Modernist Movements:
Border Crossings and Ways of Knowing
in the Literature of Anglo-American Women, 1913-1930

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Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>‘BI’</td>
<td>Djuna Barnes, Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians</td>
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<td>‘GM’</td>
<td>Djuna Barnes, The Grande Malade</td>
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<td>‘GV’</td>
<td>Djuna Barnes, Greenwich Village As It Is</td>
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<td>‘H’</td>
<td>Djuna Barnes, The Hatmaker</td>
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<td>‘HM’</td>
<td>Djuna Barnes, The Hem of Manhattan</td>
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<td>‘SN’</td>
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<td>SP</td>
<td>Olive Moore, <em>Spleen</em></td>
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<td>TO</td>
<td>Natalie Clifford Barney, <em>The One Who Is Legion or A.D.’s After-Life</em></td>
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Abstract

This thesis proposes a new way of thinking about relations between literary modernism and movement by exploring the writings of Anglo-American women published between 1913 and 1930. Crossing borders to ‘foreign’ places is an instance of movement particularly relevant to the colonial geopolitics and ethnographic projects in Britain, Europe and North America in the early twentieth century. In the discourse of anthropology and sexology – gradually emerging as disciplines with ‘scientific’ ambitions at the time – travels abroad served as a way of gathering knowledge empirically: ‘men of science’ traversing national borders to gather data is a central and gendered aspect in the production of anthropological and sexological knowledge. This thesis brings into critical focus the scientific paradigm of travel with the aim of illustrating the ways in which border crossings and ‘foreign’ spaces figure in literature’s engagement with forms of knowing sexual otherness in the early twentieth century. Texts by Olive Moore, Natalie Clifford Barney, and Djuna Barnes are read as sites appropriating and interrogating movement as a gendered way of knowing through experiments with narrative movement, textual space, female authorship, and the legibility of eccentric bodies.

How movement is mobilised as a practice of knowing sexual otherness not only in anthropological and sexological publications but also in modernist studies is the subject of Chapter One. Chapters Two to Four explore the distinct ways in which the complex relationship between gendered movement and sexual knowledge shapes the experimental aesthetics of texts published by Anglo-American women writers between 1913 and 1930. Chapter Two examines how the story of an ‘unnatural’ English woman’s emigration to an island in Southern Italy in Moore’s *Spleen* (1930) aligns deviations from gender norms with geographical peripheries but, at the same time, complicates this correspondence. The oscillation between loyally replicating and ironically mimicking ‘scientific’ discourse on gender, sexuality and race characterize a novel invested in figuring itself as different whilst taking dialectical recourse to existing paradigms of difference. Chapter Three probes how the ‘journey of discovery’ in Barney’s *The One Who Is Legion* or A.D.’s *After-Life* (1930) unfolds in form of the protagonist’s quest for a genderless existence and in form of the text’s search for a new way of representing outside of any literary traditions. The novel seeks to overcome the reproduction of sameness – encapsulated in procreative heterosexuality – by exploring the potential of liminal states and spaces as grounds for difference. Chapter Four illustrates the significance of travel as an exceptionally productive concept, uniting aspects ranging from the skill of literary representation and the production of knowledge to female authorship, in newspaper articles and short stories published by Barnes between 1913 and 1930. By taking recourse to the language and logic of tourism many of her pieces pose questions about travelling and storytelling as ways of producing authentic representations about a place and its people.

Geographical frameworks and spatial concepts proliferate in current approaches to literary modernist studies. The thesis contributes to this critical momentum by exploring a less considered line of inquiry: rather than examining the kind of knowledges a spatial concept like movement yields it probes how a number of female-authored texts playfully interrogate how moving across space is implicated in a process of knowing sexual otherness, as a male prerogative, in the early twentieth century. How these texts respond to the gendered discourse of movement as a ‘scientific’ way of knowing presents a yet little examined aspect of the epistemological and aesthetic concerns of female modernist writers.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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INTRODUCTION

Modernist Movements

In the field of modernist studies, the notions of movement, motion, mobility, border crossing and travel have been repeatedly examined in relation to literary texts of the early twentieth century. Each lexical choice indicates a specific conceptualisation of the act of changing a physical location, exploiting a term’s semantic possibilities, disciplinary genealogy, and historical trajectories to signal the nature and scale of the scholarly intervention. In anthropological, ethnological and sexological discourses, for instance, border crossings refer to human populations and bodies – gendered, sexualised, and racialised – travelling across a specific cartographic boundary, leaving one place, nation or culture and arriving at another. Movement, on the other hand, is a term typically deployed to describe the mechanics of motion in more abstract terms. In poststructuralist and queer theory, developing in the mid-twentieth century, the idea of a distinct boundary between any two entities such home/abroad or foreign/familiar comes under scrutiny precisely by celebrating movement as an infinite process, pre-empting the possibility of arrival.¹

Modernist scholarship has tapped these two disciplinary approaches to the act of going from place to place with the aim of unravelling the importance of border crossings and movements to the lives and literary aesthetics of writers in the early twentieth century. On the one hand, studies identify experiences of border crossings and encounters with foreign individuals, cultures and nations as influential inspirations for the modernist styles of male and female authors; on the other hand, literary critics use a more abstract understanding of movement and motion to scrutinise typical features of modernist aesthetics. This latter approach views movement as a kinetic phenomenon that, similar to the term ‘queer,’ captures the instability inhering in language and sexuality as sites generating meaning and identity: it is this instability which concerns modernist literature.² Diametrically opposed to border

¹ The feminist and queer theorist Judith Butler, for example, describes the term queer as ‘a point of departure for a set of historical reflections and futural imaginings,’ whose ultimate destination remains open-ended. See Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’, 2nd edn (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 173.
² On the contingency of sexuality as a concept, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s insight that ‘sex/sexuality does tend to represent the full spectrum of positions between the most intimate and the most social, the most predetermined and the most aleatory, the most physically rooted and the most symbolically fused, the most
crossings between a point of departure and the place of arrival, yielding unique discoveries and authentic encounters, such movements designate departures falling short of arrivals and discoveries. If caught in the process of movement the traveller continuously drifts without ever arriving in the double sense of attaining a fixed meaning in the process of reading and of beholding a definite sight in the process of travelling.

This distinction between conventional travels and subversive movements – the nomenclatural choice carries a value judgement: colonial travel versus deconstructive movement – is helpfully illustrated by Catherine Malabou’s reflections on the voyage in *Counterpath: Traveling with Jacques Derrida*. In the preface the French philosopher writes:

> Travelers drift as far as their arrival, thus completing the circle of destination. Within that circle there can and must be produced what confers on the voyage its sense and allows it to be distinguished from a simple movement or displacement, namely the event of the foreigner.³

Malabou unravels the meanings of travelling as that which happens in the space between arriving (at a destination) and deriving (from an origin) with the aim of distinguishing between two types of journeys: the traditional conception of the voyage embraced by ‘the West’ and epitomised by the Odyssey, on the one hand, and Jacques Derrida’s theorisations of drifting, derivation, and catastrophe placed in the service of a deconstructive practice, on the other. Blurring the boundaries between the literal and the figurative, Malabou not only considers journeys across geographical space but also regards the drifts enacted by words: the incessant displacement of one meaning with another which Derrida illustrates through a spatialisation of language.⁴ For Malabou, as the quotation above indicates, a defining feature of the ordinary voyage is an experience of the unexpected, unfamiliar, adventurous, and exotic summarised in the phrase ‘the event of the foreigner’. If the authentic voyage requires

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by definition the event of unforeseen alterity then, paradoxically, the sudden becoming flesh of the Other – in form of ‘a present being’ or ‘the thing itself’ – is, in fact, an occurrence calculated and anticipated before its arrival.\(^5\) This makes the catastrophe of the event ‘a disciplined catastrophe’ insofar as it derives from and takes place within the predesigned possibilities of an already established order. The insistence voiced by anthropologists like Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) and sexologists such as Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) that the travelling researcher needs to be versed in ‘foreshadowed problems’ and ‘the main points for investigation’ to bring home reliable knowledge about ‘tribal behaviour’ and ‘homosexual traces’ exemplifies the paradox troubling the notion of discoveries.\(^6\) ‘All types of travel narratives’ including ‘ethnological observations,’ Malabou elaborates, ‘obey a law that decrees that the truth of travel amounts to unveiling a sense of the foreign that remains accessible to the traveller’.\(^7\) Border crossings and the event of the foreigner are mutually dependent.

Among the multiple denotations of ‘to arrive’ and ‘to derive’ the traditional conception of the voyage prioritises the meanings in a way that produces, Malabou contends, ‘an unshakeable solidarity, even a synonymy between the two terms’: ‘The logic of that solidarity presupposes that everything that arrives derives’.\(^8\) Only the arrival that is derived from and remains faithful to its point of departure, its origin, makes possible the ‘completing of the circle of destination’. Completion implies the success of knowledge, the arrival at a truth or a fact. Opposed to such a conception of the voyage and trading on different meanings of ‘to arrive’ and ‘to derive’ is the notion of ‘simple movement or displacement’. Movement designates the process of ‘arriving without deriving,’ travelling without a fixed point of reference or framework from and through which to make sense of the world ‘as it is’; to ascertain a truth about the world or to arrive at a definite meaning are both impossible. To Malabou this type of ‘travel is differance itself – temporalization, spacing, incessant

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\(^8\) Malabou and Derrida, *Counterpath*, p. 2, original italics.
displacement of the letter and of the sense,’ and scrupulously performed in the writing of Derrida. Such movement stumbles over accidents of unknowability, attesting to ‘the failure of certainties’ rather than culminating in the event of the foreigner. Movement manifests the kinetics of uncertainty and inconstancy.

My excursion into Malabou’s and Derrida’s theory of textual deconstruction as a spatial process demonstrates that ‘the question of travel is already at work in the […] least being of language’. This thesis utilises the semantic spectrum of ‘border crossings’ and ‘movement’ with the aim of unpacking how a selection of texts by Olive Moore (1904-c. 1970), Natalie Clifford Barney (1876-1972), and Djuna Barnes (1892-1982) navigate between such facets of travelling in their negotiation of travelling as a way of knowing deviant sexual identities. The writings of these women not only queerly manipulate but also profitably exploit the close relation between border crossings and the unveiling of a truth about ‘the event of the other’ to pose larger questions about the politics of gender at stake in processes of travelling, discovering, and representing.

While cultural historians and literary critics have considered the specificities of women’s travels, women’s travel writing and women’s travel-inspired modernist literature the lens of gender plays a far less prominent role in the recent turn to explorations of transnational, global, cosmopolitan and nomadic modernisms. Previous scholarship finely attuned to intersections between travel and women’s literary creativity has largely, and productively, channelled its readings through the category of experience. A recurring concern in such studies has been the question of how the experience of travelling – newly relevant in the wake of societal, political and infrastructural changes which have facilitated women’s access to means of transport – has affected women’s identity, perception and literary style. Seizing on the critical momentum kinetic terms currently undergo in modernist studies this thesis turns to a selection of female-authored early twentieth-century texts from a fresh perspective: It asks how our understanding of women’s modernist experiments with literary aesthetics and textuality might be enriched if we place border crossings in the context of quests for sexual knowledge undertaken by ‘men of science’ around the turn of the century.

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9 Ibid. p. 28.
10 Ibid. p. 16.
11 The expression ‘men of science’ is commonly used to describe researchers of various disciplines throughout the 19th century and in the early 20th century. As a gendered term, historian of science Melinda Baldwin points out, it is ‘clearly conveying that science was a respectable intellectual endeavour pursued only by the more serious and intelligent sex’. See Melinda Baldwin, ‘The History of “Scientist”’, <https://thonyc.wordpress.com/2014/07/10/the-history-of-scientist/> [accessed 27 Apr 2017]. Heike Bauer terms sexology a predominately ‘male business,’ pointing out that ‘the medical profession remained largely closed...
In the discourse of sexology and anthropology – gradually emerging as disciplines with scientific ambitions at the time – travels abroad served as a way of gathering knowledge empirically: ‘men of science’ traversing national borders – or referencing the reports of travellers – to gather data is a central and gendered aspect in the production of sexological knowledge. This thesis brings into critical focus border crossings and ‘foreign’ spaces to illustrate the ways in which they figure in literary experiments with knowing and representing sexual difference in female-authored works of the early twentieth century. To conceive of movement as a way of knowing central to the discourse of ‘scientific’ knowledge in sexological and anthropological publications opens up new lines of inquiry through which to probe intersections between movement and women’s literary modernism: how have women writers creatively engaged with the idea that border crossings provide a way to experience the ‘event of the foreigner’ – to discover the figure of the sexual Other – in its most authentic form? How do women’s fictional and non-fictional texts play with the gendered distinctions drawn between experts and amateurs, knowledge and ignorance, objectivity and subjectivity which privilege the male traveller and writer?

To emphasise travel’s discursive entanglements with a ‘scientific’ way of knowing embraced by sexologists rather than the specific experience it denotes also provides a new vantage point from which to examine relations between sexuality, space and literary modernism. A dominant line of reasoning in this realm is that an author’s or a protagonist’s sexual identity finds expression in the way in which fictional characters inhabit and traverse the geographic spaces depicted in a narrative. In a recent contribution to a M/m Print Plus...
cluster on ‘What is Sexual Modernity?’, Susan Lanser, for example, points out a striking prominence of ‘tropes of mobility, border-crossing, and dislocation’ in modernist representations of lesbian lives.\textsuperscript{13} Citing Radclyffe Hall’s \textit{The Well of Loneliness}, Djuna Barnes’s \textit{Ladies Almanack}, Elizabeth Bowen’s \textit{The Hotel}, Compton Mackenzie’s \textit{Extraordinary Women}, and Virginia Woolf’s \textit{Orlando} (all published in 1928) as evidence, she delineates how these novels ‘challenge the conventions of domestic realism’ by featuring ‘upstart women whose stories follow motifs of adventure and movement’. In this illuminating reading, movement turns into the token of a specific kind of knowledge: ‘narratives bent on movement,’ Lanser argues, encapsulate lesbian identity by portraying the lesbian as a figure interrogating women’s limitation to the private sphere and domestic duties.

This thesis expands on current work undertaken in the field of feminist modernist studies by suggesting a coin-flipping shift of perspective: what if we were to view the prominence of border crossings, foreign settings and rebellious gender-bending protagonists as playful allusions to the association of sexual eccentricities with travels to peripheral spaces such as islands, coastlines, urban undergounds and borderlines? A key question driving this project is therefore: how does a reconsideration of movement as a \textit{practice} of knowing sexual difference rather than as a form of sexual knowledge transform our reading of texts and forms of textual experimentation? If we consider professional border crossings, objective discoveries and authoritative representations of discoveries as knowledge practices critical to the sexological project and primarily implemented by men, then we can view women’s creative experimentation with such themes as a critical response to a hegemonic way of knowing and constructing sexual difference.

The topographies of perilous margins, plots of border crossings, and eccentric female, androgynous and genderless travellers in the works of Olive Moore, the penname of Constance Vaughan, Natalie Clifford Barney, and Djuna Barnes suggest a new way of imagining the complex relationship between movement, gender and sexual knowledge. By means of a range of literary techniques the writings of these authors spoof and appropriate, contest and manipulate a set of assumptions that undergird the paradigm of movement as a way of knowing: the cognitive superiority and writerly authority conferred to the male traveller, the significance attributed to the body and its location in space in the diagnostic endeavours of sexologists, and ideas of authentic sexual difference as a phenomenon that uniquely unfolds beyond a specific border. In a close reading of a selection of Djuna Barnes’s

journalism and short stories (1913-1930), Olive Moore’s *Spleen* (1930) and Natalie Clifford Barney’s *The One Who Is Legion, or A.D.’s After-Life* (1930), this thesis unpacks how travelling as a way of knowing – by which I mean the role travelling and location play, materially and discursively, in empirical research in the field of sexuality – functions as a critical intertextual referent. For this purpose it concentrates on three interrelated key aspects: the text’s relation to the reader as traveller; the process of reading as the enactment of travelling; and finally, the text as a body and surface to be traversed.

To better convey the context of my larger argument, this introduction will provide a brief overview of current developments in the field of modernist studies. Following this recapitulation of recent trends, I will indicate more specifically how particular movements and spaces have facilitated the production of a modern ‘scientific’ way of knowing the sexual not only in modernist studies but also in the disciplines of sexology and anthropology. The final section investigates how links between movements, border crossings and sexual knowledge inform selected writings by Moore, Barney and Barnes.

**Knowing Geographically in Modernist Studies**

In the context of modernist studies, motion and movement recur in the kinetic terminology of recent publications on issues of geography, space and scale. The special issue ‘Global Modernism’ in *Modernist Cultures* with its focus on ‘how modernist texts ‘travelled’” across geographical places and literary networks, the edited volume *Moving Modernisms: Motion, Technology, and Modernity* (2016), the chapter ‘An Aesthetics of Motion’ in Peter Kalliney’s *Modernism in a Global Context* (2016) and Susan Stanford Friedman’s identification of mobility and acceleration as ‘metaphorical key words’ in *Planetary Modernism: Provocations on Modernity Across Time* (2015) exemplify contemporary efforts to demonstrate the multifaceted significance of movement to modernisms by analysing the ways human bodies, aesthetic works, and political ideas traverse historical, geographical, temporal, and spatial planes. In these works movement functions as an umbrella term through which

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scholars launch large-scale reconfigurations of modernism understood as a global heterogeneous aesthetic phenomenon.

A major outcome of new critical inquiries into modernist practices as ‘transnational,’ ‘global,’ or ‘planetary’ has been a more abstract, versatile use of concepts such as movement to accommodate and render meaningful a diversity of aesthetic expressions across the world from a single unifying vantage point. Conversely, the expansion of geographic boundaries, refined attention to the effects of imperialism, colonialism and globalisation, and a broader employment of spatial concepts also affect theoretical perspectives brought to bear on Anglo-European and U.S. modernism. In Moving Modernisms, for instance, the editors shed new light on Anglo-European modernism by harnessing the full metaphorical potential of ‘movement’. Beyond a concern with human bodies travelling across geographical space, the contributors study motion in relation to ‘feelings and affect,’ ‘the moving image’ of film, ‘the mathematization of modernist movement,’ ‘the moving modernisms of dance performance,’ ‘movement between art forms,’ and ‘cultural, political, and literary movements’. Here the immense productiveness of a term surfaces that epitomises not only several aspects of modernity – new transportation technologies, globalisation processes, imperial expansions and contractions – but, according to the editors, ‘becomes definitional of modernity’. Modernism, from this perspective, is ‘a space filled with moving’. Tracing the origins of

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15 Networks, exchange, and translation constitute another set of organising terms that can be conceptualised as instances of movement and that gain critical currency in contemporary modernist scholarship. For instance, Yogita Goyal cites ‘circulation and exchange’ as an impetus for modernist writing, replacing the trope of the gifted individual artist in genealogies of modernism. See ‘Gender and Geomodernism’, in The Cambridge Companion to the American Modernist Novel, ed. by Joshua L. Miller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 89-105 (p. 89).

16 See Laura Marcus and David Bradshaw, ‘Introduction: Modernism as ‘a space that is filled with moving’’, in Moving Modernism: Motion, Technology, and Modernity, ed. by David Bradshaw, Laura Marcus, and Rebecca Roach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 1-10.

17 Marcus and Bradshaw borrow the phrase ‘a space that is filled with moving’ from Gertrude Stein’s The Gradual Making of the Making of the Americans. See Moving Modernism: Motion, Technology, and Modernity, p. 2. As early as 2003 Andrew Thacker addresses the sense of disorientation and feeling of flux commonly associated with modernist literature by contemplating the significance of movement between diverse social spaces – psychic, urban, domestic, national, imperial – for the production of modernist textual space. At the time of writing, Thacker reflects, ‘relatively little work, thus far, has been done that specifically locates modernism within a renewed set of spatial or geographic contexts’ and, in an effort to direct attention
European literary modernism to Charles Baudelaire’s collection *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857) and particularly the poem ‘Le Voyage,’ Peter Kalliney reaches a similar conclusion through this more patriarchal and genealogical line of reasoning when he declares that ‘modernism is an aesthetics of motion’.¹⁸ These assertions testify to the importance assigned to movement as a useful organising concept through which to probe intersections between modernist aesthetics and spatial practices. Yet, as this thesis suggests, such interventions often overlook aspects of literary modernism historically relegated to the margins of critical interest. In ‘Placing Modernism,’ literary critic Andrew Thacker illustrates how the Anglo-American geographic imagination of a globalised modernism neglects the complexities of particular geographic sites, places and scales, observing that notions like the ‘transnational’ and the ‘cosmopolitan’ may be ‘conceived differently in other geographical locations around the globe’.¹⁹ While efforts to bring into focus the diversity of geographic scales such as the region and formations like the coastline foster a more critical and nuanced understanding of the complexity of spatial concepts, they largely operate from within a geographic model,

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¹⁸ The kind of motion Kalliney has in mind is modernism’s movement towards the unknown, impelled by the desire to discover something new but perpetually frustrated, thus resulting in a constant ‘sense of restlessness’. See Kalliney, *Modernism in a Global Context*, p. 1.

¹⁹ In this timely essay, Thacker subjects the discourse of transnational and global modernism to rigorous scrutiny, interrogating its conceptual premises and pointing to the possible biases and limitations accompanying interventions launched from within Anglo-American academic institutions and articulated largely in English. Bearing in mind that ‘the globe of a global modernism looks very different depending upon where you are positioned,’ Thacker calls for ‘meticulous attention to scale, to locality, and to regionalism’. See ‘Placing Modernism’, in *Moving Modernisms: Motion, Technology, and Modernity*, ed. by David Bradshaw, Laura Marcus, and Rebecca Roach (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 11-26 (p. 22). The region as a neglected site in modernist studies is also the subject of the edited volume ‘Regional Modernisms’ and Howard Booth’s work on rural modernisms. Noting the belated attention paid to rural modernisms, Booth underlines the need ‘to address a further set of hierarchies within nations,’ a plea echoed by the editors of ‘Regional Modernisms’ who demand ‘a more detailed understanding of modernism’s sub-national and intra-national dynamics, and the ways in which these local ties are intricately braided with its more cosmopolitan strands.’ See Neal Alexander and James Moran, ‘Regional Modernisms’ (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 4; ‘Non-Metropolitan Modernism: E.M. Forster, D.H. Lawrence, and William Faulkner’, in *The Cambridge History of Modernism*, ed. by Vincent Sherry (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 700-16 (p. 701).
paying less attention to the discipline itself. Studies with this more specific focus, however, tend to be more sensitive to issues of gender and sexuality in their analysis of intersections between topographical shapes and modernist literature.

In this shift towards an expansion of the temporal and spatial parameters of literary modernism, the reframing of its aesthetic forms, and a broadening of theoretical approaches, feminist perspectives often play a subordinate role. Recent publications on global, transnational, transatlantic and cosmopolitan modernisms frequently omit considerations of gender as an analytical category entwined with issues of movement and mobility, translation and exchange, centre and periphery, metropolis and region, home and abroad. Notably, the introduction to two special issues of the British journal Modernist Cultures on ‘global’ and ‘transatlantic’ modernism do not allude to gender, despite its relevance to their exploration of global and transatlantic networks of cultural exchange. A consideration of the gendered politics of movement and exchange would have added complexity and nuance to the editors’ efforts to spotlight the ‘cultural, material, and social specificities of transatlantic modernist exchange’ and to point out the powerful roles agents, publishers, translators, and book sellers play in the global circulation of texts. Equally, in contrast to the Oxford Handbook of

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21 In Archipelagic Modernism, Brannigan devotes one chapter to ‘Social Bonds and Gendered Borders in Late Modernism,’ maintaining that some topographical features like the coast, the sea, and islands ‘have clearly been systematically gendered, classed, sexualised, and racialised.’ In the edited volume Modernism on Sea only one essay, ‘The Seaside Flâneuse in Elizabeth Bowen’s The Death of the Heart’ by Edwina Keown, cursorily touches on sexuality in relation to the protagonist Daphne. Two publications zooming in on the literary geographies of metropolitan spaces, Thacker’s Moving through Modernity and Deborah Parsons’s Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity, regard the gendering of space and the gendered politics of the gaze. See Brannigan, pp. 207-48; Feigel and Harris, p. 189; Thacker; Deborah Parsons, Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

22 A very early example of how gender, geography and knowledge are entangled is a remark by Canadian literary critic Hugh Kenner’s to the effect that Virginia Woolf is not an international, but ‘an English novelist of manners, writing village gossip from a village called Bloomsbury’ and ‘craftily knowing, in a local place, about mighty things apart’. The emphasis placed on a way of knowing that is ‘craftily’ further associates Woolf with the domestic as the sphere in which women writers pursue down-to-earth manual skills. See Hugh Kenner, ‘The Making of the Modernist Canon’, Chicago Review, 34 (1984), 49-61 (p. 57) <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/25305247>.

23 Original emphasis. Questions posed by the 2016 special issue on ‘New Transatlanticism’ include ‘What were the material networks that transmitted ‘European’ culture to American modernists?’ and ‘How was national identity shaped, in concrete ways, through transatlantic exchange?’ Published in 2018, the special
Modernisms, the introduction to the more recent Oxford Handbook on ‘global modernisms’ neglects how gender might be integral to critiques of imperialism and cosmopolitanism as well as to reflections on geography and cartography in the literature of the early twentieth century. Explicitly building on these two anthologies, the encyclopaedia A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism aspires to furnish scholars with a set of revised and expanded concepts believed to be key to modernism as a world-spanning phenomenon. While the contributions offer compelling readings of concepts, benefitting from a rigorously comparative analysis that considers aesthetic practices across continents, cultures and languages to bring up to date ways of understanding modernist paradigms, gender is – again – noticeably absent. In the introduction the editors address the omission of ‘contemporary critical markers such as race, class, gender, empire, sexuality, and disability’ among the terms included in their collection by honouring accomplishments achieved by these frameworks in the past, suggesting that their analytical power is exhausted, and by voicing their intention to avoid thinking at the level of a ‘worldly scale’. Implicit in this reasoning is a logic whereby a theoretical approach channelled through the lens of the global inevitably overrides and replaces the importance of social constructions like gender and sexuality: the global becomes the new political category solely relevant for an examination of ‘the language of modernist practices, institutions, and aesthetic categories’.

24 In the first paragraph to their introduction, the editors of the Oxford Handbook of Modernisms emphasise that feminist scholars not only instigated the recuperation of marginalised women writers but facilitated a ‘rethinking of frames of reference according to which such forgetting and marginalisation occurred in the first place’. In contrast, the only reference to a feminist perspective in the introduction to the Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms is made in relation to an expansion of the canon rather than a revision of its terms. See Oxford Handbook of Modernisms, ed. by Peter Brooker and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 1 and Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms, ed. by Mark Wollaeger and Matt Eatough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

25 In the words of the editors, contributors are intent on ‘showing how concepts that seem generic to (all) modernism have global origins and implications and developing fresh concepts draws from modernism’s expanded archive.’ The words selected for the volume are divided into ‘older and flatter paradigms (those that have appeared to be universal to modernism)’ and ‘new paradigms from materials that have seemed unworldly because too small or too abstract or, indeed, too local.’ See A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism, ed. by Eric Hayout and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 4.

26 Ibid. p. 4. This narrative of succession indicates one of the drawbacks of a discourse of ‘turns’ in various disciplines in so far as it implies that a previous turn or preoccupation has turned an obsolete object of study.
Several critics have challenged the idea of feminist theory as a critical frame that is separable from other theoretical models by mounting a new series of feminist interventions and offering textual analyses that attend to the intersections between geography and gender. Literary scholar Anne Fernald, for instance, challenges the conception of gender as an add-on rather than ‘a constitutive category of modernism’ and argues that the lens of the global is ‘unsustainable without feminist theory’ in an issue of *Modern Fiction Studies* devoted to ‘women’s fiction, new modernist studies, and feminism’. A cluster on ‘modernism and feminist praxis’ of the digital platform *M/m Print Plus* articulates a similar concern when editor Urmila Seshagiri notices ‘how one disciplinary process of expansion and inclusivity can overwhelm another,’ underlining that ‘feminism’s gains—political, material, artistic, civic—require sustained vigilance’. This need has informed the recent launch of a new journal, *Feminist Modernist Studies*, dedicated to publications that enter into and engage with the new modernisms ‘from a sustained feminist/gender perspective’ by encouraging feminist inquiries and by continuing the recovery of understudied women writers. A plea to conceive of feminist inquiries as fundamental to an understanding of transnational modernist literature unites these scholars, whose work is driven by a concern that gender will, once again, become a tangential issue. The critical labour performed under the heading of feminist practices consists of a continuous re-reading of the modernist canon, decentring and multiplying definitional cores, and contextualising notions like the global, identity, and place. Rather than re-asserting an essentialist notion of woman, the strength of feminist perspectives in a context of expanding geographic frames is a careful and critical consideration of gender and sexuality in relation to the diversity of material conditions, social positions, lived experiences, creative experimental practices, power dynamics, prevailing ideologies, and societal, scientific and academic discourses.

‘It is as though that primarily recuperative project is now complete, and critical momentum needs to look elsewhere,’ literary scholar Anna Snaith remarks in light of feminist politics slipping out of view in the recent shift towards a transnational paradigm.’ See *Modernist Voyages: Colonial Women Writers in London, 1890-1945* (New York Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 10.


30 For an insightful account of why ‘practicing transnational, or planetary scholarship […] requires practicing feminist scholarship’, see Jessica Berman’s ‘Practicing Transnational Feminist Recovery Today’, *Feminist
A few feminist literary scholars routinely address gender and sexuality in their readings of early twentieth-century texts, laying stress on the specific historical context of female-authored fiction and on the material conditions of women writers. Laura Doyle’s focus on how the history of transatlantic crossings is intimately entwined with a racialised ideology of liberation and a heteronormative logic is an example of the ways in which geographical tropes have been productively studied in tandem with gender, race and sexuality.31 While the collaborative work of Doyle and Laura Winkiel on ‘geomodernisms’ highlights the prominent roles of race and place in the ‘geocultural consciousness’ of modernist texts worldwide, Doyle, in this article, singles out one strand of geomodernists, ‘Atlantic modernists,’ to demonstrate how their fiction combines narratives of transatlantic movement with stories of sexual crisis.32 Reflecting on the new methodologies of transnational and ‘geomodernist’ studies, Yogita Goyal insists on taking into account the geopolitical dimensions of movements across space in order to grasp how literary narratives often channel their critique of race and gender, empire and nation through geographical paradigms.33 Anna Snaith’s Modernist Voyages: Colonial Women Writers in London 1890-1945 illustrates a way to counter ‘the homogenising effect of the new transnational and global paradigm’ by scrutinising a particular instance of movement, the migration from a British colony to the imperial metropolis of London, from the perspective of the woman traveller. By reversing the more common focus on the voyage out and by including lesser known writers

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31 Similar to Andrew Thacker who challenges the opposition ‘between (bad old) internationalism and (good new) transnationalism,’ Doyle demonstrates the importance of considering the historical legacy of a phenomenon to avoid a simplistic distinction ‘between liberatory and conservative transnationalism – between top-down, imperialist capitalism on the one hand, and bottom-up, mestiza, or cosmopolitan subversions on the other’. Thacker and Doyle both emphasise, and their scholarship benefits from, an emphasis on historical specificity. See Thacker, p. 17; Laura Doyle, ‘Transatlantic History at Our Backs: A Long View of Larsen, Woolf, and Queer Racial Subjectivity in Atlantic Modernism’, Modernism/modernity, 13 (2006), 539-559 <https://doi.org/10.1353/mod.2006.0058> (p. 534).

32 See Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel, ‘Introduction: The Global Horizons of Modernism’, in Geomodernisms: Race, Modernism, Modernity, ed. by Laura Doyle and Laura Winkiel (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005), pp. 1-14 (p. 4). To Doyle and Winkiel ‘geomodernisms […] signals an locational approach to modernisms’ engagement with cultural and political discourses of global modernity’ (p. 3). For her study of Anglophone modernists who ‘situate their stories of sexual or gender trouble within a transnational, Atlantic history,’ Doyle draws on Nella Larsen’s and Virginia Woolf’s writings but also points to Jean Rhys, Claude McKay, Gertrude Stein, Zora Neale Hurston, E.M. Forster, and Ernest Hemingway as further examples.

33 See Goyal, ‘Gender and Geomodernism’.
like Sara Jeanette Duncan and Una Marson, Snaith’s study sheds new light on the cultures of movement between metropolis and colony, expanding our understanding of the material conditions and discursive constructions of voyages undertaken by colonial women writers.

The critical response sketched above takes issue with a tendency that has characterised the development of modernist research into geopolitical and spatial dimensions over time and that is reflected in the choice of key concepts: in recent studies operating under the aegis of movement and motion, gender figures less prominently as an object of study than in works which take the journey as one specific motion-related aspect of literary thematics and aesthetics. Seen from this angle, Snaith’s juxtaposition of ‘voyage’ and ‘women’ in Modernist Voyages indicates a concerted effort, rooted in a larger critical feminist interrogation of canon formations emerging in the 1990s, to study relations between the historical and discursive specificities of movement and modernist literary aesthetics through the lens of gender. In a number of other publications, the choice of ‘voyage,’ ‘journey’ and ‘travel’ as titular key phrases goes hand in hand with a focus on women’s writing and gender, challenging a long history of publications which portray travel and exile as themes and tropes central to a modernism whose canon is largely comprised of male-authored texts.34 Identifying gender as an essential category of analysis signals recuperative, expansionary and revisionary politics of reading and flags interventions in hegemonic disciplinary formations but, paradoxically, the act of naming also risks a reduction of scholarly work to a niche preoccupation on the basis of the same denominator.35 While an explicit focus on feminist


35 Hesitancy to name gender and feminist issues as objects or angles of studies also bespeaks the pressure to situate scholarship at the forefront of cutting-edge research and contemporary concerns often defined by a single frame. Cassandra Laity addresses the difficulty of feminist critics ‘wary of being labelled old fashioned’ and feeling ‘pressured to authenticate their scholarship on women, gender, or feminist issues by establishing upfront its primary intent to illuminate other political, global, cultural, and interdisciplinary
inquiries and female-authored texts is important in foregrounding a gendered understanding of paradigms and themes so as to complicate, refine and expand our grasp of them, the simultaneous absence of gender in studies with a larger, say transnational, frame or a more abstract focus on aesthetics as a realm separate from politics, inadvertently depicts feminist perspectives and gender as distinct fields of study unrelated to broader concerns in modernist studies. Scholarship geared towards an extensive rethinking of the modernist canon and assertion of knowledge claims about the broader field frequently circumvents gender as a supposed particularity that compromises the universality of the interpretative claims. In the context of research on intersections between modernist literature and movement across space, the manner in which nomenclatural preferences materialise across titles taking gender as a point of entry, and titles omitting or briefly touching on this category, reveals a relation between the level of abstraction associated with the chosen key term (motion versus travel), the scope of the argument (universal versus particular), and attention paid to feminist perspectives. Gender is not only a factor addressed or omitted in scholarship, but implicitly present in the very form and discourse it assumes.

It is possible to read these two strands of scholarship in terms of the production of a more generalised knowledge about motion and geography as theoretical models as opposed to a more situated knowledge concentrating on travel as a material practice and the lived experience of spaces shaped by local and transnational geopolitics. Yet the pursuit of such a reading clarifies how this division perpetuates a conception of knowledge whereby women stand in for an embodiment of gendered specificity while gender plays either a minor or no role in claims of a universal scale. In effect, the position of the subaltern risks becoming subsumed under a notion of the universal oblivious to differences materialising across ‘worldly’ categories of race, gender, sexuality, class, and ability. Two ambitious projects

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36 The effects of an institutionally matured lexicon of specialised terms and methodologies of global modernist studies are critically examined in a M/m Print Plus cluster in early 2018. Feminist and queer inquiries have historically operated at the margins of such field formations, attending to the particular and offering a place from which to launch a critique of the canonised critical languages and reified methodologies that the editors interrogate in relation to global modernist studies. See Thomas S. Davis and Nathan K. Hensley, ‘Scale and Form; or, What Was Global Modernism?’, Modernism/Modernity Print Plus, 2 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.26597/mod.0033>.

illustrate how a more comprehensive approach, although promising original insights by taking a step back to reflect on the significance of geography as a discipline for early twentieth-century writings, risks overlooking the myriad ways in which politics of gender infuse disciplinary formations, academic discourses, ‘scientific’ and popular modes of knowledge and the production of literature. Rebecca Walsh’s Modernist Geopoetics (2015) and Jon Hegglund’s World Views: The Metageographies of Modernist Fiction (2012) scrutinise connections between the rise of geography as an academic discipline driven by new spatial paradigms and systematized methodologies in the late nineteenth century and literature from two different vantage points. While Walsh draws on modernist American poets to establish links between disciplinary practices of geography and formal experiments in poetry, Hegglund calls attention to the ways in which the resistance of literary narratives to new geographical frameworks shapes features of British modernist and postcolonial fiction. Both identify a heightened geographical consciousness, a global orientation, and scepticism about the concept of the nation state in the material they examine, but ascribe these phenomena to diametrically opposed causes. Despite contrasting lines of reasoning, both publications take the formation of new geographical paradigms as a starting point to not only tease out effects on literature but to understand poetic and fictional texts as another site of knowledge production engaging with, affirmatively or critically, dominant modes of knowing through experiments with language and form.

Against the background of new knowledges produced through movement as a central frame, the present study proposes a paradigm shift by re-orientating the ways we apply the lens of geography to the study of modernist literature. While methodologically this project is

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39 Focusing on ‘environmental determinism’ as a core idea in academic and popular geographical discourses, Walsh highlights how its rethinking of cultural, national and racial identity as effects of climate and topography serves as a creative source for a transnational poetics embracing global locations. In contrast Hegglund locates modernist experimental aesthetics in a narrative’s resistance, through the use of irony, to the disciplinary rise of geography, the increasingly abstract conceptualisation of space, and the concept of ‘territorial nationality’. Another way of fathoming the methodological difference between Walsh and Hegglund is to notice the distinction between a geographical and a meta-geographical analytical frame. In her ‘geopoetic’ analysis of modernist poetry Walsh attends to ‘the particularities of place, proximity, and position,’ extrapolating Doyle’s and Winkiel’s concept of ‘geomodernisms’ to poetry, whereas Hegglund’s ‘meta-geographies of modernist fiction’ alludes to the ‘broader system that makes the particularities of place and position possible,’ pointing to narrative’s engagement with the ‘production of geographic knowledge’ rather than with its findings. See Hegglund, World Views, p. 12.
akin to Walsh’s and Hegglund’s reading of literary texts as another site of knowledge production in dialogue with extra-literary epistememes, it takes the category of gender to be intimately entwined with the ethnographic discourse of sexological knowledge acquired through travelling.\textsuperscript{40} Issues relating to gender are not discussed in the introduction to \textit{The Geopoetics of Modernism} and \textit{World Views}, but, tellingly, the topic crops up unintentionally. In a section in which Walsh historicises North American debates around environmental determinism, for instance, she quotes from a 1911 text published by Ellen Churchill Semple, the first female president of the Association of American Geographers. The quoted passage reveals a striking discrepancy between Semple’s position as a rare female figure among mostly male geographers and the persistent use of the male pronoun to flesh out her theory.\textsuperscript{41} Although this writerly convention speaks to women’s historical position in patriarchally structured disciplines, the tacit laws of textual authority in scientific writing and the gender of authoritative discourse, Walsh does not seize this opportunity to contemplate the gendered politics of disciplinary formations and language usage.

Another precursor to the current study, Carey Snyder’s \textit{British Fiction and Cross-Cultural Encounters: Ethnographic Modernism from Wells to Woolf} (2008), proceeds from a similar starting point, enquiring how ‘literary modernists reflect and subvert the practices and assumptions of ethnographic discourse’.\textsuperscript{42} Snyder’s work foregrounds an often neglected but critical context of British literary modernism, offering illuminating readings of protagonists as ‘amateur ethnographers’ and ‘ethnographic techniques on a narrative level’ in the writings of E. M. Forster, Joseph Conrad, D. H. Lawrence, and Virginia Woolf, among others. In its focus on travel the current project also highlights ethnographic practices as an overlooked context; however, it insists that aspects of gender and sexuality are implicated in and entangled with the way in which a specific theoretical discourse, methodological paradigm or

\textsuperscript{40} For a linguistic analysis of how scientific language operates, see Michael A. K. Halliday, \textit{The Language of Science} (London and New York: Continuum, 2004).

\textsuperscript{41} The passage in question is the following excerpt from \textit{The Influences of Geographic Environment}: ‘Man is a product of the earth’s surface. This means not merely that he is a child of the earth, dust of her dust, but that the earth has mothered him, fed him, set him tasks, directed his thoughts, confronted him with difficulties that have strengthened his body and sharpened his wits, given him his problems of navigation or irrigation, and at the same time whispered hints for their solution.’ See Walsh, \textit{Modernist Geopoetics}, p. 10. For the original text, see Ellen Churchill Semple, \textit{The Influences of Geographic Environment, on the Basis of Ratzel’s System of Anthropo-Geography} (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1911), p. 1. The conspicuous personification of nature as mother may struck as an instance of female empowerment but it perpetuates the disempowering ideal of women as a nurturing entity enabling the intellectual and physical activities of others.

epistemological framework travels across literary and academic texts. An in-depth consideration of the dynamics and politics of gender characterising regimes of knowledge is also lacking in the most recent investigation of modernism’s response to given conceptual models or representations. Contributions to Beyond Given Knowledge: Investigation, Quest Exploration in Modernism and the Avant-Gardes inquire into how modernism and the avant-gardes have appropriated, challenged, and reconfigured conceptions embraced by ‘scientific knowledge, religious dogmas and social conventions’ but omit reflections on gender.43

Given the control mostly male professionals have historically exercised over demarcating objects of study and parameters of inquiry as well as over determining criteria for objectivity and impartiality, it seems paramount to bear in mind this unequal distribution of power along lines of gender in our reliance on larger frames as a lens through which to study literary modernism.44 If today modernist scholarship tremendously benefits from, and thrives on, concepts taken from and historically rooted in other disciplines like geography, then one important question is how this shapes the knowledge we retrieve through these frames. In a similar vein, if literary texts engage with dominant paradigms such as the view that travel is a mode of knowing – crucial to the ethnographic methods of sexology and


44 The founders of Geographical, Ethnological, and Anthropological Societies in Europe and North America, the editors of academic journals issued by each society, and the authors of canonical standard works were largely men, often with backgrounds in physiology, anatomy, and geography. This professional history in scientific disciplines often translated into the desire to apply ‘scientific’ methods, including the identification of natural laws, to the study of racial groups as a new field of enquiry. A 1911 essay by German sociologist and philosopher Georg Simmel offers insights on possible consequences of ‘scientific men’ constituting the authoritative voices deciding over approved ways of knowing. In ‘Das Relative und das Absolute im Geschlechterproblem,’ Simmel makes explicit the tacit equation of objectivity with a male standpoint when he argues that ‘the requirements of […] correctness in practical judgement and objectivity in theoretical knowledge […] belong as it were in their form and their claims to humanity in general, but in their actual historical configuration they are masculine throughout.’ Simmel’s piece prompted feminist critics of natural sciences to probe ‘How is it that the scientific mind can be seen at one and at the same time as both male and disembodied? How is it that thinking “objectively,” that is, thinking that is defined as self-detached, impersonal, and transcendent, is also understood as “thinking like a man”? ’ See Evelyn Fox Keller, Secrets of Life, Secrets of Death: Essays on Language, Gender and Science (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p. 19. The passage of Simmel’s essay has been translated and quoted by Karen Horney, ‘The Flight from Womanhood: The Masculinity-Complex in Woman as Viewed by Men and by Women’, in Gender and Envy, ed. by Nancy Burke (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 27-38 (p. 28).
anthropology sexology – in original ways, then it is crucial to consider how gender bears on this dynamic.

This thesis thus proceeds on the assumption that gender is paramount in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of how these women writers playfully and creatively engage with a paradigm of knowing in which the male explorer and the male author have figured as main players. Despite the fact that women did embark on expeditions and undertook scientific research in the early twentieth century they nevertheless remain largely absent and unacknowledged in academic institutions, conferences, and publications on matters of not only human sexuality, ethnology and anthropology, but also in the realms of mathematics and philosophy — an absence constitutive of claims to truth and rationality in so far as these notions are equated with quintessentially male virtues and contrasted with women’s alleged tendency to subjectivity and sentimentality.

Movement and Producing Modern Sexual Knowledge

This thesis aims to critically interrogate the use of movement as a gendered way of knowing in modernist literature by bringing into focus the practice of travelling in academic and literary texts. My focus is not on the discipline of geography but on how abstract geographic and cartographic representations of space – and movements across such spaces – underpin paradigms and practices of other disciplines newly emerging in the early twentieth century, particularly sexology and anthropology. Geographic surveys of the world and cartographic mappings of space, ‘the drawing of lines and the bounding of objects’ as geographer John Pickles puts it, have played a critical role in the formation of such social sciences.45 Sexology and anthropology, despite different research interests and disciplinary protocols, deploy cartographic frameworks to place human bodies and populations into distinct groups, organising social, cultural, racial, and sexual difference along cartographic boundary lines as ontological givens. Drawing on nation states as points of reference, the gradual rise of sexology and anthropology as disciplines with ‘scientific’ aspirations hinged on the ethnographic fieldwork pursued by travellers who, systematically or anecdotally, described the customs and cultures of people encountered on journeys. In their introduction to Sexology Uncensored, historians Lucy Bland and Laura Doan note that sexologists did not only rely on

case studies but also ‘compiled ethnographic information from all parts of the globe, uncritically incorporating into their studies the observations of anthropologists and social observers’. The voyage out to foreign lands, the movement across national boundaries, was essential in producing sexological knowledge. This paradigm of travel as an epistemic practice, a method of gathering knowledge empirically, is fundamental to my inquiry into the multifaceted ways in which movement figures in relations between a new sexual epistemology on the one hand and literary modernism on the other hand.

Chapter One begins to explore this relation between modern sexual knowledge and literary modernism by examining the ways in which space and movement gained meaning as interpretative frameworks in modernist scholarship on gender and sexuality identities. To pinpoint the gay, lesbian and/ or queer object of study, literary critics develop a sexual hermeneutics of space in which a set of distinctive places and topographies – peripheral, labyrinthian, underground, hidden, insular, liminal – are shrouded by and overdetermined with connotations of sexual difference. Against the backdrop of modernist scholarship’s more general concern with notions of liminality and marginality as a central, if not a defining criterion, of modernist themes, the positing of correspondences between ‘aberrant’ sexualities and precarious borderlands – such as those opening up in the interstices between public/ private, visible/ hidden, familiar/ foreign spaces – has been key in establishing an intimate connection between non-normative sexuality and modernism’s transgressive aesthetics.


47 To gain an insight into the centrality assigned to the margin and the liminal as modernist master terms, see, for example, Hugh Steven’s introduction to Modernism and Its Margins (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 1-12. Steven speaks of modernism’s fascination with ‘marginality, and with border crossings’ evident in its interrogation of ‘fixed gendered and sexual identities’ (p. 9). The sense that modernism, as a category, ‘is difficult to pin down’ is shared by Laura Doan and Jane Garrity who compare literary modernism to queer theory: ‘modernism and queer theory both resist fixity, cross boundaries, and regard with fascination the transgressive, marginal, and liminal’. See ‘Modernism Queered’, in A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture, ed. by David Bradshaw and Kevin J. H. Dettmar (Chichester: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 542-550 (p. 542). See also the discussion of ‘bad modernisms’ as a collection of ‘subversive’ early-twentieth-century texts distinguished by an ‘emphasis on outrageous behaviour,’ ‘refusal to be condoned,’ and border crossings in form of ‘cosmopolitanism, synaesthesia, racial masquerade, collage, and translation’ in Douglas Mao’s and Rebecca Walkowitz’s introduction to Bad Modernisms (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 1-18. Joseph Boone’s comparison between sexuality as force that is ‘radically indeterminate’ and ‘most unstable’ and the modernist novel as a genre that ‘not only frequently violates established boundaries (of decorum, of genre, of subject matters high and low) but remains open-ended, more plastic’ in Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
To notice the prominence of cartography and topography as recurring points of reference through which literary critics retrieve knowledge about sexual identities in early twentieth-century fiction is important in highlighting a set of critical investments. Assumptions about an intimate relationship between deviant desires and the ways in which protagonists inhabit and traverse spaces have also informed the present study at an earlier stage. I took as my starting point the correlation between transgressive sexual norms and cartographical border crossings in women’s literary modernism. Gradually, however, this initial focus on parallels between specific spaces, ways of movement and sexual identities moved into view as the object of inquiry itself. The quest for narratives of border crossings entangled with lesbian identity began to turn in on itself, edging towards a critical examination of the inclination to use travels towards peripheries, islands, and foreign lands as indicative of sexual otherness. Inadvertently, my determined reading enacted a travelling across pages that, in its search for signs of sexual difference embedded and encrypted in literary representations of space resembled the rationale of an ethnographic expedition. The modernist bodies that I had subjected to my enquiry seemed to simultaneously invite and thwart a reading for sexual eccentricities.

Although it is possible to understand alternations between allusion and reticence, secrecy and disclosure, as the very expression of non-normative sexuality, and to read hermeneutical gaps as a literary form of sexual knowledge, I grew more interested in another less often explored question: how might literary texts engage with critical assumptions and interpretative frames commonly used to retrieve and represent knowledge of ‘abnormal’ sexual desires and bodies? How might they not merely replicate but also play with associations aligning specific dwelling places with non-heterosexual identities? If travels to these places suggests the possibility of unveiling such identities how might they creatively respond to such an idea of movement as a way of knowing? These questions indicate a different focus from Scott Herring’s study of modernist authors’ resistance to and manipulation of markers of ‘modern homosexual group identity’ in Queering the Underworld: Slumming, Literature, and the Undoing of Lesbian and Gay History. Rather than probing the literary mechanisms of resisting, disrupting, thwarting, and undoing homosexual identification and knowledge – processes which Scott conceptualises as a ‘queering [of] the underworld’ – my inquiry focuses instead on how a selection of literary

texts experiments with the idea that travels to specific places yields unique knowledge about forms of sexual otherness.

In the second part of this chapter, entitled “‘Men of Science’ on Voyages of Discovery,” I shift attention to the role of space and movement in modes of knowing sexual abnormality in the writings of early sexologists and anthropologists to indicate geography’s profound involvement in charting sexuality. By looking at a selection of prominent publications in sexology and anthropology, this section investigates what was at stake for these researchers to ‘scientifically’ broach the subject of sexual difference. My objective is to unpack the critical presumptions that qualify men’s border crossings and the observations they make while on the move as knowledge practices. Facets of gender move into view in various ways here: distinctions forged between experts and amateurs, ignorance and knowledge, subjectivity and objectivity, rationality and sentimentality map onto assumptions about women’s and men’s respective abilities and tendencies.

Sexology and anthropology have different research agendas, subject matters, and methodologies, but they share a preoccupation with cataloguing and classifying populations and bodies, a concern with ethnographic data and, critically, a belief in the authority of observations undertaken by travelling male experts. This underlines the centrality of movement as a mode of knowing mobilised by disciplines that were increasingly concerned with the study of human bodies in geographical settings in the late nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century. To illustrate how some female modernists creatively responded to the significance attributed to movement and space in efforts to retrieve knowledge, this study focuses on sexual difference as sexology’s preferred objects of study.

The field of sexuality has generated an unprecedented level of interest since the late nineteenth century, evident in both the rapid growth of a public discourse on deviations from sexual norms, as well as the formation of sexology and psychoanalysis as new branches of knowledge concerned with the study and classification of sexual behaviour. Given the

49 For a broad periodization of the emergence of sexology as an academic discipline in Britain, Europe and North America, see the general introduction to Bland and Doan, pp. 1-7. Bland and Doan note that although sexology has gradually emerged since the 1870s it ‘was not recognised as a legitimate branch of science until the interwar years’ (p. 2). On the development of modern studies of, and debates around, sex ‘beyond the familiar European archives of sexology,’ see the essays collected in Sexology and Translation: Cultural and Scientific Encounters across the Modern World, ed. by Heike Bauer (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2015), p. 1. On the link between a confessional discourse on sexual pathologies and the rise of secular modernity, see Michel Foucault, The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, trans. by Robert Hurley, 3 vols. (London: Penguin, 1998), I [1976]. Literary critic Anna Katharina Schaffner notes that ‘the preoccupation with “perversion” is a specifically modern phenomenon and the product of various political, sociological, cultural and technological processes which can be subsumed under the term “modernity”’. See Modernism and Perversion: Sexual Deviance in Sexology and Literature, 1850-1930 (Basingstoke: Palgrave,
proliferation of new taxonomies of sexual identities as well as the heightened attention paid to deviations from ‘normal’ sexual behaviour among medical professionals, in the press, legal debates, and works of literature in the decades before and after the turn of the century, the discourse of sexual transgression promises to be a productive angle for an examination of literary modernism’s engagement with gendered politics of knowing. Mappings of homosexual identities by sexologists who allude to geographical markers such as national boundaries, as chapters two to four illustrate, constitute a central discursive formation through which these texts attend to the possibility of knowing and representing differently.

By the early twentieth century, historians of sexuality have shown, a number of professionals, including physicians, psychiatrists, criminologists, began to systematically investigate the realm of the sexual, scrutinising and cataloguing behavioural and anatomical characteristic believed to qualify as a deviation. During the rapid growth of new taxonomies and categories, gradually an interest in identifying ‘abnormal’ types of people such as the ‘invert’ or the ‘homosexual’ overtook the previous concern with sexual activities. Amidst efforts to clearly determine and describe all variations of sexual abnormality, slippages between concepts of deviant sexual identities prevailed not only across sexological treatises but particularly in the public eye. The birth of new categories, albeit spreading slowly, made it possible to subject ‘afflicted’ individuals to moral judgement, social sanctions, medical pathologization, and legal criminalization. Questions of healthy sexual relations, marriage and procreation were also relevant to the field of eugenics, taking shape in the late nineteenth century. Eugenicists like Karl Pearson (1857-1936) were invested in procreative different-sex desire as a practice to take place between the ‘fittest’ individuals to improve the health of the nation state conceived of as a body. Xenophobic beliefs in racial superiority, class prejudices, discrimination against differently abled people, and ideals of heterosexuality underpinned the selection of the ‘fittest’ members of society.

Cultural historians and literary scholars have demonstrated how the field of sexuality as a site of control and regulation reached influence publicly and gained power institutionally at a time of contested gender relations and geopolitical upheaval in Europe and North

2012), p. 5. Schaffner’s introduction outlines the shift from a religious, moral conceptualisation of perversion to a medical model (see pp. 1-29).


51 For an overview of eugenicist publications, see the excerpts collected in Bland and Doan, pp. 165-98.
Mass recruitments of women to join the workforce during the first world war, for example, fuelled anxieties about changing gender roles. In the history of British imperialism, moreover, the motherhood of white Englishwomen came to be a factor in political imperatives to sustain the nation through racial reproduction. If gender ideals and constructions of normative sexuality are deeply enmeshed in geopolitical matters, then the cartographies of nation states are meaningful in relation to sexuality as both a site of regulation and knowledge.

In the opening line to the classic Epistemology of the Closet, literary critic and queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick insisted on the structural relevance of the homo/heterosexual definition ‘to the thought and knowledge in twentieth-century Western culture as a whole […] dating from the end of the nineteenth century’. According to Sedgwick, the omnipresent force of this definition meant that every person and every aspect of personal existence was no longer only ‘necessarily assignable to a male or a female gender [but] was now considered necessarily assignable as well to a homo- or a hetero-sexuality’. Every behavioural trait and every physiognomic feature turned into the potential sign of a sexual meaning and was subjected to a new semiotics of binarized sexual identity. An aspect this thesis considers particularly important for its readings of literary texts is Sedgwick’s claim, following French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault, ‘that modern Western culture has placed what it calls sexuality in a more and more distinctively privileged relation to our most prized constructs of individual identity, truth, and knowledge’. As chapters two to four

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52 Historian George Chauncey argues that the different stages in conceptualizing deviant female sexuality correlate with the ‘changes in and challenges to the Victorian sex/gender system such as the women’s movement, the growing visibility of urban gay male subcultures, and the changing structure of the economy’. See George Jr. Chauncey, ‘From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: Medicine and the Changing Conceptualization of Female Deviance’, *Salmagundi*, 58/59 (1982), 114-46 [https://www.jstor.org/stable/40547567] [accessed 2 May 2015] (p. 116). Chauncey’s article delivers examples of how medical models of abnormal sexuality could be mobilized for attempts to preserve a destabilized political, economic, and social structure of a state.

53 Historian Susan Grayzel points out that ‘in part the war was justified as a defence of women and children, and thus implicitly of traditional gender roles’ and adds that women’s growing emancipation, noticeable in the type of work pursued and changing dress styles ‘led to surveillance and legislation’. The interwar years, Laura Doan notes, witnessed how ‘the fluidity of gender roles [fostered by the requirements of war] spilled into various realms, such as fashion, and contributed to heightened confusion and cultural anxieties that the sexes were changing places’. See Susan R. Grayzel, *Women and the First World War* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2002), p. 62; Laura Doan, *Fashioning Sapphism: The Origins of a Modern English Lesbian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. xviii.


55 Ibid. p. 2.

56 Ibid. p. 3.
will show, Moore’s, Barney’s, and Barnes’s texts often pivot on notions of truth and reality in relation to the identity of a distinct place, a nation, an individual person, a specific type of person defined by sexual, national, and ethnic characteristics and, in doing so, take recourse to movement as a force entangled with dynamics of knowing. In this way, my readings indicate how the ‘language of sexuality’ constitutes a central language ‘by which we know’.

Sedgwick’s assertion that the homo/heterosexual definition has become inextricably entwined with other ‘definitional nexuses’ of modern Western culture since the late nineteenth century is a premise that informs my inquiry into the significance of categories like secrecy/disclosure, urban/provincial, domestic/foreign, same/different to the literary texts examined. The present study proceeds on the assumption that these binaries are implicated in the idea that the crossings of a designated border facilitates access to knowledge. In the newly emerging fields of sexology and anthropology, as I will explore in more depth in Chapter One, border crossings between familiar and foreign places, for example, constitute an essential element in the discursive formation of knowledge practices; the journey to yet unexplored territories – from foreign countries to hidden urban enclaves – advances to the status of a paradigm of empirically verified expert knowledge.

The meticulous attention paid to sexual relations and activities distinguished itself through a heightened concern with possible forms of aberrations, gradually establishing definitional boundaries ‘predicated on the presumed existence of a normative heterosexuality’.

Although the existence of ‘normal’ sexual behaviour is intrinsic to the notion of a deviation, the precise outlines of the normal remained an abstract norm, a ghostly embodiment of the natural defined ‘by what is not’. Conversely, the idea of abnormal sexuality has stirred a drive to know actualized through a most vigilant and diligent hunt for behavioural and phenotypical characteristics that may qualify as pertinent signs for a sexually transgressive practice. Such a template for a sexual epistemology, equating knowledge about sex with knowledge about sexual transgressions, has not only characterised the public’s preoccupation but has informed the more systematic investigation and classification of sexual practices and identities gradually taking shape in the 1870s.

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57 Foucault argues in the first volume to The History of Sexuality that sexual science ‘concerned itself primarily with aberrations, perversions, exceptional oddities, pathological abatements, and morbid aggravations,’ establishing medical, social and moral norms of sex retrospectively. See Foucault, p. 53. On the absence of heterosexuality as an object of sexological inquiry, see Laura Doan’s essay “‘A Peculiarly Obscure Subject’: The Missing ‘Case’ of the Heterosexual’, in British Queer History, ed. by Brian Lewis (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 87-107.

58 See Doan, “‘A Peculiarly Obscure Subject’: The Missing ‘Case’ of the Heterosexual’, p. 88, original italics.
Movement and Knowledge in Women’s Literary Modernism

The centrality of liminal spaces – from Moore’s ‘island space’ and Barney’s ‘intermediate world’ to Barnes’s ‘basements’ and ‘lost places’ – traversed by rebellious nonconformist women or genderless protagonists in the works of Olive Moore, Natalie Clifford Barney, and Djuna Barnes invites a new approach to thinking together movement, sexual knowledge and modernist textuality.\(^{59}\) Moore’s novel Spleen, Barney’s novel The One Who Is Legion or A.D.’s After-Life as well as several newspaper articles and short stories by Djuna Barnes negotiate several key questions about the gendering of knowledge practices in relation to dissident sexual types.\(^{60}\) Each text probes the capacity of sexual difference to summon readerly curiosity by plotting and staging a series of border crossings. Journeys to unfamiliar and foreign lands, moreover, invite further reflections about the authority of a text and the authenticity of its representations: what, for example, do these writings promise to bring home to the reader?

The argument the thesis proposes concerning movement is not limited to the texts discussed, although I see the texts I examine as exemplary of the very different forms in which movement and border crossings figure prominently in literary experiments with the

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\(^{59}\) Moore’s ‘island space’ is mentioned on p. 100 in Spleen; the ‘intermediate world’ is referenced in The One on p. 75; allusions to ‘basements’ recur in Barnes’s articles on Greenwich Village and its Bohemian crowd (‘GV’ 228; ‘BI’ 234, 240 and 241); examples of places ‘lost’ to the inquisitive urban tourist are Chinatown (p. 125), the dwelling place of the last squatter in the eponymous article and the ‘real’ Washington Square in ‘Greenwich Village As It Is’. ‘Bohemia’ is a fantasy of the ‘loser looking for the lost’ (‘BI’ 237) and indeed any place whose real essence a reader or traveller seeks to encounter belongs to the category of ‘lost places’ (‘BI’ 240).

\(^{60}\) References to Spleen in this thesis largely rely on a reprinted paperback edition of Dalkey Archive’s publication of Moore’s ‘Collected Writings’ in 1992 and will be indicated by ‘SP’ and page number. See Olive Moore, Spleen (Normal: Dalkey Archive Press, 1996 [1930]). Originally, two versions of Spleen existed: a U.S. version published by Harper & Brothers in October 1930 under the title Repentance at Leisure and an English version published a month later by Jarrolds under the title Spleen. The Dalkey Archive Press edition has used the U.S. version as its source text, but made several orthographical and typographical alterations to the original will be considered in Chapter Two. Because of the attention paid to typography in this thesis, I refer to the original U.S. version in sections reflecting on the arrangement of printed matter on the page. See Olive Moore, Repentance at Leisure (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1930). Barney’s novel The One Who Is Legion or A.D.’s After-Life, privately published by Eric Partridge Ltd. at the Scholartis Press and limited to 560 copies, has long been out of print. References in this thesis refer to a facsimile reprint issued in 1987 by The National Poetry Foundation and will be indicated by ‘TO’ and page number. See Natalie Clifford Barney, The One Who Is Legion or A.D.’s After-Life, facsimile repr. edn (Orono: The National Poetry Foundation, 1987 [1930]). For discussions of Barnes’s newspaper pieces and short stories I have relied on the following editions: Djuna Barnes, New York: Djuna Barnes, ed. by Alyce Barry (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1989) as well as Djuna Barnes, Djuna Barnes: Collected Stories, ed. by Phillip Herring (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1996).
gendered politics of knowledge practices. The interpretative framework I pioneer provides an angle from which to pursue innovative readings of other writings of the period, too. It would be interesting to see, for example, how the journey abroad depicted in Virginia Woolf’s *The Voyage Out* (1915) and *Orlando* (1928) can be related to specifically modern way of knowing and representing the sexual. Particularly *Orlando* seems to offer a compelling juxtaposition of a protagonist undergoing a change of gender while traversing different periods of time and different places. The present study, however, considers the marginalised and sometimes idiosyncratic texts of lesser known writers in the context of women’s literary modernism to place pressure on a monolithic understanding of what constitutes ‘proper’ experimental literature. This is not only to aid the recuperation of women writers and writings who have been historically overlooked – one important objective of feminist modernist studies – but a choice which also proceeds on the assumption that neglected works afford new analyses of the relationship between literary modernism and modernity.

One objective of feminist modernist studies is the recuperation of women writers and writings who have been historically overlooked. This thesis accounts for the prominence given to women’s authorship not merely as a biographical fact but as a critical reference point in each narrative’s negotiation of approved ways of writing and travelling as male prerogatives. Such a gender-exclusive selection is not meant to reinforce essentialist ideas about men’s and women’s modernisms or male and female styles of writing. Rather it is an invitation to imagine the complexities of feminist modernity from the place of texts still neglected in the field. Within the field of feminist modernist studies, my project is situated in a larger trajectory spearheaded by the queering of the modernist canon and branching off into variously configured interventions going by names like ‘queer modernism’ and ‘lesbian modernism’. 61 Insisting on the centrality of sexuality to literary modernism, this thesis is less concerned with tracing the precise contours of a specific sexual identity than in teasing out

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the capacity of queer deviations from a tacit heterosexual norm to summon readerly curiosity and expectations.

In the discipline of modernist studies British author Olive Moore and North American authors Natalie Clifford Barney and Djuna Barnes occupy very different positions, not only in terms of visibility but also in relation to their viability for specific areas of modernist inquiry. While the vast oeuvre of Djuna Barnes is increasingly considered in a range of publications on different aspects of literary modernism, writings by Natalie Clifford Barney, for example, receive notably little attention. Barnes features in numerous individual chapters and is also the subject of several monographs on subjects such as ‘consuming fictions,’ ‘improper modernism,’ and ‘affective modernism.’ In the course of the feminist recuperation and reappraisal of previously neglected authors and texts emerging around 1990, publications by Moore and Barney received some scholarly attention. Scholarship on Barney, however, focuses largely on her legendary literary salon in Paris and her eccentric lifestyle, and gives less regard to her aphorisms, poetry – composed in French – her posthumously published novel *Amants féminins, ou, La troisième* (2013 [1926], *Women Lovers, or The Third Woman* in the English translation by Chelsea Ray) and her English-language novel *The One*. The history of reception is here characterised by a focus on biography rather than the writerly contributions to the literature of a particular time, style or canon – a fate shared by many women authors. Similarly, Moore’s 1930 novel gained prominence in the context of lesbian, Sapphic and queer modernism, but, different from Barney’s output, remains more visible in today’s modernist scholarship. Over the past decade journal articles have

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63 Moore’s other novels, *Celestial Seraglio* (1929) and *Fugue* (1932), as well as her collection of aphoristic notebooks entitled ‘The Apple Is Bitten Again (Self Portrait)’ (1934) have, with the exception of *Fugue*,
occasionally appeared as well as a book-length study of Moore considering her alongside Virginia Woolf. In contrast, only two publications have turned to Barney’s The One. Barney’s and Moore’s relatively small corpus compared to prolific writers such as Virginia Woolf may have compromised their position and visibility in the modernist canon. However, given the prominence of liminal tropes, the preoccupation with crossing boundaries and threshold states as well as the concern with sexual and textual difference in their writings, it is surprising that they remain noticeably underrepresented in modernist scholarship.

How ideas of sexual deviance, modes of tracing its signs and symptoms, and practices of authoritatively representing its truths in treatises and reports register in the writings of female modernists are questions central to this project. Critically, the connection at stake in my inquiry is not a relation between the rise of new sexual identities and the representational content or stylistic features of modernist literature. This link has been explored in a number of ways, as Chapter One will demonstrate. Instead I bring into focus the crucial role


[66] For example, Anna Katharina Schaffner’s monograph Modernism and Perversion and the contributions to edited volume Modernist Eroticsisms, both published in 2012, explicitly address the question of how new
movement and space have played in the formation of sexual knowledges, in order to enquire in what ways such modes of knowing have been embraced and appropriated, contested and manipulated by the literary texts of select female modernists. Travelling is the vantage point from which this thesis explores the formation of sexual knowledge in scientific discourses and its reverberations in the experimental literature of women writers in the early twentieth century.  

A feature shared across the texts I examine is a narrative play with knowledge of ‘the real’ as a still hidden but discoverable ‘reality’ about the identity of an Other – where otherness or foreignness connote racial and sexual difference and vice versa – contained in the printed matter of the book. Such prominence given to narrative power and authority calls for a critical consideration of the dimension of reading and the reader. One way in which this thesis attends to this dimension is by conceiving of the reader as a kind of traveller and reading as a process of travelling. On this view, the reality of and the real as sexual otherness feature as a destination that the reader approaches by means of scanning the sequence of a sentence, the lines of a page and the leaves of a book. Travelling is enacted in the moment of reading; the geographical space of a foreign place becomes the textual space of an unread book. Allusions to forms of sexual deviation recur in the writings under examination, drawing from the taxonomical categories and phenotypical catalogue compiled by sexologists. They imply that vigilant readers – those who make the effort in travelling across the pages with eyes wide open – will be rewarded with the revelation of scandalously intimate and visible details about unconventional sexual relations, eccentric lovers and freakish bodies. What is suggested is that the text at hand offers a glimpse into a world of sexual otherness that simultaneously figures as an encounter with an instantiation of the real as absolute alterity.

This reader-informed angle seems particularly relevant given that the writings examined, as well as their authors, have frequently been scrutinised with an eye to the kind of sexual knowledge they possibly contain. At different points in the history of literary scholarship these texts have been identified as key instances of lesbian modernism and their authors cited as examples of lesbian modernists. Not only have the eccentricity and obscurity attributed to women and writings at the fringes of the modernist canon been deciphered as

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67 To grasp the role of literature, particularly literary fiction, in constructions of sexual identities, norms and knowledges, see Heike Bauer, ‘Literary Sexualities’, pp. 101-115.
indicators of a lesbian subtext, but the marginal status in itself seems to have strongly suggested the existence of an aesthetics and thematics outside the heterosexual.\textsuperscript{68}

Marginality, in this context, has exceeded its meaning as a description of the peripheral status many female-authored writings occupy in the canon of literary modernism: it has also gestured towards a sexually connoted form of otherness and idiosyncrasy latent in a work’s subject matter or formal features. In a piece on ‘Literary and Sexual Experimentalism in the Interwar Years,’ Daniela Caselli argues that the writers Richard Nugent, Djuna Barnes, Charles Henri-Ford and Parker Tyler play with but also resist the exposure of homosexual desire as a ‘commodified spectacle of marginality’.\textsuperscript{69} According to Caselli their works exhibit ‘a keen awareness of the impossibility of an aesthetic project outside of a capitalist economy’. The travel and tourism industry is a key example of how a capitalist economy may feed on the sensational and spectacular encapsulated in notions such as sexual transgression. What I have suggested above, moreover, is a view of the modernist body – the book or corpus of a particular author – as a site of spectacular marginality overdetermined by associations of sexual deviance.

Beyond acknowledging the marginalisation of these authors in modernist scholarship, this thesis inquires how a minoritarian position might also operate as a touristic token, to perpetuate the analogy between travelling and reading. The phrase ‘touristic token’ alludes to a set of assumptions and expectations that distinguishes the reader as tourist: it rewrites the ideal of an uninterested curiosity about a remote, marginal object of study as an investment in a particular kind of knowledge and the rewards ensuing from its possession. Tourism may be viewed as a transactional relation to places where the costs involved in a visit, such as the entry fees to a sight, are remunerated with a contribution to the tourist’s cosmopolitan credentials. The well-read and well-travelled individual, on the other hand, is rewarded with the labels ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘culturally literate’. Although it is Djuna Barnes who plays most overtly with a commercial relation to the secret of a place or a person, Moore’s and Barney’s emphasis on the possibility of arriving at the ‘real’ Italy or reality in itself in \textit{Spleen}

\textsuperscript{68} On Herring’s account such readings may exemplify the hermeneutics of sexual suspicion that he seeks to transform into ‘a suspicion of sexual hermeneutics’ in \textit{Queering the Underworld} (p. 14). For a consideration of mystery and secrecy as markers of hidden homosexual knowledge, see his introduction, pp. 1-20, particularly pp. 2-3. On ‘the mysteries of homosexuality as an “unveiled secret”’ see also Leo Bersani’s and Ulysses Dutoit’s \textit{Caravaggio’s Secrets} (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1998), p. 13; quoted in Herring, p. 14.

and *The One* can also be seen as gestures to such transactional dynamics. This thesis attends to the textual corpus as an embodied instance of marginality by considering how these female-authored texts inhabit the double position of knower – the instance narrating a story, constructing a world, and directing readers – and object of knowledge.

Another aspect informing my close readings is attentiveness to the performative – a notion involving the reader in particular ways. To discern the distinctive nature of the experimental aesthetics of Moore’s *Spleen*, Barney’s *The One*, and Barnes’s short prose, it is paramount to consider travelling and border crossings not merely as thematic preoccupations but as issues materialising on the level of form. For this purpose, this thesis considers the process of reading as an enactment of a kind of travelling that unfolds across the span of a sentence and the space of a page. To compare reading to travelling allows us to understand plays with the structure of a sentence (syntax, punctuation, diction) and the flow of a narrative (analepsis, prolepsis, repetitions, circularity) as an engagement with the concept of movement. Sentence structure and narrative flow indicate a text’s kinetic and choreographic qualities. Through a play with formal elements texts control how the reader arrives at – or fails to arrive – the specific meaning of a sentence, the significance of a scene, the overall plot, or the identity of protagonists and narrators.

Similarly, we can conceive of the surface of the book as a kind of space to be traversed: typography, orthography, fonts, font sizes constitute the materiality of the text conceived as a physical body. This textual body is thus a site of inscription distinguished by the selection and arrangement of textual matter on the page. Olive Moore’s ample use of blank space between paragraphs and breaks with orthographical rules, Barney’s musings on fonts as a way to capture a writer’s various moods and similar thoughts about exploiting ‘the great variety of lettering’ including punctuation marks to forge a new system of representation, Barnes’s use of italics and snippets of Italian, French, and German in her short stories as well as the intricate graphics included in many of her newspaper pieces bespeak a sensitivity to the material surface properties of a text. Such attention paid to the corporeal dimensions of texts, participating in the production of meaning, gains particular relevance given sexologists’ identification of the human body as a diagnostic site. In the sexual sciences, Heike Bauer notes, the body served as ‘a measure by which individuals and larger groups of people could

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70 See Barney, *The One*, p. 98. A page later the narrator concludes: ‘So our faculties marked down in different types and scripts would be quickly distinguished, and as easy to recognise as differently dressed individuals in a thoroughfare. Identified rather by the silhouette given by the letters than by the nomenclature’.
be identified and classified in relation to normative ideals about civilisation and progress’. \(^71\) Anatomical details and physical appearances and normative shapes were intimately linked to the epistemological framework of sexuality.

Against this background, it is possible to view the text – fictional or journalistic – as a site of knowledge production which participates in such constructions of diagnostic sites and frameworks of knowledge production by means available to the literary text. By manipulating sentence structure, narrative flow, typography, and orthography, writings by Moore, Barney and Barnes effectively generate a meta-commentary on ways of knowing as written and performed on the page. Barnes’s instructions to and interpellations of the reader as a voyeuristic and touristic figure as well as Barney’s repeated imperatives concretised in the phrase ‘Let us’ are further elements influencing the reader’s experience of navigating across the body of the text. Chapters Two to Four chart the specific ways in which each text plays with the legibility of deviant bodies and desires through stylistic, narrative, typographical, orthographical experimentation. Sexual identities, borrowed partly from the rhetoric of tourism and partly from the discourse of sexology, function as categories through which these writings probe the limits of a text’s capacity to deliver authenticity.

To foreground movements and border crossings in the production of a scientific discourse suggests fresh lines of inquiry on questions; for instance, how do Moore’s, Barney’s and Barnes’s texts engage with the notion of a boundary line as fundamental to binarized identities that hinge on distinctions between familiar/ foreign or same/ different; how might they mobilise the assumption that the crossing of national borders as cartographically construed realities enables the discovery of the authentic embodiment of dissident sexual subjects; how might such intimate links forged between border crossings and authenticity relate to modernist interrogations of representation, notions of truth and reality; and finally, how do these texts participate in, and respond to, a scientific discourse that frequently aligns manifestations of sexual abnormality with the spatial peripheries of urban undergrounds or distant lands?

Olive Moore’s novel Spleen, as Chapter Two illustrates, brings into dialogue the sexological and anthropological discourse of sexual and racial otherness with modernist visions of writerly creativity and innovation. Southern Italy with its ‘dark island souls’ figures not only as the exoticized setting for a story of escape and exile but also as the destination of a protagonist – and text – keenly seeking to achieve difference from the reproduction of both heterosexual relations and literary conventions. The oscillation between

\(^{71}\) Bauer, ‘Literary Sexualities’, p. 10.
lovingly replicating and ironically mimicking ‘scientific’ discourses on gender, sexuality and race characterise a novel invested in figuring itself as different whilst taking dialectical recourse to existing paradigms of difference.

Moore’s novel tells the story of an ‘unnatural’ woman’s emigration from London to an island in Southern Italy shortly after her unhappy marriage to high-born Stephen Sharvells, the birth of her ‘deformed’ effeminate boy child and a diagnosis of hysteria (SP 22, 26). ‘Lonely as an invert,’ the protagonist imagines that her journey abroad amounts to a move ‘back to where she belongs’ in the eyes of her in-laws, alluding to the idea that Southern Italy is not only geographically removed from England but backwards in terms of civilizational progress (SP 125). The text aligns deviations from ‘natural’ behaviours, ‘normal’ shapes and gender expressions with the European South in a way that replicates the racist theories of eugenicists, anthropologists, and sexologists who often identified the Mezzogiorno as one of the last European cradles of primitive cultures. Yet Ruth Dalby never arrives on the Italian island insofar as even after her stay of twenty-two years its daily scenes ‘remained an unreality’ and she remains ‘suspended in island space’ (SP 14, 100). Such an effect of thwarted arrival also describes the readerly experience of a narrative that moves back and forth between an English and Italian imagery and frequently repeats passages and sections. Similarly, Spleen faithfully repeats racist narratives about ‘Italians’ and at the same time mocks the idea that a phenomenon or object is believed to exemplify ‘Italian-ness’ by refusing to capitalise nation names and nationalities. By playing with the logic of narrative progression as well as with orthographical and typographical conventions, the text uses the semantics of shapes and movement as a site through which to experiment with representational conventions and paradigms of knowledge.

In Chapter Three I turn to Natalie Clifford Barney’s The One to examine how border crossings to unfamiliar places play a central role in the novel’s exploration of sexual otherness and forms of embodiment beyond gendered shapes. Barney’s novel recounts the journey of a genderless protagonist who assumes and haunts the life of a former female lover with the aim to redeem a figure that has fallen victim to the limits of a gendered body and a heterosexual storyline. By exploring the potential of liminal states and spaces to accommodate and allow for difference the novel seeks to overcome the reproduction of sameness encapsulated in both procreative heterosexuality and the reproduction of genre conventions. Similar to Moore’s novel, The One chronicles a quest for difference in form of new possibilities of expression with regards to the language of printed and corporeal matter: the book and the body as sites of inscriptions are central concerns of this genre-bending novel. In a Butlerian fashion, it interrogates relations between the routine repetitions of
habits, writerly and sexual, and the process of coming-to-matter in terms of acquiring an identity and a voice; the ‘carnal novel’ and the human body of flesh denote a legible text and a visible reality, resulting from staunchly reiterating norms of genre and gender. Bodies appear as surfaces always already inscribed, indicating the impossibility of ‘the Real’. The prospect of ‘the Real’ as something yet unborn propels the narrative forward, figuring as the protagonist’s and the narrative’s ultimate destination that, paradoxically, needs to retain its mystery as a condition of its existence.

To couch this ambitious search for the real in the language of travel, as The One does, indicates the close tie between travel’s promise of an encounter with absolute otherness -- encapsulated in the notion of national, racial, and cultural foreignness -- and the idea of reality as something beyond and yet latent in language, something out of reach and yet reachable. On this view the act of writing compares to the act of travelling insofar as both activities strive towards authenticity. This analogy can be taken further by considering how the difference often established between traveller and tourist seems to bring into play the distinction drawn between mimesis and alterity: numerous travel writings are invested in contrasting the traveller as the adventurous individualist who ventures off the beaten track and discovers places not yet textualized in a guidebook with the tourist as a compliant figure determined to visit the most popular sights commonly equated with a place. Such a contrast hinges on the possibility of having an unmediated encounter, the experience of an authentic phenomenon where authenticity is defined as that which unfolds beyond pre-conceived ideas and ways of representing. A similar assumption underlies the idea that works of literature swerving from representational conventions are able to capture new truths.

The narrator’s faith in the capacity of textuality – conceived of as a form of embodiment and solidified meaning – to not only capture but to move towards ‘an unborn reality’ beyond ‘stereotyped reality’ is treated with more scepticism in the writings of Djuna Barnes, as Chapter Four demonstrates. For the purpose of my argument I examine a selection of Barnes’s journalistic pieces and short stories. In these short prose texts relations between reader and narrator, between readerly expectations and narrative power, are particularly heightened, as the content each story may convey is condensed on a few pages. Barnes’ writings emphatically appeal to and fully exploit the generic expectations. In newspaper pieces (‘Who’s the Last Squatter?’ [1913], ‘Greenwich Village As It Is’ and ‘Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians’ [both published in 1916]), the author belabours the point that she will, like no one else, reveal the true reality of middle-class inverts, eccentric Bohemians, Chinese, Italian and Russian immigrants as well as the districts, squares, parks, bars, basements and beds in which they dwell. In these articles the narrator poses as a tour guide
with intimate knowledge of a place and its people, taking the reader by the hand and providing instructions about where to find the most authentic sights. By luring the reader with unique knowledge to be gained if she travels and observes as advised, these texts mobilise the logic and rhetoric of an ethnographic expedition. Indeed, the distinction the narrator establishes between expert observations and amateurish gazes, between male cosmopolitanism and female domesticity in an article like ‘Why Go Abroad – See Europe in Brooklyn!’ (1913) mirror the presumptions integral to the empirical ways of knowing formulated by early sexologists and anthropologists. Published a few years later in 1917, ‘The Hem of Manhattan’ brings out a concern already noticeable in previous articles: a preoccupation with the art of representation and storytelling negotiated in relation to the identity of a place, its atmosphere and its people.

The notion of identity and the possibility of its literary representation, its coming to live in a piece of writing, is perpetually undermined and sabotaged across Barnes’ corpus; to depict a truth constitutes an impossibility that spurs writing and is often accompanied by an ironizing metafictional commentary on writer as artist and the reader as spectator. Concerns with issues of authenticity and artificiality, transnational travel and knowledge not only distinguish some of her journalistic writing but recur in short stories like ‘The Grande Malade’ (1925) and ‘The Hatmaker’ (c. 1930). In ‘The Grande Malade’ the protagonist Moydia, who strives to become a character on stage, functions as a metafictional reflection on the production of sound literature. Allusions to cosmopolitan knowledge, ambiguous national origins, and female eccentricity merge in this short story, which indicates an affiliation with and yet parodies a Bohemian milieu. By having a protagonist called ‘Madame,’ an affluent but uneducated North American business woman, decide to embark on transatlantic travels, accompanied by her secretary ‘Miss Swann’ and a volume of Marcel Proust’s À la recherche du temps perdu, ‘The Hatmaker’ plays with the ideas of movement, cultural literacy and writing. Chapter Four explores the significance of travel as an exceptionally productive concept in Barnes’s short prose, uniting aspects ranging from the skill and artistry of literary representation and the production of knowledge to female authorship.

This thesis contributes to the current reconfiguration of the modernist literary canon and the rethinking of modernist aesthetics through geographical frameworks, by focussing attention on how movement and border crossings figure in experimental texts published by Anglo-American women writers between 1913 and 1930. It considers links established between border crossings and the acquisition of knowledge in the writings of anthropologists and sexologists an important context for understanding the significance of movement as both a material practice and a discursive construction in early twentieth-century literature. My
close readings of a range of experimental work illustrates how literary and journalistic texts published by women writers exploit the idea of movement as a way of knowing, embraced by self-proclaimed ‘men of science’ in the fields of anthropology and sexology, to negotiate questions of knowledge, representation, and authenticity.

To provide an important context for the close readings in chapters two to four, this thesis begins with an examination of how ‘travelling as a way of knowing’ has become a relevant reading practice applied to the study of relations between geography, gender and sexuality in modernist scholarship. In closing with an analysis of the significance attributed to voyages by ‘men of science’ in the formation of modern anthropological and sexological knowledge, this chapter offers a frame of reference for the close readings to follow. Each chapter explores the relation between travelling across space and knowledge from a different angle, illustrating multiple inroads into thinking together the intricate interplay between movement, gender and sexuality in literary modernism. While Spleen and the short prose of Barnes engage most directly, albeit differently, with an ethnographic discourse of travel and discovery, The One relocates the voyage of discovery into the realm of abstract speculation. To begin and end my readings with texts that experiment with movements in the more concrete terms of geographical and cartographic space I couch my discussion of Barney’s novel in between the other two.
CHAPTER ONE

Travelling as a Way of Knowing

Sexual Hermeneutics of Space

A study of women’s travel writing might seem an obvious choice for a project concerned with the significance of movement to questions of gender and sexuality in modernist literature. Such an inquiry, however, would single out women’s experiences of travelling as the source for formal experiments and modernist innovations rather than bringing into critical focus the gendered language and discourse of movement across borders in literary texts more generally, which is instead the aim of this thesis. Scholars have addressed both the significance of journeys – transnational and domestic – and the importance of specific spaces – familiar and foreign, urban and rural, visible and underground – to modernist styles, demonstrating how specific ways of inhabiting and traversing space in the early twentieth century came to matter in the literature of the time. A few critics have also considered how the material reality of a space, as well as its representation in a text, is interwoven with issues of gender and sexuality. These scholars routinely draw on geographical signifiers like the map, the labyrinth, and the underground to delineate the ways in which non-normative sexual practices and expressions of authors or protagonists become manifest on the level of content and form as the following section illustrates. The present study contributes to this important work on intersections between travel, space and literary modernism but does not turn to geography as a lens through which to retrieve knowledge about the representations of gender and sexual identities in literary fiction. Rather, it brings into critical focus the role assigned to movement and geography in processes of gathering and conceptualising such sexual knowledge.

This chapter will survey critical work that has been undertaken in modernist studies on intersections between geography, travel, gender and sexuality to situate the close readings undertaken in chapters two to four. The insights and readings of these scholars have been indispensable precursors to the current project, rendering visible the long ignored aspect of gender and sexuality in the geographies and journeys of modernist literature. Such work on

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72 Parsons identifies Robin in Barnes’s Nightwood as ‘a native animal of the modern labyrinth’. The labyrinth here depicts the topography of the ‘underworld of cosmopolitan Europe’. See Parsons, p. 179.
the visibility of sexuality as a force in the literary and cultural production of modernism requires continuous effort. Different from previous work this thesis is less interested in mapping out representations of lesbian identity in early twentieth-century literature than in highlighting the significant role sexuality, and particularly ideas of sexual difference, plays in narratives’s oscillation between secrecy/ disclosure, knowledge/ ignorance, legibility/ illegibility. This chapter closes by unpacking the idea of ‘travelling as a way of knowing,’ tracing its crucial role in the methodological repertoire and professional discourse of sexological and anthropological research. In illustrating to what extent sexologists relied on information gathered by travellers, including anthropologists, to formulate a comprehensive theory of sexuality across the human race, this section provides an important backdrop to the reading pursued in the following chapters.

In the wake of the feminist intervention into the modernist canon, gradually gaining traction in the 1990s, an important project was to retrieve the works of unknown and neglected female authors as well as lesbian, bisexual and gay writers and to place both, writers and their works, on the map of modernism to pave the way for reconfigurations of the modernist canon and a redrawing of modernist cartographies. If previously the abodes of male writers and the urban maps detailed in their fiction constituted the geographic imaginary of literary modernism – one thinks of James Joyce’s Dublin in Ulysses, T.S. Eliot’s London in The Wasteland, Alfred Döblin’s Berlin in Berlin Alexanderplatz, Henry James’s New York in Washington Square and Marcel Proust’s Paris in In Search of Lost Time – it was now imperative to chart new territories, making visible places at which a Sapphic or lesbian modernism was located. Particularly the clandestine geographies of the Left Bank in Paris of the 1920 and 1930s, home to numerous Anglo-American expatriates who had escaped more rigid social and sexual confines elsewhere, became a focal point for scholar efforts to

retrieve and examine the specifically ‘lesbian’ contributions to, and ‘Sapphic elements’ of, modernist literature at its metropolitan sites of production.74

A rhetoric of discoveries and explorations of previously hidden lesbian lands is most pronounced in Shari Benstock’s influential Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900-1940. This book, Benstock declares, ‘charts this newly discovered country [of Paris rive gauche] and places its early settlers in relation to one another, […] directs itself to important Paris addresses, […] maps the intersections of various lives,’ and traces the ‘secret passages’ of the Faubourg St. Germain.75 In addition to practices of charting another way in which Benstock creates representative spaces for women writers is her inclusion of a map of ‘Expatriate Paris,’ which locates the private residencies, literary salons and novelistic settings of Women of the Left Bank – more than half of which are identified as lesbian. By couching this important recuperative project in the language and form of a travel guide, Benstock turns the demi-monde of lesbian Paris into a mysterious and mythic object of study that, it is implied, will be unveiled in the course of reading. By means of the map, Women of the Left Bank captures, organises and represents knowledge of women’s and lesbians’ modernism, using a well-established medium to render visible what has been previously suppressed and hidden. Benstock’s use of the map has been critiqued for lacking a critical reflection on the shortcomings of such a hegemonic form of representation as well as for its complicity in the production of new exclusions.76 Amidst these valid points, a question raised less often is how a cartographical conception of space itself might have registered as a practice of knowing in literary works by authors often haunting the fringes of such representational systems. From this perspective, textual experiments with movements across space may point beyond the negotiation of a marginalised experience; a spatial sensitivity also nods to the role geographical space plays in hegemonic ways of knowing.

To redraw the map of metropolitan modernism on the basis of women’s urban walking and writing is also the aim of Deborah Parsons’s Streetwalking the Metropolis:

74 These phrases are borrowed from Shari Benstock, who has been one of the most outspoken advocates of a lesbian modernism, conjoining ‘all forms of lesbian experience, including artistic and aesthetic experiences’ and challenging the sweeping exclusion of this figure in cultural history. See Shari Benstock, ‘Expatriate Sapphic Modernism: Entering Literary History’, in Rereading Modernism: New Directions in Feminist Criticism, ed. by Lisa Rado (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012 [1994]), pp. 97-122 (p. 97).
76 Literary critic Deborah Parsons, for example, cautions against the effects of mapping ‘to localize and confine the writers in places, ignoring those outside its boundaries, and neglecting representations of the dynamics between, and movement within, city and space’. See Parsons, Streetwalking the Metropolis, pp. 149-150.
Women, the City and Modernity. If the reconfigurations undertaken by Benstock remain entrenched in a more static conception of space, Parsons emphasises dynamics of movement in literary fiction set in the cityscapes of Paris and London. Her study thematises ‘the ways in which the perceptions and experiences of the street are translated into the dynamics of literary texts’. Against a tradition to conflate urban spaces with male authority and vision, encapsulated in the figure of the flâneur, Parsons’s study of women’s literary representations of space is predicated on the assumption that the city is always a gendered site. Although Parsons seeks to distinguish her project from Benstock’s, dismissing the latter as ‘a literary Baedeker to the map of the Paris Left Bank,’ travelling remains a pervasive metaphor for acquiring knowledge in a work that ‘walks and reads the literary maps of a range of women writers’. To imagine the reading of a text as a kind of walking is an innovative twist on gauging the effects of the experience of space from the perspective of the female urban wanderer. In contrast to the present study, Parsons’s approach remains faithful to a representational reading in so far as any effect produced in the reader is always taken to refer back to and replicate the experience of the writer or protagonist as a flâneuse. The text reproduces ‘the modern urban psyche’ of women in form of a female psychogeography. As a consequence, what readers gather in the act of ‘walking’ the narratives of female urban writers is a kind of affective knowledge about women as metropolitan wanderers in the early twentieth century. To Parsons the narrative turns, flashbacks, elisions and repetitions recurring in Djuna Barnes’s novel Nightwood, for example, create a disorientating effect in the reader, comparable to the shock experiences of Georg Simmel’s urban walker in ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’ (1903). A reading practice based on translations between an individual’s perception of ‘real’ space and its literary expression contributes to a refined

77 See the synopsis on the dust jacket.

78 See also Janet Wolff, ‘The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity’, Theory, Culture & Society, 2.3 (1985), 37-46 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276485002003005>. Wolff’s piece is a critique of literature that locates the experience of modernity in public spaces and that imagines the public person as exclusively male. The separation between public and private, she indicates, ‘confined women to the private, while men retained the freedom to move in the crowd or to frequent cafés and bars’ (p. 41).

79 Parsons, Streetwalking the Metropolis, p. 2. For a critique of travelling as a popular metaphor in cultural criticism, see Janet Wolff, ‘On the Road Again: Metaphors of Travel in Cultural Criticism’, Cultural Studies, 7.2 (1993), 224-39 <https://doi.org/10.1080/0950238930490151>.

80 Parsons, Streetwalking the Metropolis, p. 134. In relation to Jean Rhys’s Good Morning, Midnight (1939), Parsons argues that the author uses ‘the state of wandering […] to plot a female psycho-geographic map’ (p. 132).

81 See ‘The Metropolis and Mental Life’, in The Blackwell City Reader, ed. by Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 103-10 (pp. 181-2).
understanding of ‘lived experiences’ through the lens of a particular gender or sexuality by reconstructing the material conditions women faced at a particular point in time. Such an interpretative method usually follows a mimetic logic either by drawing conclusions from the literary representations of domestic and public spaces about the life-worlds of (lesbian) women or by relating the spatiality of the text – the structure of sentences, narrative flow, elisions, and typographical arrangements – to experiences typical for women navigating urban landscapes.

Whereas Benstock and Parsons focus mainly on women with some consideration given to lesbian and bisexual identities, other feminist scholars have concentrated on the lesbian as a figure and lesbian sexuality as a phenomenon intimately entwined with modernity and its cultural production. From the vantage point of a lesbian critique, binaries of visible/ hidden, known/ secret, outside/ inside, and public/ private spaces constitute important spatial coordinates for examining how lesbian subjectivity materialises spatially and geographically in modernist literature. A useful example of new work on relations between lesbian modernism and space is Joanne Winning’s essay ‘Lesbian Modernism: Writing In and Beyond the Closet’. In this piece, Winning unravels representations of lesbian subjectivity in modernist writing by approaching the text ‘in spatial terms’ by which she means a conceptualisation of the text as ‘a space in which a kind of coming out – or self-articulation – might be enacted’. To gain an understanding of modernist representations of

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82 The most recent consideration of ‘the conjunction between modernism, or the modernity that underwrote it, and an intensified literary investment in female same-sex desire’ is Susan S. Lanser’s piece ‘1928: Sapphic Modernity and the Sexuality of History’, Modernism/modernity Print Plus, 1 (2016). In line with the methodology introduced in The Sexuality of History: Modernity and the Sapphic, 1565-1830 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014) Lanser does not inquire how modernity names and makes visible lesbianism, but instead asks how ‘representations of lesbians inscribe modernity’. In effect, attention shifts from the theme of lesbian sexuality in modernity to an understanding of modernity through a consideration of lesbian sexuality. A similar angle has informed the contributions to Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women and National Culture, which ‘regard the lesbian as an exemplary subject of modernity […] consciously breaking from constraining historical definitions regarding gender, identity, and sexuality’. See Sapphic Modernities: Sexuality, Women and National Culture, ed. by Laura Doan and Jane Garrity (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 8.

83 In this way, feminist scholarship put to productive use categories of sexual identities originating in sexological and psychoanalytic models. Methodologically, they proved to be useful tool in feminist endeavours to trouble textual readings that were either silent on sexual matters or tacitly assumed a heterosexual plot.

lesbian identity that does justice to its historical formulations in the early twentieth century, Winning complicates the spatial concept of the closet, suggesting that ‘the text might represent a third space that undoes the restrictive dialectics of outside and inside which structures our own contemporary thought’.\(^{85}\) The desire to write, Winning points out, is a prevalent theme in the works of lesbian modernists and bespeaks the authors’ ‘progress towards […] sexual self-knowledge’; the ‘coming to writing’ is hence a ‘coming out into the text’.\(^{86}\) If the text is construed as ‘a space or container where desire might be put instead of speaking it,’ ‘writ[ing] “the lesbian” into existence,’ then a decoding of the text – as pursued by Winning in her essay – yields knowledge about a lesbian identity. In this light, modernist textuality itself is key to both the existence and expression of lesbian desire.

Parsons and Winning are concerned with different themes – the former studying women’s experience of ‘streetwalking the metropolis,’ the latter concentrating on lesbian subjectivity; however, they both adduce particular spatial movements and formations as meaningful in relation to non-normative forms of sexuality. Parsons aligns the urban space at night with the habitat of the ‘international, lesbian flâneur’ and the ‘night-time, homosexual café society’.\(^{87}\) Winning identifies the text as a third space that ‘allows for the articulation of selfhood and desire’ on part of the author.\(^{88}\) They each offer an insightful and original account of overlooked ways in which spatial matters pervade textuality and sexuality in the early twentieth century. The present study is guided by a similar interest in productions of and traversals across space but pursues a different line of inquiry, complementing existing work in this field: it views recurrent references to and plays with space and movement in a number of female-authored works not only as indicative of a subjective framework for experience relative to one’s gender and sexual orientation but also as an engagement with the increasing importance assigned to cartographic space and movement in the sexological study of sexual identities. This thesis places border crossings and movement in a very specific context – spatial practices serving the acquisition of knowledge of sexualised bodies – to discern a different and little considered way in which they become relevant to the textual experimentation of a few women writers. From this angle, the dramatization of border crossings undertaken by journalists, tourists, eccentrics, and outcasts in the literary works I

\(^{85}\) Ibid. Cautious of its origin in contemporary articulation of sexual identities, Winning proposes a more flexible handling of the concept of the closet as an ‘analytical category’ sensitive to the particular ‘dialectics of inside and outside’ of lesbian modernist writings.

\(^{86}\) Ibid. p. 58, original italics.

\(^{87}\) See Parsons, Streetwalking the Metropolis, pp. 179-180, original italics.

examine is a gesture to the heightened attention paid to voyages across cartographically mapped space in pursuit of the research object.

More recently, feminist scholarship has witnessed a discursive shift from the lesbian as a clearly defined subject to the lesbian as an ‘analytical category,’ ‘a figure’ and ‘a sign,’ indicating a more careful approach to sexual categories and sexual knowledge. With the rise of queer theory as a new interpretative framework, drawing from poststructuralist tenets to unsettle monolithic conceptions of gender and sexual identity, an awareness of limitations inherent in essentialist constructions of lesbian and gay identity has developed. Queer readings aim to denaturalise identity categories by deconstructing binaries such as female/male and homo/hetero that have previously organised ways of thought. The growing awareness in historical, cultural and literary studies that the homosexual is a relatively recent identity category has spurred a productive debate on temporality. Given that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender are contemporary ideas of sexual identity, beginning to emerge in the course of the twentieth century, they may be seen as anachronistic frames imposed on and obfuscating knowledge of the past. A queer approach to time, however, has not only facilitated a more critical use of terminology but, at the same time, it has also allowed scholars to use categories in new innovative ways, challenging the orthodoxies of traditional chronologies. While some mobilise the term ‘queer’ to think differently about historiography, history and its relation to literature, fantasy and affect, others choose ‘the sign of the lesbian’ as a productive lens through which to study the historiography of sexuality.

89 Valerie Traub considers the critical work that ‘the sign of the lesbian’ could perform’ in Valerie Traub, Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp. 265-93. Literary critic Jodie Medd speaks of ‘lesbianism as both a productive and destabilising figure within systems of meaning and representation,’ arguing that ‘the suggestion of lesbianism functioned as a figure for unrepresentable cultural and artistic anxieties in early-twentieth century modernity and modernism’. See Jodie Medd, Lesbian Scandal and the Culture of Modernism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 4.

The candid and careful readings of historical documents Laura Doan undertakes in *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality and Women’s Experience of Modern War* are a noteworthy example of how new lines of inquiry and unexpected insights proceed from an approach rigorously critical of contemporary paradigms of modern sexuality. In line with axioms formulated by Judith Butler in * Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’* and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *Epistemology of the Closet*, two foundational texts of queer theory, Doan’s deployment of the term queer draws on its potential to resist and trouble sexual categorization rather than to consolidate. Butler and Sedgwick consider how ‘queer’ functions as a self-ascribed label, a site of identification more volatile than LGBT affiliations; however, they both place emphasis on ‘queer’ as a practice of deconstruction. Queer gains its methodological relevance and critical thrust as a practice challenging established modes of reading and interpreting, frequently signalling an intervention in the formation of a discipline, a canon, and a research practice.

How a reading based on ‘the lesbian’ as a category differs from a reading launched from the lens of queer theory in the context of modernist studies can be helpfully illustrated by placing Winning’s article on ‘lesbian modernism’ in dialogue with Daniela Caselli’s piece ‘Literary and Sexual Experimentalism in the Interwar Years’. While both essays probe relations between modernist textuality and sexuality, the ways in which they conceive of this connection and the conclusions they draw decidedly diverge. Winning’s contention that a preoccupation with language and writing is not only a defining trait of modernism but of lesbian modernism indicates a reading practice that identifies textual features as potential signs of lesbian desire and its forms of expression. Caselli, on the other hand, does not rationalise textual dynamics as the (author’s) articulation of a specific sexual identity but views textual elements such as recalcitrance, secrecy, and illegibility as a play with the reader’s hunt for precisely such traces of articulation. If Winning identifies the silent speech

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act of writing as the specifically lesbian dimensions of modernist literature, Caselli regards textual illegibility and strangeness as inherently queer features of modernist literature.

The relentless movements staged in literary texts by Richard Bruce Nugent, Djuna Barnes, Parker Tyler and Charles Henri Ford, on this view, designates the queer kinetics of language and sex as phenomena that ‘refuse to stay in their proper place’. For Sedgwick ‘queer’ comes to stand for movement itself: ‘Queer is a continuing moment, movement, motive – recurrent, eddying, troublant’. Queer movement, or movement as queering, nods to a trajectory of the term ‘movement’ that exists in parallel to, and is diametrically opposed to, movements placed in the service of acquiring definite knowledge, of fixing a meaning and pinpointing an identity. The fields of language and sexuality, queer theorists like Sedgwick suggest, are the playing field for queer movements as departures without arrivals. While we can usefully view moments in texts by Moore, Barney and Barnes as a queer manipulation of the ethnographic expedition, these writings are also invested in a more traditional conception of the journey.

**Border Crossings in Women’s Travel Writing**

The connections that literary critics have established between travelling and modernist writing often invoke a series of common narratives about what exactly the crossing of cartographical lines drawn between nation states and the experience of moving afford the itinerant (woman) writer. Travellers, it is assumed, find creative inspiration while on the move; furthermore, they engage in a form of transgression when crossing the border imagined between home country and ‘foreign’ space. Reminiscent of the logic and language of the tourism industry, these narratives about the meanings and effects of travelling rely on two critical assumptions: cartography produces a spatial reality whereby boundaries co-determine national, racial and cultural identities; secondly, it is possible to authentically experience a foreign identity in its essence – be that in form of a person, landscape, architecture or atmosphere. Cosmopolitanism – often mentioned in relation to modernism and modernist writers – hinges on these assumptions in so far as it is conceived of as a knowledge of cultural difference exclusively acquired through travels across national borders.

In the history of modernist studies, peripatetic notions of nomadism, displacement and exile have been viewed as central to the aesthetic innovations of the period but were, for a

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94 Caselli, ‘Literary and Sexual Experimentalism in the Interwar Years’, p. 108.
95 Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. xii.
long time, channelled through the readings of male-authored texts. The most recent example in this tradition is Robert Burden’s *Travel, Modernism and Modernity* which relies on canonical and largely male modernist figures – Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, D.H. Lawrence, Henry James and Edith Wharton – for its study of how the experience of transnational travel cultivated a new consciousness of mobility, borders and cultural difference in modernist fiction. In *Modernist Travel Writing: Intellectuals Abroad*, David Farley points out parallels between the experience of ‘foreign scenes, exotic locales, wrenching perspectives, and uncanny perspectives,’ and the appearance of ‘fragmented forms, montage techniques, and streams of consciousness’ in modernist literature. Basing his analysis on works by Ezra Pound, E. E. Cummings, Wyndham Lewis, and Rebecca West, he writes, ‘these writers saw the travel book as a fit vehicle for their modernist style’. Like others, Farley argues how the experience of travelling directly translated into the literary aesthetics of the time.

Feminist scholarship has mobilised travelling to frame inquiries into writers and texts lingering at the fringes of modernism, reiterating ideas about travel that have traditionally traversed projects of linking movement and literary modernism in European and North American. A recent example is Joyce E. Kelley’s 2015 publication *Excursions into Modernism: Women Writers, Travel, and the Body* which holds that ‘travel allows for new conceptions of the self, opportunities for imaginative thought, and experimentation with literary form and language’ building on the assumption that the journey ‘opened up new ways of seeing the self, and provided new eyes for seeing the world at home’. That ‘vehicular

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96 For a persuasive critique of the use of liminal notions like exile and displacement in literary criticism to describe the experience of privileged modernist artists, see Caren Kaplan, *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996). Kaplan argues ‘that the modernist trope of exile works to remove itself from any political or historically specific instances in order to generate aesthetic categories and ahistorical values;’ in this context, she speaks of an ‘aestheticised excision of location in favor of locale’ (p. 1).

97 Burden’s monograph has been preceded by a number of scholars who have studied the relationship between the experience of travel in modernity and the stylistic features of modernism by prioritising well-known and male authors. See the works by Farley, Fussell, Schweizer and Eagleton mentioned in my introduction.


99 Ibid. p. 3.

100 See Joyce E. Kelley, *Excursions into Modernism: Women Writers, Travel, and the Body* (Farnham and Burlington: Asghate, 2015), p. 2. To account for the specificity of travelling women writers, Kelley slightly modifies the association of traveling with inspiration by arguing that journeys undertaken by women writers revealed ‘a quest for a form that could capture the modern woman’s perspective of the world’. Breaks with realist forms of representation in modernist fiction are located in an author’s experience voyaging abroad:
motion becomes an altered way of seeing and of seeing oneself” is also a basic tenet of Sidonie Smith’s inquiry into how new modes of movement have transformed women’s travels and travel narratives. Smith identifies the experience of one’s body catapulted through space by means of different technologies of motion as a source for altered ways of seeing. To Kelley, on the other hand, it is the traveller’s exposure to foreignness – epitomised in the encounter with ‘the Other’ – that facilitates new views on the self and the world. Similar to Kelley, Anne E. Fernald contends that women’s improved mobility and access to new modes of transport spurred writerly inspiration, basing her argument on the much cited assumption that travelling provides an opportunity of ‘close contact with a stranger on whom a woman may exercise her imagination with silent impunity’. Such reasoning is governed by a causal chain according to which travelling sharpen perceptions, a sharpened perception yields new insights, and new insights inspire and require new ways of writing.

Another narrative that recurs in discussions of travel’s significance to early twentieth-century literature associates the crossing of cartographic borders with acts of transgressions. On this view, authors or protagonists, who violate norms and expectations – particularly in relation to gender roles and sexuality – imposed on them in their home countries and seek freedom abroad. Kelley, for instance, illustrate how the journey abroad, as a plot, offers opportunities for ‘subversive re-articulations’ of the embodied self by focusing on women’s skin, ill body, and womb as forms of female embodiment. The uniquely liberating and subversive potential of travelling is also an issue discussed in Fernald’s piece on bourgeois women’s use of the taxicab as a means of navigating the city. In the introduction to Moving Lives, Smith considers in more depth the cultural meaning attributed to women, noting how the notion of the female globetrotter and adventurer poses a challenge to ‘protocols of proper

‘they voyaged together out of realism into remarkably similar narrative innovations’. See Kelley, Excursions into Modernism, pp. 6, 10.


102 In the quoted passage Fernald refers to women’s train travels. Detailing how the notion of a train journey signifies differently across gender, she argues that ‘the modern train represents a phallic mastery of space’ for men while offering women a chance to ‘for exercising one’s imagination unfettered by the ordinary demands of domestic intimacy’. See Anne E. Fernald, ‘Taxi! The Modern Taxicab as Feminist Heterotopia’, Modernist Cultures, 9 (2014), 213-232 <http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/mod.2014.0084> (p. 214).

103 Kelley, Excursions into Modernism, pp. 5-6.

104 Fernald conceives of the taxi as a ‘potentially subversive’ site where women temporarily assume the ‘privileged status of the invisible observer’. Through an examination of taxicabs in the writing of Virginia Woolf, she explores the significance of this mode of transport for ‘a new kind of imagination and a new alignment of gender hierarchies’, linking the rise of the modern woman with new experiences of moving across space. See Fernald, ‘Taxi! The Modern Taxicab as Feminist Heterotopia’, pp. 215, 220.
femininity’ given that ‘travel has generally been associated with men and masculine prerogatives’. Drawing on Janet Wolff’s elaboration on ‘the ideology of women’s place in the domestic realm,’ Smith outlines how ‘a woman on the road still signaled femininity displaced from its founding attachment to domesticity and the requisite sissility’. One of the repercussions of such transgressions, undermining the ‘constitutive masculinity of travel,’ is that women telling stories of their travel experiences, Smith notes, often carefully attend to the ways in which they address their readers, construe the narrator, relate the motivations of their trips abroad to uphold an image of proper femininity. At the same time, the very fact that these female travellers were bringing back home knowledge accorded them a level of authority theretofore reserved to men.

Attention paid to the specificity of gender has contrived a more complex picture of intersections between early twentieth-century travel and literature, taking into consideration the impact of technological developments, new modes of transport, the rise of the tourism industry, colonial and imperial expansion has had on the mobility of mostly middle-class women in Britain, Europe and the United States. During the first world war a larger number of women of various social standings were encouraged to leave their domestic duties in order to join the military front lines, affording them access to tasks and spaces formerly reserved to men. Such shifts in gender roles, cultural historian Laura Doan has pointed out, ‘expanded the configurations and expressions of gender, and allowed greater independence and mobility, even adventurous travel’. Accordingly, for some women the notion of travel gained wider currency as an emancipatory concept: indicating women’s new social and economic opportunities and signalling physical strength and autonomy, the journey advanced to a concept intimately entwined with reconfigurations of gender. Studies examining

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105 Smith, Moving Lives, p. x.
107 It is important to bear in mind that a travel culture of exploration or recuperation is a class-specific phenomenon. The journeys discussed in these studies were undertaken by middle-class women in the context of a rising tourism industry rather than out of economic necessity. Smith, for instance, notes how in a climate of increasing prosperity in Britain and Europe, not least made possible by the imperial politics and colonial expansions, the ‘consumption of travel experiences […] became an inevitable extension of bourgeois culture’ (p. 16). Likewise, the female passengers moving through the city in the taxicabs Fernald discusses are women from affluent backgrounds.
108 See Laura Doan, Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women’s Experience of Modern War, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 1. In the years following the war, Doan notes, ‘the fluidity of gender roles [fostered by the requirements of war] spilled into various realms, such as fashion, and contributed to heightened confusion and cultural anxieties that the sexes were changing places’. See Doan, Disturbing Practices, p. xviii.
travelling and border crossing as a salient and gendered trope in the 1910s and 1920s contribute to explorations of such intersections between women’s mobility, modernist sites, and literary experimentation.

What has not been explored yet, however, is how travel registers in modernist texts as a gendered practice intimately entwined with ways of knowing newly emerging in the early twentieth century. The line of inquiry pursued in this thesis crucially departs from a focus on the experience of travel by moving into view narratives relating the crossing of cartographic boundaries to a cluster of notions – normative transgressions, authentic experiences, unique discoveries, cosmopolitan capital – whose value consists of promising access to, and knowledge of, sexual identities. Instead of asking what it means for travel to have ‘opened up new ways of seeing’ and to provide unprecedent freedoms, it critically examines how texts creatively and playfully engage with pre-existing beliefs that the journey abroad sharpens perception and delivers new insights particularly in relation to the notion of a sexualised Other. The final section of this chapter sheds light on how travel figures in the discourse of ‘scientific’ knowledge proliferating in anthropological and sexological treatises.

‘Men of Science’ on Voyages of Discovery

This thesis takes the writings of early sexologists as a point of departure for understanding how travelling became entangled with scientific ambitions brought to bear on the elusive field of sexuality. Mobility and border crossings have widely been understood as defining features of modernity, facilitated by imperial politics, technological developments, and a burgeoning tourism industry; they are, however, less often placed in the context of new knowledge practices important to the emergence of the professionalised study of sexuality at the turn of the century. This section will outline the role travelling has played in the discourse of ‘scientific’ knowledge on questions of sexual difference.109 By looking at a selection of

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classic writings in anthropology and sexology, I indicate the significance of border crossings in the formation of a discourse of ‘scientific’ observations and ways of knowing.

The type of journey under discussion in these anthropological and sexological writings is an example of Catherine Malabou’s ‘traditional’ travelling which always departs from a firm point of origin – a set of research questions, a specific epistemological framework – and arrives at a definite place encapsulated in the Other, the ‘foreign land,’ or the ‘foreign type’. In this way the material practice of departing and arriving in geographic terms maps onto and corresponds with the epistemological process of inquiring and finding, of setting out with questions and arriving at answers. The metaphorical ‘journey of discovery’ translates into both a material act and a cognitive process. Crucially, such a conceptualisation of the journey as a research practice only retains its value as long as the boundaries between a few important binaries remain firmly in place: those include distinction drawn between the familiar and foreign (land), the same and different (type of person, identity), knowledgeable expert and ignorant amateur (traveller), subjective and objective (modes of perception). Travels placed in the service of knowledge are therefore border crossings between clearly demarcated entities or identities, not incessant movements falling short of the ‘event’ of discoveries and subverting the apparent stability and unity of boundaries. Paradoxically, the range of possible answers and the level of radical openness are limited by the motivation driving the researcher: to travel with the aim of widening one’s knowledge about the spectrum of deviant sexual identities inadvertently means that phenomena encountered abroad are rationalised through the category of sexual difference.

How travel registers in female modernist texts as a gendered research practice used by sexologists to construct categories of sexual identities is the driving concern of this thesis. If sexual scientists travel literally or refer to actual travels undertaken by others to seek classificatory certainty and taxonomical clarity, then modernist writers have commonly embraced border crossings thematically and formally to produce uncertainty, ambiguity and illegibility: Travelling figures very differently in the positivist model of human sciences and the deconstructive approach to regimes of knowledge which distinguishes many modernist narratives. In my examination of little discussed examples of female modernist fiction and non-fiction, I regard the coincidence of border crossings and sexual transgressions on the level of content and experiments with narrative movement and textual space on the level of form as a critical engagement with the epistemic significance assigned to travelling in the scientific discourse of sexology. The texts I examine intervene in such a mode of knowing embodiments of sexual aberrations in distinct ways by manipulating (in the case of Moore), re-purposing (in the case of Barney), parodying (in the case of Barnes) travel’s association
with knowledge. Instead of arrivals, discoveries and findings put into writing Moore, Barney and Barnes deploy movements (thematically and formally) to stage suspended arrivals, anti-climactic twists, halted discoveries and flawed ambitions.

Operating across two disciplinary and discursive fields – the literary and the scientific – this thesis views the concept of travelling as a research practice which has shaped ways of thinking and knowing the sexual Other in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Sexological writings on forms of sexual perversion and literary preoccupations with dissident sexual subjects do not unfold in isolation but inform one another. We can shed light on the movements and crossings – of cartographical lines and sexual norms – explored in modernist writings by scrutinising how they might relate to a larger model of knowledge production, or episteme in Michel Foucault’s terminology, surfacing in the discourse of early sexologists and anthropologists. The remainder of this section outlines travel’s function as a ‘scientific’ research practice for sexological and anthropological research. To grasp how exactly these ‘men of science’ conceptualise border crossings – arrival, discovery, representation are key elements – allows for a clear understanding of the ways in which female modernists disrupt and destabilise, appropriate and repurpose this conception.

The term ‘science,’ at this point in time, did not ‘exclusively refer to the natural sciences and their particular methodologies,’ as Kevin Brazil points out, but could also refer to ‘any systematic pursuit of knowledge, carried out through academic scholarship’. Such a broad definition of ‘science’ also characterises Franz Boas’ claim, formulated in an essay on geography in 1887, that ‘[a]ll agree that the establishment of facts is the foundation and starting-point of science’. The term gained relevance for the field of sexuality when a


110 While the taxonomies, categories and identities of sexologists registered in the realms of culture, literature and arts (see the work of Schaffner) Heike Bauer reminds us that ‘literary representations, and, perhaps even more so, literary methods were crucial to the way “sexuality” was articulated in sexology and beyond’. See Bauer, ‘Literary Sexualities’, p. 110.

111 See Kevin Brazil, ‘T.S. Eliot: Modernist Literature, Disciplines and the Systematic Pursuit of Knowledge’, in Being Modern: The Cultural Impact of Science in the Early Twentieth Century, ed. by Robert Bud, et al. (London: UCL Press, 2018), pp. 77-94 (p. 78). Brazil considers claims formulated by modernist poets like T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound that poetry should be a science as indicative of the idea that ‘science offered a model of being modern in the early twentieth century’ (p. 81). Such a turn to science, Brazil acknowledges, can also be viewed as ‘appeals for authority, hierarchy and control, or as masculine reaction to a feminised belles et lettres’; in his piece, however, Brazil draws attention to ‘the appeal and prestige of the social organisation of science into disciplines’.

112 In this essay, Boas, who has been credited for his pioneering work in anthropology and helped institutionalise the discipline in the United States, makes a plea for maintaining geography as an independent discipline by identifying it as a branch of science distinct from ‘physical science’ in its ideals, objects and methods. See Franz Boas, ‘The Study of Geography’, Science, 9 (1887), 137-141 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1762738> [accessed 27 Jun 2018] (p. 138).
group of professionals – psychiatrists, physicians, forensic experts – as well as social reformers and activists committed to a more rigorous examination of sexual desires and relations. An increasing emphasis on ‘science’ was also noted by contemporaries. In an overview of the attitudes researchers have brought to the study of sexuality since the eighteenth century, the British physician, social reformer and sexologist Havelock Ellis remarked that ‘in the twentieth century […] we are acquiring a more scientific spirit’. In 1937, German physician and eugenicist Max Hodann recapitulated recent developments in the academic discourse on sexuality, maintaining that in the twentieth century ‘the stress has shifted to the scientific investigation and discussion of sexual matters’. Such an ideological shift became manifest in the role border crossings assumed as a material and discursive practice placed in the service of a ‘scientific’

investigation of sexual and racial ‘types’. Increasingly, cartography and geography functioned as sites through which to conceptualise sexual and racial difference. In their introduction to a ‘Special Section on Travel Writing and Knowledge Transfer,’ literary historians Florian Krobb and Dorit Müller argue that “scientific” travel assumed the status of a specifically empirical scientific methodology of knowledge production by facilitating practices of surveying, collecting, recording and systematising and by integrating new subjects of observation into existing knowledge systems.\(^{117}\) If voyages gained ‘epistemic significance’ since the age of Enlightenment, as Krobb and Müller contend, what distinguishes expeditions undertaken towards the end of the nineteenth century is an intensified concern with types of bodies and populations in relation to geographical factors such as a particular environment and climate.\(^ {118}\) Traversals across space became a research practice fundamental to modern anthropology and sexology striving to scale up the scope of their studies to encompass populations worldwide. Travelling thus played a noticeable part in the professionalisation of these disciplines.

In a piece on the history of ethnographic travel writing, historian Joan Pau Rubiés traces a development from the emergence of ‘scientific ethnology’ in the wake of evolutionary theories in the nineteenth century to the rise of modern anthropology as a ‘scientific enterprise’ and ‘the modern professional anthropologist’ as a distinct type of ‘traveller-ethnographer’ in the first decades of the twentieth century.\(^ {119}\) The history of social anthropology witnessed a ‘general shift in ethnographic methods’ in the 1890s and early 1900s.\(^ {120}\) During this period, Kuper argues, anthropologists lessened their reliance on travel reports from others and instead embarked on voyages themselves, marking the rise of intensive fieldwork as the new basis for anthropological research. Ethnographic expeditions,

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\(^{118}\) Ibid. p. 46.

\(^{119}\) Rubiés, ‘Travel Writing and Ethnography’, p. 251.

\(^{120}\) See Adam Kuper, ‘Anthropology’, in *The Cambridge History of Science*, ed. by Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 354-78 (p. 362). Kuper adds that this shift has been notably influenced by financial support from ‘proliferating ethnographic museums, hoping to add to their collections’. For a more detailed overview of modern British anthropology see Kuper’s *Anthropology and Anthropologists: The British School in the Twentieth Century*, Fourth edn (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2015). One of the findings put forward in this book is the impact British empiricism has had on the field. The author states that ‘if one were to characterize the mood of British anthropology in the first decades of this [twentieth] century one would have to stress the overriding concern with the accumulation of data’ (p. 5).
first-hand observations, and intimate contact with the subjects of investigation constituted a new way to compensate for ‘the incomplete and even misleading character of much of the vast mass of survey work which forms the existing material of anthropology,’ as English anthropologist and psychiatrist William H. R. Rivers (1864-1922) stated in a report on ‘the science of anthropology’ in 1913. Rivers contrasts perfunctory ‘survey work’ with ‘intensive work’ to argue that only intensive work – defined by several criteria including a minimum stay of one year among the community studied – furnishes ‘the inquirer’ with access to the ‘immense extent of the knowledge’ available. Travels abroad, prerequisite for immersive fieldwork, constituted an ‘important element in the professionalization of the discipline’: Border crossings undertaken by largely male professionals bestowed credence upon the discoveries made abroad, becoming part of a ‘scientific’ discourse of objective, unbiased, and direct observation of the social systems and psychologies of a people. References to voyages embarked on and ethnographic fieldwork conducted conveyed authority to anthropological and sexological treatises. To a new group of professional anthropologists striving to meet ‘scientific’ standards in terms of methodology and to determine the ‘scientific laws’ governing the phenomena studied travels abroad were paramount to establish anthropology as a social science.

The degree to which scientificity operated as a crucial benchmark for the esteem and authority of anthropology as a serious discipline is evident in several publications. Rivers’s reference to chemistry and biology in an effort to draw the reader’s attention to one crucial difference, namely the fact that anthropology’s ‘material’ is at the risk of extinction, assumes similarity in all other aspects. Out of this insight grows a sense of urgency not to preserve living conditions but ‘to save vanishing knowledge’ by undertaking intensive fieldwork. Similarly, Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) justifies the exposition of the ‘subject, method and scope of his inquiry’ at the beginning of a report compiled in 1921 and following his two-year long field research in the Trobriand Islands on grounds that ‘no one would dream of making an experimental contribution to physical or chemical science, without giving a

detailed account of all the arrangements of the experiment’. How exactly a scientifically informed approach to the study of ‘human races’ looks like is a matter of great concern to the authors of anthropological treatises. For the production of knowledge of ‘scientific value’ a series of steps must be observed encapsulated in Albert Ernest Jenks’s (1869-1953) formula for research on ‘ethnic groups’ and beginning with ‘accurate and abundant observation, then classification and comparison, and eventually hypothesis and demonstrable conclusion’. To gauge the elements integral to the acquisition of scientific knowledge it is also helpful to turn to Malinowski’s introduction to the classic *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, which elaborates on Jenks’s more condensed synopsis. Malinowski identifies three main principles: the formulation of ‘real scientific aims’ by which he means an inquiry ‘along really relevant lines and towards aims possessing real importance’; the researcher’s residence among locales as the only white man to be in ‘real touch with the natives’; and finally, the ‘collecting, manipulating and fixing of his evidence’. What is important for Malinowski’s argument and the validity of his study are a range of distinctions invoked in his elaborations on a properly scientific procedure. Critical, for instance, is the differentiation between the unprejudiced observation and description of a phenomenon on the one hand and processes of inferring, interpreting and concluding, on the other hand. For Malinowski the ‘brute material of information’ must remain separate from the ‘final authoritative presentation of results’ so as to make transparent the ethnographer’s transformation of ‘actually observed data of real behaviour’ into ‘objective documents’. Both, that is, the ‘full body and blood of actual native life’ and the ‘skeleton of abstract constructions’ are important to Malinowski who postulates that theorisations must be complemented with (anecdotal) descriptive accounts of observations as that which gives insights into the ‘full actuality’ of people’s lives; the ‘actual life’ and the ‘real substance’ of a people, on Malinowski’s view, remain theoretically ‘imponderable’ but accessible through ‘real, unbiased, impartial observation’. The self-

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125 Rivers, Jenks, and Morley, *Reports Upon the Present Condition and Future Needs of the Science of Anthropology*, p. 55. The reference to the phrase ‘scientific value’ occurs on page 8 in River’s report and on page 3 in Malinowski. Sir James G. Frazer who has written a preface to *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922) praises the ‘high scientific value’ of the work on page viii.


128 Ibid. p. 18.
conscious narrator in Djuna Barnes’s newspaper article ‘Greenwich Village As It Is’ draws on precisely such a rationale to uphold the possibility of the reader’s glimpse of Greenwich Village as it presents itself ‘in reality’ (‘GV’ 228). Only by means of an ‘anecdote,’ the narrator asserts, intimate knowledge of a place and its people is possible (‘GV’ 229). In the same breath, however, the first-hand account of the ‘real’ life, habits and dwellings of a particular ‘type’ of people is exposed to be yet another construction as the narrator’s phrase ‘the skeleton of life’ implies.

The notion of unprejudiced observation hinges on another important distinction for only the ‘trained mind’ of an ‘empirical investigator’ is unaffected by the ‘preconceived ideas’ that the ‘untrained minds’ of ‘amateurs’ bring to the object of study; another version of this binary is Malinowski’s differentiation between ‘untrained observers’ and ‘scientifically trained observers’.\(^{129}\) This distinction between an expert’s skilled observation and the amateur’s ignorant gaze recurs in anthropological and sexological writings on the acquisition of knowledge, indicating the enormous disciplinary investment in the possibility of a researcher’s absolute objectivity and impartiality as well as a firm stake in notions of the reality, actuality, and truth of a people. Ironically, attending to the precise wording of what ‘trained observers’ encounter reveals the impossibility of immediacy; inevitably, the scientist’s perception is channelled through concepts. Malinowski holds out the prospect of seeing a ‘whole class of phenomena’ and of ‘observ[ing] data’ if the observers brings merely ‘foreshadowed problems,’ not preconceived ideas, to the object of study.\(^{130}\) Precisely when he upholds the idea of a reality that exists independently from the researcher’s perception, he also reveals its dependency on pre-existing categories of theoretical thought and predetermined questions, undermining the idea of a reality that is independent from the inquirer and his point of view.

The conception of ‘scientific research’ expounded by Rivers, Jenks and Malinowski and organised around binaries of real/ apparent, objective/ subjective, immediate/ mediated, observing/ interpreting, trained/ ignorant, and professional/ amateur exemplifies a lexicon of key terms important not only to anthropology but also to the sexological project. To shift from one part of the binary to the other – for instance, from an illusionary impression to an authentic experience – transnational mobility is essential. Underlying these distinctions between theory and observation, impartiality and partiality, subjectivity and objectivity in the

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\(^{130}\) Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, pp. 9, 17, 20.
anthropological and sexological discourse of ‘scientific’ knowledge are politics of gender. Only the learned ‘man of science’ as an authoritative figure equipped with superior cognitive skills is able to make contributions to ‘scientific’ knowledge. To Malinowski ‘the methods and aims of scientific field ethnology have taken shape’ the moment ‘men fully trained for the work have begun to travel into savage countries and study their inhabitants’. Importantly, the figure of the ‘man of science’ is not simply a convention of language to denote human beings generally, a universal signifier inclusive of all genders, but also a material reality given that the ‘trained’ travellers as well as the authors of reports – the ‘final authoritative presentation of tribal life’ in Malinowski’s words – were, with a few exceptions, men. The fact that institutions of science, including social science, were historically dominated by white men favoured the formulation of research questions, methodologies, and values that categorically dismissed ideas of multiplicity, perspectivism, and context-specificity. Such a gender inequality has perpetuated both the unchallenged gendering of research values such as objectivity and detachment as well as the reproduction of gender-normative stereotypes in publications of research findings. This is not to ignore and diminish the observations recorded and field research undertaken by colonial women travellers but to clarify that in the context of institutionalised knowledge, professional networks and authoritative publications male voices had more influence.

In the documents of sexologists an emphasis on the ‘scientific’ versus the ‘casual observer’ — the precise terminology varies — crops up as a discursive practice conferring authority on assertions. For instance, in a section that surveys the practice of ‘marriage by capture’ as a ‘method of courtship’ across the world, Havelock Ellis quotes from a passage in Northern Tribes of Central Australia in which the authors remark that ‘to the casual observer what looks like a capture […] is in reality an elopement’. Similarly, Krafft-Ebing states that sudden attraction between members of the opposite sex ‘appears as a “soul-mystery”’ to the general public, but clarifies that ‘to the scientific observer’ ‘certain physical or mental

131 See ibid. p. xv.
132 For an overview of feminist interventions in scientific research and science studies, see Sharon Crasnow and others, ‘Feminist Perspectives on Science’, in The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ed. by Edward N. Zalta (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018) [https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-science] [accessed 10 Jan 2017]. In this article, the authors expand on how ‘scientific authority has frequently served to rationalize the kinds of social roles and institutions that feminists call into question.’
peculiarities’ are evident as actual causes.\textsuperscript{134} This gendered differentiation between a casual and a professional way of observing ‘foreign’ phenomena abroad is an important element in the conceptualisation of travelling as a method to acquire knowledge: it holds out the prospect of discovering reality while regulating who exactly has access to it.

Notions of purposeful travel and direct observation handled by experts also appear in sexological treatises published roughly between 1890 and 1920, usually in tandem with efforts to lay claim to the scientific nature of a method and the findings it yields. The rise of sexology as an academic discipline unfolds in parallel to, and is heavily influenced by, the methods and writings of anthropologists who have travelled abroad. Similar to the preambles to anthropological reports, the authors of sexological treatises are notably concerned with emphasising the scientific value of their research questions, methodologies, and findings. In the preface to the first edition of\textit{Psychopathia Sexualis} (1886), Richard von Krafft-Ebing, a prominent German-Austrian psychiatrists and forensic expert, belabours the need for ‘scientific treatises’ on sexuality by which he means the ‘description of the pathological manifestations of sexual life’ undertaken by medically and legally trained ‘men of understanding’.\textsuperscript{135} His work is dedicated ‘to earnest investigators in the domain of natural science and jurisprudence’. In the 1901 preface to \textit{Sexual Inversion}, Havelock Ellis calls the London prosecutors who prohibited sales of a work they deemed not scientific ‘amateur experts on the judicial bench’.\textsuperscript{136} To pursuit a ‘scientific investigation’ is of great importance to Ellis, who praises Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, a German lawyer and author writing on love between men, for his contributions to the ‘scientific recognition of congenital homosexuality’ as well as Krafft-Ebing whose ‘fine-spun classification has doubtless contributed to give


precision to the subject and to advance its scientific study’. Like Rivers in 1913 and Malinowski in 1921, Swiss psychiatrist and entomologist Auguste Forel points specifically to ‘the natural sciences’ as an important methodological frame through which to study phenomena of sexuality. In his 1908 publication on ‘the sexual question,’ he maintains that it is ‘necessary to treat the question from the point of view of the natural sciences, physiology, psychology and sociology’.

While sexologists often relied on informants to demonstrate patterns and circumstances of abnormal behaviour, basing their ‘scientific findings’ on these ‘case studies,’ specialists also drew on a vast archive of travel narratives. Discoveries made by mostly male professionals during expeditions and documented in medical journals, conference papers, textbooks, bulletins to societies of anthropology and geography — genres distinguished by a discourse of objectivity and scientific methodology — frequently served as evidence cited to determine the origins, occurrences and forms of sexual perversion in foreign regions. One poignant example of cross-referencing in sexological texts is the figure of ‘Dr. A. B. Holder’ whose name is never fully disclosed. ‘Dr. A. B. Holder’ is introduced as an authority on the subject of sexual perversion among North American indigenous tribes, having directly observed the sexual activities, relations and physiognomies of its ‘perverted’ members, by Richard von Krafft-Ebing to prove that his claims on ‘eviration and defemination’ are supported by ‘ethnological data’. Havelock Ellis refers to ‘Dr. Holder’s careful description’ of the ‘boté’ or male ‘invert’ several times in the introduction to Sexual Inversion. British writer and social reformer Edward Carpenter mentions ‘a certain Dr. A.

137 Although Ellis praises Krafft-Ebing for his ‘clinical enthusiasm with which he has approached the study of sexual perversions’ he is also sceptical about the value of Krafft-Ebing’s obsession with categorisations. His cautiousness becomes clear when he commends Moll for ‘rejecting any minute classification of sexual inverted’ and to instead identify only two types of inversion: psychosexual hermaphroditism and homosexuality. See ibid. pp. 37, 39, 54.


139 See Krafft-Ebing, pp. 197, 202. By ‘eviration’ he means the ‘psychosexual transformation’ of a biological man into a person with female ‘feelings and inclinations’. To Krafft-Ebing, typically ‘female’ traits are a preference for the passive role in sex, receptibility to male touch, and the desire for ‘feminine occupations’ (pp. 197 and 200).

140 See Ellis, Sexual Inversion, pp. 9, 10, 13, and 215. As each author explains, Holder reported that ‘boté’ is a phrase used by the Crow Indians in Montana and translates into ‘not man, not woman’. To differentiate the spectrum of queer sexualities in Native American cultures from prevailing LGBT categories today, some
B. Holder to deliver ‘evidence of the wide-spread belief in hermaphroditism current among the early European travellers’ as well as ‘among most primitive peoples’ in Intermediate Types Among Primitive Folk: A Study in Social Evolution (1914). To Carpenter the ‘double sex’ and cases of ‘hermaphroditism’ of which travellers speak are a misconception of what in reality is the ‘intermediate type’. In this way, each theorist adduces observations captured by travellers to substantiate their respective hypothesis about forms and varieties of sexual abnormality.

In addition to the ‘case study,’ that is, the personal account and confessional story of an individual as a source of information on ‘abnormal’ sexual behaviours and relations, sexologists have also relied on observations undertaken by travelling anthropologists and recorded in written treatises. If case studies were believed to give insights into personal motivations, thoughts, and feelings, illuminating an individual’s psychic interiority, then travelling professionals zoomed in on observable exterior ‘facts’ such as anatomies, appearances and behaviours. We can discern the conversion of a traveller’s personal experience into statements with scientific pretensions in Ellis’s remark that ‘Holder, on the basis of his own experience among Indian tribes […] prepared a table showing that […]’. The shift from Holder’s ‘own experience’ to ‘a table showing that’ captures the moment in which subjective perception turns into a scientific – in the sense of factual and objective – finding. Moving the source of information from the personal and anecdotal to the systematic and abstract display of observations organised into ‘tables of kinship terms, genealogies, maps, plans, and diagrams’ simulates detachment and qualifies such display as ‘scientific’. In the words of Barney’s protagonist, individuals are ‘seized from outside-up against “hard facts”’ (TO 44).


143 See Malinowski, Argonauts of the Western Pacific, p. 10. To Malinowski the ‘mental chart’ of an investigator, that is, the data he has collected, is ‘transformed into a real one’ as soon as it ‘materialise[s] into a diagram, a plan, an exhaustive synoptic of cases’ (p. 4).

144 In The Apple is Bitten Again, Olive Moore speaks of an ‘Outside Directing Intelligence’ (p. 403).
On the basis of travel reports, sexologists extrapolated their theorisations to groups outside of their immediate purview, driven by the ambition to provide a comparative and comprehensive study of sexuality. Entire sections in Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Ellis’s volumes on ‘the psychology of sex’ and Forel’s *The Sexual Question* accumulate findings of physicians, anthropologists, and ethnologists who have embarked on research trips abroad and who are introduced as experts on different ‘tribes’ and ‘natives’ — a terminology relentlessly reinforcing the contrast fabricated between Europeans as the epitome of civilisation and ‘primitives’ or ‘savages’ as the dehumanised object of study. Observations on sexual practices and rituals, anatomies and physiognomies of people designated a ‘foreign’ racial and national identity enabled researchers to lay claim to a comprehensive study of anomalous forms of sexual life across the human race. Incorporating aspects of racial difference and geographical distance, however, also served to chart a historical genealogy of sexual deviation proceeding on the assumption that civilizational progress mapped onto racial and geographical paradigms. Sexual theorists freely used descriptions of sexual customs, gender roles, dress styles, and anatomical details contained in travel reports to identify sexual practices beyond heterosexual monogamy and ways of dressing outside of white European and North American gender norms as manifestations of sexual degeneracy to not only locate them in geographically distant places but to situate them genealogically backwards in time.

A passage in Ellis’s *Sexual Inversion* in which he laments the shyness, ignorance and vagueness travellers exhibit in relation to ‘the main points of investigation’ makes explicit a dependency on the ‘records’ of those venturing abroad.

Traces of homosexual practices, sometimes on a large scale, have been found among all the great divisions of the human race. It would be possible to collect a considerable body of evidence under this head. Unfortunately, however, the travelers and others on whose records we are dependent have been so shy of touching these subjects, and so ignorant of the main points for investigation, that it is very difficult to discover sexual inversion in the proper sense in any lower race. Travelers have spoken vaguely of crimes against nature without defining the precise relationship involved nor inquiring how far any congenital impulse could be distinguished.145

The quote encapsulates the complex entanglement of border crossings and cartographical space with the emergence of the systematic study of ‘homosexual practices’ and ‘sexual

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inversion’. Mobility enables a survey of sexual practices across ‘the great divisions of the human race,’ indicating the importance of geography and race as frameworks through which to grasp manifestations of sexual deviancy. Ellis’s lament for the negligence travellers display in relation to ‘the main points of investigation’ is echoed in Carpenter who also mentioned ‘the early travellers, who had less concrete and reliable information on such subjects [intermediate types] than we have’. Such criticism reveals that the framework through which to comprehend sexuality is already in place before the research commences. Precisely what kind of expressions, practices and rituals count as ‘sexual’ and how to categorise those sexual phenomena to render them intelligible in terms of one’s own language and taxonomies is predetermined. This sits squarely with science’s idea of an impartial and detached inquiry but is fundamental to its very method.

Through plays with narrative movements and textual space, the literary writings I examine in this thesis exploit parallels between travelling and reading as processes that may yield arrival in the sense of arriving at a meaning, a truth, an end. The following chapters provide each a close reading of select texts by Moore, Barney, and Barnes, considering in what way and to what effect they replicate and appropriate, twist and mock authoritative ways of knowing and representing sexuality and the sexed body.

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CHAPTER TWO

Surface Aesthetics and Non-Arrivals in Olive Moore’s *Spleen*

Olive Moore’s novel *Spleen* (1930) is primarily set on the isle of Foria in Southern Italy. While Foria is nowhere to be found on an actual map, its topography is modelled on the volcanic island of Ischia in the Tyrrhenian Sea. Numerous references to landmarks specific to the island and the region suggests this parallel is not thinly disguised but blatantly disclosed. Like Ischia’s, Foria’s neighbours are the isles of Procida and Capri. It features a district called Barano d’Ischia and offers views to the city of Gaeta in the North and Sorrento in the South. Other references appear slightly altered with their original grammatical gender eradicated and their ending changed from the Italian masculine ‘-e’ or ‘-o’ to the feminine ‘-a’ or the pluralised ‘-i’. In this way, Ischia’s mountain Monte Epomeo becomes Foria’s ‘Mont’ Epomana,’ the harbour Ischia Ponte turns into ‘Foria Ponte,’ the village of Piedimonte is named ‘Piedimonti’ and Ischia’s main town Forio is the eponym for the isle of ‘Foria’. These subtle orthographical modifications capture a textual idiosyncrasy that permeates the entire novel: an oscillation between faithful replication and subtle subversion of geographical signifiers in a manner that destabilises the authenticity of such touristic signposts. *Spleen* treads the thin line between half-hearted imitation and slight distortion not only in its use of representational conventions, but also in its allusions to ‘scientific’ discourses on gender and sexuality as well as in its intertextual references to other English novels set in Italy.¹⁴⁷ Neither turning into a convincing pastiche nor becoming a fully-fledged parody, the novel casts doubt on the author’s intentions.

Whether we read the altered toponyms as the sign of the narrator’s negligence and the staging of inaccurateness or as a wilful and strategic manipulation, they draw the reader’s attention to Italian landmarks as they become text and exist in text. By opting for similarity between ‘real’ and ‘fictional’ place names, the novel lays claim to the reality of its setting as an extra-literary referent and yet it instantly revokes the reliability of an extra-literary referent by means of disfigured word endings: while the recognisability of the toponyms has us effortlessly locate the novelistic setting, the orthographical alterations, arbitrary or not, erode faith in the reliability of the geographical signifier, introducing an element of uncertainty. Recognition is both facilitated, even provoked, and at the same time interrogated: how the reader reads knowledgably is accentuated here by drawing attention to acts of mapping. Sean Latham has noted how a range of modernist authors who experimented with the genre of the roman à clef published books ‘they consistently claimed were entirely imaginative but that aggressively exploited the roman à clef’s illicit pleasures’.¹⁴⁸ This chapter does not propose to read Spleen as a roman à clef, however, we can see how Moore has eyed with establishing a connection with an extravagant community of queerly living expats, artists, and bohemians, playing with its ‘scandalous appeal’.

One important way to account for the novel’s sexual and textual eccentricities, its references to an unwomanly woman addressed as ‘Signor’ (SP 52, 67, 77) and emanating ‘something queer’ is to consider it as an example of lesbian modernism (SP 116).¹⁴⁹ In this

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chapter, however, I emphasise how such insinuations of difference together with the journey to Southern Italy gesture to a process of knowing that had gained prominence among early sexologists and anthropologists: the prospect of gathering comprehensive information on sexual otherness by crossing the borders to foreign countries and by studying anatomies and behaviours in relation to geographical and ‘racial’ factors is an important context. If we view the allusion to exotic sites and sights in *Spleen* as the staging and stylisation of an object of study, appealing to the reader’s ‘hope of seeing,’ then we can also consider to what extent the book itself might pose as precisely such an object. The title itself playfully insinuates that the novel at hand encapsulates, or is the product of, an eccentric deviation from a ‘healthy,’ ‘normal’ behaviour. In this way, *Spleen* not only draws on a sexological and anthropological discourse to portray the protagonist’s and the text’s quest for difference but also writes itself, as an object of inquiry, into such a discourse. Describing it as the ‘best-kept secret’ of British literature’ on the back cover of the 1996 paperback edition, the Dalkey Archive Press depicts Moore’s work as a touristic token of yet unexplored realms of British writing.

Modelled on the island of Ischia in the Bay of Naples – a secluded abode for a community of eccentric, often wealthy, English, European and North American artists in the 1920s and 1930s – *Spleen*’s fictional setting aligns this novel with several other publications that bring to the scene the literary tourist eager to enter a world where vivid depictions of Mediterranean landscapes and people merge with scandalous stories of sexual escapades.

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151 Today’s denotations of ‘spleen’ – the term either refers to an organ in vertebrates or to bad temper – can be traced back to the seventeenth century ‘where “exhalations” in the stomach or spleen were supposed to rise up into the brain and produce mental imbalance’. See Jacqueline Broad, *Women Philosophers of the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 24. Moore’s depiction of Ruth Dalby as a hysteric woman and a mother gone mad directly takes up the terms of the literature of the time: the vapours escaping the spleen were also known as ‘Fits of the Mother’ or ‘Hysterick fits’ and a believed to be a ‘typically female ailment’ (ibid., original italics). Another prominent theme in Moore’s novel, women’s wombs and restlessness, can be traced back to the ancient Platonic idea of the ‘wondering womb’ as a uterus that begins to ‘travel around the body,’ causing symptoms of hysteria. See Lisa Appignanesi, *Mad, Bad and Sad: A History of Women and the Mind Doctors from 1800 to the Present* (London: Virago, 2008). On the medicalisation and pathologization of female experiences in the 19th century and earlier, see Jane M. Ussher, *The Madness of Women: Myth and Experience* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), particularly chapter two. In 1709 English poet Anne Finch published a Pindaric ode called ‘The Spleen’. The following line unites the ‘unusual’ with the deviation from a well-trodden path: ‘my Hand delights to trace unusual Things | And deviates from the known, and common way’. While the poem has been mostly read for its depiction of melancholia it also contains ‘a defence of the right of women to become authors’ – a concern shared by Moore, too. See Barbara McGovern, *Anne Finch and Her Poetry: A Critical Biography* (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1992), p. 160. Shared across this plethora of intertextual references is the theme of deviation and movement.
Tuscany in E. M. Forster’s *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) and *A Room with a View* (1908), the fictionalized island of Capri in Norman Douglas’s *South Wind* (1917) and Compton Mackenzie’s *Vestal Fire* (1927) and *Extraordinary Women* (1928), the Italian Riviera in Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Hotel* (1927) situate plots touching on the illicit pleasures of homoerotic relations in Italy, as I will explore in the first section of this chapter. Citing novels set in Capri, Manhattan, Paris, London and Berlin as a case in point, Sean Latham suggests that ‘one of the most vibrant literary markets of the early twentieth-century, in fact, was for works that offered glimpses into such bohemian affairs,’ appealing to the public’s ‘appetite for scandal’ and desire to ‘extract its most alluring secrets’. Moore’s choice of setting toys with such expectations raised in the reader – as do the selections of sites in Natalie Barney’s novel (Bois de Boulogne) and Djuna Barnes’s prose (Greenwich Village, among others).

Having considered this tradition in British modernist writing allows for a careful study of how Moore’s novel is aligned with a broader trend in the literature of the time and yet strays from conventions in several notable ways. The latter part of this chapter will shed further light on the ways in which *Spleen* swerves from representational orthodoxies, investigating its surface aesthetics, its alternations between movement and stagnation, between departures and non-arrivals as well as its innovative plays with the materiality of language and books by tampering with orthographical rules and typographical orthodoxies. Moore’s plays with narrative circularity and experiments with normative shapes can be usefully placed side by side with the story *Spleen* narrates: its main protagonist, Ruth Dalby, never feels at ease with a heteronormative life narrative governed by heterosexual marriage, traditional gender roles, and the labour of procreation. This resistance to expectations voiced by English society – instanced by Ruth’s in-laws and representatives of the medical institution in the novel – materialises literally when Ruth gives birth to a disabled, effeminate boy, rendering impossible the multiplication of able-bodied, appropriately gendered, fertile social and national subjects. The birth of Richard prompts her emigration to an island in the South of Italy, fuelled by feelings of failure and ambitions to rebel.

The story of Ruth’s emigration is told retrospectively, producing the effect of a narrative perpetually caught in a move backwards. If continuous reading implies a gradual acquisition of more information, the progressive travelling towards knowledge, then Moore’s novel plays with this logic through its narrative diversions and repetitions, sabotaging the reader’s arrival at a meaning, conclusion, or image. Such attention paid to readerly

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movements across the space of the text testify to a preoccupation with the mechanics of narratives: the motion enacted by the force of a narrative is a critical working part of a written text. An interest in the technicality and materiality of texts is also evident in the novel’s orthographical alterations as well as in its striking manipulation of typography – both will be discussed in the third section of this chapter. It is, furthermore, noteworthy that in the original 1930 publication by Harper and Brothers, paragraphs were separated by either one or eight line spaces, creating an unusual aphoristic aesthetic of insular sections. Spleen’s experimentation with shapes and movements in this most literal way are an important, if neglected and sometimes editorially removed, dimension of the literary aesthetics forged by female modernists. This chapter closes by examining an ‘autobiographical sketch’ that showcases Moore’s engagement with questions of gender, sexuality and nationality as issues channelled through genres of writing.

**Journeys to Italy in British Fiction**

The story of Spleen begins in medias res with the narrator, largely focalised through Ruth, describing a daily scene unfolding on the island of Foria in 1929. This scene triggers one of many flashbacks to the protagonist’s former life in both England and Foria. Gradually, the reader learns that Ruth has always had an uneasy relationship with the social protocols and gender roles of an English society that persistently singles her out as an outsider. With a plot about a young English woman’s escape from a conservative social milieu to an Italy perceived as more liberal, Moore places her novel in a tradition of English interwar fiction set in Italy.153 In a range of novels published between 1900 and 1930, the voyage to Italy is portrayed as a route out of England and the social and moral constraints associated with it. Elizabeth von Arnim, Norman Douglas, E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, Compton MacKenzie, D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley and Elizabeth Bowen have all crafted narratives in which the journey to Italy is a crucial feature that coincides with motifs of social non-conformity and sexual dissidence. These authors have created characters who feel, to different degrees, alienated from an English society into which they don’t seem to fit insofar as their sexual desires seep across the boundaries of gender, class and nationality. The journey to Italy becomes a preferred route for the social misfit towards a space imagined to be more

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accommodating of difference. Douglas, Lawrence and Huxley have also produced travelogues of their own Italian itineraries which were often driven by a resentment for England’s affected manners, hypocrisy, monotony, and priority given to the mind over bodily needs. Often their narratives are driven by the desire to recover what they believed to be lost in modern civilisation: passion, spontaneity, sexual desire, beauty, freedom. To them the journey to Italy lured with the possibility of returning to an original and more authentic state of being.

The notions of the journey at stake in the works of these British authors, as indeed in the wider popular imagination of nations benefitting from colonial violence and economic wealth, have a distinctively utopian slant. In these novels, white northern European travellers enjoy the freedom of transnational mobility to visit a country that is economically disadvantaged and that attracts precisely because of the presumptions underlying this condition: its untouched, unrestrained, unaffected nature promises an experience of the pure and the genuine not available at home. This is not to say that Italians did not travel, but acts as a reminder that travel was more affordable to the growing population of the middle class in England. Moreover, Italian-set English fiction tends to dwell on the encounter with the Italian peasant population rather than with Italy’s intellectual elite, further attesting to a unilateral dynamic in which the tourist travels and gazes while the local inhabitant is travelled to and gazed at. Although the journey of English protagonists is usually not the story of an enforced displacement or an escape into exile necessary for survival, it nevertheless may be the consequence of freedoms severely constrained by the disciplinary apparatus of a judicial system or by social stigmatisation.

It is possible to broadly distinguish between three kinds of Italian travel in English modernist fiction: the holiday trip predicated on a return home which occurs in Forster’s *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) and *A Room with a View* (1908), Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room* (1922), von Arnim’s *The Enchanted April* (1923), and Bowen’s *The Hotel* (1927); the quest for ‘cultural and religious alternatives to European civilisation’ found in D.H. Lawrence novel *The Lost Girl* (1920) and in his Italian travel books *Twilight in Italy* (1916), *Sea and Sardinia* (1921) and *Sketches of Etruscan places* (1932);154 and finally the expatriate life abroad depicted in Douglas’s *South Wind* (1917) as well as in MacKenzie’s novels *Vestal Fire* (1927) and *Extraordinary Women* (1928). In the following, I will briefly survey these different kinds of English travelling for the purpose of locating *Spleen* in this broad field of

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literary production. This will allow me to demonstrate that Moore’s novel not only draws on a literary convention by having the figure of the social misfit escape to the South, but in fact consciously alludes to and subtly modifies the formal and thematic features of these earlier texts. In view of the fact that works by Forster, Lawrence and Douglas seem to have been the most influential intertexts in this regard, I will study their conception of the Italian journey more closely.

In the English literary imagination Italy is a polyvalent signifier in that it can simultaneously denote the primitive and the civilised, the corrupt and the authentic. Paradoxically, it is precisely the conception of Italy as untrammelled by modern civilisation which allows for the Italian experience to be imagined as a catalyst for the development of English character. The study of famous works of Florentine architects, painters and sculptors promises the improvement of taste; the exploration of the picturesque landscape of rural Tuscany sensitises the eye; the encounter with the impulsive Italian reconnects the over-civilised and passionless English with the bodily capacities for sensual experiences long forgotten. Consequently, the Italian holiday lures with a number of attractions all of which are meant to benefit the tourist beyond the time of their stay. Particularly in Forster’s texts the trip abroad facilitates self-knowledge and self-discovery, especially in relation to sexuality, which are to influence and enrich life back home in England. In her study of Forster’s Italian novels, Ann Ardis gives an example: as Philip and Miss Abbott in Where Angels Fear to Tread return home, ‘Gino [the Italian character] returns with them to England as an awareness of bodily sensations and emotions that lie beyond the pale of polite conversation’.155 Here, Forster crystallises what the holiday implies epistemologically: the experience of the culturally other can be harnessed at home. A similar assumption informs the phrase ‘to do’ a city where ‘having done’ a city or a sight enables the traveller to report back on it once at home. Forster’s Italian novels place great emphasis on this distinction between factual knowledge as the kind of knowledge recorded in guidebooks and bodily knowledge as a kind of knowledge that is only attainable through an unmediated and purportedly more authentic experience of the country visited.156 This juxtaposition can be extrapolated to the traveller in question as I will demonstrate in the following.


156 On British authors who have attempted to move beyond an always already scripted Italy, see Tess Cosslett, ‘Revisiting Fictional Italy, 1887-1908: Vernon Less, Mary Ward, and E.M. Forster’, English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920, 52.3 (2009), 312-328 <http://dx.doi.org/ 10.2487/elt.52.3(2009)0043>. 
Lilia Herriton in E. M. Forster’s *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), Lucy Honeychurch in *A Room With A View* (1908), the four women in Elizabeth von Arnim’s *The Enchanted April* (1922) and Sydney Warren in Elizabeth Bowen’s *The Hotel* (1927) are all at odds with restrictions placed on them, as middle-class women, by expectations of social propriety, and as a result of their dissatisfaction they escape to Italy in search of a life-enhancing change. During their holiday they experience more self-determination and agency as they navigate their way through a foreign country, albeit often in the company of the very English society they have attempted to escape. However, the holiday situation which sees strangers of different classes and genders herded together in pensions and hotels creates an atmosphere in which cross-class and cross-cultural contact is inevitable, lowering the threshold of respectability accordingly. Violations of legitimate forms of socialisation provide material for gossip and surveillance, but do not bring about the social marginalisation they would at home. Therein lies the chance for the heroines in these novels.

For Sydney Warren, Lilia Herriton and Lucy Honeychurch, as Bowen and Forster make sure to emphasise, do not belong to the category of the ordinary tourist merely seeking pleasure and distraction. Although relatively affluent, their threatened social status and rebellious attitudes have prompted their families to send them on holiday to provide a cure and to avoid a scandal at home. For each of these characters the holiday to Italy offers a chance to escape the disciplinary gaze of the family and, as such, their experience abroad deviates from that of their fellow travellers. In Bowen’s novel, for instance, Sydney Warren’s attempts to unsettle the safety of the hotel contrast with the other residents’ commitment to conveniently alternate between organised trips outdoors and a return to the home-like lodgings. In ‘the Picnic’ chapter, Mr. Milton’s description of a village as if taken ‘out of some background looked at, you know, through an arch or the slit of a window’ testifies to the distance between touristic subject and contemplated object. Following his sight Sydney conjures up a fantasy in which the Saracen invaders, to whom the village’s protective walls bear witness, ‘appear on the skyline, land and ravage the Hotel’. However, Mr. Milton remains unresponsive and indifferent to Sydney’s fancy with the effect that ‘the dust, panic and ecstasy with which she had filled for a moment the corridors of the Hotel subsided. Once more she saw her fellow-visitors as they were to remain — undesired, secure and null.’ Contemplating the same sight, Mr. Milton is struck by the picturesque, aestheticising the landscape, while Sydney fantasises about a particular moment in the village’s past in a way that bespeaks her desire for upheaval and change. Whether the village becomes a token for Italy’s beauty or for an exciting history of Arabic invasion, in each case the particular desire of the viewer overwrites the object in sight.
In Forster’s novels, the English social milieu is portrayed as one characterised by its bourgeois families – whose public appearance and reputation are most stridently defended by women – educated young men with worldly advice at their fingertips, and the young female rebel with emancipatory aspirations. Across these groups the imagination and utilisation of Italian travel varies: to the ordinary English middle class tourist the journey affords entertainment and status; to the educated bohemian it promises refinement and cultivation; to the unmarried or widowed woman it provides an opportunity for greater freedom. The gendered distinction between viewing Italy as a spectacle for vulgar consumption and seeing it as a source of intimate knowledge manifests itself most clearly in relation to the figure of the young woman at a threshold in her sexual life. Lilia Herriton, as a young widow on the verge of finding someone new in Where Angels Fear to Tread and Lucy Honeychurch as an adolescent about to grow out of her adolescence in A Room with a View are convenient targets for advice on how to travel in Italy.

In Where Angels Fear to Tread, Lilia Herriton’s lower social status translates into an unruly and unpredictable force in the eyes of the family she has married into. At every turn of events her mother-in-law anxiously reminds herself that ‘Lilia must be pushed through life without bringing discredit on the family’, and she is determined to contain Lilia’s ‘knack of being absurd in public’.157 When her husband dies and Lilia develops a liking for Mr Kingcroft, who ‘is neither well-bred, nor well-connected’, Mrs. Herriton is deeply troubled until Philip Herriton, ‘the clever one of the family’, suggests sending Lilia on an Italian tour for a year. In the eyes of Mrs. Herriton, it is the ‘idea of Italian travel that saved’ them because it puts Lilia at a safe distance from her improper suitor; to Philip Herriton, on the other hand, Italy signifies not so much safe distance, but a force that ‘really purifies and ennobles’.158 To have such an effect, however, the tourist has to become an adventurous traveller. Accordingly, Philip advises Lilia that ‘it is only by going off the track that you get to know the country’ dismissing the ‘awful tourist idea that Italy’s only a museum of antiquities and art’. In A Room with a View, Forster again juxtaposes the conventional tourist, ‘quite unconscious of anything that is outside Baedeker,’ with the adventurous traveller deliberately stepping outside the familiar reference frame and open to surprise. This time it is clergyman and expatriate Mr. Eager, in his address to Lucy, who mentions that he ‘knew the people who never walked about with Baedekers’ and insinuates that he himself has acquired

158 Ibid.
the perception ‘of Florence which is denied to all who carry in their pockets the coupons of Cook’.

Forster satirises both the conventional tourist who is only able to see and appreciate Italy through the lens of a Baedeker and the aspirational bohemian who apparently discards any preconceived image on his quest for authenticity. While the former tightly holds onto English markers during their Italian travels — staying in English-run pensions, moving in the company of English tourists, visiting sights and enjoying views recommended by their Baedeker — the latter promotes the idea of going off track only to find the image of Italy conceived during their classical education. Hence Philip praises Lilia the moment she abandons the main sights and ‘began to visit the smaller towns that he had recommended’. However, Philip’s advice does not lead to a more direct experience of the material reality encompassing her, but instead she has her view of Italy mediated through its past: ‘Looking out of a Gothic window every morning, it seems impossible that the Middle Ages have passed away’. What Forster implies here is that intellectualism stands in the way of genuine experience. In a speech on the touristic versus the expatriate experience in A Room with a View, Mr Eager condescendingly confides to Lucy, ‘we residents sometimes pity you poor tourists a little — handed about like a parcel of goods’. Ironically, at the time of his statement Mr Eager and Lucy sit in a carriage that ‘swept with agonising jolts up’ across Florence. During this ride Mr Eager draws Lucy’s attention to the local English colony and their various literary and scholarly activities (inspired by Florentine artists and architecture) and thus, much like an English guidebook, offers an Anglicised script for accessing the Florentine cityscape.

Despite Forster’s satire on the notion of travel ‘off the beaten track’, he nevertheless upholds the possibility of a genuine Italian encounter with implications for the sensual and emotional development of the English. In Where Angels Fear to Tread and A Room with a View Italy compensates for what England lacks: it revives the senses and passions withered in the course of English industrialisation and urbanisation. Speaking of English life in A Room with a View Lucy summarises it as ‘a circle of rich, pleasant people, with identical interests and identical foes. In this circle one thought, married and died’. She continues: ‘But in Italy, where anyone who chooses may warm himself in equality, as in the sun, this conception of life vanished. Her senses expanded; she felt that there was no one whom she might not get to

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160 Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread, p. 7.
161 Forster, A Room with a View, p. 62.
The notion of equality Lucy refers to in the passage quoted above is not material equality in terms of equal access to economic opportunity, but refers to the right of the English middle-class woman to have ‘equality beside the man she loved’ in terms of sexual emancipation. Ironically, Lucy’s demand for equality proceeds from the basis of unacknowledged inequalities: her perception of Italy as a space where people have the choice to not see poverty and to instead ‘warm’ themselves in equality is more indicative of her own privileged position than of life in Italy. The odd verb choice of ‘warming’ also underlines that the equality offered to Lucy is a private sensual experience. ‘Warming’ may allude to the sexual awakening associated with the Italian climate; after all, it is in Italy that she can afford to ‘like’ everyone.

Whereas Forster exposes the incoherence and hypocrisy characterising Philip Herriton’s and Mr Eager’s attempts to set themselves apart from the vulgar tourist, Lucy’s notion of Italy remains unchallenged. Indeed, the entire story depends on the imagined power of Italy to have ‘all feelings grow to passions,’ so that Lucy can ignore class protocols and ultimately yield to the charm of George Emerson. As such Italy is celebrated not for something outside the reach of English travellers, but for the influence it is said to have on them: Italy infuses life and vitality into Forster’s characters, bringing formerly subdued passions ‘speedily to a fulfilment’. To Lucy ‘the company of this common [Italian] man’ makes the world ‘beautiful and direct’ to her and facilitates the first kiss between her and (the English) George. The encounter with the Italian has less to do with understanding the culturally other, but is simply an event which puts the over-civilised English back in touch with lost sexual possibilities. For this purpose Italy necessarily needs to be construed as more primal and thus persistently appears in the guise of the romanticised peasant. In this way the possibility of sexual fulfilment via cross-class or cross-culture romances, socially prohibited in England, is rerouted through Italy.

In *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, the more pronounced exoticist depiction of Italians coincides with a story in which the English tourist marries the Italian Gino and settles in Italy. If the image of Italy oscillates between the beautiful and the dangerous, the story of a sexual romantic relationship between ‘the northern woman’ and ‘the Latin man’ highlights the latter. On the one hand the text suggests that this relationship allows Lilila to be ‘beside herself with passion’, on the other hand it also subjects her to the brutality that lies ‘deep

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162 Ibid. p. 115.
163 Ibid. p. 69.
down’ in Gino.\textsuperscript{164} Given the more persistent dichotomous juxtaposition of the ‘social ideals of North and South’ in Where Angels Fear to Tread, it seems that the text can only portray Lilia as ‘so similar to her husband’ by simultaneously stressing the difference inhering in their national cultures. Moreover, the novel’s exploration of the underside of Italy’s charm and beneficial influence, largely focalised through Philip who discovers the ‘beastly Italy’ that ‘produced avarice, brutality and stupidity,’ is interwoven with a homoerotic subtext that characterises the encounter between Philip and Gino.\textsuperscript{165} Again, Philip’s sudden conviction that Italy does not live up to his ideal allows him to distance himself from an influence suddenly deemed dangerous. Thus Gino, to whom ‘he was bound by ties of almost alarming intimacy,’ seduced by his ‘southern knack of friendship,’ is also ‘the betrayer of his life’s ideal’. As the excitement of viewing pleasure threatens to collapse into the intoxication of close contact, the Italian, and by implication same-sex desire, are deemed beastly.

It is worth noticing that the English holiday tends to take place in the central and northern regions of Tuscany and Liguria while fictions of quest and expatriation lead the protagonist to the southern regions of Campania, Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia. In English fiction, latitudinal location and thematic focus seem to be broadly correlated whereby the North-South axis indicates the degree of transgression performed: plots of homoeroticism and promiscuity are often situated in the South. Ever since the Grand Tour gained popularity and Italy’s cities became both a favourite tourist destination and a salient motif for English novelists, poets and artists, individual cities signified differently in the British imagination. The northern city of Florence, for example, had a consistent appeal to the British bourgeoisie as a charming place for a second home. Naples, on the other hand, the central city of the South, was perceived in a more ambiguous light, its impression of beauty and allure going hand in hand with a sense of danger and menace.\textsuperscript{166} In her study of the role of Italian cities in the British imagination, Rosemary Sweet writes that Naples figured as ‘an ideal which offered travellers from the colder northern climates the opportunity to escape familiar strictures and conventions, to transgress the morals and mores of their own society’.\textsuperscript{167}

\textsuperscript{164} Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid. p. 79.
\textsuperscript{167} Forster, Where Angels Fear to Tread, p. 164.
What constituted the strongest appeal of Southern Italy to the British cultural elite was the fact that its history leads right back to the civilisations of Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece. The memory of Magna Graecia continued to shape the perception of Southern Italy’s landscape and people, their classical beauty believed to be indicative of a once blossoming Hellenic culture, and survives physically in the remnants of ancient cities like Herculaneum, Pompeii and Paestum. In the travel writing of Norman Douglas and D. H. Lawrence, impressions of Italy are regularly supplemented if not explained with references to Greek mythology and culture, and descriptions of Italian landscapes and people thus become infused with references to its Greek heritage, highlighting Southern Italy’s closeness to both the cult of beauty and the sexual freedom practiced in Ancient Greece. What emerges is that with each kind of journey undertaken, the holiday in Forster’s novels, the quest in Lawrence’s writing, and the residence abroad in Douglas’ *South Wind*, a different pattern emerges with regard to the transgression thematised and the Italy imagined.

Not only in E. M. Forster’s novels, but also in D. H. Lawrence’s writing the economically weaker Italy is romanticised as a refuge from English industriousness and social rigidity and cultural monotony. The escape, the move elsewhere down south is also equated with a move backwards in time. A key difference between the journey out of England in Forster’s Italian novels and D. H. Lawrence’s travel writing is that in Forster’s texts the journey abroad ultimately aims to enrich life in England while for Lawrence travelling is dedicated to discovering the ‘search for the other of European civilisation’.

Nepenthe and Sirene, the names Norman Douglas and Compton MacKenzie give to their fictionalised versions of Ischia and Capri in their novels *South Wind* (1917) and *Vestal Fire* (1927), are the settings for a comical portrayal of a colony of foreign eccentrics who gleefully ignore sexual orthodoxies. In the British imagination, Southern Italy and especially Naples, Capri and Taormina stood for a sexual culture more instinctual, liberated and virile, and on the basis of such assumptions attracted sexual misfits and social outcasts from Britain and Northern Europe. ‘By the 1870s,’ Chiara Beccalossi writes, ‘there was a sizeable British colony’ which was to expand noticeably after Oscar Wilde’s trials in 1895. Around that time Wilde, Douglas, MacKenzie and other relatively affluent artists and writers including John Ellingham Brooks, Somerset Maugham, E. F. Benson and Lord Alfred Douglas, began to settle on or regularly visit Capri.

168 Roberts, *D.H. Lawrence, Travel and Cultural Difference*, p. 3.

In the context of this English literary interest in Italian travel, Olive Moore’s novel seems to be yet another example of a literary utilisation of Italy as the opposite of the English homeland. Similar to the protagonists of Forster, Lawrence and Douglas, Ruth Dalby is disenchanted with English life and society and embarks on a journey South in the hope to find an alternative. The Italian peninsula becomes a projected space utilised to gauge the possibility of living differently and in this case, of becoming non-English and non-woman. Notwithstanding this shared concern, however, the protagonist in Spleen is not constantly moving in her search for something new, but takes up residence on the isle of Foria. By thus geographically aligning her novel with Norman Douglas’s South Wind, Moore creates a tension between the earnestness of an ambition to change as articulated by Lawrence and the mockery of a settled community that characterises the tone of Douglas’s narration.

**Surface Aesthetics and Deferred Arrivals**

Although the back cover of the 1996 paperback edition of Spleen describes Moore’s novel as ‘filled with the colours and beauty of the Italian countryside and in a style similar to Virginia Woolf’s’ the idiosyncratic text produces a rather schematic and shallow image of an Italy defined by ‘the action of the sun on the skin, and intense blue light of sea and sky on the eye’ (SP 80).\(^{170}\) Here the reader neither plunges into a world of illicit love and homoerotic adventures against an Italian backdrop nor will she, as the publisher claims, be able to indulge in the ‘beauty’ of Italy coming to life on the page. Moore’s blatant language, repetitions, rants, reductive and stereotypical descriptions differ from the sophisticated and carefully composed prose of someone like Woolf.\(^{171}\) If the protagonist, Ruth Dalby, fails to arrive in Italy so does the novel fail to unveil ‘Italy’ if unveiling denotes the precise and polished rendering of a phenomenon. Similarly, if the motif of the journey and the Italian setting are features in Spleen that promise reading pleasure, as suggested by the editors, they are also precisely those elements whose authenticity and reliability as signifiers in the English-language text is called into question.

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The novel mobilises the language of surface aesthetics – often not moving beyond specifications of colours and contours as in the ‘blue light of the sea’ – in dwelling on the Italian landscape and people, which we also find in Forster, Lawrence and Douglas and other British novels depicting Italy. However, Spleen markedly differs from these other novels. Although it follows the comparably realist aesthetics that characterise those travel narratives, it also subverts them through a range of formal and narrative idiosyncrasies. With Spleen we have a female-authored text that locates itself in a tradition of what we may view as more mimetic British writing, but that simultaneously co-opts its themes and aesthetics in order to vouch for the impossibility for authenticity and originality. Moore playfully traverses the thin line between imitation and parody, realism and theatricality, and moves between seriousness and laughter in a novel boldly dedicated to differentiating itself from its English literary ancestors.

An impression reinforced throughout this text is that descriptions of Italy and Italians are occasions on which the narrative turns particularly repetitive, jarring and superficial. The narrator’s tributes to the ‘action of the sun on the skin,’ for instance, turn into a mockery of English raptures about the benefits of the Italian climate as the phrase is repeated again and again across the span of two pages (SP 79-80):

Of course the sun had really done more for her than anything else. […] But the sun did a great deal for her in searching her out and extracting the poison and dissolving the dark anger spots.

That Spleen lacks the ambition to render Italy vivid and appealing to a reader who might expect to revel in the ‘the beauty of the Italian countryside’ is also evident in the narrator’s elaborations on dust and flies:

Warm grey dust on everything. Grey-powdered feet; eyelashes grey with dust; grey vines; grey cacti; grey carts; grey leaves; grey dust smeared thickly the billowing road-bordering walls in which the small stones rose and fell in cobbled rhythm. Everywhere flies in angular flight. Restless dogs worried by flies. The hammer hammer hammer of asses and mules kicking the cobbles. (SP 80)

Contrary to an Italy ‘filled with […] colours and beauty’ as the editors suggest, the narrator hammers home the message of its monotonous greyness and the unchanging pattern of recurrent occurrences through the exhaustive use of repetitions reinforced by a performative quality: the regular rhythm of the movements of objects – ‘small stones rose and fell in
cobbled rhythm’ – also captures the rather mechanical poetic rhythmicality and staccato of these written lines. Repetition occurs on every level of language here: the narrator uses the colour specification ‘grey’ eight times, alliterations abound (‘small stones,’ ‘grey cacti; grey carts,’ ‘flies in angular flight,’ ‘hammer hammer hammer’), adjectives are recycled as nouns (‘cobbled rhythm’ and ‘kicking the cobbles’) and monosyllabic, disyllabic and trisyllabic words follow one another (‘warm grey dust’, ‘asses and mules’, ‘billowing road-bordering’).

What Ruth – and this text – strive to avoid is rendered more explicit towards the end of the novel when the scenery finally shifts away from the balcony and time moves forward. When her husband Stephen, who has remained in London, passes away Ruth sets out on a journey to England to settle the inheritance bequeathed to her. On her way she passes through popular tourist destinations like Florence, triggering the desire to clearly distance herself from those type of English women who would spend their holidays in Tuscany. To belabour her singularity, Ruth perpetuates the division between the idea of domesticated mass tourism and adventurous individual travels. The island of Foria is contrasted with a city like Florence in a way that suggests that Foria allows for an experience of Italy that Florence denies its visitors: ‘Here in Tuscany all was beatific calm. Foria wild and disorderly was for ever drawing breath between one rage and another’ (SP 110). Moore resorts to an idea shared by E. M. Forster: the distinction between overrun touristic sights and yet unexplored territories that provide an experience of authenticity still unspoilt by the proliferation of guide-book illustrations. Although Ruth’s observation that ‘on the summit of each hill a modest-gazing castle’ echoes, for instance, Jacob’s reflection that ‘there is always a white tower on the very summit’ in Jacob’s Room by Woolf, such remarks are quickly followed by scoffs at the charm of Tuscany (SP 109).

In the waiting room of a lawyer’s office in England to accept the inheritance, Ruth picks up and ridicules ‘a lady-like tea-pale eulogy of foreign travel’ that depicts the ‘peculiar charm of Venice’ in a way that bespeaks a metafictional gesture: Spleen is invested in being a novel that is anything but ‘lady-like’ and ‘tea-pale,’ acquiescent and appropriate. An entry titled ‘Martyr-exile’ in The Apple Is Bitten Again, criticises the habit of English writers to journey south for creative inspiration:

Spring in Sicily. Summer on hill-tops near Naples. More months about Southern France and Naples. And year upon year spent thus, as an alternative to sipping tea […] among the little London cliques of literary tea-cup fishers. (The Apple, p. 105)

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Moore’s text is invested in and yet suspicious of the voyage as a means to originality, simultaneously upholding and defying the imperative of producing ‘something different, something new’ (SP 18, original italics). The confidence that pure difference, located in the ‘event of the foreigner,’ exists and can function as a destination is questioned. Accordingly, Ruth’s journey comes to a sudden halt in Foria: ‘she seemed to be resting there; a stage on a journey she was not conscious of desiring to complete’ (SP 13). This statement is repeated using the same wording later in the novel, thus enacting the standstill on the level of the narrative (SP 79). Moreover, Ruth herself seems to not arrive on the Italian island insofar as even after her stay of twenty-two years its daily scenes ‘remained an unreality’ and she remains curiously ‘suspended in island space’ (SP 14, 100).

At another point in the novel, the journey in the name of acquiring knowledge culminates in the failure to retrieve and encounter the reality of an object fascinating the intellectual researcher in this case. When ‘August Braunschweig of Stuttgart’, a German professor who has discovered the academic writings on education of Justin Dalby, Ruth’s father, yet unknown to scholars, decides to seize the chance and furnish a biography, he travels to Dalby’s hometown of Lithington. Upon arrival, however, there is little information for him to gather: ‘Arrived in the drear inconspicuous Hampshire townlet Braunschweig found that little if anything was remembered of his hero’ (SP 33). Similar to Ruth’s journey to Foria, Braunschweig’s journey to Lithington brings the reader as well as the literary critic to the scene. Here the idea that such a journey may aid the acquisition of unique knowledge is first invoked and then dismantled. Cynically, the narrator relates how Braunschweig’s passion for knowledge – and craving for a scholarly breakthrough that ensures fame – is disappointed again and again. The impenetrable mystery surrounding his idolised object of study is preserved by Lithington’s local population who only know that Dalby ‘was queer at times and kept to himself a great deal’ (SP 34). As Braunschweig realises that Dalby has not left any footprints behind to be traced, except for a tombstone and two unenlightening pictures, he decides to compensate for this lack of information by taking numerous photos of the surroundings. The text ridicules the endeavour to come to the truth, to fully grasp the writings of a person by exploring autobiographical circumstances. In lieu of any other hints, Braunschweig, as the figure of the determined explorer who is also ‘lost in opalescent clouds of hero-workshop, of theories, notebooks, of the fate-shattering neglect of genius’ (SP 34), begins to (re)construct Dalby’s life from his own perspective, taking pictures void of the

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173 See Malabou and Derrida, *Counterpath*, p. 2.
subject in question, but revealing the objects chosen and angles assumed on part of the
photographer.

Works by literary theorists Bishop C. Hunt and Jonathan Culler offer productive ways
to probe such relations between knowledge, language and travel. In a short essay entitled
‘Travel Metaphors and the Problem of Knowledge,’ Hunt, for example, views the suspended
journey as one possible variation of a linear voyage which presumes the possibility of
reaching a location different from the place of departure. In this sense the linear voyage
suggests both the option of an ‘unending extension of knowledge’ and the belief ‘that new
truth exists “out there”’. By implication, when reaching a stand-still, the traveller either
experiences ‘epistemological frustration’ or changes his ‘focal point […] away from the
external world around him and toward other realms of experience’.

The journeys we find in the early-twentieth-century fiction of Forster, Lawrence and
Douglas are dedicated less to acquiring knowledge as to a notion of sexual, social, and
cultural difference as a lived experience available to the English. In their novels, the journey
provides access to an alternative reality to the one currently lived, and travel, given that it
takes place ‘off the beaten track,’ seems to point the way to the authenticity of such an
experience. More critical of the possibility of definite knowledge and final truths than Hunt
Culler examines this ‘possibility of authentic experiences at other times and in other places’
from the perspective of the language and logic of tourism. In his piece on the ‘semiotics of
tourism,’ he asserts that ‘one of the characteristics of modernity is the belief that authenticity
has been lost and exists only in the past — whose signs we preserve (antiques, restored
buildings, imitations of old interiors) or else in other regions or countries’. This harks back
to the travelling English protagonists, who seek to recover what has been lost in the process
of modernisation and, for that reason, travel either to formerly colonised or to poor nations
which offer examples of an originality still intact.

With Hunt’s notion of the halted journey and Culler’s analysis of touristic signs in
mind, this section suggests that Spleen mobilises the figure of the tourist for its own project
of difference and yet undermines the idea of the journey as yielding difference by suggesting
the inevitable failure of its own endeavour. The theme of difference is pervasive in Spleen

174 See Bishop C. Hunt, ‘Travel Metaphors and the Problem of Knowledge’, Modern Language Studies, 6.1
(1976), 44-47 <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3194392> (p. 45), original italics. In his illustrations of the possible
uses of the metaphor of travelling in English literary history, Hunt exclusively cites canonical male poets and
male travellers. Bishop’s text itself thus provides an example of the gender bias inhering in a metaphor that
since Odysseys has been allied with men’s privilege to pursue truth and knowledge.
and emerges in relation to Ruth and her anticipated delivery. Jane Garrity has read Ruth’s pregnancy as a metaphor for textual production and women’s creativity, viewing the protagonist’s locating of her womb in her head – in a twist on Socrates’ notion of the pregnant mind – as well as the disabled child as attempts to forge a model for female experimentalism. Here I will foreground the journey to Italy as a theme connected with ideas of producing originality and difference. The voyage from England to Italy in *Spleen* serves as a basis for the articulation of a desire to exist and write outside a national affiliation and gender. That is, it is framed as an escape from England’s orthodox sexual ideology as well as its aesthetic conventions, especially in relation to the sexual and writerly positions available to women.

The exoticised island space of Foria, eccentric characters and possible inverts provide the backdrop for a novel that experiments with the possibility of difference in relation to the gendered body and textual form. The protagonist’s desire to generate difference materialises in her vehement rejection of giving birth to a gendered body limited to only two possible pronouncements:


Such acts of identification make possible the continuation of ‘Birth. Adolescence. Marriage. Birth. Old Age. Death.’ as the disappointingly predictable summary of a generic life narrative. The text also stages this litany by returning to it on different occasions (SP 24, 30).

The desire for ‘something beyond and above it all’ coincides with the protagonist’s journey to the Italian island, establishing a connection between the transgression of sexual and gender norms and the crossing of national boundaries (SP 28, 29, 30). In line with the modernist impetus to create something new, which has sent several British authors searching for more ‘authentic’ people and landscapes in more ‘primitive’ settings, *Spleen* places its quest for difference in Southern Italy.

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176 See Garrity, ‘Olive Moore’s Headless Women’.

In the story, Ruth relies on a notion of Italy as backward and stagnating in her calculated affront to the imagined onlooker, the English family, just as the narrator manipulates time and place with the effect of readerly disorientation and alienation. When Ruth remembers the scene of her arrival, she repeatedly wonders ‘what would they say’ while conjuring up a provocatively racialised image of a local population that she, the English lady with ‘her small patent leather feet, so correct, so refinedly helpless’, encounters as she sets foot on the island: ‘rows of brown faces and foaming teeth gathering on the jetty and hemming her in, leagued against her with this savage to whose arms she was hanging’ (SP 9). Given the repeated use of the modal verb ‘would’ in ‘what would they think’ — a question raised three times on the first two pages — the point of Ruth’s dramatic memory seems to be precisely its hypothetical effect on the spectator. The fact that, in her fantasy, the image of Southern Italy prompts her mother-in-law to confidently declare ‘she has gone back, back to where she belongs’ allows Ruth to affirm with proud boldness that indeed the primitive Foria with its brutish peasant population is ‘the niche which she had found for herself’ (SP 8).

From the beginning, Spleen positions itself as a novel determined to take distance from its origin in English culture, yet it is a text that teases out, with a mannerism that ranges from the playfully parodic to the candidly serious, the English view on things and especially on things foreign. This also crystallises in relation to time, whose treatment undercuts the time of the voyage in those other novels. While in Forster’s, Lawrence’s and Douglas’s travel writings events are retold in chronological order and summarise a holiday, a quest or a season spent abroad, in Spleen time stagnates. From the outset, Moore pushes Italy back in time in order to depict it as a refuge from the ever accelerating pace of an England entrenched in modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation.

The very first paragraph details a pastoral scene of Italian peasants driving their cattle over ‘Saracen road’ just before the bells of San Soccorso strike six o’clock. By referring to the church of San Soccorso the narrator precisely locates this scene in Forio, a town on the isle of Ischia in Southern Italy. The term saracen, on the other hand, reaches back to the Arab conquerers in Mediterranean Europe and evokes an impression of pastness still lingering in the streets of the island in the year 1929. In terms of place and time, it is unmistakably clear, we are far away from a modern industrial England, which is invoked only a paragraph later, emphasising the contrast. In a sudden flashback, the protagonist Ruth, who a moment ago was immersed in the memory of her very first sight of the Saracen scene on the day of her arrival, now recalls the English family she left behind twenty-two years ago. With relish she fantasises about the scandalised response to be expected of a respectable English family of
some social standing were they to have witnessed the first encounter between the English lady with ‘her travelling costume’ and ‘the garlic-reeking unclean foreigners’ (SP 8).

The way in which the narrator in Spleen maps the passage of time onto cartography dramatises a difference between Northern Europe and Southern Italy in terms of civilizational progress, reminiscent of theories developed in sexological and anthropological treatises about the influential role of geographical factors in developmental states. Statements like ‘the Italian woman kicks the cat and beats the dog: but she caresses the child. It is much a matter of climate’ directly engage with the idea that climatic zones determine a people’s character (SP 123), famously expounded by British explorer and ethnographer Richard Francis Burton in his essay on the ‘sotadic zone’ in the late nineteenth century. In a publication on ‘sexual anthropology’ issued in 1933 and featuring subheadings like ‘description of fiery love in Southern Italy,’ German psychiatrist Iwan Bloch states that ‘undeniably climate, race, and nationality play a quite important role in the genesis of sexual aberrations,’ testifying to the perseverance of theories charting sexuality onto cartography in the first decades of the twentieth century. To Bloch both the ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’ expressions of sex are ‘immeasurably greater’ in Italy, especially southern Italy, than in Northern Europe. In The Female Offender (1895), Italian criminologists Cesare Lombroso and William Ferrero, for instance, single out rural Italy and Italian islands as typical habitats of the ‘primordial woman’ characterised by ‘a minor degree of differentiation from the male’. Ellis points out that ‘proclivity to homosexuality’ is stronger in southern Italy ‘which in this respect is held to be distinct from northern Italy’.

Whereas Foria, the island Ruth emigrates to, is imagined as a wild and unruly outdoor space situated in a limitless expanse of sky and sea, England is envisioned as dominated by claustrophobic indoor spaces with views onto conscientiously landscaped gardens. These divisions between the rugged and the refined, the cultivated and the uncultivated, the artificial and the natural extend to the character of the local population, with the ‘colder northern women, over-civilised, over-sensitised’ opposed to the ‘silent indifferent dark-hearted people’ of Foria (SP 18, 14). Here the polarity of geography and climate — north/south, cold/warm — provides an anchor for the neat arrangement of temporally inflected adjectives which shift Italy backward in time: the binaries wild/domesticated, silent/articulate, dark/light.

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180 See Ellis, Sexual Inversion, p. 28.
relegate the Mezzogiorno to ideas of a primordial chaos, a stage of nonverbal existence and an unenlightened dark age.

On the level of the narrative discourse Southern Italy is similarly associated with both a turn backwards and a decelerated passage of time. The first narrative is anchored in a day in October in the year 1929 and proceeds from a scene in which Ruth sits on the veranda of her Italian home suspended between taking notice of her surroundings and reflections on her past life, often triggered by what passes in front of her. What enters her field of vision engenders remembrances and reflections: thus the view on Saracen road the veranda affords sends Ruth back to the day of her first arrival in 1907. Similarly, when Graziella, the pregnant daughter of Ruth’s live-in landlord, walks by, Ruth is reminded of her own traumatic experience of pregnancy twenty-three years ago, which then leads onto a lengthy contemplation of reproduction as a principle undergirding the English sexual and national ideology. The appearance of Padre Antonio sets off another flashback as Ruth inevitably associates the local priest with Uller’s strong aversion towards religious figures (SP 86).

By means of these and other flashbacks the reader is constantly sent back to various moments in Ruth’s past life in a way that inverts the order of events; although reading onward we are in fact going backward in time, experiencing a form of temporal displacement. While a divergence between the actual succession of the events of a story and the order in which they are narrated is a common feature of narrative in the Western literary tradition, Spleen exaggerates this practice to the extent that its analepses overtake the first narrative. As Ruth dwells in an array of retrospections, time on Foria progresses slowly, action is nearly arrested and as a result the time the reader requires to read the text on the page (narrative time) is longer than the time of events unfolding on Foria (story time). Conversely, when news of her husband’s death and an inheritance to manage reach Ruth towards the very end of the novel, she decides to embark on a journey to England and time suddenly leaps forward. Whereas up to this point Ruth has done barely more than shift in her veranda alcove, we now follow her in a rapid succession of events on her travels from Foria to London and her strolls through the busy streets of England’s capital. In this way the effect realised in the reading process mirrors the narrator’s temporal framing of the North/South divide: the notion of the Italian island as a niche, a place of withdrawal that becomes possible by going back, by retreating from the linear progression of modern forward-looking time, is reinforced by a decelerated reading pace.

The impression of a near standstill is emphasised by the fact that the two central scenes of the first narrative, the veranda on which Ruth sits and the view of Saracen road it offers, are repeated several times and nearly unaltered. Thus we see the procession of locals
and we hear the bells of San Soccorso strike six o’clock at the beginning, halfway through, and towards the end of the novel, suggesting either little time has passed, having unfolded only as remembrance of the past, or that events on the island recur in the exact same order and at exactly the same time. Similarly, the episode in which Ruth promises Graziella to buy her a new coat next Thursday in Naples, a scene taking place early on in Spleen (SP 16), is echoed towards the novel’s end when Ruth remembers the promise made (SP 106). As to whether minutes or days have passed by we are left in the unknown for ‘the last evening was like the first’ and ‘each incident tallied’ (SP 54). The passage of time on Foria goes by unnoticed, only registering the time and order of events, but not recording any change over time; progress is halted and ‘Time the sadist’ for once defeated. This impression of sameness and eternal recurrence is strengthened by several prolepses in which the narrator lethargically predicts events: ‘Remained the evening to be eaten, after which Lisetta would […] fetch her sewing’ and shortly after ‘came the scene for which the whole evening had set itself’ (SP 54).

Material Textuality and Sites of Knowledge

The beginning of this introduction cited a few examples of Moore’s plays with the traditional orthography of place names. A similar unsettling of identity markers occurs when nation names like England and designations of nationalities such as English, Italian, German and French appear in lower case. These violations of capitalisation rules not only challenge the power of the capital letter to designate a presumably static and unique identity — what in linguistics is termed a ‘proper name’ — but also emphasise the role of the narrator as an instance marking letters on a surface and as able to experiment with form in the most literal way. The narrator encroaches upon the domain of the writer or, conversely, the figure of the novelist, as an extra-literary token, trespasses on the territory of the purely fictional.

181 Proper adjectives like English and Italian are largely not capitalised; ‘England’ is capitalised only once (SP 115); ‘Italy’ is capitalised with one exception in lower case.

182 In the context of Roland Barthes’s juxtaposition of figuration with representation, the author figures here ‘not in the guise of direct biography’ but bodily in form of the shape assumed by ‘the text itself’ (p. 56). The author is ‘a figure of the text,’ not a figure represented in the text (original italics). Representation is ‘when nothing emerges, when nothing leaps out of the frame: of the picture, the book, the screen’ (p. 57). Barthes elaborates on the distinction between figuration and representation – only the former is linked to the reader’s experience of pleasure – in Barthes, pp. 55-7. On the frame as a spatial and metaphorical border between the filmic and extra-filmic, diegetic and extra-diegetic, see Cecilia Sayad, Performing Authorship: Self-Inscription and Corporeality in the Cinema (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013). Sayad discusses intrusions of authorial presence in the context of film, arguing that ‘the author’s sometimes prevents the film’s existence as autonomous and self-contained universe’. As ‘the author’s body potentially extends the boundaries of diegesis,’ she contends, ‘the creator is perceived as a foreign element, as a trespasser and exterior to the film’ (p. 27).
Orthographical alterations, particularly orthographical errors, force the reader to attend to the trifling dimension of craft, the disenchanted manual labour of writing rather than the artistry of creating a world, a character, a story in which the reader delves into. Such manipulations or accidents impinge on the novel’s function: breaching the rules of linguistic representation draws attention to its artificiality and arbitrariness, thus having the novel fail as a holistic artwork, complete unto itself.

Although *Spleen* replicates the racist discourse of the early twentieth century and mobilises ideas of the primitive and ‘degeneracy’ to formulate its agenda of difference, it also undermines ideas about a stable national identity by writing nationalities and nations in lower case. References to England, the English, Italy, the Italian and the Neapolitan appear in lower case, thus depriving the nation state of its authority as an inviolable and solid identity by violating a representative convention. However, this authorial habit does not only lay bare the power and the deficiency of representation, but also calls into question the notion of authenticity: the ‘Italianness’ of the object in question is challenged. Consider, for example, Ruth’s inner monologue as she arrives in Italy:

She laid her fingers on the water as in a vaschetta d’acqua santa. It was warm. Of course, warm. Warm water, blue-shining water, radiant water, Italian water. Of course Italian water, for she was in Italy. (SP 8)

Considering that in the rest of the novel references to nationalities appear in lower case, the capitalisation of Italy in this passage acquires particular significance. Precisely because of the use of the lower case as a standard orthographical practice throughout *Spleen*, the narrator is able to capitalise ‘Italian’ and ‘Italy’ in the quoted passage not by way of implementing an orthographical rule, but as a gesture of mockery. The absurdity of an Italianness inhering in the water is further emphasised by the narrator’s flippant remark ‘of course’. The tediousness of this remark, ‘Of course, warm […] Of course Italian’, seems to at once point to the tediousness of stating the obvious and the tediousness of a touristic signifying practice. Every object turns into something typically Italian ‘for she was in Italy’. The text simultaneously replicates the touristic gaze and rails against the tourists’ habit for seeing ‘everything as a sign of itself’.

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183 ‘The tourist is interested in everything as a sign of itself,’ Culler writes in ‘Semiotics of Tourism’, p. 127. The paradox of authenticity lies in the fact that it requires prior marking: ‘The authenticity the tourist seeks may seem at one level to be an escape from a code, but the authentic is always marked, requires a mark to be constituted as authentic, and nothing is more coded than the cliched versions of authentic travel experiences.’ See Culler, ‘Semiotics of Tourism’, p. 137.
During his Italian trip, Jacob in Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room* similarly feels enchanted by the possibility of touching the real authentic Italy when he sets out to ‘take up a handful of earth — Italian earth, as this is Italian dust upon my shoes’. In contrast to the separation between narrator and characters in Woolf’s novel — the narrator lingers on in empty rooms after the character has long left —, the narrator and protagonist in *Spleen* are much closer, sometimes indiscernible from another. By imagining and articulating the thoughts and utterances of others, Ruth insistently fashions herself as a narrator. This impression is reinforced by her inhabitation of the same spot throughout much of the novel: from there she observes, a book always by her side, sometimes ‘putting aside her book, taking the plate on her lap and detaching a grape’, sometimes ‘settling the cushions more comfortably behind her head’ (*SP* 102). Whether she is reading or writing a story – perhaps this story? – is not revealed but insinuated.

Such critical attention paid to the shapes of letters, capitalised and lower spaced, in relation to national identities is mirrored in the narrator’s equation of human anatomy with nationality by means of the tongue-in-cheek allusion to Uller’s ‘pale luminous solid-fleshed german-curved thigh and buttock quality’ (*SP* 90). In the language of anthropometry, the narrator also ridicules the idea that specific forms involve specific distinctions. Gazing at her husband before her eventual emigration to Italy, Ruth wondered ‘whether Stephen’s nose were not a shade too long and the nostrils a shade too wide for all the moral and physical distinction claimed for it’. The novel ridicules the idea that the Hungerford family, as the embodiment of a civilised species, has its ‘moral distinction’ inscribed on its body. Harking back to a discourse of heredity and evolutionary theory, a preoccupation with shapes also crystallises when the narrator describes ‘the Hungerford nose’ as a nose ‘reduced by generations of ease and prosperity to being nothing more formidable than the touchstone of a small and tradition-sacred family on a small and tradition-sacred island’ (*SP* 39).

Working within the parameters of an eugenics discourse, the novel also portrays the deformed body of Ruth’s child as the site of failure, futility and degeneration: ‘rootless, null, unproductive’ (*SP* 109). Her child Richard is an affront to a family that proudly passes on its distinctive physiognomy through generations and whose portraits are exhibited in the National Gallery in London, cast as quintessentially English. By upholding the ethos of reproduction and the logic of inheritance, the family not only ensures its own continued

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185 Barkan notes that eugenics ‘the most popular manifestation of racial theories’ particularly in England, German, and the United States, improvement of the biological composition of society to overcome poverty and social ills. See Barkan, ‘Race and the Social Sciences’, p. 699.
existence, but also that of the English nation. Richard’s effeminate physiognomy breaches the ideal of sexual dimorphism, his ‘deformed’ anatomy defies family resemblance from the start and his infertility effectively puts an end to the continuance of the family line. In this way, Richard is a curious utopian site precisely because he exists outside the paradigm of a reproductive family, dismissively depicted as ‘a thing dumb, pitiful, deformed’ (SP 68).186 This ‘deformed’ body is aligned with the racially other given that Ruth’s childbirth coincides with the novel’s shift from England to the South of Italy as the prime setting.187

In addition to these orthographical alterations, Moore’s novel also experiments with typographical elements, teasing out the signifying power of surfaces by subtly playing with formal conventions. Analogous to the prioritisation of a more descriptive, superficial narrative versus an exhaustive in-depth exploration of psychic interiorities, Spleen is attuned to the way its sentences inhabit the blank page. The spatial dimension of the text is emphasised by the Moore’s habit to exaggerate the standard leading practices by inserting additional vertical space between paragraphs and by aligning each paragraph along the left margin. Ironically, the Dalkey Archive Press, re-issuing Spleen for the first time after its original publication and keen on promoting its originality, has compromised this noteworthy idiosyncrasy by the decision to remove the traces of ‘this wasteful and aesthetically displeasing’ authorial practice, which was found especially irritating in the case of dialogues and one-sentence paragraphs.188 In the currently available editions, paragraphs appear standardised, that is, ‘intended and closed-up’. This information is provided at the end of the novel in an anonymous ‘Note on the Text’. The anonymity of the editorial note seems not an attempt to write under the sign of impersonality, even objectivity, considering that the erstwhile editor of the British publication in 1930 is called ‘a conventionally minded copy-editor’.

This judgement is based on the fact that said editor corrected ‘errors […] that Moore apparently preferred’ – an irony given that the anonymous editor(s) of the 1996 version undertake a ‘departure from the original’ because it does not conform to their aesthetic sense

186 On Spleen’s – and modernism’s – exploitation of the trope of disability for its agenda of difference, see Frank, ‘Mental Inversion, Modernist Aesthetics, and Disability Exceptionalism in Olive Moore’s Spleen’.
187 Degeneracy, in scientific and medical studies of the time, denoted a more primitive state, a regression from evolutionary progress, manifested in a lack of sexual differentiation between male and female anatomies and behaviours and associated with the racialised bodies of Africans, Asians, Jews, Southern Europeans, and indigenous communities in the Americas and Australia.
188 Olive Moore, Spleen, p. 133. Because the original manuscripts of Moore’s novel have not been found up to this date, the Dalkey Archive Press has based its reissue of Spleen on the U.S. edition, which the Press believes to be closer to the original manuscript than the British edition.
and, significantly, seems inefficient. With this subtle admission to the logic of marketing and mainstream appeal, a tension arises between an interest to make the book attractive to the reading public on the one hand and to preserve its extraordinariness and subversiveness as a modernist work on the other hand. What counts as a modernist extravaganza is already defined a priori given the editors’ comparison of Moore’s style with the experimentalism of more renowned modernist writers, while the author’s bibliographical oddities are eliminated. The favourable press quotations, which adorn the front and back cover and are again cited on the first page of the book, are geared towards capturing the attention of the reading public by presenting the novel as the discovery of a forgotten writer, who has ‘mysteriously disappeared’ in 1934 and whose brilliance, they suggest, resides in her similarity to writers like Virginia Woolf, Nathanael West, D.H. Lawrence, E.M. Forster and Friedrich Nietzsche. This shows that the inclusion of women writers into the canon is influenced by an array of pre-established criteria that may limit our understanding of what encompasses modernist prose.

However, because deviations from ‘ordinary’ forms and shapes and peripheral spaces like islands are prominent themes in Spleen, the way printed matter is arranged on the blank page demands attention. We can, for example, consider how the silence engendered by the vacant lines between paragraphs produces an absence, a space vacant of words, that nevertheless signifies in a most bewildering and ambiguous way. For once it draws attention to the surface of the page; the page as a space that can be occupied and inscribed with powerful effects. Leaving what is usually inhabited by specifying words blank foregrounds the existence of the page as something that can always signify differently. Moreover, these blank lines interrupt the flow of reading and question the linearity and cohesion of a narrative presented in form of what strikes as aphoristic aesthetics. It is also possible to read vacated typographical space as a form of ‘unpleasing’ futility and excess, as the editors of the Dalkey Archive Press have done. Such excess counters the logic of efficiency and may indicate the resistance of a female author to please and to prove literacy in writerly conventions. Moore’s subversions of orthographical and typographical norms demonstrate an important aspect of modernist experimentation, placing emphasis on shapes and surfaces as a site through which to experiment with representational conventions and paradigms of knowledge. In the final section of this chapter, I take the relationship between

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189 In Epistemology of the Closet, Sedgwick has rendered silence a particularly meaningful speech act in relation to the closet where the presence or absence of an utterance is tied in with regimes of knowledge/ignorance. With Foucault, Sedgwick argues that ‘there is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that underlie and permeate discourses.’ See Sedgwick, p. 3.
Ruth and Uller in *Spleen* as the starting point to further reflection on Moore’s engagement with questions of gender, sexuality and nationality as issues channelled through writing and authorship. This closing section speaks to the broader significance given to space in Moore’s novel, placing emphasis on the question of inhabiting space. It provides a further context to the voyage to Italy in *Spleen* as a way of simultaneously rebelling against and replicating a tradition in English fiction.

**Gender and Authorship: Inhabiting the Space of the Page**

The ‘absurdly gay, primitive, and exotic’ sight of the child’s wheelchair, assembled and coloured by locals, hints at degeneracy as a theory that views ‘anatomical deformities’ including the lack of visible differentiation between genders, and psychological peculiarities as signs of a developmental regression to more primitive states, a reversed evolutionary progress (*SP* 65). At the same time, this description gestures towards the popular appeal Southern Italy enjoyed as the ‘primitive’ subject matter for a number of modernist artists and writers seeking a source for creative inspiration and artistic renewal. The string of adjectives ‘absurdly gay, primitive, and exotic’ thus taps into two discursive formations prominent in the early twentieth century: the knowledges that accrued around sexual difference – imbricated with the notion of the primitive – on the one hand, and the meaning attributed to the primitive and exotic subject in formulations of abstract art on the other hand.

In the novel the figure of Hans Uller encapsulates the abstract aspirations and colonial inclination of the continental avant-garde. An outspoken misogynist and anti-Semite Hans Uller spends several summers on the island, taking both the ‘eccentric englishwoman’ Ruth and local boys ‘squating there naked on the stones’ of the island as models. Years later, in the 1920s, Uller’s subjects reappear as paintings exhibited in the Tate Gallery in London with titles like *The Modern Blue Boy* and *Woman and Child* (*SP* 112, 124-5). On her way to England, pausing in Florence, Ruth spots a reproduction of The Modern Blue Boy:

> Giovanni stared back at her from stark blue-black eyes set in an incredibly blue face against an incredibly blue sky. She read Moderner Meister der Farbe. Das blaue Kind. The blue boy. Le garçonnet bleu. (*SP* 112)

This reference to Pablo Picasso’s monochromatic blue paintings and preoccupation with the mother-child motif evident in, for instance, works like *Mother and Child* (1901), *Mother with Child on the Beach* (1902), and *The Blue Boy* (*Le Garçon Bleu*, 1905) is one of the text’s several tongue-in-cheek allusions to the accomplishments of male artists. The novel
provocatively forges a contrast between the aesthetic literacy and artistic virtuosity of men and women’s limitation to the legibility of faithful replication. Mimesis and abstraction are clearly gendered here: While Uller embraces the cubist dictum that ‘unless a thing is three times removed from nature it is not art,’ to Ruth the resulting artworks merely depict ‘strangely-limbed-and-coloured children’ like the ‘distorted blue boy’ and elicit the observation that ‘his compositions were mathematical problems correctly solved’ (SP 72). On her visit to the Piazza del Duomo in Florence, Ruth speaks of ‘that unruly heap of statuary in the Loggia which even her eye could see,’ similarly reinforcing the idea of her inferiority in appreciating a work of art (SP 111, my italics). Throughout the novel, Moore’s protagonist oscillates between seeing sights and becoming herself an ‘unseeing upheld profile’ scrutinised by the male artist (SP 103), reminiscent of the attention Barnes’s narrators pay to the gendered ability of ‘seeing’ discussed in Chapter Four.

The representation of Italy as diametrically opposed to England makes it not only the ideal destination for a protagonist determined to escape the regiment of the English family, but also the preferred escape route for an author who, across her oeuvre, is determined to dissociate herself from English writing and especially from English women writing. In an autobiographical text furnished for Authors Today and Yesterday, Moore portrays herself as a misanthropic exile of the literary establishment, who resists expectations of stylistic finesse, refuses to celebrate London as an open-minded cosmopolitan metropolis and ignores genre conventions.¹⁹⁰ Hence this textual composition, although it is assigned to the genre of autobiographical writing, reveals characteristics and thematics which appear in a more pronounced and complex form in Spleen. In both cases, the narrative explores ideas of identity and belonging, particularly in relation to textual and sexual dissidence, by placing these notions along the spectrum of centre/ periphery, affiliation/ estrangement, expression/ silence.

In the sketch, Moore challenges the idea of the author as a figure whose identity emerges from a collection of facts and whose textual production can be reduced to, or reliably viewed through the lens of those very facts. By stating that ‘[m]y life is so completely dull and uneventful, that there is absolutely nothing to tell you about it,’ Moore mocks expectations issuing from the biographical genre (SP 129). Neither does she use the writing space at her disposal to pose as a likeable writer, ensuring the readers’ sympathies, nor does she attempt to showcase a particularly elegant or elaborate writing style. Instead, she begins

nearly every sentence with the first person singular, parodying the genre of the autobiographical sketch as a necessarily egocentric and absurd endeavour. Her laconic statements about personal preferences and dislikes read more like reluctant response to a pointless question – ‘I loathe books . . . I like walking. I like talking.’ (SP 130) – than information provided for a representational reference book. If the autobiographical piece is meant to introduce the public to current writers, Moore manages to precisely withhold and deny the reader familiarity with and knowledge of herself.

The utter refusal to comply with the expectations of the autobiographical genre is also, and importantly so, a refusal to comply with expectations imposed on the female artist. In the penultimate paragraph, Moore displays an acute awareness of gender as a most forceful identity category, infiltrating both the conception of the artist and the perception of the artwork. While the English woman artist, if not rebellious, is ‘genteel, tea shoppe, bored, refined, amateurish,’ her creative output can typically be equated with ‘female twittering,’ ‘drawing-room beliefs’ and sterility (SP 130). The author’s outright dismissal of women by means of imitating the misogynist discourse of male orthodoxies – ‘They seem able to do everything but think.’ – discredits her own voice as emphatically female and reveals the attempt to speak from a position outside the gender binary. To problematise, if not pre-empt, the reader’s summoning of gender and national identity to aid their efforts at comprehension and interpretation, Moore demands that her texts be judged on the basis of ‘the texture of my thought and the disposition of my sentences’. Following on from the critique of practices of identification, the reader is asked to view Moore’s literary texts less in the service of a representational function than as performative pieces producing material effects (suggested in the term ‘textures’) and spatial relations. ‘Dispositions’ not only refers to a person’s inherent qualities of character, but also to the way in which something is placed or arranged.

However, the performance of anger, protest and provocation where self-disclosure and self-naming are expected, not only marks a refusal to perform under the sign of gender, but also an attempt to undermine the idea of the woman author as the loyal voice of the nation. Indeed, for the English-born woman writer to liberate her libidinal potency and achieve creative virility, Moore suggests, she needs to revolt against the ‘parochial little village’ of London and a ‘secure, pleasant, imitative, watery’ England (SP 130). Speaking of London, Moore clarifies, ‘I dislike it so much, that it does me (creatively) an awful lot of good. It’s the pearl in my oyster.’ Textual authorship is tied in with sexual authorship to the extent that only the renunciation of the spaces and roles assigned to the female national

191 Similar views resurface in Moore’s collection of aphorisms The Apple Is Bitten Again (Self-Portrait).
subject, embodied in the figure of the wife and mother and thus heterosexual and reproductive, allow desire to do the work of narrative disruption. The experience of uprooting, displacement, estrangement from the affiliative structure of the family and the nation is epitomised in the figure of the solitary traveller, the nomadic hermit enmeshed in a quest for something as yet non-existent. The utopian space which Moore gestures towards is one in which her voice is not identified with the alleged truth of her sexual identity, but remains unknowable.

This novel engages less with formal aspects to capture reality in ever finer shades, although it does make use of a few modernist techniques like free indirect speech, but instead bluntly exposes the crafty aspects of writing. Moreover, its experiments with narrative movement, typographical space and the materiality of language do not occur in isolation but are intimately connected with the text’s references to anatomical shapes, physiognomies, national spaces and island topographies; such experiments can be viewed as non-verbal engagements with an increasing emphasis on the body and cartographical space as sites fraught with meaning in the discourse of anthropology and sexology. These interferences in basic rules of writing and novelistic conventions seem a risky choice, treading the thin line between provoking a dismissal on grounds of amateurism or, more profitably, inviting the label of eccentricity. Gender is a prominent issue in testing the scope of digressions available to the female creative artist. While more contemporary reviews of Spleen are hard to find, the editors of the Dalkey Archive Press have decided to leave intact Moore’s deviations from orthographical norms, depicting – selling – them as ‘occasional eccentricities’ (SP 133). If Moore eyed with the image of the eccentric female artist, a designation or brand name through which women writers were able to gain visibility, then such a positioning proved successful in this case.
“Dahin! Dahin! möchten ich, mit dir o mein Geliebter, ziehn.” Swayed by the general clichés of uninventive lovers she dared suggest: “Venice!” (TO 117)

To stretch the mind beyond its present possibilities may be to indicate a place towards which it will ultimately travel to the further discovery of itself” (TO 100-101).

Similar to Moore’s *Spleen*, Barney’s novel *The One* deploys the journey as a narrative frame for its pursuit of sexual and textual difference, taking recourse to the voyage as a powerful paradigm for discoveries. This rather idiosyncratic text, alternating between novelistic narration and philosophical speculation, tells the story of a protagonist who embarks on both actual and conceptual travels with the aim to retrace the life of a tragically diseased person called A.D. This recapitulation is accompanied by a more general exploration of the possibilities of liveable lives on the one hand and the limits posed by systems of representation such as identity categories, normative types of embodiment, and language conventions on the other. The reading of *The One* is complicated not only by its occasional excursions into metaphysical speculation, but also by the fact that the main protagonist – usually a specific character in a novel – defies the idea of a stable subject whose actions we, as readers, follow. The protagonist’s complete name gives away this complication: ‘The One Who Is Legion’ suggests that we track the story of a strangely multiple entity, a paradoxically plural singularity. Suggestively, ‘The One Who Is Legion’ is also the title of the novel: the project of recapitulation and redemption pursued by the ‘The One’ as the protagonist is closely entangled with the agenda of *The One Who Is Legion* as a written text. Crossing and

contesting boundaries, movements in new directions and of different types are practices this novel mobilises in its interrogation of sexuality and categories of sexual identities.

Barney’s 1930 text is divided into thirteen chapters several of which detail journeys: the horseback ride from a graveyard in the Bois de Boulogne to the centre of Paris in ‘Participation,’ a car ride from Paris to a seaside resort crowded by freakish characters in ‘A Day in the Country,’ the train ride from Gare de Lyon to a mountain hotel in an alpine town in southeast France in ‘Interference,’ and the spectacular return to Paris with a bi-plane in ‘The Return’. This repertoire of journeys is a faithful reflection of the types of travelling and means of transport available in the early twentieth century. In ‘Interference,’ for example – from which the first quotation above is taken – a character named ‘Glow-woman’ tries to seduce her lover to go on a honeymoon, citing a list of possible destinations and enticingly describing the types of rooms and beds different hotels have to offer. Apparently fluent in German, her speech above is a quote from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s poem ‘Mignon’ in which the speaker urges the beloved to travel to a country that critics usually identify as Italy.193 Nodding to Romantic poetry in another language seems an attempt to convey the allure of romantic foreign travel but fails to convince the addressee who finds such a popular suggestion rather ‘uninventive’. The lover, a genderless character called ‘The One,’ might also take offence at the designation ‘Geliebter’ – the masculine form of ‘beloved’ – which is another unimaginative convention given that it couches ‘couples and coupleings’ in the terms of heterosexuality (TO 38).

Diametrically opposed to this conception of earthly journeys is the kind of travelling the second quotation alludes to. To have the mind ‘travel’ to a place that facilitates the ‘discovery of itself’ is not simply a metaphor for challenging habituated thinking and expanding a narrow field of vision, but the project outlined in The One. This text embraces the idea of a ‘voyage of discovery’ to formulate and pursue its agenda of singularity and difference, reflected in the protagonist’s ambitious search for the possibility of an existence, a reality, outside of any pre-existing signifying system. Casting away the idea of reconfiguring existing ‘systems of classifications’ used to generate meaning – genres, letters, font types,

punctuation marks – the protagonist concludes that the very mediums of representation –
books and bodies – require reshaping to approximate the Real (TO 92, 97). This text seeks an
emancipation from two forms of embodiment: the gendered human body and the literary
corpus as a body of writing organised around a particular subject, author, canon, genre or
movement. Like the conventional journey of ‘travel-bent couples’ in the first quotation, this
fantastic journey is prompted and its course determined by the desire to explore sexual
intimacy. If trips to popular destinations are associated with ‘sexual habits’ between men and
women (TO 48), then the voyage to an unknown place unfolds in parallel to an exploration of
desire beyond conventions of gender and sexuality. Sexological categories, including
inversion, ‘double nature’ and ‘hermaphrodites,’ constitute the starting point for speculations
of further possible deviations from postulated norms (TO 38).

This chapter examines the role of itinerant bodies and liminal spaces in what Barney
describes as a journey of discovery in her novel and which informs a new vision of corporeal
oneness as paradoxically multiple and malleable. The point of departure for this voyage is the
body in two incarnations: the gendered human shape and the corpora of literature. In line with
this, Barney’s novel is structured by a double trajectory with regard to bodies and texts.
While the female-gendered body of a character named ‘A.D.’ is contrasted with the
genderless body of the One, the ‘carnal novel’ once owned by A.D. is a curious self-
referential gesture to the book the reader holds in her hands. In the novel, the narrator seizes
juxtapositions between the human body and the textual corpus as well as between regular
shapes and deformations to pose questions regarding divisions of materiality/ immateriality,
actuality/ potentiality, and matter/ text. The journey depicted in this novel is the voyage to an
‘intermediate’ space existing in the interstices of such binary categories.

Different from Spleen and the newspaper pieces of Barnes, which display scepticism,
irony and ambiguity about the idea that journeys yield discoveries and turn the search in on
itself in a way that, particularly in Barnes, confronts the reader with their own readerly
investment, The One fully appropriates this association. However, the journey here does not
promise the unveiling of a truth about the ‘hermaphrodite’ or ‘double being’. Instead
sexuality as a force that escapes the containment of categories drives the journey. The
deconstructive potential of illicit sexual desire, engendering an ‘infinite variety of couples
and couplings’ beyond the ‘sad repetition of conjugal and other loves […] with its thirty-two
positions,’ figures prominently in The One and has led literary critics to identify this novel as
exemplary of lesbian modernism (TO 38, 66). While reading this novel through the figure of
the lesbian as a critical category is a possible angle, this chapter shifts focus to how
movement across space and border crossings between materiality and immateriality relate to
the text’s project of unknowing history sedimented in canonical texts and gendered bodies and re-assembling corporeal fragments. My aim is to illustrate the centrality of movement as a practice that engages with the signifying power of spaces, bodies and texts: to ‘move and undo’ the ‘well-adjusted functioning’ of a body that plays a predesignated part in a heterosexual plot and is gendered by its environment, motivates the journey (TO 16). What exactly such moving and undoing eventually produces, however, remains shrouded in mystery as ‘the invisible link between what is outworn by knowledge, and the unborn reality’ (TO 159). Like the text itself the body of the protagonist remains ultimately illegible. This play with indeterminacy and obscurity distinguishes a text that gestures towards potentiality and futurity by inviting a continuous re-reading.

The novel provides the reader with a story, but plot and protagonists act as proxies for the formulation of an abstract vision, an idealist fantasy of a journey from a state of ‘disembodied fragments’ to a newly configured body, making this a difficult text to read (TO 13). The main protagonist, for instance, is a multitude of fragments throughout much of the story and thus speaks in the first person plural. In this very conceptual approach to storytelling, distinguished by an abstract language and a manifesto-like tone, allusions to sexology as well as to empirical sciences occur in relation to ‘systems of classifications’ and authoritative ‘books of cold observations’. Such ‘cold observations,’ the narrator remarks, were undertaken by authors who ‘had let slip’ rather than ‘captured’ (TO 94). The narrator in Barnes’ ‘Greenwich Village As It Is,’ as Chapter Four will explore, similarly indicates that she will ‘pen’ for the very first time what is most evasive and has previously escaped notice. In The One, however, the intention to capture ‘unregisterable material’ is not undercut by irony but lies at the core of writing differently (TO 98). More specifically, its ambition is not merely to represent the ‘unregisterable’ but to create a space for a new form of being and reality.

The first section of this chapter will offer a glimpse at Barney’s role in modernist scholarship, considering the responses this figure and her texts have elicited. Such an overview provides an important context to the narrator’s self-conscious references to books in The One and situates the specific intervention this chapter seeks to make. The remainder of this chapter is structured in line with binaries key to this novel: materiality/ immateriality, actuality/ potentiality, and matter/ text. Drawing on Butler’s Bodies That Matter as well as Gilles Deleuze’s and Félix Guattari’s A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, I will trace how the journey in this novel is a move towards a non-dualist view on reality.

Reading Barney’s Recalcitrant Body
Barney’s writings, including her novel The One, are rarely discussed with the majority of modernist scholarship focusing on this figure in the context of her legendary literary salon in Paris and her eccentric lifestyle. In a number of modernist studies and anthologies Barney’s oeuvre is alluded to, but usually mentioned only in passing or dismissed as overly allusive and obscure. The image of Barney as a notoriously eccentric Bohemian, who was not only acquainted with numerous avant-gardists, but actively supported the arts with her private patronage, contrasts with the anonymity surrounding her own fiction, poetry, epigrams and plays. The general exclusion of The One in discussions of literary modernism appears rather concerted, however, in light of the fact that the text explicitly distances itself from ‘mediums of modernism’. In the chapter ‘In A.D.’s Library,’ the protagonist inspects the library of the diseased A.D., noticing that it bans ‘erotism badly written’ and adding the following observation:

The mediums of modernism as mannequins of fashion, were also excluded, because an acquired speed can never represent a movement. (TO 95)


195 Benstock surmises that the impossibility of assigning a genre to The One may have compromised the attention it has received among scholars. See Benstock, Women of the Left Bank, p. 298. In the introduction to Bonnie Kime Scott’s The Gender of Modernism, Barney is explicitly excluded because Scott assumes she has published in French only. See The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology, ed. by Bonnie Kime Scott (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 5. Two publications dedicating an individual chapter to Barney’s are Bridget Elliott and Jo-Ann Wallace, Women Artists and Writers: Modernist (Im)Positionings (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) who consider her alongside Romaine Brooks, and Elizabeth English’s Lesbian Modernism.
This nod to modernism’s use of textual material and form as a medium through which to showcase a fashionable style is a critique of sameness and repetition that the narrator first raises in relation to the crowd of rich eccentrics – from androgynous ‘mannishly dressed’ women to the ‘American Greek type [of man] buoyant as a danseuse’ – gathering at a popular seaside resort in France (TO 64, 66). In The One, speed is related to new means of transport controlled by men and to which the protagonist is subjected: ‘human packages carried on, to be delivered at some terminus on which our driver alone seemed bent’ (TO 57). This critique of modernism on grounds of an ‘acquired speed’ offers a way of reading the novel’s allegiance to decadent motifs and its embrace of stylistic anachronisms, putting it at odds with fiction more overtly embracing a modernist pathos. With the question of singularity in relation to a literary movement raised in such an explicit way, the novel invites a closer analysis of its positioning in the field of cultural and literary productions.

The novel’s evasive prose not only compounded the search for a publisher, drawing attention to conditions of inclusion, but also prompted the verdict ‘obscure’ among literary critics and readers. The narrator of The One anticipates exactly such a reception in a self-referential gesture: ‘here taxed with obscurity’ (TO 105). By selecting a fiscal term, which denotes a compulsory contribution to the nation state, Barney ridicules the assumption that literature owes clarity to a reading public. At the same time, ‘taxed’ describes the very effect obscurity has on the reader in that it is demanding and exhausting. In a similar vein, the ‘Author’s Note’ attached to the novel is a conscious play with readers’ expectation, luring with the promise of helpful explanation: ‘For those who would have our obscurities brought into the opera-glass focus shall we as in the theatre, condense our argument?’ (TO 160). Here the narrator assumes an authorial persona and appeals to the idea of an author’s authority over the meaning of a text. Spanning six lines and squeezed into a single sentence, Barney then provides a rather dull summary of the novel’s phantasmagorical plot:

A.D., a being having committed suicide, is replaced by a sponsor, who carries on the broken life, with all the human feelings assumed with the flesh, until, having endured to the end in A.D.’s stead, the composite or legion is disbanded by the One, who remains supreme.

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This synopsis is followed by a list of the ‘DRAMATIS PERSONAE,’ finally promising clarity in form of the clear identification of protagonists. Yet such hope is soon dispelled by the spread of further confusion. The introduction of a character named ‘Duthiers,’ for example, falls short of any noteworthy specifics by reading merely ‘a third person in all situations’.

With this meta-commentary occasionally surfacing the novel draws attention to itself as a literary genre and medium aware of expectations raised by readers, critics and publishers and, at the same time, rebelling against conventions through provocations, manipulations and non-compliances. In a chapter entitled ‘In A.D.’s Library,’ this critique is expanded to include books at large: a collection of sheets of paper bound in a book is at once ‘the virgin of receptivity’ as well as the site where ‘the action of multitudes had been prepared’ (TO 93): the text can be both the site of ideological indoctrination and of radical politics.

This outright refusal to adhere to narrative conventions, to be readable, identifiable, and assignable, is reflected in a potpourri of styles ranging from novelistic, poetic, epigrammatic, aphoristic to philosophical and biblical and exploding the genre of the novel. In its departure from a traditional novelistic form, The One mirrors the modernist zeitgeist of literary experimentation. And yet, a plot bordering on the fantastical, characters disappearing into abstraction, a setting which only brushes the city as the preferred modernist site and the invocation of somewhat anachronistic motifs may have prevented scholars from examining the novel in the context of its modernist legacy.

On the level of content, The One wilfully deforms the human body by reimagining possibilities of female corporeality; on the level of style, the novel creates a distorting effect by championing a linguistic experimentalism contrasting with the authoritative prose of canonised literature. To this extent, the text itself performs what the plot only narrates: the possibility of alterations and reconfigurations with effects of a material order. The typographic body of this consists of paragraphs in prose, lines of poetry, divisions of pages into two vertical sections (see the chapter ‘Other Discoveries’), and other plays with line spacing and orthography.

Barney’s borrowing from decadent motifs has been noted and evaluated as a feminist response to a predominantly male-defined modernist project of stylistic innovation by modernist scholars. In Women Artists and Writers: Modernist (Im)positioning, Bridget Elliott and Jo-Ann Wallace examine the effect of gender on women’s positioning in the cultural and discursive field of modernism.197 They propose to read the decadent and symbolist rhetoric

in female-authored fiction of the 1920s and 1930s as a literary strategy specific to negotiations of a ‘feminine, and especially lesbian, sexuality’.\textsuperscript{198} By not merely replicating, but modifying late nineteenth century aesthetics, they maintain, Barney’s writing refuses to follow the modernist ethos of artistic originality.\textsuperscript{199} Elliott and Wallace identify this refusal as a feminist move critically targeting the assumption that such originality is predominantly defined by and reserved for the male genius.

The choice of precisely decadence as a counter-aesthetic, Elliott and Wallace attribute to its association with homoeroticism and homosexual writers such as Oscar Wilde and Charles Baudelaire. By recreating Wilde’s epigrammatic style and drawing on Baudelaire’s depictions of eccentric figures, they argue, Barney strategically and ‘deliberately invoked the cultural markers of a marginal, deviant, and illegal sexuality’.\textsuperscript{200} Building on an aesthetic that is implicated in the emergence of a male homosexual culture, Barney is said to ultimately aim for the construction of a distinctive lesbian cultural identity. To Elliott and Wallace, the appearance of the figure of the hermaphrodite in \textit{The One} exemplifies Barney’s revival of a fin-de-siècle trope paradigmatic for negotiating non-normative sexuality. Although they claim that Barney intended to represent lesbian identity, Elliott and Wallace nevertheless observe that her poems relentlessly champion an ‘always incoherent identity’.\textsuperscript{201} At odds with Elliott and Wallace’s reading of \textit{The One} as introducing to the public a new sexual identity seems the novel’s embrace of incoherence, ambiguity and obscurity. Moreover, the hermaphroditic ‘double being’ in its various incarnations in \textit{The One} serves only as the point of departure for further deconstructions of any stable identity categories – a circumstance, which Elliott and Wallace acknowledge when they discern ‘an exploration of psychic “hermaphroditism” or doubleness – even multiplicity – of being’. Yet, the authors focus on ‘psychic hermaphroditism’ as a marker of a specific sexual identity invoking sexual taxonomies employed by sexologists at the turn of the century.\textsuperscript{202}

In \textit{Psychopathia Sexualis} (1886), Krafft-Ebing speaks of ‘psychical hermaphroditism’ as a mild and possibly curable version of sexual inversion ‘where subjects are mainly homosexual but traces of heterosexuality remain’.\textsuperscript{203} On the other end of the spectrum he

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid. p. 34.

\textsuperscript{199} On ‘male heroic originality’ versus the downplaying of female creativity ‘as merely and transparently personal,’ see Elliott and Wallace, \textit{Women Artists and Writers}, p. 38, original italics.

\textsuperscript{200} Ibid. p. 51.

\textsuperscript{201} Ibid. p. 49, original italics.

\textsuperscript{202} Ibid. p. 40.

places ‘hermaphroditism or pseudo-hermaphroditism’ by which he means that ‘the subject’s physical form begins to correspond to the inverted sexual instinct’. Krafft-Ebing also terms this ‘extreme grade of degenerate homosexuality’ gynandry. Later sexologists would draw on the figure of the hermaphroditic double being, too, but contradict Krafft-Ebing’s thesis of homosexuality as ‘a functional sign of degeneration’. In 1896, Carpenter, expanding on the work of Ulrichs, postulated the category of an ‘intermediate sex’ as a descriptive for psychic inversion of normative gender behaviour. Laura Doan and Chris Waters point out that the concept of sexual inversion as developed by Havelock Ellis and Stella Browne bears some resemblance to Carpenter’s intermediary type. Ellis’s and Browne’s accounts of sexual inversion tend to locate masculine traits in women with same-sex desire. While for these sexologists the species of the intermediate or third sex was a phenomenon of biology, Sigmund Freud pushed towards a decoupling of sexuality from biology by foregrounding the


individual’s psychic development. With regard to the idea of an intermediary or hermaphroditic sex, Freud argued that ‘psychical hermaphroditism’ can be only detected in ‘inverted women’ whereas ‘a certain degree of anatomical hermaphroditism occurs normally’ in both genders.208

Barney’s references to hermaphroditism, her occasional recourse to the figure of the angel and her choice of a genderless protagonist in The One have given rise to the view that the novel is concerned with constructing either a lesbian identity, as suggested by Elliott and Wallace, or a transsexual identity as Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar as well as Anna Livia have proposed.209 Even though the novel invokes tropes of sexological discourse, however, it ultimately moves beyond the primacy of the sex-gender system as a referential framework for differentiations between the normal and the abnormal. When, for example, the narrator ponders on angels, the reader is informed that

> On earth they often appear with a woman’s body and a man’s desire, or vice versa. Two needed – No one entirely a woman or a man? Infinite variety of couples and couplings. (TO 38).

Here the gender binary is portrayed as a common but deficient identity marker, bespeaking a terrestrial need rather than a true phenomenon. The notion of sexual deviance is already exposed as the artefact of an arbitrary but imperious principle. By the same token, the insight ‘two needed – No one entirely a woman or a man’ hints at the redundancy of a dualist division unable to accommodate actual and possible variations. In its place, the narrator proposes an ‘[i]nfinite variety of couples and couplings,’ thus emphasising the malleability and contingency of sexual identity categories. When the figure of the angel is contrasted with its earthly manifestation of a ‘two-sexed hermaphrodite’ at a later point in the story, again the text pushes towards a deconstructing multiplication of a dualist status quo: ‘the separate pair creative of a third [state] . . . The three-in-one leading to four: out of the third the fourth’ (TO 100). Viewed from this perspective, an exclusive focus on the formation of a lesbian identity


209 Gilbert and Gubar adduce Barney’s novel as one example of representations of ‘transvestism and transsexualism’ tinted with recourse to religious language. The One is described as ‘a dreamlike tale about the multiple sexual identities that haunt its protagonist’; the allusion to the hermaphrodite is read as ‘a spiritualizing of the cross-dresser’. See Gilbert and Gubar, p. 362. Livia places The One under the category of the ‘transsexual novel’. See Anna Livia, Pronoun Envy: Literary Uses of Linguistic Gender (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 59.
in Barney’s novel, neglects to take account of notions of multiplicity and malleability abundant in *The One* and obstructing a reading for identity markers. At the same time, the prioritisation of psychical interiority limits the novel’s theorisations to the sphere of the mental, thus overlooking its investment in notions of corporeality and materiality.

The following section illustrates that the text is closer to a materialist and monist worldview than the novel’s abundant borrowing from religious doctrines of transcendence may suggest. It read recourses to liminal figures such as hermaphrodites, angels, shadows or spirits not as symbols for a psychic state indicative of a particular sexual identity, but as rewritings of corporeality. Although they root in popular and medical discourses, these figures are mobilised in the novel to indicate possibilities of creating an entirely new form of being in the future. In this section I also suggest that *The One* is less invested in themes of male homoeroticism and perversion cultivated by the decadents than assumed. The novel is not exclusively indebted to Wilde’s, Baudelaire’s or J.-K. Huysmans’s writings, but also – and more explicitly – adapts themes and scenes from John Milton’s epic poem *Paradise Lost*, Honoré de Balzac’s novels *Seraphita* and *La Peau de Chagrin* and the Bible.

The centrality of Milton to Barney is underlined by the fact that a passage from *Paradise Lost* is quoted in the epigraph to *The One*:210 In this passage, contemplations on the sexual indeterminacy of spirits, the burden of flesh and the malleability of shapes set the tenor for the story to follow. Moreover, the novel follows *Paradise Lost* in basing its plot on unorthodox materialist interpretations of biblical scenes, although *The One* arguably misappropriates the biblical template to a greater extent.211 The ground shared between *The One* and *Paradise Lost* reveals two of the novel’s primary concerns: the summoning of the Christian scripture as the first mass-printed book points to the novel’s preoccupation with the

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authoritative power of canonical texts.²¹² On the other hand, the text’s negotiation of a materialist monism underlines its augmented interest in concepts of the body, corporeality and matter over the subject of psychical interiority.

It is possible to view the novel’s resistance to common modernist forms and motifs, together with its obscure and ‘frustratingly abstract’ prose, as part of a project more rigorous than – and perhaps even opposed to – the construction of a specific lesbian, or indeed any sexual identity.²¹³ Not only does The One deconstruct female corporeality beyond recognition, but in the same breath the novel features a staggering heterogeneity of genres equally defying any unequivocal categorisation. Firmly distancing itself from ‘the mediums of modernism as mannequins of fashion,’ The One repudiates the here and now and instead insists, in the words of cultural critic José Esteban Muñoz, on ‘potentiality or concrete possibility for another world’ (TO 95).²¹⁴

Against this background, the obscurity surrounding the (sexual) identity of the narrator and protagonists, animate bodies and inanimate objects and, indeed, the literary genre, functions to keep open the possibility of a non-dualist view of the world where distinctions between materiality/ immateriality, actuality/ potentiality, body/ text, reality/ fiction are blurred. At the same time, the mysterious ambiguity enveloping both prose and content reflect the role of the metaphysical and the supernatural as a vantage point from which to critically examine what qualifies as real.

**Between Disembodiment and Incorporation**

Given that the plot revolves around the post-mortem redemption of a woman’s life, named A.D., it stands to reason that negotiations of corporeality in The One are particularly aimed at retrieving possibilities for the oppressed lives of women. In the course of the story, the reader learns that A.D. had a particularly passionate and intense affair with a married woman called Stella, who would eventually commit suicide. What prevents the reader to view A.D.’s own suicide as a mere act of desperation is Barney’s fantastic reconceptualization of death as an opportunity for metamorphosis. As the novel’s subtitle, A.D.’s After-Life, already reveals A.D.’s suicide does not completely extinguish her existence. Instead her life is retraced and

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²¹² The Gutenberg Bible was the first type-printed book distributed in Western countries from around 1454 onwards. For a short introduction on its history of publication and distribution, see Martin Davies, *The Gutenberg Bible* (London: British Library, 1997).


lived by someone else: ‘a sponsor, who carries on the broken life’ (TO 160). What this sponsor provides for the success of a second chance is a bodily form that escapes sexual differentiation. Indeed, the character who comes to live in A.D.’s stead is a spirit in corporeal form, a supernatural and superhuman creature. This figure is the outcome of a mysterious materialisation of various once abandoned fragments, spirits or shadows: a multiplicity united in one. This implies that for the redemption of the female character an unidentifiable bodily form and a yet unmapped and therefore unmameable identity, are crucial.

The introductory scene of The One is reminiscent of a biblical incident, which is then severely altered and rewritten as the story unfolds. The ominous title of Barney’s work, The One Who Is Legion, alludes directly to an incident described in the Gospels of Mark 5, Matthew 8 and Luke 8. In the scene entitled ‘Jesus Restores a Demon-Possessed Man,’ Jesus asks for the name of the ‘impure spirit’ possessing a naked man whereupon he replies: ‘My name is Legion, […] for we are many.’ Jesus then allows the demons to enter the bodies of a herd of pigs who later drown; thus freed from the impure spirits, the man is again ‘dressed and in his right mind’.

Parallels between the story of the bible and the plot of Barney’s novel are evident in the graveyard as initial setting, the focus on a suicidal character beset by a multitude of spirits and the appearance of a saviour. However, while in the Gospel Jesus brings back to health a demon-possessed man through exorcism, in the novel the resurrection of an already dead woman is attempted precisely through the incorporation of various spirits. Thus in Barney’s adaptation of the scene the reintegration of spirits into a bodily and liveable form – the becoming-corporeal – is absolutely vital for the continuance of a life worth living. Given that the notion of impurity has been read as an allusion to sexual perversion in the historical exegesis of the New Testament, Barney’s rewriting also reverses the sexual morality behind exorcism: the incorporation of erotic possibilities infuses life into the body, rather than threatening its integrity and vigour.


Furthermore, the change of nomenclature from ‘demon’ to ‘spirit’ constitutes yet another blasphemous alteration of the biblical story by naming the formerly abject, the demon or the personified demonised, after a term employed to describe the Holy Spirit and any God-like aspect in Christian theology. The unusual and varied nature of these spirits as fragments comes to light in the following quote:

Many of Death’s cast-offs approach the radiation to be incorporated, like separated atoms in a ray of light. [...] All those who are out of the body must find again a body. Not to belong to a human make-up, not to become incorporated, not to lead or be led by a shape, is the worst thing that can befall even a shadow. Many disembodied fragments that hoped to expand by themselves nourished false claims, which could not nourish them long. (TO 12-13)

In the quotation above, spirits do not denote an immaterial substance but are reconfigured as ‘disembodied fragments’ comparable to ‘separated atoms’. The result of breakage and separation, they no longer belong to a ‘concrete entity’ whose fixed solidity would render them identifiable and nameable, but are nevertheless made of matter. As ‘Death’s cast-offs’ parasitically ‘crowd[ing] on the living as beggars,’ they seem to hover on the outside of what is already established as an entity. The fragments’ ability ‘to expand,’ that is, to extend into space and to gain substance – and significance – independently from one another is rendered an endeavour ultimately doomed to fail. Though denoting material potentiality, they remain impotent and futile if not incorporated in what is recognised as a definite shape.

For the purpose of conceptualising the redemption of A.D., the novel alludes to yet another biblical incident: the Resurrection of Jesus. However, while in the scripture Jesus undergoes the stages of crucifixion, burial, death, the discovery of the tomb and resurrection, the text focuses on the three days of interim existence between death and resurrection. Those days constitute the temporal backdrop of Barney’s novel and chronicle the attempt to assemble the multitude of spirits in a corporeal form without sacrificing the freedom, dynamism and potency of their otherwise bodiless, amoeboid matter.

In the first two chapters, this abstract text models the diligent dismantling of female corporeality on biblical accounts of bodily modifications and revivals. In the course of this dismantling, a link between corporeality and morality surfaces: the body of the possessed man is beset by demons effecting its dishonourable residence ‘among the tombs’ as well as his social status as a mad outcast. Similarly, the reference to the Resurrection doctrine emphasises the link between the revived body of Christ and the redemption of sins. Given
that *The One* evolves around the redemption of the deceased bisexual or lesbian A.D., it seems plausible to suggest, as Suzanne Hobson does, that Barney’s novel is about ‘an angelic (re)birth for the lesbian’. However, while the narrator and protagonist may dedicate the mission of redemption to the figure of the lesbian, the conceptualisation of the revival urges for a more general reconsideration of the reality of corporeality and materiality and their relation to the production of text.

In turning towards the bible as a template to modify, Barney targets one of the oldest and most influential accounts of the genesis of the world, proposing a divine creation of the human race. This move, with its fantastic rewriting of the scene of resurrection which runs counter to the biblical tale, situates *The One* in an ontological inquiry concerned with processes of morphogenesis and metamorphosis. Furthermore, the depiction of spirits as atom-like fragments and as involved in a process of becoming-corporeal, undermines the fundament of the hierarchical distinction between the fallible mortal body and the infallible immortal God-sent or God-like spirit. Despite these references to the bible and its rhetoric, the novel ignores the morals of its stories and instead mimics canonical scenes and figures to formulate a different project through the powerful discourse of religious language. In *The One*, the narrators equally fantastic but secularised and parodying story seems an example of Judith Butler’s argument that ‘those who are abjected come to make their claim through and against the discourses that have sought their repudiation’.

In *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ‘Sex’*, Butler illustrates how materiality and discourse are always imbricated with one another, mutually constitutive articulations rather than two distinct structures. She critiques feminist practices, which base their analysis on the ‘sexed specificity of the female body’ and therewith presume the ‘material irreducibility of sex’. Instead, Butler proposes that language is ‘the very condition under which materiality may be said to appear’ so that ‘to know the significance of

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217 Suzanne Hobson, *Angles of Modernism: Religion, Culture, Aesthetics 1910-1960* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011), p. 128. In contrast to Elliott and Wallace, who emphasise the role of a decadent rhetoric in *The One*’s construction of a lesbian identity, Hobson foregrounds the novel’s delineation of ‘a gynocentric version of the occult’ intended to free women from traditional gender roles (p. 127). In her view such a delineation occurs under the sign of the lesbian, but is not necessarily invested in reformulating the identity of the lesbian.


something is to know how and why it matters, where “to matter” means at once “to materialize” and “to mean”.\(^\text{221}\) Butler adds that ‘matter is fully sedimented with discourses on sex and sexuality’ so that ‘to invoke matter is to invoke a sedimented history of sexual hierarchy’.\(^\text{222}\)

The novel’s experimentation with a monist doctrine challenges divisions between corporeality and spirituality, female and male and experiments with divisions forged between discursive power and material effect. Such interrogations coalesce in the polymorphic figure of the One. Barney’s novel conceptualises the One as a God-like force transcending the boundaries of the material and the natural, not by becoming spiritual but by expanding what may become or count as matter and reality. In this sense, the figure of the One embodies the force of materiality itself, echoing a materialist interpretation of God. Here then the delineation of the figure of the protagonist can be seen to be inspired by Milton’s notion of corporeal angels in *Paradise Lost* and Balzac’s ‘Angelic Spirits’ in *Seraphita*.\(^\text{223}\)

The next section further investigates the text’s engagement with spiritualism vis-à-vis realism and immateriality vis-à-vis materiality by examining how these binaries figure in the construction of ‘the Real’ (*TO* 92). While the first two chapters of *The One* address the resurrected body, the morphogenesis of the character called the One, the remaining chapters explore the force physical space can have on the body. Here the defamiliarisation and detachment from a given material reality become instrumental in opening up possibilities of perceiving and interpreting differently.

**Materiality/ Immateriality**

The novel interrogates the spiritual/ material binary by having the sexually undifferentiated and liminal figure of ‘A.D.’s angel’ (another designation of the One) clash with the sexed and concrete world of human society (*TO* 160). In contrast to the popular conception of an afterlife occurring in a spiritual otherworld, the ‘after-life’ of A.D. is shifted to the realm of

\(^{221}\) Ibid. pp. 6-7.

\(^{222}\) Ibid. pp. 5, 22.

\(^{223}\) For Milton’s conception of angels, see Hart, ‘Matter, Monism, and Narrative: An Essay on the Metaphysics of Paradise Lost’, p. 22-3. The character of Monsieur Becker in Balzac’s novel, while elaborating on Emmanuel Swedenborg’s theories, explains that ‘God has not created angels; none exist who have not been men upon earth’. See Honoré de Balzac, *Seraphita*, trans. by Katharine Prescott Wormeley (Champaign: Book Jungle, n.d. [1834]), p. 72 (first publ. in English by The Gebbie Publishing Co. in 1899 under the title *Seraphita and Other Stories*). Suzanne Hobson points out that ‘Swedenborg’s maxims in particular are crucial to the novel’s purposes [including] his idea that humankind and angelhood were of the nature of a continuum’. See Hobson, *Angles of Modernism*, p. 126.
the material world. Although decried as an ‘imperfect medium,’ the mortal human body is nevertheless posited as an inevitable ‘medium by which to realise and partake of this singular life’ (TO 17, 102). Consequently, the challenge for A.D.’s saviour is to reconcile the task of redemption with the necessity to do so in a corporeal form and in the material world.

This conflation of the celestial and seraphic with the terrestrial and human already points to the text’s experimentation with a non-dualist philosophy. Even though the exploration of a monist perspective characterises the entire plot, it is in the ‘Author’s Note’ where two monist doctrines, radical materialism and spiritualism, are considered more explicitly, if only in passing:

In our human composite, part ape and part angel, is there not scope for an extreme realism and spirituality?’ (TO 159).

Barney’s replication of Cartesian dualism – the conception of mind and matter as two entirely separate substances – in the first line is less faithful than it seems. The reference to the ‘ape’ invokes the body as an object of scientific discourse, emphasising its primitive and instinctual nature. However, by substituting the idea of the mind with the figure of the angel, Barney not only blurs the boundary between the natural and the supernatural, but also insinuates that mental phenomena have a distinctive shape. As a consequence, the clear differentiation between the material and the immaterial falters as mental phenomena such as ideas and thoughts are said to assume a shape, that is, to materialise.

In the quoted question, the narrator’s interest in potentiality crystallises: ‘is there not scope for?’ What is hoped for is the capacity of the ‘human composite’ to house a combination of ‘extreme realism and spirituality’. Philosophical realism argues that there are real existences of objects independent from what the human mind is capable of conceptualising, imagining or articulating. In this view, the empirical study of objects and their properties can only yield a limited human perspective on the actual (possible) state of affairs. Nevertheless, realism maintains that objects’ wider reality, extending beyond human perception, is still material and physical rather than spiritual and divine.

Etymologically, spirituality originates from the Latin word spiritus translating into breath or spirit. During the early nineteenth century, the term became associated with and

224 Taking into consideration the philosophical and speculative content of this passage, it seems likely that the term realism refers to the philosophical theory rather than to the literary aesthetic. Moreover, the term appears elsewhere as a descriptive for a purely empiricist and therefore limited epistemological method: ‘books of cold observation, of a realism so exterior that it was more obvious what their authors had let slip than what they had captured’. See TO 94.
secularised by American transcendentalists, to whom it designated a powerful connection with the spirit of nature or the universe rather than with God. In so far as the transcendental movement signals ‘a new confidence in and appreciation of the mind’s powers, and a modern, non-doctrinal spirituality,’ it is, in its idealist orientation, opposed to realism, which insists on the mind’s limitedness. A further difference consists in realism’s insistence that matter is not reducible to mind or spirit while spiritualism precisely defends the existence of the spiritual as the ultimate universal substance.

Taking spirituality to an extreme shifts ontological agency to the mind. In other words, ‘extreme spirituality’ (to quote from Barney) emphasises the mind-dependency of objects and state of affairs, positing the mind as a creating productive principle. As a result, spiritualism is more compatible with the doctrine of free will than realism, which tends to allow for the determining power of matter, especially when construed as biologistic rather than physicalistic. Barney emphasises the interpretation of matter from a biological point of view when invoking the figure of the ape. At the same time, however, the call for an ‘extreme realism’ decouples the doctrine from its empiricist foundation and moves it away from an anthropomorphic epistemology towards possibilities stretching beyond the human mind. Pushed to an extreme, it points to possibilities of material existence beyond what is immediately perceivable.

What crystallises here are efforts to foster the confidence in a potential reality surpassing the already familiar and rationalised life-world of the ordinary human being. In this context, the novel’s abundant borrowing from transcendentalist doctrines serves to defamiliarise the experience of everyday life. This is exemplified by the main character, who is newly born into a world already occupied and organised by human beings and who persistently remains removed from an environment not accounting for the existence of fantastic creatures. The hybrid figure of the One – half angelic, half human – embodies a perpetual critique of a strictly realist conception of space which relies on physical laws and empirical knowledge.

In order to redeem A.D.’s suicide, however, the One is required to relive A.D.’s former life and to understand the specific pain she had undergone. It is precisely this oscillation between empathy and distance, identification and dis-identification with A.D. and her life story, which allows the protagonist to realise the limits of a given reality:


226 The figure of the ape appears elsewhere in The One as marker of inferior imitation, see TO 136.
We soon became aware of our stage-setting, the part we had been playing. Playing a part suggesting that we belong to a whole? This fixed reality destroying the chance of the Real. Because of the obstacles of this set of realities, we should perhaps never find our Reality! (TO 92)

This realisation locates the origin of A.D.’s misery in her entrenchment in a ‘fixed reality’ while positioning the One as the figure who possesses knowledge of potential types of existence to which the current ‘set of realities’ opposes ‘obstacles’. The construction of the protagonist as a liminal figure hovering over the threshold of materiality and spirituality, actuality and potentiality, poses a challenge to the maintenance of those very distinctions. At the same time, this borderline position is viewed as an epistemic advantage: ‘We can judge of nothing while we are in it. | Even happiness is an aftermath. | Only the retired dealers in reality can realise’ (TO 45). While the retrospective realisation of a former state of happiness is a platitude, to only retrospectively recognise what is real seems to entail higher costs given that it calls into question the referential framework and signifying system one has lived by.

To determine the particular circumstances, which caused A.D.’s suffering, the One occupies her residence, browses through her possessions – spotting an engraved fan, a memoir detailing her love-lives and personal letters – and makes the acquaintance of her husband and her female lover. In this context, rooms, objects and bodies come into view as composed texts whose deciphering yields knowledge about the human beings that were once in touch with them. Coming across A.D.’s fan, for instance, the One wonders: ‘Should we open the ivory sticks? Disclose their story?’ (TO 44). Likewise, when the One enters A.D.’s house for the first time, the question arises: ‘Must we ask of outward objects their secrets? . . . Let us ask assistance from passages, from rooms an explanation. Even the memories they contain must become ours’ (TO 25-6).

In line with this, the protagonist never enters a not already signified world to revenge A.D., but the mission requires to ‘be “present” in the story we had fallen into’ (TO 102). This specific way of phrasing emphasises that lives are always embedded in a narrative: There is no access from a neutral vantage point outside; access is only granted through the medium of language including texts written in books, on objects (like the engraved fan) as well as

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227 In ‘The Hem of Manhattan,’ Barnes pokes fun at precisely this idea, invoking the distinction foreign/home rather than past/present: ‘There one would notice how the buttons were made because it would be a strange, new person wearing them in a strange, old land. Here one’s buttons are never missed until they fall off’ (‘HM’ 286).
particular meanings assigned to gendered bodies and distinctive spaces. The physical surroundings of A.D. are portrayed as a powerful signifier, putting pressure on the notion of agency. The ‘stage-setting’ in the quote above alludes to the idea of reality as a disguise. What the protagonist lacks in knowledge of its protégée’s existence they ultimately learn through the organisation of A.D.’s material life-world:

Adaptable almost to the exclusion of ourselves, limited and shaped according to so suggestive and pre-existing an environment, we gave in to the mood of the things around us. (TO 23)

What is beginning to emerge is a finely mapped interplay between material reality, textual production and the creation of the human subject in the course of a narrative trajectory. In this sense, The One bears much resemblance with the materialist project of French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, especially as formulated in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. In several passages in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate how the world is forced into the threefold division of ‘a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)’. In Deleuze’s and Guattari’s view, such an organisation allows for particular formations and perpetuations of hegemonic patriarchal structures such as the State apparatus, which eradicate the possibility of change. In order to break through the hierarchical binaries of reality/representation, matter/form, subject/object, these philosophers propose a philosophy of radical monism, which flattens these distinctions by locating them on the same horizontal plane: matter.

In *The One*, a similar effort at levelling crystallises especially with regard to the figure of the protagonist. As the prototypical liminal figure, the One is moving along the borders demarcating the real from the unreal, the known from the mysterious, the past from the future. As a threshold character, the next section demonstrates, it also embodies potentiality and utopian hope.

**Actuality/ Potentiality**

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229 Ibid. p. 24.
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The novel’s preoccupation with deconstructing materiality and reality furnishing a critique of current ideological structures and their material manifestations. By pointing to the idea of a place beyond, *The One* displays an investment in transcending existing structures and pointing towards potentiality. The critical balancing act between immanent criticism and transcendental flight, engagement and detachment, is reflected in the protagonist, who is shown to carefully navigate between participation and passivity, proximity and distance. As pure spirituality, the One would remain irrelevant and non-existent in a world whose reality is composed of tangible objects and corporeal beings. On the other hand, as a clearly sexed and identifiable human creature, they would merely replicate the patriarchal structures organising human society, rather than expose their limits.\(^{230}\) In its cautious balancing between current corporeal and spatial materiality and an utopian outlook, *The One* may be said to be an example of the more ‘ambivalent, provisional utopian visions,’ which Benjamin Kohlmann detects in modernist literature.\(^{231}\) Writers like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, and W.H. Auden, Kohlmann argues, ‘present utopia as a critical engagement with the lived spaces of the everyday’ while revealing a ‘troubled recognition of the resistance which the material spaces of everyday life put up against the flights of utopian dreaming’.

The novel gestures towards the potentiality of a not yet existent state of affairs, intent on having shapes or material phenomena signify differently. To cite one example, the notion of material reality as something absolute, objective and independent from human conception comes under scrutiny when the seraphic body of the protagonist moves within the walls of its protégée’s home. During those indoor scenes, the narrator introduces the idea of fourth-dimensional thought – a notion which undermines the trust in immediate perception to deliver final truths.

In *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art*, Linda Henderson meticulously demonstrates how the fourth dimension developed from a mathematical model to a concept inspiring artistic imagination at the beginning of the twentieth century. She traces references to and explorations of the fourth dimension in the works of H. G. Wells, Oscar Wilde, Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, Marcel Proust, and

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Gertrude Stein. Although other mathematicians have also employed the concept, the theories of the more theosophical-orientated ‘hyperspace’ philosophers such as the British Charles Hinton, the American Claude Fayette Bragdon and the Russian Pyotr Demianovich Ouspensky, had a particular appeal to artists and writers at the turn of the century. Hinton, Bragdon and Ouspensky, Henderson explains, proposed the existence of a fourth spatial dimension based on the idea that our understanding of space is limited by a perceptual apparatus, which allows only for the apprehension of three-dimensional space. Objects and beings, these thinkers argued, exist across four dimensions, exhibiting different motional and morphological characteristics in each sphere.

While writings by Barney available in English do not testify to her knowledge of fourth dimensional thought, her novel The One contains a direct reference to this theory, reflecting the text’s general fascination with latent existences and higher realities. Following the contemplations of realism and spiritualism in the previously mentioned ‘Author’s Note,’ the narrator asks, ‘[a]nd might not an Epicurean be defined as a “Fourth-dimensional Materialist”? ’ (TO 159). Given that the Greek philosopher Epicurus proposed ‘a description of nature based on atomistic materialism,’ his doctrine is generally compatible


235 Two novels, a memoir and a collection of bilingual poetry have been published in English. See Anna Livia, A Perilous Advantage: The Best of Natalie Clifford Barney (Norwich: New Victoria Publishers, 1992).
with the physicalism embraced by fourth dimensional theorists:²³⁶ both subscribe to matter as a universal substance, that is, they both herald the idea of material monism. However, Epicurean and fourth-dimensional philosophers differ with regard to their epistemological method. While Epicureanism maintains that ‘sensations, together with the perception of pleasure and pain, are infallible criteria,’ fourth-dimensional thinkers apply mathematical-geometric reasoning.

What is worth noticing is that fourth-dimensional theorists do not seek to establish a general rule applicable to this world, but rather look out for the abnormal, illogical, and unfamiliar to deduce the characteristics of a possible hyperspace. Hinton, for instance, stresses that one must seize objects, movements and shapes where they appear ‘unique and unrelated’ in the context of three-dimensional space.²³⁷ This is echoed by Bragdon, who suggests to search for ‘contradictory facts’ meaning ‘facts [which] forced us to ascribe to a body two attributes or qualities which we formerly thought could not exist together’.²³⁸ Although we do not know to what extent Barney was familiar with either Hinton’s or Bragdon’s writings, the protagonist, as an arguably paradoxical and eccentric figure can be seen as an exemplary phenomenon, pointing towards the existence of a different plane of space with its own characteristics.

The idea of a fourth dimension appealed to a writer, whose novel is driven by an agenda to defamiliarize the familiar and to dehumanise the human with the ultimate aim to liberate the senses to be able to perceive differently. These philosophers’ effort to establish a connection between the strange material phenomena of unfamiliar shapes and movements and the existence of something other opens up a new epistemological register: the illogical behaviour of objects promises knowledge of a larger reality. Hinton was keen to reconsider and reconfigure the reality of material objects, that is, ‘to [newly] realise the shape of objects’.²³⁹ In other words, to have them materialise and matter differently.

Even though the narrator in Barney’s novel is not interested in advancing science’s grasp on reality, they have an evident interest in modifying how bodies, objects and rooms come to matter in both senses of the word: to materialise and to signify. Ultimately, the physical environment in its current manifestation, especially with regard to binaries of immateriality/ materiality, and the gendered body come under siege with the narrator hoping

²³⁷ See Hinton, The Fourth Dimension, p. 3.
²³⁸ See Bragdon, A Primer of Higher Space, pp. 4-5.
²³⁹ See Hinton, The Fourth Dimension, p. 3.
to point the way to new ways of mattering. Here Barney’s novel shares common ground with hyperspace philosophers: both set out to unsettle the borders of the real. However, the novel utilises this destabilisation of reality and the exposure of truth as temporary and limited not as an opportunity to bolster the search for certainty, but to herald potentiality. As the protagonist threatens to more and more morph into A.D. and adopt her former routines and habits, the question arises: ‘Too late to pursue on the heels of mystery, turning around an angle into a dimension beyond?’ (TO 92). Elsewhere mystery is described as ‘that which is not yet, the forerunner of occurrence?’ as well as that which ‘remains the invisible link between what is outworn by knowledge, and the unborn reality’ (TO 159).

*The One* can be said to articulate a critique of material reality not only by juxtaposing the ordinary with the magical, but by introducing the event of death as an opportunity for insights into what defines and predetermines life. Taking into account such a reconceptualization of death, the mantra ‘to be stronger than life,’ which informs the protagonist’s mission, seems an invitation to critically rethink available life narratives rather than a wish for eternity and immortality (TO 30). This shimmers through when the protagonist ponders, ‘[w]hat of the unlived side? The unchosen course.’ (TO 37). If the notion of life at stake in the novel is not reduced to denoting the period between birth and death, but encompasses the definition of life as organic matter ‘including the capacity for growth, reproduction, functional activity,’ then *The One* issues forth a critique of life as presently defined, rather than a wish for transcendence. Indeed, functionality and female reproduction emerge as powerful imperatives impeding on the individual’s agency in the course of the story. This critique, as shall be seen, is bound up with interrogations of female corporeality and procreative heterosexuality.

**Body versus Flesh/ Text versus Form**

The previous sections have demonstrated that Barney’s novel, with its interest in corporeality and materiality, morphogenesis and metamorphosis, is akin to a form of textual experimentation taking place at the level of material ontology. To further shed light on the role of materiality in the novel’s experimental project, this section examines its juxtaposition of the human body with the production of text. Drawing on Deleuze’s and Guattari’s notion of the Body without Organs (BwO) and territorialisation, this section illustrates how *The One*

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mobilises border crossings, liminal spaces and a character perpetually in motion for the purpose of contesting what Deleuze and Guattari would term territorialisations of matter.

The previous section has detailed how the morphologically ambiguous figure of the One contrasts with the body of A.D. gendered as female and making her vulnerable to the signifying force of the physical world. The human body and its liability to textual inscriptions is further explored during a scene, in which the One discovers A.D.’s memoirs bearing the title ‘the Love-Lives of A.D.’:

Here were to be found traces of the human adventure undergone by our predecessor, hardly a satisfactory documentation, no names, no dates, no anecdotes. (TO 27)

Ironically, Barney’s own novel has been read as a highly autobiographical account of her turbulent love life during her residence at 20 rue Jacob in Paris and as such not a very ‘satisfactory’ because very abstract portrayal.241 Further details about the discovered memoir – ‘It comprised hymns, quotations; poems threw out their antenna for individual comprehension’ – nurtures the suspicion of a self-referential gesture on part of the narrator (TO 29). After all, the novel under discussion does contain all those elements.

However, A.D.’s memoir and The One diverge in that the latter lacks a gendered protagonist as well as a coherent narrator. Throughout the novel, the identity of the narrator undergoes alterations reflecting the ambiguous and unstable identity of the protagonist. In the first two chapters, ‘a shadow being’ narrates the story in the first person singular; in the subsequent chapters, this ‘shadow’ joins forces with an array of other shadows and spirits by entering a bodily form, which then becomes the locus of the ‘we,’ that is, the first person plural voice of the One; only in the last chapter, tellingly entitled ‘The One Takes Leave of the Legion,’ these fragments, once constitutive of the One, are shed, giving way again to the singular voice. In two scenes, a third person narrator appears, commenting on the protagonist’s movements and appearance (TO 24, 39-40), albeit not on thoughts or feelings. Anna Livia points to Barney’s novel as one of the first English publications to avoid ‘recourse to traditional gender markers,’ a phenomenon which began to occur more frequently with the beginning of the feminist movements in the 1970s.242

What gradually emerges is that the binary of text/ body is itself divided into two individual trajectories: the gendered body is placed side by side with the genderless body and

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242 Livia, Pronoun Envy, p. 59.
the memoir is a blurred reflection of Barney’s novel. In both cases, the latter object is utilised to destabilise the integrity of the former: the genderless One intervenes in the life of a woman; Barney’s novel, in its embrace of obscurity and ambiguity, is a critical meta-commentary on textual production and reading practices using the example of A.D.’s memoir. The storyline of an ordinary if homosexual love affair, as recorded in the memoir, is opposed to the fantasy trajectory mapped out by the resurrected phantasmagorical protagonist of the One.

The novel’s relentless efforts to ‘move and undo its [the body’s] well-adjusted functioning’ and to explore the capacities of books to create threshold states, new pathways, and possibilities align it with Deleuze’s and Guattari’s project in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Notions like the ‘Body without Organs’ (BwO), ‘becoming’ and ‘deterritorialisation’ display a strong affinity with themes fleshed out in Barney’s novel. For instance, the idea of a naturalised but contingent arrangement of matter into discrete organisms informs the novel’s interrogations of human morphology and corporeal dimorphism as static, irrefutable and permanent. The organisation of matter into organisms or molar configurations is also central to Deleuze and Guattari, who developed the concept of the BwO in order to contest the belief in self-evident material compositions: ‘The BwO is opposed not to the organs but to that organization of the organs called the organism’.†243 The wider implications of such an organisation of available matter are suggested in the act of identifying and naming it ‘organism’. Once concrete organisms with distinct characteristics have become established as a self-evident reality, Deleuze and Guattari argue, the process of signification and ‘subjectification’ ensues.†244

In the novel, the conceptualisation of the protagonist resembles the BwO in so far as it materialises as a deconstructive force, subverting the apparent coherence of representations of the human body – representations which not only uphold the female/ male division, but also differentiate between human/ nonhuman. By questioning the scope of what qualifies as human shape, it aims to reveal the potentiality inherent in corporeality and materiality with the ultimate aim to liberate human life. In this context, it is crucial to notice that the text draws an important distinction between the concept of flesh and the notion of corporeality. In *The One*, flesh is frequently associated with memory, habit and repetition especially in relation to a form of naturalised sexuality. Flesh bears the imprint of external signification; it is the becoming alive of representation, the duly performance of discursive directives. To

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†244 Ibid. p. 185.
exist but in the flesh is to reiterate normative practices, the text suggests. Such a conceptualisation of flesh surfaces most clearly during those scenes in the novel when the protagonist has sexual encounters with A.D.’s former lover, the Glow-woman.

These meetings between the One and the Glow-woman entail the clashing of a genderless, supernatural corporal spirit with a woman ‘who exists but in the flesh’ (TO 126). In order to understand what exactly this fleshiness signifies in the text, it is helpful to consider the specific features going hand in hand with an incarnate state. The Glow-woman represents the ideal woman in a patriarchal state in so far as she is ‘existing mostly as men appraised her’ (TO 120); indeed ‘men tottered to their feet’ upon spotting a woman so ‘beautiful and to the general taste’ (TO 67, 129). Although having an affair with A.D. and attempting but ultimately failing to seduce the One, she remains committed to her husband Duthiers. Her amorous pansexual escapades remain entrenched in functionality. Disenchanted by this insight, the One reasons ‘[s]o we were to be their [the couple’s] remedy, carefully administered, we were to secure a better circulation, combustion, exchange’ (TO 90). Here non-heterosexual sex is portrayed as the cure necessary to perpetuate a heterosexual relationship that has turned functional. The machine metaphor evident in the choice of ‘circulation, combustion, exchange’ as terms to describe heterosexuality is taken up again in relation to Duthiers, who is ‘only at his best when coupled to a machine,’ hinting at an apparatus maintaining, with mechanic stringency, a phallic libidinal economy (TO 140).

When embarking on a car trip to the countryside in the sixth chapter of the novel, Duthier is the ‘monocled automaton at the wheel’ while the Glow-woman and the One become ‘human packages carried on’ (TO 57). The description of the scene invokes both a military image and a phallocentric regime, implying a violence inhering in heterosexuality: ‘the trees narrowed into an ambush before us . . . a black shiny road stretched as the barrel of a rifle along which we aimed and were shot’ (TO 57-58).

The eventual failure of the short-lived love affair between the One and the Glow-woman is linked to the ‘limited vibrations of flesh,’ which serve to keep the Glow-woman’s body in the service of heterosexual procreative sex (TO 82): ‘a slave to sexual habits, functioning absent-mindedly’ (TO 80). During a nocturnal love scene, the One compares the Glow-woman’s mechanical movements with the birth process: ‘the full-sailed belly making for joy in laboured rhythm, measuring the span of a future pregnancy, from which a cry and sterile spasm seemed to deliver’ (TO 81-82). As sex and procreation coincide, the possibility of desire, together with its power to be excessive, transgressive and disruptive seems compromised. Towards the end of the novel, the narrator speaks directly to a personified ‘flesh’: ‘Obtuse flesh, you do not know that “to haunt is greater than to possess!”’ (TO 158).
In contrast to the verb ‘possess,’ which signals achievement and completion, ‘to haunt’ implies an eternal movement, concentrating around a place, but never fully arriving. Haunting also denotes a disturbing because never fully materialising presence. The idea of flesh intent on possessing may nod to the possession of the other by way of marriage: the becoming property of the differently sexed person, that is, the subjugating of the relationship to the laws of the state.

Deleuze and Guattari make an important distinction between pleasure and desire, which reflects and sheds further light on the narrator’s differentiations between possessing and haunting. Pleasure, on their account, is detrimental to the achievement of a BwO in so far as it implies ‘reterritorializations’. Reterritorialisation re instituted the subject as a molar formation and as such, reassembles and re integrates organs into an organism. In this light, the Glow-woman’s activation of those body parts and movements implicated in women’s procreative labour connotes repetition, confirmation, and stagnation. This reverberates in the words the narrator mobilises to describe the love scene: the rhythm is ‘measured,’ the spasm ‘sterile’. For Deleuze and Guattari, desire, on the other hand, is a positive force, containing joy in and by itself: ‘a joy that implies no lack or impossibility and is not measured by pleasure since it is what distributes intensities of pleasure and prevents them from being suffused by anxiety, shame, and guilt’. Desire as unrestrained and creative, as a force able to overturn habits, manifests itself when the protagonist in The One laments: ‘passions become so located in sexual habits that only in change can they again find the elements that composed their intensity’ (TO 48). ‘Change’ as the departure from habit and repetition sustains the possibility of individuality and freedom from a set of predetermined roles. Crucially, this ‘intensity’ only arise through the redistribution of elements. If we consider the narrator’s description of the body as a collection of ‘composite beings’, it becomes clear that reconfiguring the elements constituting a specific body – the human body, the female body, the heterosexual body – opens up the possibility for the experience of new intensities, a new vitality (TO 99).

In Barney’s novel, the creation of a bodily composite is associated with textual matter organised on the page. During a scene in which the One discovers A.D.’s library the relation between authoritative books and the production of the subject as subject defined and confined by its body becomes clear. In the imposing library, the protagonist is confronted with scientific and philosophical publications, elaborating on the laws and mechanisms of the

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245 Ibid. p. 181.
human subject and body. Itself an indefinable multitude of fragments rather than a determinable singularity, the One escapes the available classificatory systems. Knowing ‘almost nothing of [its] own representations,’ the One reasons:

We must choose a system of classification – make our inventory, determine our composite. Put down every wanderer found in our catacombs, fix them by some familiar trait, and so learn to know and govern our ghosts, our lovers, our low-characters . . . (TO 97)

In the quotation above, the narrator illustrates how to ‘determine our composite,’ the collection of elements under the sign of a ‘familiar trait’ corresponding to a category within an available ‘system of classifications,’ leads to knowledge. Knowledge is hence the outcome of a choice of a given set of possibilities, implying that once knowledge is ‘acquired’ the known object also becomes controllable. As the protagonist scans the shelves, they ascertains:

Chance and choice were also ruled out of the laws of intellectual inheritance. We touched the shelves and our ribs. What books had passed from them into us? become part of our make-up? (TO 96)

This collapse of the distinction between book and bodily composite, underlining the power of language to compose material reality, is also echoed in the description of A.D.’s memoir as a ‘carnal novel’. Alluding to the past-time practice of anthropodermic bibliopegy, the memoir is said to be bound in the skin of A.D.’s breasts – an observation from which the protagonist infers ‘the hint at a tragedy of individual flesh’ (TO 29).

The malady of an existence in flesh, that is, existing in a predetermined and always already signified ways, is contrasted with the possibility of corporeality. In The One, the notion of the human shape is described as a particular extension into space, which can be re-directed, refigured and rewritten. Particularly when exposed to liminal conditions, the human shape seems to become more ambiguous: the graveyard witnesses the human body disintegrate, intermingle and merge with other matter; male and female bodies become alike by both disintegrating into matter, thus becoming sexless.

During a flight in an airplane, the protagonist ‘leaves the sense of earthly speed and proportion’ and is ‘hurried through new dimensions’:
We felt none of our organs. All needs seemed for ever abolished. . . . The air-tide poured into our system, the opening dikes of memory carrying us on and away, as on the morning we rode forth and became each thing we looked upon, merged in universal receptivity. (TO 141)

Here mobility, with its change of movement patterns, allows for new possibilities of ‘becoming-other’. In contrast to other passages in the novel where to be receptive denotes the willingness to meet another person on sexual terms, ‘receptivity’ in the quote above includes everything. With the body immersed in a process of becoming-other, it experiences what Deleuze and Guattari term a deterritorialisation and disintegration by which they mean ‘enter[ing] into composition with something else’. Thus, only when exposed to liminal conditions, when approaching the borders of a given material unity complete unto itself is it possible for the body to signify differently.

‘Stereotyped reality’ and ‘false representations’ are a recurring point of criticism in this novel and the point of departure for its journey. This voyage is the search for a new medium. The One seeks a new form of expression altogether: a new language yet to be invented in relation to two mediums – a new way of arranging printed matter on the page and a new way of assembling the human body – is at stake. In the process, this text does not simply celebrate a process of deconstructing and undoing, but rather it explores the possibility of a new system of representation, a more ‘evolved medium’.

Barney’s novel offers the most speculative exploration of movement placed in the service of both a philosophical exploration and the deconstruction of gender and sexual identity. Ironically, paying such attention to movement and motion positions this novel at once at the heart of modernist aesthetics understood as a ‘space filled with movement,’ and yet such attention to the capacity of movement is meant as an escape from the ‘acquired speed’ of modernism (TO 95). Movement forward in this novel is rigorously rethought as moving backwards as the title and the story suggest: in their pursuit of A.D.’s former life the protagonist creates A.D.’s after-life. This journey necessitates the re-writing history by reconfiguring the genealogy of the gendered body and the textual corpus as sites of knowledge. Moving backwards as a prerequisite to move towards renewal and originality also captures the kinetics of unruly sexual desire evident in the novel’s disavowal from procreative heterosexuality as a model for futurity.

247 Ibid. p. 319, original italics.
CHAPTER FOUR

Choreographies of Border Crossings in Djuna Barnes’s Short Prose

This chapter turns to another minor figure in modernist studies, Djuna Barnes, to illustrate how her early journalistic and short prose texts, a yet understudied part of her oeuvre, allow us to gauge a different way in which travel intersects with modernist writing. Barnes’s narratives exemplify the significance of a surge in mobility to the modernist imagination. Several critics have pointed to the role of geography and travel in her oeuvre, linking it to an expatriate or migratory modernism. Frequently they construe a parallel between a nomadic or peripheral existence on the one hand and sexual fluidity on the other. What is often overlooked, however, is the extent to which these texts play precisely with readings that align sexual transgression with notions of border crossings and marginality. The aim of this chapter is not to establish Barnes’s short prose texts as travel writing, but to demonstrate how they exploit conventions of the genre to pose larger questions about the acquisition and representation of knowledge.

Barnes oeuvre has proven to be exceptionally productive for studies highlighting the significance of sexuality to modernist narratives and styles. Particularly her novel Nightwood, published in 1936, features in several publications dedicated to a queering of literary

248 Barnes’s early works are often regarded, if not disregarded, as less important precursors to the more renowned later works such as the novels Ryder (1928) and Nightwood (1936). Often such a verdict is based as much on genre as on the chronology of publications and reassuringly sanctioned by Barnes’s own dismissal of her journalism. See Silence and Power: A Reevaluation of Djuna Barnes, ed. by Mary Lynn Broe (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), p. 9.


250 Edwards has cited Barnes’s journalism as an example of women’s contribution to the metropolitan reportage as a ‘new subgenre of travel writing’. See ‘Djuna Barnes and the Urban Travel Narrative’, p. 7. Such a categorisation risks limiting the meaningfulness of her writing to a literary manifestation of travelling as a way of inhabiting the world that ostensibly affords the globetrotter a cognitive edge over the sedentary resident.
modernism. My chapter does not lose sight of the homo/heterosexual differentiation as critical to an understanding of twentieth-century culture; indeed the promise of a sensational disclosure of ‘abnormal’ sex, sexual relations and sexual types constitutes one of its focal points. However, it shifts its attention towards an analysis of the role movements and border crossings play in quests for detailed information of the behaviours, physiognomies and habitats of those who deviate from norms of gender and sexuality. The rationale is threefold: to clearly demonstrate and vigorously insist on the importance of considering Djuna Barnes’s early works for an understanding of how modernist texts can interact with, modify and utilise travelling and border crossings as a salient and gendered trope in the early twentieth century; to shed light on how the movement across space as an epistemic practice not only informed the theorisations of early sexologists and anthropologists, but is also central to Barnes’s textual mechanisms.

This chapter examines how Barnes’s short prose texts engage with travelling conceptualised as a practice leading to discoveries and with travel writings as authoritative texts, ranging from ‘scientific’ collections of ethnographic data to touristic guide-books. Many of Barnes’s New York articles and short stories are couched in the rhetoric of adventurous travels and sensationalist discoveries, with the author posing as an authentic token of the cultural milieu she represents and acting as a tour guide who willingly offers insider knowledge to an inquisitive public. Her urban tales have not only been read as faithful mappings of the sexual and ethnic geographies of New York City, but the city itself has served as a vantage point from which to decipher Barnes.251

In contrast to such an interpretative approach, this chapter argues that the journeys we find in her journalism are very different from the kind of travelling that yields discovery and knowledge. While rhetorically her journalism commits itself to locating a series of dissident ‘types’ – ‘foreigners,’ ‘the criminal type’ and ‘that type’ of women with cropped hair – on the level of form travel is enacted as a specific narrative practice that falls short of delivering

251 Barnes as a writer who sheds light on a New York hidden in darkness is invoked literally by the volume’s colour scheme: the painting of New York that adorns the front cover shows the city at night. Its silhouettes are hardly recognisable and only a few lit windows suggest life. Correspondingly, the rest of the front and back cover is coloured in black with white lettering. The title ‘New York’ is printed on the very top of the front cover while the letters ‘Djuna Barnes’ appear to the right side of the painting following its vertical line from top to bottom with both names printed in white and in a matching font and font size. Typography and colour scheme suggest Barnes’s ability to translate the sight of an impenetrable New York into a decipherable text. Hidden night time activities are brought to the surface in form of letters whose white glare already contains the promise of the dazzling and showy nature of such a translation, replicating the neon flaring lights of urban advertisement.
arrivals in the sense of discovery and recognition. The knowledge the reader gains is paradoxically that there is no definite knowledge to acquire; instead the readerly experience is one of being subjected to continual movement across lengthy passages and tedious lists of stereotypes, names and clichés. Barnes’s texts, I argue, do not simply ‘explore a geography of edges, borders and trails,’ but bring into critical focus the process of exploring, aligning the traveller traversing geographic space with the reader traversing the typographical space of the book page. This chapter suggests we can gauge the radically experimental ways in which Barnes’ writing both mobilises and challenges conventional ideas of travel as a paradigm for the acquisition of knowledge. What makes Barnes particularly relevant to the modernist scholar is an engagement with travel and cosmopolitanism that complicates our understanding of modernism’s concern with geography.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section, ‘Travelling Intimately with Djuna Barnes,’ examines how the narrators in articles like ‘Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians’ (1916) and ‘Greenwich Village As It Is’ (1916) pose as tour guides with intimate knowledge, portraying the reader as a tourist eager to have the foreign unveiled in the process of reading. I will then briefly survey the reception of Barnes’s journalism and short story writing, particularly with an eye to the rationales that have informed the re-publication of her long neglected newspaper articles. The conditions on which Barnes is retrieved demand attention in that they deny the kind of experimental writing she performed to retain their authority. The framing of this part of her oeuvre, accomplished by prefaces, blurbs and cover page design, overlooks a mode of experimentation that Barnes already anticipates: the decision of the publisher Sun & Moon Classics to market the collection of her journalistic pieces as urban reportages testifies to the success with which Barnes imitates a touristic idiom that revolves around the search for the real. The publisher draws on marketing strategies deployed by Barnes’s herself, glossing over the ultimate recalcitrance of her texts.

The second section, ‘Traversing the Surface of the Page,’ considers the various ways in which travelling becomes important to our understanding of the narrative dynamics and syntactic manoeuvres distinguishing Barnes’s newspaper writing. Here the context of travel writing is helpful in indicating how her journalism exploits conventions and assumptions of

252 See Djuna Barnes, ‘Sad Scenes on Sentence Day in the Kings County Court’, in New York: Djuna Barnes, ed. by Alyce Barry (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press, 1989 [1913, Brooklyn Daily Eagle]), pp. 26-31 (p. 30). The full sentence runs ‘As for the long hair of the men and the short hair of the women, that type is to be found on Broadway’ (‘GV’ 226).

253 This quotation is borrowed from the blurb of Cianci, Patey, and Sullam, Transit: The Nomadic Geographies of Anglo-American Modernism.
this genre. In an introductory chapter to the *Cambridge Introduction to Travel Writing*, Tim Youngs maintains that travel writing aids ‘our construction of our sense of ‘me’ and ‘you’, ‘us’ and ‘them’.” To qualify as travel writing, texts must ‘consist of predominantly factual, first-person prose accounts of travels that have been undertaken by the author-narrator,’ that is, ‘authors must have travelled to the places they describe’. These assumptions – a clear separation between self and other, the presence of the narrator and the idea of real versus imagined travel – are all vigorously employed and scrutinized in Barnes’s narratives. One notable aspect of Barnes’s writing style is the peculiar handling of the second person pronoun and in the second section I seek to unpack ‘the ‘Barnesian use of the “you” in relation to the power dynamics unfolding between narrator and reader, tour guide and tourist. Following my reading of ‘Why Go Abroad? – See Europe in Brooklyn’ (1913) and ‘Who’s the Last Squatter?’ (1913) in the previous section I shift attention to Barnes’s short stories in the latter part of this chapter. Beginning with a quotation from ‘The Hem of Manhattan,’ the third section looks at the short story ‘The Hatmaker’ (c. 1930) to further tease out the gendered implications of ‘seeing’ and travelling competently as they relate to the mastery of reading and the artistry of writing. The last section explores how ‘The Grande Malade’ (1925) takes recourse to different versions of ‘foreignness’ – including the text itself – and delivers a metanarrative commentary on the art of short story writing.

**Travelling Intimately with Djuna Barnes**

No, I shall not give them away, but locate one of them [those lost places] for those of you who care to nose it out as book lovers nose out old editions. (‘Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians,’ p. 240)

And me? I went about in satin trousers for respect to China, which is a very great country and has majesté because you cannot know it. It is like a big book which you can read but not understand. (‘The Grande Malade,’ p. 396)

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255 Ibid. p. 4.

These two passages capture moments in Djuna Barnes’s oeuvre where geography becomes a most effective site for negotiating access to a form of knowledge that materialises uniquely beyond a designated border traversed by the story-teller. In both instances place epitomises the unknown, the territory of the foreign, routinely inhabited by a cosmopolitan narrator but out of reach for the reader – as long as the act of reading does not remedy this lack of knowledge. On both occasions the enigmatic invocation of oblique cartographic objects – ‘those lost places twice as charming because of their reticence’ and having ‘majesté’ because of their unknowability – not only clarifies the epistemic supremacy the narrator wields over the listener but also insinuates the text’s extraordinary potential to have the reader make rare discoveries. After all, the assertions that ‘I shall not give them away’ and ‘you cannot know it’ are not merely vigorous refusals but also postulate the existence of an object exclusively recognisable by a well-travelled narrator. Besides extending one’s knowledge of the world the experience of travelling, it is implied, confers cognitive superiority onto a traveller who has learnt to locate and identify objects.\(^{257}\)

It is worth noticing how both passages gesture to the literary: this meta-narrative self-reference situates the text at hand as the reader’s object of study differently on each occasion. To compare the sightseer’s quest for a ‘reticent’ place – as Barnes does in ‘Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians’ – with the bibliophile’s search for ‘old editions’ is to more explicitly invoke a parallel between the way both objects fascinate because they give way not only to the idea that the identity (of a place or of a book) is a stable fact but to the fantasy that it is a reality that materialises tangibly. Emphasis is thus placed on the book as a concrete materiality whose origin can be traced genealogically across editions. The reference to the ‘big book which you can read but not understand’ in ‘The Grande Malade’ establishes another analogy between books and places, juxtaposing the unknowability of China with the incomprehensibility of books. In contrast to the previous quotation, the emphasis is not on the book as an artefact but as a printed text to decipher.

In both texts, allusions to the foreigner and foreign nationalities function as signs for an unspecified otherness rather than as signifiers for a specific culture or nation. To this extent, the remark that ‘the Bohemians have a preference for foreign make’ in ‘Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians’ or the fact that the nationality of the protagonists in ‘The Grande Malade’ changes in accordance with the current place of residence (‘We are Polish when we are in Poland, and when in Holland we are Dutch,’ ‘GM’ 394) emphasises the cosmopolitan as a chic pose rather than a form

\(^{257}\)Sedgwick remarks on how the adjectives ‘worldly’ and ‘urbane’ are not simple descriptives but denote cognitive superiority: ‘it is the cognitive privilege of the person described over a separate, perceived world that is actually attested, and by a speaker who through that attestation lays claim in turn to an even more inclusive angle of cognitive distancing and privilege over both the “urbane” character and the “world”.’ See Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, p. 97.
of cultural knowledge. When Phillip Herring, editor of a collection of Barnes’s short stories, rightfully observes that ‘often [the protagonists’] names do not reflect their national origin at all, or reveal no specific ethnicity’ and that they ‘are identifiably ethnic though most of their names would be quite odd in their countries of origin,’ these discrepancies and incoherencies demonstrate the use of the foreign as an effect of strangeness rather than the marker of cultural specificity.\textsuperscript{258} The ‘insisted-upon ethnicity of these characters’ which Herring views as Barnes’s most pronounced weakness bespeaks what sells as much as a possible fault on part of the author.

Addressing the reader in form of the defensive exclamation ‘No, I shall not’ or the inviting interrogative ‘And me?’ the narrators in these quotations anticipate as much as they incite curiosity, posing both as subjects with intimate knowledge and as objects of scrutiny.\textsuperscript{259} This double figuration of the narrator as someone uniquely positioned to tell a story and, at the same time, as the authentic token of the avant-garde’s cosmopolitan literary production in New York City and Paris is typical for many of Djuna Barnes’s short prose texts. In ‘The Grande Malade,’ the first-person narrator Katya is the personal witness to her sister Moydia’s rise to a bohemian Parisian woman par excellence but also portrays herself as part of the same cultural milieu. In this section, I concentrate on ‘Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians’ and ‘Greenwich Village As It Is’ to shed light on how the journalistic Barnes successfully exploits conventions of the travel genre – geographical localisation, ethnographic descriptions, expert knowledge – with the effect of positioning these newspaper texts as a loophole to yet unexplored territories of New York City. I will return to the ‘The Grande Malade,’ originally published as ‘The Little Girl Continues’ in the magazine \textit{This Quarter} in 1925, in the penultimate section, demonstrating how relations between foreignness and knowledge still figure prominently, but differently in Barnes’s later prose texts.

In her newspaper articles on Greenwich Village, Barnes meticulously charts the location of cafés, clubs, basements and streets frequented by bohemians, identifies numerous famous inhabitants by name and points to their preferred hangouts. Boasting that she will locate the ‘those lost places’ of Greenwich Village for the ‘ignorant’ she avows to make visible and recognisable ‘a sight as a sight’.\textsuperscript{260} By casual references to her own residency in


\textsuperscript{259} On the relationship between female spectator and the female object of the gaze, see Warren, \textit{Djuna Barnes’ Consuming Fictions}, p. xi, particularly the second chapter, ‘Travels with the Pen Performer,’ offers a relevant discussion on this topic.

\textsuperscript{260} I borrow this phrase from Culler, \textit{The Semiotics of Tourism}, p. 132. In this piece, Culler elaborates on the tourist’s quest for an intimate encounter with a foreign place, its indigenous population, architectures,
Greenwich Village – ‘I had lived there once’ (‘BI’ 240) and her personal acquaintance with its inhabitants – ‘I know the man [an impressionist] very well’ (‘BI’ 235) – Barnes endows herself with the qualifications of a tour guide who is willing to disclose insider knowledge to ‘you of the Bronx’ (‘BI’ 234) or to ‘you of the outer world’ (‘GV’ 232). Clearly asserting a difference between a writer with unique access to the material covered and an inquisitive but less well-informed public, Barnes’s adopts an assumption essential for newspapers to sell. The voice of the journalistic Barnes is one that promises to locate what is particularly reticent and to show what is exceptionally obscure: a border crossing into terrains less accessible, visible or well-trodden.

Published in November 1916 in the New York Morning Telegraph Sunday Magazine, ‘Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians’ does justice to its title by having an anonymous ‘Queen of Bohemia’ arise ‘out of her dainty sheets’ at the very beginning of the story. At stake is not only intimacy in the sense of familiarity but the kind of intimacy that presumably unfolds between ‘King McGrath’ and the Queen and whose traces are still conspicuous in the ‘crumpled lace’ and the last traces of exotic ‘myrrh’ in the air. Twice the narrator alludes to a picture of the Virgin Mary ‘hanging crooked on the wall’, suggesting an innocence scandalously and sinfully lost considering religious morals. Physical decay and moral degradation appear as two mutually constitutive terms in these first paragraphs which juxtapose the image of an ‘ever-widening keyhole set in a house that was once something’ with the impression of ‘ever-widening lips of a drunkard who was once a man’. The evocativeness of endlessly expanding keyholes to a house of unknown identity and of protagonists whose name can’t be told – ‘I can’t tell you her name’ and later again: ‘her name – let it go at that’, pp. 233 and 237) and of the blood-like redness spreading across a tablecloth drenched in spilled wine raise expectations for the story to follow. Having established ‘Bohemia’ as a site of scandal, the narrator chronicles a typical day, meticulously naming numerous famous inhabitants and their preferred hangouts and scrupulously

landscapes, flora and fauna. He unravels how distinctions between the authentic and the copy, the real and the artifice are fundamental to the functioning of the tourism industry: the possibility of an authentic experience, the encounter with foreignness at its point of origin, no longer mediated through print materials like travel writing, postcards and photographs motivates the journey abroad. Insofar as the tourist is unfamiliar with the semiotic systems and cultural signs of a place she may retort to a local expert, a tour-guide able to single out exactly which objects and cultural practices define a place as that place and none other, Culler points out. Intimacy is thus the condition for tourism’s most lucrative selling point.
typercasting the Village demographics in terms of sexual deviants, eccentric bohemians, immigrants and squatters.261

Allusions to the perversely unnatural, the sexually abnormal and the menacingly foreign abound in these articles and suggest that what awaits discovery is the scandalous embodiment of sexual dissidence: these writings are haunted by the possibility of sexual otherness and draw the reader into a search of new knowledge contained in their lines. Signposts of where to find sex in its most outrageous and impure form proliferate in these articles: ‘the business of love is conducted under the table beyond Fourteenth Street’ (‘GV’ 226), ‘in the basement is all that is naughty’ (‘BI’ 234), ‘the dirty back room’ (‘BI’ 243) are all acts of localisations that draw on spatial signifiers conventionally equated with sexual illegitimacy. Not only is improper sex to be found ‘under’, ‘below’ and ‘in the back’ in spatial terms but obscurity and inaccessibility seem to be the very conditions for sex to be excitingly immoral. Barnes plays with both: readers who seek to discover the abnormal sexual body in her texts rendered legible by acts of locating and cataloguing visual and behavioural characteristics and readers who want to decipher the body of the author. In this sense, there are always two touristic objects: what is represented in the text, the demi-world of Lower Manhattan, and the text as a token of the literary outpourings of the eccentric woman artist and sexual dissident.

The notion of place as a cartographically demarcated point in space plays an exceptionally important role with regard to a power dynamic at stake between a presumably more stagnant reader and a well-travelled narrator. More specifically, it serves to consolidate a constellation whereby a reader is positioned on the outside (‘uptown’) of a milieu the narrator routinely inhabits. Whereas the reader is construed as an instance hovering voyeuristically on the outside of Greenwich Village, the narrator identifies with the ‘impossible people living here’ (‘GV’ 227). That the adjective ‘impossible’ does not describe an ontological conundrum but rather a sex life decreed outrageous becomes clear a few lines later when Barnes provocatively asks: ‘And must you play forever the part of the simpering puritan who never heard of sex relations?’ The journalist’s mockery of a reader seeking the entertainment a close-up description of an authentic bohemian locale or the invocation of an electrifying atmosphere is believed to deliver is noticeable throughout. For instance, the narrator objects ‘[b]ut where are the records that state that all malefactors and hypocrites have been caught within the limits of what we call our Bohemia? And as for crime, have all its

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victims be found murdered in the beds of Waverley Place and Fourth Street?’ (‘GV’ 227). Yet, despite the explicit critique of an ethnographic discourse that divides up space into milieus, the fact that these travel pieces nevertheless abundantly draw on distinct places and homogenous types as objects of study upholds such a discourse and its underlying epistemological paradigm. Divisions between uptown and downtown Manhattan, the North and South side of Washington Square, ‘upstairs’ and the ‘basement’ and acts localisations such as ‘that type is to be found on Broadway’ play into a fantasy that an identity authentically materialises in a specific place (‘GV’ 226, ‘BI’ 234).

Barnes’s newspaper articles demonstrate both a commitment to informing the reader, albeit reluctantly at times, while paradoxically asserting the impossibility of disclosure. In the quotation earlier, for instance, the impossibility is already implied in the line that contains the promise for a place that is ‘lost’ is by definition no longer locatable – not in its originality, that is. A display of reluctance is not only explicit in the exclamation ‘No, I shall not’ and the snappy remark that ‘locality and atmosphere should be left alone’ but also resonates in an appeal to readers as ‘those who care to nose out’. This suggests that what these texts must offer is an intimate glimpse into private affairs; they carefully construe a division between inside and outside, public and private to add value to a promise of transgressing precisely those dividing lines. In this way, Barnes’s travel pieces assume the character of intimate confessional documents: they not only purport to realistically and truthfully represent the lives and life-worlds of those ‘types’ of people which constitute the other of middle-class residents in uptown Manhattan, but they also constitute the private space, private revelations put into print, of one of Greenwich Village’s inhabitants. In an introductory to an edited volume on intimacy, Lauren Berlant notes that the collected essays ‘reproduce a fantasy that private life is the real in contrast to collective life’.262 Barnes seems to play into exactly such a fantasy when she provides the readers with anecdotes of private encounters to illustrate the reality of a place: ‘Yet what does one know of a pace if one does not know its people intimately?’ the narrator asks (‘GV’ 229).

By ascribing reticence to places, the narrator grants them an agency that turns the project of mapping into an act of narrative mastery. Implicit in this anthropomorphism is the idea that successful retrieval is not accomplished by means of representation, but by having a place speak on its own behalf. The mocking ‘respect’ paid to places as unwieldy and wilful subjects spotlights and derides if not an aspiration on part of the author than an expectation

levied on this figure, to paradoxically hunt and capture the real essence of an entity beyond language in language. Barnes maps the reader’s ardent pursuit for meaning onto geography, implying that readers and travellers alike share a hermeneutic ambition that is fulfilled at the sight of authenticity.

A parallel between the figure of the reader and the tourist is also drawn when midway through ‘Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians’ the reader is no longer reduced to ‘you of the Bronx’ but instead appears as the character ‘Madam Bronx’ in the story. Madam Bronx, whose fur-trimmed clothes signal upper middle-class affluence, inquires of the narrator where to find Greenwich Village, indifferent to her current whereabouts at the intersection of Sixth Avenue with Greenwich Avenue because what meets the eye does not correspond to preconceptions brought to the scene. Counterintuitively, the recognition of authentic sights is shown to be contingent on the traveller’s set of expectations; recognition merely marks the moment in which preformed beliefs and current rumours find affirmation. The list of assumptions about the real Greenwich Village readily summarised by Madam Bronx in an effort to clarify the object of the quest to the narrator is suspiciously similar to the catalogue of stereotypes permeating Barnes’s newspaper articles on Greenwich Village. The reader’s desire for a glimpse into hidden parts of bohemian life becomes as much a focus of these articles as the personal desires and private activities of bohemians.

Barnes’s rhetoric artistry consists in writing for and selling to a public by displaying reluctance to write, a hesitation that has been variously read as symptomatic of a queer or lesbian identity. For instance, in Urban Underworlds: A Geography of Twentieth Century American Literature and Culture, published in 2011, Thomas Heise intends to tell a story about the ‘geographic ascriptions of sexual and racial […] through Djuna Barnes,’ which requires that ‘one has to read between the lines and listen to the silences’. Barnes’s reluctance to give away ‘the city’s sexual mysteries’ is understood as a safeguarding of the marginalised queer community from public exposure: ‘authentic queer life was contingent

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263 The readers of ‘Becoming Intimate with the Bohemians’ were largely members of the more prosperous bourgeoisie settled in upper Manhattan. Alex Goody points out that the paper was relatively expensive and its themes geared to the middle class. ‘Madam Bronx’ with her fur-trimmed coat is thus likely to mirror the social status of the reader. See Alex Goody, ‘Spectacle, Technology and Performing Bodies: Djuna Barnes at Coney Island’, Modernist Cultures, 7.2 (2012), 205-230 <https://doi.org/10.3366/mod.2012.0039> (p. 206). In her reading of Nightwood, Deborah Parsons has portrayed Nora as an ‘expatriate journalist’ and ‘tourist’ hunting the mythical Robin: we can think of Nora as the proxy for a particular kind of reader similar to Madam Bronx’s function in ‘Becoming Intimate’. See Parsons, Streetwalking the Metropolis, pp. 179, 81.

upon being submerged, unknowable, and away from the prying eyes of New York’. The problem with such a reading is that it continues to evaluate Barnes’s writings in terms of a possible knowledge about the sexual and hence reduces any textual idiosyncrasy to a phenomenon of her alleged sexual identity. Whereas Heise attributes to Barnes the ‘authority as a community insider […] derived from familiarity with the secret world,’ Edwards describes her as ‘the expert urban traveller and observer’. An alternative line of inquiry and one embraced in this chapter, is to ask in what ways Barnes’s texts play with border crossings and topographies of the underworld as part of an epistemic framework gaining currency at the turn of the century. If we cease to read the reticent narrator as one who holds back knowledge about sexual identities, another possible reading emerges: we can approach these newspaper pieces as less concerned with a specific way of representing and instead probe what they might tell us about readerly expectations of ‘seeing’. Moreover, the fact that the author has been deemed variously as eccentric, obscure, strange and difficult might further shape such predictions about what the text, directly or indirectly, represents.

The reading of Barnes’s oeuvre pursued by Heise in *Urban Underworlds* provides an example of the embrace of a powerful tie between travelling and recognising, seeing and representing. Such a tie is both promoted and undone in her journalism given that Barnes spoofs a set of assumptions about travel and knowledge. Heise’s informative introduction requires a careful reading for it makes thoughtful claims in relation to the book’s methodology that are then partly overridden in the course of the analysis. For instance, Heise is careful to distance himself from the charge of ‘lurid sensationalism’ as a motivation that may possibly accompany the book’s inquiry into the American underground. This defensive anticipation is couched in a language that relies on precisely such an association between travelling underground and the encounter with something excitingly shocking.

This book is a journey into the depth of human misery and perversity. […] It will be a journey through urban decay and urban unrest, into fetid cellar apartments and red-light districts. As the Harlem Renaissance writer James Weldon Johnson put it, we will ‘nose down into the lower strata of life,’ into an ‘underworld . . . of illicit love and illicit liquor, of red sings and dark crimes’. (*Urban Underworlds*, pp. 1, 5-6)

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265 Ibid. p. 100.
267 For a discussion of problems accompanying the concept of the ‘the critic-as-tourist,’ see the previously mentioned article by Janet Wolff, ‘On the Road Again: Metaphors of Travel in Cultural Criticism’, *Cultural Studies*, 7.2 (1993), 224-239.
This critique echoes the sensationalist language and the underground geography Barnes marshals in ‘Chinatown’s Old Glories Crumbled to Dust’ when she writes about ‘a crooked street lit with blood-red lanterns; […] narrow alleys that led into darkest China; getaways, and heavy-curtained rooms’ and goes on to observe ‘a broken basement, a litter of bull pups, a growl from the dark […] little alleys that led into another house and out into the getaway streets’ (pp. 123-5).

Throughout his introduction Heise incorporates the voices of fiction writers as if to render more vivid his historical survey of the American underworld and geographies. Quoting the African-American author and civil rights activist James Johnson serves as an authentic token of the world to be journeyed into, the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, rendered genuine by both Johnson’s status as a literary figure and his residency in Harlem. This incorporation of Johnson foreshadows the interpretative approach applied to Barnes’s texts: Barnes is here adduced as a contemporary witness endowing authenticity: ‘the story’ Urban Underworlds seeks to ‘tell through Djuna Barnes’ is one ‘about the geographic ascriptions of sexual and racial identity’.268 Appointing Barnes as a representative of a deviant sexual identity sits squarely with Heise’s ambition to avoid an ‘understanding of it [the urban demiworld] through the lens of late twentieth century identity politics’.269 This methodological inconsistency resurfaces in chapters structured around identities such as ‘gays and lesbians’ and in a recurring conflation of the terms ‘queer’ and ‘lesbian’: ‘one of these lesbians was Barnes, with her short coiffed hair and trademark black coat,’ a ‘queer writer’.270

What remains unnoticed is the way in which these articles fail to deliver what they constantly promise to offer. However, it seems that the recognition of such a failure is not only prevented but indeed seems risky given the terms of her recuperation: ironically, Barnes journalism is a source of knowledge the ‘queer geography’ rather than an intricate and wilful text that questions the very mechanism of (a particular kind of) knowledge acquisition.271 To acknowledge that they fail and to still attribute significance and value to their study would

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268 Heise, Urban Underworlds, p. 79.
269 Ibid. p. 7.
270 Ibid. pp. 8, 78, 91.
require a radical reformulation.\textsuperscript{272} The obscurity diagnosed here is not further scrutinised but instead transforms into a token for queer sexuality.

Against this background it is worth noticing that scholarship which examines Barnes’s journalism from the angle of its thematic focus – information about urban city life and types – and representational accuracy perpetuates a discourse of travel and discovery rooted in precisely the language Barnes uses to lure her readers. In this sense the decision of the publisher Sun & Moon Classics to market the collection of her journalistic pieces as urban reportages testifies to the success with which Barnes imitates a touristic idiom that revolves around the search for the real. Barnes herself emphasizes her exceptional ability to convey private knowledge accurately. The assertion ‘I, personally, have never seen one really good article on Washington Square’ not only brims with confidence about what precisely constitutes a successful depiction of the square, but also coquettishly implies that this article, written by Barnes, will finally put an end to a plethora of inferior publications. While until now ‘the truth has never been penned about Washington Square and Greenwich Village’, Barnes’s rhetoric promises precisely that: a final truth spelled out, captured in language and reproduced on the blank page. In a series of declarative statements appearing across her journalism the author announces that she will show Greenwich Village ‘as it is’ (in the eponymous article), to trace the last ‘real Brooklyn squatter’ in ‘Who’s the Last Squatter?’, to locate a typical basement that receives the approving mark ‘this is real’ in ‘Becoming Intimate’ (‘LS’ 241), to portray activities undertaken by the Villagers endorsed by the assertion ‘this is the real way that the Bohemian amuses himself’ (‘LS’ 252) and to pinpoint ‘a real personality among the unending nonentities’ in ‘Crumpet and Tea’ (‘LS’ 273). By emphasizing ‘the real’ Barnes makes a claim about both the factuality of her narratives and their authenticity or genuineness in a way that lives up to expectations levied on an urban travel guide.

Intimacy with the clandestine geographies of Greenwich Village’s underworld paired with the skill of rendering touristic sights and places recognisable allows Barnes to not only appear qualified, but also talented, as claimed by the blurb of a collection of her articles published by Sun & Moon Classics in the year of 1989.\textsuperscript{273} Following on from figures such as

\textsuperscript{272} Out of 11 authors studied in this monograph Barnes is the only woman. The authors whose fiction and travelogues are studied include: Jacob Riis, Henry James, Ernest Ingersoll, Frank Moss, William Meloney (chapter one); Djuna Barnes and Claude McKay (chapter two); Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison (chapter three); John Rechy and Thomas Pynchon (chapter four).

\textsuperscript{273} The Sun & Moon Press originated from the eponymous magazine founded by Douglas Messerli in 1975. As an independent publishing house issuing long forgotten works Sun & Moon Press has been instrumental in keeping in print less known avant-garde writing.
T. S. Eliot whose public endorsement of Barnes facilitated the author’s introduction to the reading public, Douglas Messerli exemplifies another wave of people who exercise some influence over a literary niche market of avant-garde writing: his introduction, prefaces and commentaries reveal criteria underlying decisions about which works are printed and on what terms. In the case of Barnes, his introduction not only explains why we should read Barnes, but also didactically lays down how to read her to grasp her literary value. Implicit in these instructions is the belief that the writer needs translating to discern her intentions correctly and appreciate her properly; the emancipation of the female-authored text is contingent on an explanatory instance. To give an example: Barnes’s clichéd characterisation of people in terms of types in her journalistic writing is rendered a ‘convention of the medium’ rather than ‘a conscious decision of Barnes’: ‘When one reads of her “terrorists,” “cowards,” and “revolutionists,” in short, one must understand them as participating in the milieu of popular newspaper stereotypes, as sharing in the landscape of the headline “killer,” “judge,” and “cop.”’

However, Messerli overlooks that the term ‘type’ recurs in her journalism; the author plays with and challenges the category as such rather than deploying it in a descriptive way.

What requires scrutiny, too, is the fact that Barnes’s writing is first rendered anti-modernist in a melancholic tone — ‘In relation to the literature of her close friends, T. S. Eliot and James Joyce, Barnes’s writing may always appear an anomaly’ — only to then be recuperated by way of an appropriation that masquerades as a generous interpretation.

Barnes’s ‘flat, stereotyped characters’ and ‘narrational intrusions’ invoke only as much as the impression of eccentricity and obscurity, for, after all, they are not so much the consequence of the author’s mastery of language as the result of ‘where and when Barnes published’. What follows is Messerli’s corrective and redemptive reading aimed at demonstrating that ‘Barnes was not completely naive in her use of journalistic techniques’ (my emphasis).

Female-authored literature worthy of reprinting explores social conditions and upholds moral value to qualify as ‘serious exploratory artmaking’. It seems that Barnes ‘highly stereotyped’ characters and ‘artificial dialogue’ precisely lack the ambition of a serious social critique.

Even so, Messerli manages to recover Barnes by locating a ‘deeper commitment’ in her prose. For this purpose the flatness of her characters is read as symptomatic of social

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275 Ibid. p. 21.
276 Although Barnes mockingly imitates the tone of serious journalism driven by moral concerns in, for instance, the article ‘Sad Scenes on Sentences Day in the Kings Country Court,’ see particularly p. 31.
conditions in which men degenerate into types. Female-authored literature is here a medium were symptoms of social ills manifest themselves.

By aligning Barnes’s journalistic texts with the genre of urban travel narratives, Messerli needs to emphasise the realism of Barnes’s descriptions to vow for the quality of her writing. For this purpose he accredits Barnes with stylistic virtuosity (‘radical’, ‘aphoristic’ and ‘original’) and likens the ‘“real” figures’ in her articles to characters that have ‘just stepped from a fin-de-siècle play’. Placing the term ‘real’ in quotation marks is at odds with ‘still-fresh’ and the realness of figures and streets attributed to her characters a paragraph later. The politics of gender that materialise here in a careful balancing of Barnes’s stylistic virtuosity with her alleged realism.

Traversing the Surface of the Page

Barnes’s multifarious use of the concept of travel, including thematic, rhetorical, even syntactical dimensions, presents a yet little examined aspect of women modernists’ engagement with epistemological and aesthetic concerns channelled through the lens of cartography and geography as gendered frameworks. The following passage taken from the article ‘Why Go Abroad – See Europe in Brooklyn!’ illustrates the significance of travel as an exceptionally productive concept in Barnes’s oeuvre that unites aspects ranging from the skill and artistry of literary representation and the production of knowledge to female authorship.

Three thousand miles away, on a foreign shore, pictured to us in the graphic language of men who went and saw and, seeing, wrote; painted for us by dreamers who unite conception with oil; dwelt on by us as something yet to realise — of its sorrow, its charm, its serenity, its splendour of colour united with splendour of line, the splendour of little things and the splendour of great — that is the land of our hearts. (Why Go Abroad? – See Europe in Brooklyn!, p. 131)

In these first lines from Djuna Barnes’s newspaper piece ‘Why Go Abroad? – See Europe in Brooklyn!,’ the object of sentimental desire, ‘the land of our hearts,’ is situated trans-continentally on the coastline of Western Europe out of reach, the repeated use of the first person plural implies, for narrator and readers alike. To traverse a great distance and cross national borders is depicted as a privilege held by affluent men over those who, as the

277 A possible intertextual reference might lead to W. B. Yeats’ play The Land of Heart’s Desire (1894). See W. B. Yeats, The Land of Heart’s Desire (Chicago: Stone & Kimball, 1894).
narrator remarks a line later, are yet waiting to ‘have saved enough’. The implied female readership depends not only on men’s direct access to a reality that materialises uniquely and intriguingly abroad, but on their ability to translate pure visual perception into a painterly or writerly language intelligible to women.Representational accuracy is the axiom for the male artist seeking to harness his mobility for a didactic project of imparting knowledge to the ‘stay-at-homes’.

However, mere seeing as a passive impression on the beholder’s eyes does not suffice for a successful mimetic re-presentation of the external world as Barnes’s mocking modification of the Caesarian phrase ‘I came, I saw, I conquered’ (veni, vidi, vici) to ‘men who went and saw and, seeing, wrote’ indicates. To ‘see’ upon a quest (‘men who went’) foregrounds another meaning of the verb: it denotes understanding, a mental process rather than a sensory experience. The male travellers in this excerpt master the world not only geographically but cognitively; they do not simply look at views like the conventional tourist might be said to do but they comprehend and recognise. An emphasis on mental deduction over empirical observation also shimmers through in the remark that these globetrotters ‘unite conception with oil,’ further insinuating that a priori ideas precede any immediate sensation.

Insofar as ‘conception’ denotes an abstract idea rather than an empirical reality it presents a threat to the assumption that transnational border crossings are the single most important aspect differentiating between cosmopolitan knowledge and parochial ignorance.

Furthermore, by slotting in the present continuous ‘seeing’ to the Latin idiom the narrator suggests that the moment of seeing and the act of writing coincide, casting doubt on the possibility of visual immediacy decoupled from language as a medium. Finally, uncertainty about whether ‘the land of our hearts’ – the metaphor employed to describe the destination of women travellers in this passage – refers either to the European shore as an extra-literary reality or to its ‘graphic’ representation arises as the result of the narrator’s alternation between descriptive terms appropriate for both a work of art (‘its splendour of colour united with splendour of line’) as well as for a foreign landscape or atmosphere (‘its charm, its serenity’). As a result, the claim that border crossings facilitate access to a form of knowledge materialising exclusively abroad is eroded at the moment of its formulation. What exactly resides ‘three thousand miles away’ for the reader ‘as something yet to realise’ remains vague insofar as it may refer to women’s future ability to travel and make discoveries on their own behalf; alternatively, ‘that’ which exists in the distance ‘as something yet to realise’ may also allude to women’s potential to become artists in their own right and realise a profit from sales. Ironically, the reader of this piece of journalism,
published in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, has already helped its female author to secure a profit from selling the promise of ‘seeing’ Europe.278

By paying attention to the kind of travelling enacted on the page, a further way in which the narrator engages with movement surfaces. Placed at the very beginning of the first sentence of ‘Why Go Abroad?’ is a spatial specification, ‘three thousand miles away,’ signalling to the reader the geographic mastery of a narrator who has knowledge of a region far beyond the current place of narration. Subsequent to such a precise measurement, which roughly reflects the distance between New York City and Western Europe as the title insinuates, follows the more graphic detail of ‘on a foreign shore’. If the reader follows the narrator’s invitation to identification and complicity insinuated by the pronoun ‘us’ – an invitation persistently repeated at the beginning of the article (but suspended shortly thereafter) – unfamiliarity and unknowability emerge as a condition that can potentially flip into their opposites. After all, the narrator of this article offers to put the object on display for the reader to ‘see’.

However, when after lines and lines of relative clauses the sentence finally refers back to the main sentence and promises to reveal what exactly, in visual terms, resides ‘three thousand miles away, on a foreign shore’ the reader faces what the initial act of locating has instigated, not what lies behind it: the desire to know. By locating a place in the concrete terms of distance in miles (‘three thousand’) that ensure transnational, even transcontinental, border crossing and at the same time in the rather vague terms of a topographical detail (‘shore’) that is distinguished by virtue of being ‘foreign,’ the narrator excites curiosity and propels the reader to read on. Towards the end of a rather lengthy sentence, however, what materialises on the ‘foreign shore’ remains unknown. Instead the reader faces another topographical signifier, ‘the land,’ that, this time, purports to capture personal emotions felt by the reader and the narrator. The ‘land of our hearts’ couches the feelings of wistful longing shared by women and ‘stay-at-homes’ in the language of geography, clarifying that ‘the foreign shore’ matters as a projective surface of desires – desires which can be profitably exploited by those claiming to be in the known.

278 On Barnes’s explorations of the spectacle of seeing in her journalism, see Goody’s ‘Spectacle, Technology and Performing Bodies: Djuna Barnes at Coney’. Goody argues that Barnes’s 1913 articles for the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* engage with the Progressive Era in America, particularly its tension between ‘a rowdy participatory popular culture and performances of difference, and the compulsions of rationalising modernity and the contained spectacle’ (p. 210).
Moreover, diction in this sentence is gendered with the effect of dramatizing a binary between brave exploration (men who explore and produce) and romantic consumption (women who dream and receive). The way in which word choice changes from the beginning of the sentence to its end mirrors the idea of a linear process from men’s creative ventures (travelling, seeing, writing) to women’s reception: the foreign shore has become a romanticised, idealised place that alludes to both women’s constrained mobility and alleged tendency to sentimentality.279

Barnes sneers at how the notion of a foreign land accessible to those who can afford to travel offers a paradigm for the exclusive acquisition and narrative dissemination of knowledge while simultaneously marshalling the heroic rhetoric of discovery for the purpose of marketing her own story. Subsequent to the rhetorical questions of ‘How many of us have discovered it?’ and ‘Just how many know that Europe is in Brooklyn?’, the narrator abandons the benevolent unity with the reader, dissolving the flattering ‘we’, and thereby suggests the possession of an epistemic privilege (intimate knowledge) precisely not shared with the reader: ‘Why in the world haven’t you sensed it? Here you can see […]’. At this point, then, the article’s selling point has become the unexpected locating of ‘Europe’ in Brooklyn. Whereas before the implied community of the narrator and her readership was to yet realise an aesthetic rendering by men ‘who went and saw’, it is now the reader who faces ‘something to be learned’ from a narrator who knows where seeing (or sighting) is possible (‘WA’ 135). In this context, the repetition of ‘that is the land’ establishes an emphasis on ‘that’ which hints at the possibility of an alternative rendering of the ‘real’ foreign land: this text as currently beheld by the reader. Consequently, ‘Why Go Abroad?’ is set up as a story in competition with travel narratives offering a ‘land that is swarming with incidents and is profligate with gasps’.

Similar to the meta-narrative potential of a temporal specification like ‘now’, the geographic specification of ‘here’ in ‘Here you can see’ ambiguously signifies a place outside the text (‘Wallabout! Wallabout! Wallabout!’) as well as a precise position on the written page. In the latter sense the localisation would allude to what can be seen on the page, that is, letters as they become visible, black in white, to a reader whose eyes move across the page. Significantly, the words that do appear immediately after the narrator’s signal ‘here’ concern a play with surfaces and layers giving more prominence to exteriority than to interiority: ‘Here you can see the coloured quilt that covers a spavined horse’. The horse’s bones are

279 On the sentimental as ‘a maligned, feminised and supposedly anti-modern discourse’ that Barnes engages with, see Taylor, _Djuna Barnes and Affective Modernism_, pp. 22-28.
deformed, the deformed horse is enveloped in a quilt padding and the quilt is painted in
colours: The meaning of ‘to see’ underlined by such an emphasis on shapes, covers and
colours — in short, surface manipulations — is seeing as a form of visual perception rather
than a form of mental recognition. Taking this into consideration, it is possible to view the
narrator’s announcement ‘here you can see’ at the beginning of the article as a meta-
commentary on textual inscriptions. This is reinforced by Barnes’s inclusions of graphics.

‘Why Go Abroad?’ generally spotlights touristic objects including stereotypical
Italians, clumsily rendered as the literal embodiment of a ‘Europe’ the narrator aims to
expose, their arrangement in and movement across space:

Between the clock and the restaurant abutting, with tall glasses of spaghetti and crushed
brown figs, hangs a low-swinging, lax line of clothes beating a flapping tattoo upon the blue
of an awakening sky’ (‘WA’ 132).

The precision with which the ‘line of clothes’ is located ‘between the clock and the
restaurant’ and ‘low’ compared to ‘tall glasses of spaghetti’ contrasts with its ‘lax’ state and
’swinging’ movement. Importantly, what follows upon such an act of locating is not its effect
in terms of an atmosphere uniquely, typically and richly European or Italian — however such
an atmosphere may manifest itself — as we might expect from a travel narrative, but simply a
reproduction in form of a shadow play that erratically produces polymorphous forms on a
blue sky. Taking this into consideration, it is possible to view the narrator’s announcement
‘here you can see’ at the beginning of the article as a meta-commentary on textual inscription,
a lettering on a blank page: words are always objects of a gaze available for visual
consumption. They register visually as a single distinct unit of language; yet meaning remains
elusive. This radically undermines the logic of mimesis. Barnes’s article does not prompt us
to see mimetically, but provocatively makes us see superficially. What we learn to see in
Barnes while travelling across the page is a complication of and resistance to a mimetic
paradigm as suggested in the first paragraph: the sight always remains just that, a sight.

Throughout articles couched in the language of expeditions or quests, references to
‘seeing’ are always charged with the idea of a cognitive seeing, a recognising, rather than
merely visual perception. Instead of denoting an involuntary activity of the senses, ‘seeing’
points to the kind of enlightened or informed seeing granted to those who allegedly possess

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280 See Caselli’s remark that in Barnes writing ‘there is no bare flesh to be found once the finery has been
stripped away. […] This is why in Barnes the naked body is always inscribed.’ See Improper Modernism, pp.
14-15.
sufficient intellect (to know where to look) and mobility (able to look): the male traveller is the paradigmatic figure in this context. A similar use of the term ‘seeing’ as a form of diagnostic recognition, a skilled gaze scanning an environment, surfaces in the language of sexological treatises. Such seeing not only occurs abroad but is also crucial as the sexologist enters the hidden worlds and coteries of homosexuals in large cities. Here Havelock Ellis, for example, appears in the guise of the urban guide who – knowingly yet accidentally, as Ellis insists – navigates across the cityscape. To give an estimate of the numbers of homosexuals in Berlin, Ellis relies on what German psychiatrist Albert Moll has ‘seen himself’ in the city which amounts to a number ‘between 600 and 700 homosexual persons’. The sexologist acquires expertise by virtue of his place of birth:

In England, concerning which I can naturally speak with most assurance, its manifestations [sexual inversion and homosexual phenomena] are well marked for those whose eyes have once been opened. (Sexual Inversion, p. 29)

‘Seeing’ is an absolutely crucial notion insofar as it brings together the weight of both empirical evidence and theoretical understanding in a way that grants exclusivity to an ability otherwise possessed by the majority of the population. The differentiation between mere seeing and seeing with ‘eyes’ that have ‘been opened’ alludes to two senses of the term: seeing as a form of visual perception, an observation as well as a mental deduction that, the passive tone suggests, requires a form of enlightenment by an expert. ‘Homosexual phenomena’ are ‘well marked,’ however only to those who know where and how to look.

‘Seeing’ in Barnes’s journalism is always a gendered and politicised notion. Firmly embedded in a chain of activities that yields knowledge — travelling, seeing, writing —

281 In Psychopathia Sexualis, Richard von Krafft-Ebing speaks of ‘the “mysteries” of life in modern Capitals,’ identifying ‘large cities’ as ‘hotbeds in which neuroses and low morality are bred’. See Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis, p. 7. In a footnote, Ellis concedes ‘it is true that in the solitude of great modern cities it is possible for small homosexual coterie to form, in a certain sense, an environment of their own, favourable to their abnormality’. See Sexual Inversion, p. 28.

282 Following a careful consideration of possible authorities who could ‘guide’ Ellis through the city — including ‘the invert,’ ‘the writer’ and the ‘ordinary normal person’ — he concludes: ‘Striving to put aside this source of fallacy (for overestimates), and only considering those individuals with whom I have been brought in contact by the ordinary circumstances of life, and with whose modes of feeling I am acquainted, I am still led to the conclusion that the proportion is considerable’. See Sexual Inversion, p. 30.

283 Ellis, Sexual Inversion, p. 29.

284 Several titles of Barnes newspaper pieces and short stories include a reference to seeing. Among those are ‘Why Go Abroad? – See Europe in Brooklyn!’; ‘Seeing New York with the Soldiers’ and the short story ‘What Do You See, Madam?’. Published in 1915, this story traces the genesis of a dancer, ‘Mamie Saloam,’
seeing signifies the moment of recognition (we see specific things in specific places) where recognition requires prior travelling and acquires authority in form of the written document. Not only in the aforementioned ‘Why Go Abroad?’ but also in other articles the kind of seeing that travelling to foreign lands affords is a seeing ‘with eyes wide open’. By virtue of leaving the well-trodden path of home, the traveller’s gaze is sensitised to new environments, able to see and identify against the backdrop of the familiar as a reliable reference point. The specific kind of knowledge that travelling seems to afford is a knowledge of the foreign that serves to differentiate the self from the other, the normal from the abnormal in reassuringly absolute terms. In the wake of the formation of scientific disciplines such as sexology and ethnography in the late nineteenth century questions of sexual and racial identities have become focal point of such excursions. If seeing is diagnostic, then this implies that objects of knowledge, that is, the foreign body or the body of the sexual other, must have properties that can be deciphered in relation to a classificatory system. In Barnes’s journalistic narratives of exploration, allusions to foreign lands and foreign types abound in a way that invokes the discourse of sexology and anthropology.

While rhetorically this article is embedded in an idiom abundant in touristic notions of discovery, foreign lands and ‘atmosphere,’ it remains graphic, schematic and superficial, reinforced by predominantly topographical and physiognomic descriptions (‘WA’ 135). However, Barnes’s article does not only draw on travel by playfully engaging with and staging an epistemology of seeing, but also draws attention to the travelling undertaken by readers as they follow a succession of written words on the page (rather than a meaning lingering behind a word, text or concept). In this article, travelling is enacted off the page: reading Barnes enacts a particular way of travelling. Whether the reader sets out to decipher a text hermeneutically or to find autobiographical evidence about Barnes in her writing, they participate in quests for knowledge. Barnes play with both readers who want to see the sexual body rendered legible and readers who want to see her.

That the reader relation looms large in Barnes's journalism is also illustrated by a narration that at times flips from a first-person to a second-person narration. An example occurs in ‘Who’s the Last Squatter’ when the narrator explains ‘[g]et off at Consumers Park, go up Washington Avenue, and you come upon a stretch of uneven ground’ (‘LQ’ 119). On

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as the movement towards ‘something different’ – mirrored in a move from the Bowery to the stages of Broadway. In an aphoristic style, ‘What Do You See, Madam?’ alludes to ‘seeing’ twice: ‘A woman never knows what she sees; therefore, she tries to see what she knows’ (p. 59); ‘they have all seen what they wanted to see because the aforesaid showed them what they wanted to see’ (p. 59).

285 See ‘Chinatown’s Old Glories Crumbled to Dust,’ p. 127.
such occasions, the prose replicates the idiom of a guidebook, implying that the text at hand is a faithful representation of reality, referencing actual street names to orientate the reader-tourist in New York’s urban geography. However, although the ‘you’ strikes a seductively colloquial tone, seemingly taking the reader by the hand, the strength of the commitment fades and a different power dynamic unfolds when the narrator begins to also clarify what ‘you’ know and not know: ‘And you leave the hills with their feuds, and you know not if you have found a squatter or not’. Placed at the end of the article, the assertion of this sentence summarises the effect of the article’s peculiar syntactic and narrative manoeuvres: never marked as such, we do not know whether we have encountered the last squatter or not. What is more, while the article delineates the quest of the first-person narrator, who sometimes switches to a third-person perspective speaking about the ‘visitor[‘s]’ or someone’s search (play with narrative distance), the increasing emphasis on the second person pronoun leads to the suspicion that this text is as much about the visitor’s journey as it is about the reader’s process of reading. Whereas the visitor is traversing the streets, walking off the streets, the reader traverses the page in search for a precise description of the subject in question.

In ‘Who’s the Last Squatter?’ the reader encounters one putative squatter after the other all of which point their finger into the direction of ‘the real last squatter’. The title raises the act of identifying as a problem presumably to be tackled by the text to follow. In this short piece the narrator recounts her own quest, couched in the zoological discourse of endangered species, and provides turn-by-turn directions for a reader to embark on just such a journey. Irony, however, soon begins to undermine this authorial road mapping. Winnie McGraw, a woman encountered by the narrator during her search escapes a possible identification as the last squatter by posing as an authority on the subject herself. In an effort to provide directions, she points her finger further afield across a nondescript divide in a way that replicates the narrator’s signposting for the reader earlier in the text. Once the divide has been crossed in the story, we meet yet another figure pointing again across the divide, back to the point of departure.

Winnie McGraw’s gesture is also captured in an illustration Barnes published alongside the article. It pictures the tourist draped in an elegant, figure-hugging dress and crowned with a modish hat, clinging to what the article identifies as her ‘oxford’ and speaking to a woman whose loose-fitting garment and uncombed hair allies her with the squatters. One hand casually in her pocket and the other pointing to her left, presumably showing the way to the real last squatter, the woman’s gesticulation mirrors a textual mechanism that keeps the reader traverse sentences without ever arriving at a final meaning; in this sense it is paradigmatic of the endlessly travelling reader in Barnes’s short prose texts.
On the level of sentence structure, a similar dynamic is enacted. Take, for example, the directions supplied by the narrator to guide the reader to the last squatter. While the sentence begins with precise descriptives of ‘get off at’ and ‘go up’, it turns increasingly vague and goes off on a tangent as we read on: ‘black loam on which grow rank bushes, between the branches of which is thrust the white, drooping beard of an old goat, sage and seer, blinking in the noonday sun, content with the colour of the coming autumn.’ Equally, when another act of locating, ‘[o]n the other side of the divide,’ introduces the next sentence, appealing to the readers’ expectation of an imminent disclosure of what exactly is to be found ‘on the other side,’ they instead face vagueness literally captured in the image of rising smoke ‘drifting up slowly, covering the heap of whitewashed wood with a mystic cloth of haze’ (‘LQ’ 119).

My close reading of ‘Why Go Abroad’ and ‘The Last Squatter’ illustrates how we can productively read Barnes’s journalism not as narratives of urban travels but as a travelling of narratives. Such a shift of perspective makes visible to what extent and with what effect Barnes draws on the genre of travel writing. Declaratives of what the journalistic Barnes will ‘show’ and a rhetoric of looming revelations contrast with the choreography of movements and border crossings staged on the page.

**The Artist as Traveller: Seeing with Eyes Wide Open**

Gender figures as a decisive factor distinguishing between simple seeing as a form of passive reception and a capacity for profound meditations as prerequisite for artistic creations in ‘The Hem of Manhattan’. Published in 1917, this newspaper article mimics the rhetoric of a guidebook, addressing readers eager to hear delightful descriptions of a ‘pleasure trip’ to pose questions about travelling and storytelling as ways of producing knowledge about a place and its people. Before detailing the impressions of a boat tour in New York, Barnes fills a few paragraphs with elaborations on the particular difficulties faced when writing about a trip undertaken at home rather than abroad, alluding to the truism that transnational border crossings endow the traveller with a level of objectivity and receptivity otherwise lacking. Pronominal alterations within the span of single sentences underscore how the composition of accomplished literary representations of places are inevitably imbricated with gender. The article’s opening sentence is a case in point:

> To take a yacht trip around Manhattan Island is to find yourself in the awkward position of one who must become a stranger in his own house that he may describe it with the necessary colour. (‘The Hem of Manhattan,’ p. 285)
The movement from an emphatic appeal to the reader (‘yourself’) to the narrator inhabiting the position of generality (‘one’) to a place reserved for men (‘he may describe’) in this passage neatly captures the ultimate authority held by male authorship. A few lines later the chiastic remark that ‘here one looks upon things because one has eyes. There one has eyes that he may contemplate’ similarly instances geographic mobility (‘here’/ ‘there’) as a circumstance that facilitates male reflectiveness through the appropriation of the female eye. By introducing ‘Why Go Abroad’ as well as ‘The Hem of Manhattan’ with an exposition of how travelling furnishes the male artist with the opportunity of a depiction of the foreign ‘with the necessary colour,’ Barnes presents the texts to follow as the demanding venture of a female author attempting to write accurately and authentically in the absence of geographic and cultural distance (to the object of study).

We encounter this notable differentiation between two types of seeing — a simple sensory perception on the one hand and a cognitive-epistemic process on the other hand — manifested along gendered lines in Barnes’s short fiction, too. When the nameless protagonist in ‘The Hatmaker’ abandons her profitable business in the fashion industry to travel the world, accompanied by her secretary, the highly literate Miss Swann – versed in foreign languages and cultures – the narrator remarks that in Paris ‘Madame hurried through a number of galleries and historic buildings; she did not seem to see what she was looking at’ (‘HM’ 471). The affluent female traveller is depicted as a cultural philistine just as ignorant of the historical significance of certain sights in Paris as a narrator who refrains from naming the landmarks thus left by the wayside. Instead the phrase ‘historic buildings’ draws attention to the qualifications of a sight as meaningful in relation to a particular historical narrative rather than to its specific identity, suggesting that what is of interest is a mode of seeing when on the road, not what is actually seen.

To note the peculiarities of ‘The Hatmaker’s style of writing helps us to view this short story from the angle of a skilfully crafted artefact whose narrative dynamic feeds on suggestions of sexual and racial otherness. Travelling competently becomes entangled with the mastery of reading most distinctively when Miss Swann thinks it necessary to supply Madame with a copy of Marcel Proust’s À la recherche du temps perdu the moment they arrive in Paris because the book ‘is essential to get the flavor of a people’ (‘HM’ 471). A reading of the Proustian text, this piece of advice implies, enables the traveller to fathom the distinctive character of a nation, turning ‘Frenchness’ into a recognisable phenomenon that can be experienced first-hand. Perception, at least in its cognitive dimension, is said to operate through language — an assertion which makes any discovery in the external world a
rediscovery of a phenomenon encountered in a previous reading experience; on this account, cognition is nothing but recognition, challenging the possibility of a direct access to reality as well as its very existence outside of language. Immediately after Miss Swann has thrust a copy of Proust’s book into Madame’s hands the reader learns that, in stark contrast to the highly educated and cultivated Miss Swann, Barnes’s protagonist is not able ‘to read anything long’.

Parallel to the possibility of a ‘seeing’ and recognising when on the road the narrator introduces the idea of different ways of reading when traversing the page, mustering travelling and reading as epistemic practices contingent on movement. If the competent male globetrotter not only perceives but recognises, then the schooled reader, epitomised by Miss Swann, not only reads but understands. This subtle but significant differentiation between arbitrary perception and the cognition of specific visual signs is also obvious in the earlier discussed short story ‘The Grande Malade’: here the narrator compares an unknowable China to ‘a big book which you can read but not understand. (‘GM’ 396). By distinguishing ‘understanding’ from the act of reading, the analogy assigns to the book the mystifying qualities of a foreign object that can be surveyed but not conclusively deciphered. Instead of creating a fictional world for a reader to enter, the book strikes as a surface appearance: letterings on a blank surface that remain unassimilable and unfamiliar. By implication, the production of literary texts participates in, is an instance of, the production of foreignness. What is thus suggested is that to master a text’s foreignness, to unveil its ultimate meaning, parallels the mastery of an unknown city, endowing the reader and traveller with literary and cosmopolitan credentials.

The contrast between the highly literate Miss Swann, namesake of Proust’s protagonist Charles Swann, and the impulsive, vain and trivial Madame as a typical Barnesian character strikes as a meta-textual reference to the skill of writing. A tongue-in-cheek allusion to the commitment contained in the title of À la recherche du temps perdu further consolidates the suspicion: it is Miss Swann who is proficient at ‘keeping track of life,’ who saves and gives back life to Madame ‘every time she spoke,’ establishing a coherent narrative and historical trajectory through which memory can operate. The reference to a widely acclaimed novel whose considerable length, syntactic complexity and stylistic sophistication grant any reader a high level of education and literacy inevitably invites a comparison with the text at hand: short, grammatically flawed, repetitive, and alternating between plain sentences and tedious parataxes. Take, for example, this brief dialogue between the two protagonists: ‘She had remarked to Miss Swann that she thought of altering the coat herself. Miss Swann said that she thought it extremely risky.’ The repetition of ‘Miss
Swann,’ the clarification that ‘she thought’ – inserted twice – and the similar sentence structure leads to an accumulation of monosyllabic words and make this reported dialogue sound flat, static, inanimate.

**Cosmopolitan Sophistication and Literary Artistry**

Preoccupations with cosmopolitan sophistication and literary artistry also distinguish ‘The Grande Malade’ which, like many of Barnes’s newspaper pieces, exploits the ambiguity of the second person pronoun – ‘you’ may refer to a generality or to a specific person – to distinguish between the knowledgeable expert and ignorant amateur, the literate cosmopolitan and the uncultured impostor. An example is the following excerpt:

> And me? I went about in satin trousers for respect to China, which is a very great country and has majesté because you cannot know it. It is like a big book which you can read but not understand. (‘GM’ 396).

In the context of the metanarrative reference to the mastery of reading and understanding one is inclined to take the second person pronoun as an interjection distinguishing between the reader attempting to decipher a text and the narrator constructing a possibly incomprehensible text. From this perspective, the ‘book which you can read but not understand’ is also the printed text we currently read. ‘Madame’ is regularly invoked in this story as an instance that is privy to the narrator’s world – ‘You know how it is in Paris in the autumn’ (‘GM’ 395) – but also oblivious: ‘(you were not here then, Madame)’ (‘GM’ 399). Such carefully constructed positions between a knowing narrator and an unknowing reader render this story as an example of the ‘big book which you can read but not understand.’

In ‘The Grande Malade,’ the simultaneous presence of the narrator as story-teller and as a figure in the story translates into alterations between pronouns. On the one hand, the first person plural appears in statements such as ‘[a]nd of course sophistication came upon us suddenly. We hung long curtains over our beds and we talked of lovers and smoked’ (‘GM’ 396). On the other hand, a narrative ‘I’ reports on how ‘Moydia began to cultivate a throaty voice’ and comments on how she ‘sugars her tea from far too great a height’ (‘GM’ 396-7). Narrative perspective is concomitant with a specific attitude towards the becoming-bohemian as a version of the coming of-age story: bohemian refinement is both mocked as something that inevitably befalls every person under Parisian skies and as something deliberately developed and ‘cultivated’. Worldly sophistication as a blessing ex nihilo contrasts with the idea of its conscious attainment. The underlying opposition between the authentic and artifice
is a preoccupation pervading the story. Another instance is the narrator posing as the force consciously crafting a story. Such a visibility as narrating instance is highlighted not only by the frequent direct addresses of the narratee, but also by the concluding sentence: ‘And that’s all. There’s nothing else to tell’ (‘GM’ 403). The narrator not only appears as protagonist but as the force producing a text that in itself becomes an object of scrutiny.

Moydia’s theatricality, the affected tone of her melodramatic exclamations, and her erratic behaviour not only invoke the stereotype of the overemotional, hysterical woman, but also reveal the figure of the eccentric ‘gamine’ as a staged performance (‘GM’ 398, original italics). On this occasion embracing the cliché of the excessively dramatic woman unsettles the very idea of authenticity as something to be ascertained. In a metafictional twist, the protagonist aspires to become a character who is “tragique” and “triste” and “tremendous” all at once (‘GM’ 393). Although the sudden death of her lover makes for a tragic ending, the turn of events aids Moydia’s premeditated efforts to change into the brave heroine mastering a pitiful fate, undermining the possibility of an authentic embodiment from the start. By portraying a character whose ‘crying in her pillow’ is frequently accompanied by laughter, Barnes creates a figure whose emotions appear fabricated and unconvincing. Although grammatically the text largely sustains its pronominal differentiation between the narrative ‘I’ and the third-person referent ‘she’, these positions coalesce as the narrator’s prose style reproduces Moydia’s idiom. Hence Moydia’s failure to convince the reader of the genuineness of her performance (instead she remains visible as a character trying to be a character, that is, an actress) represents the narrator’s failure to tell a credible story with a realistic character. That Moydia functions as a site through which the narrator negotiates the chronological conventions of story-telling – its relation to movement – also becomes apparent in the statement that Moydia ‘became more and more restless, like a story that has no beginning and no end, only a passion like flash lightning. […] All her movements were a sort of malheureuse tempest’ (‘GM’ 396).

If the audience at an opera Moydia attends looks onto her exaggerated gestures and attention-grabbing manners ‘with displeasure’ (‘GM’ 397), the reader of Barnes’s short story, too, is likely to experience irritation in light of a narrator whose voice oscillates between the speech of a child with its simple syntax, plain observations and literal takes on truisms half-remembered (‘Moydia has a thin thin skin, so that I sit and look at her and wonder how she has opinions,’ ‘GM’ 393) on the one hand and the ostentatious writer anxious to demonstrate cultural sophistication, on the other hand. Not only does the reference to ‘satin trousers for respect to China’ lay claim to a fashion style whose sophistication derives from the cosmopolitan competence of its well-travelled wearer, but the text itself is adorned with
French words, implying multilingual worldliness. Although the use of French initially characterises the direct speech of Moydia who aspires to be ‘like the great period Frenchwomen, only fiercer and perhaps less pure,’ adjectives like ‘majesté,’ ‘soigneusement,’ ‘malheureuse,’ ‘enragé,’ ‘tragique’ soon permeate the narrator’s discourse, too. Bearing in mind the Parisian setting of this story as well as its protagonists, two sisters of indeterminable origin who drink, smoke, read and have ‘reached extravagance,’ the text itself is infiltrated by the bohemian cultural milieu – or, rather, driven by the ambition to become a token of it.

That French terms and phrases, including exclamations and a quote from the fabulist Jean de La Fontaine, appear in italics suggests the significance not of their successful assimilation into the text but of their status as foreign imports: their value is less a testimony to fluency than the showcasing of the artistry of elevating plain English writing with French literary aesthetics. Furthermore, the frequent use of the sloped italic typeface, originally inspired by calligraphic handwriting, endows the text with an ornamental quality. If read out loud, the reader’s emphasis of italicised English words such as ‘wonderful,’ ‘everything,’ ‘grave and rare’ produces a dramatic effect reminiscent of stage plays which figure in this short story prominently in form of the appearance of a puppet play, an opera house and an aspiring actress. To this extent, an exaggerated floridness – a charge levied on Moydia who is said to have become ‘a little too florid’ – also encapsulates a feature of this short story. A tendency to floridness occasionally manifests itself in form of long-winded sentences stringing together pieces of information in many clauses and generously punctuated with commas reinforcing a sense of the tedious. By means of seemingly arbitrary ramblings about hats, boots, and a coat the text further aligns itself with women’s writing: inelegant prose paired with the superficiality of its theme. Notably, Barnes’s writing turns particularly jarring when it replicates the jargon of Marcel Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time (Remembrance of Things Past)* in another staged attempt to establish an affiliation with a more established avant-garde and their literary aesthetics:

I have had to go back in my knowledge, right back to the remembrance, which is the place where I regard my father, and how he looked when in from the new snow: I did not really see him then. Now I see he was truly beautiful all the time that I was thinking nothing about him at all. (‘GM’ 394)

This excerpt illustrates the comical allusions to Proust’s novels and one of its key narrative mechanisms: the involuntary memory triggered by objects in the presence and prompting the conjuring of past moment in the vivid details. The narrator’s exaggerated attention paid to
objects of fashion on each occasion—a hat in the passage quoted above and a cape few sentences later—seems a mocking imitation of Proust’s madeleines as does the paradoxical remark that Moydia ‘has a great memory in the present,’ implying that she is unable to recollect the past (‘GM’ 395; original italics). To select fashion items also unites a scoff at Proust’s writing with an alleged female malady to invest garments with an unduly importance.

In ‘The Grande Malade’ and ‘The Hatmaker’ hardly concealed allusions to Proust’s oeuvre as a token of cosmopolitan sophistication and literary refinement echo the references to ‘men’ able to recognise and represent what they encounter on travels in pieces like ‘Why Go Abroad’ and ‘The Hem of Manhattan’. The question of who sees is of paramount importance to texts that challenge the idea of voyaging as a door to both discoveries and literary competency. By portraying herself as an explorer into the unknown geographies of New York’s reputed underworlds of illicit sexual and criminal activity in her journalism, Barnes invokes the logic of a knowledge practice used by early sexologists. The Barnesian narrator travelling to specific places to tell a story, promising to bring home knowledge about unusual, freakish and eccentric types mimics the sexologists travelling with eyes wide open, that is, sensitive to alleged manifestations of sexual knowledge. The discourse of travel and discovery mobilised in Barnes’s short prose texts builds on and manipulates rationales that have informed the epistemological framework of sexology.
Conclusion

This thesis has considered the conceptualisation of the journey as a gendered practice employed by ‘men of sciences’ in the field of sexology to reveal new facets of women’s modernist fiction and non-fiction in the early twentieth century. Such an understanding of travelling is a neglected but crucial element in gauging modernism’s engagement with epistemological paradigms and identity categories which have shaped the disciplinary formation of sexual science. By placing travel in this specific historical context, this thesis has explored relations between movement and modernism from a different angle, shedding new light on the significance of traversing space to literary experiments with the production of knowledge on the level of narrative, language, and form. Each literary text examined has demonstrated a different aspect of the ways in which a gender-sensitive discourse of travel, entrenched in ethnographic constructions of sexual and racial otherness, profoundly shaped the modernist experimentation of women writers. Together they have illustrated the gendered dimension of the restlessness, the state of flux and quests for novelty that many critics equate with modernist aesthetics and themes.286

This study has expanded on current scholarship on intersections between modernism, geography, and sexuality: its inquiry into how literary texts engage with a conceptualisation of border crossings premised on the acquisition of sexual knowledge sheds new light on our understanding of modernism ‘as a space filled with movement’.287 An innovation of this thesis is its foregrounding of gender and sexuality in unpacking the phenomenon of modernist movements. Rather than an abstract aesthetic phenomenon, movements are inevitably entwined with politics of gender and constructions of sexuality. To illustrate how movement is a gendered practice of knowing, this thesis has placed references to foreign, eccentric and inverted types of people in female modernist fiction and non-fiction in the context of sexological ‘men of sciences’ researching and writing at the turn of the century. One important insight has been the extent to which these texts trade on the capacity of sexual difference to summon readerly curiosity: the reader figures as the traveller traversing the

286 Examples include Peter Kalliney’s assertion that ‘modernism is an aesthetics of motion’ and Michael Levenson’s remark that ‘[m]odernity remains haunted both by a search for novelty and by the recollection of precursors’. See Kalliney, Modernism in a Global Context, p. 1 and Levenson, Modernism, p. 2.
287 Marcus and Bradshaw, Moving Modernism: Motion, Technology, and Modernity, p. 2.
body of the text, driven by the prospect of discoveries. By aligning the reader with the often male-connoted figure of the expert traveller, Moore’s, Barney’s and Barnes’s writings invoke and play with gendered distinctions between knower and object of knowledge, author and reader, mind and body. Themes of movement, performances of border crossings, and settings of marginal spaces in these texts serve to challenge and reconfigure how we traverse the modernist bodies, alerting us to still overlooked forms of experimentation in female fiction and non-fiction.

*Spleen* illustrates how modelling a plot and setting on novels by male precursors – the story of an eccentric British character’s emigration to an island in the Bay of Naples – culminates in a very different text; rather than entertaining elaborations on the indulgence of the senses, the pleasure of illicit sexual relations and the colourful coterie of unconventional British and European artists and misfits, *Spleen* ruminates on women’s disadvantages when it comes to producing an original piece of art or formulating an innovative thought. Moore’s novel demonstrates an uneasy relationship with the modernist credo of the new, contemplating how women are reduced to their bodies and a reproductive – but not visionary – function. *Spleen*’s innovative response to this gendered binary of reproduction/creation, body/mind is a turn to the surface of the page – the materiality of typography and orthography – and an emphasis of surface impressions of Italian scenes, landscapes and people, fully embracing women’s relegation to the bodily and material. *Spleens* adds to our understanding of ‘modernism’s aesthetics of motion,’ to use Peter Kalliney’s term, in important ways.288 It exposes the underside of an abstract understanding of movement. If the kinetics of modernist aesthetics are defined by oscillations between the burden of a past and the possibilities of the new, *Spleen* reveals how gender defines the terms, limits and scopes of such a motion. The restless wanderings of a protagonist, who is ‘different,’ for example, is firmly reinserted into a medical discourse that pathologizes a woman’s movements. To read this novel in the context of ‘modernist movements’ draws attention to its specific narrative mechanisms: the swings, repetitions, and interruptions of a narrative parcelled into insular paragraphs. Such an analysis provides a new perspective on forward motions usually associated with modernist aesthetics. Rather clumsily, *Spleen* returns language to the page and refuses to explore its capacities to penetrate the depths of the mind or capture the complexity of impressions gathered on a journey.

Similar to *Spleen*, *The One* opposes the reiteration of a heteronormative life narrative and the repetitive movements of heterosexual ‘couplings’ – ‘unlyrical, unrhythmic,
uninspired’ (TO 67) – with the force of a movement that queerly explodes binaries of gender, sexual identity, bodily matter and spirituality. Published in the same year, The One reveals a remarkably different engagement with a similar idea: border crossing and transgression of norms of gender and sexuality. In contrast to Spleen’s realist aesthetics, this novel ventures into the realms of magical realism and scientific speculation, toying with the idea of fourth-dimensional spaces and philosophical monism. If in Spleen the journey towards difference fails, collapsing into circularity, repetitiveness and deferrals, and reflected in a disenchanted protagonist, The One buoyantly strives to a destination in which materialisation seems imminent. The journey of a protagonist liberated from any distinct shape is contrasted with the travels of ‘Duthiers,’ the male character in the novel ‘only at his best when coupled to a machine’ of transport (TO 140); this journey constitutes an escape from the corporeality of human bodies and written texts as overpowering forms that delimit possibilities of signification, of straying from categories of gender, sexual identity, canons and branches of knowledge. While critics have examined literary modernism’s engagement with scientific and philosophical theories, this novel demonstrates how its movement into new realms of thought is entwined with issues of gender and sexuality: its voyage is a journey beyond the labels and taxonomies of sexologists. As the reader attempts to make sense of the multiplying body of the protagonist and the genre-bending body of a hardly readable text, the journey unfolding in the course of the story catapults both bodies increasingly to the limits of representation. The success of the protagonist’s ‘voyage of discovery’ to an undefined ‘beyond’ seems contingent on the reader’s impossibility of discovery in the sense of recognising and labelling. While the novel fully embraces the conception of the voyage as a way of knowing – as the specification ‘voyage of discovery’ indicates – it simultaneously places this voyage in the service of deconstructing the notion of a knowable and definable identity.

Border crossings to unfamiliar territories and possible revelations of ‘deviant’ individuals, straying from norms of gender and sexuality, also loom large in the short prose texts of Barnes. A selection of her newspaper pieces and short stories show yet another way in which female modernists creatively depict travel towards a foreign land, exploring the promise of an authentic encounter with a particular type of person – whether the very ‘last squatter’ still around or the ‘perverted’ bohemian or foreigner. As with Spleen’s jarred sentences and trenchant narrator, or The One’s enthusiastic tone, Barnes’s texts simultaneously celebrate and parody the idea that travelling – across geographical space as well as across the page – to bring the traveller closer to the reality of a specific type of person or place. Such movements are rigorously gendered, as the narrators in her journalism and
short stories provocatively distinguish between men’s ability to see – and to visually or linguistically represent their impressions in a sophisticated and accurate manner – with women’s immobility and alleged ignorance. While the pieces published in newspapers tend to dramatize the impending ‘event of the foreigner,’ enacting a choreography of border crossings and futile movements, short stories like ‘The Grande Malade’ and ‘The Hatmaker’ incorporate cosmopolitan poses, parading ‘exotic’ figures and languages, that strike as flat and affected. Barnes’ witty alteration of the Caesarean phrase ‘I came; I saw; I conquered’ into ‘men who went and saw and, seeing, wrote,’ discussed in Chapter Four, not only encapsulates the paradigm of victorious traveling but exposes the act of writing in the aftermath of travel, the travel narrative, as that which seals the conquest (‘WA’ 131). The ‘foreigner’ is an event and a truth the traveller beholds in their eyes, colonising the land in the moment of enunciating ‘I see a sight’ (‘SN’ 328) and submitting the land to ‘criteria drawn from their own culture’.289

Bringing together texts by Moore, Barney and Barnes for the first time, this thesis has drawn attention to writings lingering further at the fringes of the modernist canon. Through close readings launched from the periphery, not the kernel, of established modernist works, this study has revealed another dimension of modernist movements. In relating the movements and border crossings enacted by and taking place in each text to authoritative ways of knowing and representing, this thesis has emphasised movements as closely interwoven with the modernist textualities pioneered by female authors. In light of a prose that more often borders on awkward than elegant, unreadable than readable, superficial than deep, writerly skill and literary artistry seem to not have been objectives through which these texts strove to secure their position in the literary marketplace. Such a lack of sophistication might be seen either as resisting conventional standards of literary value or trading on eccentricity and strangeness as a position of – profitable or risky – singularity.

Catherine Malabou’s insightful reflection on travelling, which has introduced the conceptual and terminological framework of this thesis, points to an important differentiation between the omnipresence of a traditional conception of the voyage, rooted in Europe’s colonial practices, and the relentless voyaging that is potent in written language and in the realm of sexuality, as feminist theorists and queer critics have indicated. Mindful of these utilisations of travelling to opposite ends – as an authoritative way of knowing in the intellectual discourse of ‘scientific’ disciplines and as a radical way of un-knowing in literary writings and queer theory – this thesis has not pitted not one conception of travelling against

289 Malabou and Derrida, Counterpath, p. 28.
another, playing off voyage against movement. Instead it has sought to attend to those moments when voyage becomes movement and movement transforms into voyage, seeking to take note of the instability of the distinction itself. The readings undertaken in chapters two to four have suggested that the writings examined do not advance a subversive reconfiguration of the voyage in every respect, but instead display a far more nuanced and varied engagement with notions of movement and border crossings and their relevance to knowledge about sexual identities. In distinct ways, the novels *Spleen* and *The One* as well as a selection of short prose pieces by Djuna Barnes have not only replicated but also repurposed the voyage of discovery and border crossings to their own ends: they have juxtaposed references to male travellers and expatriate artists with voyages not only undertaken by strong-minded female or genderless protagonists but with movements staged on the level of narrative, syntax, typography and style. This demonstrates that the literary appropriations and manipulations of movement as a way of approximating the foreign and unknown are never ‘simple’ in the sense of innocent but probe the spectrum between marketability and unprofitability, between eccentricity and illegibility available to the female author.

In considering movement as a gendered practice of knowing rather than as a form of knowledge, the thesis opens up new possible directions in investigating the kinetics of modernist aesthetics. To notice how we, as readers, move across modernist bodies and to attend to the ways in which these bodies come into being as bodies that we traverse, might be to introduce new critical itineraries in modernist studies. The challenge for future scholarship is to queerly rethink abstract conceptions of modernist movements from the place of gender and sexuality.
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