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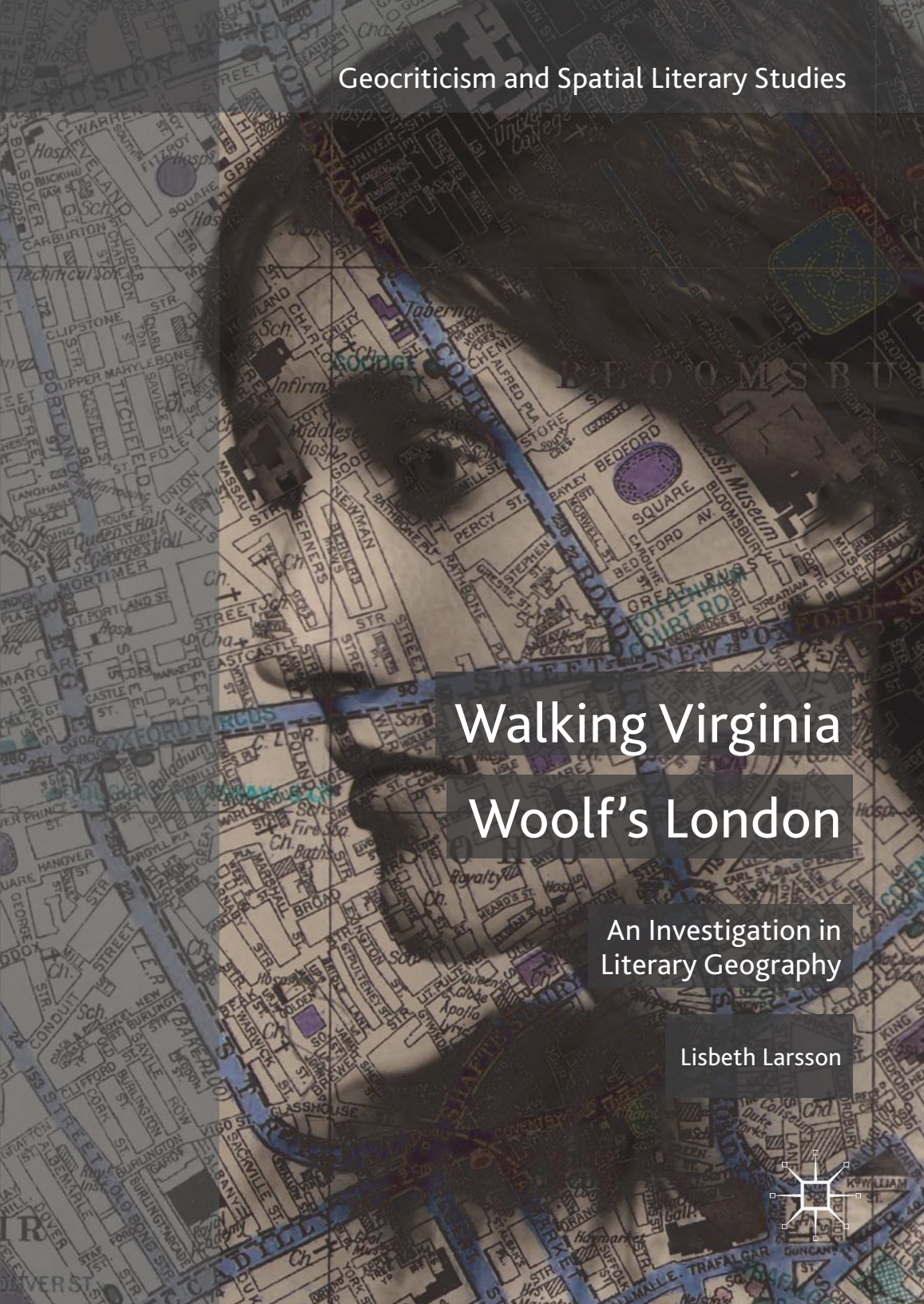

Walking Virginia Woolf's London

An Investigation in Literary Geography

Lisbeth Larsson

Geocriticism and Spatial Literary Studies

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Walking Virginia Woolf's London

An Investigation in Literary Geography

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Thanks also to my son Martin for introducing me to Google Maps.

Summary

Walking Virginia Woolf's London: An Investigation in Literary Geography employs theoretical tools from the field of literary geography to explore Virginia Woolf's writing and the ways in which she constructs her human subjects.

The city of London is the main setting in Woolf's novels. They abound with names of streets, parks and monuments, and her characters are continuously walking about in London. By following their routes, turns, shortcuts, dead ends, resting points and stops on the map of London, one becomes aware that Woolf constructs the characters in her stories in a very politically conscious way. None of Woolf's characters are able to walk just anywhere, at any time in history or at any time of the day. Time, place and gender/class form the conditions of life that the characters have to deal with, accept or challenge.

Written in an abundant and easy to read language, *Walking Virginia Woolf's London: An Investigation in Literary Geography* could be read both as a new kind of introduction to Woolf's work and an innovative and original contribution to the research on Woolf's writing.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Virginia Woolf's writing is full of walks. Short walks, such as that of Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose in Woolf's debut novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), and long walks, such as Jacob's triumphant early morning walk from Hammersmith to Holborn in her breakthrough novel, *Jacob's Room* (1922). The indisputably best-known and most discussed walk is that of Mrs. Dalloway through Westminster and Mayfair to buy flowers in Bond Street at the beginning of the novel that bears her name (1925). In the context of feminist theory, a central role is played by the walk of Woolf's alter ego in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), which takes her from the men's college in the centre of the fictitious university town of Oxbridge to the women's college on the outskirts of the same town.

Woolf walked a lot herself—often several hours a day—either alone or in the company of others, frequently her husband. The possibility of taking walks was an important factor in her choice of holiday homes; there are wonderful areas for walking in the part of south-east England, the South Downs, where she first rented various places before buying a house in the village of Rodmell. But most of all she loved London with its hustle and bustle, where she could move about freely and anonymously. "I love walking in London" says Clarissa Dalloway to Hugh Whitbread when she meets him in St. James' Park on her walk towards the flower shop on Bond Street: "Really it's better than walking in the country."[1] The words could have been Woolf's own.

In the essay "Street Haunting: A London Adventure" (1927) she describes, in ecstatic phrases, how wonderful it is to walk in London at

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dusk, "between tea and dinner".[2] She said time and again that walking made her happy and put her in high spirits. It also offered material for her writing and energised her writing process.[3] She discovered exciting streets, interesting people, inspiring situations and invigorating parks everywhere. There runs through her diaries and letters, as well as through her novels and short stories, a paean to the metropolis of London with its parks, omnibuses, bridges, balustrades and web of streets.

In the present book, I wish to take my reader to a city that is both the actual city of London and an elaborate fiction. When walking in London and, as I have had the pleasure of doing, following the routes that are mapped out in Woolf's novels, one discovers both a city and a literary oeuvre. One notices how she points out the impasses and obstacles to be found there, both literally and metaphorically, and how she has built in possibilities of choosing new and unknown routes, depending on time, biological sex and class.

Several Woolf scholars have argued that London is the very purpose of her writing.[4] I would rather say that the map of London is the stage on which she places her characters, and the context in which she creates them. The map of London is the reality that her characters have to deal with. It is, to use Edward W. Soja's concept, a "real-and-imagined place".[5] In this representation of the real London she finds the obstacles that her characters need to surmount and the opportunities they can grasp. In contrast to a fictitious map, the map of London cannot be manipulated—and that is an important point. In the interplay between fact and fiction that increasingly occupied Woolf in her novels, she makes her characters wrestle with the city. The city displays the fixed conditions of their lives, the conditions by which they have been shaped and through which they shape themselves.

In Woolf's works, the city is the material foundation of the modern human being. In what is now considered her classic essay about "The New Biography" (1927), she argues that when describing a human being one has to take into account, on the one hand, what is real and true and, on the other, what may be called 'personality':

> And if we think of truth as something of granite-like solidity and of personality as something of rainbow-like intangibility and reflect that the aim of biography is to weld these two into one seamless whole, we shall admit that the problem is a stiff one and that we need not wonder if biographers have for the most part failed to solve it.[6]

Woolf herself chose to narrate the lives of human beings in the form of novels. She wrote only one real biography, about her friend the art historian, critic and painter Roger Fry, but two parodies of biography, *Orlando* (1928) and *Flush* (1933). The former describes a person who lives to be nearly 400 years old, and is transformed halfway through life from a man into a woman; the latter is about a dog. It is as if Woolf never tired of mocking the rigid descriptions of people in Victorian biographies. Even in her other novels, the traditional biography is constantly treated with irony. When in her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, the young man Hirst "propose[s] that each member of this party now gives a short biographical sketch of himself or herself", and insists that they "keep to the facts", as in a biographical dictionary, the reader who knows their Woolf realises that this is not the man the young girl Rachel is going to fall in love with. Rachel's other admirer, Hewet, who encourages her instead to talk about her daily walks, has a better chance.[7]

Woolf grew up in the embrace of Victorian biography, in a very literal manner of speaking. In the year she was born, her father, Leslie Stephen, began working on the *Dictionary of National Biography*, to which he contributed a number of comprehensive articles. As an adult she lived among intellectuals who constantly questioned the Victorian view of human nature and the corresponding way of describing individual human beings. Her close friend Lytton Strachey, who was also for a short period her fiancé, was the inventor of what has often been called 'the new biography'. John Maynard Keynes redefined the human being in economic terms; T.S. Eliot, in turn, described the human being in a new way in his modernist poetry; Roger Fry, Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell, Woolf's sister, did so in their paintings. Through her works, Woolf joined this project. In her novels she wanted to write about the modern human being in a modern way, challenge the conventions of class and gender, and shake up the idea of a complete and consistent subject, which was fundamental to the biographical descriptions of the time. In various ways, she would even try to write 'beyond' the individualism that was central to the genre.

In Woolf's novels, people's paths of life and range of movements are determined by place, time, class and biological sex. They move about in accordance with the strong but invisible powers that she returns to time after time. The walk, the movement, is, however, always liberating. It is when her characters move about that things happen. Employing a concept from the Russian literary theoretician Mikhail Bakhtin, I define

the London walk as the 'chronotope' of Woolf's novels—it is "where the knots of the narrative are tied and untied".[8] During walks on London's streets, time and place meet in a determining way and something important takes place, while at the same time the conditions of life become visible and it is possible to transcend them.[9]

In novel upon novel, Woolf anchors her characters in London's web of streets. This is the space in which she has them come into existence, gives them life and lets them move about. The names of the streets and the addresses are, with a few exceptions, meticulously specified. However, depending on the period in which her characters are placed, as well as on their sex and class affiliation, the streets offer different opportunities and obstacles.[10] When in *The Years* Colonel Pargiter slips into a small house in the shadow of Westminster, Woolf makes him cast anxious glances to the left and right. The year is 1880 and he has come to a slum to visit a woman and does not want to be seen. Thirty-five years later his daughter Eleanor finds her way to the same address: she is visiting her cousin Maggie and her family. The social decline that has affected the family is made clear, and at the same time the transformation of the city also becomes visible. The major slum clearances that were undertaken in London in the early twentieth century have made it possible for a lower middle-class family to live here.

By tracing the addresses mentioned, it is possible to see, in a very concrete way, what Woolf is talking about and it also reveals her view of biography, namely that the position in space and time of the body, which is defined by class and biological sex, determines what a person is and can be. It also shows how deeply political her fiction is. All too often Woolf has been seen as an unworldly and esoteric author, and this was held against her for a long time. However, reading her novels alongside the map of London, one is struck by the severity of her criticism of the class society, the patriarchy and, not least, British colonialism.

Virginia Woolf's Homes

The most important geographical move in Woolf's own life took place in 1904 when she moved from 22 Hyde Park Gate in Kensington, where she had grown up, to 46 Gordon Square in Bloomsbury. Her older sister Vanessa "had chosen Bloomsbury because of its distance from Kensington and all it stood for", as Jean Moorcroft Wilson puts it in

Map 1.1 Virginia Woolf's Homes. **1**. 22 Hyde Park Gate 1882–1905. **2**. 46 Gordon Square 1905–1907. **3**. 29 Fitzroy Square 1907–1911. **4**. 38 Brunswick Square 1911–1912. **5**. 13 Clifford's Inn 1912–1913. **6**. 17 The Green, Richmond 1914–1915. **7**. 52 Tavistock Square 1924–1939. **8**. 37 Mecklenburgh Square 1939–1940. **9**. Hogarth House, Richmond 1915–1924

her very informative and exhaustive book on *Virginia Woolf's London: A Guide to Bloomsbury and Beyond*.[11]

The move involved breaking with one world and stepping into another. With this move, Woolf entered the social and mental space that would be hers for the rest of her life. However, that does not mean that she stayed at this particular address. On the contrary, it is striking how many addresses she managed to live at, both in the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury and elsewhere (Map 1.1).[12] But it was to this part

of London, the name of which has become associated with the group of people who were her friends, that she linked the intellectual positions that would be transformed into her novels.

The impetus for Woolf and her siblings to find a new home in 1904 was the death of their father. At last they were able to leave the home that had been a relatively happy one until their mother's death in 1895, but had then changed into a dark prison. Until then, the year had been divided between a restricted, orderly life in Hyde Park Gate in the winter and rather more relaxed summers in Cornwall, where the family rented the summer cottage Talland House in the village of St. Ives. When their mother died, their father gave up Talland House, no longer wanting to return there. Woolf's autobiography and diaries reveal how painful this was to her. As an adult she systematically sought a new Talland House; not in Cornwall, however, but in the lovely, undulating landscape of the South Downs in Sussex, where she lived in several places until she and her husband, Leonard Woolf, found Monk's House in the village of Rodmell in 1919.

Monk's House was to become the couple's lasting, and Virginia Woolf's final, home. During the German bombings in the Second World War, their London house in Tavistock Square was destroyed and soon afterwards the house in Mecklenburgh Square to which they had fled was left in ruins.

In the scholarship on Woolf, there is great interest in the relationship between the places she lived and those described in her fiction. Above all, the focus has been on two places: St. Ives in Cornwall and Bloomsbury. Despite the fact that Woolf set *To the Lighthouse* (1927) in the Hebrides, it has become something of an established truth that the place described is in fact St. Ives. And although the characters in her novels seldom turn up in Bloomsbury, this part of London is presented in the literature about Woolf as her literary landscape par excellence nonetheless. However, as this book shows, the main setting in Woolf's fiction is never in the part of London that is associated with her and her friends. Mary Datchet admittedly works in Bloomsbury in *Night and Day* (1919), and Jacob in *Jacob's Room* and Peter Walsh in *Mrs. Dalloway* both live there for a short time, but the important events in Woolf's novels always take place in central London, in the area around Fleet Street and the Strand.

Woolf herself lived in this very area for a couple of months. When she and Leonard Woolf married in 1912, the couple chose to begin their life together a slight distance away from their circle of siblings and friends and rented a couple of rooms at Clifford's Inn, immediately north of the

Strand. Shortly after returning from their honeymoon, however, Woolf had a psychological breakdown and her husband decided that central London and Bloomsbury were harmful to her. They then moved to his childhood neighbourhood in the suburb of Richmond, where they lived for 10 years until, in 1924, they found a new London address at Tavistock Square in Bloomsbury.

In her fiction, Woolf uses her own address only twice, and in both cases it is the Richmond address. Thus, in *The Voyage Out* she has the motherless Rachel live in the house of two childless aunts in precisely the area where she and her husband had lived for a decade, and Woolf cannot sufficiently stress how stifling, remote from everything and everybody, life is in a setting so far away from London. And in *The Years* (1937)—as if with a grimace—she exiles the worn-out maid Crosby to a rented room in the same neighbourhood of Richmond.

Mapping

"The act of writing itself might be consider as a form of mapping or cartographic activity", writes Robert T. Tally in his fundamental analysis of the growing area of research that has come to be called literary geography. From this point of view drawing a map is the same as telling a story.[13]

It was with the realist literature of the nineteenth century that maps of the expanding European metropolises became an important part of the art of narrating a novel. In the works of authors such as Honoré de Balzac, Émile Zola and Charles Dickens, the reader can follow the protagonists as they move about in the streets of Paris and London. In his *Atlas of the European Novel: 1800–1900*, Franco Moretti not only indicates where the period's European authors are found, he also points out the places where their heroes and villains appear, for example, in Balzac's Paris and Dickens's London.[14] The city map was to play an even larger role in the modernist novels. For example, James Joyce wrote his modernist milestone *Ulysses* with a map of Dublin in front of him.[15] We do not know whether Woolf made such concrete use of the map of London for her work, but in her archive there is a sketch of a map showing the walks in *Mrs. Dalloway*.[16] At first, the way in which Woolf and other modernist authors employed this 'method of maps' may seem to be the same as that employed by the realists. In practice, however, they differ in an important respect. It may in fact be argued that this is where the clearest difference is to be found between the realist and extrovert

literature of the nineteenth century, on the one hand, and the twentieth century introvert modernist texts, on the other.

Whereas, in general, the reference to a street in Balzac, Zola and Dickens is followed by a long description of the street and its environment, in Woolf and other modernists the mentioning of an address instead replaces the description. In her novels, Woolf mentions street addresses all the time, as well as exact walking routes and traffic directions, but without letting the reader 'see' them. "Streets are named but never described", as Eric Bulson writes—quoting James Joyce's biographer, Frank Budgen—in his interesting discussion of the paradigm shift from realism to modernism.[17] The name of the street anchors the narration in an outer reality, but this is not what is interesting to the modernist writer of novels. What is interesting is the subject and the inner reality of the human being. Agreeing with the literary theorist Georg Lucáks, who claimed in *The Theory of the Novel* (1914) that the modern novel was sustained by a "transcendental homelessness", Bulson even claims that the many addresses in modernist novels do not serve to inform the reader of the fictional characters' whereabouts on the city map. Rather, the function of the addresses, he argues, is to describe the feeling of losing direction and going wrong that is central to the modernist life view.[18]

In modern and post-modern literary theory there is a manifest unwillingness to link the places named in literature with concrete geographical localities in anything more than a metaphorical sense. Virginia Woolf herself gave expression to this in her 1905 review in *The Times Literary Supplement* of *The Dickens Country* and *The Thackeray Country*, where she wrote that there was a risk that the books would severely disappoint visitors to these places.[19] The landscape described by the author in her or his novels is not the same as the geographical landscape: it is created in the author's mind. Just as Woolf profiled herself against the realist authors and their interpreters, who equated a specific geographical place with a place in a novel, most scholars within the field of literary geography profile themselves against the traditional static view of geographical places by stressing their dynamic and changing character instead. In differentiating between place and space, as did the fundamental theoreticians in this field, Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau, one avoids the guidebook fallacy that Woolf alerted us to.[20] On the basis of de Certeau's assertion in *The Practice of Everyday Life* that "space is a practiced place", one can see how the concrete indications of places in Woolf's novels are transformed by

the walks taken by her characters into spaces filled with the meaning that a subjective investment in a specific place provides.[21] Turning this around, as the theoretician Yi-Fu Tuan has done, one can also see how shared public spaces full of history are transformed into concrete places that provide meaning when someone stops there and relates to them.[22]

What characterises the art of Woolf's novels, Thacker writes in *Moving through Modernity: Space and Geography in Modernism*, is that it "constantly plays across the spatial borders of inner and outer, constructing a fiction that shows how material spaces rely upon imaginative conceptualisation, and how the territory of the mind is informed by an interaction with external spaces and places".[23] One would be equally justified in saying that what characterises Woolf's novels is the systematic way in which she shifts between space and place by allowing them to interact, merge and be differentiated. When, for example, in *Mrs. Dalloway* Peter Walsh wanders down Whitehall towards Trafalgar Square after his unsuccessful visit to his youthful sweetheart Clarissa Dalloway, he is moving in a space that is almost overburdened with English nationalism and imperialism. He thinks about Clarissa who seems dead to him. He grimaces at the statue of the Duke of Cambridge and walks facetiously in step with the young soldiers marching along Whitehall. He is part of the scene and at the same time is not. When he gets to Trafalgar Square and walks between the gigantic statues of military heroes, space thickens. The Empire's history becomes almost palpable. But Woolf does not probe it. Instead she moves quickly to turn the public space into a specific geographic and personally significant place by allowing Peter Walsh to come to a stop in front of the statue of General Gordon and remember him as his childhood hero. A given space becomes a place and acquires a specific meaning, while at the same time it contributes to and becomes part of the general understanding of the London space.[24]

The characters in Woolf's novels are firmly anchored in time, place and body. Tracing the routes taken on foot and by car that Woolf has plotted on the map of London in her works sheds a unique light on her continuous examination of the importance in people's lives of place, time, class affiliation and gender—as well as their inner world of dreams and desires. What endows place with significance is, as Tally writes, the narrative.[25] And this is true. But at the same time, in Woolf's novels it is more often the opposite: place is what endows the narrative with meaning. For instance, in the example of Peter Walsh, his actual position in Trafalgar Square is what

indicates his place in both history and in the story. This is what makes it possible to understand his character, choices and shortcomings.

The narrator's geographical perspective in Woolf's novels shifts between two fundamental positions. In novels such as *Night and Day* and *Mrs. Dalloway*, the author follows closely in the footsteps of the protagonists at the same time as she describes their routes on the map of London. They are, and she with them, to use the words of Michel de Certeau, "walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it".[26] In a novel like *Jacob's Room*, on the other hand, Woolf adopts a bird's-eye view, which is de Certeau's point of departure when he observes New York from the top of the World Trade Centre and sees "The ordinary practitioners of the city live 'down below', below the thresholds at which visibility begins".[27] Nor does Woolf permit Jacob to write any complete text on the map of London. Rather, she mainly allows him to emerge here and there like one small dot among the teeming London crowds. He is one among many and will soon, like many other young Englishmen, vanish into one of the First World War's mass graves. Unlike the women in the novel, however, he turns up all over the entire map of London while they are linked to individual, separate and highly specific places.

"[S]pace and place, spaces and places, and our sense of them (and such related things as our degree of mobility) are gendered through and through. Moreover they are gendered in a myriad different ways, which vary between cultures and over time", Doreen Massey claims in *Space, Place, and Gender* (1994).[28] In the mapping in her novels, Woolf reveals London's class and gender codes very explicitly. Men and women cannot go where they like, when they like, either historically or at different times of day. In her first novel, Woolf already raises the double gender problem of women's ignorance of sexuality and their sexual vulnerability through a discussion about walking. "So that's why I can't walk alone!" Rachel exclaims when she realises that the women that walk along Piccadilly are prostitutes.[29] Woolf also expresses her most direct criticism of the prevailing gender hierarchy in terms of walking. When in *The Years* the young girl Rose slips out of her home to buy a toy she has been dreaming of and saving up for, she is the victim of a sexual assault that will colour the rest of her life.

Maps

In his 1924 essay "Geography and Some Explorers", Joseph Conrad, one of the authors Woolf admired most, maintained that the West had gone through three phases of cartography.[30] The first was in the Middle Ages, when maps were imaginary constructs.[31] During the second phase, which was associated with exploration and colonialism, the white areas on the map were progressively filled in. And in the third phase, which he believed he himself belonged to, everything had been measured out and filled in with scientific precision. The project of cartography appeared to Conrad to have been completed. However, for several decades now, we have found ourselves in a fourth phase, that of cyber cartography, in which maps are communicated by means of satellites. This is a technology that has developed very quickly and has, since the 1990s, become increasingly interactive and even begun to include movement and sound.[32]

Thanks to the Internet and Google Maps, since 2006 we have had direct access to up-to-date photographic maps of cities and landscapes, with close-up views of streets, squares and individual houses. Using Google Maps, it is possible to construct one's own maps on the basis of the maps that are already there, just as Woolf did in her fiction. The tools that are found on the Internet also make it possible for users to do exactly what Woolf did and adopt a bird's-eye perspective in order to subsequently zoom in on the street or house that they want to study close-up.

The maps printed in this book—and which I refer to in the main text—can also be found on the Internet.

In contrast to the places on the map of London that Charles Dickens employed in his fiction—which have been plotted meticulously by a great number of scholars[33]—it is still possible to make one's way around London with the map that Woolf worked with. In the course of the major clearances and modernisation and reorganisation projects that central London underwent at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, many of the alleys and houses that were the whereabouts of Dickens's characters disappeared and the city that is found in Woolf's novels began to take shape. The Victoria and Chelsea Embankments, which play such a major role in her early works, were built to create a new centre, along with the Strand, further away from the river. The neighbourhoods of Holborn and those to the immediate

west of the City, with all their small theatres, pubs, gambling dens and brothels—Charles Dickens's London—were torn down, as Kingsway, a central street in Woolf's fictive world, was constructed, connecting northern London with the Strand.

Many of Dickens's novels are set in the same geographical area as Woolf's, but whereas central London in Dickens's novels is a chaotic, dangerous and dilapidated area with all kinds of unpleasant and untrustworthy characters, in Woolf's novels it is more of a creative and innovative venue. This is where she has the dream of the future materialise: that of the New Woman as well as of the liberated encounter between men and women. The centre of London and in particular the areas around Kingsway, Fleet Street and the Strand are, to use a term from Gillian Rose's *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (1993), "paradoxical places".[34] These are open spaces. The gender order, the established mechanism of discrimination and exclusion, is suspended, but not, however, replaced by a new one, and there is diversity and the possibility of something new.

This book is organised chronologically. In it I examine how Woolf works with place, time, gender and class, from her debut novel *The Voyage Out* (1915) to the posthumously published *Between the Acts* (1941). This approach turned out to yield an interesting story in and of itself.

It is easy to see in Woolf's early works how her enthusiasm for the possibilities of the metropolis is constantly growing. The power of the place seems to be able to lift both men and women, but especially women, out of the straightjacket that biological sex represented in the periods described. However, after *Mrs. Dalloway*, which is set in Woolf's own era, she appears more sceptical as to whether not only the city but also the categories she is working with and about can contribute to the narrative of the human being that she is endeavouring to write. In *To the Lighthouse*, *Orlando* and *The Waves* (1931), she stretches her categories to their utmost, as if attempting to see if human beings can be described without them.

When in *The Years* she once again places her narrative on the map of London, her faith in the city has begun to crumble and in the novel that follows she increasingly and ever more strongly criticises the oppositions of gender and of the class characteristic of London. By *Between the Acts*, her faith in the liberating power of the city has completely disappeared.

London is no longer "a paradoxical place". It is a black hole of patriarchal forces, where a woman can no longer walk safely.

Notes

1. Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), ed. Anne E. Fernald (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015) p. 5.
2. Virginia Woolf, "Street Haunting: A London Adventure" (1927), in *Collected Essays* IV (London: Hogarth Press, 1967).
3. Jean Moorcroft Wilson, *Virginia Woolf: Life and London: A Biography of Place* (London: Cecil Woolf Publishers, 1987), p. 10 (Wilson 1987).
4. Dorothy Brewster, *Virginia Woolf's London* (New York: New York University Press, 1960); David Bradshaw, "'Great Avenues of Civilizations': The Victoria Embankment and Piccadilly Circus Underground Station in the Novels of Virginia Woolf and Chelsea Embankment in *Howards End*", in Giovanni Cianci, Caroline Patey and Sara Sullam (eds.), *Transits. The Nomadic Geographies of Anglo-American Modernism* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), p. 206; Susan Merrill Squier, *Virginia Woolf and London: The Sexual Politics of the City* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985) (Brewster 1960; Bradshaw 2010; Squier 1985).
5. Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace. Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 1996) (Soja 1996).
6. Virginia Woolf, "The New Biography" (1927), *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, vol. 4, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth Press, 1994).
7. Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* (London: Duckworth and Company, 1915), p. 160.
8. Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogical Imagination*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 250 (Bakhtin 1981).
9. Mikhail Bakhtin, op. cit., p. 84.
10. Robert T. Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 80 (Tally 2013).
11. Jean Moorcroft Wilson, *Virginia Woolf's London: A Guide to Bloomsbury and Beyond* (1st ed. 1987; 2nd ed., London and New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2000), p. 41 (Wilson 2000).
12. See Map 1.1. Virginia Woolf's Homes; cf. also http://www.atlantisbok.se/7880.Bok-Promenader_i_Virginia_Woolfs_London__. The homepage of the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain includes a list of Virginia Woolf's various homes in London, compiled in 1999 by the Woolf scholar Stuart N. Clarke: http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.co.uk/vw_res.london.htm. Similarly, the British Tourist Information website includes

a page about Virginia Woolf's London houses: http://www.infobritain.co.uk/Virginia_Woolf_Biography_And_Visits.htm.

13. Robert T. Tally, op. cit., p. 45.
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CHAPTER 2

Dreaming of London—*The Voyage Out*

"As the streets that lead from the Strand to the Embankment are very narrow, it is better not to walk down them arm-in-arm" is the first sentence in Virginia Woolf's first novel.[1] She began her literary career with the description of a walk, and moving about in London—on foot, by cab, bus or car—was to become a fundamental feature in her writing. This first walk in her works is short but packed with the issues that she would continue to elaborate on in her fiction: issues of class, gender, place and space, and about who is able to move around where, how and when. Furthermore, the walk is set in the central area in London that would become the predominant setting in her works.

Time and again Woolf would return to this area in her books, but only once did she allow a man and a woman to walk happily arm-in-arm in the centre of the city: in the final scene of her second novel, *Night and Day*, in which Katharine and Ralph stroll in precisely this part of London. It is night and their arms are lovingly interlocked. However, as we shall see, even on that occasion it may be questioned whether it is possible for a woman to be happy together with a man.

Mrs. Ambrose in *The Voyage Out* does not like walking arm-in-arm with her husband. In fact, one might argue that all of Woolf's novels are about a female dream of walking alone and independently through the city, while at the same time throughout her oeuvre there flows, like a strong current, the vision of arm-in-arm companionship between a man and a woman. The reason Mrs. Ambrose is nevertheless clinging to her husband's arm is that she cannot manage without his support, as they

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