly more hostile since the development of the modern urban metropolis in the nineteenth century (324). As a result of rapid urbanization, modern cities worldwide now possess an ability to change extremely rapidly, an antagonistic and impersonal atmosphere, and an obsession

⁷ Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” in *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald N. Levine (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 324. Hereafter cited in the text.

with commercialism and a capitalist economy. Over time, these external societal conditions affect the psyche of the urban dweller. The hostile metropolis forces this urban citizen to become more “adaptive” to its rapid tempo and ever-changing environment; as a result, he/she, like the metropolis, also becomes detached, driven by money, and obsessed with his own hectic schedule. On the individual level, these characteristics form the urban individual into one who senses his own valuelessness and thus possesses a “blasé attitude.” On the societal level, each of these “blasé” citizens comes to view all other citizens as suspicious and untrustworthy, forming urban society into one that “places emphasis on striving for the most individual forms of personal existence—regardless of whether it is always correct or always successful” (328, 336).

The work of urban historian Erika Rappaport serves as the culmination of these various theories; she draws on Parsons’ emphasis on “fresh-eyed” women as “observers from within,” Sennett’s historical account, and Simmel’s sociological analysis, to argue that the first publicly acknowledged London *flâneuse* was a shopper.⁸ In *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London’s West End*, she chronicles the “retail revolution” that occurred in London’s West End shopping district during the mid-1800s, a revolution that involved “a reinterpretation of public life, the economy and consumption, and class and gender ideology” (7). For example, when London’s first department store, Whiteley’s, was constructed in 1863, shopping became “an inherently female and amusing activity” and

⁸ Erika Rappaport, *Shopping for Pleasure: Women in the Making of London’s West End* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 7. Hereafter cited in the text.

first bridged the gap between confinement to private, domestic sphere and active participation in the public metropolis (31). While there were still dangers associated with a “bourgeois lady [roaming] alone out of doors,” the emergence of the consumer-driven West End made strides in de-stigmatizing the female street walker figure (7). In fact, Rappaport notes, “One of the key features of the late-Victorian suburban woman was her refusal to stay at home or even remain in her local high street. As early as the 1850s, she seemed to be in constant motion, ever traveling to and through the city center” (23).

Rappaport also states, “[The] shopper was always asked to come home. In the department store, women could enjoy the pleasure of men’s company, could experience the pleasure of *flânerie*, but could also experience social and yet domestic pleasures of the aristocracy and wealthy bourgeoisie” (165). Shopping, therefore, facilitated two important historical developments for female walkers: first, it encouraged women’s participation in the arteries-and-veins description of London that Sennett described; second, it gave London’s female citizens a safe, enjoyable, and socially acceptable opportunity to become a gender group fundamentally defined by their *flâneuse* activities. Rappaport’s analysis also helps resolve Wolff and Parsons’ debate about the historical relevance of the *flâneuse*. By pointing out the department store’s creation of a simultaneously private and public space, she acknowledges women’s enjoyment of traditional “domestic pleasures” and their yearning to break free from confinement in the domestic sphere and “experience the pleasures of *flânerie*.”

The three chapters of this thesis further develop Rappaport's connection between "public and private" and articulate three claims about women's relationships, as walkers and movers, to the public space of the city. All chapters center around my use of the *flâneuse* as a heuristic device that connects public and private, although each chapter uniquely qualifies the relationship between the two. Chapter One explores the connection between public and private spaces and argues for a further modernization of the already distinctly "modern" figure of the *flâneuse*. Traditionally, the *flâneuse* is a walker immersed within the city, her feet make direct contact with the pavement of the street, and her immediate surround, the bustling city streets, dominate her point of view as an observer. In my analysis of daughter characters from *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Voyage in the Dark*, I suggest that by mediating the *flâneuse's* contact with the street via more modern forms of transport, such as omnibus or train rides, the *flâneuse* can cover greater geographic and historical ground. Like the department store, these vehicles serve as public-and-private spaces that mediate the *flâneuse's* relationship to the city, cause her to experience *flânerie* while in a protected and enclosed space, allow her to observe without being observed, and move her through the city without letting her linger directly within it.

However, buses and trains also do what the department store cannot: move through space. From the top of an omnibus, Elizabeth Dalloway from *Mrs. Dalloway* may observe more of the city's geography, and while on the train, Anna Morgan from *Voyage in the Dark* is able to cover a greater amount of space, while feeling protected and removed from what

Simmel describes as the “impersonal” city and its “hostile” inhabitants. This chapter also suggests that more modern forms of geographic movement facilitate the *flâneuse*’s historical and generational progress. When traveling farther and faster through space, these women embark on mental “travels” in which they imagine greater opportunities for future progress and development as women, including freedom from the traditional and confining gender roles that have, as Wolff describes, rendered earlier generations of *flâneuses* “invisible” within and irrelevant to the culture and history of the city.

Chapter Two analyzes a *relationship* between a mother and daughter as it transitions from private to public status. In the context of this chapter, the word *private* connotes limitation to a nuclear family constructed around biological determinants. I suggest that this private mother-daughter relationship becomes public, or extended to those outside of the nuclear family, when a masculine figure takes the daughter away from the mother and into the public space of the city as a *flâneuse*. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, however, the masculine figure who disrupts this mother-daughter dyad is not a father or a male suitor, but rather another woman who acts a masculine alternative mother figure. This chapter argues that Clarissa and Elizabeth Dalloway’s mother-daughter relationship is triangulated by the masculine character Miss Kilman, Elizabeth’s tutor and companion. Miss Kilman takes Elizabeth out shopping and uses the activities of *flânerie* to subvert a biological same-sex relationship between mother and daughter and transform it into a homoerotic relationship between two women. As a result of this triangulation, Clarissa also adopts a *flâneuse* role

both to cope with Miss Kilman's threatening maternal influence and to imagine alternatives to her biological mothering role. In this chapter, I also suggest that like the omnibus and the train, certain clothing items worn by Clarissa and Miss Kilman help to mediate and complicate their relationship to the city as *flâneuses*.

Chapter Three links this consideration of mother-daughter relationships to an analysis of the relationship between "Mother England," the hub of British imperial power, and its colonial subjects. It turns from the same-sex associations between mother and daughter to a comparison of opposite-sex *flâneur* and *flâneuse* characters. In analyses of Peter Walsh, a *flâneur* from *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Anna Morgan, a *flâneuse* from *Voyage in the Dark*, I argue that activities of *flânerie* transform the private male fantasy of the "colonizer," or an agent of the British Empire, into the public and literal experience of a "colonized" woman who comes to London from an unnamed British colony in the Caribbean. Furthermore, both the colonizer-*flâneur*'s imperial ideology and the colonized-*flâneuse*'s colonial perspective connect public geographic space with private imaginings and thoughts. Peter uses movement through the geographic space of London in order to stimulate his imaginary pursuit and domination of a female colonial subject, while Anna's *flâneuse* activities allow her to think about the disconnect between her "white" outer appearance and "black" inner racial consciousness. As in Chapter Two, the accessories Peter and Anna carry with them—a pocketknife and a pair of gloves, respectively—help to

explain these characters' unique relationship to London, both as walkers and as participants in the imperial dynamics of the British Empire.

Finally, Chapter Three re-imagines the triangulated mother-daughter relationship of Chapter Two in the historical context of British imperialism. Just as Elizabeth's relationship with Miss Kilman disrupts Clarissa and Elizabeth's biological mother-daughter relationship, Anna's relationship to Empire disrupts and inhibits her roles as both a daughter and a mother-to-be. By the end of the novel, Anna grapples with her pregnancy and the prospect of motherhood in the same way that she struggles to connect, as a colonial subject, with "Mother England."

Thus, Anna's role as *flâneuse* unites the claims of these three individual chapters; her movements through London connect the public and private experiences of women as daughters, mothers, and subjects of the British Empire. In this thesis, the *flâneuse* does much more than walk in the city. In her concrete, visible movement through geographic space, she reveals what would otherwise remain abstract or altogether invisible within *Mrs. Dalloway* and *Voyage in the Dark*: women's complex experiences as inhabitants of the city of London, both on familial and national scales.

CHAPTER ONE

THE OMNIBUS AND THE TRAIN:

DAUGHTERS IN MOTION

*Some men to carriages aspire;
 On some the costly hansoms wait;
 Some seek a fly, on job or hire;
 Some mount the trotting steed, elate.
 I envy not the rich and great,
 A wandering minstrel, poor and free,
 I am contented with my fate—
 An omnibus suffices me.¹*

This chapter introduces two daughter characters—Elizabeth Dalloway from *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Anna Morgan from *Voyage in the Dark*—and compares the way they travel around and into the city of London. From this comparison, I make three claims about the roles that daughter characters play in these novels. First, Elizabeth and Anna’s travels show how differences in social class and ethnic identity shape each character’s experience as a *flâneuse*. Second, each characters’s mode of transport—Elizabeth rides on an omnibus, while Anna travels on a train—affects the roles that they play, both as daughters and *flâneuses*. Both the omnibus and the train allow Elizabeth and Anna to feel protected within private, enclosed spaces even while out and about in London and in the English countryside. These

¹ Amy Levy, “Ballade of an Omnibus,” in *A London Plane-Tree*, (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1889), 21, accessed October 15, 2010, http://books.google.com/books?id=3WU7AAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=a+london+plane-tree&hl=en&ei=a6GDTfeTB6Gx0QG565zgCA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false.

private spaces allow both daughters to reflect on their connections to and detachments from both their mothers and the city of London itself. Third, despite the differences between Elizabeth and Anna's experiences as movers through the urban space, both of their journeys modernize the mode, speed, and results of the *flâneuse's* travels, thus revealing much about the modern woman's changing relationship to the city of London itself.

I. Elizabeth Dalloway's Omnibus of Opportunity

Elizabeth Dalloway's ride through Westminster on an omnibus unites her geographic travel with her navigation through complicated relationships with her mother, Clarissa, her father, Richard, and her history tutor and companion, Miss Kilman. As Elizabeth waits for the bus, Woolf writes:

She would get on to an omnibus. And already, even as she stood there, in her very well cut clothes, it was beginning . . . People were beginning to compare her to poplar trees, early dawn, hyacinths, fawns, running water, and garden lilies, and it made her life a burden to her, for she so much preferred being left alone to do what she liked in the country, but they would compare her to lilies, and she had to go to parties, and London was so dreary compared with being alone in the country with her father and her dogs.²

² Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1925), 135. Hereafter cited in the text.

The omnibus scene is rife with descriptions of place. Woolf mentions Elizabeth's exact whereabouts several times, whether she is in or on "Victoria Street," "Westminster," "The Strand," or "Chancery Lane" (135). Ironically, despite being very particularly situated in London's streets, this particular passage reveals that Elizabeth feels very much *out* of place in her relationship with Clarissa. She and her mother are as different as the country and the city; Elizabeth's conception of "dreary" London and desire for the countryside contrast sharply with Woolf's description of Clarissa as loving "life; London; this moment of June" in the novel's opening scene (4). Furthermore, despite having been born and bred in London, people continually liken Elizabeth to "running water" and "poplar trees," terms that highlight both Elizabeth's beauty and the fact that she is more like her father and prefers the countryside and "her dogs" to the bustling city that Clarissa enjoys.

Woolf's use of natural rhetoric also signals a generational difference between Elizabeth and Clarissa. Melissa Bagley remarks, "[The] word 'beginning' is important, as it signifies the demarcation of an impending progression. Elizabeth comprehends and wishes to avoid descriptions that limit and bind, that would make her delicate, just as she wishes to think of her path as distinct from that of her mother."³ These natural descriptors are also reminiscent of earthly growth and renewal, and Lisa Tyler argues that this description of Elizabeth "reminds people of the flowers, water, and springtime associated with the ancient

³ Melissa Bagley, "Nature and the Nation in Mrs. Dalloway," *Woolf Studies Annual* 14 (2008): 41, accessed October 21, 2010, http://find.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T002&prodId=AONE&docId=A219520174&source=gale&srcprod=AONE&userGroupName=lom_umichanna&version=1.0. Hereafter cited in the text.

myth [of Demeter and Persephone].”⁴ Woolf reformulates the Demeter-Persephone myth, “in which a living mother is grieved and angered by the temporary loss of her daughter,” into a story of Elizabeth’s geographical and generational “progression” away from traditional roles like Clarissa’s (Tyler 60). That is, Elizabeth’s ride around Westminster facilitates her increased awareness of her generational movement away from the old-fashioned femininity of her mother. Elsewhere, Woolf notes, “That Elizabeth did not care more about it—for instance for her clothes—sometimes worried Clarissa” (135). Elizabeth’s lack of interest in what Bagley calls “delicate” or traditionally feminine activities, such as an interest in clothing, drives a generational wedge between mother and daughter. Like Demeter, Clarissa “worries” about the temporary loss of her influence over Elizabeth, an influence derived from the tradition of Clarissa’s generation. Meanwhile, Elizabeth muses upon the freedom of her own younger generation as she rides on the omnibus: “She liked people who were ill. And every profession is open to the women of your generation, said Miss Kilman. So she might be a doctor. She might be a farmer. Animals are often ill. She might own a thousand acres and have people under her” (136). Elizabeth entertains the possibility of seizing professional opportunities that never would have been available to Clarissa, and these rural occupations like farming and “[owning] a thousand acres” harken

⁴ Lisa Tyler, “The Loss of Roses: Mother-Daughter Myth and Relationships Between Women in *Mrs. Dalloway*,” *West Virginia University Philosophical Papers* 52 (2005): 62, accessed October 21, 2010, http://find.galegroup.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/gtx/infomark.do?&contentSet=IAC-Documents&type=retrieve&tabID=T002&prodId=AONE&docId=A149850925&source=gale&srcprod=AONE&userGroupName=lom_umichanna&version=1.0. Hereafter cited in the text.

back to Elizabeth's disdain for London's dreariness and her close attachment to her father and the countryside.

By inserting the character of Miss Kilman into this passage, Woolf further complicates Elizabeth's already detached attitude towards Clarissa. Miss Kilman's character contrasts directly with Clarissa's; as Elizabeth's history tutor and almost constant companion, she is a *paid* mother and a single, working woman rather than a well-to-do wife of a Member of Parliament. In the context of the Demeter-Persephone myth, Miss Kilman also plays the role of the mythological god Hades (Tyler 62-3). Just as Hades woos Persephone away from Demeter, Miss Kilman successfully lures Elizabeth away from Clarissa's influence; she urges Elizabeth to worry about "professions" rather than "clothes," and she and Elizabeth shop at the Army and Navy store rather than in the upscale stores that Clarissa visits when buying flowers in the opening scene of *Mrs. Dalloway*.

However, while she certainly spends more time with Miss Kilman than with her mother, Elizabeth does not feel particularly close to Miss Kilman, either. In fact, Elizabeth's ride on the omnibus is prompted by her need to escape from a strained lunchtime conversation with Miss Kilman. As she rides the bus, Elizabeth thinks to herself, "It was always talking about her own sufferings that made Miss Kilman so difficult . . . Oh, she would like to go a little further. Another penny was it to the Strand? Here was another penny then. She would go up the Strand" (136). Elizabeth's ride on the omnibus, while

distancing her from Clarissa, also facilitates her movement away from the “anti-Clarissa” figure of Miss Kilman. Elizabeth’s upper-class status allows her to do so; because of her family’s wealth, she feels no need to worry about how to make money on her own, so her imagined future “professions” serve as sources of freedom and agency rather than as sources of income and subsistence. However, Elizabeth’s economic security also prevents her from being able to appreciate Miss Kilman’s various “sufferings,” which, as *Mrs. Dalloway* later reveals, stem from her precarious financial situation and the stigma attached to her German ancestry. In this way, Elizabeth is still very much like her mother, acting like a traditionally upper-class Englishwoman who remains inattentive to the economic and emotional plight of even her very close companion.⁵

Thus, Elizabeth’s travel on the omnibus itself mirrors her continuous movement towards and away from relationships with different authority figures. Her journey lacks a predetermined route and a fixed, final destination; she decides on a whim to board the bus, and changes her mind about the course of her travels several times, including her sudden decision to journey “up the Strand.” Likewise, Elizabeth’s role as a daughter lacks a clearly defined trajectory throughout the passage; at her various stops along the bus route, Elizabeth allies with either her father or Miss Kilman, both alternatives to Clarissa, yet still taps into the traditionally upper-class mentality that she shares with her mother. This lingering connection with Clarissa reemerges at the end of Elizabeth’s omnibus ride, when

⁵ Clarissa demonstrates this class-based insensitivity several times in *Mrs. Dalloway*; earlier in the novel, Clarissa notes that Miss Kilman’s “ugly green mackintosh,” a sign of how “poor she [is],” does not provoke Clarissa’s sympathy, but causes her to selfishly sense her own “inferiority” (Woolf 12).

she realizes, “But it was later than she thought. Her mother would not like her to be wandering off alone like this. She turned back down the Strand” (138). Just as Demeter mourns the “temporary loss” of Persephone, Elizabeth only temporarily distances herself from her mother’s influence. Granted, Elizabeth’s decision “to turn back down the Strand” is made for fear of her mother’s disapproval, and this passage implies that she would prefer to remain apart from Clarissa for a longer period of time. Nevertheless, she *does* ultimately choose to return to the Dalloway home and thus remains at least superficially “fixed” or located in the otherwise complicated geography of this mother-daughter relationship.

II. Anna Morgan’s Isolating Train Ride

In *Voyage in the Dark*, on the other hand, Rhys uses geographic movement to portray a stepmother-daughter relationship completely devoid of fixedness or stability. Anna Morgan, a 19-year-old woman who was born to English parents but raised exclusively in the Caribbean, has recently moved to London to work as a dance-hall performer. She flashes back to her arrival in England with her stepmother, Hester:

. . . This is England Hester said and I watched it through the train-window divided into squares like pocket-handkerchiefs; a small tidy look it had everywhere fenced off from everywhere else—what are those things—those are haystacks—oh those are haystacks—I had read about England ever since I could

read—smaller meaner everything is never mind—this is London—hundreds
 thousands of white people white people rushing along and the dark houses
 all alike frowning down one after the other all alike all stuck together—the
 streets like smooth shut-in ravines and the dark houses frowning down—oh
 I’m not going to like this place I’m not going to like this place I’m not going to
 like this place—you’ll get used to it Hester kept saying I expect you feel like a
 fish out of water but you’ll soon get used to it—now don’t look like Dying
 Dick and Solemn Davy as your poor father used to say you’ll get used to
 it (17)⁶

The phrases “This is England” and “This is London” reveal how Anna’s class status and national identity cause her to experience England differently from Elizabeth Dalloway. While Elizabeth, as the daughter of a Member of Parliament and lifelong resident of Westminster, rides around as an active participant in the metropolis—she sees the sites, walks, shops—Rhys characterizes Anna as an outsider in London who cannot participate in the landscape that she views from her train window. Anna views the “haystacks” and “hundreds thousands of white people” from afar, repeating, “I’m not going to like this place” without ever actively experiencing the “places” of England and London themselves. Furthermore, Anna’s stepmother, Hester’s, remark “you’ll get used to it” signals a tension

⁶ Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1934), 17. Hereafter cited in the text.

between Anna, a Caribbean native, and Hester, a resident of England, that stems from their different senses of connection to England and the city of London.

The structural elements of the passage also demonstrate Anna's lack of connection to England. For instance, Andrew Thacker notes that Rhys' use of a stream-of-consciousness technique highlights Anna's experiences as an outsider in England.⁷ Rhys' extensive use of flashback and memory scenes and short, choppy, and often incomplete phrases and sentences—all of which appear in this train scene—ultimately convey a series of “geographies that are always in flux and for which the idea of a settled place of origin does not exist” (214). Thacker also argues that despite her constant movement within the city of London, Anna continually fails to convert the public and hostile urban “space” into a private, welcoming “place” or dwelling (194). Elements of a “geography in flux” appear in this passage. While a ride on an omnibus might allow Anna to more effectively connect with the city and people of London, her high-speed movement on the train, while allowing her to cover greater geographic distance, prohibits her from lingering or remaining “settled” in any one place. Likewise, her complicated national and racial identities prevent Anna from fully connecting with the “white people” she sees. Anna is, in fact, “white” in appearance and of English ancestry, but she narrates elsewhere in the novel that as a child in the colonies, she both “hated being white” and “wished she was black” (Rhys 72).

⁷ Andrew Thacker, *Moving Through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2003), 214. Hereafter cited in the text.

The opposition between black and white comes to define Anna's role as a *flâneuse* both in this train ride flashback and throughout the novel. In *The Worlding of Jean Rhys*, Sue Thomas describes how dualisms such as black versus white and colonizer versus colonized lead Anna toward a "possibility of a 'recognition' of difference" between her Carib heritage and what she sees as the "sameness of Englishness."⁸ Anna's *flâneuse* role is thus mediated by this conflict between Carib "difference" and English "sameness" even before she arrives in London; as she looks out the train window, Anna feels immediately removed from the multitude of "white" people she sees but with whom she cannot identify. I suggest that the train window itself, which is transparent yet impermeable, can be seen as a symbol of Anna's *flâneuse* role. When moving toward and around the city of London, she can, like the *flâneur*, "spend much of her day looking at the urban spectacle," yet that capacity to observe only heightens her awareness that she does not belong to the city in which she moves (Wilson 94). She thus never "exists with the great city," as the *flâneur* does, but only outside of it (Wilson 94). This feeling of isolation aligns with the argument that women's confinement to the private, domestic sphere rendered the *flâneuse* figure "invisible" in the modern city (Wolff 37). However, in this case, it is the abstract private sphere of Anna's own racial identity that makes Anna feel "invisible" and prohibits her from immersing herself in the public forum of London.

⁸ Sue Thomas, *The Worlding of Jean Rhys* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999), 146. Hereafter cited in the text.

Hester's response "you'll get used to it" to Anna's repeated statement "I'm not going to like it here" also foreshadows Hester's only present-tense appearance in the novel. Shortly after Anna flashes back to her initial sighting of England, she and Hester meet in a restaurant in London. Hester informs Anna that she has written Anna's uncle Ramsay, who lives in the Caribbean, and advised him that Anna "should go home again." According to a letter Hester reads, Ramsay responds by saying, "I wanted to write about Anna some time ago when she started trapesing about the place pretending to be a chorus girl or what ever you call it" (59-60). Anna's alleged "trapesing" around London both resembles and contrasts with Elizabeth's bus ride around Westminster. Just as Elizabeth travels at her own pace and to no place in particular as she rides the omnibus, Anna is, in Hester and Ramsay's opinions, "trapesing" through life at a leisurely pace. However, while Elizabeth derives a sense of opportunity from the bus ride—she muses about her future profession and relishes her progress away from the traditions embraced by Clarissa—Anna's movement around London erodes any such sense of possibility. Her "trapesing" has resulted in little more than a lack of stable employment or place to live, and Ramsay echoes this in his letter, saying, "You know as well as I do that there is not the remotest chance of her ever being able to earn any money for herself out here" (61). Furthermore, the notion of "home" remains undefined for Anna. Hester suggests that she "go home again," but to where? Uncle Ramsay points out that Anna would never be able to make a living "out

here," meaning the Caribbean, revealing that what Hester calls Anna's "home" is no longer a welcoming place in any capacity.

The passage unites Anna's geographic homelessness with two other parts of her identity that are somehow incomplete: her lack of a biological mother or a caring mother figure, as well as her lack of a publicly recognized and accepted racial identity. Soon after Hester shares the letter with Anna, Anna says, "You're trying to make out that my mother was coloured . . . [and] she wasn't" (65). Hester replies, "I tried to teach you to talk like a lady and behave like a lady and not like a nigger and of course I couldn't do it. Impossible to get you away from the servants. The awful sing-song voice you had! Exactly like a nigger you talked—and still do" (65). As opposed to Clarissa, Hester differs from Anna not because of her age or the fact that Hester embodies an older generation. Rather, Hester credits what she sees as Anna's racial and ethnic deviancy as grounds for a permanent separation from her stepdaughter. To make matters worse, neither Anna's biological mother, whom Anna implies may have supported her desire to "be black," nor her father is alive, and Hester admits to having sold Anna's family home in the Caribbean, Morgan's Rest, immediately after the death of Anna's father. Even her Uncle Ramsay, who from his letter at least appears superficially interested in Anna's well-being, refuses to help pay for her return to the Caribbean. After she and Hester end their meeting, Anna confirms that she never again entertains the possibility of living with her stepmother, narrating, "I wrote

once to Hester but she only sent me a postcard in reply, and after that I didn't write again. And she didn't either" (74).

Ironically, Anna's travel across oceans and incessant "trapesing" around London still cannot free her from the states of professional, familial, and locational deadlock in which she finds herself. She has failed to successfully live and work in London as a chorus girl, and Hester refuses to help her achieve future success while she lives in England. Thomas also remarks upon Anna's lack of belonging, writing that "[the] transcendental homelessness of Rhys and her white Caribbean female protagonists is crucially linked to interrogations of the family" (147). When "interrogating" the dynamics of Anna's family, it becomes clear that they have enabled Anna's sense of "homelessness." Despite their references to Anna's alleged "home" in the Caribbean, her family's refusal to provide financial support means that Anna could not afford the trip even if any such "home" really existed.

III. The Omnibus and Train Compared

Whereas Elizabeth's relationships with her father and Miss Kilman distance Elizabeth from Clarissa, Anna lacks filial connection both to her deceased biological parents and living stepmother and uncle. These familial attachments and detachments greatly influence both daughters' roles as *flâneuses*. When Elizabeth realizes that "[her] mother would not like her to be wandering off alone like this," she turns around and heads back

toward the Dalloway home. Anna is also prohibited from “wandering” back to the Caribbean, but while Elizabeth’s attachment to her parents prevents her from riding any farther, it is Anna’s utter lack of familial connection that prohibits her from controlling her own sense of movement and “going home again.” As a single working woman living in London, Anna is theoretically free from all constraints on her mobility and progress and from attachments to people around her. On the one hand, these freedoms and detachments make Anna an ideal *flâneuse*, one able to play the role of “solitary onlooker” that Wilson describes as characteristic of the *flâneur* (Wilson 95). However, despite her incessant movements, Anna’s life remains at a standstill; she has relatives on two continents but cannot forge lasting familial relationships on either side of the Atlantic; she incessantly wanders around London, but remains trapped in a city she knew she “was not going to like” even before her arrival. While Elizabeth’s omnibus ride is punctuated by names of specific geographic locations around London, Anna’s memory begins and ends with ellipses, and her train of thought is punctuated by a series of dashes. The ellipses neither neatly begin nor formally conclude Anna’s flashback, and the dash sequence feverishly strings together Anna’s various memories without providing grammatical or thematic closure. The passage reads the same way that the memory appears in Anna’s mind: as a reminder of her frenetic movements towards no particular destination, her attachment to no one, and her progress towards no meaningful goals.

Despite their very different relationships to the idea of “home,” to London, and to their mothers and mother figures, Elizabeth and Anna are united in their modernization of the *flâneuse* figure. Both characters move extensively to, from, and within the metropole, but strictly speaking, neither is a walker. Rather, each woman’s *flâneuse* travels are mediated by modern mode of transportation. By riding on an omnibus, Elizabeth travels greater distances and is allowed to board and de-board the bus at will, thus causing her to feel freer, more distant from Clarissa and Miss Kilman, and more in control of her own future.⁹ The more modern form of bus travel thus supplements Elizabeth’s travel on foot when she de-boards the omnibus and walks along various streets; thus, I consider Elizabeth’s character to be a next-generation *flâneuse*, whose expanded transportation options reveal an equally expanded range of future opportunities.

If Elizabeth is the modern woman free to imagine the future possibilities of life in the city, then Anna is the modern woman forced to confront the grim realities of that urban lifestyle. She may travel more quickly and over a larger distance by train than Elizabeth does on the omnibus, but Anna feels as removed from London society as she is from the landscapes that she distantly views through the train car window. Though she travels a great deal farther than Elizabeth, her journey accomplishes much less. Anna’s memory of the train ride serves as a prescient warning of her continued feeling of detachment once she

⁹ In “The Invisible *Flâneur*,” Wilson recounts a memory from George Augustus Sala, who wrote of a ride on a bus through London, “The things I have seen from the top of an omnibus! . . . Unroofing London in a ride . . . varied life, troubled life, busy, restless, chameleon life . . . Little do you reckon that an [observer] is above you taking notes, and, faith, that he’ll print them!” (96).

arrives in the London metropole. Like Elizabeth Dalloway, she is a next-generation *flâneuse*, whose act of walking is supplemented by a more modern transportation mode. Anna also plays the role of “bohemian cosmopolitan,” a variation of the *flâneuse* figure who, as Parsons describes, possesses both spatial and national freedoms that allow her to roam both the city of London and the world freely (Parsons 31). Unlike Elizabeth, though, Anna is also a defeated *flâneuse*. The frenzied tone and disconnected grammatical structure of the train ride passage mirrors her incessant geographic movement yet utter inability to emotionally progress in her personal and professional life. This “bohemian cosmopolitan” continually eludes Anna, as she remains trapped in the logic of Georg Simmel’s “blasé attitude,” possessing too much detachment and too little support from her stepmother and other family members, ultimately feeling “wary and suspicious” of her entire experience in London even before she arrives (Simmel 328).

Thus, Woolf and Rhys’ decisions to place Elizabeth and Anna on an omnibus and a train, respectively, do not simply move those characters from one geographic destination to the next. Rather, those modes of travel create on-the-go privacy for both Elizabeth and Anna even while they travel outside of their neighborhood and country of origin, respectively. These portable private spaces allow both characters to reveal what would otherwise remain hidden and unexplored: the natures of their relationships to the nation of England, to their mothers, and to the streets of London itself as *flâneuses*. This chapter has shown how Elizabeth and Anna’s progression through geographic space mirrors their

generational progression away from their older family members, particularly their mothers or stepmothers. Their unceasing movements and changes in location suggest that their relationships with their mothers or mother figures are also constantly in flux, whether for better—in Elizabeth’s sense of opportunity—or for worse—in Anna’s feeling of isolation. Furthermore, their activities as next-generation movers in the city suggest a modernization of the *flâneuse* as one who not only walks, but takes advantage of the wide range of opportunities for freedom in her travels, even if that freedom is unwanted. In the next chapter, I will analyze the role of the *flâneuse* from the perspective of the mother characters who move around London in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Rather appropriately, these older mother characters forego more modern modes of transport and lapse back into the more traditional *flâneuse* activity of walking. However, their relationships to their daughters and to the city are no less complex, unfixed, and “on the move” as the novels progress.

CHAPTER TWO

THE GLOVES AND THE MACKINTOSH:

ACCESSORIES OF MOTHERHOOD

*I mark, untroubled by desire,
Lucullus' phaeton and its freight.
The scene whereof I cannot tire,
The human tale of love and hate,
The city pageant, early and late
Unfolds itself, rolls by, to be
A pleasure deep and delicate.¹*

This chapter turns from a consideration of daughter characters to an analysis of the two primary mother or mother-figure characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa and Miss Kilman. I explore their roles as mothers and *flâneuses* in terms of the accessories and apparel each woman dons when she walks in the city; Clarissa wears gloves, while Miss Kilman sports a green mackintosh coat. I argue that the gloves and the mackintosh are devices that, like the omnibus and train, mediate these *flâneuse's* relationships to the city. Although they are relatively ordinary clothing items, the gloves and the mackintosh nevertheless capture the enormous complexity of these *flâneuse's* roles as mothers or mother figures, and allow me to make a number of claims throughout the remainder of this chapter. First, these items reveal much about these women's unique class and social

¹ Amy Levy, "Ballade of an Omnibus," in *A London Plane-Tree* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1889), 22, http://books.google.com/books?id=3WU7AAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=a+london+plane-tree&hl=en&ei=a6GDTfeTB6Gx0QG565zgCA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false.

positions, which, in turn, shape these women's roles as walkers in the streets. Second, these walking roles are bound up in their roles as mothers, and the relationship between the two is circular; walking stimulates their thoughts about these motherly roles and spurs their imagined possibilities for change, while those same motherly roles prevent those imagined changes from ever occurring. Third, these characters' *flâneuse* roles show how the private, biological mother-daughter relationship between Clarissa and Elizabeth has been triangulated by a masculine alternative mother figure, Miss Kilman. As a *flâneuse*, Miss Kilman strains and threatens this private mother-daughter dynamic by drawing Elizabeth away from Clarissa and into the public space of the city. Miss Kilman's masculine desire for Elizabeth also subverts same-sex maternal influence, transforming it into a threat of homoerotic domination and mastery, which both Clarissa and Elizabeth perceive as dangerous.

I. 'A lady is known by her shoes and her gloves': Clarissa Performing Motherhood

In the opening scene of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Clarissa embarks on a journey through London that, in many ways, parallels her daughter Elizabeth's journey through Westminster on an omnibus. The walking scene begins with Clarissa's exclamation, "I love walking in London," thus immediately casting Clarissa in a *flâneuse*-like position, or a role fundamentally defined by walking (6). As the scene unfolds, Woolf frequently reminds readers of Clarissa's whereabouts as she ambles around London, whether she is "arguing

in St. James's Park," "looking at the omnibuses in Picadilly," "walking towards Bond Street," or "dreaming as she [looks] into Hatchards' shop window" (7-9). Like the passage describing Elizabeth's omnibus adventure, Clarissa's walking scene is frequently punctuated by mentions of her whereabouts. Although Clarissa is on her way to buy flowers for her party later in the evening, her journey to the flower shop is neither quick nor direct; rather, she takes time to meander through the streets of London and linger in the spots she finds most intriguing, decisions which further cast Clarissa in the role of *flâneuse*, which, as Wilson notes, often involves being an "idler" or "fritterer away of time" who is free to "roam . . . at will" (93-4).

These mentions of *geographic* location and movement, though, result in anything but idleness. Rather, they mirror Clarissa's *mental* "travels" to different parts of her memory, and her walking motion facilitates an extensive stream-of-consciousness foray into Clarissa's thoughts about her roles as wife and mother. For instance, Clarissa remembers her past, and often tempestuous, relationship with her old friend Peter Walsh:

How [Peter] scolded her! How they argued! She would marry a Prime Minister and stand at the top of a staircase; the perfect hostess he called her (she had cried over it in her bedroom), she had the makings of the perfect hostess, he said. So she would still find herself arguing in St. James's Park, still making out that she had been right—and she had too—not to marry him.

(7)

Woolf's mention of *where* Clarissa "[finds] herself arguing" is significant. Clarissa's decision to walk around St. James's Park provides a break from her purpose-driven flower-buying excursion and allows her to slow down, linger in a more peaceful, outdoor location, and reflect upon the choices that have come to define her identity as "Mrs. Dalloway": namely, her decision to marry Richard Dalloway, a Member of Parliament, and her subsequent transformation into the so-called "perfect hostess." Also, Clarissa's movements both through the park and back into her memory suggest that these past decisions are a continual source of conflict for Clarissa. Her past and present "arguments" with both Peter and herself, as well as her acknowledgement that she "cried over" Peter's labeling of her as the "perfect hostess," suggest that Clarissa remains somehow troubled by the result of her choice to marry Richard; for instance, if Clarissa is certain that "she had been right . . . not to marry him," why does she feel the need to "argue with herself" at all?

Her reason for arguing stems from Clarissa's conflicting senses of outward appearance, or her performed role of wife and mother, and her inner identity as a woman who longs for more individual freedom than her largely domestic life can provide. Like Anna Morgan's racial conflict between inner "blackness" and an outer "white" appearance, Clarissa's perceived tension between her inner and outer identities continues to develop as she moves as a *flâneuse*. On the one hand, Woolf writes, "She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible, unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children, and now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of

them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway" (11). Outwardly, "Mrs. Richard Dalloway" is a static character, perpetually and exclusively defined as a married woman and mother. The unnatural, artificial nature of this outward persona is evident in her mention of "solemn progress with the rest of them"; her perceived obligation to walk along, unknown, with the other pedestrians in London mirrors her need to fall in line with others' expectation of her as a woman rendered invisible by her domestic roles.

On the other hand, her walk around London allows the inward persona of "Clarissa" to imagine what a different life might have been like, to reflect on her journey from youth to adulthood, and to examine the current consequences of her past decisions. "Clarissa" can only be free from the clutches of "Mrs. Richard Dalloway" when she is out walking in the public urban space and away from the private sphere of the Dalloway home. Woolf explains the liberating effects of Clarissa's walk as she writes, "[To] her it was absolutely absorbing; all this; the cabs passing; and she would not say of Peter, she would not say of herself, I am this, I am that" (8-9). Woolf also notes,

[Somehow] in the streets of London, on the ebb and flow of things, here, there, she survived, Peter survived, lived in each other, she being part, she was positive, of the trees at home . . . being laid out like a mist between the people she knew best, who lifted her on their branches as she had seen the trees lift the mist, but it spread ever so far, her life, herself. (9)

In Clarissa's mind, the city of London, whether in the "ebb and flow" of its streets or the frenzied pace of its "cabs passing," never stops moving, and its various components—its citizens, its taxis—never root themselves in one particular location. This lack of geographic fixedness pleasantly disrupts Clarissa's sense of her own fixed and static outward identity; when walking and taking in the motion of London, she feels no need to attach herself to a label, or say "I am this, I am that," and she feels free to describe herself as a "mist," "spread ever so far, her life, herself." It is as if her movement in the city, her ability to remain perpetually detached from any one place at any one time, has freed her from remaining attached to any one stage of her life as a woman, wife, and mother. She freely imagines being both "Mrs. Richard Dalloway"—the "this"—and "Clarissa"—the "that"—because the city itself is also defined by the "ebb and flow" of its many different sights, sounds, and diversions.

This layering of Clarissa's different identities mirrors itself in the layers of clothing that she wears. Immediately after imagining herself as a "mist," Clarissa "pauses for a moment at the window of a glove shop where, before the War, you could buy almost perfect gloves." Clarissa then remembers that "her old Uncle William used to say a lady is known by her shoes and her gloves" (11).² Clarissa's shopping activity aligns with Erika

² Gloves also play a key role in the textual evolution of *Mrs. Dalloway*. In the introduction to *Mrs. Dalloway's Party: A Short Story Sequence*, Stella McNichol notes that a short story in the collection, "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street," was originally intended to be Chapter One of *Mrs. Dalloway*. The story's first line, "Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the gloves herself," and description of Mrs. Dalloway's glove-shopping excursion were eventually rejected from the revised draft of the novel by Woolf herself; Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway's Party: A Short Story Sequence*, ed. Stella McNichol (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2004), 6-11.

Rappaport's description of the "shopper *flâneuse*," who uses shopping excursions to forge a link between the external world of the city, or, in this case, the glove shop, with the private sphere of Clarissa's memories of her family members and her life before the war (Rappaport 31). This connection between public and private spheres also manifests itself in the gloves that Clarissa views in the shop window; outwardly, gloves are the means by which other Londoners recognize a *flâneuse* as not only a walker in the streets, but as a "lady" who walks. In this sense, they serve the same purpose as Clarissa's publicly recognized and accepted persona of "Mrs. Richard Dalloway." However, gloves also prevent the wearer from being nakedly exposed to the public space of the metropolis, much like "Mrs. Richard Dalloway" shields the inward identity of "Clarissa" from public view. Just as the quality of the gloves themselves has deteriorated since the war, Clarissa's sense of contentment with her outward role as "Mrs. Richard. Dalloway" has declined. Meanwhile, her desire to shed the "glove" of her outer identity has finally manifested itself in Clarissa's liberating walk around London.

In fact, gloves serve as apt representations of both Clarissa's experience as a walker and Elizabeth's adventure as an omnibus-riding *flâneuse*, which I discussed in Chapter One. Both passages suggest that these *flâneuse* activities offer a way for Elizabeth and Clarissa to shed their "ladylike" gloves, or escape from their current, outwardly visible roles in the mother-daughter dynamic. Elizabeth rides the omnibus to escape the influence of her mother and tutor while imagining *future* opportunities, including the possibility of

pursuing a “manly” profession and one day leaving London to enjoy life in the country. Conversely, Clarissa uses her walk to meditate on her past and examine the effects of her past choices on both her outwardly fixed and inwardly flexible identities.

Elizabeth and Clarissa’s acknowledgement of the shortcomings of their respective daughter and mother roles is also expressed in the description of Clarissa as a “mist.” Such imagery aligns with the natural metaphors used to describe Elizabeth as she rides around London on the omnibus. Melissa Bagley notes, “Elizabeth comprehends and wishes to avoid [these natural] descriptions that limit and bind, that would make her delicate, just as she wishes to think of her path as distinct from that of her mother (41). Likewise, Clarissa’s private thoughts about the possibility of a marriage to Peter, or an alternative to her role as a “perfect hostess,” signal a challenge to the “descriptions that limit and bind her,” including the “solemn” recognition of her own “invisible” role as “Mrs. Richard Dalloway.” In Clarissa’s case, however, natural images like “mist” represent an escape from any one place or identity. Just as a mist cannot be controlled or confined, Clarissa as *flâneuse* cannot be limited to any one role or identity. Thus, her self-description as a “mist” serves to liberate rather than “limit and bind.”

Therefore, in comparing Elizabeth’s ride to Clarissa’s walk, two tensions become increasingly evident. First, conflict between inner and outer identity plagues both Elizabeth and Clarissa. Elizabeth is the urban-dwelling daughter that would like to be a country-dwelling independent professional, while Clarissa is the outwardly trapped wife and

mother, "Mrs. Richard Dalloway," who would like to inhabit the more fluid and liberated persona of "Clarissa." Second, the use of natural images in both scenes serve as a shared, middle ground between Elizabeth and Clarissa's characters; at the same time, the two women's opposing reactions to those images demonstrates how they remain separated by a wide generational gulf. The images of "hyacinths" and "lilies" used to describe Elizabeth are metaphors for the older female generation, a group of women that, like "Mrs. Richard Dalloway," has bloomed and grown while digging its roots deep into soil of the domestic sphere. However, Elizabeth, as a member of the next female generation, has the luxury of imagining a future not determined solely by a domestic life, and thus dismisses those natural images as constricting, limiting, and overly delicate. Because Clarissa, like those "lilies" and "hyacinths," is already firmly rooted in her role as "Mrs. Richard Dalloway," and can only look back on the opportunities that have already come and gone, the natural image of the far-reaching, free-floating "mist" serves as a welcome alternative to her feelings of entrapment and invisibility. However, a "mist" can quickly dissipate and fade, and Clarissa's feeling of freedom is equally ephemeral and can only be expressed during her brief interludes out in the public space of the city. Both this inner-outer tension and generational divide are exacerbated by the character of Miss Kilman, Elizabeth's history tutor and companion, who triangulates and threatens the already tenuous mother-daughter bond between Clarissa and Elizabeth.

The dynamics of this triangulated relationship can be explained in terms of the clothing items that Clarissa and Miss Kilman wear when walking in the street. As Clarissa continues to walk on Bond Street, she thinks about how her love of gloves impacts her relationship with Elizabeth:

Gloves and shoes; she had a passion for gloves; but her own daughter, her Elizabeth, cared not a straw for either of them . . . Elizabeth really cared for her dog most of all . . . But it might be only a phase, as Richard said, such as all girls go through. It might be falling in love. But why with Miss Kilman? . . . Anyhow they were inseparable, and Elizabeth, her own daughter, went to Communion; and how she dressed, how she treated people who came to lunch she did not care a bit. (11-12)

As in Elizabeth's omnibus ride, Miss Kilman is portrayed as an interloper, an alternative mother figure hostilely positioned between Clarissa and Elizabeth. As her masculine name suggests, Miss Kilman is, in Clarissa's view, responsible for leading Elizabeth to be interested in religious and boyish pursuits, such as an interest in her dog, rather than in the traditionally feminine interests in "gloves and shoes" that Clarissa herself enjoys. However, Clarissa's thoughts also draw upon the dynamics of the mythical Demeter-Persephone relationship by portraying Miss Kilman as a malicious suitor. Just as Hades challenges Demeter, Miss Kilman attempts to rob Clarissa of her authority as a mother, whom Elizabeth "loves" and blindly follows (Tyler 60, 62-3). In Clarissa's mind, Miss Kilman

poses a threat to Elizabeth that links maternal influence with erotic desire. "Falling in love" with Miss Kilman is equated with succumbing to maternal influence, as seen in Miss Kilman's authoritative control over Elizabeth's religious practices and fashion choices. Furthermore, the phrase "a phase . . . such as all goes through," suggests that this same-sex desire is an inevitable part of Elizabeth's progression into womanhood. Thus, Miss Kilman's role as an alternative mother figure is, in Clarissa's words, "inseparable" from her function as a romantic suitor for Elizabeth.

Clarissa claims to "hate" Miss Kilman because of these two intermingled threats, but interestingly, Clarissa expresses this so-called hatred in the language of love and desire. As Clarissa continues to walk up Bond Street, Woolf describes her feelings about Miss Kilman as follows:

For it was not her one hated but the idea of her, which undoubtedly had gathered in to itself a great deal that was not Miss Kilman; had become one of those spectres with which one battles in the night; one of those spectres who stand astride us and suck up half our life-blood, dominators and tyrants; for no doubt with another throw of the dice, had the black been uppermost and not the white, she would have loved Miss Kilman! But not in this world. No. It rasped her, though, to have stirring about in her this brutal monster! . . . never to be content quite, or quite secure, for at any moment the brute would be stirring, this hatred . . . as if the whole panoply of content were nothing but

self love! this hatred! Nonsense, nonsense! she cried to herself, pushing through the swing doors of Mulberry's the florists. (12)

Clarissa's "hatred" of Miss Kilman expresses itself in various and contradictory ways throughout the passage. Most obviously, she resents Miss Kilman for taking away her daughter and posing a threat to her own maternal authority, demonstrated by the phrase "[sucking] up half our life-blood." However, this passage suggests that this hatred might also be embroiled with a desire for or connection to Miss Kilman; why, for instance, does Clarissa declare that she "might have loved" Miss Kilman and that the "panoply of content" of her hatred is actually composed of "self love"? The "brutal monster" of the passage refers to her intense hatred of Miss Kilman, but it may also reference the something or someone "that [is] not Miss Kilman." What this "something" is remains unclear; Clarissa's repeated reference to love may suggest a homoerotic desire like that which Miss Kilman feels for Elizabeth, or Clarissa may feel as though Miss Kilman really is a better mother to her daughter. However, one thing *is* clear: the phrase "never to be content quite, or secure" reveals that at least part of Clarissa's hatred is aimed towards herself. As the previous passages regarding her walk around the city have shown, Clarissa's ultimate source of discontentment is her permanent entrapment in her role as "Mrs. Richard Dalloway." Introduction of Miss Kilman, though, reveals that Clarissa sees her motherly role as a performance, much like her performed duty as Richard Dalloway's wife. She does not worry about *being* a mother to Elizabeth and preventing Miss Kilman from corrupting

her; rather, she frets about *acting* like a mother, or playing the publicly recognized role as Elizabeth's parent.³ Elizabeth's decision to follow Miss Kilman is not so much a threat to Elizabeth's virtue as it is a hazard to Clarissa's own feeling of "self love." Motherhood is like the pair of gloves Clarissa sees in the shop window: an outward designation of her title as "mother" covering her desire to be free, like a "mist," from the responsibilities associated with that motherly title.

Clarissa's superficial performance of motherhood, as well as this intermingling of hatred and desire, are further explored in Elizabeth's thoughts about Clarissa. As she and Miss Kilman prepare for a shopping excursion at the Army and Navy stores, Woolf writes, "Elizabeth said she had forgotten her gloves. That was because Miss Kilman and her mother hated each other. She could not bear to see them together" (124). On the one hand, this mention of gloves forges a link between mother and daughter; just as Clarissa remarks on her "passion" for them as she walks the streets of London, Elizabeth remembers to retrieve her gloves before venturing into London's public space, thus attempting to outwardly appear just as "ladylike" as her mother does when walking in the streets. Despite the appearance of a mother-daughter bond, though, Elizabeth's sudden interest in gloves is motivated not by filial duty and love, but by fear of a hate-filled confrontation between both of her mother figures. Gloves, which mediate the *flâneuse's* connection to the

³ Other characters in *Mrs. Dalloway* sense that Clarissa's role as "mother" is little more than titular, and that she values her motherly influence over Elizabeth only because it boosts her own reputation. For instance, when Peter Walsh visits the Dalloway home, Clarissa introduces her daughter as "my Elizabeth." Peter wonders afterward, "The way she said 'Here is my Elizabeth!'—that annoyed him. Why not 'Here's Elizabeth' simply? It was insincere. And Elizabeth didn't like it either" (Woolf 49).

city, also mediate Clarissa and Elizabeth's relationship; they forge an outwardly visible bond between mother and daughter while also exposing the inner weaknesses of or tensions within that relationship.

II. Miss Kilman's Masculine Mackintosh

Woolf's mention of "ladylike" gloves directly contrasts with her description of Miss Kilman's drab attire; she writes, "Miss Kilman stood on the landing, and wore a mackintosh; but had her reasons. First, it was cheap; second, she was over forty; and did not, after all, dress to please. She was poor, moreover; degradingly poor" (123). Just as Clarissa and Elizabeth's gloves signify that they are ladies who walk in the streets, Miss Kilman's mackintosh labels her as an over-forty, poverty-stricken spinster. These clothing items affect how each woman is publicly perceived as a *flâneuse*, but these publicly recognized personas also affect characters' self-perceptions. For instance, as Miss Kilman walks with Elizabeth down Victoria Street toward the Stores, she becomes aware of the connection between her activity as a walker and her role as an alternative mother figure to Elizabeth:

Beaten up, broken up by the assault of carriages, the brutality of vans, the eager advance of myriads of angular men, of flaunting women, the domes and spires of offices and hospitals, the last relics of this lap full of odds and ends seemed to break, like the spray of an exhausted wave, upon the body of

Miss Kilman standing still in the street for a moment to mutter 'It is the flesh.'
 It was the flesh that she must control . . . But why wish to resemble her? Why?
 She despised Mrs. Dalloway from the bottom of her heart. She was not
 serious. She was not good. Her life was a tissue of vanity and deceit. Yet Doris
 Kilman had been overcome. (130)

Miss Kilman's walk along Victoria Street in no way resembles Clarissa's leisurely stroll through Regent's Park or Elizabeth's exciting and liberating omnibus ride through Westminster. Rather, hers is a "brutal" and "assaulting" experience in which the geographic space of the city acts as a "wave" that breaks upon her body. Much of her discomfort in the city stems from her status as an outsider; not only is she "degradingly poor" and thus unable to partake in many of the city's diversions, but earlier, readers learn that she is "of German origin" and had formerly been expelled from school during the war because "she would not pretend that the Germans were all villains" (124). Thus, the violent "wave" of external space facilitates an exploration of the similarly troubled and violent conflict occurring within the internal space of Miss Kilman's mind.

Much of the conflict concerns the nature of her relationship with Clarissa. On the one hand, Miss Kilman and Clarissa can simply be considered enemies, or mother figures diametrically opposed to one another; Miss Kilman "[despises] Mrs. Dalloway from the bottom of her heart," just as Clarissa ponders her "hatred" of Miss Kilman earlier in the novel. Yet Miss Kilman also feels as though she has been "overcome" by Clarissa, and

entertains a “wish to resemble” her. The language of hatred, of separation, is intermingled with an expression of desire to be like or joined with Clarissa in some way. Her wish to resemble Clarissa also accentuates the erotic desire—for Elizabeth, or Clarissa, or both women—that prevents her from achieving her goal of “mastering the flesh.”

While the source of her thoughts and desires remains unclear, it is clear that Woolf has deliberately made Miss Kilman impossible to categorize; all at once, she plays the indigent, mackintosh-wearing spinster, the knowledgeable history tutor, the friendly companion, the hate-filled and jealous alternative mother figure, the masculinized suitor, the sexual deviant, and the religious zealot. All of these roles achieve a common goal: to threaten Clarissa and Elizabeth’s relationship. Miss Kilman’s mackintosh, I argue, symbolizes this threat. Unlike gloves, which serve as accents to a lady’s going-out attire, a mackintosh is all-encompassing and covers virtually all of the wearer’s body, while repelling all outside forces and elements with its waterproof material.⁴ Likewise, Miss Kilman’s various roles threaten to cover, and even smother, Clarissa and Elizabeth’s mother-daughter relationship, as her personality repels Clarissa away from her, and, as a result, repels Clarissa and Elizabeth away from one another.

Miss Kilman’s personality also threatens Clarissa and Elizabeth’s roles as *flâneuses*.

Wilson remarks upon a similar threat that has, throughout history, endangered women

⁴ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a “mackintosh” as “a full-length coat or cloak made of waterproof rubberized material. Subsequently: a rainproof coat made of this or some other material; *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed., s.v. “Mackintosh,” <http://www.oed.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/view/Entry/111902?redirectedFrom=mackintosh> (accessed February 3, 2011).

who venture out into the city: the risk of being considered a prostitute. She writes, "The prostitute was a 'public woman', but the problem in nineteenth-century urban life was whether every woman in the new, disordered world of the city . . . was not a public woman and thus a prostitute" (Wilson 93). Wilson also notes, "Prostitution, then, was not only a real and ever present threat; it was also a metaphor for disorder and the overturning of the natural hierarchies and institutions of society (92). Miss Kilman's various threats, symbolized by her mackintosh coat, can also be seen as "metaphors for disorder," or disruptions of the "natural hierarchy" of Clarissa and Elizabeth's mother-daughter relationship. As a paid tutor and companion, she already receives compensation for her maternal influence over Elizabeth. However, by combining that maternal influence with her erotic desire to "master" Elizabeth, Miss Kilman effectively prostitutes her abilities as an alternative mother figure in exchange for both monetary and sexual compensation. She is a "public mother" in the same way that the prostitute is a "public woman," and by exposing Elizabeth to this subversive, threatening motherly influence, she "publicizes" a formerly private mother-daughter relationship. That is, she undermines the biological, same-sex relationship between mother and daughter, which is located *within* a nuclear family and centers around motherly and daughterly love. She then transforms it into a "prostituted" mother-daughter relationship, which is located *outside* of the family and, while masquerading as an alternative source of motherly and daughterly love, actually centers around homoerotic desire.

III. The Gloves and the Mackintosh Compared

Two problems arise from this “publicized” and “prostituted” mother-daughter model. First, Elizabeth refuses to participate in this homoerotic relationship with Miss Kilman. Elizabeth both refuses her advances and, interestingly, clings to the customs and traditions of her biological mother, Clarissa, in order to escape from Miss Kilman’s influence. As Elizabeth and Miss Kilman lunch at a tea shop after their shopping excursion, Elizabeth suddenly decides to leave the shop:

[Elizabeth] looked for her gloves—her white gloves. They were under the table. Ah, but she must go! Miss Kilman could not let her go! this youth, that was so beautiful, this girl, whom she genuinely loved! . . . She was about to split asunder, she felt. The agony was so terrific. If she could grasp her, if she could clasp her, if she could make her hers absolutely and forever and then die; that was all she wanted. But to sit here, unable to think of anything to say; to see Elizabeth turning against her; to be felt repulsive even by her—it was too much; she could not stand it. (131-2)

In this passage, Woolf confirms what Clarissa already suspects: that Miss Kilman’s influence over Elizabeth is not simply maternal. Her desire to “grasp her” and “make her hers absolutely and forever” implies an intense and likely erotic desire for control over the “beautiful” girl that she “genuinely [loves],” and the phrase “make her hers absolutely and forever and then die” suggests a concerning, all-or-nothing approach to her relationship

with Elizabeth. However, Miss Kilman's recognition that she is "repulsive" to Elizabeth, as well as Elizabeth's search for her "white gloves," cements the opposition between the mackintosh and the gloves that has come to define the relationship between the three women participating in this triangulated mother-daughter relationship. Elizabeth recognizes the threats that Miss Kilman's various roles pose, and so her retrieval of her white gloves signals her detachment from the repulsive, all-consuming "mackintosh" of Miss Kilman's personality and her lapse back into the "ladylike glove" mentality that has been inculcated in Elizabeth by her mother.

However, a second problem stems from Elizabeth's supposed return to her mother's traditional maternal influence: Elizabeth's search for her white gloves by no means signals a genuine resurgence in filial connection between Elizabeth and Clarissa. In fact, immediately after leaving Miss Kilman in the tea shop, Elizabeth ventures out onto the street, boards the omnibus, attempts to mentally detach herself from her mother's traditional and domestic lifestyle, and takes on the role of next-generation *flâneuse* that I described in Chapter One. Thus, while gloves and mackintoshes create different public personas for their wearers—a woman donning gloves is recognized as a marriageable lady, while a woman wearing a mackintosh is viewed as a working-class spinster—both types of clothing items demonstrate how this complicated, triangulated mother-daughter relationship revolves around an empty center. None of the women in this relationship interact out of genuine concern and respect for the others: Clarissa only worries about

Elizabeth because Miss Kilman threatens to usurp her title of “mother”; Elizabeth sides with either Clarissa and Miss Kilman at different times in order to escape from the influence of the other; and Miss Kilman, despite her claim to “genuinely love” Elizabeth, really only wants to derive personal satisfaction and control from their relationship by “making her hers absolutely.” Whether private (familial) or public (extra-familial and erotic), the label “mother-daughter relationship” serves the same purpose as the gloves and the mackintosh do: it acts as an outer, publicly visible layer that connotes feelings of love and personal attachment, yet it conceals a series of troubled relationships between three ultimately self-interested women.

Interestingly, each woman explores her connection to the others while adopting a *flâneuse* mentality. While moving around the city, they observe and reflect on their places in this troubled, triangulated relationship. However, Chapters One and Two have shown the women’s collective inability to ever fully, permanently immerse themselves in the role of the *flâneuse*; Elizabeth heads home for fear of her mother’s disapproval, Clarissa returns to her role as “Mrs. Richard Dalloway,” and Miss Kilman loses her shopping companion and her reason for being out in the street at all. Nevertheless, their roles as mothers and daughters are still embroiled with their roles as walkers and movers, even if the women can never be defined solely by their *flâneuse* activities; the same challenges they confront in the mother-daughter sphere manifest themselves in their activities of *flânerie*. By seeing these limitations played out in concrete terms—walker, street, city—readers gain an

understanding of otherwise abstract, mental, and hidden thoughts and motivations—love, hate, erotic attraction—that connect these three women and repel them away from one another. This idea extends into Chapter Three, which shows how the link between mother-daughter relationships and *flânerie* is triangulated by a third entity, similar to Miss Kilman: the influence the British Empire, or “Mother England.” This thesis now turns to analysis of Peter Walsh and Anna Morgan, characters who navigate this triangulated relationship in the same way that they navigate the streets of London.

CHAPTER THREE

THE POCKETKNIFE, THE NEEDLE, AND THE GLOVES:

EMPIRE AS “MOTHER ENGLAND”

*What ails my senses thus to cheat?
 What is it ails the place
 That all the people in the street
 Should wear one woman's face?*

*The London trees are dusty brown
 Beneath the summer sky;
 My love, she dwells in London town,
 Nor leaves it in July.*

*O various and intricate maze,
 Wide waste of squire and street;
 Where, missing through unnumbered days,
 We twain at last may meet!¹*

In this chapter, I analyze the broader implications of these complicated mother-daughter dynamics, which I discussed in Chapters One and Two, by exploring certain characters' relationships to a different type of maternal influence: “Mother England.” Although conducted on a national rather than familial scale, Woolf and Rhys describe these relationships in ways similar to the relationships between mother and daughters; in fact, I argue that Anna's character serves as a concrete example of the connection between these

¹ Amy Levy, “London in July,” in *A London Plane-Tree* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1889), 18, http://books.google.com/books?id=3WU7AAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=a+london+plane-tree&hl=en&ei=sqWCTYShBsm9tgd9vm4BA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CDIQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=out%20of%20town&f=false.

two relationship types; throughout *Voyage in the Dark*, she plays the roles of daughter, mother-to-be, and colonial subject, and each role is linked with the other two.

This chapter also supplements a consideration of the same-sex relationships between mothers and daughters with a comparison of opposite-sex walking figures, the *flâneur* and the *flâneuse*. I posit that Peter Walsh, an employee of the British Empire, is the only character in either novel to truly and completely live a life of *flânerie*; his role as *flâneur* is lasting, fully understood, and publicly recognized and accepted. On the other hand, Anna Morgan, a Caribbean native and recent immigrant to London, attempts to embrace life in England as a walker in the streets, but her complicated racial identity, her troubled relationship with her stepmother, and her inability to cope with her impending role as mother combine to defeat her role as a *flâneuse*.

As with the mother and daughter characters I have already described, Peter and Anna best express their thoughts and feelings about their relationship to the British Empire when walking in and around the London metropolis. In my analysis of scenes that feature Peter and Anna as they move around London, I make a number of claims about the way the figures of the *flâneur* and *flâneuse*, mother-daughter relationships, and imperial dynamics work together or clash with one another. First, Peter and Anna's senses of connection to or estrangement from the streets of London mirror the nature of their relationships to the British Empire. Second, the reasons that Peter can be considered a "true" *flâneur* while Anna remains a "defeated" *flâneuse* are the same reasons that Clarissa,

Elizabeth, and Miss Kilman can never completely or permanently realize their walker-in-the-streets roles. All of these reasons—Elizabeth’s ties to her mother, Clarissa’s discomfort with her entrapment in her roles as wife and mother, and Miss Kilman’s class-based and national outsider status—manifest themselves in Anna’s character, whose roles as tortured stepdaughter, unwilling mother, and inwardly conflicted colonial subject bring together all of the challenges and limitations experienced by these *flâneuse* characters. Third, as with Elizabeth, Clarissa, and Miss Kilman’s *flâneuse* roles, Peter and Anna’s walking activities are often expressed in terms of objects that the characters carry when they are out in London. Consideration of these objects’ significance allows me to argue, finally, that the activities of *flânerie* literalize and publicize private male fantasy. That is, the roles of *flâneur* and *flâneuse* transform the private imaginings of Peter, the male “colonizer” and agent of the British Empire, into the public, real-life experience of Anna, a “colonized” woman who comes to London from an unnamed British colony in the Caribbean.

I. The Pocketknife and the Needle: Peter Walsh’s Blade of Ambivalence

Interestingly, Woolf introduces Peter Walsh not as a man “free . . . from familial responsibilities,” like the archetypal *flâneur* M. Bonhomme, but as someone overwhelmed with responsibilities and problems regarding his personal and family life, and whose personal life is linked to an equally complicated national identity (Wilson 93-4). As an employee of the British government in India, Peter, who is of “Anglo-Indian” descent, has

arrived in London with the intention of procuring a divorce for his fiancée, who is, somewhat problematically, “the wife of a Major in the Indian Army” (45). Immediately, then, readers become aware of Peter’s doubled and often contradictory relationship to the British Empire. He was born in India yet is of “Anglo” descent, and works *in* India, the country in which he was raised, but *for* the British government. These confusing national allegiances are reflected in his romantic attachments; his being engaged to a married woman—at once both personally connected to and legally distanced from her—is much like his “Anglo-Indian” attachments to both the Britain’s imperial and India’s colonial perspectives.

However, Peter continues to typify the archetypal *flâneur* figure not because he is officially “free . . . from familial responsibilities” and these national identities, but because he chooses to be *mentally* detached from them (Wilson 94). The news of Peter’s illicit engagement shocks his old friend Clarissa Dalloway, but Peter himself remains decidedly calm and ambivalent about his predicament. Clarissa thinks to herself,

She flattered him; she fooled him, thought Clarissa; shaping the woman, the wife of the Major in the Indian Army, with three strokes of a knife. What a waste! What a folly! All his life long Peter had been fooled like that . . . marrying the girl on the boat going out to India; now the wife of a Major in the Indian Army—thank Heaven she had refused to marry him! (46)

The mention of “three strokes of a knife” alludes to Peter’s habit of flicking his pocketknife open and closed, which he does numerous times throughout the novel. The back-and-forth movement of the blade is, I argue, a symbol of the “ambivalence” that Wilson describes as the “characteristic response” of the *flâneur* (93). Peter showcases this ambivalence not only in his relationship to his Indian fiancée, but in every aspect of his life. Peter is both English and Indian, an official “colonizer” and personally attached to a “colonized” woman, about to be married and unable to be married, a native of London and a visitor in London. The motion of the pocketknife also mirrors Peter’s travels back and forth between England and India; these several conflicting personal and national identities can be explained by his unique *spatial* identity: of all the characters in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Peter Walsh is the only one to never stay in one place for long.

Peter’s sense of ambivalence and lack of spatial fixedness, which are exemplified by his pocketknife, contrast with Clarissa’s life of stability and connection to the domestic sphere, symbolized by the sewing needle she holds while talking with Peter:

What an extraordinary habit that was, Clarissa thought; always playing with a knife. Always making one feel, too, frivolous, empty-minded; a mere silly chatterbox, as he used. But I too, she thought, and taking up her needle, summoned, like a Queen whose guards have fallen asleep and left her unprotected (she had been quite taken aback by this visit-it had upset her) so that anyone can stroll in and have a look at her where she lies with the

brambles curving over her . . . all to come about her and beat off the enemy . . . So Peter Walsh and Clarissa, sitting side by side on the blue sofa, challenged each other. (44)

The ambivalent back-and-forth motion of Peter's pocketknife draws out Clarissa's insecurities about her own life and status as "Mrs. Richard Dalloway." I suggest that her sewing needle is a foil for Peter's knife; both are sharp and can pierce or cut, yet while Peter's knife signifies his ability to mentally and spatially sever himself from the people and places around him, Clarissa's needle reveals how her identity has been woven into the fabric of her domestic life. Clarissa's inability to experience the ambivalence that Peter enjoys is also expressed in Woolf's use of the phrase "brambles curving over her." This natural image, one that implies her entrapment within the domestic sphere, contrasts with Clarissa's description of herself as a "mist" during her walk around London. While the "mist" allows her to temporarily escape from her outward, fixed role as "Mrs. Richard Dalloway" and inhabit the more fluid, in-motion persona of "Clarissa," the mist quickly dissipates as Clarissa returns home and is replaced by the constricting and smothering "brambles" of domestic life.

Peter remarks indirectly on Clarissa's inability to free herself from her domestic roles while he enjoys a leisurely stroll around Regent's Park; he thinks to himself, "Women live much more in the past than we do, he thought. They attach themselves to places" (55). Interestingly, this thought occurs to Peter just before he embarks on an extended mental

voyage as the so-called “solitary traveller.” In this fantastic role and sequence of partly real, partly imaginary events, Peter accomplishes what neither Clarissa nor Elizabeth can do: be defined *entirely* by his “solitary” nature, by his detachment from any person or place, and by his “travelling” motion as a walker in the streets. He is in a prime position to assume the role of “solitary onlooker” indicative of the archetypal *flâneur* figure (Wilson 95). Indeed, “looking on” eventually becomes Peter’s primary activity; by the end of the sequence, Woolf simply describes him as “[tripping] through London, towards Westminster, observing” (164).

In particular, Peter observes various women as he “trips” around the metropolis.

Woolf describes the nature of these observations as follows:

The amusing thing about coming back to England, after five years, was the way it made, anyhow the first days, things stand out as if one had never seen them before; lovers squabbling under a tree; the domestic family life of the parks. Never had he seen London look so enchanting—the softness of the distances; the richness; the greenness; the civilization; after India, he thought, strolling across the grass . . . After India of course one fell in love with every woman one met. There was a freshness about them; even the poorest dressed better than five years ago, surely; and to his eye the fashions had never been so becoming. (71)

In this passage, Peter takes on several additional defining features of the *flâneur*. Peter's mention of even the "poorest" women's "becoming fashions," as well as his cavalier use of the phrase "fell in love with every woman," reveals his superficial interest in, yet feelings of detachment and superiority from, the objects of his observing gaze. This ambivalence towards women mirrors his attitude towards the British Empire. As he walks, Peter's relationship to the Empire flip back and forth, much like the blade of his pocketknife. In one sense, Peter portrays himself as a colonial outsider, returning to London after a long absence, and feeling somewhat detached from the "civilization" and "richness" that he imagines he has "never seen before." Such descriptions are reminiscent of Anna Morgan's remark "this is England" when she first catches sight of the English countryside and realizes her racial detachment from the "hundreds thousands of white people" that she views from her train window.

This tendency to "fall in love with every woman" that he sees, as well as his ability to passively observe their "freshness" and eye-catching "fashions," places Peter in a rather voyeuristic position. Wilson points out the importance of "surveillance" in the *flâneur's* daily life, writing that he is the "embodiment of the 'male gaze'" and "represents men's visual and voyeuristic mastery over women." However, Peter's ability to surveil is not only determined by his gender, but also by his connection to the British Empire (94-5). For example, the phrase "After India" establishes a link between Peter's role as an employee of the British empire and his ability to "fall in love" from afar. It is as if his *national* colonizer

role has been converted into a *gendered*, colonizing male gaze; just as the British Empire employs men like Peter to remotely control and govern the Indian colony, Peter uses his ability to “observe” and master women from afar.

While this colonizing male gaze fails to charm Clarissa—she describes him as an “enemy” when he comes to visit her home—it succeeds within Peter’s imagined pursuit of a woman walking in the streets. The following chase scene, although rather lengthy, demonstrates Woolf’s masterful ability to connect and complicate the relationship between Peter’s colonial gaze, his movement as a *flâneur*, and the public space of London:

I haven’t felt so young for years! thought Peter, escaping (only of course for an hour or so) from being precisely what he was . . . But she’s extraordinarily attractive, he thought, as, walking across Trafalgar Square in the direction of the Haymarket, came a young woman who, as she passed Gordon’s statue, seemed, Peter Walsh thought (susceptible as he was), to shed veil after veil, until she became the very woman he had always had in mind; young, but stately; merry, but discreet; black, but enchanting. Straightening himself and stealthily fingering his pocket-knife he started after her to follow this woman . . . But she’s not married; she’s young; quite young, thought Peter, the red carnation he had seen her wear as she came across Trafalgar Square burning again in her eyes and making her lips red. But she waited at the kerbstone. There was a dignity about her. She was not worldly, like Clarissa;

not rich, like Clarissa. Was she, he wondered as she moved, respectable? Witty, with a lizard's flicking tongue, he thought (for one must invent, must allow oneself a little diversion), a cool waiting wit, a darting wit, not noisy. She moved; she crossed; he followed her. But other people got between them in the street, obstructing him, blotting her out. He pursued; she changed. There was colour in her cheeks; mockery in her eyes; he was an adventurer, reckless, he thought, swift, daring, indeed (landed as he was last night from India) a romantic buccaneer, careless of all these damned proprieties, yellow dressing-gowns, pipes, fishing rods, in the shop windows; and respectability and evening parties and spruce old men wearing white and slips beneath their waistcoats. He was a buccaneer. On and on she went, across Piccadilly, and up Regent Street, ahead of him, her cloak, her gloves, her shoulders combining with the fringes and the laces and the feather boas in the windows to make the spirit of finery and whimsy which dwindled out of the shops on to the pavement, as the light of a lamp goes wavering at night over hedges in the darkness. Laughing and delightful, she had crossed Oxford Street and Great Portland Street . . . It was over. Well, I've had my fun; I've had it, he thought, looking up at the swinging baskets of pale geraniums. And it was smashed to atoms—his fun, for it was half made up, as he knew very well; invented, this escapade with the girl; made up, as one makes up the better

part of life, he thought—making oneself up; making her up; creating an exquisite amusement, and something more. (52-4)

Many details in this chase scene solidify Peter Walsh's role as a *flâneur*, which has gradually developed throughout the various passages I have included in this chapter. As with the women he "falls in love with" at every turn, this particular imaginary woman allows Peter to adopt a "colonizing male gaze" in order to both observe and, as Wilson notes, gaze upon the "predominantly aesthetic" aspects of the street, such as the "extraordinarily attractive" woman and the "fringes and the laces and the feather boas in the windows" (Wilson 94). Peter takes the stuff of his imagination, or what "he had always had in mind"—the fact that she is "young, but stately; merry, but discreet; black, but enchanting"—and projects it *onto* the streets of London themselves. These streets are not only sites of diversion, but avenues for artistic creation that allow Peter to use his well-honed skills of "surveillance" to, as Wilson describes, play the role of "*flâneur-as-artist*," a figure for whom "the multifarious sights of the astonishing new urban spectacle [constitute his] raw material" (94, 98).

Second, it is important to note that Peter's artful creation takes the form of a commodity, or a woman who mirrors the items for sale in a shop window. Woolf writes that "her cloak, her gloves, her shoulders [combined] with the fringes and the laces and the feather boas in the windows to make the spirit of finery and whimsy which dwindled out of the shops on to the pavement," which indicates that Peter uses his *flâneur* walking motion and colonizing 'male gaze' to participate in the commodity culture of London.

Wilson writes about the historical development of such a culture, noting, "This special form of public life was played out in a zone that was neither quite public nor quite private, yet which partook of both . . . the department store and the hotel,—these were commodified spaces in which everything was for sale, and to which anyone was free to come" (96).

Likewise, Peter's chase mingles the public domains of "Trafalgar Square," "Regent Street," "Oxford Street," and "Picadilly" and the imaginative private space of his own mind, particularly his private conception of himself as a "romantic buccaneer."

By merging the items for sale with the imaginary "black, yet enchanting woman," Peter expresses a colonial ideology and "buccaneer" mentality in the language of shopping and consumer activity. Alissa Karl explains this connection between imperial and consumer attitudes, noting, "By merging the woman's image with those of the cheaply erotic fringes and laces in the shop windows, Peter imagines the woman as an object to be consumed by his own sexual fantasies and sense of entitlement."² She also suggests, "Peter's colonizing personage emerges at home in his drive to dominate via consumption" (67). Karl's analysis emphasizes that Peter's *flâneur* role—specifically, his capacity to walk, observe and "commodify" the women of the city—is deeply intertwined with his role as an instrument of the British Empire. Peter feels most comfortable and most "artistic" as a *flâneur* when he can imaginatively project his "buccaneer" and "adventurer" personas onto the city streets. He uses this colonial superiority to master, manipulate and change the city

² Alissa Karl, *Modernism and the Marketplace: Literary Culture and Consumer Capitalism in Rhys, Woolf, Stein, and Nella Larsen*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 67. Hereafter cited in the text.

and the woman into what “he had always had in mind.” Peter’s character can thus be seen as a further redefinition of the *flâneur*, a figure who not only walks in and observes the urban spectacle, but who uses those walking and observing activities to, in the manner of a buccaneer, plunder the urban space in an attempt to gain superiority and control.

Third, this passage highlights Peter’s unparalleled level of comfort in the streets and underscores the fact that, as a true *flâneur*, he feels most at home when in a public space. Wilson writes, “The society which thus constituted itself as spectacle was a society of outsiders, and the boulevards and cafés offered, as Kracauer puts it, a homeland for those individuals without a home” (96). Peter uses this imagined chase scene to feel “at home” in a way that he does not when in the “real” England. For example, notice how he creates the imaginary woman as an alternative to Clarissa’s “worldly,” “rich” personality. Whereas Clarissa resents Peter’s “challenging” persona as she mends her dress, Peter’s imaginary woman is “witty” and possesses “a lizard’s flicking tongue” that matches his “pocketknife” of ambivalence in a way that Clarissa’s passive “needle” of domestic life cannot. Furthermore, while the pacing of the scene is quite frantic—the woman moves from street to street and his conception of her “changes” as he continues to “pursue” her—Peter still takes time to slow down his imagination and invite the woman to “stop” in the streets for a moment to “come and have an ice.” Even in a city that, as Sennett describes, was designed to “privilege the individually moving body,” Peter succeeds in forming a connection to this imagined woman.

However, this connection fades as quickly as it forms, and Peter ends the imagined escapade by thinking to himself, “It was over . . . I’ve had my fun.” Like his pocketknife, which he “stealthily fingers” as he “follows” the woman, Peter is able to seamlessly move back-and-forth between his “romantic buccaneer” role and his realization that the woman is, after all, “half made up.” More than anything, Peter is “at home” in his feeling of ambivalence, able to transition between an imagined experience of “freedom from being precisely what he was” and a return to his recognition that in reality, he simply “makes up the better part of life.”

Finally, I argue that the passage serves as a key connector between my analyses of Peter Walsh as the “true” *flâneur* and Anna Morgan as the “defeated” *flâneuse*. In the next section of this chapter, I will show how the “black, but enchanting” woman that Peter chases could very well be Anna herself; passages from *Voyage in the Dark* describe Anna in ways that are similar to Peter’s conception of his imaginary female companion. My comparison of Peter and Anna supports my claim that the activities of *flânerie* literalize, or make real and publicly visible, the otherwise private male fantasy of colonial “buccaneering” domination.

II. The Too-Small English Gloves: Anna’s Mental Colonial Struggle

Peter’s imagination of the woman as “black, yet enchanting” very closely resembles Anna’s own imagined self-conception; as she thinks back to a pleasant memory of her

childhood in the Caribbean, she notes, "I always wanted to be black . . . Being black is warm and gay, being white is cold and sad" (30). Also included in this memory is a mention of gloves:

[Brown] kid gloves straight from England, one size too small. 'Oh, you naughty girl, you're trying to split those gloves; you're trying to split those gloves on purpose.' (While you are carefully putting on your gloves you begin to perspire and you feel the perspiration trickling down under your arms. The thought of having a wet patch underneath your arms—a disgusting and a disgraceful thing to happen to a lady—makes you very miserable). (41)

Just as Anna cannot comfortably fit her hands inside the English gloves, she cannot reconcile her "white" outer appearance and inner "black" racial identity. The "perspiration" and "wet patches" under her arms resemble the description of "blackness" as "warm," but when that warmth comes into contact with the English gloves, symbols for what Anna perceives as England's racial "whiteness," Anna's "gay" mentality transforms into a "disgusting and disgraceful thing." Thus, both these too-small gloves and her ill-fitting racial appearance conceal Anna's true, inner feeling of "blackness," causing her to feel "miserable" both in her memories and in her current experiences in the city.

Anna's most "miserable" current experience is her recognition that she is pregnant, and she realizes that she cannot "fit" into a mothering role any more easily than she can fit her hands into the too-small English gloves:

Like seasickness, only worse, and everything heaving up and down. And vomiting. And thinking, 'It can't be that, it can't be that . . . And besides it's never happened before. Why should it happen now?' . . . (Don't think of it, don't think of it. Because thinking of it makes it happen). (162)

The panicked tone of the repeated phrases "It can't be that" and "Don't think of it" resemble the "wet patches" of nervous perspiration that form when Anna tries on the gloves. She cannot even bear to "think" about the prospect of motherhood, and her qualms about becoming a mother manifest themselves in her *flâneuse* role. Anna's mention of "seasickness" and "heaving up and down" harkens back to her sea voyage from the Caribbean to England, presumably just before she rides the train into London. In this passage, Anna thinks about motherhood in the same way that she reacts to her first view of England; the fearful, frenzied utterances "It can't be that" and "Don't think of it" mirror the anxious tone of her statement "I'm not going to like this place," which she speaks when viewing the English countryside from her train window.

Furthermore, Anna's thoughts suggest that she has mentally conflated her conception of Hester, her vicious and racially prejudicial stepmother, with her attitude toward "Mother England," a country she perceives as similarly hostile and racially oppressive. For instance, notice that in the previous passage about the "brown gloves," an unnamed character chides Anna for trying them on, telling her, "Oh, you naughty girl, you're trying to split those gloves . . . on purpose'." While Rhys never reveals who scolds

Anna, Hester proves the likeliest candidate; the claim that Anna “split” the English gloves “on purpose” strongly resembles Hester’s previous accusation of Anna: “I tried to teach you to talk like a lady and behave like a lady and not like a nigger and of course I couldn’t do it” (65). Hester’s words reveal that Anna’s three roles as daughter, colonial subject, and mother-to-be, are inextricably linked to one another. In both the incident with the gloves and the later run-in with Hester, Anna is punished for her inability to reconcile the “split” between her outwardly white appearance and inner feeling of blackness, and in both cases, she is punished by her two alternative “mothers,” the cruel and racially prejudiced character, Hester, and the unwelcoming and overwhelmingly “white” country, England. Both of these “mothers” reject Anna because of her racial difference, and her rejection as “daughter”—both as a stepdaughter to Hester and as a colonial subject to the Empire—culminate in her own rejection of the prospect of motherhood and decision to have an abortion.

In one sense, this rejection of motherhood can be seen as Anna’s attempt to exercise her freedom as a next-generation *flâneuse*. Up until this point in the novel, Anna has been consumed by a continuous mother-daughter cycle: Anna’s biological mother gives birth to a daughter, Anna; Anna’s biological mother dies, leaving Anna motherless; Hester becomes Anna’s alternative mother; Hester rejects Anna as a daughter; and finally, Anna, formerly defined by her daughter status, now must grapple with her own impending role as a mother to her unborn child. An abortion would abruptly end this unending cycle, and

metaphorically speaking, Anna's rejection of motherhood would symbolize her attempt to break free from the unending racial oppression of her two white "mothers," Hester and England. However, even after the abortion procedure takes place, Anna finds it difficult and even dangerous to escape from her mothering role, and this difficulty is mirrored in her activities as a *flâneuse*. As she leaves the building in which the abortion procedure takes place, Anna thinks to herself,

I got outside. I was afraid to cross the street and then I was afraid because the slanting houses might fall on me or the pavement rise up and hit me. But most of all I was afraid of the people passing me because I was dying; and, just because I was dying, any one of them, any minute, might stop and approach me and knock me down, or put their tongues out as far as they would go . . . A taxi passed. I put my hand up and the man stopped. I couldn't get the door open and he got down and opened it for me. (178)

Physiologically, Anna is "dying" because her body is reeling from complications from the abortion procedure, which become nearly fatal in the following days. However, her ability to play the role of *flâneuse* is also "dying," as the feelings typically associated with street-walking—freedom, opportunity, and detachment—are replaced with fear, danger, and death. Compare this scene of violent, dangerous walking with Anna's experience much earlier in the novel, just after being evicted from her first apartment; Anna narrates, "So I went outside and finished putting on my gloves standing on the doorstep. (A lady always puts

on her gloves before going into the street)" (34). In this case, Anna embraces the prospect of homelessness in the same way that Peter Walsh ambivalently reacts to his lack of clearly defined marital and national connections. By putting on her gloves, Anna attempts to "fit" into the English, white, "ladylike" persona that those gloves convey to the outside world. She attempts to use that "ladylike" role to derive a feeling of freedom and agency from her recent eviction; with no place to stay, Anna is, like Peter, temporarily able to fully immerse herself and feel "at home" in the streets.

However, as the events of the novel unfold, Anna's inner racial struggle confounds her opportunity to become a true *flâneuse*. Several times, she describes the streets in a way that is similar to her characterization of "being white" as "cold and sad." Early on, she thinks, "When we were coming home from the theatre that night it began to rain and in Brighton it rained all the time. We got to Holloway and it was winter and the dark streets round the theatre made me think of murders" (18). Once she moves into her second apartment, Anna notes, "I lay in bed pretty late because there wasn't anything else to do. When I got up I went out for a walk. It's funny how parts of London are as empty as if they were dead. There was no sun, but there was a glare on everything like a brass band playing" (41). Just before she meets with her stepmother, she declares, "Looking out at the street was like looking at stagnant water. Hester was coming up to London in February. I started wondering what I should say to her, and I began to feel depressed" (41). In all three instances, the streets of London are completely devoid of diversion or activity; they are

“dark,” “rainy,” “empty,” “dead,” and cause Anna to feel as though “there [isn’t] anything else to do” but “[lie] in bed.” Because the streets themselves are such empty *public* spaces, Anna uses the *private* space of her mind to fill them with her imagination, in the form of similes and poetic images: filled with “murders,” glaring back at her “like a brass band playing,” and looking like “stagnant water.” Thus, we see how different Peter and Anna’s relationships to the streets are. Peter sees the hustle and bustle of London as a source of diversion and of artistic creation, an opportunity for him to envision the woman “he had always had in mind” and project her onto the already busy streets. Anna derives absolutely no happiness or diversion from the streets of London, so instead, she uses her imagination to fill that empty space with those things that she fears (“murders”), something that could be fun or amusing to observe but is not actually there (“a brass band playing”) and something altogether void of interest (“stagnant water”).

Unlike Peter, Anna can never be “at home” in the city because her racial and national identity have prevented her from feeling connected to London, even in her mind and imagination. The only “warm and gay” aspect of her life in London is that which she can never truly, outwardly achieve: being black. In turn, her desire to be black has prevented her from being loved or at least accepted by both her white and English stepmother, Hester, as well as the “hundreds thousands of white people” who reside in “Mother England” and threaten to “knock [her] down” and “put their tongues out at [her]” as she walks in the streets. Thus, Anna is a defeated *flâneuse*; she feels detached from the

streets not in a way that promotes freedom and the ability to observe and create—all of which Peter, as *flâneur*, accomplishes in his imaginary chase scene—but in a way that makes her feel “depressed” and stuck with “nothing to do” but feel lonely, racially isolated, and finally, as if she were “dying.” Indeed, Anna remains “colonized” much like the “black, yet enchanting woman” falls victim to Peter’s colonizing “male gaze.” The whiteness and Englishness of London, which exacerbate her already unachievable desire to be black, have also caused her to feel out of place on both sides of the Atlantic; she feels “miserable” when she cannot fit her hands into the English gloves, and she cannot make peace with the disconnect in her inner racial identity and outer racial appearance. These struggles are what form Anna into a “postmodern *flâneuse*,” or what Deborah Parsons describes as a migrant or stranger who inhabits “places of non-place, places of the dispossessed” (176).

However, unlike Peter’s “black, but enchanting” imaginary woman, Anna cannot simply fade from view as a “partly made up” figment of someone else’s imagination. Rather, her entrapment in London haunts her until the very end of *Voyage in the Dark*. As the complications from her abortion worsen, Anna’s former coworker summons a doctor:

‘She’ll be alright,’ [the doctor] said. ‘Ready to start all over again in no time, I’ve no doubt.’ When their voices stopped the ray of light came in again under the door like the last thrust of remembering before everything is blotted out. I lay and watched it and thought about starting all over again. And about being new and fresh. And

about mornings, and misty days, when anything might happen. And about starting all over again, all over again . . . (187)

These are the final lines of *Voyage in the Dark*, open to various possible meanings. On the one hand, the “last thrust of remembering before everything is blotted out” could mean that Anna never recovers and dies before she is able to “start all over again.” On the other hand, Helen Nebeker suggests that these final lines reveal that Rhys has been playing a “trick” on her readers throughout the novel; Nebeker argues that this seemingly final scene is actually the opening scene of the novel, and that all events that come before it are actually consequences of her attempt to “start all over again.”³ This theory may or may not be accurate; much of Rhys’ skill as a writer lies in her ability to construct a narrative based on what is *not* said and what remains *unknown*, thus preventing her readers from reaching any sort of definitive “truth” about the events within her novels.

However, Nebeker’s theory highlights the importance of the phrase “start all over again” with regards to the narrative progression of *Voyage in the Dark*. Throughout the novel, Rhys tells the same story “all over again” in three different ways: Anna’s abandonment, as a daughter, by her stepmother; Anna’s refusal of her own mother-to-be role; and Anna’s constant feelings of loneliness and rejection as an inhabitant of London. Anna’s role as *flâneuse* finally unites these three experiences. Whether on a train, in a memory, as a pedestrian in the street, or in a panicked attempt to hail a taxicab, Anna

³ Helen Nebeker, *Jean Rhys: Woman in Passage* (Montréal: Eden Press Women’s Publications, 1981), 77-78.

expresses all three of her roles—daughter, expectant mother, colonial subject—in terms of her movements as a “defeated *flâneuse*” in the London streets. If *Voyage in the Dark* contained only one of these three stories, the novel would feature little to no character development; Anna would simply be a street-walking woman who fails to flourish and succeed in any aspect of her life.

However, Anna’s *failure* to “start all over again” becomes less important when each of her individual failures combine to *successfully* portray Anna’s “voyage” as a *flâneuse* throughout the novel. If she were simply content with her life in the Caribbean and if her biological mother were alive, she would never need to travel across the Atlantic with Hester; if she led a happy, uneventful life as a citizen in England, she would never walk around London while projecting her imagination onto the “stagnant water” of the city streets; and if Anna were excited by the prospect of motherhood and did not decide to procure an abortion, many of the important connections between her roles as a rejected, motherless daughter and as a racially isolated colonial subject of “Mother England” would remain underemphasized. Certainly, the plot developments of the novel are, as the title suggests, “dark” and depressing. Nevertheless, Anna’s experiences shed light on the importance of the *flâneuse* as a device that makes the invisible, visible, and reflects a woman’s private, mental struggles in her geographic movements through the public space of the city.

III. The Pocketknife, the Needle, and the Gloves Compared

Anna's *flâneuse* role also draws attention other characters' unacknowledged relationships to Empire. In this chapter, she literalizes Peter's private fantasy as a male "colonizer." Anna's experiences as a "colonized" woman give Peter's imaginary "black, but enchanting" woman a voice that she would never otherwise possess, and Anna's movements through the city highlight the downside of Peter's privileged, ambivalent role as a "colonizer"-*flâneur*: the black, isolated "colonized" woman's inability to escape from the imperial oppression of the overwhelming "whiteness" and "Englishness" of the "colonizing" British Empire.

Anna's experiences also highlight the fact that Elizabeth and Clarissa Dalloway remain blissfully unaware of their own deep-seeded connections to the British Empire. While riding on the omnibus, Elizabeth seeks to escape from the traditions and customs of the older female generation by aligning herself with her father, Richard. However, Elizabeth never acknowledges that her father, as a Member of Parliament and employee of the Empire, is the person who enables her to entertain the possibility of assuming a manly "profession" in the first place. The wealth and upper-class status that she inherits from her father allow Elizabeth to focus on bourgeois ideals, such as the need for women's freedom and progress, without acknowledging the practical reasons that she is even able to embrace such progressive notions: the reality that she is white, rich, English, a "ladylike" wearer of

gloves, and the daughter of parents who will provide her with all that she needs to succeed as a member of the next female generation.

Conversely, Anna is too distracted by the harsh realities of day-to-day life as a colonial outsider and motherless wanderer to bother wondering what her future may be like; in fact, the end of the novel suggests that her life may even be cut short by a tragic and untimely death. Anna's suffering in London thus heightens our appreciation of Elizabeth's privileged life as a wealthy, young Englishwoman and her insulation from the oppression experienced by even her closest companion, Miss Kilman. Elizabeth dismisses Miss Kilman as "difficult" because she constantly talks about her "sufferings," but she never takes the time to understand *why* Miss Kilman suffers, even though it is widely known that Kilman is of German ancestry and was accused of sympathizing with the German cause during the war. *Mrs. Dalloway* remains mute about the effects of Miss Kilman's "sufferings," but Anna fills in these gaps, and her experience as a colonial outsider in London gives readers an excellent idea of what life may have been like for an outcasted German sympathizer living in World War One-era England.

Likewise, Anna's united struggle as a mother, daughter, and colonial subject underscore the fact that that Clarissa's role as "Mrs. Richard Dalloway" is also linked to her class status and national identity. She laments her static, fixed status as wife and mother when she walks through London, but she never acknowledges that those gendered roles are woven into the fabric of her life as a well-to-do woman who is married to a Member of

Parliament. In her interactions with Peter Walsh, Clarissa's sewing needle, a symbol of her entrapment in the domestic sphere, "challenges" the ambivalence and detachment of Peter's pocketknife. However, Clarissa never confronts or "challenges" the reality that she is also trapped in the logic of the British Empire's imperial ideology, or a feeling of racial and national superiority and casual disregard for the plights of those who are less fortunate. For example, Clarissa detests Miss Kilman for a variety of reasons, and many of them, including her recognition of Miss Kilman's erotic desire for Elizabeth, prove to be valid causes for concern. However, like Elizabeth, Clarissa never once attempts to understand Miss Kilman's point of view in the triangulated mother-daughter relationship; in fact, the closest she comes to acknowledging Miss Kilman's outsider position is in her snobbish, materialistic disdain for Miss Kilman's "ugly green mackintosh," a symbol of Miss Kilman's status as an social outcast and an over-forty, working-class spinster (12).

Thus, Anna's life as a *flâneuse* in London not only showcases her own struggles as a daughter, mother, and colonial subject in *Voyage in the Dark*, but accentuates what is largely unseen in *Mrs. Dalloway*: the pervasive, overpowering influence of Britain's imperial ideology on the lives of its female citizens.

CONCLUSION

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

*Why is it that I see to-day,
Imagined as clear as in a dream,
A little city far away,
A churlish sky, a sluggish stream,*

...

*Oh, who can sound the human breast?
And this strange truth must be confessed
That city do I love the best
Wherein my heart was heaviest!¹*

After her various walks around the city of London, when and where does the *flâneuse* finally “arrive”? In this thesis, the *flâneuse*’s connection of public and private spaces, relationships, and male fantasies has allowed her to arrive at a number of historically and critically significant destinations. In Chapter One, she has reached a more modern point along the course of women’s historical and generational progress. I have described how Elizabeth Dalloway’s ride on the omnibus and Anna Morgan’s voyage on the train modernize the *flâneuse*; these updated modes of transport create a private, protected spaces in the midst of the public, often hostile space of the city. This on-the-go privacy allows Elizabeth and Anna to travel greater geographic distances while seizing

¹ Amy Levy, “Alma Mater,” in *A London Plane-Tree* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1889), 59-60, accessed October 15, 2010, http://books.google.com/books?id=3WU7AAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=a+london+plane-tree&hl=en&ei=a6GDTfeTB6Gx0QG565zgCA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q&f=false.

opportunities both as members of the next female generation and as next-generation *flâneuses*.

Certainly, this geographic and generational progression is not always easy or pleasant. Elizabeth uses her omnibus ride to mentally distance herself from her various authority figures—particularly her mother, Clarissa, and her tutor and alternative mother, Miss Kilman—and to entertain future opportunities as a “professional” woman not limited by traditionally feminine roles and activities. Yet for fear of her mother’s disapproval, Elizabeth decides to return home after her omnibus ride, and her upper-class status reveals that Elizabeth still adheres to the traditional female gender norms espoused by her mother, Clarissa. Anna’s train ride demonstrates her complete isolation from all of her family members, including her stepmother, Hester, in England and her Uncle Ramsay in the Caribbean. This freedom from familial attachment, as well as her “bohemian” detachment from any one country or national identity, should allow Anna to achieve absolute freedom both as a young woman and a *flâneuse*. However, Anna feels overly detached both from her family and her home country, causing her to view her next-generation *flâneuse* status not as an opportunity for freedom, but as an obstacle preventing her from ever truly belonging, whether as a daughter or a resident of London. Despite these challenges, Elizabeth and Anna pushed the *flâneuse* toward a future of increased spatial and gendered opportunities.

In Chapter Two, the *flâneuse* has arrived at a destination that disrupts and reorganizes the mother-daughter binary. I have argued that as a *flâneuse* and “prostituted”

alternative mother figure to Elizabeth, Miss Kilman threatens both Clarissa's maternal influence and the nature of the mother-daughter relationship itself. She attempts to "publicize" the mother-daughter bond, or transition it from a same-sex relationship between mother and daughter, which is private and thus located *within* the nuclear family, into a relationship that centers around homoerotic desire, which is public and thus takes place *outside* of the bounds of the family, between a masculine mother-turned-suitor and the object of her attraction, another woman's daughter. Clarissa and Elizabeth's reaction to Miss Kilman's intervention in their relationship further undermines the mother-daughter dynamic; while both Clarissa and Elizabeth recognize the threat Miss Kilman poses, they cling to one another not because of motherly or filial love and concern, but out of hatred and self-interest. These characters' troubled and often conflict-ridden walks around the city mirror their equally tempestuous relationships with one another, as mothers and daughters who superficially connect yet remain inwardly isolated from one another.

Chapter Three has moved the *flâneuse* in two directions: toward a comparison of opposite-sex *flâneur* and *flâneuse* characters, and toward a consideration of the mother-daughter dynamic on a national scale. I have shown that Peter Walsh enjoys a masculine freedom from a mother-daughter dynamic, just as he possesses a national freedom from an allegiance to either a British or colonial cause. These freedoms manifest themselves in his ambivalent *flâneur* role and his ability to derive freedom and enjoyment from his colonizing "male gaze" and imperial mastery of the imaginary "black, but enchanting" woman he

chased through the streets. Anna, as a colonized woman, portrays life in the city from the perspective of this imaginary “black” woman. Anna’s struggles to fit in with the white and English culture of London make Peter’s male fantasy a female reality, and she showcases the costs associated with Peter’s imperial ideology of the “romantic buccaneer.”

Finally, Anna highlights the important connections between the three types of *flâneuse* characters that have been discussed throughout this thesis: daughters, mothers, and British colonial subjects. Her “voyage” throughout the novel explores the nature of the relationship between the British Empire and its colonies in a supremely unique way. Anna does not describe the global, broad-sweeping effects of Britain’s imperial power; rather she explains her colonial perspective in simple, concrete terms. In Anna’s mind, a colonized woman’s oppression as a resident in “Mother England” is synonymous with a daughter’s suffering at the hands of her hostile, British stepmother.

Thus, throughout this thesis, the *flâneuse* has moved from a consideration of female generational progress, to an analysis of a triangulated mother-daughter relationship, and finally to an exploration of a real-life female experience of private male fantasy. Where does the *flâneuse* travel next? With regards to the ongoing critical conversation about the role of the female street-walker in the history and literature of modernity, I suggest two opportunities for further inquiry and discussion. First, this thesis highlights the need to consider the *flâneuse* as a multifaceted character. Critics, historians, and sociologists have extensively described each of the *flâneuse*’s individual roles; the *flâneuse* can take the form of

a shopper, or a “public woman” and prostitute, or even an “invisible” and irrelevant citizen of the city, but she is never considered as more than one type of woman at one time.

However, this thesis demonstrates the ways in which *flâneuse* characters play a variety of roles as walkers in the city; these characters’ various functions—as mothers, daughters, wives, colonial subjects, Englishwomen, shoppers, and history tutors—not only intersect with one another, but contribute to each other’s development. I urge these critics, historians, and sociologists to move their consideration of the *flâneuse* in the direction of a more expansive consideration of the myriad, overlapping contributions that female urban street walkers make to the history and culture of the modern city.

Second, I suggest the need for increased attention to the interaction between the *flâneur* and the *flâneuse*. Typically, critics consider these street-walking figures separately; both walk around the modern city, but they remain, in Janet Wolff’s words, “invisible” from one another. However, my comparison of Peter Walsh and Anna Morgan reveals that the *flâneur* and *flâneuse* can meaningfully relate to one another, at least within the context of literature. Perhaps there is also more to be learned about the ways that these figures have historically interacted, or about the sociological ramifications of their coexistence in the city streets.

The *flâneuse* is, after all, a woman who moves. Each of her chosen destinations soon becomes a point of departure to a new place, filled with new opportunities for observation and exploration. Likewise, this thesis should be considered as one stop along the course of

the critical and theoretical discovery. It has arrived at a number of conclusions about the dynamic relationship between women and the city while probing many topics that may guide the *flâneuse* in new historical, cultural, and literary directions.

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