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Down and Out in Paris and London and Voyage in the Dark: Experiencing the Metropolis and its Margins

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Abstract: *Down and Out in Paris and London* and *Voyage in the Dark* were published within twelve months of each other, in 1933 and 1934 respectively. At first sight, they appear to have little in common and might suggest markedly divergent readings. This essay argues, however, that these two texts offer illuminating examples of the ways in which Jean Rhys and George Orwell use representations of urban spaces—in particular, of early twentieth-century London—to construct their own narrative architectures. Adopting some of the categories identified by Henri Lefebvre in *The Production of Space*, this article also considers the impact on these narratives of specific movement away from, and beyond, the urban centre.

Keywords: Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark*, George Orwell, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, intermodernist, urban margins

Introduction

In 'Les yeux des pauvres' (1864), Baudelaire describes an evening spent in a new and newly fashionable café in Paris but writes of his resentment at the way his lover responds to the sight, outside on the pavement, of a poverty-stricken father and his two young children 'tous en guenilles' ('all in rags') staring in at the privileged interior scene. It is a striking visual metaphor for Baudelaire's meditations on Paris and the human experience of metropolitan living. In the context of this essay, it is also powerfully suggestive of the ways in which Jean Rhys and George Orwell present and re-present to the reader some key considerations for readings of urban spaces of London. These considerations will be examined in relation to the categories (spatial practice, representations of space and representational space) identified by Henri Lefebvre (1974) in *The Production of Space*. This allows for a comparative reading of the two texts which explores the relationship between the observer and the observed, the

discourse of interior and exterior spaces and the topography of the urban centre and its periphery.

Chronology and Genre

Down and Out in Paris and London was first published in 1933 by Victor Gollancz whilst *Voyage in the Dark* appeared in 1934 in an imprint of the publishers Constable. There are, however, two difficulties associated with the examination, side by side, of these two texts and specific issues need to be addressed early on in this discussion.

The first problem refers to textual chronology: Orwell's book effectively reverses the Paris and London experiences. In fact, according to Peter Davison, Orwell's first experiences of 'tramping' in England occurred in the spring of 1928 *before* he moved to Paris to live and work between spring 1928 and the latter part of 1929 (Davison 1996: xvi-xvii). *Voyage in the Dark* was published in 1934 but notes for its construction were, according to Anna Snaith (2005), being made as far back as 1910 when Jean Rhys was already living in England. It is in fact easier to identify the period of time covered by the narrative itself. The London of the novel is pre-World War I and narrative points such as the trip to the cinema to see the latest instalment in the *Three-fingered Kate* series help to locate the text in a fixed temporal setting.

There is also the question of documentary authenticity. Indeed, the question arises as to the precise nature of what *Down and Out in Paris and London* actually 'is'. Social or realist documentary? Investigative journalism? Autobiography? Fictional autobiography? It is a question which has tested many of Orwell's commentators and has provided ammunition for those critics who accuse him of acting out his own feelings of class guilt by constructing a written fabric of self-deception and, emerging from that, a highly subjective socialist mantra. It is a debate to which Orwell contributed. In *The Road to Wigan Pier*, he indicates that the motivation for going 'tramping' was as a direct reaction against the 'evil despotism' of the oppressive regime in Burma of which he had been a part: 'I was conscious of an immense weight of guilt that I had got to expiate' (Orwell 1962: 129), he writes. Gordon Beadle (1975) skilfully interrogates Orwell's motivations at this time and although he tends towards an overtly psychological and emotional reading of Orwell's purposes, he also locates Orwell's 'poverty studies' within a tradition of the 'poverty novels' of George Gissing, Samuel Butler and Jack London. At a more specific level, Beadle also suggests that Orwell consciously adopts those writers' deployment of the 'case study of the more respectable victims of poverty' (Beadle 1975: 192) in order to achieve his didactic purposes. In this way, Beadle views Orwell's early work as a critique of modern society which is paradoxically Victorian in form and style.

Claire Hopley disagrees. Whilst acknowledging that Orwell 'did not necessarily learn from the modernists so much as share similarities in approach and method' (Hopley 1984: 61), she sees Orwell not as a new Victorian but as a

writer who successfully adopts the distinctive approach of the more successful writers of World War I in consciously and deliberately blurring the distinctions between fiction and autobiography. 'The point about the prose of the First World War', she suggests, 'is that it highlights rather than conceals facts, asserting that the war was unprecedented and not to be contained in traditional forms' (Hopley 1984: 64). This fits well with Orwell's own re-reading of this period of his life. He somewhat artlessly comments: 'Nearly all the incidents described there actually happened, though they have been rearranged' (Orwell 1962: 133). Whilst Bernard Crick (1980) considered that the chronological authentication of events in *Down and Out* was something of a red herring, Davison (1996) perhaps states the case most tellingly in placing these textual uncertainties within the conditions of its production. Many of the adjustments and re-writings were the result, he argues, of requests to make the book a longer one and to convert its original format as a diary into something more substantial. In fact, more recent criticism questions the whole notion of Orwell's positioning in the literary canon altogether, Janine Utell supporting a reading of Orwell not as an 'outsider' but as 'part of a web of public, intellectual life... an intermodernist' (Utell 2006: 201).

Voyage in the Dark would appear to present us with fewer problems of categorisation. Certainly, many commentators on Rhys's work from the 1930s see clearly autobiographical veins of meaning in her heroines. Deborah L. Parsons (2000) suggests some compelling points of contact between the author's own life and the fictive life of Anna Morgan. Like Anna, Rhys worked as chorus girl in a touring company and, like her, developed an antipathy towards England. She saw England as 'oppressive and its social structures and rules as incomprehensible' (Parsons 2000: 133). Thinly veiled autobiography, then? Parsons herself offers a timely corrective to this too easy reading when she suggests that Rhys is actually carefully combining fact and fiction in order to 'create for herself a faltering *Bildungsroman*' (133). Whilst the narrative focalisation of Anna is fixed, that of Orwell is perhaps more open to interrogation because, although at times he presents an authoritative narrative voice, there remains a nagging suspicion of the possibilities of external focalisation. In a similar way, his text points towards some of the difficulties inherent in distinguishing between narrative and narration.

Journeys to Urban Spaces

How do Anna Morgan and Orwell arrive in their respective urban spaces? Strictly speaking, in the case of Orwell's Paris, there is no 'arrival'. His narrative begins *in medias res* with a picaresque evocation of the French metropolis at seven o'clock in the morning. He is, simply, already 'there'. His return to England is more detailed (and more interesting) because it is mediated through the lens of a patriotic defence of England in the face of a newly married 'Roumanian' (sic) couple whose first visit to the country it is. Orwell is bursting with patriotic pride because he is glad to be back in a country which is a 'very good country when

you are not poor' (Orwell 1978: 113). And yet the first English representation of space (a planned but oddly incongruous space) proves to be an architectural embarrassment: the image (of the hotel at Tilbury Docks) is 'all stucco and pinnacles' which stare from the English coast like 'idiots staring over an asylum wall' (113). As their questions multiply, the more florid becomes his evocation of Merrie England, but Merrie England is brought abruptly to an end by the stark reality of economic hardship. When his offer of employment (looking after an 'imbecile') is delayed by a month (the entire family has travelled abroad) he is left, literally, out on the street.

Anna's narrative begins in strikingly similar terms to Orwell's Parisian experience, but with no journey from the Caribbean to frame the contrasting urban experience. Like Orwell, she is abruptly 'there', but with an important difference, for Anna's narrative involves a kind of distorted re-birth in the sense that her existence in Southsea (and the nameless other regional towns of England) represents a parallel exclusion of prior experience and fixity. For Anna, England is a 'curtain' which 'hid[es] everything I had ever known' (Rhys 1969: 7). In order to re-locate herself 'home' she resorts to fabrications sometimes based on immediate sensory experience and sometimes on memory and imagination alone: the heat of the fire or the bedclothes 'becomes' the heat of the Caribbean sun; she shuts her eyes in order to visualise the perspective of looking from her house 'down Market Street to the Bay' (7). Her sense of smell is equally important in stabilising this sensory re-location. She writes longingly of the smells of 'frangipanni and lime juice and cinnamon and cloves...and incense after funerals or Corpus Christi processions' (7). Later, as her geographical fixity begins to unravel and in response to Walter's departure, she cocoons herself in her room ('for a week after Walter left I hadn't gone out'), and she spends hours in the bath: 'I would put my head under the water and listen to the noise of the tap running. I would pretend it was a waterfall, like the one that falls into the pool where we bathed at Morgan's Rest' (77).

The Production of Space

In his introduction to *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre identifies three key spatial terms (spatial practice, representations of space and representational space) as being, in his terms, a 'triad' of 'perceived-conceived-lived' notions and concepts (Lefebvre 1974: 40), but he warns the reader of the implications of allowing these notions to remain 'abstract' and to allow for the continuance of a dialectical relationship between the three. If the Rhys and Orwell texts have much to tell us of the experience of representational space (and they do), they may also shed light on the notion of Lefebvre's representation of space—in other words, Anna Morgan's and Orwell's experience and occupation of the urban environment as increasingly conceived by the planners and social architects of the London cityscape. Recent criticism (Parsons 2000, Snaith 2005) has given a great deal of attention to the idea of Anna's

temporally intermittent occupation of the city. Indeed, at times, her psychology impels her to move between the two landscapes of London and the Caribbean in ways which are both linguistically charged (traditional narrative formality gives way to a type of refugee stream-of-consciousness interiority) and starkly, even brutally, alienating.

Orwell shows little interest in the surface features of the planned urban environment. The 'doss-house' on the street next to the Waterloo Road (Orwell in fact tells us that nobody ever really calls them doss-houses) is described simply as a 'tall, battered-looking house, with dim lights in all the windows' (Orwell 1978: 116), but that is all we can read of its exterior appearance. For him, it is the architecture of the interior space—its sensory architecture, too—which commands his (and our) attention: 'Murmurous sounds' emerge from the cellar, together with 'a wave of hot air and cheese', whilst the bedroom has the 'sweetish reek of paregoric and foul linen' (116). At the level of wider topographical consideration, London itself is sketched in, rather than comprehensively illustrated. Specific locational points are named and identified (Bow, Wapping, Whitechapel, Lower Binfield, the Embankment) but they represent little more than points on a rudimentary and arbitrary map. Perhaps Orwell assumes a prior, detailed, knowledge of the planned London urban environment. Perhaps he downplays the importance of locational details because he wants the reader to perceive the universal nature of the experience of homelessness. In an intriguing aside, he describes a 'little Chittagonian lascar' who is so 'vague and helpless that he did not even know the name of the city he was in—he thought it was Liverpool, until I told him' (150). This sense of geographical uncertainty and disenfranchisement is echoed in Orwell's rendering of Paddy Jaques. At the time when Orwell is searching for Bozo the pavement artist, he asks Paddy for directions, but '[a]ddresses did not exist in Paddy's world' (143). The haziness of Paddy's sense of location is confirmed when he tells Orwell that he has a 'vague idea that Bozo might be found in Lambeth' (143).

In a rare comparison of the two metropolitan centres, Orwell writes that in London 'everything is so much cleaner and quieter and drearier', that the capital is the 'land of the tea urn and the Labour Exchange, as Paris is the land of the *bistro* and the sweatshop' (120). And yet London is also an alien experience, conditioned by Orwell's decision to immerse himself in the tramping sub-culture. He sees the city through a new perspective, impelled by economic re-alignment. 'It is curious', he writes, 'how one does not notice things. I had been in London innumerable times, and yet till that day I had never noticed one of the worst things about London—the fact that it costs money even to sit down' (137).

As in Orwell's Parisian experience, *Voyage in the Dark* begins with Anna Morgan's location ostensibly already fixed (in Southsea). She is drawn to the urban, imperial centre but it is that process (of the transition between the anonymised regions to a metropolis with its fixed topographical nomenclature) that parallels her disintegration and loss of self. The representation of public

social spaces plays a significant part in this disintegration. Two locations attest to this. Earlier in the novel, Anna pays a visit to Cohen's Dress Shop. 'This is the beginning', she says. 'Out of this warm room [it's one of the few warm spaces in the whole of the novel] that smells of fur I'll go to all the lovely places I've ever dreamt of. This is the beginning' (Rhys 1969: 24–25). It is a sweetly optimistic moment, but it is short-lived, and may even be destabilised by that hopeful, possibly self-assuring and repetitive mantra. It proves to be no 'beginning' at all. The cinema is a more typical location in alienating Anna from modern life. The piano is 'sickly-sweet', the interior smells of 'poor people' and, in an ironic inversion of the traditional escapist notion of the silver screen, even the actors 'walked about with strained smiles' (92–93). It is not really surprising that this interior space presents an opportunity for social conflict, Ethel arguing with the other cinemagoers.

Rhys's early public spaces offer the possibility of change, or at least, novelty, but few such certainties exist in Orwell's London. The cafes where the tramps are allowed to exchange tickets for food are scenes of exploitation and exclusion. When the open spaces are appropriated for street meetings, disintegration and dissent swiftly follow: 'Oh don't get on the argue, for Christ's sake, don't get on the argue, etc. etc.' (Orwell 1978: 121).

Conditioned by destabilising imperatives (economic and social in the case of Orwell's tramps; cultural and colonial in the case of Anna Morgan), the protagonists of these two texts struggle to inhabit planned urban spaces. This is particularly significant for Anna whose journey from innocence to bitter experience is mirrored in a parallel topography which travels between the florid abundance of the Caribbean and the harsh reality of the fixed and unyielding urban, imperial, centre: 'I had read about England ever since I could read—smaller meaner everything is never mind—this is London—hundreds thousands of white people white people rushing along and the dark houses all alike frowning down one after the other all alike all stuck together—the streets like smooth shut-in ravines and the dark houses frowning down' (Rhys 1969: 15–16). These 'dark houses' of Anna's urban perception become a leitmotif of *Voyage in the Dark*, and they merge with other negatively framed images of decay and uncertainty, allied to a dull conformity and a lack of diversity in both the built and the interior environment. This uniformity creates an externalised manifestation of Anna's alienation, particularly at moments of emotional crisis. After Walter abandons her, it starts to rain, but it is the built environment which really characterises her struggle. The 'houses on either side of the street were small and dark and then they were big and dark but all exactly alike' (82). Perspective and scale may change (they often appear to be rather fluid in Anna's imagination) but it is uniformity and conformity which stifle her. She struggles against this environment: 'Always a high, dark wardrobe and something dirty red in the room; and through the window the feeling of a small street would come in' (128). What is also interesting here is the suggestion of a blurring of the spatial distinction between interior and exterior environments because this

blurring serves to intensify a view of Anna Morgan as practically excluded from the representational spaces of the novel.

Anna's alienation is further intensified by the ways in which Rhys populates her urban spaces. She sees, for example, a couple leaning against the railings and kissing in Brunswick Square: 'They stood without moving in the shadow, with their mouths glued together. They were like beetles clinging to the railings' (30). The urban streets may be populated, then, but this does nothing to halt Anna's increasing isolation and alienation. She describes a man who passes her on the street: 'I thought he looked at me funnily and I wanted to run' (86). Later, she effectively absents herself in spatial terms. She is spotted by Laurie but 'I didn't want to talk to anybody. I felt too much like a ghost' (98).

Escape to the Margins: 'High walls' and 'the road to Constance Estate'¹

What happens, then, on or beyond the margins of the city or, perhaps more accurately, at the margins of urban experience in these two texts? There is, for Anna Morgan, a dialectical tension between the certainties of fixity and of a destabilising flux, from the very earliest stages of her experience of England. On the one hand, there appears to be a dreary surface uniformity articulated in the distancing use of the second person ('You were perpetually moving to another place which was perpetually the same' (Rhys 1969: 8)) which is refined and concentrated into an intense dislike and distrust of the streets and roads of London. Anna also suffers from a destabilising uncertainty in locating and confirming the boundaries of the capital of empire, sensing a disconnect even in the quite basic topographical delineation of space:

'London?' Mr. Jones said, lifting his eyebrows.

'Well, Holloway. Holloway's London, isn't it?'

'Of course it is,' said Mr. Jeffries (13)

It is in response to this kind of uncertainty and its congruent dislike of London that she makes her periodic return journeys to the fixed, but imperfect, locus of the Caribbean. But this is no representation of a simple dream/reality dialectic because Rhys actually presents the reader with a stark portrayal of Anna's fractured and excluding sense of personal locational refuge. Simply put, though deceptively beguiling, Anna tries to summarise her feelings of otherness and other 'placeness': 'Sometimes, it was as if I was back there [the Caribbean] and as if England were a dream. At other times, England was the real thing and out there was the dream, *but I could never fit them together*' (Rhys 1969:7-8, my emphasis). There is irony here: first, the multiple and multiplying negative references to her urban experience give the lie to the notion of a dream landscape as ever being in any way associated with her dislocated experience of London (an unfolding nightmare, rather). Ironic, then, but also hugely significant, a leitmotif for Anna's alienation and the focus for her despair because the two landscapes compete for her psychological and disintegrating sense of

self but at the same time they prohibit the possibility of emotional development and psychological resolution when the anchoring tendencies of geographical certainty are lost.

For Anna, then, the boundaries of the urban may exist in a state of flux and uncertainty, but what happens on those rare occasions when she moves beyond those disputed boundaries? The disastrous trip to Savernake is a good example, but this is to be no extra-urban idyll. The tone is set even before they set off on their journey, presenting a grim foreshadowing of what is to come. Her landlady, Mrs. Dawes, maintaining the 'blank' expression seemingly reserved for all her interactions with Anna, delivers Walter's letter with customary diffidence. Anna's concern, however, is focussed entirely on her appearance. 'I was so nervous about how I looked', she writes, 'that three-quarters of me was in a prison, wandering round and round in a circle' (66). She dwells briefly in this labyrinth of uncertainty and self-consciousness but is provided with no exit route by Walter. He 'just looked me up and down and smiled' (66). If Rhys's concern is with the commodification of Anna, this is arguably one of its high (or low) points.

Rhys pays little attention to the mode of transport between London and Savernake. Walter's terse summons—'We're going into the country'—is amplified (briefly) by the instruction to be 'ready by six' (65): he will take them by car to their destination. The possibility of the moth flying in to her face ('I hit at it and killed it') perhaps suggests a journey by open-topped car, but Rhys is more concerned here with the distorting relationship between metropolis and country (66).

The interior of the Savernake hotel is tellingly realised. The engravings ('Cries of London') which characterise Anna's urban discomfort are noticeably absent here. Instead, the bedrooms are decorated with a succession of printed tableaux ('The Sailor's Farewell', 'The Sailor's Return') which, on one level, offer her a degree of comfort ('They had a calm, sleepy look', 'that time must have been a good time' (66)) whilst simultaneously revealing the fact of illusory experience—they are like 'drawings of stuffed figures' and, unlike Anna, their narratives conclude with a definitive 'homecoming', however sentimentalised.

The heat experienced at Primrose Hill is equally pervasive at Savernake, and it suggests a kind of spatial consistency between the two locations. Perhaps it also foreshadows the negative psychological and emotional outcome of the prematurely terminated weekend. Nevertheless, on first waking in the hotel, Anna overcomes her initial sense of locational uncertainty and quickly and affirmatively delights in the 'cool smell' that offers a hopeful contrast to the 'dead smell of London' (66). It is as part of this process of sensory re-adjustment that she makes a hugely significant, if short-lived, discovery: that, not being in London, she doesn't have to 'get up and go away' (66). She has a rare opportunity to be sedentary and fixed, but this realisation makes her cry. In Savernake Forest, however, the possibilities of fixity are interrogated and questioned. Walter's query about the local flowers and the flowers of 'your

island' serve only to remind Anna of the limitations of her experiential dichotomy—the tension between 'home' and adopted home. She experiences feelings of fraudulence and disconnectedness in naming the flowers because 'I got the feeling of a dream, of two things that I couldn't fit together' (67). The extra-urban retreat ends long before Germaine Sullivan's insistence on their immediate and premature return to London. It ends, for Anna, in the realisation that in the moment after declaring that 'I like it here', in fact 'something had happened to it. It was as if the wildness had gone out of it' (67). It is also the scene of Walter's sexual suggestion. He wants to make this space his own by using the holes made by the deer in winter. Far from being a truly wild place, this locus is as spatially planned and organised as Lefebvre's national park, and it is this that helps to forge a stifling spatial continuity between the metropolitan and the apparently rural². The inevitable retreat from the country is confirmed in the fractured and ambiguous real or imagined dialogue (74) which climaxes in Anna's 'attack' on Walter's hand with her cigarette. Savernake can in no sense fulfil her need for re-location or affirmation of her Caribbean identity, and it sends her spiralling back in to the disintegrating centre.

Extra-urban: 'How sweet the air does smell'

For the characters who populate Orwell's London, the opportunities for extra-urban experience are necessarily limited: economic exclusion means that they are even unable to access the relative fluidity of movement available to Anna Morgan—they have no choice but to 'tramp' or 'loaf', but their movement within and beyond the metropolitan centre is actually more conditioned by the seasons and by the social conditioning of those from whom they seek charity. 'Tramps go far afield in summer', Orwell informs the reader, 'and in winter they circle as much as possible round the large towns, where it is warmer and there is more charity' (Orwell 1978: 128). The topography of Orwell's London is in some specific ways constructed like a form of concentric labyrinth, with a demonic, often literally fiery centre progressively giving way towards a freer and less economically exploiting 'suburb'. In typical Orwellian fashion, he informs us that, on release from one of the 'spikes', 'How sweet the air does smell—even the air of a back street in the suburbs—after the shut-in, subfaecal stench of the spike!' (Orwell 1978: 132).³ The further away he can move from this demonic centre, it seems, the greater the chances of sensory pleasure and experience.

The Parisian chapters of *Down and Out in Paris and London* are notable for a singular absence of extra-urban references. Movement is confined to Orwell's infrequent journeys between different quartiers; within those quartiers, actual movement appears almost non-existent at times. He refers to a young woman, a consumptive, who tells him that she has worked in a bistro from seven in the morning until midnight for an entire year. On inviting her to a dance, he is laughingly informed that she has not been 'farther from the street corner for several months' (Orwell 1978: 100).

Orwell's Paris is sedentary and often subterranean. In contrast, he experiences London as a broader topography, but one in which movement is initiated by the legal certainties of the tramp's status (one night only allowed in each 'spike', the restrictions super-imposed by the remote authority of the London County Council). On foot, the opportunities for experiencing any form of non-metropolitan life appear to be highly restricted—with one interesting exception. This concerns the short-lived excursion to Cromley, a journey of sixteen miles 'blistering to the heels', and the 'plantation beside a meadow' (166). Like the aborted journey to Savernake, this episode offers the chance of relief from urban suffocation, but at first glance it appears to be anything but a form of relief. This plantation has been pre-inhabited by a 'regular caravanserai of tramps' (166). It is a location in which the 'sharp reek of [the] tansies [was] warring with the reek of tramps' (166) and in which the evidence of previous occupation exists in the form of 'worn grass and the sodden newspaper and rusty cans that they had left behind' (166). The tramps 'sprawled about on the ground, sweaty and exhausted' (166). This excursion allows them a unique, if temporary, degree of freedom and it is this which acts as the spur for them to achieve some form of narrative cohesion and community: they light a fire and take it in turns to tell their stories. 'Bill', a 'genuine sturdy beggar of the old breed', evaluates the relative merits of locations such as Kent and Oxford as being suitable for his 'mooching' lifestyle (167). Two other tramps (unnamed) tell a ghost story centred on the spike at Cromley, whilst a further two deliver the grisly tale of a stowaway heading towards Chile who is crushed by the ship's cargo. A fifth man provides his own (but inaccurate) version of the Scottish legend of Gilderoy. Yet, for these men, Orwell acknowledges, there is the fundamental need for narratives which have a 'happy ending' because the reality of their lives allows for no other narrative panacea (168). The Cromley episode provides a brief but unique insight into the capacity of Orwell's London characters for establishing community and shared identity through narrative. It is no coincidence that it takes place in a location away from the metropolitan strictures of harsh rules and subjective law enforcement. What we may read here is a variant of Lefebvre's representational space: the tramps as artists of their own spatial production, in seeming defiance of the representation of space characterised by the planners and organisers of a (sub)urban landscape. It is a rare but exhilarating vision of the tramps as colonisers of their own space, but it is short-lived. In his re-ordered chronology, Orwell is soon able to remove himself from the sub-cultural space of the tramps because he only has eight days to go before he can finally take up the offer of employment. The authorial voice is turned towards issues of social justice and compassion but, in effect, his 'story ends here' (188).

'The fringe of poverty' or 'Starting all over again'

By way of spatial contrast, the final space occupied by Anna in *Voyage in the Dark* has all the connotations of a nightmare. She is trapped in a room which is 'nearly dark' except for a 'long yellow ray coming in under the door' (Rhys 1969: 155). Her island home and London have become fused in a nightmarish sensory disorientation which is characterised by feelings of sickness and the sensation of falling and whose articulation is dominated by her Caribbean stream-of-consciousness at the expense of staccato metropolitan interjections. It is perhaps an ultimate irony that she picks up on the doctor's platitudinous and insinuating refrain ('She'll be all right...Ready to start all over again in no time, I've no doubt'), repeating it to herself ('And about starting all over again, all over again...') but now with no sense of locational certainty (159). Anna is, ultimately, lost. The stability of language, which has become increasingly fragile, has finally collapsed. The interior space, like the London streets outside, has at last become a prison.

Notes

1. The quote is from *Voyage in the Dark* (Rhys 1969: 128–9). Towards the end of the novel, Anna Morgan is in the early stages of pregnancy and is struggling to maintain her sense of self. Her response to the stifling urban environment is to visualise and rehearse a familiar and comforting journey taken in childhood, 'the road to Constance Estate'.
2. Lefebvre's interpretation and conceptualisation of the national park focuses on the extent to which 'natural' landscapes may be read as socially constructed and representational spaces.
3. 'Spikes' is the term used by Orwell's fellow tramps to refer to the casual workhouses in which they were allowed to stay for strictly limited periods of time.

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Note on Contributor

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