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GENDERED GEOGRAPHIES OF POWER: LONDON IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S *MRS DALLOWAY* AND JEAN RHYS'S *VOYAGE IN THE DARK*

This paper poses a parallel analysis of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*, two novels set in London around the First World War that complement one another with regard to representation of women in the city. In focus are Woolf's and Rhys's heroines who belong different social classes. With a view to producing a fuller picture of the London strata of the time, the paper concentrates on a dual front: it examines the position the protagonists enjoy in respect to their gender as well as in respect to their social status. While Rhys's Anna is a young woman from a distant colony, that is an outsider with no permanent residence in London, Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway, however seemingly privileged, is greatly disadvantaged by her restricted experience of the metropolis. The paper argues that in these two novels London is a source of double marginalisation – a city unjust to the colonial subjects but unjust to women of all strata. As a theoretical background, the paper uses the concept of gendered geographies of power, which are supposed to help us reveal how different power structures affect the cityscape on both macro and micro level.

Key words: gendered geographies of power, Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys, *Mrs Dalloway*, *Voyage in the Dark*, London, First World War, Creole.

INTRODUCTION

Set in London, the centre of the British Empire, in the years surrounding the First World War, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark* complement one another in regard to representation of women in the cityscape: *Mrs Dalloway*, which takes place in 1923, yields a profound insight into the ways of English establishment, whereas *Voyage in the Dark*, set in 1914, concentrates on a young Creole¹ woman who has recently moved to London from a

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¹ Here the paper adopts Sue Thomas's interpretation: by Creole, she considers 'people born in the region, but not of indigenous Carib or Arawak ancestry' (Thomas, 1999: 20).

Caribbean island. With a view to producing a fuller picture of the London strata of the time, the paper concentrates on a dual front: it examines the position that the protagonists under discussion enjoy in respect to their gender as well as in respect to their social status.

To this effect, the paper uses the concept of gendered geographies of power, introduced by the social anthropologists Sarah Mahler and Patricia Pessar (2001), to conduct a parallel analysis of the two novels. Gendered geographies of power are supposed to help us reveal how different power structures affect the cityscape on both macro and micro level. While Woolf's oeuvre is a fresh opposition to the "Men of 1914" (Joyce, Lewis, Pound and Eliot)' (Brooker & Thacker, 2005: 3), in that she challenges the male-dominated experience of the city, Jean Rhys takes a step further by creating a character who is subject to a double spatial marginalisation: in the context of the Empire, Anna is a young woman from a distant colony, trying to get by in London; consequently, on the micro level of the city, she is an outsider with no permanent residence in which to put down roots. This is indicated by the many addresses that she has throughout the story but, moreover, by her view of the world, conflicting to the one prevalent in the imperial centre. Clarissa Dalloway's position, however privileged it might appear on the outside, is, in essence, greatly disadvantaged, which is exemplified by her experience of the metropolis that is restricted to the city's central areas. With these premises in mind, the paper argues that London is a source of double marginalisation – a city unjust to the colonial subjects but unjust to women of all strata. Considering that the theoretical background of gendered geographies of power is applied to literary studies, this research remains methodologically faithful to interpretation based on feminist reading. Most commonly, it uses close reading to detect delicate places in the text that address the issues of concern.

ANNA MORGAN AND CLARISSA DALLOWAY

Anna Morgan, the eighteen-year-old protagonist of *Voyage in the Dark*, spent her youth on a Caribbean island. After her father died, Anna relocated to England, where her stepmother Hester supported her financially – but only as long as she went to school. Stripped of an allowance, Anna started working as a chorus girl, trying to make ends meet. It was then that she got emotionally involved with Walter, a man quite her senior whom she begins to depend on financially. Throughout the book, Anna often daydreams about her home in the West Indies, despising the greyness and coldness of the British Isles.

The feeling of being forced into the city and detached from English society is embodied in identity politics – the white protagonist self-identifies as non-white and non-English. Even before coming to London, Anna – despite being white and ‘the fifth generation born out there, on [her] mother’s side’ (Rhys, 2000: 45) – felt closer to the black community: ‘When I was a kid I wanted to be black, and they used to say, “Your poor grandfather would turn in his grave if he heard you talking like that”’ (Rhys, 2000: 45). In England, this link becomes even more prominent – not only in Anna’s eyes but in those of others, such as her stepmother Hester (Rhys, 2000: 56) and her fellow chorus girls (Rhys, 2000: 12). Glen Thomas (1995) discusses Anna’s colonial ambivalences:

Anna is therefore continually linked with the oppressed/marginalized population of the Caribbean, despite the fact that she is white. In terms of the textual black/white binary, Anna presents an anomaly. She must, in accordance with this binaristic structure, be grouped with either one part of the equation or the other. That the text (through the English characters) links her with black rather than white would suggest, therefore, that the novel is uneasy with her status as a third term in the colour structure. As a Creole fifth generation West Indian (p. 45) she is white but belongs to the Caribbean. Thus, she must ‘become’ black so that the English order is not disrupted. (Thomas, 1995: 30)

These ambiguities become hardly reconcilable with the traditional English class system, which embraces the three-tier model of stratification, differentiating the social categories of upper, middle, and lower class citizenship (Grant, 2001: 161). While it may be tempting to position Anna in the lower class, it would be more sound to suggest that she is denied any classification at all:

Anna stands at a remove from the English society of *Voyage in the Dark*. On one level she is marginalized as an impoverished woman in a system of patriarchal exchange. On another, her position as a colonial subject further excludes her from the English hegemony. Anna is persistently signalled as being Other to the middle-class English order of the novel, through the repetition of a series of signifiers and their related cultural associations. (Thomas, 1995: 28)

In this vain, Thomas dismisses common readings that blame Anna’s passivity for her exclusion from the city:

Rather than personal failings, it is Anna’s gender and colonial status which prevent her from participating fully in the dominant social and economic order of *Voyage in the Dark*. Anna is textually constrained on three levels, which may be defined as economic, colonialist, and narrative. Imbricated within these is the question of gender, which functions to place Anna in a position of double-exclusion within the

text. [. . .] Anna's position is not, therefore, a product of realist character 'flaws' but rather that her discursive placement within the novel offers insight into the ways in which colonialism and sexism function in terms of textuality. (Thomas, 1995: 27)

The other novel under scrutiny does not feature such ambiguities. On the contrary, the (self-)identity and class perception of Clarissa Dalloway, the 51-year-old protagonist of *Mrs Dalloway*, remains out of question. She is as English as it gets, residing in the very heart of London and married to a member of the Parliament. The novel famously follows one day in Clarissa's life, opening with her morning walk and finishing with an evening party. A number of class markers reveal that the Dalloways belong to the upper class. Nevertheless, the seemingly privileged status does not necessarily mean that Clarissa is not – just like Anna – a subject of marginalisation on different levels. This is best seen in the seemingly free and open space of the metropolis, which the two protagonist try to claim through their urban wanderings.

URBAN WANDERINGS

A proliferating array of terminology surrounds the figure of an urban wanderer, ranging from those that emphasise the very act of walking, such as *stroller*, *rambler*, *walker*, *saunterer*, *flâneur*; those that stress the vanity of such practice, as is the case with *idler* or *loafer*; to those that put stress on visual perceptiveness, such as *observer* or *spectator*. This research will adopt the one most commonly associated with the cityscape – the French loan word *flâneur*.² To determine whether our protagonists actually fit into the definition of this widely debated term, this somewhat ambivalent concept requires a brief theoretical discussion. Historically speaking, '[i]n the literature of the nineteenth-century city, the figure of the observer – the rambler, the stroller, the spectator, the flâneur – is a man' (Nord, 1995: 1). This is also the main premise of Walter Benjamin's understanding of the term: throughout his groundbreaking essay 'Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century', where the concept was first formulated, the figure under close scrutiny is invariably referred to as 'he' (Benjamin, 1978: 156-58).

² As far as the spelling of this French term is concerned, we shall use the Anglicised version that omits the accent mark – 'flâneur' rather than 'flâneur'. The same applies to the female form 'flâneuse' and the abstract noun 'flânerie'. Apart from the italicisation whose purpose is emphasis, the italics that denote a foreign-language borrowing will be left out due to the increased frequency of the aforementioned terms among literary scholars.

Nonetheless, such biased articulation would soon be called into question with the occurrence of a dramatic change in the very structure of the English life, in the initial decades of the twentieth century. Even though the social and political transitions were still in their infancy (Parsons, 2000: 190), women's access to public spaces increased rapidly, making the term *flaneur* too restrictive. In her writings about the literary representations of cities in the Victorian era, Deborah Epstein Nord identifies this underlying gender issue and further poses a crucial question: 'If the rambler was a man, and if one of the primary tropes of his urban description was the woman of the streets, could there have been a *female* spectator or a vision of the urban panorama crafted by a female imagination?' (Nord, 1995: 3; original emphasis³). Here 'the woman of the streets' denotes a prostitute or the so-called fallen woman (Nord, 1995: 2). Albeit central, the described position is that of an object of the male gaze. Can a woman be transformed into the subject, the one who is looking at instead of the one being looked at? Or in simple terms, can there be a genuine *flaneuse*?

The affirmative answer might lie in the novels under study, as modernism opens a new chapter in the sense that both Clarissa and Anna are heroine-narrators, which, Maurel believes, elevates them to the status of a speaking *subject* (Maurel, 1998: 83). Both authors are deliberately portraying their protagonists as individuals from whose angle the story is told. In their strolls, neither Anna nor Clarissa is depicted as 'a woman of the streets'; rather the reader interprets them as one among many ordinary women enjoying arguably the most significant gain of the First-wave feminism – the improved freedom of movement.⁴ In the early twentieth century, it became more socially acceptable for a woman to be seen unaccompanied in public. In retrospect, women with no male companion became a regular sight as early as in the Victorian era, but such practice was socially acceptable only for those who

³ Unless otherwise indicated, emphases in quotes are original.

⁴ A meeting of the World League for Sexual Reform will be held in London in 1929 and birth control, censorship and sexual education were among the burning issues on the program (Brassard, 2007: 282-83). The Conference's agenda, *id est* the fact that feminist discourse of the time started revolving around female sexuality, indicate that towards the end of the 1920s freedom of movement was already a clinched victory.

joined the workforce.⁵ Anna and Clarissa, however, do not fall into the given category, as neither of them is a middle class woman who has taken on a wage job. Rhys's and Woolf's heroines wander around the streets of London unchaperoned and often aimlessly, thus challenging the exclusive character of publicness. In cultural imagination, Parsons argues, 'the city has been habitually conceived as a male space, in which women are either repressed or disobedient marginal presences' (Parsons, 2000: 1-2). Notwithstanding its traditional male dominance, an urban environment gradually opens up to both genders and, as a consequence, we witness the emergence of a *flâneuse*.

The following step pertinent to the formulation of the concept requires identifying certain distinctive traits of the one who wanders. Parsons asserts that, 'the *flâneur* as Benjamin first conceives him, the expert observer of the urban scene, translating the chaotic and fragmentary city into an understandable and familiar space, seems to become increasingly detached from his asphalt environment' (Parsons, 2000: 3). This, however, is not the case with Clarissa since she is a subject who, as Andrew Thacker puts it, 'surrenders' to the city (Thacker, 2003: 159). Indeed, the experience of crowded streets has such a liberating effect upon her that she becomes an inalienable part of the flux. On the other hand, Anna is detached from her environment – her harsh reality in London is blurred with the daydreaming about her native land – but she fails to qualify as a *flâneur* by this definition mainly because she lacks perceptiveness: immersed in her own thoughts, she does not care to observe distinctive features of a certain place, which is why streets, squares, and underground stations that she frequents blur into a unifying picture in her mind. What is more, London is neither understandable nor familiar to Anna; quite the contrary, the metropolis causes bewilderment combined with uncertainty that widen the existing cultural gap. Parsons reminds us that, 'the *flâneur* is . . . also a critical metaphor for the characteristic perspective of the modern artist' (Parsons, 2000: 3). While, for example, Stephen Dedalus from James Joyce's *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* is a protagonist perfectly tailored to this definition, neither Clarissa nor Anna have artistic aspirations. It is true, however, that before moving to London, Anna was on a tour as a 'chorus girl' and even though her close friends suggest her a career of a singer (Rhys, 2000: 43–44), she herself never seriously considers this option.

⁵ Working women enjoyed a slightly different status in public areas in comparison to other unaccompanied women (Nord, 1995: 3). Much cultural evidence on the topic can be found in the paintings of nineteenth-century English social realists.

The reciprocal relationship between the character and the city, *id est* the ways in which the protagonists are influenced by London and vice versa, is an aspect worthy of closer attention. Virginia Woolf opens her novel with an exhaustively analysed statement: 'Mrs Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself' (Woolf, 1996: 3). Having declared her trip to the flower shop, Clarissa makes a list of reasons behind this decision, concluding it with a surge of elation at the day ahead of her: 'And then . . . what a morning – fresh as if issued to children on a beach' (Woolf, 1996: 3). This unspoken exclamation announces her engaging stroll through the streets of London. Flowers are, of course, a mere excuse to enjoy the sunlit morning: having, as her old suitor Peter Walsh scornfully puts it, 'a Conservative husband, like the admirable Richard' (Woolf, 1996: 30), Clarissa has a number of servants to take care of the preparations for the party scheduled to take place that evening. Yet, she derives intense pleasure from that very experience of being out-of-doors. In addition, she uses 'the stimulation of the city to counter the deadening stasis of the home' (Rosner, 2005: 148). Going out offers an escape from the mundane reality of conforming to the strict social norms: 'Much rather would she have been one of those people like Richard who did things for themselves, whereas, she thought . . . half the time she did things not simply, not for themselves; but to make people think this or that' (Woolf, 1996: 8). This sentence provides us with a valuable insight into the social relations in London of the 1920s: for members of the English upper class, preserving a favourable public image becomes a way of living, to which everything else, including the individual's well-being, is subordinated. Indeed, this is neither a peculiarity of London nor of the 1920s, as similar kinds of behaviour were witnessed throughout the 19th and even 18th century. Wandering the streets of London gives Clarissa the chance to break free from the restraints of the top echelon, exemplified in the very home of the Dalloways, where preparations for the party are in full swing. Furthermore, these casual strolls give her a 'sneak peek' of a different life, the one she was never brave enough to embrace. In middle age, disenchanted with the artificiality of her interpersonal relationships, Clarissa is overwhelmed with the feeling of profound regret, which is materialised in her muffled agonised cry: 'Oh if she could have had her life over again! she thought, stepping on to the pavement, could have looked even differently!' (Woolf, 1996: 8). To step on to the pavement is not only to step out of the rigid routine and break the monotony, it is, moreover, a turn towards the rediscovery of the inner self since she finally does something just for her own sake. The revelatory experience of the city turns Clarissa from a subordinate figure of a politician's wife into a true observant subject, a genuine *flâneuse*.

Anna, on the other hand, appears to be a typical ‘negative *flâneuse*’, as Rachel Bowlby terms Rhys’s heroines (Bowlby 1992: 53), in that she refuses to interact and bond with the city. Her experience of London is isolating inasmuch as she is constantly absentminded, despising the cold drizzly weather, and thinking about her childhood in the sunbathed West Indian island of Dominica. When she has a clear purpose set ahead of her, Anna normally uses the public transport. Walks appear to be more of a leisure activity that turns her thoughts away from the lingering uncertainty of the situation in which she found herself in London. Absentmindedly strolling around, she pays little or no attention to her actual surroundings. ‘I walked along’, Anna confesses, ‘imagining that I was going to his house and the look of the street and ringing the bell’ (Rhys, 2000: 125). She walks *imagining* and she also walks simply to kill time, because, ‘[t]here [isn’t] anything much to do all day’ (Rhys, 2000: 34). Her daily schedule consists of getting up late, going out for a walk, coming back home, eating a meal, and, finally, waiting for a message from Walter (Rhys, 2000: 34). While in *Mrs Dalloway* Clarissa’s morning stroll is described in minute detail with many references to the actual city sights, and continues, with minor interruptions, over several pages, in *Voyage in the Dark* Anna’s walks receive just a passing mention, seen as a mere habitual activity to keep her occupied during the day. The spaces through which Anna moves and the people whom she encounters on the way are rarely given any characterisation. Rhys deliberately makes places and people on the streets blend in a dim picture of an unfriendly and unwelcoming city with a view to stressing the stark contrast to the vivid Caribbean island. Elaine Savory, who investigates the politics of colour in the novel, stresses that what lies at the heart of this antithesis is not just ‘the difference between northern and southern locales but a reflection of a difference between feeling activity and strength, signified by vivid jewel colours on the one hand and stress, passivity, self-destructive hostility and inability to feel on the other’ (Savory, 1998: 86).

One instance when London caught Anna’s attention took place in the northeast corner of Hyde Park: a man who stood on a box slightly away from the crowd surrounding the orators in Speakers’ Corner intrigued Anna by his ranting about the God and she wanted to hear what he was saying (Rhys, 2000: 41–42). Before she even had the chance to pause and listen to his speech, her friend Maudie and him exchanged some verbal insults. Maudie interprets this man’s words as an attack on two unchaperoned women; to her, it signals nothing but vulnerability of unaccompanied women in the public, who easily become subject to harassment. Anna’s interpretation is entirely different: ‘I wanted to go back and talk to him and

find out what he was really thinking of, because his eyes had a blind look, like a dog's when it sniffs something' (Rhys, 2000: 42). Yet her passive nature allowed Maudie to persuade her to walk away. Perhaps Anna saw her own reflection in the manic gleam of his eyes, recognising the vicious circle of disillusionment, alienation and helplessness, the mixture of feelings prevalent in the metropolis.

The heretofore analysis indicates that Clarissa and Anna have opposing reactions to the city. Yet, despite the critics' tendency to regard Clarissa as a person full of enthusiasm for motley crowds of London, a less optimistic reading can be found in Laurence Scott's comparative study of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and André Breton's *Nadja*. Drawing a parallel between these two works 'challenges the critical tendency to read Woolf's novel as ultimately optimistic, aligning it more closely with the dark ambiguities of Surrealism' (Scott, 2014: 122). One such point of ambivalence can be found in the scene where Clarissa looks at omnibuses and taxis from the pedestrian crossing (Woolf, 1996: 6). Thacker points out that, '[t]he taxicabs symbolise isolated travel rather than communal experience of train or bus travel, and show a different side to the "life" and vitality of the city, where each day contains danger, particularly of urban anomie' (Thacker, 2003: 159). Although the new modes of transport had already become intrinsic parts of London's cityscape⁶ (Daiches, 1979: 75), almost to the extent that vehicles are characters in the story, their long-term potential effects in relation to the individual's experience of the city had yet to be assessed. Clarissa's sudden anxiety – the feeling that she is out in the sea alone (Woolf, 1996: 6) – is perhaps not only her current state, but a shiver of anticipation. The sense of foreboding is invasive, especially in the context of the metropolis, insofar as it is exhibitiv of her own emotional isolation: this fit of apprehension, mixed perhaps with a twinge of nostalgia, is not accidentally placed after her attempt to justify the split with Peter (Woolf, 1996: 6). The taxicabs are symbolic of the uncertainty that occupies not only Clarissa's inner being but also those of many who wander through the solitude-induced streets.

This links us to Anna's travelling experience of London: even though she occasionally travels on the Tube as well, her taxi rides are of more interest. Physical barriers imposed by these taxi rides prevent her from broadening the circle of people whom she interacts with and further contribute to the solitary way of living. Interpersonal relations in the metropolis, as both novels indicate, are constructed

⁶ Over the course of two decades, London travelled from being traffic-free to being congested with motor vehicles.

socially rather than spatially. On the one hand, Mrs Dalloway clings to the upper class to the extent that she is remarkably reluctant to invite her cousin Ellie Henderson to the party (Woolf, 1996: 87), only because she does not belong to the aristocratic milieu, unlike the rest of Clarissa's guests.⁷ On the other hand, Anna is surrounded with newcomers, like Maudie, Laurie, and Ethel, all three women trying to situate themselves in London. As a result of this limited interaction, Anna keeps recycling her own thoughts, as it is visible from the following quote: 'All the way back in the taxi I was still thinking about home and when I got into bed I lay awake, thinking about it' (Rhys 2000: 49). Comparing Anna to Clarissa, who, Thacker holds, is a prime example of how the conventional urban fears of isolation and separation are overcome if the subject surrenders to the city (Thacker, 2003: 159), underlines Anna's stiff resistance to the new place of residence – her denial to interact with the people of London and engage with the city is, above all else, a denial of the foreign, domineering culture.

WHO IS AT HOME IN THE HEART OF THE EMPIRE?

Nevertheless, we have to be careful not to overlook the paradox that Anna, regardless of her unquestionable alienation, is still an organic part of that city – one among many immigrants, whose influx was about to turn London into a cultural melting pot in subsequent decades. At the time, immigrants coming over primarily from the Commonwealth countries started flocking into the centre of the Empire, building up the diverse social collage. Dell'Amico makes an important point about the dual nature of Anna's status in this increasingly global urban environment: he stresses that, 'Anna as a character and a psychology must be approached beyond the contexts of homelessness and imperial subjectification because she serves Rhys not only as a colonial, but also as a representative Briton in the text' (Dell'Amico, 2005: 48). Rhys's very selection of the topic that gives voice to the minorities living in a multicultural city points towards the conclusion that the concept of Britishness as envisaged and prescribed by the dominant elite is no longer applicable inasmuch as it ceases to be determined by factors such as the cultural, ethnic, religious, or

⁷ It should be noted here that, thanks to Richard's political position, Clarissa moves in the higher echelons of the Establishment, but she herself is not a titled aristocrat. Therefore, the prime minister's attendance at the party will help her dispel any doubts about her social circle and solidify her upper-class status. Throughout the paper, I shall use the term 'aristocracy' interchangeably with 'upper class' as the formal distinction between the two is not essential for the purposes of this analysis.

socio-economic background. Dell'Amico is trying to draw attention to the newcomers who constitute the rising stratum of the London's changing social image. Anna, indeed, has every right to identify as a Londoner on grounds of residence and to identify as British on grounds of heritage, but her denial to forge a new identity is as vehement as Jean Rhys's reaction when asked whether she considers herself an English author: 'No! I'm not, I'm not! I'm not even English' (Plante, 1979: 275).

In writing about Rhys and London, Anna Snaith underlines that '[t]he colonial perspective has no place in the imperial metropolis' (Snaith, 2005: 85). By focusing on a Creole woman on the streets of London, Rhys's narrative emphasises the existence of a colonial perspective, however unwelcome or impossible it might be. Snaith further asserts that imperial decline resulted in '[the] insistence on Englishness that characterized the early twentieth century' (Snaith 2005, 85). In *Voyage in the Dark*, Anna's stepmother Hester serves as the stereotypical figure, who is the embodiment of English conventions. Her fine manners are indicative of imperialistic egotism. Anna recognises this note of skepticism about colonists in her stepmother's voice:

[Hester] had . . . an English lady's voice with a sharp, cutting edge to it. Now that I've spoken you can hear that I'm a lady. I have spoken and I suppose you now realise that I am an English gentlewoman. I have my doubts about you. Speak up and I will place you at once. Speak up, for I fear the worst. That sort of voice. (Rhys, 2000: 50)

Anna senses that, as Homi Bhabha puts it, 'to be Anglicized, is *emphatically* not to be English' (Bhabha, 1984: 128). Too painfully aware that her position within the British society is supposed to be that 'between mimicry and mockery' (Bhabha, 1984: 127), Anna resists conforming to the social conventions of her host country. Her silent refusal to adopt the manners of the English may, on the one hand, have its roots in her feeling of being boycotted by that country. On the one hand, however, this act of resistance may be interpreted as her boycott of the British Empire, carried out in its very heart.

In *Mrs Dalloway*, this aristocratic, somewhat conceited, mindset, which Hester represents in *Voyage in the Dark*, has been studied in more detail: we can spot it on the very first page of the novel when Clarissa reflects on the fact that she has been in London for twenty years: 'For having lived in Westminster – how many years now? over twenty' (Woolf, 1996: 3). Straight from the beginning, the reader is told that we are in the centre of the Empire: Woolf's careful choice of vocabulary – her deliberate use of Westminster rather than London – stresses that,

‘Westminster . . . is at the centre of the novel. Its symbol is Big Ben, heard repeatedly through the course of the day’s events’ (Tambling, 1993: 58). Long residence in the city becomes not only a status symbol, but, more importantly, a way to look down on newcomers. Clarissa, who enjoys the privileges of the highest stratum, has, however, a highly limited involvement with the capital. Mapping out her morning stroll, but also those of other characters,⁸ reveals that for the aristocracy of the time, London begins and ends in Westminster. Not even Westminster as a whole, but only its respectable parts. Regent’s Park, situated at the outskirts of the City, is the remotest spot that any character reaches and it lies only about two miles north to Westminster Bridge (‘Mrs. Dalloway’s London’). With the exception of Septimus’ walk through Regent’s Park (Woolf, 1996: 19) and Elizabeth’s brief bus ride to the Strand (Woolf, 1996: 99-101), other areas of London are left out with a view to stressing the dependency of characters’ spatial patterns upon their social status. Thacker concludes that, ‘the lack of a more socially panoramic picture of the city in *Mrs Dalloway*, is, then, a clear indication of Clarissa Dalloway’s own circumscribed social space’ (Thacker, 2003: 156). Highlighting the strict stratification of the city is, *inter alia*, an effective way to vehemently condemn the society’s fixity as well as a strategy to ‘demythologize bourgeois value systems’, which Lucio Ruotolo pinpoints as one of the great struggles of Woolf’s literature (Ruotolo, 1977: 173).

CONCLUSION

While, on the one hand, *Voyage in the Dark* is directly concerned with the issue of colonial power owing to the protagonist’s strong inner conflict, *Mrs Dalloway*, on the other hand, tackles this issue implicitly, through the political subtext of imperialism, visible predominantly in the exclusionary nature of London’s high society, but also through a set of unwritten rules by which Clarissa abides. The female perspective on London, provided through the intimacy of the first-person narrative, points towards the conclusion that gender subordination was as pervasive as the impact of class stratification. On the whole, London is portrayed as a hostile patriarchal environment, where power and privilege are primarily economically and hereditary conditioned. Positioned at the opposite ends of the social spectrum, Clarissa and Anna are driven by different motives, yet their desire

⁸ For an interactive map of the routes that the characters from Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway* take in London, see ‘Mrs. Dalloway’s London’, provided by Google Maps.

for a change is mutual, as the sense of captivity and fixation is prevalent in both novels. A rare positive projection on an otherwise gloomy metropolis is the emergence of a flaneuse, which came as a result of women's increased access to the public sphere. The newly-discovered possibility for a female to engage with the city independently strikes us not only as an encouragement on the journey of emancipation but also on the way to a more inclusive society, where cultural and ethnic diversity is a feature to be accepted and promoted rather than sanctioned.

Višnja Krstić

RODNE GEOGRAFIJE MOĆI: LONDON U *GOSPOĐI DALOVEJ* VIRDŽINIJE VULF I *PUTOVANJU U MRAKU* DŽIN RIS

Rezime

Ovaj rad predstavlja paralelnu analizu romana *Gospođa Dalovej* Virdžinije Vulf i *Putovanje u mraku* Džin Ris, čije se radnje dešavaju u Londonu u godinama oko Prvog svetskog rata. Budući da se oba romana dešavaju u gradskoj sredini i da su u glavnoj ulozi žene, ova dva dela se dopunjuju u pogledu reprezentacije. U središtu interesovanja su glavne junakinje koje pripadaju različitim društvenim staležima.

Kako bi se stvorila što jasnija slika društvenih staleža Londona tog vremena, rad kombinuje rodnu i geografsku prizmu. Cilj rada jeste da istraži dva aspekta: prvo, položaj protagonistkinja u rodnom, a zatim i u društvenom kontekstu. Glavni argument ovog rada jeste da je London u ova dva romana izvor dvostruke marginalizacije – grad nepravedan prema kolonijalnim subjektima, a takođe nepravedan prema ženama iz svih društvenih staleža. Kao teorijsku osnovu, rad koristi koncept rodne geografije moći kako bi otkrio kompleksne načine na koje različite strukture moći utiču na gradski pejzaž, kako na makro, tako i na mikro nivou.

Metodološki gledano, ovaj rad oslanja se u potpunosti na interpretaciju zasnovanu na rodnom čitanju, služeći se pritom pominim čitanjem. Rezultati istraživanja navode na sledeće zaključke: dok je Ana, glavna junakinja *Putovanja u mraku*, mlada žena koja je u London došla iz daleke kolonije, te je tako „autsajder“ bez stalne adrese, Klarisa Dalovej, protagonistkinja romana *Gospođa Dalovej*, mada naizgled privilegovana, sputana je time što metropolu doživljava sasvim ograničeno. Takvi rezultati potvrđuju pretpostavku da je Londonu tog vremena surovo mesto ne samo za osobe koje su se doselile iz kolonija, već i žene svih društvenih staleža, pa čak i onih najviših, odavno odomaćenih u metropoli.

Ključne reči: rodne geografije moći, Virdžinija Vulf, Džin Ris, *Gospođa Dalovej*, *Putovanje u mraku*, London, Prvi svetski rat, Kreoli.

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