Dedicated to Neil Levi, Hannah Wells, and Lisa Jordan for their invaluable advice and expertise.

"This is London": The Politics of (Im)mobility in Spatial Theory and British Migrant
Literature

A Thesis in English Literature

by

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Abstract

The politics of place, or the relationship between culture and spatiality, was an intellectual fascination throughout the twentieth century. Philosophers, cultural critics, writers, and artists alike explored how an individual's sense of place composed aspects of their personal identity and their relationship to a national identity. Control over place became a pressing political issue throughout the twentieth century due to the growing popularity of capitalism, the phenomenon of colonialism, and the advent of new technologies which re-defined how and why space can be owned, controlled, and exploited.

The rise of colonialism and industrial capitalism in the twentieth century led to the immobility of marginalized individuals, particularly the figure of the migrant. The following research sets twentieth century spatial theory, British legal history, and British migrant literature in conversation to explore how the political and economic ideologies of colonialism and capitalism were encoded within the British urban environment and rendered the migrant immobile both on a local and global scale. The spatial theories of Michel de Certeau, Guy Debord and the Situationists, and Doreen Massey provide foundational definitions of place and space, and postulate that walking may be used as a method of recognizing and critiquing the cultural ideologies that shape the urban environment. The British

migrant literary works of Jean Rhys and Samuel Selvon explore the relationship between place and identity, the migrant experience of London, and question whether the act of walking can be used as a device to critique the politics of place and the immobility of the migrant. Rhys and Selvon provide the alternative solution of remaining still as a method of democratizing space for the British migrant. Explorations into the politics of place and the migrant experience of twentieth century London speak to the twenty-first century European migrant crisis and Britain's decision to leave the European Union.

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Walk 1: Christ Church, Spitalfields

I began my walk at the Liverpool Street tube station at 1:30 pm. It was an overcast and chilly day in October with the threat of rain imminent. I walked out ofLiverpool Station and went left towards Christ Church and the Spitalfields Market. Most of the architecture near Liverpool Station consisted of steel and glass skyscrapers. Most of the people walking around Liverpool Station were business types or people looking to shop. As I walked toward Christ Church and away from Liverpool station, it felt as though I was traveling back in time. The skyscrapers gave way to squat, brick buildings that looked much older than the steel and glass. I came across a large construction site among the older architecture, where it appeared another skyscraper was being built. The unfinished construction loomed over the older brick buildings, the new architecture encroaching on the old.

On the way to Christ Church, I walked toward the Spitalfields, a historic market associated with the Huguenot silk weavers who settled in the area as refugees in the late-1600's. I passed an information panel about the Spitafields. The panel was a map made of metal and glass. When I stood in front of the map, I was able to see myself reflected within the geography of the Spitalfields. I decided to make a detour through the market. Although the market is called the Old Spitafields, very little of the market feels historic. There is a steel and glass ceiling overhead which protects the merchants and shoppers from the rain. Most of the booths in the market were handmade jewelry and clothing stalls. I stopped at a stall that sold ladies' hats — the type of hats worn at polo matches, complete with feathers and netting. I spoke to the merchant who owned the stall, a woman named Pamella with a thick Polish accent. I asked Pamella how long she had been selling her hats at the market. She responded that she had come to sell her hats at the Old Spitalfields for thirteen years. Pamella remarked that there were less shoppers in the market than when she first opened her stall, so she only came to the market three days a week as business grew quieter.

After my detour in the Spitalfields Market, I reached the original destination of my psychogeographic walk — Christ Church. The church was striking in its architecture. The top of the steeple could be seen from several blocks away, peeking out between the buildings that surrounded it. The church looked incredibly abrupt, vertical and narrow. There was a great deal of space that separated the church from the surrounding buildings, which made reaching the church feel like a climatic moment in my walk. I entered Christ Church and was greeted by Ava, a woman who had been working in the church for 20 years. She gave me a pamphlet for a self-guided tour of the church. The pamphlet talked about a piece of the tile floor which had traces of a fossilized fish in the stone, the organ which Handel once played, and the stained glass windows. A man was sketching the ornate ceiling and the beautiful glass. Ava spoke to me about her faith. She came to Europe from Calcutta to study. She was deeply religious and centered her life around her faith. I noticed that Christ Church held a service in Bengali roughly once a month. I asked Ava whether the Bengali services were well attended, and she assured me that many people came for the Bengali services. She mostly talked of her faith, but was aware of the Spitalfields' rich history as a landing site for migrants. When asked why she settled in the Christ Church for twenty years, she said that the place of worship did not matter — she had little interest in the famous architecture of Christ Church.

Introduction
"To draw a map is to tell a story"
-Dr. Robert T. Tally Jr.

In "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," Michel Foucault argues that the twentieth century was the epoch of space — a period in which space functioned as a "network that connects points and intersects with its skein. One could perhaps say that certain ideological conflicts animating present-day polemics opposes the pious descendants of time and the determined inhabitants of space" (1). In the twentieth century, space was a tangible object to own, control, and profit from. Yet, an individual's personal relationship to space was also marked by a set of cultural and social relations that define what a space can be used for. Distinctions between public and private space, the space of leisure or work, and spaces for family or social interactions all associate a cultural institution with a physical location. According to Foucault, these social definitions are a result of the "hidden presence of the sacred" (2), or the concept of space as both physical and incorporeal. For Foucault, space went beyond just location; space was both composed of physical boundaries and social practices.

Foucault's theories of space as a network of social and cultural relationships are only part of a deluge of twentieth century intellectual work interested the politics of place. Much of twentieth century spatial theory and literature were interested in exploring the politics of place, or the relationship between culture and spatiality, and its effects on the pedestrian in the growing industrial city. The twentieth century's intellectual focus on the politics of place was both an interdisciplinary and a global phenomenon, with some of

the most compelling work coming from Paris and London. In Paris, the notable avant-garde collective known as the Situationists attempted to create a methodology to investigate how political and economic ideologies shaped the physical environment. The Situationists developed spatial practices to reclaim the city of Paris for the pedestrian. British migrant literature, particularly the works of Jean Rhys and Samuel Selvon, used the figure of the migrant to critique how the migrant's (im)mobility in urban spaces correlated to widespread social, political, and economic oppression of marginalized communities in Britain. Both the Situationists and British migrant literature were interested in answering a series of questions: How do we define place? How do political and economic discourses within a nation shape the geographic landscape and an individual's movements through spaces? Who decides who "belongs" within a place, and what are the ramifications of exclusion and subordination? Spatial theory and literature found the answers to these questions through the act of walking.

Despite the shared intellectual focus on the politics of place within spatial theory and literature, little work has been done to recognize how twentieth century urban literature uses spatial theory to explore themes of identity and nationhood. In this thesis, it is my intent to set spatial theory and literature from the twentieth century in conversation with one another in order to explore how the politics of place shape the urban landscape. The spatial theory and literature I will be discussing is both interdisciplinary and transnational, though the urban spaces of London will be my primary spatial focus. Through a juxtaposition of psychogeographic and Situationist

documentations of urban life alongside the literary works of Jean Rhys and Samuel Selvon, I will argue that both British migrant literature and spatial theory use the act of walking as a device to critique the politics of place and the (im)mobility of the migrant in urban spaces. The spatial theory of the Situationists and British migrant literature critique how the legacy of colonialism and the growing popularity of capitalism in the twentieth century were encoded within the urban landscape, and influenced the (im)mobility of marginalized communities. Furthermore, I will argue that British migrant literature questions effectiveness of walking as a method to overcome widespread inequality and immobility faced by the urban migrant.

There are several methods of exploring the politics of place and the (im)mobility of migrant populations in urban life. Over the course of this paper, I will utilize three approaches to determine how social factors influence (im)mobility in British urban life. The first approach uses spatial theory to decode the political undercurrents that shape the urban geography and re-define our understanding of place. The second approach pairs British legal history and British migrant literature in order to present both an empirical and subjective exploration of urban space. Interspersed between the spatial theory and literature are my own walks through the city of London and my experiences as a pedestrian English urban spaces. Each of the three approaches focuses on the act of walking and the pedestrian, drawing together spatial theory, law, literature, and my own observations through representations of (im)mobility.

The first chapter of this thesis, "Space, Place, and Psychogeography" will explore the politics of place through the spatial theories of Michel de Certeau, Guy Debord, and Doreen Massey. In this chapter, I will argue that spatial theory provides definitions of place that recognize both the physical and social networks of connections that influence an individual's relationship to a place. The spatial theory I discuss will provide necessary background on the theoretical and literary history of the *flâneur*. Through an examination of spatial theory throughout the twentieth century, I will show that walking is a tool of communication and civil disobedience which can be used to recognize the politics of place. I will also argue that although spatial theory provides a strong foundation for exploring urban spaces, the theories of de Certeau, Debord, and Massey work best as abstract principles. It is only by placing spatial theory alongside other discourses, such as law and literature, that the personal meanings of places, and how they control (im)mobility can be understood.

In the second chapter, "Law, Literature, and the Politics of Place," I will discuss the relationship between British legal history and British migrant literature. The chapter consists of two primary sections. The first part of the chapter will discuss British legal history and the colonial legacy of England. In the first section, I will argue that the cultural distinction between "Englishness" and "Britishness" perpetuated the colonization and subjugation of British migrants. Through an examination of British legal history, I will show that anti-migration acts passed by Parliament in the twentieth century

prioritized white, native born English citizens over British subjects, and created

significant obstacles to migrants' freedom of mobility.

In the second part of the chapter, I will analyze Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*

and Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*. In my analysis, I will argue that Rhys and

Selvon use the (im)mobility of the migrant flâneur as a critical response to the legal and

social anti-migration sentiments in England. Selvon and Rhys also use spatial metaphors

to explore the relationship between place, nationhood, and the marginal identities of

migrants. In *Voyage in the Dark*, I will argue Rhys constructs three spaces through which

the migrant Anna moves, using her relationship to space as a method to negotiate her

multiple identities as a migrant. Rhys also uses formal techniques, such as stream of

consciousness and temporal breaks from the narrative, to portray what Paul Gilroy refers

to as "double consciousness." In my analysis of Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners,*

I will argue that the narrative structure focuses on the quotidian aspects of life in order to

show how the xenophobia in Britain made everyday life difficult for British migrants. I

will use Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* to demonstrate how British colonialism

perpetuated harmful neuroses in the black migrant. I will also show how Selvon uses the

urban wanderings of the migrants to show how urban (im)mobility correlated to

widespread political, social, and economic oppression for Caribbean migrants in London.

Selvon questions the effectiveness of walking as a tool to democratize space through the

character of Tanty Bessie. Unlike the other Caribbean migrants, Tanty remains sedentary,

but is the most successful in transforming English space to fit the needs of the migrant

community. The works of both Rhys and Selvon use the (im)mobility of the migrant as a tool to critique the politics of place, and to question the effectiveness of walking as a method to democratize space.

Interspersed throughout my thesis are my recorded walks through London. In each walk I step into the role of the urban wanderer, drawing upon the spatial theory and migrant literature I read and analyzed. There are a total of four recorded walks accompanied by photographs of the areas I traversed. Each walk explored areas that historically served as landing places for migrant populations. My first walk explores the areas of Liverpool Station, The Spitalfields, and Christ Church. The second walk is my second exploration of Whitechapel, Shoreditch, and Brick Lane. The third and fourth walks explore the area of Hackney, particularly London Fields, Regents Canal, and Victoria Park.

Although I have separated each of my three approaches into their own chapters, I do not mean to suggest that the spatial theory, literature, and personal experiences I have collected are intellectually quarantined. Each approach I have used to discuss the politics of place is a necessary component. Spatial theory will provide necessary vocabulary and a foundational understanding of how our sense of place is influenced by the political climate. Literature conveys the personal meanings places have to the individual, and my own experiences speak to how accurately both spatial theory and British migrant literature communicate the (im)mobility of the urban walker.

Walk #2: Whitechapel
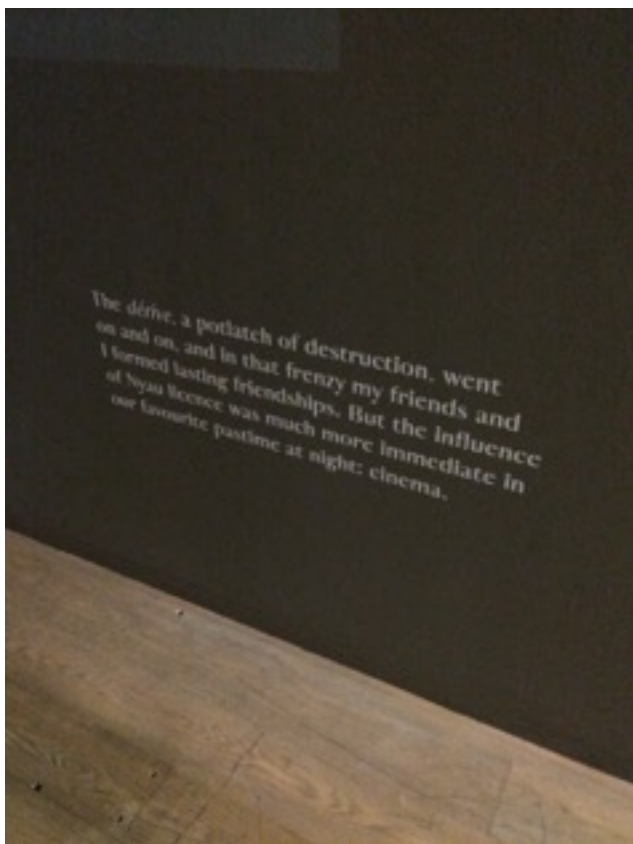
My walk around Whitechapel began at the Aldgate East Underground station at 3 pm on a cold, rainy day in November. I walked toward the Whitechapel Museum, but first stopped at the Anarchist Bookshop, which had a whole section for Situationist literature. I spent a few minutes in the shop as the rain turned to a downpour. After the rain had stopped, I walked toward the Whitechapel Gallery, which had an exhibit on Samson Kambalu and Nyau Cinema. On the walk to the museum, a man in a hooded sweater ran past me and his shoulder bumped mine. He ran down the alley and into one of the brick walls, as though he was running from something. I looked around but saw no one chasing him. I resumed my walk and entered the Whitechapel Gallery, which which sits between two brick buildings. Once inside, the museum was very calm. There is a table near the entryway where a group of employees sat with laptops. I stopped in the Nyau Cinema exhibition, which was mostly empty. Kamabalu's projections subvert linear time and embrace Gule Wamkulu rituals practiced in Malawi. The projections were playful and depicted different scenes around London, including a projection called "The Pick-Pocket."

I left the museum and walked toward Altab Ali park, a site mentioned in several readings I had come across. The rain had mostly cleared, but it was still very chilly. Altab Ali park was empty, with an occasional pedestrian walking a dog. There was plenty of signage in the park and information about Altab Ali, a Bangladeshi man who was killed in the park by three teenage boys. The murder of Altab Ali was part of a group of racially motivated attacks in the East End during the late 70s.

I left Altab Ali Park and walked toward the London Muslim Centre. The restaurants and shops became predominantly Turkish as I got closer to the centre. There were many pedestrians walking the streets near the London Muslim Centre, mostly fathers and their young children, some wearing shalwar kameez, and others wearing

trousers and dress shirts. As I took a picture of the centre, two young boys wearing taqiyahs watched me. Even on a Wednesday, the Muslim Center was buzzing with activity, with men and women in traditional religious clothing. Right next to the London Muslim Centre was the First London Mosque, a multi-story building which was just as busy as the centre.

Right next to the mosque was the Fieldgate Synagogue. The synagogue, in comparison, looked empty or under construction. I thought it was very interesting to see both the synagogue and mosque side by side. The mosque was not only much larger than the synagogue but also much busier — it is a very

physical representation of the change in cultures and religions in Whitechapel. The restaurants and shops seemed much quieter and less-touristy than Brick Lane, where you are often pestered by men standing outside restaurants, offering you lunch deals and making jokes.I continued to wander around Whitechapel and came across the Brick Lane Jamme Masjid Mosque. I took note of the separate entrances for men and women. I also noticed a "BWS" graffiti tag on the mosque, which I had been seeing everywhere in East London.

Chapter 1: Place, Space, and Psychogeography

"People can see nothing around them that is not their own image; everything speaks to them of themselves."
-Guy Debord, *On the Passage of a Few Persons*

Spatial theorists, geographers, writers, and cultural critics have all explored how our sense of place plays a primary role in our national and personal identity. Michel de Certeau, Guy Debord, and Doreen Massey are three spatial theorists and cultural critics who attempt to understand and communicate how social, political, and economic ideologies shape our lived environment and limit our freedom of mobility. Spatial theory provides useful vocabulary and demonstrates how thinking spatially changes our perception of the most mundane activities, such as walking, commuting, or simply taking up space in public places. This first chapter will discuss the spatial and cultural theories of de Certeau, Debord, and Massey, and explore their approaches to communicating the politics of place. Although spatial theory provides a necessary introduction to spatial thinking, much of spatial theory remains abstract, or separated from lived experiences of urban life. It is only by placing spatial theory alongside other discourses, such as law and literature, that the personal meanings of places, and how they control our (im)mobility can be understood.

Many philosophers, geographers, and cultural critics have created definitions of place and space which attempt to capture the authority that location has on the lived experiences of people. In *The Practice of Everyday Life,* French cultural critic and

philosopher Michel de Certeau develops theories of production and consumption in the banal activities of the everyday. In his chapter "Spatial Stories," de Certeau differentiates between "place" and "space," two terms that he believes should not be used interchangeably. According to de Certeau, "place" denotes a sense of stability and rest. A place is "an order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence…an instantaneous configuration of positions" (117). Places have a set of "proper" rules, where two elements cannot occupy the same location. Instead, elements are placed next to one another and work together to serve a particular purpose.

Space, on the other hand, is a "practiced place" (117) created and defined by the people within. Unlike place, space considers the directions of vectors, velocities, and time. Spaces are locations which are constantly transformed and redefined by the elements moving and intersecting within them. If the grid of a city is a place, then the people who walk the streets transform the city into a space. The city walkers violate the proper rules of the urban grid. This dynamism and re-invention allows the walkers to bring the city into actualization, make the urban a lived reality. It is the people within a city who give the functions of place a multiplicity of purposes, effectively taking a place and transforming it into a space.

Another example of the relationship between place and space can be demonstrated by an apartment complex. Left vacant, the apartments are identical places in which all elements remain constant. The apartments become spaces when tenants move

in, filling the rooms with their furniture and using the space to fit their lifestyle. Each apartment maintains its own atmosphere created by the tenant, rendering it a completely different space from any other apartment, despite the structure remaining essentially the same. De Certeau's concept of the malleability of space challenges the limiting notion of space as a neutral geographic location. De Certeau's space is a site of transformation shaped by the people within. Spaces respond to the demands of the people, with the basic functions of that space defined by the habits, cultures, and identities of individuals. De Certeau defines space as democratic, where individuals alter spaces within structural and architectural boundaries.

It should be noted that de Certeau's definitions of space and place are contrary to geography's definitions of place and location. In the field of geography, place is defined as a site of interaction, and location remains more of an inert site of orientation. Despite de Certeau's reversal of the space/place dichotomy, the central point remains the same. De Certeau's vision of the space/place relationship was meant to make people more aware of the power of place. De Certeau wrote *The Practice of Everyday Life* to illuminate how economic ideologies are embedded within the quotidian aspects of our lives. His definitions of place and space are meant to encourage the reader to recognize how we affect, and are affected by, the spaces we pass through.

De Certeau's democratic vision of space remains a pertinent theory when thinking about migration. If spaces are transformed by the people within them, then international borders and national identities are also constantly challenged and reinvented. De

Certeau's theory of spaces allows for the possibility that spaces are reflections of the people. In practice, however, democratic spaces do not take shape instantaneously. Migrants often face social, political, and economic difficulties when arriving in a new place. Their mobility through public spaces is often limited. In the past, migrants of color in London, for example, faced color bars which prevented them from living in certain areas of the city. London isn't the only offender — segregation in the U.S. also banned people of color from occupying public spaces. Space isn't as democratic as de Certeau's theory appears to be, yet his definitions of space as an active site which reflects the politics of the people within acknowledges that space is politicized. De Certeau's definitions provide the basis for examining how the migrant experience of mobility in urban landscapes speaks to deeper political and social issues.

De Certeau grounds his theories of place and space in the city. Cities are active sites of movement and invention and are diverse in their large populations. In his chapter "Walking in the City," de Certeau looks down on Manhattan from the 110th floor of the World Trade Center. From above, de Certeau becomes a "voyeur" who is able to watch how the urban spaces below continue to shift and change. The World Trade Center becomes an important symbol for de Certeau. According to de Certeau, the World Trade Center is "the most monumental figure of Western urban development" (93). The WTC was a site of optical knowledge for de Certeau, a vantage point where large swathes of New York City could be observed. The WTC was at one point the tallest building in the world, a testament to Western urban ingenuity and power. De Certeau's voyeur shares in

this urban authority. Despite this omnipresence, the voyeur remains separated from urban life.

Although de Certeau's writings on the WTC predate 9/11, the attack serves as tragic proof of the politicization of place. If the WTC is to be understood as monument to American ingenuity, Al Qaeda's destruction of the WTC can be interpreted as a direct attack on the global power and legacy of the United States. The urban landscape of New York City became the embodiment of U.S. national identity. By attacking the WTC, Al Qaeda effectively attacked the global economic power of the U.S. The destruction of the WTC reveals how political issues are embedded within the urban landscape. Shifts in international politics can have a tangible effect on the physical landscape of global cities like New York.

De Certeau uses the WTC both as a symbol of Western hegemonic power, but also as a vantage point. From the top of skyscrapers like the WTC, the voyeur is able to see urban space more clearly. The voyeur watches as the people below create linear patterns, trajectories, and connections by walking the streets. These trajectories overlap and interact, creating an urban narrative. Each person crafts their own trajectory and leaves behind an urban "texturology" (93). De Certeau uses the phrase "texturology" to argue that the patterns of urban life can be read like a book. In the eyes of de Certeau's voyeur, the people below carve out patterns in the urban landscape when they move through an urban space. These carvings and patterns leave behind a textured trail which can be read like words on a page. The urban grid is the lines on the paper, and the individual paths of

the walkers become the words on the page, composing the urban narrative. The trajectories are not meaningless and are shaped by each individual's habits and identities.

The walkers use their footsteps as a single thread within a complex overlapping narrative, connecting isolated places and transforming the space around them. De Certeau sees walking as a form of communication. The city dwellers communicate through the ways they traverse the city. Each individual's mobility is a reflection of their freedom to move through space along lines of race, class, gender, and citizenship. The walker transforms the "proper meanings" (100) of the city created by urban planners by violating the grid. These personal trails create a double image of the city, consisting of the urban planner's grid and the walker's path. The urban narrative becomes composed of the "clear text" of the city grid shrouded in the "migrational, or metaphorical city" (93) composed of the walker's footsteps. The voyeur is able to witness this doubleness, seeing the urban narrative in its totality.

The urban narrative, however, is composed of "fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces" (93) which the walkers cannot recognize. The walkers become the authors of an urban narrative or texturology they cannot read. There is chaos within de Certeau's vision of the urban narrative, where walkers deny any permanent sense of place. Walking, by de Certeau's definition, is "a lack of place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper" (103). Walking is thus composed of two parts — occupying and unoccupying, leaving behind a location which will then be filled and deserted by another. Space is constantly redefined by the onslaught of new walkers. The

urban narrative is changed before it can ever be actualized by the voyeur, who is the only person with enough distance to see the urban text as a whole. De Certeau's high-rise voyeur may watch the overlapping patterns of the walkers below, but they can never interpret the narrative. The voyeur's distance from the street only further separates them from the logic which dictates the patterns of the walkers. The voyeur attempts to see an objective urban narrative but remains entirely disengaged from the motivations of the walkers and how it feels to navigate urban space.

The walkers and the voyeur have weaknesses which cannot be met with one another's strengths. De Certeau's voyeur cannot read the urban narrative in a way that reflects the social, political, and economic realities that shape how walkers move throughout a city. Walking in the city feels more like a war than it does a collaborative project. The walkers choose paths for particular reasons, yet these reasons remain unknown to the voyeur. The eye of de Certeau's voyeur visualizes a homogenous city, where individual stories become buried by the overwhelming power of the collective. The voyeur loses his or her ability to follow any one thread within the whole, reading the city only in excerpts from completely different narratives as though it is one continuous text. The city becomes impossible to translate, a indecipherable tome which is interesting to look at, but impossible to understand.

It would seem that de Certeau's illiterate voyeur problematizes theories of space, place, and the urban text. De Certeau believed that urban life could be read, yet his voyeur cannot derive any meaning from the urban texturology. De Certeau does not

provide a methodology for people to read the "thicks and thins of the urban text" (93).

Neither the voyeur nor the walker in de Certeau's theories can communicate what they

are creating or witnessing. The moment the urban text is actualized, it is rewritten by

another walker who utilizes the space for their own purposes. De Certeau's lack of a

methodology for reading the city seems both unfeasible and undesirable. De Certeau's

urban narrative is chaotic and momentary, like a text written in invisible ink — legible

for a fleeting moment, then remembered solely by the person who wrote it. The urban

narrative is a collective project branching off in endless directions. Who is to say whose

personal narrative is representative of a collective truth?

De Certeau's lack of a methodology in reading the urban text is more than just a

logical impossibility. If it were possible to devise a way of reading de Certeau's vision of

the urban text, the only person able to understand the narrative would be de Certeau's

voyeur. The voyeur is limited in their knowledge of the logic of the street. From above,

the voyeur becomes alienated from the city below, disentangled from the "daily

behaviors" (93) of the walkers. If the voyeur could read the urban text, it would most

likely be a very poor translation with no consideration of the social forces which

influence the texturology unfolding below. The voyeur's urban narrative would be wholly

unrepresentative of what it actually feels like to live in an urban space.

De Certeau's theories remain important because they encourage self awareness

and spatial thinking. De Certeau's definition of space legitimizes the need to explore

urban narratives in order to understand the politicization of place. De Certeau recognizes

that the urban narrative is composed of both the totalizing gaze and the narrow close-up. Imagining a daily commute as a single thread woven into the tapestry of an urban narrative gives a new authority to spaces and the people within them. Spaces become active sites of reinvention powered by the people within. De Certeau's walkers are tools of spatial democracy, and their awareness of such influence is the first step to recognizing the politics of place.

De Certeau uses the figure of the urban walker in his theories, but the urban walker pre-dates *The Practice of Everyday Life* by centuries. The urban walker may also be referred to as the "flâneur" which translates as "stroller," or in more critical translations, a "loafer." In *Paris — Capital of the Nineteenth Century,* Walter Benjamin discusses the arcades of Paris. Benjamin credits Baudelaire's lyrical poetry for the creation of the flâneur. For Benjamin, the flâneur is a liminal figure, a man who remains alienated from the crowds of people who populate the city (Benjamin 84). The flâneur is neither destitute nor bourgeois, but somewhere in the middle. Benjamin's flâneur is closely linked to both the "intelligentsia" and the "bohemia" (85) whose purpose originated as an observer of the Paris arcades and marketplaces. Benjamin is critical of the urban architect Georges-Eugène Haussmann whose vision of Paris was populated by large boulevards and shopping centers. Haussmann's 19th century urban redevelopment of Paris "encouraged finance capital" (86) according to Benjamin, who favored Marxist critiques of capitalism. Haussmann's Paris consisted not only of arcades but barricades, which Benjamin believed made public demonstrations and civil war impossible (87). The

city of Paris was transformed into a center for commerce and commodity.

Benjamin was not alone in his critique of Haussmann's redevelopment of Paris. Marxist philosophers, artists, cultural critics, and everyday Parisians shared in the criticism of Haussmann's Paris. Some of the most vocal critics were the Situationists, an avant-garde collective of artists, writers, and cultural critics in 1960's Paris. Although several years separate the work of Benjamin and the Situationists, their philosophies and written works share many similarities. The Situationist International was led by Guy Debord, a French Marxist theorist, writer, and filmmaker. Debord and the Situationists felt the urban regeneration of Paris was an act of police control. In his essay *Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,* Debord describes Paris as a city with "open spaces allowing for the rapid circulation of troops and the use of artillery against insurrections… Haussmann's Paris is a city built by an idiot full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" (par. 4*)*. Debord saw Paris gradually become a city created for cars and technology, rather than pedestrians and people. The Situationists believed that the "regeneration" of urban architecture was a symptom of the growing popularity of capitalism and would result in increased inequality and policing of public spaces. According to Debord, by rebuilding cities to support the use of motor vehicles rather than pedestrians, urban developers were encouraging capitalist notions of happiness through materialism and commodity fetishism. "Such pathetic illusions of privilege are linked to a general idea of happiness prevalent among the bourgeoisie and maintained by a system of publicity" (par. 6).

The Situationists remain notable in their playful construction of situations meant to refocus individuals on authentic experiences. The situations created by the SI were games meant to revitalize and reimagine urban spaces. These situations were advertised in *Potlatch*, a bulletin published by the Letterists, another artist collective who shared similar motives as the Situationist International. An example of these games can be found in the first edition of *Potlatch:*

"In accordance with what you are seeking, choose a country, a large or small city, a busy or quiet street. Build a house. Furnish it. Use decorations and surroundings to the best advantage. Choose the season and the time of day. Bring together the most suitable people, with appropriate records and drinks. The lighting and the conversation should obviously be suited to the occasion, as should be the weather or your memories. If there has been no error in your calculations, the result should prove satisfying."

This tongue-in-cheek approach was typical of the Situationist movement, perhaps even their signature. These situations were a way of teaching people about desire and the material world by focusing on intangible qualities of life such as friendship, rather than accruing material goods to the ends of increasing social stature. In *Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,* Debord claims that it was indulgence in material goods which was the "primary moral deficiency" (par. 22*)* of Parisian culture during his time.

Like de Certeau, Debord and the Situationists believed walking was an essential tool in recognizing and critiquing the politics of place. By walking and wandering

through the urban landscapes, the Situationists reclaimed the city for the pedestrian.

Debord's urban walker shares many qualities with Benjamin's flâneur, though Debord

would most likely resent the affiliation. The Situationists sought to create a scientific

methodology behind these urban wanderings, unlike the figure of the flâneur, who

historically used walking as a leisurely pursuit rather than an intellectual one. The

Situationist methodology of urban walking is often referred to as psychogeography,

which Debord defines as "study of the precise laws and specific effects of the

geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of

individuals" (*Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography,* par. 2*)*. Psychogeography

attempts to make sense of the urban texturology by focusing on the individual

experiences of a carefully documented walk through the urban landscape.

Psychogeography reclaims the personal and the local through subjective experiences of

urban spaces.

  The phrase "psychogeography" has been repurposed many times since Debord,

but the act of walking remains a crucial component of the discipline. The

psychogeographic walk became a technique among the Situationists, referred to as the

*dérive.*The Situationists described the method behind psychogeography in Debord's essay

Theory of the Dérive. Debord's dérive emphasizes a playful aimlessness in the urban

drift, reimagining urban space as fantastic, other-worldly visions. Dérives were most

effective in a small group of two or three people who were willing to "drop their

relations, their work and leisure activities…to be drawn by the attractions of the terrain

and the encounters they find there" (*Theory of the Dérive*, par. 2*)*. Average dérives lasted

a day, though some were recorded to go on for several days or weeks. The spatial field,

or the ground covered in the dérive, could be limited or entirely open-ended depending

on the wanderer. Debord insisted that chance within the dérive was limited, as walkers

were influenced by certain contours within their urban environment which the walkers

"may tend to fixate around new habitual axes, to which they will constantly be drawn

back" (par 7). These axes remain consistent in the contours of the landscape in Debord's

vision of the city, and can be felt, consciously or unconsciously, by those who walk

through the urban environment. De Certeau's "thicks and thins" of the urban landscape

seem an obvious parallel to Debord's vision and language of the city. Both de Certeau

and Debord believed the urban landscape influenced a walker's path, though these

influences remain ambiguous or deeply personal to each individual walker.

The Situationists focused their attentions on the architecture of spaces during their

dérives. In his short essay *Formulary for a New Urbanism,* Ivan Chtcheglov, one of the

creators of the dérive, claimed that "Architecture is the simplest means of articulating

time and space, of modulating reality, of engendering dreams" (par. 13). Debord and the

Situationists read the architecture as abstraction, and paired the physicality of built

environment with the sounds, smells, and light that a walker may experience when

wandering the streets of Paris. There was a strong belief that walking could transform a

city both in its physical presence and spirit.

Marxist critiques of capitalism and walking as subversion were just two of the

hallmarks of Situationism. Situationist theory was also built upon Debord's concept of the "spectacle." In his 1967 book *The Society of the Spectacle*, Debord defines the spectacle as "a social relationship between people that is mediated by images" (par. 4). Debord witnessed the commodification of the everyday through the reconstruction of Paris, which influenced his written work. In *Society of the Spectacle,* Debord argued that he lived in "the era of the self-destruction of the urban environment" (par. 174) in the name of consumption. Haussmann's long boulevards, arcades, and freeways were part of the spectacle that Debord saw as problematic. Paris became populated with "temples of frenetic consumption" (par. 174) which eventually became overtaxed and abandoned. Debord believed such patterns would result in the city consuming itself, with new temples of consumption built to replace the previous.

Debord theorized that the urban destruction erased the "universal history" (par. 176) of revolution encoded in urban life. According to Debord, cities were battlegrounds for freedom, a "concentration of social power, which is what makes the historical enterprise possible, and a consciousness of the past" (par. 176). Debord believed that a city could hold power of its country, creating possibility for political and economic upheaval. Debord argues that bourgeoisie never claimed possession of their freedom, which allowed for the destruction and commodification of urban life (par. 176). The reconstruction of cities, like Haussmann's Paris, destroys the history of the city along with the consciousness of the past. The commodification of the city leads to a sense of alienation in the same way many Parisians felt alienated after the redevelopment of Paris.

The feeling of alienation Parisians felt was a result of the artificiality of Haussmann's Paris (par. 177), which severed Paris from its culture and history. Debord saw this alienation as a major roadblock to collective power and revolution.

The dérive, along with several other tactics of civil disobedience attempted to combat the sense of alienation that Haussmann's Paris engendered. Situationist theory, however, was not without its faults. In his 1961 film *A Critique of Separation*, Debord resigned himself to one major pitfall of the dérive: urban relativism. The focus on the subjective experiences of the city, which psychogeography based its entire philosophy on, allows for a multiplicity of interpretations. Such subjectivity made it difficult for Debord and the Situationists to depict a unifying experience of urban life. Urban relativism also recognized the difficulty in accurately expressing the emotional and psychological impacts a space may have on an individual. Like de Certeau, Debord struggled with communicating the urban narrative: "the personal meaning [cities] have for us is incommunicable, as is the secrecy of private life in general, regarding which we possess nothing but pitiful documents" (*A Critique of Separation)*. Although de Certeau and Debord have different approaches in spatial theory, the same issue crops up — a portrayal of an unreadable city. Urban relativism and the incommunicability of personal meanings makes psychogeography perhaps entirely theoretical, rather than the objective practice Debord originally set out to accomplish.

Despite Debord's ambivalence, urban relativism is one of the many merits of psychogeographic theory. The subjective nature of psychogeography gives the silenced

and ignored members of society a platform to express their urban reality. The experiences

of the marginalized expose the politics of place. These marginalized narratives illuminate

an urban vision which portrays a city beyond its traffic circles and shopping centers.

Marginalized urban narratives expose a reality which the bourgeois Situationists did not

recognize: the privilege of mobility. For many people, there are social and economic

obstacles which limit their mobility. Some people are unable to afford the rising cost of

public transportation, while others fear street harassment based on their gender, race, or

other significant markers of personal identity. The ways we experience a city is

influenced by how freely we are able to navigate the urban landscape, with members of

marginalized groups often creating alternative routes out of necessity.

For Debord and the Situationists, exploring and recording Paris was without

significant financial or social obstacles. Debord and the SI were primarily composed of

white intellectuals who were able spend inordinate amounts of time exploring Paris.

Debord was afforded all the advantages that come with a stable family income and formal

education. Paris was accessible to Debord in ways that it is not to marginalized people

such as women, the poor, the uneducated, and people of color. Recognizing the privileges

that Debord and other members of the SI were afforded would have only benefitted the

SI's mission to democratize urban spaces. Despite the obvious benefits that marginalized

narratives had for the mission of the SI, the Situationists did not fully recognize the

politics of place both in their theories and practices of psychogeography.

In "Salvaging Situationism: Race and Space," Andrea Gibbons discusses perhaps

the most glaring omission of marginalized narratives within the SI. Gibbons argues that

the Situationists did not properly recognize the exceptional psychogeographic work of

Abdelhafid Khatib, a member of the Algerian faction of the Situationist movement.

Khatib's principal focus was the drafting of the first psychogeographic study of Les

Halles, which Gibbons claims is a particularly difficult area to record. Khatib's careful

documentation and inclusion of larger social and political considerations that influence

the urban landscape are clear in his only publication, *Attempt at a Psychogeographical*

Description of Les Halles:

> "According to the theory of concentric urban zones, Les Halles belongs to the
>
> transitional zone of Paris (social deterioration, acculturation and the intermixing
>
> of population making the environment propitious to cultural exchanges). One
>
> knows that in the case of Paris this concentric division is complicated by an east-
>
> west opposition between the predominantly popular and bourgeois quarters,
>
> business or residential. South of the Seine the line of rupture is formed by the
>
> Boulevard Saint-Michel. North of the Seine it deviates slightly towards the west
>
> and then passes along the Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs, the Rue Notre-Dame-
>
> des-Victoires and their prolongations. It is at the western limit of Les Halles that
>
> the Ministère des Finances, the Bourse and the Bourse du Commerce form the
>
> three points of a triangle whose center is occupied by the Banque de France. The
>
> institutions concentrated in this restricted space turn it, practically and
>
> symbolically, into the defensive perimeter of capitalism's smartest neighborhoods.

The projected displacement of Les Halles to the outskirts of the city will entail a

new blow to popular Paris, which has for a century now been constantly exiled, as

we know, to the suburbs" (par. 19).

Khatib's work also includes maps of his recorded walks, and precise descriptions of the

construction which interfered with his walks. He was unable to finish his work due to the

curfews against Arabs and North Africans on Paris streets. During his attempts to record

Les Halles at night, Khatib was arrested twice and spent the night in a holding cell.

According to Gibbons, Khatib was never heard from again in the Situationist movement.

As Gibbons points out, the Situationists largely ignored Khatib's experience of

Les Halles. There is no essay penned by Guy Debord on the racial discrimination and

colonial history of France. There is no rebellion or protest to end the curfew against Arab

and North African men on the Paris streets. Debord wrote about theories of alienation, yet

ignored Khatib's visceral experience of psychological and physical alienation both in

regards to the curfew and Khatib's imprisonment. The silence of Khatib parallels the

oppression of the Algerians and the rise of France as a colonial power. Gibbons is

unrelenting in her criticism of the Situationists:

"This is the moment his comrades decided to cling to the safest possible

understandings of capitalism, rather than to start from the position and the

struggle of the oppressed made so clear to them through his imprisoned body.

They might have begun to disentangle the ways in which colonialism had been

fundamental to the growth of Paris and to capitalism itself; how it undercut the

power of their own work; the ways in which race and nationality stood in

dialectical relation to both spectacle and brutal, death-dealing force at the level of

the city as well as at the level of the nation."

Khatib's experience in Les Halles provides strong, if not undeniable, proof of the

politicization of place and its effects on the mobility of the pedestrian. Khatib's

experiences with the curfew in Paris is a near perfect blend of subjective observations on

Les Halles met with objective reality of law, a combination that Debord's own writings

often struggled to achieve.

The difficulties Khatib faced with his restricted mobility were a result of the

Algerian war and France's growing claim as a colonial power. The urban regeneration of

Paris and the growing popularity of capitalism, the two major concerns of the

Situationists, were in many ways intertwined with the colonial powers of France. The

lack of intellectual energy spent by the SI on France's involvement in the Algerian War is

shocking and curious. The growing colonial power of France should have been a chief

concern for the Situationists. Colonialism is at its root, a concern over the control of

space. The colonizer uses oppressive force to control space, take economic advantage of

the disempowered, and impose their own culture, language, law and people of the

invaded country. Colonialism and notions of empire blur the lines of a national identity

based on place, as imperial powers conquer and control countries that may be oceans

away. The growing presence of capitalism, which the Situationists were highly critical of,

would have only compounded the exploitation of colonized lands. Khatib's presence on

the streets of Paris is a remapping of the colonial city by the colonized individual, an act of defiance which is central to the goals of Situationism. Khatib's work may the most impressive psychogeographic work to be produced, and yet it is seldom ever discussed.

The absence of Khatib's work in the psychogeographic canon is one example of the larger failure to recognize how the violence of the Algerian War may have been encoded in the architecture and emotional undercurrents of Paris. War changes national narratives, and symbols of patriotism and militarism become a part of everyday life. Architectural markers of national identity would have been a central nexus between the abstract theories and the concrete experiences of the flâneurs operating in Paris. Psychogeography would have served as an important tool to critique France's colonial powers, and yet the Situationists do little to see the city from the perspectives of the oppressed. Gibbons makes her most poignant critique as she asks "how can [Situationists] escape the oppressions of the old if they could not even see them?" This inability to see prevents psychogeography from accomplishing its mission to serve both a theoretical and social purpose.

Ironically enough, the Algerian War came to be one of the final nails in the coffin for the French faction of the Situationist International. According to a report from the Third Conference of the Situationist International in 1959, the interest in the French SI began to wane in light of the "overwhelming conformism inspired by the military and the police, currently dominating the new regime in that country, and the length of the colonial war in Algeria, which has conditioned and broken the youth of France" (Gibbons).

Debord's anxiety over urban relativism is all the more troubling with the suppression of voices like Khatib's recordings of Les Halles. Khatib's experiences in Les Halles expose how the colonial cities oppress their own citizens under imperialism. His work provides proof that social, political, and economic issues are encoded within cities and the urban narrative, a claim which justifies the importance of Situationist work in major cities around the globe.

The Situationists' struggles with incorporating marginalized urban narratives complicated their attempts to recognize the politics of place, but their theories remain important to the politics of place. Debord's concept of the dérive, and the emphasis on the subjective walker provide a corrective lens for de Certeau's objective voyeur. Both de Certeau's totalizing view of the city and Debord's singular urban thread are necessary perspectives when reading the urban narrative. Thinking about the politics of place requires both de Certeau's panorama and Debord's close-up, resulting in a better understanding of how the global is played out in the local. Geographer and social scientist Doreen Massey achieves a more equal distribution of this double image of the city. Massey not only uses her own experiences of living in London and walking the streets, but also recognizes how global issues are woven into the very fabric of urban life.

In *A Global Sense of Place*, Doreen Massey discusses the role that technology has played in changing our understanding of place and space. Today, you can be sitting in a cafe in London while simultaneously taking a virtual tour of the Louvre. Massey's understanding of place is closely related to economics: "Capital is going through a new

phase of internationalization, specially in its financial parts. More people travel more frequently and for longer distances. Your clothes have probably been made in a range of countries" (1). Our daily lives are an amalgamation of global forces — the clothes we wear, the food we eat, and the entertainment we enjoy are often made elsewhere and yet, they all remain comfortably at our fingertips. Massey argues that our recent advancements in technology has created a "time-space compression" (1), which has created new uncertainties about our definitions of place. A privileged few are able to move through the world with startling simplicity, whether it be across a city or across an entire ocean. With this intense global overlap, Massey argues that our understanding of place must be more progressive.

Massey recognizes that time-space compression affects people differently along lines of class, race, and gender. Time-space compression itself is a very Western and colonial concept. Watching local restaurants turn to global imports "must have been felt for centuries, though from a very different point of view, by colonized peoples all over the world as they watched the importations, maybe even used, the products of, first, European colonization" (1). Massey defines these different experiences of space along lines of race, class, gender, and nationality as "power geometry" (3), where some groups are more in control of the flows of movement and mobility. The location that groups have in relation to the power geometry are complicated and varied, with the increased mobility of some weakening the limited mobility of others. For example, if most people in a city drive rather than use public transportation, there will be a decrease in public

transportation service. People who cannot afford cars will be limited to the poorly funded public transportation, restricting their mobility around a city. Thinking about this on a global scale, with the exporting of factory plants, countries like the United States can pit "relatively immobile workers" in factories across the globe against one another, strengthening capital's hand "against struggling local economies" from Genk to Dagenham (4).

Massey's theories of time-space compression and its global effects on the experience of urban life are essential to our very understanding of what creates a city. According to Massey's theories of time-space compression, cities defy a geographic location — they must be understood as a web of interweaving relationships. Forces from all over the world shape and influence a city and the people within it. Place becomes a series of social connections which grow and change constantly. According to Massey, "what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus" (7). Under this definition, place becomes a specific location composed of the intersections of social relationships. People and their relationships to others, both global and local, become the primary factor in creating a space. Massey's definition of place allows for a transformation of spaces based on the growing and changing web of social relations.

In many ways, *A Global Sense of Place* achieves what both de Certeau and Debord could not. Massey's writing is articulate and easy to understand. Massey

recognizes that global politics affect local urban environments and sees mobility as a privilege which is often denied to women, people of color, and the poor. This is not to say that de Certeau and Debord's theories are null and void. In fact, some of Massey's strongest passages parallel the work of de Certeau and Debord. Debord and the Situationists believed that political and economic ideologies were encoded in the urban planning of the city. Reconstructions of the urban landscape, like Haussmann's Paris, were contemporary examples of urban regenerative efforts mirroring the growing popularity of capitalism. The creation of the dérive gave power back to the pedestrian. Massey embarks on her own dérive through Kilburn in *A Global Sense of Place,* taking note of the "chaotic mix of Kilburn" (6) from the shops displaying saris to the postboxes "adorned with the letters IRA" (6). Massey uses her dérive to demonstrate her point that places and communities do not have single identities, rather they are composed of global and political relationships.

Massey bridges Debord's close up on the individual with de Certeau's panoramic voyeur as she urges the reader to "get back in your mind's eye on a satellite; go right out again and look back at the globe. This time, however, imagine not just all the physical movement, nor even all the often invisible communications, but also and especially all the social relations" (7). Massey uses de Certeau's panorama to get a sense of the totality, the social links which transform a local place into a global space. From Massey's satellite, we can see that de Certeau's urban narrative is much larger and more complex than he imagined from the top of the World Trade Center. Massey, however, does not

privilege this panorama over the close-up. This global panorama is played out on the local through the habits and social relationships of the individual.

The spatial theories of Debord, de Certeau, and Massey demonstrate that sense of place is a political issue. Their work provides a strong foundation for exploring urban spaces, though their theories work best as abstract principles. Debord expressed the difficulty in understanding his own work, stating that "none of this is very clear. It is a completely typical drunken monologue…with its vain phrases that do not await response and its overbearing explanations. And its silences" (*A Critique of Separation).* De Certeau's work defines the urban narrative and explores the importance of the pedestrian, but the narrative is never made legible to the voyeur. Massey momentarily explores the urban narrative through her walk down Kilburn High Road, only to revert back to the perspective of the satellite and the abstract notion of a map consisting of intersecting global social relationships.

Disciplines such as literature and law explore how spatial theory plays out in everyday life both empirically and experientially. Cultural critic Andrea Gibbons argues that a purely theoretical understanding of space lacks an emotional depth: "Fiction does it better, or memoir" (*Salvaging Situationism).* Gibbons points to the psychoanalytic work of Frantz Fanon and other migrant writers as more emotionally explorative in understanding place. Spatial theory struggles to communicate the personal meanings a place may have to an individual. Literature is able to capture the single thread of the urban narrative de Certeau envisioned, and communicate the personal meanings of space

that Debord struggled to convey. British literature in particular has a long history of literature about the city, from Charles Dickens to Zadie Smith. London has become a symbol of British culture, for better or for worse. British migrant literature in particular tests and challenges the limits of spatial theory. Much like spatial theory, British migrant literature uses the figure of the flâneur to document urban spaces. Migrant authors like Samuel Selvon and Jean Rhys use the migrant flâneur to critique the politics of place through the experiences of their characters, whose experiences are often autobiographical. The migrant flâneur, much like Khatib, experiences urban space differently than anyone else. Migrants are often denied the privilege of mobility through blatant acts of racism like color bars, or more subtle social stigmas. The migrant is a representative of the global forces at play in the local urban environment as they negotiate nostalgia for their homeland and alienation from their new country. The migrant flâneur's relationship to urban space demonstrates how personal relationships to space speak to larger political issues.

Literature is not the only discipline outside spatial theory which explores space and place. Law, particularly law involving national borders, immigration, and citizenship, articulates a more empirical narrative of space. Examining the laws passed within a democratic nation broadly speaks to the political and cultural climate of its citizens. British legal history has struggled with questions of national identity and its relationship to space and place due to its imperial past. Legislation such as the Aliens Act of 1905, the British Nationality Acts of 1948 and 1981, and the recent outcome of the EU Referendum

Act all speak to the changing landscape of England and its complicated relationship to a British imperial past. The nationality acts have redefined British identity, privileging native-born citizens over migrants and members of the commonwealth. The nationality acts show that "Britishness" is determined based on birthplace and heritage. British legal history exposes that there is also a racial component in deciding who is allowed to take up space in Britain, with people of color typically excluded from claiming an English identity. The legal history of Britain exposes what is at stake when we discuss space, from the free movement of people to racial equality.

Law serves as a helpful framework in analyzing how British migrant literature explores the politics of place. The British Nationality Acts and the EU Referendum speak to larger cultural trends in Britain. Setting law and literature in conversation reveals both empirically and experientially how political ideologies are encoded within the urban landscape. The works of writers like Samuel Selvon and Jean Rhys all record a thread of the urban narrative through the experiences of migrant characters and their personal relationships to London. The second chapter of this thesis will explore how Selvon and Rhys use the migrant flâneur to illuminate how larger themes of xenophobia, racism, and sexism are apparent in the everyday experiences of urban life.

Walk #3: Hackney Central, London Fields

I began my walk at Hackney Central, which is populated by Vietnamese restaurants and a handful of pubs. The weather was brisk, but it was a sunny day for late-October. I left the Hackney Central station around 2:30 pm and began to wander toward town hall. Right next to Hackney Town Hall, I saw the Hackney Museum. I stopped inside the museum, which had exhibitions on black artists from 1960 to the present. The exhibit included information on the BLK Art Group, and Caribbean Artists Movement, and more. There was also an interview with John Akomfrah about the Black Audio Film Collective and its response to civil disturbances in Brixton in 1981. There was also an exhibit about the history

of Hackney which focused on migrant life. There was information on Jewish migration as well as black, West Indian, and Bengali migrants.

I continued my walk through Hackney toward Mare Street and walked to Broadway Market. Mare street consisted of multi-story buildings with some chain businesses like Pret but also a lot of Vietnamese markets and a handful of pubs.. There was a new housing development going up on Mare Street called "Abode," which looked as if it was trying to appeal to younger crowds of Londoners. A lot of Hackney looked like it was under construction, and there wasn't a lot of people walking around Mare Street. As I got closer to

Broadway Market, I noticed more people walking around. Most of the people near Broadway market were younger white families with small children.

Broadway Market mostly consisted of artisanal coffee shops and bakeries, all with quirky ambient lighting. There were a few strongholds left on the street such as F. Cooke, which advertised its imported live eel for which Hackney used to be famous. Bikes were parked all along the streets. I also noticed several real estate offices, which I understood as a sign of gentrification. I peered into Regent's Canal, which was lined with the backs of storefronts and a few houseboats. A majority of the people on the canal path were joggers in athletic gear and bicyclists. I turned around and walked toward the Bethnal Green tube station. I passed London Fields, a massive park filled mostly with baby buggies. I decided to stop in the park and sat on a bench for a while. There was a man in the park with several checkers boards, advertising free games of checkers. A child and her mother stopped to play a game. A few young boys rode their bikes through the park and stopped to play on on a jungle gym. Several young parents passed with young children in strollers, or walking dogs. The wind picked up and I got too cold, so I left London Fields and continued to walk toward the Bethanal Green tube station. When I arrived at the station, I noticed an advertisement I had seen in other tube stations. It was an ad sponsored by London Transport which read #LondonIsOpen, a campaign run by the Mayor's Office to deter xenophobia post-Brexit.

Chapter 2: Law, Literature, and the Politics of Place

"Empire messes with identity."

Gayatari Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine*

Spatial theory and psychogeography provide a vocabulary and method of

interpreting the social, political, and economic forces that control how people understand

their sense of place and express their (im)mobility. Much of spatial theory and

psychogeography, however, remains obscure or incommunicable. De Certeau's theories

on space and place provide us with an urban narrative that cannot be interpreted or

understood. Debord struggled with urban relativism and communicating the personal

meanings of place. Discourses outside of spatial theory, particularly law and literature,

can apply abstract spatial theory to more empirical and personal experiences of place.

The first part of this chapter will explore British legal history and England's complicated

relationship with its colonial legacy. The second, and more central part of this chapter

will move to a discussion of postwar British migrant literary works such as Jean Rhys's

Voyage in the Dark and Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners.* Rhys and Selvon

explore the politics of place through the (im)mobility of the migrant flâneur, a figure who

is denied a sense of place both in their native country and the colonial motherland. Rhys

and Selvon challenge the notion of walking as a tool for democratizing space, offering

counter-narratives in which it is the migrants who refuse to move who succeed in

securing their own place in English culture.

Before pointing to specific moments in British legal history, it is necessary to

explore the colonial implications of the distinction between "Englishness" and "Britishness." The distinction between Englishness and Britishness was a method of differentiating the English citizen from the British subject, or the colonizer from the colonized. By differentiating Englishness from Britishness, British subjects were denied English citizenship, along with any legal rights and cultural capital. The Englishness/Britishness distinction became a method of divorcing England from its cultural ties to the British Empire, while still allowing England to benefit economically from the scope of British colonialism. This distinction, however, is also a symptom of a larger colonial fear — that both the colonized *and* the colonizer are transformed through the expansion of empire.

In *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire and the Locations of Identity*, Ian Baucom discusses how notions of Englishness were challenged by the legacy of the British Empire. Baucom provides a succinct description of the relationship between Englishness and Britishness, characterizing the relationship as a matter of "imperial confusion" (4). Baucom sees the cultural desire to differentiate Englishness from Britishness as a result of the localist construction of the English identity. According to Baucom, English identity is defined through "appeals to the identity-endowing properties of place" (4). Traditional English spaces such as the cricket field, the Gothic cathedral, and the Victoria Terminus have become "literalized, sometimes subtly, sometimes crudely, so that these material places have been understood to literally shape the identities of the subjects inhabiting them" (4). Baucom argues that contact with traditional English spaces can confer a sense

of Englishness to an individual. Englishness became not a natural state of identity, rather a "second nature" (5) which can be gained through an association with English spaces.

This association between place and identity, however, is complicated by the colonial scope of the British Empire, which came to rule territories all over the world, all with very different cultures, languages, religions, and people. English law and British rule had historically followed the *ius soli*, or "the law of the soil," a concept dating back to medieval England which claimed England and all its colonies were subjects of the monarch. By the logic of the localist narrative of national identity, if Britain were to claim a country as a colony and erect traditional English styles of architecture, cricket fields, etc., would these new colonial spaces thus transform the colonized people into Britons? British identity became a nebulous, ever-changing qualifier, which led the English colonizers to ask one essential question: "Was the empire the domain of England's mastery of the globe or the territory of the loss of Englishness?" (Baucom 6). In other words, would the colonial objectives of the British Empire transform English identity? The exporting of English spaces and culture to the colonies would result in a transformation of the locations of English identity and challenge the authenticity and authority of England over its colonized territories. As a result, England's greatest threat to its imperial authority and its sense of Englishness was its own empire.

The imperial threat to the locations of English identity and the authority of the white hegemony in England was the primary reason for the Englishness/Britishness distinction. Baucom further complicates English identity by arguing that the localist

narrative of Englishness worked in tandem with a racialized vision of English identity in

order to deny the colonized people a claim to Englishness. According to Baucom, figures

such as Enoch Powell argued for a definition of Englishness based on race, and his

predecessors adopted a localist narrative to prevent the "imperial beyond" from

transforming the "national within" (6). The added racial dimension of Englishness, along

with the Englishness/Britishness distinction, constructed Englishness as a localized and

white identity. The racialized, localist notion of Englishness began to function as a

framework in which the xenophobic culture and irrational fear of migrants in England

continues to exist today.

The cultural fear of migrants and the persistence of the localist discourse in

England influenced much of British immigration law in the twentieth century. One of the

first measures to curb immigration, and the first piece of immigration legislation in the

twentieth century, was the Aliens Act of 1905. The Aliens Act deemed the poor, the

mentally ill, and the criminal all "undesirable" migrants to the UK. According to

Exploring 20th Century London, a project created through a partnership between the

Museum of London, the London Transport Museum, the Jewish Museum, and the

Museum of Croydon, the Aliens Act also sought to curb migrant Russian and Polish Jews

fleeing persecution from Tsarist Russia. British Parliament wanted to decrease the

number of Jewish immigrants, as they became a national scapegoat for the deplorable

living conditions in the East End. The Aliens Act of 1905 demonstrated English cultural

conceptions of who a "good" or "bad" migrant is. Migrants also became a marginalized

group to vilify or blame for the poverty-stricken East End, and other larger political issues in early 20th century England.

British legal history continued to restrict migrancy with the 1948 British Nationality Act, which sought to differentiate between British subjects and English citizens, while still maintaining a colonial presence abroad. The 1948 British Nationality Act created the status of "Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies (CUKC), and allowed dominion states to create their own rules for citizen within individual countries, though not all individuals qualified." (Baucom 10) Individuals designated as a CUKC were given no legal rights or citizenship under British subjecthood, and in some cases, were denied citizenship from their native homeland. This left many individuals as British subjects without legal citizenship in any nation.

Under the 1948 British Nationality Act, British Parliament characterized "Britishness" as a quality of both nation and empire, and English space as "unique, local, differentiated: a formula which permitted the empire to be that which was simultaneously within the boundaries of Britishness, and outside the territory of Englishness" (Baucom 10). The 1948 British Nationality Act also denied British subjecthood to nonwhite people living in the territories, prioritizing the white, native born English over British subjects living in colonized countries. Perhaps the most unprecedented act, however, was the 1981 British Nationality Act, which broke away from the tradition of *ius soli*, an ideology that set the precedent for British immigration law and custom for centuries. The 1981 British Nationality Act sought to once and for all divorce England from its colonial past through

a renaming of the identity of "subject" to "CUKC," though the implication of

subjecthood remained clear. (Baucom 12). The aims of the 1981 act may seem

contradictory to the Thatcherite nostalgia for English imperialism, however, we have

already seen that this paradoxical relationship between Englishness and Britishness is

typical in light of imperial confusion.

The abandonment of the *ius soli* for the notion of *jus soli* also enforced new laws

regarding "patriality" or "the right of abode" in the United Kingdom. According to

Baucom, the notion of patriality was first introduced in Edward Heath's 1971

Immigration Bill, in which the United Kingdom allowed discrimination against those

holding a CUKC status by "reserving a right of abode in the United Kingdom only for

those who had actually been born in the United Kingdom or one of whom parents or

grandparents had been born there" (13). The notion of patriality established a

prioritization for those born in the United Kingdom over individuals designated as a

CUKC. The implication of the patriality law was that the home soil "had greater right-

endowing properties than the soil beyond the sea" (13). Where you were born, and where

your parents were born, determined whether or not you had a right work and live in the

United Kingdom. Migrants, especially those who were nonwhite or from "protected"

dominion states were effectively barred from claiming their own place within English

space. The Aliens Act of 1905, and the Nationality Acts of 1948 and 1981 all set forward

a racialized, localized vision of Englishness. Nonwhite individuals born in the

commonwealth, were excluded from the notion of Englishness and denied a place in

England, both geographically and culturally.

British migrant literature critiques the displacement and immobility of British migrants through the remapping of London by the migrant flâneur. The (im)mobility of the migrant flâneur is a response to the legal and social anti-migration climate in England. The migrant flâneur's urban wandering serves different purposes within migrant literature. In Jean Rhys' 1934 novel *Voyage in the Dark*, the migrant Anna wanders around London to escape the oppressive forces of colonization, and to cruise for wealthy Englishmen willing to support her financially. In Samuel Selvon's 1956 novel *The Lonely Londoners*, Moses and the fellars walk in order to claim a place within the urban landscape, to avoid paying their debts, to sexually cruise, to find a job, and to find a hostel willing to rent rooms to black migrants. Despite the efforts of the migrant flâneur to remap the city of London, it is the migrants who refuse to move, rather than those who wander, who are able to transform the oppressive urban landscape into spaces for the migrant community to grow.

In Jean Rhys' *Voyage in the Dark*, the young migrant Anna moves through urban spaces to negotiate a balance between her conflicting identities as a white creole woman. Anna grew up in Dominica, an island in the Caribbean where her English family had settled for five generations. When Anna's father dies, she is sent to England for a "proper" education with her English stepmother Hester. Despite Anna's English heritage, her creole identity complicates her status as an English woman. Published in 1934, *Voyage in the Dark* is a direct response to the Aliens Act of 1905, which vilified migrants.

Anna would have been considered a migrant and a British subject despite her English heritage, subjecting her to English cultural biases against migrants. Rhys, who also migrated from Dominica as a young woman in the early twentieth century, would have experienced first-hand the "good" or "bad" migrant ideology perpetuated by the 1905 Aliens Act, which would have influenced her depiction of migrant life in London. Anna expresses difficulty in negotiating her multiple identities as a creole migrant, which Rhys portrays formally through Anna's relationship to English spaces.

Rhys constructs three spaces through which Anna wanders: the colonial motherland London, the tamed English countryside, and the dreamlike Caribbean. Each of these spaces represents a part of Anna's identity as a white creole woman, with both English and West Indian heritage. Rhys sets Anna's identities against one another, each part of her mixed heritage fighting for dominance, through spatial and temporal shifts in the narrative. These breaks in the linear narrative function both to subvert colonial notions of spatial and temporal control, and to represent Anna's struggle with finding a balance within her creole identity. Anna's dissociative states, however, are only momentary — she is always forced to return to English urban space. Rhys' weaving of these narrative breaks is a spatial representation of the tension between Anna's antagonistic identities as a white creole woman, and her desire to set her multiple identities in harmony.

Anna's struggle to find a place where she belonged began as a white child growing up in the Caribbean. Anna's whiteness alienated her from her mostly black

peers, who saw Anna as the embodiment of English colonialism. Anna's loneliness and isolation led to a resentment of her whiteness: "I always wanted to be black…Being black is warm and gay, being white is cold and sad" (31). Anna comes to associate her whiteness with alienation and childhood melancholia and wishes to be black in order to be accepted by her peers. Anna's rejection of her white English heritage is a denial of the racist, colonial notion that whiteness is superior to blackness. Anna subverts the colonial logic that Englishness and whiteness are more desirable than blackness, reversing racial associations created by white hegemony. With racial and local English identity at stake, Anna's white, English stepmother Hester sends Anna to England to educate her on how to be a proper English woman.

The novel begins with Anna's arrival in London, the seat of colonial and governmental power. Rather than gold-paved streets, Anna describes London in much bleaker terms:

> "I had read about England ever since I could read — smaller meaner everything
> is never mind — this is London — hundreds thousands of white people white
> people rushing along and the dark houses all alike frowning down one after the
> other all alike all stuck together — the streets like smooth shut-in ravines and
> the dark houses frowning" (17).

The tableau Anna describes from the window of the train is a vision of the imperial city that has turned its own colonial ambitions inward. London is a city divided into grim, identical parcels of land, each private and isolated from one another. Anna's childhood

association of whiteness with loneliness is overwhelmed by the hundreds and thousands of white faces she sees. Rather than feeling comforted by the sight of people who look like her, Anna sees the identical white faces as all "stuck together," an amorphous mass which conquers the individual and incorporates them into an anonymity. The white masses rush through the dark city, but their movements never culminate into an arrival. Just as Anna is exiled from the Caribbean, the white masses remain exiled in the urban environment of London, wandering without ever finding a place to rest or to call their own.

The description of the streets as "smooth shut-in ravines" portrays a dynamic in which navigating the city requires a descent, surrounded by and enclosed in the urban environment. The dark houses are anthropomorphized, and Rhys' syntax makes it unclear as to whether it is the houses, or the people, who are frowning. Rhys' personification of London's urban spaces merges the environment with the people moving through the city. The white mass become a reflection of their environment, internalizing the gloom and isolation of the urban landscape. In this short passage, Rhys sets up several devices which are repeatedly used to represent how the city of London, and conceptions of Englishness, attempt to invade Anna's sensory experiences, her sense of place, and her identity as a white creole woman. The sense of claustrophobia, the grey and cold landscape, and the isolation Anna expresses in this passage are consistently used to depict other places within the English urban landscape.

The isolating and "shut-in" streets of London begin to merge with Anna's own sense of place. Throughout the novel, Anna often feels claustrophobic, both when she is lying in bed or walking the streets. Several times in the work, Anna can feel the walls closing in on her, "getting smaller and smaller until they crush you to death" (30). All the hostel rooms she rents are described as "small, dark boxes," (25) conjuring notions of a coffin or grave. Anna also feels claustrophobic or trapped by her relationships with wealthy men. Anna dislikes the way men treat her, using spatial metaphors to describe their manner of speaking: "The damned way they look at you, and their damned voices, like high, smooth, unclimbable walls all round you, closing in on you. And nothing to be done about it, either" (147). Walter, and the other men Anna is supported by, begin to embody the urban spaces which close in on Anna. Both the urban environment and the people within it, encroach on Anna's sense of place and her physical body. Anna's experience of claustrophobia, both in her hostel rooms and her relationships serves as a spatial metaphor for the colonial power of England. Just as the British Empire seized, parceled, and commodified the Caribbean, the creole Anna is trapped and exploited by English spaces and English men. The colonial forces begin to close in on Anna, overwhelming her physical body and trapping her within the small, dark boxes.

English spaces also invade Anna's sense of place and her creole identity through the repeated motif of the cold climate. Throughout the novel, Anna is unable to keep warm. During her time in England, Anna claims she "got used everything except the cold and that the towns we went to always looked so exactly alike" (8). Whether standing near

a fire, or wearing the fur coats her suitors buy her, Anna cannot get warm. Other people

notice Anna's constant shivering: "'She's always cold,' Maudie said. 'She can't help it.

She was born in a hot place. She was born in the West Indies or somewhere, weren't you,

kid?'" (13). Rhys' descriptions of the cold climate are a motif seen repeated throughout

many British migrant texts, such as Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners.* The London weather

would have been a big adjustment for Caribbean migrants, who are used to the sunny,

warm weather in their native country. Anna's trouble with adjusting to the cold weather

would have been typical of the Caribbean migrant experience.

Rhys' use of the cold weather shows how the urban spaces of London begin to close in on

Anna, invading her body as the walls of her hostel close in. Anna internalizes the cold

weather of London, which merges with her physical body and sensory experience. The

constant chill, along with the descriptions of the coffin-like hostel rooms are also

common associations with death. Anna often describes London as a city filled with death.

The air in London is "used up and dead, dirty-warm" (76). Some streets are desolate and

lonely, with entire parts of London "are as empty as if they were dead." (41). The people

in London lead such mundane lives that Anna believes that "It seems to me it's better to

be dead than to live like that" (75). These allusions to death describe London as a city of

the dead, composed of lonely people all trapped in their own coffin-like rooms, or

moving through the dark, shut-in streets.

  In order to escape the claustrophobia of the hostels, and the pervasive sense of

cold and death, Anna walks the streets of London. Walking also becomes a way of

making money and finding new hostels to rent from wealthy men willing to support Anna

in exchange for extramarital affairs. Anna's days are filled with urban wandering. She

walks down Oxford Street, near Chalk Farm, along the Strand. Anna describes the urban

landscape:

> "…always a little grey street leading to the stage-door of the theatre and another little
>
> grey street where your lodgings were, and rows of little houses with chimneys like the
>
> funnels of dummy steamers and smoke the same color as the sky; and a grey stone
>
> promenade running hard, naked and straight by the side of the grey-gown or grey-
>
> green sea; or Corporation Street, or High Street, or Duke Street or Lord Street" (8).

Anna's descriptions of the grey uniformity once again show a bleak version of London,

which directly contrasts its imperial visions. The streets Anna walks down are also

significant, with names reflecting traditional English titles like "Duke" or "Lord,"

representing English commerce, such as Oxford Street and the high streets, or English

culture, such as the Strand and Chalk Farm.

In her essay "Mapping the Sea Change: Postcolonialism, Modernism and

Landscape in Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*," Kerry Johnson argues that Anna's desire

to wander through the urban spaces of London is Rhys' way of crafting an alternative

cartography of the colonial motherland. According to Johnson, by walking the streets,

Anna resists Western and imperial control over the physical landscape, and consequently,

her own body. Johnson argues that Anna's movement "through places where she

shouldn't be (the city streets at night) and over land that is revealed to be tame and

contained (the countryside when she is on tour), reveals a resistance to the fixed spatial boundaries" (48) of the colonial London. Anna's movement through urban spaces, and her dissociative breaks into childhood memories of the Caribbean disrupt the spatial and temporal boundaries of Western, imperial notions of land ownership.

Johnson's claim regarding Rhys' alternative cartography is convincing in more ways than Johnson herself even points out. Rhys' depiction of London as a bleak, isolating city challenges the assumption that English spaces were more civilized, or advanced than the nations they colonize. In Rhys' work, London itself becomes a victim of England's colonial ambitions, demonstrating that no one is safe from the effects of colonialism. Western notions of land ownership, which can be traced back to the medieval Enclosure Movement in England, were bolstered by colonialist and capitalist aims to accrue and exploit the land and its resources for personal economic gain. Such historic and cultural motivations led to the division of land and the alienation of urban populations. Both the migrant Anna, and the native Londoner are subject to the isolation and death which reduces urban living into a series of unremarkable moments. Urban life in London is composed of people who live knowing "exactly what's going to happen to them each day" (75). The repetitive, mundane London lifestyle is reflected in Rhys' narrative structure. Anna's days are almost exactly alike, consisting of her staying in bed until noon, venturing out to find new men who will support her, and sleeping with them in exchange for money. The only demarcation of time is Anna's birthday, which signals that the narrative takes place over the course of a single year. Without this temporal

situation, Rhys' text reads more like a series of vignettes, interrupted by vivid, stream of consciousness memories of the Caribbean.

Johnson reads the streets of London as a liberating force for Anna. For Johnson, Anna's urban wandering is a sign of her autonomy and authority over English urban space. Yet, Anna's walks are less of a desire, and more of a compulsion. Anna feels compelled to walk, escaping her claustrophobic hostel or avoiding the xenophobia of the other boarders. Anna walks not with the explicit desire to reclaim her identity, rather to escape her oppressive living quarters: "I walked along Oxford Street, thinking about my room in Camden Town and that I didn't want to go back to it" (130). Anna walks because she has nowhere to go that she does not feel trapped and vulnerable. Anna's refusal to be enclosed within English spaces, however, exposes her to harassment and danger on the streets, and subjects her to sexual commodification by wealthy men, who keep Anna in a desperate economic situation. As the migrant flâneur, the streets of London become a place of danger and oppression for Anna. During her walks, Anna becomes "afraid because the slanting houses might fall on me or the pavement rise up and hit me. But most of all I was afraid of the people passing" (178). Once again, the physical landscape becomes a force of oppression which threatens to close in, or seize Anna's physical body. Anna is also harassed by men who "looked at me funnily and I wanted to run, but I stopped myself. I walked straight ahead. I thought 'Anywhere will do, so long as it's somewhere that nobody knows'" (100). Here, Anna reveals the purpose of her urban wandering: to a find a place nobody knows, a place that can be all her own.

Anna's desire to find a place of her own comes at a high price. After living in various hostels around London, a fellow boarder named Ethel offers to rent Anna a permanent room in her apartment. In exchange, Anna would work in Ethel's massage and manicure parlor, a front for a brothel. Ethel expects Anna to "make a few friends and so on and try to make the place go," (145) alluding to Anna's sexual relationships with the men who financially support her. In order to claim a place of her own, Anna must become a commodity. Anna is followed by street life, quite literally, as Ethel's apartment is decorated with "The Cries of London," a series of portraits that depict poverty-stricken street merchants in London. To make matters worse, Ethel hates migrants and "dirty foreigners" (139). Ethel's hatred for foreigners and migrants is reflective of the xenophobic culture engendered partly by the 1905 Aliens Act, which encouraged the concept of the dangerous or criminal migrant. Ethel, however, is unaware of Anna's Caribbean origins because of Anna's perceived whiteness. Anna feels trapped in the apartment, partly due to Ethel's prejudice. Lying in bed Anna knows that she "can't stay here. You've got to make a plan" (150). Eventually, Anna leaves and returns to the streets by necessity, rather than choice.

Johnson's claim about Rhys' disruption of the colonial control over space and temporality can also be used to understand Rhys' use of Anna's childhood memories. During moments of distress, melancholia, or claustrophobia, Anna suffers from dissociative breaks from reality, in which she relives moments from her childhood in vivid detail. In her reveries, Anna reimagines her native Dominica, freeing her

momentarily from the oppressive colonial forces which attempt to overcome her creole identity. For example, when Anna's stepmother Hester refuses to help Anna out of her desperate situation, Anna recalls a moment from her childhood "eating fishcakes and sweet potatoes and then stewed guavas…Sitting there eating you could see the curve of the hill like the curve of a green shoulder. And there were pink roses on the table in a curly blue vase with gold rings" (70). The Caribbean is always described in rich, colorful detail, the shape of the island often described as a maternal, feminine body, lush and alive. This romanticization of the Caribbean as a feminine body is in direct contrast to the dark, dead London.

Anna's breaks from reality into a nostalgic vision of the Caribbean always end in a tragic depiction of her isolation from her creole identity. During one of her reveries, Anna remembers standing out under the hot sun:

> "I felt I was more alone than anybody had ever been in the world before and I kept think, 'No…no…no…' just like that. Then a cloud came in front of my eyes and seemed to blot out half of what I ought to have been able to see. It was always like that when I was going to have a headache. I thought, 'Well, all right. This time I'll die.' So I took my hat over and went and stood in the sun" (73).

Anna's struggles with her creole identity isolate her from even her own visions and memories of the Caribbean. These breaks in the linear narrative of the text, and their disruptions into English urban space, ultimately do not provide an escape or a space for Anna to form a coherent identity. Anna is left without a place of her own, even in her own

imaginative renderings of the Caribbean. There is no refuge for Anna in either the external landscape, or the internal space of her own memories.

Anna's dissociative states, and her internal and external isolation are a manifestation of what Paul Gilroy refers to in his book *The Black Atlantic* as "double consciousness." In *The Black Atlantic,* Gilroy sees the trans-atlantic slave trade to map the routes, and the roots, of black intellectual history and black diasporic culture. According to Gilroy, diasporic people are pulled between their European and black identities, resulting in "the instability and mutability of identities which are always unfinished, always remade (xi). Gilroy, however, does not understand the European and black identity as antagonistic, rather it is "racist, nationalist, or ethnically absolutist discourses [that] orchestrate political relationships so that these identities appear to be mutually exclusive" (1). Anna is constantly being forced into one identity over the other, whether it is English space closing in and overtaking her physical body, or her breaks from reality into vivid, yet traumatic memories of Dominica. Anna moves from the physical world of London to these imagined visions in the attempt to negotiate her double consciousness. It is this movement, rather than the physical movement of her urban wanders, that demonstrates Anna's struggle to bring both her English and Caribbean identities in harmony with one another. Anna becomes an embodiment of what Gilroy refers to as the "themes of nationality, exile, and cultural affiliation which accentuate the inescapable fragmentation and differentiation of the black subject" (35). Rhys constructs

these fragmentary, narrative breaks as a formal correlative of the fragmentation of black

diasporic identity.

The closest Anna gets to exploring a space in which she can recognize her

diasporic heritage as a creole woman is in the English countryside. Anna visits the

countryside with Walter, and as they walk through the open fields, and for the first time in

England she feels a sense of calm. The air is fresh, a "cool smell, that wasn't the dead

smell of London" (77). She enjoys looking at the wildlife in the countryside, "the leaves

of the beech trees were bright as glass in the sun. In the clearings there were quantities of

little flowers in the grass, red, yellow blue, and white, so many that it looked all

colours" (77). The language Rhys uses to describe Anna's time in the countryside is

closer to the colorful, lively language in depictions of the Caribbean. There is beauty and

life in the countryside that deeply contrasts the death and stagnation in London. Anna

admits that she "didn't know England could be so beautiful" (78).

The sense of belonging Anna experiences in the English countryside is only

momentary. As Anna walks, she remarks that "something had happened to it. It was if the

wildness had gone out of it" (78). For Rhys, the English countryside represents the

colonized person and despite the beauty of the flowers and the beech trees, it is still tame

and controlled. In the countryside, Anna can recognize herself as the colonized, creole

woman, seeing the multiple identities within one physical landscape. Unlike Gilroy,

however, Rhys does not seem to believe these two identities can co-exist. Anna feels the

discordance of her creole identity in the countryside, a "feeling of a dream, of two things

that I couldn't fit together, and it was as if I were making up the names" (78). Ultimately, Anna is forced to leave the countryside, returning to the dark and lonely London. Rhys' rejection of the English countryside can be understood as an internalization of the racial antagonism perpetuated by English colonialism. In *The Black Atlantic*, Gilroy holds both the racist and antiracist community accountable for legitimizing the notion that black and white culture are dialectically opposed: "These strange conflicts emerged in circumstances where blackness and Englishness appeared suddenly to be mutually exclusive attributes and where the conspicuous antagonism between them proceeded on the terrain of culture, not that of politics" (10). The dialectic relationship between blackness and whiteness, or in Anna's case, Caribbeanness and Englishness, is a vestige of colonialism which continued long after the formal end of the British empire. Such cultural and racial antagonism would have been prevalent in the Caribbean migrant's experience of London, as demonstrated by the Aliens Act of 1905.

Not long after Anna returns to England, she has a close brush with death after an illegal abortion. When she wakes up from her hallucinations of the Caribbean, she is forced to face her dire circumstances. Broke, homeless, and ill, Anna is faced only with the prospects of "starting all over again, all over again…" (188) returning to a life of wandering and sexual commodification. Anna's loss of temporal and spatial authority over English urban space leaves her stranded in an endless state of exile and exploitation. Anna's near-death encounter returns her to the English urban life she found so

reprehensible, living each day knowing exactly what will happen to her, forced to start all over again each day.

Not all of British migrant literature is as tragic as Anna's experiences in *Voyage in the Dark.* Where Anna suffered extreme isolation and despair, Samuel Selvon's migrant flâneurs in *The Lonely Londoners* traverse London in search of adventure, work, and women. Published in 1956, Selvon's generation of migrants would have arrived in London shortly after the British Nationality Act of 1948 as newly British subjects. Selvon, who migrated from Trinidad in the 1950's, would have experienced migration under the 1948 British Nationality Act. The London envisioned in Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* offers more opportunities for Caribbean migrants, a city where "the birds sing and all the trees begin to put on leaves again, and flowers come and now and then the old sun shining, is as if life start all over again, as if it still have time, as if it still have another chance" (Selvon 141). The hope expressed by the Caribbean migrants is reflective of their change in legal status as British subjects — they would discover that their subjecthood did not confer legal rights or equal treatment once they landed in London. Selvon's optimistic depiction of London is a reflection of the growing migrant population in London as a direct effect of the 1948 British Nationality Act. In his introduction to *The Lonely Londoners,* Kenneth Ramchand states that "By 1956, when *The Lonely Londoners* was first published, the annual figure for migrants from the West Indies had reached over 25,000" (Ramchand 4). New arrivals to London from the Caribbean could look to the community in London for help when settling in to English urban life.

The autonomy and authority expressed by Selvon's male migrant flâneurs is a significant shift away from Anna's constant fear of harassment in *Voyage in the* Dark. The difference in the experiences of urban wandering for Selvon and Rhys' migrant flâneurs can be attributed to differences in gender. Whenever Anna wandered, she was subjected to street harassment by men who thought Anna was a prostitute. Anna is seen as a commodity to be exploited. Selvon's flâneurs, in virtue of their maleness, do not have the same anxiety about gender-based sexual harassment or exploitation. This is not to say that Selvon's flâneurs do not face sexual exploitation or discrimination. Unlike Anna, Selvon's fellars are black and as a result, they experience different forms of racial discrimination and sexual exploitation of the black man. The gender and race differences between Anna and the fellars reflect the different forms of racial bias and exploitation they face during their urban wanderings.

Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* is both a celebration of the migrant communities within London, and a critique of the political, social, and economic oppression that attempted to deny Caribbean migrants a place within English urban spaces. Selvon uses the figure of the migrant flâneur to explore the obstacles that Caribbean migrants faced even in the most quotidian aspects of urban life. The narrative is episodic, describing the urban wanders of several different Caribbean migrants within London as they search for better hostels, a source of income, and companionship. By grounding the action of *The Lonely Londoners* in the most basic aspects of everyday life, such as finding affordable housing, keeping a job, and forming relationships within their communities, Selvon

exposes how the colonial legacy of England made even the most essential aspects of life incredibly difficult for British migrants.

Selvon is also notable for his use of Caribbean patois in *The Lonely Londoners*. Selvon uses Trinidadian slang such as "coasting a lime," which means to hang out, carouse, to gather. Selvon uses phrases such as spades, which refers to black Caribbean men. Selvon also plays with syntax, with entire sections of the text in a stream of consciousness style. Ramchand sees Selvon's use of patois as a subversion of social stratums in English society, "a careful fabrication, a modified dialect, which contains and expresses the sensibility of a whole society" (13). Selvon's linguistic playfulness, and his use of an episodic narrative structure, shows the variety of migrant experiences in both good times and in bad.

Selvon's ensemble of migrant flâneurs, from the experienced and world-weary Moses, to the naive and hopeful Sir Galahad, all demonstrate how difficult it was for migrants to establish themselves in a country which systematically denied their right to occupy public space. Although the migrant fellars are considered British subjects under the 1948 Nationality Act, they still face obstacles to racial, economic, and social equality regardless of how long they have been living in London. Selvon juxtaposes Moses, a Trinidadian migrant who has been living in London for ten years, with the newly arrived Galahad. The novel begins with a description of the grim landscape of London from the view of an omnibus window as Moses sets out to meet Galahad at Waterloo Station. Moses begrudgingly boards the bus, lamenting over the chill on the "grim winter

evening, when it had a kind of unrealness about London, with a fog sleeping restlessly over the city and the lights showing in the blur as if is not London at all but some strange place on another planet…" (23). Selvon's opening parallels Rhys' description of Anna's arrival, constructing a vision of London which is otherworldly and isolating. For Moses, London is a lonely and miserable city where black migrants face constant racism and xenophobia: "Nobody in London does really accept you. They tolerate you, yes, but you can't go in their house and eat or sit down and talk. It ain't have no sort of family life for us here" (131). The lack of a family life makes it all the more necessary for a strong community presence, which Moses maintains through his welcoming of new Caribbean migrants. Moses elects himself the "welfare officer" tasked with "scattering the boys around London, for he don't want no concentrated area in the Water" (25). Moses disperses the newly arrived migrants all over the city to avoid the formation of visibly black migrant communities or enclaves, which may be interpreted by the racist English culture as a migrant invasion.

The black migrant community faces racial prejudice from white migrant communities as well as the white Englishmen. Moses and the other black migrants are often denied service at hostels or restaurants due to the colour bar, or social segregation based on color. Moses refers to one restaurant when explaining racial social codes to Galahad: "There is have a restaurant run by a Pole call the Rendezvous Restaurant. Go there and see if they will serve you. And you know the hurtful part of it? The Pole who have that restaurant, he ain't have no more right in this country than we" (40). The black

migrants must form their own enclaves within the larger migrant community, since they face prejudice from every white social class in London.

When Moses arrives at Waterloo Station to welcome the newly arrived Galahad, he sees another fellow migrant named Tolroy. Tolroy is waiting for his mother, who is set to arrive at the same time as Galahad. Unknown to Tolroy, his mother has brought along his Tanty Bessie along with other members of his extended family. Tolroy is overwhelmed by his new role as the family patriarch, now responsible for "all these people on his hands, in London, in the grim winter, and no place to go to stay" (30). A reporter from an English newspaper sees Tolroy's family, and interviews the unassuming Tanty Bessie, trying to "get a good story from them why so much Jamaican coming to London," (30). From afar, Moses reflects on his first time being interviewed by an English journalist, fully aware that the media and newspaper coverage of migrant arrivals often contribute to the English fear of migrant invasion. According to Moses, the "big headlines in the papers every day, and whatever the newspaper and the radio say in this country, that is the people Bible…Newspaper and radio rule this country" (24). Unlike Tolroy, Moses evades the journalists and finds Galahad, whose naïveté about migrant life in London leaves him with no money and no luggage upon his arrival.

Selvon's opening with the train station scene portrays migrant life in a microcosm. The setting of the train station, a place of endless arrivals and departures, is a place of temporal and spatial disorientation. The black migrants who have already established a life in London find themselves drawn back to the station to see "the familiar

faces, they like to see their countrymen coming off the train, and sometimes they might

spot somebody they know" (26). The train station is also a place of nostalgia for Moses,

who often dreams of "hustling passage back home to Trinidad" (39) when he has enough

money to return a wealthy man. The scene at the train station also establishes the two

forms of community presence for the black migrants, both familial and extra-familial.

Both communities are necessary yet burdensome. Tolroy worries he will not be able to

support his family, and Moses is shocked at Galahad's unpreparedness. Regardless, the

formation of the black migrant community is more beneficial than it is burdensome.

Without Tolroy or Moses, Galahad and the other newly arrived migrants would be left

without a place to sleep or money to support themselves.

The presence of the merciless journalists looking for a sensational story for the

newspapers also shows the cultural climate surrounding migration in London. The

arrivals of migrant families are used as political fodder to curtail migration to London.

When Moses speaks to the journalist, rather than give a story of mass migration, Moses

talks about migrant life in London: "'let me give you my view of the situation in this

country. We can't get no place to live, and we only getting the worse jobs it have

—'" (29). The journalist cuts Moses off, and instead interviews Tanty Bessie about her

family's arrival. Moses' reflection on the difficulties of migrant life contradicts the

sensational stories of migrants coming to London, "stealing" jobs, and forcing white

Londoners to move out of over-populated areas. Fears about low employment and a

sluggish economy were used (and are still used today) to justify anti-migration law and

policy, despite these claims having no basis in truth. Moses and Tolroy, aware of the xenophobia and racism in London, know how to avoid or deal with the journalists. Tanty, who has yet to encounter racism and xenophobia as Moses and Tolroy have, sees no harm in talking to the journalist. Both Moses and Tolroy are liaisons of the hodgepodge migrant community in London. Without Moses, Galahad would be left to make his way through London with no warm clothes, no money, and no place to sleep, and without Tolroy, Tanty Bessie and the rest of his family would be left in a similarly destitute situation, unaware of the racial prejudice in its various forms.

Moses' hospitality, however, is only temporary. The morning after his arrival, Galahad must set out to find employment, and the narrative shifts away from Moses to the urban wanderings of Galahad. Filled with bluster and confidence, Galahad sets off to find the Ministry of Labour without Moses' help, ""trying hard to give Moses the feeling that everything all right, that he could take care of himself, that he don't want help for anything" (38). Galahad is quickly overcome with dread, as he gets lost on his way to the Ministry. Galahad is overwhelmed by the loneliness and alienation as he sets off alone for the first time:

> He forget all the brave words he was talking to Moses, and he realize that here he
> is, in London and he ain't have money or work or place to sleep or any friend or
> anything, and he standing up here by the tube station watching people, and
> everybody look so busy he frighten to ask questions from any of them… He
> bounce up against a woman coming out the station but she pass him like a full

trolley before he could say sorry. Everybody doing something or going

somewhere, is only he who walking stupid… Suddenly he stand up and look

back. He wonder if he could find his way back to Moses room! Jesus Christ,

suppose he get lost? He ain't even remember the name of the street where Moses

living. In the panic he start to pat pocket to make sure he have money on him, and

he begin to search for passport and some other papers he had. A feeling come over

him as if he lost everything he have — clothes, shoes hat — and he start to touch

himself here and there as if he in a daze" (41-42).

Selvon's description of urban life in London parallels Rhys' descriptions of the white

faces rushing through the dark city. Much like Anna, Galahad is overwhelmed by the

rapidly moving crowds, in which he is overcome by the sheer number of people. Galahad

becomes completely disoriented, falling into a melancholic daze where he is unsure of his

own place within the masses. Galahad searches for a passport or papers, physical proof of

his citizenship and his right to take up space in the metropolis. Galahad's search for his

passport communicates a series of migrant anxieties. The passport is physical proof of his

legal right to be in London, among the endless crowd of white faces he feels alienated

from. Galahad's passport would have also been the first document he showed to law

enforcement when entering England, affirming his legal right to enter the country.

Galahad's search for his passport also articulates his loss of identity among the

homogenous crowd he is swept up in. Surrounded by the unknown city, Galahad feels as

though he has lost everything, from his sense of place to his very identity. Galahad's

passport is symbolic of his migrancy, and serves as physical proof of identity in the

rushing white masses.

During his walk down the Whitleys, Galahad is confronted by a policeman who

orders Galahad to "Move along now, don't block the pavement" (43). Galahad musters

the courage to ask to policeman for directions, which ultimately does not help Galahad

reorient himself. The presence of the policeman, although not entirely malicious,

demonstrates how public places were monitored and controlled by an authoritarian

presence in London. Black migrants like Galahad are ordered to keep moving, refusing

their permanent presence within public spaces. Galahad is unable to rest, or remain still

for a moment in order to reorient his sense of place in the overwhelming urban sprawl. It

is only when Galahad stumbles upon Moses that he is able to compose himself, reminded

of the migrant community in London through the familiar face of Moses.

Through his friendship with Moses, Galahad begins to grow more comfortable

navigating the metropole. Moses teaches Galahad the unwritten codes of London,

showing Galahad the restaurants and hostels which will serve black migrants. According

to Moses, the "diplomatic Brit'n" discriminates or denies black migrants entry into public

places in subtle ways: "In America you see a sign telling you to keep off, but over here

you don't see any, but when you go in the hotel or the restaurant they will politely tell

you to haul — or else give you the cold treatment" (40). Galahad must learn to recognize

the "cold treatment," or else be shuffled along again by policemen. The alienation Moses,

Galahad, and other migrants experience is not as overt as the sense of paranoia depicted

in Rhys' *Voyage in the Dark*. The colour bar still existed in London but acts of racism and xenophobia remained much more subtle. Moses resents such treatment, reminding Galahad of their British subjectivity: "…we have more right than any people from the damn continent to live and work in this country, and enjoy what this country have, because it we who bleed to make this country prosperous'" (40). Moses' frustration with the color bar extends beyond his experience in London, alluding to the colonization and exploitation of the Caribbean, whose natural resources England's economy depended on. Moses and Galahad are also British subjects, and legally migrated to London in search of a better life.

Other migrants also rely on Moses' wisdom, often turning to him for money or shelter when they are down on their luck. Migrants like Big City and Cap, who Moses met during his first years jumping from hostel to hostel, struggle to establish themselves in London. Cap, "the wandering Nigerian; man of mystery" (51) forgoes a stable job or home, relying on his charm and sexual rendezvous for shelter and money. Cap keeps moving throughout the city to avoid paying his debts to the various landlords he owes, "from Caledonia, to Clapham Common, and Sheperd's Bush" (50). Cap's nomadic lifestyle began after refusing to work a menial job at the railway station. According to Cap, "The people who living in London don't really know how behind them railway station does be so desolate and discouraging. It like another world…It look like hell, and Cap back away when he see it" (52). Cap's experience with the railway station was typical amongst the black migrant population in London. Moses, Galahad, and the other

fellars are only offered jobs in factories or behind the railway stations due to racial

discrimination. The migrants thus work the jobs that make it possible for the privileged,

white Londoners to move freely throughout the city, while black migrants like Cap are

barred from public places, and certain hostels and restaurants.

As the narrative progresses, Selvon often returns to Galahad, who continues to

grow more comfortable in London, keeping a steady job in a factory and finding a room

of his own to rent. In "Immigration, Postwar London, and the Politics of Everyday Life in

Sam Selvon's Fiction," Rebecca Dyer argues that Selvon uses the character of Galahad to

explore the difficulty migrants face in adjusting to British life after their arrival in Britain.

According to Dyer, Galahad begins to grow accustomed to London when he starts to use

street names and neighborhoods within London in order to draw connections between

himself and the city. Galahad has overcome the anxiety which overwhelmed him when he

first explored London alone. Galahad shows off his London prowess by using the street

names, "using the names of the places like they mean big romance, as if to say 'I was in

Oxford Street' have more prestige than if he just say 'I was up the road'" (84). For

Galahad, the street names and traditional English spaces like Charing Cross are

glamorous. Selvon uses Galahad's growing familiarity with the city to craft an alternate

cartography of the imperial city, just as Rhys did through Anna's urban wanders. For

Galahad, the freedom to move through spaces like Charing Cross, held its own allure: "it

didn't matter about the woman he going to meet, just to say he was going there made him

feel big and important, and even if he was just going to coast a lime, to stand up and

watch the white people, still, it would have been something" (84). For Galahad and the other migrants, expressing a freedom of mobility is an achievement itself within the oppressive city of London. Galahad's movement through these spaces creolize English spaces, crafting a vision of London through the eyes of the migrant.

Coasting a lime, or wandering around the metropole is not just for entertainment. For some of the fellars, walking is a way of survival. Cap, one of the migrants Moses met during his first years in London, wanders around London to find new jobs, form stronger bonds within the migrant community, and meet women to sleep with. The fellars enjoy a breakdown of racial and social codes during the summer months, which for some migrants like Moses, rekindle a sense of hope for change in the xenophobic London. For Moses, the summer weather transforms London entirely:

"what a time summer is because you bound to meet the boys coasting lime in the park and you could go walking through the gardens and see all them pretty pieces of skin taking suntan and how the old geezers like the sun they would sit on the benches and smile everywhere you turn the English people smiling isn't it a lovely day as if the sun burn away all the tightness and strain that was in their faces" (102).

Selvon's stream of consciousness style when describing the summer months are a formal correlative to the breakdown of social codes between the white and black population in London. The breakdown of syntax parallels the social and physical barriers, like the colour bar, which controlled the existence of black migrants in public places. Selvon also plays with spatial and temporal structures to form a third space, similar to Rhys'

construction of Anna's dissociative breaks, where the migrants can move through spaces however they please. Moses and the fellars sleep with the white women who are tanning in the park, and feel free to move through public spaces without being policed or forced to leave. The sexual freedom the black fellars enjoy, however, comes at a cost. Occasionally some of the fellars are approached by men and women looking to pay them in exchange for sex, though they express a degree of choice whether or not they accept the money. The black women migrants also trade sex for money: "they have to make a living and you could see them here and there with the professionals walking on the Bayswater Road or liming in the park learning the tricks of the trade" (107). Again, gender changes the situation in which the black body is commodified and controlled. The black migrant women use prostitution as their sole financial income, where the black fellars look to sexual cruising for entertainment.

Although sexual cruising is a form of entertainment for the fellars, they are still exploited by white men and women. In *Black Skin, White Masks,* Afro-Caribbean psychiatrist, philosopher, activist and writer Frantz Fanon explores the psychology of the colonized black man. In the chapter "The Man of Color and the White Woman," Fanon argues that the black colonized man is forced to feel inferior to the white colonizer. Such inferiority becomes internalized, resulting in a desire to become white: "who better than the white woman to bring this about? By loving me, she proves to me that I am worthy of a white love. I am loved like a white man" (63). Fanon embodies the perspective of the

black man who wishes to be white, though Fanon does not believe that blackness is in any way inferior to whiteness.

Similar to Gilroy, Fanon argues that whiteness and blackness are only dialectally opposed due to social constructions of race used to justify the racism of colonial conquest. Fanon's discussion of the neurosis of the black colonized migrant parallels Gilroy's use of the double-consciousness. For the fellars, there is a tension between their black Caribbean identity and their English identity, which are constructed as antagonistic identities. The fellars feel cultural pressure to pick one identity over the other, to embrace either their blackness or their Englishness, but not both. According to Fanon, the identity of the "black subject" was a colonial and racial designation created by the oppressive white colonizer. Blackness only becomes a demarcation of inferiority when the white colonizer deems it so: "In other words, I start suffering from not being a white man insofar as the white man discriminates against me; turns me into a colonized subject; robs me of any value or originality tell me I am a parasite in the world" (96). Such inferiority over time, becomes internalized, creating a harmful neurosis in the black man.

Selvon uses the character of Galahad to voice the realization of this double-consciousness through the expression of restriction of mobility. During one of his coasts, a young child points to Galahad and says "Mummy, look at that black man!" (87). At first, Galahad is not bothered by the child, patting the boy on the head. The mother of the child becomes uneasy, "as they stand up there on the pavement with so many white people around: if they was alone she might have talked a little, and ask Galahad what part

of the world he come from, but instead she pull the child along" (88). Galahad, who has

come to recognize the subtle racism of "diplomatic Brit'n" is forced to reflect on the

sorrow he felt when he first arrived in London after experiencing such widespread racism

for the first time:

> "'Lord, what it is we people do in this world that we have to suffer so? What it is
>
> we want that the white people and them find it so hard to give? A little work, a
>
> little food, a little place to sleep. We not asking for the sun, or the moon. We only
>
> want to get by, we don't even want to get on…Colour, is you that causing all this,
>
> you know. Why the hell you can't be blue, or red or green, if you can't be white?
>
> You know is you that cause a lot of misery in the world. Is not me, you know, is
>
> you! I ain't do anything to infuriate the people and them, is you! Look at you, you
>
> so black and innocent, and this time you causing misery all over the world!'" (88).

Galahad's struggle to cope with the overt racism and xenophobia he faces, and his

expressed desire to be any color but black, is representative of the harmful neurosis

perpetuated by colonial racism. Galahad's out-of-body realization of the double

consciousness echoes Fanon, who describes internalization of the white colonial gaze as

an out-of-body experience in which "the man of color encounters difficulties in

elaborating his body schema. The image of one's body is solely negating. It's an image in

the third person. All around the body reigns an atmosphere of certain uncertainty" (108).

Galahad's dissociation from blackness, in which he speaks directly to the color of skin

"as if it were a person, telling it that is not *he* who causing a botheration in the place, but

Black, who is a worthless thing" (Selvon 88) is a symptom of a larger system of colonial violence which persists in post-colonial London.

Although many of the fellars spend their days coasting through London, not all of Selvon's migrants feel compelled to wander through the city. Tanty Bessie is one of the few migrants who, rather than attempt to remap the colonial city, remains immobile through most of the novel. In her essay "Mapping Freedom, or Its Limits: The Politics of Movement in Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*," Lisa M. Kabesh argues that although the fellars are mostly free to move throughout the novel, this mobility does not translate to freedom from racial hierarchies. Kabesh claims that it is Tanty, the character who remains the most sedentary, who changes English institutions to fit the needs of the growing migrant community. Tanty embeds herself within the working class community on Harrow Road with her candid personality, "and it didn't take she long to make friend and enemy with everybody in the district…She become a familiar figure to everybody, and even the English people calling she Tanty. It was Tanty who cause the shop keeper to give people credit" (78). By establishing herself within the community of Harrow Road, and setting down permanent roots, Tanty claims a place that is all her own. Emboldened by her sense of place, Tanty is able to create a space for the migrant community to thrive. Eventually, "Everybody in the district get to know Tanty so well that she doing as she like" (79). Tanty's refusal to move allows her to claim her own place within English society, over which she is able to assert authority and demand equality, refusing to settle for the rotten produce in the market.

Tanty's refusal to move challenges the efficacy of mobility to democratize urban spaces. Unlike Galahad, who associates English urban spaces with the romantic and transformative, Tanty has little interest in London. Tanty did not migrate to London for wealth or success like the fellars, rather to take care of the family and pass along Trinidadian culture to her grandchildren. Tanty transplants Caribbean culture to her new home, demanding equal treatment and respect from shopkeepers and white working class community. Fanon's work involving the black colonized psyche seems not to apply to Tanty, who does not aspire to become white or English and therefore, does not feel isolated from English culture. Tanty does not express the same anxieties over racial exclusion or isolation as Galahad or Moses. Her arrival to London is the English colonizer's greatest fear; the colonized culture taking root in the motherland and transforming national identity. Unlike Galahad, who is hustled down the street by policemen or by children who point out his blackness, Tanty decides to remain still and demand that English urban spaces fit her needs, rather than aspire to become "English."

The colonizer's fear, however, is not a fear of multiculturalism, but of erasure. Much like the colonized, the colonizer fears their homeland will become unrecognizable to them, transformed by the influx of new cultures within the same place. The English fail to recognize that their culture and national identity have already been changed long before the colonized arrive in the motherland. More troubling, the colonizer cannot envision a place in which different cultures can co-exist without erasing one another entirely. In fact, the co-existence of cultures within the same place can lead to creation,

rather than destruction. Tanty's involvement in the community on Harrow Road

demonstrates the possibility of co-existence between cultures without erasure. Tanty's

deal with the shopkeeper extends to all migrants in the Harrow Road community. Every

week, the Caribbean migrants settle their line of credit with the shopkeeper, bringing in

new business to Harrow Road. The migrants contribute to working class communities

while still celebrating their Caribbean culture.

    The Lonely Londoners ends with Moses' reflection on his ten years in London.

Overcome by his sense of aimlessness, and his lack of place, Moses imagines "a forlorn

shadow of doom fall on all the spades in the country. As if he could see the black faces

bobbing up and down in the millions of white, strained faces, everybody hustling along

the Strand, the spades jostling in the crowd, bewildered, hopeless" (141). The scene

Moses imagines is incredibly similar to the view of London Anna sees from the train

window. Despite all the wandering, all the aimlessness coasting and discovery, both Anna

and Moses return to the vision of millions of white faces rushing through the streets of

London.

    Moses, however, is optimistic: "One day you sweating in the factory, and the next

day all the newspapers have your name and photo, saying how you are a new literary

giant. He watched the tugboat on the Thames, wondering if he could ever write a book

like that, what everybody would buy" (141). For Selvon, London remains a city of

opportunity, where a black migrant like Moses can look for the possibility of meaning in

the midst of racial discrimination and the violence of colonization, searching for

"profound realisation in his life, as if all that happen to him was experience that make him a better man." Selvon remains hopeful for a better future for migrants, in which London remains the city filled possibility despite the oppressive forces encoded within the landscape of the urban environment.

Although neither *Voyage in the Dark* nor *The Lonely Londoners* are memoirs, both works are representational of the obstacles migrants faced in the twentieth century. Rhys and Selvon's migrant protagonists face many of the same issues of (im)mobility and identity that British migrants faced historically, both socially and legally. Examining the works of Rhys and Selvon in tandem with British legal history reveals both an empirical and personal narrative of migrant (im)mobility in English urban spaces. The subjecthood of migrants in Britain and the English fear of migrant populations became encoded within the English urban landscape and reflected in the isolated and oppressive migrant experience of (im)mobility.

Walk #4 - Regent's Canal and Victoria Park

My walk began at the entrance of Regents Canal on a sunny day in November, around 3:30 pm. I walked down Regent's Canal. The canal is filled with houseboats and some pop-up shops. The houseboats are quiet, though occasionally I saw people washing the dishes or cooking on the stove. The walls along the canal are filled with colorful graffiti and the path was busy with runners and bicycles. I often had to move out of the way for cyclists, who would ring their bell if they were coming from behind you. The canal path is narrow, so I found myself

constantly looking behind me to make sure I didn't cause an accident. I continued to walk down the canal. Some of the buildings and factories along the canal looked abandoned, though there were shops and apartments that looked occupied. Hip, pop up shops selling vintage clothing, vinyl, and photography lined the canal alongside the private houseboats.

The farther I walked down the canal, the quieter it got. the buildings became progressively more run-down as well. There was a boat cafe called the Boston Belle. There was one apartment or office building made entirely from stacked storage cubes. There were also a few homeless people living on the canal with make-shift tents set up. One

man was fishing on the canal near his tent.

I walked down the canal, noticing less walkers and cyclists until I was completely alone. It was peaceful, a contrast to the busy commercial streets in Hackney. There was no sense of urgency on the canal. As it got later in the day, I could hear the sounds of dinner being made — clinking plates and glasses — from the houseboats.

I ended my canal walk at Victoria Park and noticed a pagoda, which seemed out of place in the park. There was a long, blue bridge that connected the canal to the park. The bridge was designed in the style of Chinese architecture, matching the pagoda. I walked across the bridge toward the pagoda. There were people milling about the park, some walking, others sitting on the benches. As I walked closer to the pagoda, I noticed there were plaques. According to an informational plaque in the park, the original pagoda had been built in 1842 as an entrance to the Chinese Exhibit in the London Parks. The pagoda suffered immense damage during World War II and fell into disrepair in 1956. In 2010, the pagoda was repaired for the 2012 Olympic Games, but the paint has dulled and chipped since then. I wanted to go inside the pagoda, but there were and bothersome men standing about, cat-calling women. As I turned to leave, one of the men called out to me. I left the park and walked back down the canal until I reached the entrance.

<u>Conclusion</u>
"Because this is the other thing about immigrants ('fugees, émigrés, travelers): they cannot escape their history any more than you yourself can lose your shadow"
-Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

In the twentieth century, an incredible amount of intellectual energy was dedicated to exploring the politics of place. Spatial theory, law, literature, and personal experiences of mobility all provided methods of recognizing the political and cultural ideologies encoded within a place. In each discourse, walking became a tool to recognize and critique the politics of place. Guy Debord and the Situationists saw walking as an act of civil disobedience, a method which could alter the physical landscape and reclaim urban spaces for the pedestrian. British migrant literature used the device of walking as a way to craft alternate cartographies of the urban landscape, as well as questioned the effectiveness of mobility versus a refusal to move. For both spatial theorists and migrant writers, walking was a way of communicating an urban reality, a method of revealing how the political and economic ideologies of colonialism and capitalism affected the individual's urban experience down to their very ability to move freely through the metropole.

In many ways, it seems that our global sense of place has changed since the twentieth century. Twenty-first century technological advancements in transportation have made it easier and more affordable to travel the world. The Internet, advancements in communications technology, and the growing field of virtual reality allow us to explore some of the most remote locations in the comfort of our own homes. The world has only

grown smaller, more connected, more global. Yet, so much of the twentieth century's fear of migrancy can be found in modern global-political climate. Britain's decision to leave the European Union was fostered by a xenophobic, nationalist campaign by the UKIP party. The United States elected a president who spent the majority of his campaign vilifying immigrants. The European migrant crisis has left thousands of people living as citizens of no nation. Migrancy has become a defining global crisis in the twenty-first century, which leads us to the question — have the politics of place really changed since the time of Rhys and Selvon, despite our technological advances?

I believe the answer lies in the different depictions of London's urban spaces in twentieth and twenty-first century migrant literature. Twentieth century migrant literature portrayed London as a city with multiple identities and cartographies, though the different visions of London seemed to occupy entirely different spatial positions. In Selvon and Rhys's literature, the migrant cartography of London was relatively separate from that of the white, native Londoners' experience of the city. In *Voyage in the Dark*, Anna inhabits a nightmare version of London, where she is entirely isolated from everyone she meets. In *The Lonely Londoners*, the migrant fellars rarely, or only briefly encounter white, native born Londoners. Rhys and Selvon constructed a vision of London that would be unfamiliar to white audiences. This distance between that of the black migrant's experience of London to the white, native-born is also a result of cultural and legal discriminations against people of color, such as the color bar.

Twenty-first century writers of migrant fiction, however, set these two visions of London within the same space. In Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, the migrant's cartography of London shares the same spatial position of the white native born Londoners. Throughout *White Teeth*, there are spaces within London where the multiple identities and cultures intertwine. O'Connell's Poolroom, which is "neither Irish nor a poolroom" (Smith 153) is decorated with "carpeted walls, the reproductions of George Stubbs's racehorse paintings, the framed fragments of some foreign, Eastern script…an Irish flag and a map of the Arab Emirates knotted together and hung from wall to wall" (153). In her essay "Generations of Black Londoners: Echoes of the 1950s Caribbean Migrants' Voices in Victor Headley's *Yardie* and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*" Rebecca Dyer claims that O'Connell's is a place that "does not hide its many historical layers but instead allow them to coexist and comment on one another" (Dyer 94). Unlike Rhys or Selvon, Smith envisions London as a city whose multiple identities are in constant communication within the same space.

Smith's depiction of London as a city in which different cultures share the same space is representative of my own experiences in the city. My walks through the East End were filled with moments of cultural overlap encoded clearly within the architecture of the urban landscape. The historic homes of the Huguenot weavers, with their attic windows from which the weavers would send down their bolts of silk, are rented out to celebrities and wealthy artists. The Fieldgate Street Great Synagogue, established in 1899, was recently bought by the East London Mosque next door. The Truman Brewery

hovers over Muslim-owned restaurants and places of worship. Christ Church holds

Bengali services once a week, which are attended in great number. London shows its

cultural histories in all their layers through its architecture, as long as you are willing to

look.

London's diversity only makes Britain's decision to leave the European Union all

the more troubling. Despite the shared urban spaces of culture, religion, and heritage

within British literature and urban space, Britain's political ideologies are deeply

xenophobic. Britain continues to desperately cling to a vision of itself as both white and

native, even when multicultural hubs like London stand in clear opposition. Although

Smith's vision of London shows significant progress toward a truly democratic vision of

English space, there are still significant obstacles which must be overcome. Looking back

to spatial theory and migrant literature of the twentieth century provides a historical

origin to Britain's xenophobia, implicating the British empire and English colonialism in

the current political climate. A careful examination of twentieth century spatial theory

and migrant literature also shows us that Britain's decision to close its borders is a

troubling sign of a nation at war over its very own identity. Brexit should be understood

not as a shocking anomaly, but a decision influenced by a toxic history of colonialism and

subjugation of migrant populations. Rather than fear migration, Britain must recognize

that its multicultural identity is a direct result of its colonial and imperial past — a truth

which Britain has attempted to ignore throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Perhaps Zadie Smith said it best: "Involved is neither good nor bad. It is just a consequence of living, a consequence of occupation and immigration, of empires and expansion…The sheer quantity of shit that must be wiped off the slate if we are to start again as new. Race. Land. Ownership. Faith. Theft. Blood. And more blood. And more" (363-64). Britain can no longer ignore its colonial past, and it will never erase the presence of its migrant citizens. Britain must once and for all see itself clearly reflected in its own landscape — a vision of collapsed empire, of migrancy and multi-culture, of white, black, and brown — and accept its historically diverse national identity.

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