AS FLIGHT OR EQUINOX

by

SARA RENEE MARSHALL

(Under the Direction of Andrew Zawacki)

ABSTRACT

As Flight or Equinox is a book-length poem that meditates on the inundating language and lived experience of capitalism and the market as a prevailing metaphor. In particular, its poems trace the disorienting and alienating experience of capitalism's erasure of non-masculine bodies—their work, creative contributions, reproduction, meaning-making, ways of seeing, and ways of knowing. The work is also concerned with moving through the world either in a state of erasure or as an object subjected to violence and disregard. It attempts to make a vocabulary for the phenomenological experience of this position.

Engaging debates about the possibility of the flâneuse, a recently renovated figure, "'An Irrational But a Real Pleasure': Reading the Early Flâneuse" argues for additional study of the proto-flâneuse—women walkers and wanderers in late 18th and early 19th century fiction—in flâneuse discourse as a way to track the contours of her more obvious emergence in the mid-19th century. In particular, it claims Frances Burney's novels are primary sites for such study. In this paper, I read wandering episodes from Frances Burney's *Camilla* and Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* to define the

flâneuse as a fundamentally liminal figure—straddling the paradox of vigilance and pleasure at once.

INDEX WORDS: Poetry, 18th Century, 19th Century, British Women Writers, Frances Burney, Camilla, Charlotte Brontë, Villette, Flâneuse, Flâneuserie, Flaneur, Rebecca Solnit, Lauren Elkin, Helen Scalway, Janet Wolff, Griselda Pollock, Ingrid Horrocks, Deborah Epstein-Nord, Luce Irigaray, Elizabeth Wilson, Charlotte Mathieson, Wanderer, Walking

AS FLIGHT OR EQUINOX

by

SARA RENEE MARSHALL

B.A., University of Colorado, 2006

M.F.A., University of Colorado, 2013

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2019

AS FLIGHT OR EQUINOX

by

SARA RENEE MARSHALL

Major Professor: Andrew Zawacki

Committee: Magdalena Zurawski
Casie LeGette

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Interim Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
December 2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The seeds of these ideas—and their blooming—would hardly have been possible without the nourishment of my communities. Thank you, Andrew Zawacki, most of all for your art, wisdom, guidance, and chiefly, your friendship. Thanks also to my teachers, especially Magdalena Zurawski, Beth Fowkes Tobin, Michelle Ballif, and Casie Legette. I'd have been lost without a cohort of smart and supportive colleagues too. Shamala Gallagher, Lindsay Tigue, Jaydn DeWald, Claire Cronin, Bridget Dooley, Jacob Sunderlin, Jake Syersak, Paul Cunningham, Kristen Gleason, Gina Abelkop, Paula Rawlins, Ginger Ko, Henna Messina, and Anna Forrester—thank you for teaching me and for being the best of company too. Thanks also to the writerly friends who, even many states away, feel always near: J'Lyn Chapman, Julia Cohen, Mathias Svalina, Alexis Almeida, and Danielle Vogel.

What I made wouldn't have been if it weren't for those who've helped me shape my mind and take it seriously. Julie Carr, thank you for being my greatest example of hard and heart-work. In both my academic and personal life, I'm guided by your voice.

My gratitude is owed to those editors who kindly published versions of work from this manuscript, including Everyday Genius, NewLights Press, Jellyfish Magazine, and Dusie. It's a gift to be read. Thank you.

This manuscript was born of obsession, and my obsessions deserve their due. Namely, thank you, Frances Burney; thank you, Charlotte Brontë. I have found in your respective works a lush thicket that, since the dawn of my reading, I have never managed to leave. Thanks also to Lisa Robertson, Agnès Varda, and Maya Deren, my

fellow flâneuses. Your walks accompany me on mine. Thanks also to Chris Marker and Andrei Tarkovsky whose films play almost constantly in my head. Thank you, Denver, Athens, New Orleans, Austin, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, Brooklyn, Kaohsiung, Paris, Amsterdam, The Hague, and Rotterdam. In walking your streets, I found the objects, tensions, encounters, and amorousness that appear in these pages—and ways of looking at them too.

Last but not least, thanks to my family and those friends who are family too (Bernadette Perez, Erin Emmer, Kacey Kelley). You've kept me afloat. Thank you, Thomas, most of all, for putting your shoulder to the wheel with me. And Rosa Bernadette, thank you for clarifying the world, and thank you even for the sleepless nights wherein I discovered the strangest offices of my own mind.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

'AN IRRATIONAL BUT A REAL PLEASURE': READING THE EARLY FLÂNEUSE

"There was no possibility of taking a walk that day." -Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

I walked the streets of New York for the first time in 2002. Like many young performers, I spent my youth transposing myself onto the images I'd seen of New York on postcards and in film, surrounded by people, movement, and action. When I fantasized about New York, I imagined myself walking alone, breathing in dingy air full of exhaust as if it was the nourishing, high-plains air I grew up with in Denver, Colorado. Some part of me craved tension, collision, and the mundane challenges of city life, perhaps as a counterpoint to the relatively clean and quiet city from which I originate. I'd imagine myself checking my watch as I tapped a foot hastily, waiting for the F train. I looked forward to cultivating my cosmopolitan persona and satiating my desire to be in the crowd, including my desires to walk for the pleasure of walking, to walk for the purpose of observing, to get lost. In my projected fantasy life, I would have the privilege to move where I pleased and to do so safely. Who wouldn't desire that kind of freedom?

As if I needed to fully realize every detail of my city fantasy, I took my first trip to New York alone. I flew alone, I landed in Newark alone, I had my first encounter with a street salesman whose open coat was lined with off-brand gold watches alone, I sorted

out the train schedule to Penn Station alone, I took my first cab ride alone, and I stayed in a rented room with shared bathrooms alone. It was as exhilarating as I had dreamed, but what I hadn't envisioned were the men catcalling, the bartender asking too many personal questions, or the guy who—suddenly walking alongside me on 8th Ave—told me I shouldn't walk alone. The encroachment of these men didn't put me off the city, but it did complicate my internal picture of it. Strangely, their intrusions motivated a feeling of protectiveness about my fantasy—the part where I could move through the world unmolested, my mind free from the strangling stricture of fight-or-flight fear that takes hold when your safety and autonomy are threatened. *I won't let you ruin my city,* I thought. *I won't let you make me afraid.* And I silently aimed that refrain at every potential violator as I learned, for better or worse, to move through the world a bit defended.

Although it sort of felt like it, I didn't invent the act of flâneuserie, aimless urban walking as a woman; in fact, my cultivated fantasy of wandering city streets, much like Lauren Elkin, author of *Flâneuse*, grew unconsciously from amalgams of television shows and novels written across centuries and various metropolises. I was the only student in a college literature course to express sympathy for or, to be precise, affinity with Emma Bovary. While my peers enjoyed simple solidarity with one another over the novel's seeming morality tale, I found Charles insufferable and was attracted to the excitement and risk of the letters Emma exchanged with Léon and Rodolphe—saying nothing of her elicit affairs. Similarly, when I was supposed to judge Marianne Dashwood of Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* to be foolhardy, impulsive, and naïve, I instead found her to be utterly alive, bouncing alongside Willoughby in his open-air curricle. Whether her affair lasted or not, she saw the world and she allowed herself

tremendous and uncommon pleasure, even at great risk to her propriety and virtue. Marianne seemed to think highly of her own pleasure.

In Flaubert, in Austen before him, and Ann Radcliffe and Frances Burney before either of them, women's ambulation, even in seemingly acceptable social conditions, comes at an enormous risk to their reputations. And staked upon their reputations are their future prospects, their success on the marriage market, their material comfort, and their familial security. It is the complexity of women's mobility in and adjacent to early industrialized cities that I'll study in what follows. In particular, I'm preoccupied with the early days of the flâneur, the figure against which the walking woman is set in relief, when walking was still gaining traction as a leisure activity.

Beyond engaging with debates about the flâneur and flâneuse, I'll look at literary instances of women wanderers in Frances Burney's *Camilla* (1796) and Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* (1853). I'll examine in Burney's novel the nature of her protagonist's mobility and immobility. Until now, Burney's novels have not been central to flâneuse discourse. But they overflow with unaccompanied women in public gardens, in carriages, women running through city streets, searching for guardians, visiting money lenders, women in roadside inns, and alone in moonlit lanes. Burney demanded that her audience witness the material challenges women faced in entering public life. Specifically, her novels focus on the barriers to women's independent movement and financial freedom. As such, I'll argue that Burney's protagonists are proto-flâneuses, and her novels represent critical bridges toward a literary flâneuse. In other words, her novels are essential to flâneuse discourse and should be studied as such. In addition, I'll look to one of Burney's lesser characters, one "othered" in her cultural context, as a site of radical potential for the flâneuse. Using Brontë's *Villette,* I'll read Lucy Snowe's

sensory-rich and pleasure-filled foray as a true instance of the early flâneuse—complete with uniquely non-masculine embodiment, ecstasy, terror, and thus incongruity. That incongruity characterizes both the historical cusp of the flâneuse studied here and her sucessors in its splintering of vantage points—positions that simultaneously reflect on, disassociate from, or integrate outward and inward experience. In other words, I'll define her as fundamentally liminal.

A Review of the Literature

For better or worse, a discussion of the flâneuse begins with its discursive counterpart, the flâneur. Much like the flâneuse, the flâneur is situated in a larger and longer western history of walking. In her book *Wanderlust: A History of Walking,* Rebecca Solnit writes, "…the history of walking as a conscious cultural act rather than a means to an end is only a few centuries old in Europe, and Rousseau stands at its beginning" (14). Rousseau's meditative walks in the mid- to late-18th century have been historicized as descending from the Greek Peripatetics whose practice of philosophizing while walking cemented the relationship between thinking, walking, and exercising freedom (Solnit 15). Solnit mentions a great many philosophers in the walking tradition: Aristotle, Hegel, Kant, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Wittgenstein, for instance. But it is Rousseau who popularizes pedestrianism as a commitment—one he believes attunes him to nature and the self. His *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (written between 1776 and 1778) centers walking as a method to encounter the mind and forge connections between the self and so-called "nature"—major touchstones of the Romantic era of which he is considered progenitor.

Later in the same century, William and Dorothy Wordsworth walk England's Lake District, and likely due to improvements in road construction and connectivity,

walking starts to gain traction as a leisure activity (Solnit 80-83). Like Rousseau's, Wordsworth's walking differs from functional travel. As Solnit puts it, "Most who have written about this first generation of Romantics propose that they themselves introduced walking as a cultural act, as a part of aesthetic experience" (82). The Wordsworths, Coleridge, and company saw their movement through a landscape, and the writing they produced in relation to it, as effort in service of cultural construction. They were constructing, first, the very idea of nature and its power, and second, notions of human existence in awe of it and in inspired relation to it. William Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, which he began in 1798, chronicles the major phases of his life—the center of which involves climbing the Alps. Solnit's chapter on this subject in *Wanderlust* is called "The Path Out of the Garden", by which I think she means to historicize the moment in human history when we culturally departed from our safe, controlled, and curated domicile for the unknown. In many ways, the unknown becomes the great subject of the Romantic project. As Solnit summarizes in "The Legs of William Wordsworth", the aesthetic shift away from the garden, aristocratic dominion over wilderness, toward nature, once associated with suffering and class revolt, aligned these Romantic walkers with radical political transformation. Walking is reoriented as a burgeoning mode for travel, and that travel, in its focus on nature, is justified as natural—that is, simple and virtuous. In that way, walking on foot is born anew—associated with virtue and pleasure rather than toil—in the Romantic imagination.

Like rural walking, urban walking was long associated with necessity, or labor, and much later with pleasure. Urban aristocrats in the great cities avoided unnecessary walking or social contact with those on the street by riding on horseback and in sedan chairs and carriages. The privilege to literally rise above the street relegated those who

walked in it—the laborers, shop workers, vagrants, and prostitutes—to their marginal classes. The early industrialized streets were dirty and dangerous, and until major road construction projects in the late 18th century, it was unthinkable for genteel citizens to be found walking on foot just anywhere. That doesn't mean they didn't walk outdoors at all; rather, urban simulacra of the cordoned-off, private garden were built for upper class enjoyment, as well as tree-lined promenades and consumer arcades. Vauxhall and Ranelagh Gardens in London, for instance, gained popularity during the course of the 18th century as spaces for leisure walking, and eventually, consumer entertainments. By the late 18th century, gardens like these started to collect admission, which filtered out the average visitor and reduced the conceivable spaces where one might walk without suspicion ("The Delight of All Persons").

As Romanticism crosses the threshold of the 19th century, so too does the tradition of walking for walking's sake, along with its entanglement with literature. The term flâneur predates this era, but it is by the mid-19th century that the cultural phenomenon of a cosmopolitan stroller clearly materializes in the world's major cities. By 1857, Charles Baudelaire writes *Les Fleurs du Mal,* in particular "Tableau parisiens", which comes to exemplify the flâneur's gaze. Later in 1863, Baudelaire details the flâneur in "The Painter of Modern Life." His flâneur is complex—a "passionate spectator" who "[sets] up house in the heart of the multitude," which is for him an "electrical energy" where he finds "the fugitive pleasure of circumstance" (9-12). Eternal beauty, for Baudelaire lies, in part, in the beauty of the transitory and happenstance experience accessible in an aimless city walk—as in the glance of a sex worker, for instance. Once put to print, as Baudelaire's was, the gaze of the male urban stroller, and

the objects of his consumption, come to be equated with our cultural memory of modern Paris, London, and New York.

Nearly 70 years later, in his *Arcades Project,* Walter Benjamin offers a Marxist re-imagining of this figure, centered as the symbol of modernity, as an embodiment of capitalist alienation, or as it's often put, a site of self-loss. In her critique of Benjamin's "mythological" flâneur, Martina Lauster refers to his version as "the viewer who takes pleasure in abandoning himself to the artificial world of high capitalist civilization" (140). From a feminist perspective, even in Benjamin's Marxist reconfiguration, centering the flâneur and his gaze obfuscates and marginalizes any women or non-binary walkers, especially in the urban context. Until recently, we have no name for the non-masculine walker or wanderer, and outside of Virginia Woolf's non-fiction renderings, we struggle to identify women and non-binary walkers in literature—even in women's writing. Without searching and reclamation, we won't see let alone revalue a flâneuse.

"Can there be such a person as a flâneuse?" begins Helen Scalway in her article "The Contemporary Flâneuse". Her question sums up the most central debate about this recently renovated archetype. Is the term—and its relationship to flânerie—equal to and appropriate for the complicated business of women's walking? Whereas the flâneur walks alone with impunity, without the burden of a driving purpose or a proper place, "outsider/insider is a border the flâneuse must skirmish on constantly," as Scalway aptly puts it. The flâneur needs no proper, in de Certeau's conception of it; the city is made for him. At worst, the flâneur's wandering might be seen as lazy or privileged, as Kierkegaard anxiously suspected, but largely, the hallmark of the flâneur is his ability to melt into the crowd, invisibly, and to experience comfort there. He enjoys anonymity,

which is essential to his project, his freedom to observe, and his pleasure. The flâneuse, on the other hand, navigates the complexity of others' gazes, threats to her safety and her reputation, and the dangers associated with being misread.

As a result, some scholars of modernity argue that, no, no such non-male counterpart to the flaneur could exist. Janet Wolff puts it simply: "the flaneur…is necessarily male" (19). His privilege, Wolff says, "was not accorded to women" (ibid). She goes on to argue that the visibility of women's activity in the era of the flâneur is a discursive problem; placing the street and public space—Paris's arcades, avenues, and promenades—prominently at the center of modern discourse invisibilizes the experiences of women and their contributions in the city. Further, the crude and inaccurate division of the so-called public and private exacerbates the exclusion of women in studies of the modern city. If we favor the street, the institutional space of exchange and activity, then we fail to see the politics and significance of exchange in the domestic sphere, as well as in non-urban space. I can't help but think of the countless women riding in carriages in the novels of Radcliffe, Burney, Austen, the Brontës, and other works of the long 18th century. For countless reasons, from safety to weather to class, women regularly moved through cities in carriages—a site that is not entirely public or private—and experienced the city as mediated by that strange, semi-permeable, libidinous, and suspicious object. And yet the public-facing, anonymous flâneur remains the archetype at the center of our urban cultural imaginary in this era.

Like Janet Wolff, art historian Griselda Pollack argues that women can achieve no such appellation, but she turns her attention to sociological mechanisms that affect the making and consumption of art, specifically Impressionism. She notes that a cornerstone of the flâneur is the power exerted by "consuming the sights through a

controlling but rarely-acknowledged gaze" (67). The power of that gaze shapes and organizes urban public space. Anne Friedberg discusses the dizzying expansion of "the field of the visible" in the 19th century with mass proliferation of print, photography, ease of consumerism, and rapid communication (253). The flâneur of the 19th century walks to be a consumer of experience—consumption mediated by the senses, most prominent among them his sight. His sight, and how he wields it, describe and distinguish his privilege and power. Irigay wrote in the 70s about the "predominance of the look". She said, "The moment the look dominates [it], the body loses its materiality" (1978). According to Pollock, the woman walking, in all her conspicuousness, cannot escape the position of the spectacle, the object dominated by that controlling gaze. Transcending the position of spectacle, she argues, is a necessary precondition of attaining the power of the spectator. And as spectacle, or object, she is not material, as Irigaray points out, by which she means not real, dimensional, or agential. Rather, she exists purely as fodder for the male imagination in urban encounters. Further, if she cannot achieve the position of the spectator, as Deborah Epstein-Nord also argues, then by definition, a woman is denied access to the kind of anonymous observation that defines the flâneur's wandering.

In Elizabeth Wilson's *The Sphinx in the City*, she shows the many figurations of our urban cultural imaginary—the kaleidoscopic, the geologic, the palimpsest-like (1-5). The city is layered but also segregated by its purposes. With regard to the flâneuse, she describes the city as organized by "the pursuit of sexuality outside the constraints of the family," which "made women's very presence in cities a problem" (5). For the flâneur, the city's women, then, are reduced to their archetypes, luring and threatening men's morality or receding from public view to act as moral compass and paragon. Wilson

summarizes how, in the course of urbanization, city crowds get described "as hysterical, or, in images of feminine instability and sexuality, as a flood or swamp" (7). As her title suggests, the city was likened to the feminine Sphinx, "the 'strangling one', who was so called because she strangled all those who could not answer her riddle: female sexuality, womanhood out of control, lost nature, loss of identity" (ibid). That which men can't control—or even that which vexes them in its mystery—poses the greatest threat to their own identification, the sturdiness of their categories, their ways of ordering society, information, and time. In this conceptualization of the city, nothing agitates the prevailing organizing modes like women on the move. Wilson goes on to suggest, however, that the way the city regularizes indeterminacy, surprise, and pleasure may have always provided conditions for women's liberation too. The flâneur's historical voice has been louder and more commonly put to print, sure, but the flâneuse has been there all along, exerting her power and experiencing the city all the same. It is indeed her space, though perhaps unofficially, and its complexity, wildness, and never-ending state of becoming are her natural habitat.

Most recently, Lauren Elkin's *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice, and London* offers a capacious interpretation of the flâneuse—one not limited by the descriptions and definitions conferred upon the flâneur. Because women's movement and leisure were so radically conditioned by social impositions of gender, construction of urban space, and citizenship, looking for a female or non-binary equal to the flâneur may be a fool's errand. Elkin writes, "Perhaps the answer is not to attempt to make a woman fit a masculine concept, but to redefine the concept itself" (11). Elkin goes on to exercise her expansion of the concept, including mention of shop girls and solo women travelers, among other mobile women.

But what does redefining this masculine concept involve exactly? The flâneur's wandering is characterized by anonymity, and thus, privilege to move at any time of day and freedom to wander aimlessly—without the burden of purpose or destination. If we take up Elkin's directive, to shed the hallmarks of the flâneur in order to include variety and difference in women's mobility, we'll necessarily diminish or erode the kinds of privilege men enjoy in public space from our definition of the flâneuse. Even the most contemporary picture of women wandering in cities is touched with risk and anxiety. In addition, scholarly attempts to figure the flâneuse would necessarily complicate the very notion and supremacy of public space in order to make visible forms of women's mobility in cities we have yet to notice or formally acknowledge, like, for instance, that of the carriage passenger. Finally, to know women's walking more intimately, we'd have to look more closely at the texture and qualities of women's ambulation, especially in the lead up to flâneurie's popularization. Following this directive, I'll look to Frances Burney and Charlotte Brontë's women wanderers who were written in a moment when walking "was only slowly becoming detached from an association with suffering" (Horrocks 18).

In Ingrid Horrocks' *Women Wanderers and the Writing of Mobility,* she sets the woman wanderer apart for good reason. The Grand Tour of the continent develops an archetypical male traveler in 18th century writing, one whose point of departure and point of return, as in the Greek epic, is a domesticated woman—or the vague image of one. The figure of the male traveler is, in fact, made archetypical by his counterpoint and tether. The wandering woman, on the other hand, presented a radically different valence. As Horrocks notes, "In tandem, the most dire effects of exposure and the potential to become lost—the disquieting resonances of movement more associated with wandering than travel—tend to be projected onto female figures" (4). A wandering

woman acts as cautionary tale; she highlights the tragic, harrowing pitfalls of travel, while her male counterpoint summons images of curiosity, refinement, adventure, and heroism.

In a textual comparison, Horrocks also situates the distinction between male traveler and female wanderer amid sentimental journeys wherein the typified, generalizable "everyman" traveler sympathizes with sorrowful toilers, often women, littered in the margins of their stories. Think Dickens. To the sentimental reader, the male traveler's solitude between encounters is valorous, as is his pity and charity for mobile sufferers when he meets them. In contrast, women writers and the wandering women centered in their novels, like the refugee of Burney's *The Wanderer,* lack "access to authority or the ability to universalize" their alienation. While Horrocks seeks to position these so-called "reluctant wanderers" in juxtaposition to their literary male counterparts, I take up here the texture and undulation of the early flâneuse's incongruity: the simultaneity of her unnerved, vigilant, rapturous, and always embodied engagement with the city. Burney's women, written on the cusp of pleasure walking's popularization, walk with the constant risk of straying too far from acceptable space and modes into the jaws of lost propriety, illness, and insanity. And yet, she repeatedly animates the impossibility of perfect conduct—how the very unpredictable, ludic space of market capitalism makes wandering into danger and improper conduct inevitable. Brontë's Lucy Snowe, on the other hand, offers us a truly liminal flâneuse, vigilant and yet committed to experiencing and documenting pleasure. In addition to looking at Burney and Brontë's women walkers, I'll examine disability and otherness as a site of possibility and proto-feminist becoming amid the disappointing constraints of conventional femininity.

Camilla, Or A Picture of Youth

Largely, Frances Burney's novels aren't studied for their episodes of flâneuserie or even for mobility. Certainly many scholars have referred to her oeuvre's feminist seedlings, but instead of studying mobility as an entry point, scholars like Margaret Doody, Julia Epstein, Claudia Johnson, and Janet Todd have focused on theorizing characterization, femininity standards, criminalization, and female friendship in Burney's novels. But her works bubble over with furious, chaotic movement, as well as its opposites, immobility and claustrophobia, and both ends of the spectrum reveal much about women's independence and lack thereof in the early days of pleasure walking's popularity.

As with all four of Frances Burney's novels, *Camilla* offers a range of archetypes moving through the country, the city, and in between: the fop, the swindler, the widow, the heiress, the coquette. The diverse array of feminine archetypes in *Camilla* describe varied social possibilities available for the 18th century woman. As a result, we see how a particular social position affords certain social liberties, or lack thereof, and how those liberties relate to ease or challenges to physical mobility for women in this era. For instance, Mrs. Arlbery, a wealthy and respected widow, enjoys tremendous social freedom, and thus, freedom to circulate and occupy various spaces, like Southampton, the spa town where she eventually accompanies the protagonist. Her liberty, in a sense, comes from her legibility in public. Those who circulate in high society with Mrs. Arlbery consider her off the marriage market, and such a categorization saves her from suspicion, even in mixed-gender company. She is a host, a socialite, and a guardian to younger women, but she exists safely on the periphery of the complex and charged courtship scene.

On the other hand, Camilla, her sisters Eugenia and Lavinia, and her cousin Indiana are read against a traditional feminine archetype. Their exteriors, their movements, the spaces they occupy, and the company they keep are, socially speaking, cross-referenced with a virtuous, idealized woman. In particular, they're interpreted for their suitability for marriage. In addition, this novel discloses how cultural constructions of femininity involve notions of public health overflowing with anxiety about women's susceptibility to infection—both moral and physical—which further complicates a male interpreter's reading of a woman's suitability. In *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization,* Richard Sennett contextualizes this anxiety as it relates to industrializing cities, which become associated with contagion and immorality—made worse by stagnation. He delineates the attitudinal shifts, paired with a growing body of shoddy science, that contribute to big transformations in urban planning—wider streets, circular arteries, more connectivity. He says of this era that "…order means lack of contact," especially for those citizens perceived as most delicate (21). Preserving upper class women's health, in their uniquely susceptible state, involves ushering them through space and preventing their absorption of the city's impurities. In other words, women are figured as permeable vessels through and out of which information and morality are absorbed and effused. And a woman's exterior indicates her interior. Her blushes betray her heart, her skin betrays her health, her clothing communicates her gentility, and how she situates herself—in space and in social relation—corresponds with the future she hopes to shape.

Burney's *Camilla* galvanizes around the crises that emerge when such "readings" of women fail to match either intention or the complexities of feminine subjectivity and sociality. Naturally, public walking constitutes a common interpretive crisis. For Camilla

and the other women on whom conventional femininity is imposed, Burney illustrates how the degree of their legibility as an archetype conditions their degree of physical mobility in public. Further, Burney's *Camilla* reveals how constructed, conventional femininity confounds both the female text herself, the woman attempting to align with feminine signs, and the male reader unable to interpret any diversion from expected feminine signs. Under the pressure of archetypical femininity, the urban mobility of women in this novel confounds legibility. Incidentally, Burney shows how such perplexing movement opens up space for otherness. That otherness, even if seemingly pathologized by male characters, is the nascent becoming of new self-determination and mobility.

As Elizabeth Wilson points out, male scholars of 18th and 19th century cities conferred upon crowds a woman's alleged character—her hysterics, her unpredictability, and her susceptibility to influence. This archetypical woman was permeable. She absorbed too much and effused too much—the picture of a faulty vessel. Rebecca Solnit also historicizes cultural anxiety about women's permeability, including women's allegedly weak willpower against persuasion and literal or figurative infectiousness, a combination that she shows has encouraged the impulse to control women's movement (236-237). That control, she suggests, is exerted both as a protection to apparently frail female constitutions and as a public health preventative. Put simply: women can't control themselves, so we confine them to prevent their falling ill or spreading illness. Women's permeability and susceptibility, both physical and figurative, assume a huge role in *Camilla*. The novel gives an account of open-hearted Camilla's coming of age, but also that of her highly intellectual and wise younger sister, Eugenia, who is infected and disfigured by small pox and injury in childhood. Though the main action of the novel

emphasizes Camilla, the two sisters' personalities and fates unfold in tandem, somewhat like the Miss Dashwoods of *Sense and Sensibility,* and the exposition of each illuminates two major cultural preoccupations of Burney's time: 1. That of protecting women's virtue in light of their vulnerability and 2. whether or not a woman's virtue can survive infection, of a literal or metaphoric brand. Such anxieties are constantly ignited in various improper exposures or overexposures to public life. That is, by choice, naivete, or circumstance, neither Camilla nor Eugenia are adequately protected from incursion, especially as they move through public space.

Such intense vulnerability is heightened by *Camilla's* setting. The novel begins in the fragile years of childhood for the Tyrold girls and in the early days of inoculation, wherein Eugenia was thought too fragile for vaccination. Consequently, any instance of sociality posed a threat to her health, so she was shielded from any unnecessary community exposure. When out in public without her parents, her sisters were regularly charged with her protection. While in the care of their favorite if foolhardy uncle, Sir Hugh Tyrold, their brother Lionel runs off defiantly on horseback to a county fair, forcing his uncle and sisters to pursue him by coach. As a vague and insufficient preventative, Sir Hugh calls to a footman, "Hark'ee, Jacob, do you ride on first, and keep a sharp look out that nobody has the small pox" (Loc 22083). He imagines any threat to Eugenia's health to be visible and avoidable. When they arrive, the other youths are prevailed upon by Sir Hugh to go enjoy the amusements, but when Eugenia cries to join them, Sir Hugh is easily overtaken and allows her to alight from the coach to collect toys. Within moments of exiting the protective space of the carriage, and absent her vigilant sisters, Eugenia is found talking to a boy with conspicuous scarring on his face—evidence of a recent small pox infection. Soon noticing the crisis from nearby, her sisters

run to Eugenia's rescue. Burney writes, "Lavinia…perfectly unconscious what she did, covered his head with her frock, and held him fast with both her hands" (Loc 22099). Having already survived an infection, Lavinia uses her own clothes, her own protection from the world, to literally immobilize contagion and attempt to prevent her sister's exposure. In any other circumstance, pulling up one's dress would signify indelicacy, but in this moment, Lavinia's anxiety for her sister's susceptibility overrides any effort to maintain decorum. Eugenia's youthful but naïve curiosity and concern for the boy's condition foreshadow anxiety of a more figurative exposure—that of emotional susceptibility and infection.

In this episode at the fair, even the most overcautious anxiety about women's vulnerability is affirmed, and incidentally, the scene doesn't unfold in the crowded and contagion-filled city but in country suburbs. Eugenia is not only infected with small pox, but soon after, her mobility is permanently impaired by an injury on a seesaw. The most absurd, sanctimonious moral of the story goes like this: If a woman dares to move where and when she shouldn't, especially with pleasure, she'll be punished.

Some years later in similar company, a swindler named Bellamy mixes with the Tyrolds and Lynmeres on an unavoidable walk in Hampshire, and when the group is dispersed suddenly by fear of a maddened bull, Eugenia is literally carried away by Bellamy in what appears to be an abduction attempt. When family friend Edgar Mandelbert, Camilla's beloved, discovered Eugenia and Bellamy in a farmhouse alone, Bellamy on one knee, Eugenia "caught Edgar by the arm, but could not speak" (Loc 24053). The erudite and wise young Eugenia reaches out for Edgar's protection, but she is rendered mute after being forced to defer to male guardianship, even that of a malicious stranger, and immobilized by his control. Eugenia finally says, "I could not

prevail—I could not—this gentleman said the risk was so great—he would not suffer me—but he has sent for a chaise, though I told him I had a thousand times rather hazard my life amongst [my family], and with them, than save it alone!" (Loc 24045-24053). Her speech, typically fluid and sensible, becomes clipped and panicked. Here, Eugenia's disability and youthful inexperience are shown to contribute to her susceptibility to danger. Without a carriage, both her mode of transportation and protection, Eugenia's mind and body can be carried or stolen away.

As in all three of Burney's other novels, the women in *Camilla* are regularly hogtied by convention or outmaneuvered by men intending to control their fortunes and futures. Burney's oeuvre doesn't validate women's need for protection; rather, it shows the impossibility of women doing—and moving— "right" when righteousness is a moving target. In pursuit of a moving target, Burney's protagonists are never where they should be or with whom they should be associated, and in being out of place, never embodying the virtue they intend. When they're forced by circumstance to sidestep intended virtue, as Eugenia is forced to defer to a male protector, their conduct becomes illegible; interpreters misread their circumstance and intention. Edgar, standing in for a brother figure, is scandalized by the scene, and though he doesn't blame Eugenia, he can't make sense of her there.

The primary crises of interpretation take place between Camilla and Edgar, her eventual beloved. Early in the novel, we're persuaded of Camilla's charm, which is based, in part, on her open-heartedness. She is kind and playful; she loves and laughs easily, and her joy is rather infectious, but Camilla is also incapable of masking or controlling her passions. This quality makes her the favorite of her boundary-less and immature uncle, Sir Hugh Tyrold, but it concerns her prudent parents, especially her

mother, who models and expects veritable perfection from her daughters. Edgar, the charge of her father, relies almost entirely on surfaces for interpretation. Encouraged and coached by the misogynistic Dr. Marchmont, a former tutor, Edgar entrusts his judgment of Camilla to a single tool: his observation. Like an inexpert anthropologist, he studies her countenance and circumstances without the rich data one could mine and interpret after conducting interviews, or rather, having a simple an honest conversation, which propriety made difficult.

When Camilla decides to join Mrs. Arlbery on a trip to Tunbridge Wells, a touristed spa town, Edgar, believing this was evidence of her caprice, "again blessed Dr. Marchmont for his preservation from her toils" (Loc 28243). Quite to the contrary, Camilla, constrained by propriety, plans the trip to gain distance from Edgar, whose detached affect has broken her heart. She thinks, "Edgar cares no more what becomes of me! Resentment next to antipathy has taken place of his friendship and esteem!" (Loc 28239). Unlike Edgar's shallow interpretations, Camilla has every right to believe Edgar doesn't love her. He speaks coldly and continuously leverages a tour of the continent against the prospect of their marriage. Though she goes to Tunbridge begrudgingly, Camilla goes hoping a populated resort town will provide her some fun, and she goes with confidence that she's behaving according to custom. She travels, in fact, on the advice of her father who recommends she rein in her affection until Edgar makes his feelings known. Upon arrival in Tunbridge, Camilla walks the commercial district. Burney writes that "the gay company and gay shops afforded some amusement" to Camilla, and to her younger companion, Miss Dennel, "a wonder and delight that kept…her head jerking from object to object so incessantly that she saw nothing distinctly from the eagerness…lest anything should escape her" (Loc 28509). The

Pantiles, somewhat like Parisian arcades, provided a place for public walking and people watching, in addition to its commercial function. This trip, in many ways, is Camilla's unofficial public coming out, and she is appropriately escorted with an experienced widow, but that widow's cultivation of male company soon changes the appearance of Camilla's otherwise innocent public debut. When Edgar arrives in Tunbridge to confirm whether Camilla's teary exit from home had to do with her feelings for him, he finds her at almost midnight, strolling around a hotel, on the arm of a rich and handsome Major. While he has been consumed with the goal of detachment, he admits, "his esteem was still susceptible, and now grievously wounded." Burney writes, "The confusion of Camilla persuaded him she thought she was acting wrong" (Loc 28766). He reads her with shallow information—a single expression, her immediate company divorced of narrative or context. He's been trained by Dr. Marchmont that her virtue and feelings should be imminently accessible in her exterior. It does not occur to Edgar that the circumstances of Camilla's public walking—leaving a dance late with mixed company—are often out of her control as a minor and dependent. Further, he fails to imagine that her affect results from mixed emotions. Upon Camilla's recognition of Edgar, Burney writes, "Astonishment, pleasure, hope, and shame" took alternate rapid possession of her mind, but the last sensation was the first that visibly operated" (Loc 28731). Her subjective, inner experience is complex, even contradictory. As evidenced by her shame, she instantly fears his misinterpretation of her public appearance, and yet propriety demands that she neither course correct or explain herself. The appearance of Camilla's "inconsistencies", her diversion from the archetypical wife he wants her to be, materialize for Edgar exclusively when she moves through public space. When she remains in the safe, legible, feminine domestic space, he's convinced of her eligibility

and suitability for marriage. Walking, in this scene and countless others, instigates misunderstandings that threaten to destroy Camilla's future.

Near the end of the novel, Camilla's thwarted attempts at righteousness culminate in a near-fatal episode of wandering when she convinces herself she has nowhere to go—no friend to offer refuge, no proper place to occupy. And thus, without a companion or a plausible explanation for her wandering, she takes a hired chaise to stay at a roadside inn where she becomes seriously ill. She'd naively accrued debt with the help of a woman who assumed she was an heiress; that debt sent her father to debtor's prison on her behalf; her sister Eugenia had been forced to marry her captor, Bellamy, who turned out to be a fortune-hunter, which excluded Eugenia's home as a potential safe-haven; further, she assumed she was even unwelcome at home. She cries, "My mother…cannot forgive me! my father himself deserts me! O Edgar! you did well to fly so unhallowed a connexion!" (Loc 36575). Camilla is immobilized by intended propriety, first, and then by her failing health, which seems to be the consequence of the stress such misfires wrought on her body.

In this lengthy spell at a village inn, removed from her family home by a mere nine miles, Camilla shows us the conflict of a woman confronted with the crowd—this one descending upon her only refuge, the inn, while she suffers illness. When Camilla sees a diverse group walking in a cluster from a window in her rented room, Burney writes, "Recoiling, shuddering, she hastily shut the window," and though very sick, soon, "She sighed, walked feebly up and down the room, hard and with effort, and then forced herself again to open the window" (Loc 36601). The sight of a crowd initiates panic. For a hyper-visible woman of a certain class, a crowd suggests she cannot control her own privacy or the containment of her identity or homelessness. When she realizes that the

crowd, including what appears to be a gurney, enters the inn, in spite of her curiosity, Camilla "could not venture to encounter so many spectators" (36609). The "spectators" of which she speaks are ostensibly spectators of a dead body that Camilla learns is on a gurney at the center of the crowd's gaze, and yet she imagines they'll be more concerned with her identity and situation than the corpse. Unlike the flâneur, Camilla cannot imagine joining the crowd without being regarded apart from it—as a spectacle.

As the scene continues, Camilla views the corpse, who turns out to be her sister's cruel husband and captor, Bellamy, and in facing death, her presumed fate, her condition further deteriorates. In an attempted escape from this sight, "her shaking limbs were refractory, and would not support her" (Loc 36652). Losing mobility, she exclaims, "It is certainly now…over, and hence I move no more!" (Loc 36668). Assuming she'll soon die, she makes some final attempts to write last words to those she loves and read a prayer book, but "her eyes, heavy, aching, and dim, glared upon the paper, without distinguishing the print from the margin" (Loc 36685). She can no longer interpret language from white space, life from death. Camilla seems to approach the veil. Soon she enters a fever dream wherein a reaper-like figure pins her with his hand and asks, "Whither goest thou…and whence comest thou?" (Loc 36711). In this nether space of nightmare, she is impelled to walk by an unknowable force, and even Death scrutinizes her path, over which she has no control. As in every waking circumstance, Camilla's movements are dictated by an exterior force. She is steered forward to the book of Eternity, wherein she is forced against the will of her hand to write a plea for death to take her though, she is forced to admit, she doesn't deserve mercy. And that text, which she doesn't herself write, follows her eyes wherever they move, as if imprinted there. She is thereafter brought back to consciousness when she begs to

return to life: “O let me yet return! O, Earth, with all thy sorrow, take, take me once again, that better I may learn to work my way to that last harbor…” (Loc 36720). Even her metaphors for life and death take on the nouns and verbs of walking and travel. When she awakes, she implores a maid to bring her a clergyman to attend her in her last hour, and incidentally, the innkeeper produces Edgar Mandelbert, who discovers her identity.

Once Edgar is sent to bring back Camilla’s mother, she asks the innkeeper, Mrs. Marl, how Edgar, of all people, came to her chamber. She says that Edgar had tied up his horses and inquired about who was ill, “if she was a lodger or a traveller,” and “her mistress answered: she’s a traveller, Sir; and if it had not been for Peggy’s knowing her, we should have been afraid who she might be, for she stays here, and never pays us” (Loc 36801). The very fact of Camilla’s traveling at all makes her suspicious. She does not allow her identity to leak. Her lack of a companion and her financial trouble add to the innkeeper’s internal tally against Camilla, and without the life-saving reference of a young chamber maid who could vouch for her class, nobody would have accepted her collateral “pledges”—a watch and locket. Hanging by a thread to identification—not a daughter, not a Tyrold, not a wife, and barely appearing as a woman—Camilla’s mind unravels in this lonely circumstance, detached from all the markers of her life, her class, and her regular modes of movement and protection. Nobody, even those closest to her, can imagine what would drive her to wander.

As with her other heroines, Camilla is redeemed, and in the novel’s final pages, she is saved from debt and insecurity by her marriage to Edgar. But Camilla’s wandering is not meant as a cautionary tale to prove that women should remain protected in the domestic sphere where they make sense. Burney’s own life is a testament to other

aspirations for women. Rather, Camilla shows us what happens *in spite* of every earnest attempt to pursue respectability without true agency over one's course. Camilla, misread and misundeerstood at every turn in public life, is unable to represent herself. Even when given the chance to write in the book of Eternity, her hand is forced; the text is not hers. Instead, subject to the domination of others' gazes and interpretations, she remains merely text, a vessel projected onto by others, and spectacle.

As for Eugenia, othered by disability and assumed to lack the features for a fulfilling destiny, Burney offers a site of true agency and promise. After she is disabled in childhood, Sir Hugh Tyrold disinherits Camilla, entitles Eugenia to his fortune, and provides her a first rate education—one largely reserved for privileged young men. Even her tutor suspects the education will be wasted on a woman until he sees Eugenia's impressive intellect at work. For much of the novel, due to Eugenia's othering, she practically disappears from the many courtship scenes: dances, public rooms, and social gatherings. On one hand, that disappearance troubles the disability studies reader. Eugenia appears ineligible or unattractive due to her small size, her scarring, or her physical impairment. Men often announce her deficiencies to her face, and simultaneously, she is the object of fortune hunters who hope to grab her inheritance. What's more, when Bellamy successfully abducts Eugenia and forcibly marries her, the reader's terror for her vulnerability heightens. She appears the object of pity—a tragic figure. The novel's conclusion, however, liberates Eugenia from immobility in more than one way. She is freed from her forced marriage, yes, but Eugenia also decides to write a memoir. She says, "For henceforth…I mean to regard myself as if already I had passed the busy period of youth and of life, and were only a spectatress of others. For this purpose, I have begun writing my memoirs, which will amuse my solitude, and confirm

my—I hope—philosophical idea" (Loc 37226). There is, at first glance, a hint of melancholy and resignation in Eugenia's announcement. She relegates herself to being a witness of the lives of others rather than a participant, but her position as spectatress of others' youthful lives comes from her hard-won experience. Further, her plan to write her life contrasts with Camilla's total inability to write with her own hand in the fever dream at the inn. Eugenia is an empowered agent, and she has her own mind. She values her story, which does not derive its worth from her success on the marriage market. That said, shortly after, Eugenia, who inherited her uncle's fortune, forms a union with Melmond, a romantic young poet for whom she has harbored affection much of the novel. Indeed, she does get both companionate love and intellect rather than having to choose between two ends of a false dichotomy. Originally the site of ultimate vulnerability and immobility, Eugenia becomes a site for feminist promise, release from feminine conventions, creative expression, meaningful ability, and power.

Villette

Strangely, like the works of Frances Burney, Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* has scarcely been considered for its early and particularly thrilling instance of flâneuserie—that is, until Charlotte Mathieson's recent 'A Still Ecstasy of Freedom and Enjoyment': Walking the City in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*. Brontë marks the circumstances of Lucy Snowe, her odd protagonist, with features of Horrock's harrowing female wanderer. Mathieson notes, "Lucy Snowe's city walking is set within the context of a series of movements that punctuate her unsettled and unhomely life." Her security is upended when her elderly charge, Miss Marchmont, dies, and without family or wealth, she is forced to search for work. Her constantly shifting circumstances and lack of family, like Brontë's Jane Eyre, would have raised suspicion and anxiety in the mid-18th century,

especially for the moneyed people in whose homes she has found employment. What's more, she sets her sights on London. As if she obtains divine communication, Lucy says, "A bold thought was sent to my mind; my mind was made strong to receive it. 'Leave this wilderness,' it was said to me, 'and go out hence.' 'Where?' was the query…I mentally saw within reach what I had never yet beheld with bodily eyes: I saw London" (107). The wilderness she mentions is both literal and figurative. She intended to leave a remote, rural setting for the city; but the more figurative version of that wilderness is an emotional one: the dim and tangled inner world of a person whose life lacks any meaningful connections. From her very first mention, Lucy's experience of London is touched with thrill and pleasure and seemingly directed by fate.

Once she mentions London, Lucy anticipates the reader's raised brows. She says, "I ran less risk and evinced less enterprise than the reader may think. In fact, the distance was only 50 miles" (110). She then goes on to assure the reader that she has sufficient means to take herself there and back if no job materializes. And yet, she tells us that she arrives "nine o'clock of a wet February night" (111). The season is cold, the weather is admittedly wet, and the sun has been set for many hours upon her lonely arrival there. She admits, "How difficult, how oppressive, how puzzling seemed my flight!" and soon after, personifying the commandeering of her "chilled and bewildered" Common Sense, she manages to ride a coach to an inn, book a room, and communicate with Londoners in their foreign accents (112). Once in her room, the full weight of her solitude seems to descend upon her in a torrent of doubting questions from the local to the global scale: "What was I doing here all alone in great London? What should I do on the morrow? What prospects had I in life? What friends had I on earth? Whence did I come? Whither should I go? What should I do?" (114). Her questions about her own

path strangely mirror Death's questions of Camilla. Again, in contrast to the dawdling, objectless flâneur, Lucy suffers a true crisis of purpose, and no answers offer themselves easily to her. And yet, she says, "I did not regret the step taken, nor wish to retract it" (115). Convinced she "*could* go forward," Lucy listens to "the twelfth colossal hum and trembling knell," the midnight bell, and says, "I lie in the shadow of St. Paul's" (115). Every thrum of its vibration is felt bodily. Unlike the flâneur who privileges disinterested observation, Lucy receives and feels the city—its sounds, its buzz. Considering the scene of pleasure that follows the next morning, the reader senses that Lucy can finally surrender to sleep amid the comfort of the Anglican church, the symbol of her committed faith. The city, she shows us, is not entirely threatening to the lonely, directionless woman. It is also a space of faith where the humble and weary can still expect to hear God and receive his signs.

When morning comes, Lucy presents an entirely new affect. The setting, London viewed from a hotel window, parallels her transformation, "the risen sun struggling through fog," St. Paul's dome, a monument of faith, now visible in the light of day (116). The occluding dark, as well as her anxiety, sloughs away. She says, "While I looked, my inner self moved; my spirit shook its always-fettered wings half loose," and soon after, she utters aloud, "I like the spirit of this great London which I feel around me" (116-117). There is a communion of spirit between Lucy and London, one felt as an embodied experience, an enlivening, sense-sharpening invigoration that seems to embrace her. When the night before Lucy was in "flight", shuttled through the cold and disoriented by the obscuring dark, here she is grounded. Her interactions improve; the waiter remembers her uncles, which, in turn, makes her feel known and connected rather than obscure and unnoticed. An "obliging courtesy" replaces her defensiveness and fear (118).

Even the people she sees outside remind her of rural residents. She remarks, “here was nothing formidable; I felt sure I might venture out alone” (ibid). And with confident certainty, her walk begins.

As Lucy walks, the texture and complexity of central London materializes. She ascends the dome for a vertiginous view of London’s “river, and its bridges, and its churches,” as well as Westminster and Temple Gardens, which are more than two miles west. And in a rare moment of embodied flâneuserie, Lucy says, “Descending, I went wandering whither chance might lead, in a still ecstasy of freedom and enjoyment” (119). From her other worldly bird’s-eye perch, she returns to earth and comes back in contact with “the heart of city life” (ibid). She says, “I got into the Strand; I went up Cornhill,” which illustrates the levels of the city. She moves horizontally, then vertically again, and as such, we see a dimensional and dynamic London. She continues: “I mixed with the life passing along; I dared the perils of crossings. To do this, and to do it utterly alone, gave me, perhaps an irrational, but a real pleasure” (119-120). Lucy distills for readers the fundamentally liminal life of the flâneuse. Participating at all involves daring, cultivating courage, and risk. She dares to enter the crowd, and the crowd appears as one energetic unit, “the life passing along”, life that she witnesses, for a moment, as a spectator. But Lucy never loses sight of her position—set apart, alone, which is to say inappropriately situated, enjoying momentarily the paradox of an irrational pleasure. She deems her own pleasure irrational because it is not intended for her; it’s as if her joy, in fact, results from having stolen it without consequences.

Her adventure, which began at sunrise, doesn’t cease for food or rest until two o’clock in the afternoon (120). Once back at her “dark, old, and quiet inn,” Lucy takes pleasure even in two simple dishes prepared for her there, which contrast with the

"small dainty messes Miss Marchmont's cook used to send up" (ibid). Fed, both by her lunch and by the pleasure of the city, Lucy describes herself as "delightfully tired" before she takes an hour-long nap, awakens, and thinks "for two hours" (ibid). Having really lived and felt the pulse of city life, her contemplation brings another "bold thought": to leave Britain and her past behind. It is as if her walk itself emboldens a whole new course and a whole new identity. As Lucy undertakes a trip to the fictionalized Villette, London resumes its original character: dark, wet, and difficult to navigate. The waiter whom she earlier befriended calls a coach to take her to the port, and he asks the coach's driver to keep Lucy safe from the watermen. But Lucy says, "on the contrary, he offered me up as an oblation, served me as a dripping roast, making me alight in the midst of a throng of watermen" and soon, they "commenced a struggle" for Lucy and her belongings (122-123). She returns to life as an object, and this time, an object vied for by greedy men. Her pleasure romp, free from any harm or bother, is, in effect, bookended by distress and the peril of women's solo travel. That aside, Lucy Snowe's travel, both her pleasure walk and her carriage rides, constitute a radical and unique instance of flâneuserie, one that sets it wholly apart from the goals and features of flâneurie. She is not theorizing the city from a detached, "masculine cerebral" perspective (Mathieson). She feels the city and reflects the "insider/outsider" threshold on which she "skirmishes", as Scalway put it. She steals pleasure coincident with her vigilance.

Conclusions

I draw from the discomfiting and empowering accounts of Burney and Brontë's placeless women to draw together two discourses that, as yet, have sparse bridges between them: women's travel and flâneuserie. By bridging this gulf, I hope to reveal the limits of the city-bound stroller as template for our nebulous flâneuse—not only to

further inscribe her with unique, non-masculine qualities, but also to suggest that the struggle for her materialization in the 18th and 19th centuries emerges in diverse settings. Burney and Brontë's novels show us that, although provincial towns are conventionally coded safe and appropriate for women, movement in them and movement between them had its own accompanying dangers—getting lost, encountering bulls, getting fleeced by coach drivers, and being harassed in beech-lined gardens. The flâneuse's struggle to occupy city streets remains always entangled with her civil rights, which are fought for just as fiercely in women's financial self-determination in the domestic sphere as they are in The Strand. In other words, the private, as Burney's novels show us, is always also public, and the public, as Brontë demonstrates, is always also private. Furthermore, widening our scope for the woman wanderer/walker sharpens our senses for the many women who were always moving—differently and with feeling—in hidden quarters and the neighborhoods of the poor, in spooky moonlit lanes, in the part-public, part-private space of sedan chairs and carriages, in pleasure gardens, and in financial institutions.

CHAPTER 2

AS FLIGHT OR EQUINOX

"…she was the first disappearing term"

-Julie Carr, *Rag*

I

Barely alive (or standing) in the low grass of updates

Forty-nine deaths

feeding a future baby with my present

breast

herself was forgotten

I'm told this is common:

quiet, smudged grey amid racket

between neighborhood birds and the full tilt of quickening

The feeling of a trap without its trappings?

The silent grip of price

lacing itself tightly around a life

The scale of sadness shrinks

small as a sentence

“Let us now leave tragedy and move to foolishness”

where we can better file ourselves

on the planet of passion bullet-red and apologizing after

Metaphorical light strikes

The mythical warrior can kill or rescue

The horn can gore, the laborer shoulders a wheel

And where in the sky is the mother

disguised—

as animal or archer as flight or equinox or map

In one sequence I am rooted in the land

a distributor of golden pastures then

inspector of ponds. Harvest lover guardian of granaries

Still television shudders

faint streams of dust and vapor spiral arms and a glowing middle

Shoved as if by waves sloughing

solid memory at dawdling speed—

the black scowl of night seemed to rebuke me

My family is a pulse that can quit

Yet where should I go?

I want to promise the full melt of my golden fleece

into songs to keep alive by or a good wind

The word is a place to wander but never

be abandoned. I'm not "fortunate"

but sprawled on planks of an actual boat

From the moss I'd guess this is Washington

Note how little I periled

though my real arms tangle before you

Poor Penelope too witnessed

Poor Jocasta

Yet I planned nothing, and considered nothing

I wake up sick about the beauty of Medea whose bad fate

never breeds a namesake

Blood: does it curdle? Can it spoil before birth?—

A candle guttering to waste in the socket

The main mode of communication is memory

or telepathy networked with chicken wire

an electric and uneven ground

I speak to the city as a density or lush current

in which I can step and step out

If it's beautiful I've named it so though I've often married

a monolithic building to my imagination to its gilded cornice

and inimitable difference

Something as common as a dwelling goes up while we sleep

We could use a great deal more frankness

Like: it is both miraculous and mundane to build a person

I sip a glance at plants on the sill

and in these final days look proud like an unglamorous emperor

II

Of our many natural communions

those things which in our sympathy we try on

or become—

our common song with earth or womb

our impulse to say “After you/No, after you”

I would have crawled on with her for twenty years

destined to wear the other

before we cough our own

first word—tugged so. I fever

like money does and seek water born with

both heat and thirst

Night: pregnant. Homer: sightless yes as all color combined

slurs dark across

his many personages. I keep a hand drawn

against all formal stricture. The sentence

bleats from crown and foot

decayed, dissolved, mixed in with grave-mould

Charged with the law of future language

I buff *she* into the baby

Horace stays alive by

roughening water. I tally disappeared

notations a cross—all little emergencies. Trees fall

to sleep. Death or the state now

perched was once languorous

Venus a stern choreographer

Meanwhile modern news reports

Pluto's almond moons wobble—one a brick of charcoal

still lives amorously for a star. Still hurtles clumsily

across the same frozen path. *I cannot—cannot see the reason*

Out of conventional rhythm motion looks aimless

and aimlessness either futile or suspicious

From five billion kilometers I shake my head

lovingly at non-anomaly

Like good Portia, already a moneyed gift

who said mercy like her is water—

  “so is the will of a living daughter curbed”—

not stable or owned

but endowed and never pinned in

filthy shafts of the so-called

now. Even rules take up ghostly bodies

In my enthusiasm for order

I grope the air to embrace moving

spheres of the state touch the spirit

of the law but wave as at a fly

toward the letter

  what with our slow progress and long stoppages

What is written in the law*?* What is firm as a mountain

and moved with will? The sky opens up

into more sky then another, roomier word

In the language of water we talk

about risk and confidence. Dare

the fulsome bulb of morning to expect—

sun to hazard footing. Ticks drips tally the lack

of fear or faith. The market is

a natural measure of volatility until it hits

a two-month high until shares

rise yields rise thick above shores

above shoulders sight pressed

ardently skyward where unpopulated

blue elbows out more wild range for want

but there came a time when distance was to melt for me

A horse on the loose across sleep I abandon knowing

strictly. Memorial even—a surplus of yellow

too clean of memory's glacial lakes. Lies get invented. Meaning

so hallowed tugs a frothing sleeve

how it would harrow as it went

No accounting for no arid place to originate

yet bucolic plates

look clue-bearing like inheritance

I leave the room to gain

mystique she changes

into a green dress to become

novel as the next woman—

worn out by want

lusted-for and liquid as money

Capital makes everyone desperatedesirous to be capital

Sorry for instance that I once apologized

for my apologies

I want to at least pretend to

want to take back what didn't sell me

There are signs of growth

one golden gift falls prone

and in the best world

it might begin a rapprochement

where among two sides

one is alive and the other

is a derivative name

There can only be one turn

at a time—footloose capital

yanked back to a hard-edged lap

Work or care competes in gloom

And what and who was she that had haunted me?

and shone upon by night looks like shadows shuffling

Citizens read progress in austerity

The ropier reaches of earth

slapped and sent back to reckon with climbing

Some advice: get physical push

currencies ardently edge up

buoy west to lap our spoils

Can you hear ourselves

here—fabled as a voice

pursuing the future?

What dark, usurping shape

supine, long, and strange?

The opulence of princelings

gathering in an unhealthy vacuum

Look across the tilted earth

a last chance breaking

the Olympic record for Olympic cost

Intrepid as energy booming

Transpacific swagger echoing

the renewed momentum of the west

where men carry weight and weight carries

speed—and speed itself is wealth

While sadly peacemaking. Not all the forecasts will prove

Sadly national happiness

and what remains elusive when war

A mother in her middling practice advises

“At first, say nothing to build interest”

Future is the *nothing* a baby dusts into her hand

lashed up by a new scourge, I defied spectra

While she begs for any *we*—the communal body a gestured-at restorative

like the jade, roiling country a chorus erased as objection

collapsing together for collective breath

In non-discrete dominions wealth builds

vacuous silence. In that dusk of language men purchase

decisions. Her single voice's passage impaired

under such common music

And down she fell—down all around me

the oceans, distant comets

when tunneling underground, in RNA

down in shreds and fragments—and I trode upon her

or history: the big prize

Oversized continents get a determined push

from the top for those craving a boss eyeing the barrel of a pretty weapon

When she means to talk safety—

eaten up by avowals—

she trails off to empire

The third shadow is timing:

a ruse to support

the décor at the duel

I could afford neither consternation, scream, or swoon

There's talk of nailing down brokering of urgent relief

She slinks having learned to hesitate

toward a reward of others—

a real scorn on America

There are other ways to make

a deal: light the fuse and freeze funds

The rival lamps were dying:

she held her course like a white fate

by painful step and volatile region

Amid the turmoil of the modern—

an unexpected triumph

Every dumb Theodore come forward

His coat and his tail his sure thing

A decade on she laughs: how clumsy terror is

how outmoded the foolish burn

of making an old joke—confidence battered

from weak reports credit cinched or quieted

Drum, trumpet, bugle, had uttered their clanguor, and were forgotten

Lead this chance by its wrist out of sun-blindness

Those retiring retire in light

those borrowing build tomorrow carve banks

out of promise. Amid tall grass the world's breath

builds wind waits for

the bold urge of a rogue frond

Some surprises she likes: rebounding winds

chase at her tail even the lick of debts

real rates like a table used as a chair

such temporary evasion of the actual

Every dollar of option profit a flower

nodding in a coat pocket a small touch

such coward fleeing from dread

Surplus oh cordial clearing let her sleep

All falsities—all figments!

So she talks down to money

like slovenly sheep calls its long winters

its disappearance weakness

It's a cutting walk on the Hudson it's living in negative

Integers a ditch or anemia

Prospects tied to attitudes and attitudes to confidence

overblown in projections

I dance for myself in the cold

whip of spring to earn my own faith—and this to fell

other ballooning rates. My interest my wage

labor gone slack

I purchase as a promise; I invite summer

by throwing my coat to the wind

Is the tide rising—a question

poses cost as the weight of water dragging

disappointment under current

Ah! when imagination once runs riot

where do we stop?

Surge surprise surplus

strength gathered in fragile light

and featherweight hope despised for faint

speech. The record of a possible

event—how is it weakened or

encumbered simply by a sentence

I have been silently gathering from Rumour

III

Worry like one would for pain
wagered on a child and pray
aloud for relief
safe I mixed with the crowd where it was deepest
The idea of the body of money in the future meanwhile
collapses—and not crashingly as on stairs
but noiselessly and
as yet without threat or figure of a floor
And against mourning
she buoys belief simultaneous
to shaking her head—a *sorry*

Where ownership falls as the sky does not behave

Light broke, movement gathered, chimes pealed

What constitutes seeing in the event of atmosphere

While factually sequence is ineluctable—vague

uncontainable poorly mythologized

Wind in her hair her rising hem flat treatment of struggle

It seems as if I had been pioneered invisibly

Factually the city exists only under erasure

To be fair it's not a reasonable hour

as if some dissolving force had gone before me

That detachable armature from which responsibility lilts

Privately she cultivates incredulity

Which falls first—a cry or a siren—

reframed as an attitude aloft on air

Emptiness urges quick fulfillment

The hour was come; we expected the master

But how do we behave to earn space?

Never beg never spell out longing in daylight slow

your speed to appear

flightless idling in air. She plays games

poses small and unnamed

a blurred, distant fleck of gold

shore spun blue-white shelved

as the coo of a memory edging

in at a corner warming the eye

Devote deference to whatever's becoming

An importunate light was beginning to trespass

The crop now just a bud eye of a blossom

blinking. How does pathology appear

from this height? As slender blue

percentages hovering over the whole "Pacific"

"South Atlantic"—as lush green paling

to grey. Pen strokes of what looks like

spates of rain blotting out the plains

How is a symbol so physical—

a currency a mood the sky's mammatus lobes

arcing earthward like their bow won't end

A thousand ways were opened with pain

Pollen flecks turn shadows in my eyes

Two blocks of trampled blossoms—an omen

of? An omen of a craved

omen. Then rain. It's a relief

to see the sky

untrapping its worth, I'll call it

In me: the would-be luminous hurt has sentries

like worried hands

Seeing so many gains at risk—figures

dipping a touch below the forecast and meanwhile a fleet

of concealed numbers are lives

untenanted in the course of winters

She calls herself

a bright spot in recovery bleached throb foaming up

in an otherwise shadowy sphere

Of course I "confounded myself"

How with the proud

whipping rein of market does one understand

labor to sway prospects wages

wooden in uniform sleeves

growth built in and expected?

Amid a story of numbers like 90 billion

missed opportunities work is encouraged

in all its masks:

prime age slave and aging

fertile institutional migrating and seasoned

Alice and Dorothy whim and illusion full-on

dream spiral thick with tossed-up currency

every quiver seemed like the pant of an animal athirst

Provocations begin "How dangerous are…"

dumb as the grave

and that's the razed ground that's seeing morning

uncouth scavengers' ears darting up

mouths bloodied moving

stealthily through dawn's scuttling wheat. A factory

could be any event in which fear bubbles

over from volume—desperate as life for plenty

As all pleasure and beauty

righted and trued by what's rigid

for one and scorched to bend elsewhere

She onyx and cryptic ever stolen

Sometimes I thought the tomb unquiet

regretted and shepherded

then under-born

A forgotten sin or ditch can brighten

Out here she takes her death

pregnant with relief and exhales

Out here soaked in thorough orange

known through vibration the heat

waving she relives the year as commodity

guilt—excess and evidence

Clipped wings is how she says

less fortunate hurtled toward

either triumph or disaster

Sleep went quite away

She reclines to watch the hero

an underdog slogging through

a clapped-out thriller

paint pictures of angels

turning like feathers sluggishly

down the city hills—this the urge

to watch another body drop as animated fear

of our own fall the real measure of living

A slept-under fog a dome of dreams—

The dream now a fail-safe

excuse for what's born winged and

yet ruthlessly in the stomach

Even passive sight bribed

doomed to divorce from the comfort surrounding their persons

or charmed by falling rhetoric

of dwindling budgets airborne

pledges without deadlines diving perfume their

rest—disasters tempests or manmade

fates waiting to weigh down money

until its green-light promise its green

leaves fall to sleep

beneath them or surrender

What they mine mines me and here cradled

at the grassy edge of sound I keep digging

WORKS CITED

Baudelaire, Charles. *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. Translated by Jonathan Mayne, Phaidon Press, 1965.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, Harvard University Press, 2002.

Brontë, Charlotte. *Villette*. N.p. iBook public domain edition.

Burney, Frances. *Camilla, Or The Picture of Youth: The Collected Works of Frances Burney*. Musaicum, 2018. Kindle edition.

Dickens, Charles. *Charles Dickens Uncollected Writings*. Indiana University Press, 1968.

Doody, Margaret Anne. *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1988.

Elkin, Lauren. *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice, and London*. FSG, 2016.

Epstein, Julia. The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women's Writing. Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1989.

Epstein-Nord, Deborah. *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City*. Cornell University Press, 1995.

Horrocks, Ingrid. *Women Wanderers and the Writing of Mobility, 1784-1814*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017.

Irigaray, Luce. "Un art different de sentir," *Les femmes, la pornographie, l'erotisme,* editors and interviewers Marie-Françoise Hans and Gilles Lapouge, Paris, Seuil, 1978, pp. 42-59.

Lauster, Martina. "Benjamin's Myth of the 'Flâneur'." *Modern Language Review,* 102 (2007), 139-156.

Mathieson, Charlotte. 'A Still Ecstasy of Freedom and Enjoyment': Walking the City in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Volume 22, Issue 4, 1 December 2017, Pages 521–535

Olsen, Kirstin. *Daily Life in 18th-Century England*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999.

Porter, David. "18th Century English Carriages." Web.

Pollock, Griselda. “Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity.” *Aesthetics,* 1997, pp. 132-140.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*. New York: Penguin, 1979.

Scalway, Helen. “The contemporary flâneuse.” *The invisible flâneuse?* edited by Aruna D’Souza and Tom McDonough, Manchester University Press, 2006, pp. 18-31.

Sennett, Richard. *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1994.

Solnit, Rebecca. *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. New York: Penguin, 2000.

Straub, Kristina. *Divided Fictions: Fanny Burney and Feminine Strategy*. Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1987.

“The Delight of All Persons of Reputation and Taste.” *Vauxhall Gardens*. www.vauxhallgardens.com.

Todd, Janet. *Women’s Friendship in Literature*. New York: Columbia UP, 1980.

Wilson, Elizabeth. *The Sphinx in the City*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.

Wolff, Janet. “Gender and the haunting of cities (or, the retirement of the flâneur).” *The invisible flâneuse?* edited by Aruna D’Souza and Tom McDonough, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006, pp. 18-31.

INDEX

1. All italicized phrases and sentences comes from the public domain version of Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*.
2. I overheard the sentence "Let us now leave tragedy and move to foolishness" in a speech by Barack Obama on television (29).
3. The clause "so is the will of a living daughter curbed" comes from Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (37).
4. "At first, say nothing to build interest" was the dating advice of a friend's mother to her sister (44).