1913 was a momentous year for Ella Gwendolen Rees Williams. Born in Roseau, Dominica in 1890, and living as a single expatriate in London, she became pregnant for the first time. She had an abortion; experienced a major depressive episode; and began compulsively to reconstruct her experiences of the previous eighteen months in diary form in a series of exercise books. These and later diaries would become the basis of her first unpublished novel, "Triple Sec," produced through the editorial work of H. Pearl Adam in 1924. Writing as Jean Rhys, Ella Rees Williams would return to the early diaries as a source for her 1934 novel *Voyage in the Dark.* "Triple Sec" itself would remain in rough manuscript form. In her unfinished autobiography *Smile Please* (1979), Rhys refers to the "illegal operation" over which "she didn’t suffer remorse or guilt," after explaining, "I can abstract myself from my body" (118). The events of Rhys’s life in 1913 that initiated her writing as an adult are connected. Graciela Abelin-Sas contends that, in response to the cultural "demonization" of the kinds of women who have abortions, "it is crucial for a woman’s psychic well-being that she be able to tell her own story about what the abortion has meant to her in the context of her overall history and narrative constructions of her life" (Cornell 66). Rhys’s early diaries were in this sense “therapeutic” (Savory 36). “Triple Sec” served as Rhys’s introduction to Ford Madox Ford. His then partner Stella Bowen describes it as “unpublishably sordid.” The “great sensitiveness and persuasiveness” Bowen also notes (166) are particularly apparent in Rhys’s elaborations of the phantasmatic scope and implications of embodied reality.

Here I focus on the unmarried pregnant woman’s imaginings of maternal subjectivity in “Triple Sec” and *Voyage in the Dark,* and their relation to the decision to abort and to her experience of abortion. For the pregnant woman, maternal subjectivity constitutes what Drucilla Cornell terms “the future anterior,” anticipation of a future self’s “continuity and bodily integrity” (43). I would extend this to include moral integrity. Such
imaginary projection of the future entails, to use Judith Butler’s terms, “sexed identifications,” processes of affiliation with and habituating acceptance of available roles or subject-positions, and disidentifications or otherings based on “exclusion and abjection,” repudiation of particular kinds of unaccommodating social placement (3). As in Rhys’s brief reference to her own abortion in Smile Please, the experience of abortion on the parts of Suzy Gray, the protagonist of “Triple Sec,” and Anna Morgan, the protagonist of Voyage in the Dark, is central to graphic self-divisions. Rhys uses these divisions to figure the relation of white Creole women to imperial, sexual and scientific modernity.

The sexual modernity inhabited by Suzy Gray and Anna Morgan is the cultural space and time of the “amateur.” The term “amateur” was used from the early to the mid-twentieth century to refer to a sexually active young woman who did not, like a prostitute, charge a fee for sex. “That she was referred to as an amateur prostitute indicated the continuing equation of active female sexuality with prostitution,” note Lucy Bland and Frank Mort (140). Between the amateur and her partner the sexual contract is implicitly negotiated, based on mutual understandings that sex may be available freely or in exchange for gifts (for example, money, clothes, jewelry, and the like), nights out, motor rides, and the like. “[T]he [sexual] episode appears less commercial and suggests more of passion and spontaneity than a similar episode with a professional prostitute ... the whole episode may be mutually desired and mutually satisfactory,” remarked one 1930s commentator (qtd. in Haste 134-135). In my analyses of “Triple Sec” and Voyage in the Dark in The Worlding of Jean Rhys I argue that Rhys engages with the public discourses that circulated around the amateur in early twentieth-century English moral panics around her during the 1910s and 1920s. In these panics she was a figure of moral degeneracy, venereal disease, consumption, and danger to a racialized national health. The dis/ease of Rhys’s “amateur” protagonists is pointedly always depression.

Suzy Gray’s and Anna Morgan’s drifts into the life of the amateur are facilitated by their ability to assume the position of white colonial flâneuse in London, not consistently, but as one of their repertoire of social parts. Angela
Woollacott has linked the historical emergence of the colonial *flâneuse* in turn-of-the-century England to the desire of white colonial women to appropriate “new possibilities for physical and social mobility, including new professional and career opportunities” (762). The *flâneur* has been read as a key figure of European modernity. Janet Wolff describes him as “the modern hero; his experience ... is that of a freedom to move about in the city, observing and being observed,” “in his element in the crowd—at the centre of the world and at the same time hidden from the world” by the relative anonymity of city life (40). Woollacott situates her account of the colonial *flâneuse* in the context of feminist debate over whether women could move through the streets as the archetypal *flâneur* does, becoming “actors, observers, and commentators” (764) on the urban scene. Her case study is of Australian women in London. She points to the presence in England and Wales in 1911 of 13,000 Australian-born women (761). Her material—letter diaries, articles, novels, memoirs—by some of these women suggests the pleasures attending largely middle-class and single “women’s historical encroachment on autonomous movement around the city, ... their ability to inhabit public space on their own without harm to either their bodies or their reputations and to feel that they belonged in that space and could possess it in a leisurely fashion” (765). The distance from “familial ... contexts” and small communities allows the colonial *flâneuse* to move beyond the “gendered circumscription” of movement in public space and, sometimes, rigid double standards of sexual respectability (Woollacott 764). The constricting institution of chaperonage may be abandoned. The paradigmatic whiteness of the colonial *flâneuse* makes her colonial difference invisible on the street, freeing her from being “treated as a [racialized] spectacle” and subjected to “race-based ogling, harassment, and prejudiced resentments” (762).

In “Essay on England,” an unpublished autobiographical coming-to-London narrative, Rhys describes a rite of passage of the potential *flâneuse*. She indicates her interpellation as colonial subject through an English education in Dominica: “All the books I read were English books and all the thoughts that were given to me were English thoughts, with very few exceptions.” In imagination England was as a result “a wonderful place” (1). In
London (on her way to the Perse School for Girls in Cambridge) she soon appreciates the prospective pleasures of the colonial flâneuse, but also the gendered social transgression they entail. She remembers her first day in London with her aunt. She "shocked" the landlady and "vexed" her aunt into unspeakable rage by taking a long, unchaperoned walk around central London without telling her aunt of her intent. She simply "wanted to see what London looked like." The response of the women constitutes her "first taste of this curious limbo, which is England" (3-4). She was able to stave off overwhelming homesickness during her early months in England through taking in "the entire strangeness of everything" and fantasizing about a career on the stage and as a "very pretty woman," like those she occasionally catches sight of (4).

Suzy's and Anna's work as chorus girls entails movement around the city and on tour, and friendships and acquaintances beyond the confines of family and a social circle of which it might approve. It also, given the way in which turn-of-the-century theatres were erotically marked social spaces, confers on them the "moral equivocacy" attributed to actresses and female performers (Davis 163). Suzy and Anna live in boarding houses, a form of accommodation for working women that in 1911 even provoked social anxiety. "[A]ny arrangement which, by supplying cheap accommodation encourages young women to leave the shelter, however poor, of their own home and offers them the opportunity of living without restrictions or oversight ... exercises a decidedly harmful influence," asserted Mrs B. Booth at a National Conference on Lodging-House Accommodation for Women (qtd. in Davidoff 159). The figures who monitor the sexual respectability of Rhys's Suzy and Anna tend to be landladies. Their concern is for the respectability of the boarding houses they operate, and the value maintenance of it confers on their business, not preservation of the sexual respectability of their female lodgers as a tradeable "commodity" for them in the marriage market. Suzy and Anna visit clubs, restaurants, friends, and acquaintances. In Voyage in the Dark consumption, in the form of shopping, window-shopping, and visiting the cinema, also legitimizes Anna's presence on city streets. Any empowerment the active sexuality of Suzy and Anna brings is small, dubious
and transitory.

The enabling conditions for the emergence of the amateur and the colonial flâneuse make maternal subjectivity phantasmatically uninhabitable for Suzy and Anna. Their dread inability to imagine themselves as mother, to identify themselves in the role and social place, is integral to their decisions to have abortions.

In "Triple Sec" Suzy Gray's meditations on her pregnancy begin with an acknowledgement of a rupturing of narrative sequence produced by confirmation months before that she “was going to have a baby”: “Each scene is separate and distinct like a picture—I never think of it connectedly.—” (82). Working to piece together a sequence brings Suzy to realizations of the moral equivocacy of her position and of the implications of being pregnant by Carl Stahl, and the foetus is denied embryonic human status. As it becomes a metonym of an abjected sexual and commercial relationship with Carl and bearer of her shame over it, her thoughts of the baby make her “sick.” She fears it will be “a little monster” (85-86), a “wretched little monster,” “some dreadful little deformed monster,” a “dreadful horrible monster” (99). The image of the monster here is consistent with more widespread representations of fetal monstrosity in which the monster is “a container for emotions too inchoate and too threatening to allow coherent expression” (Larsen 241). Suzy's phantasmatic sense of the relation between herself and the foetus acknowledges them as “beings who are both interconnected and interdependent,” a condition, Leslie Cannold's research suggests, of the prospective mother forming a “spiritual” bond with the foetus (Cannold 72-73).

Many layers of Suzy's relationship with Carl are compressed in her sense of its monstrosity and the monstrosity of the foetus it has produced. Chorus girl Suzy has had a sexual relationship with Tony, who acknowledges that she has “a lovely soul” in her “body” (“Triple Sec” 14). After Tony abandons her, her friendship with chorus girl Alison and work as a manicurist in the massage business of Ethel takes her to the fringes of the world of the amateur. Trying to claim the distance of the flâneuse, her response is a fascinated voyeurism and repulsion at the beastliness of the men. Her social
proximity, however, makes her vulnerable to entrapment plots on the part of
men working in collusion with Alison and Ethel. This is consistent with the
manner in which her autonomy in London brought about through imperial
modernity and waged labour for women is always shadowed by a “horrid”
“night” aspect of London—“like a great black animal—that pounces—and
claws you up” (24). The image reworks the usual imperial association of the
centre of empire with light. It is also largely metonymic of the beastliness of
the men among whom she circulates as a sexual and aesthetic object, part of a
“common pool” of working-class women (Sedgwick, “Beast” 251), the sexual
use, exchange, and conspicuous consumption of whom secure upper middle-
class homosociality.

Entrapment is one of the white slavery motifs which helps Suzy make
sense and near-parodic nonsense of her experience. In late Edwardian and
early Georgian England white slavery was often termed compulsory
prostitution. This distinguished it from prostitution understood to be
grounded in economic need or immoral pleasure. The stock feature of white
slave narratives is innocent local women being tricked and coerced into the
trade of prostitution. The coercion might entail “abduction and debauching”
(Masefield vii), luring of women through false advertisements for servants or
governesses and ill-treating them into prostitution, or emotional blackmail by
inviting pones offering romance who might have even proposed to a
victim (xi-xii). Suzy’s recognition of one coercive white slave scenario, in
which Alison colludes with Jim to get Suzy drunk and to a hotel in which she
is prepared by Alison for sex with Jim, allows Suzy to assert and manipulate
her way out of a threatening situation (“Triple Sec” 38-43). Suzy’s sexual
relationship with Carl, who represents American monopoly capital and rough
sex, commences with his successful entrapment of her. The white slavery
motifs in ‘Suzy’s account of this verge on the parodic. Ethel colludes with Carl
so that Suzy and her friend Jennie, both a little inebriated, are locked out of
Ethel’s flat, where Suzy boards. Carl takes them to a hotel, where Carl
manhandles Jennie out of the room. Suzy is “simply frightened to death.”
Unwilling sex bordering on rape is implied, but small details throw some
doubt on the invoked scenario: Jennie’s highly melodramatic dialogue with
Carl; her failure to seek help for Suzy; and the “ripping” breakfast she and Suzy share the next morning in the bed of the room in which sex with Carl has “hurt” Suzy “frightfully” (71-73). Suzy’s response to Carl’s claims of exclusive ownership is a mixture of self-contempt, infantilizing relief in the early stages of a depressive episode that she won’t have “to worry” any more because he will “look after” her (74), and mild titillation.

She leaves Carl’s “protection” after an “awful night” during which she “learned what shame meant” (93); he acknowledges he had been “crazy” and had hurt her (85). The experience is sufficient to push her to “an amendment of life intended to prevent the possibility of a similar shaming event occurring” (Dalziel, “Telling” 65) and to make her “sick” on seeing his handwriting, a sign of his continuing interest in her (Rhys, “Triple Sec” 84). Suzy’s effort to produce some coherence from the disconnected pictures of her life—moralized by shame—leads her to realize how “cheap” she has been for Carl: “My great grandfather paid much more for a pretty slave” (83). Her repudiation of the relationship and her own conduct is racialized in this formulation. She is, in a sense, wanting to reclaim the respectability she associates with whiteness.

The future anterior becomes a source of dread for Suzy, inhabitable only as a secularized death, that would abandon her vestiges of a Christian moral imaginary:

I have nothing in front of me but months of sickness and pain and then a bigger pain.
And then I hope and believe I will feel nothing any more. Death is wonderful and kind.
I don’t wish heaven, hell or purgatory—I wish for nothingness and that is, I believe, what will come to me. (83)

At this site of consoling “nothingness” her human integrity, measured too in the birthed child/monster she could not in death be brought to recognize, would not be subject to religious judgement. Death is personified. She begins to access childhood memories of the West Indies through a memory of the smell of stephanotis, “the flower for the dead” there (88). In a scopophilic analysis, Charles Larsen argues that a sense of fetal monstrosity is produced by
the insistent mystery of the foetus (240-241). Rhys's image suggests rather that for the prospective mother the foetus is always already marked in imaginary terms by its place in her relationship with the impregnator, her racialized and classed sexual history, and her capacity or otherwise to project a future anterior of post-partum maternal subjectivity.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that in Gothic convention the fictional self is spatialized: it is "massively blocked off from something to which it ought normally to have access" (12). Suzy is blocked off from the autonomy she has claimed as colonial flâneuse by her confidence-draining sense that her normative unremarkability as a white person on the streets is no longer available to her. Suzy has internalized the cultural demonization of the prospective unmarried mother, one of the principal kinds of women who have abortions, under the sign of harrowing and mortifying shame. Shame, Rosamund Dalziell insists in Shameful Autobiographies, manifests itself most basically as a sense "that one is completely exposed and conscious of being looked at, in one word, self-conscious. One is visible and not ready to be visible" (6). Suzy feels that on the streets she has become a spectacle of illness and shame: "I very seldom go out because of the beastly sickness and giddiness that attacks me so suddenly. Also I imagine that people know and are looking severely at me" ("Triple Sec" 87).

Suzy wants the parental nurturing from which her status as isolated female Gothic protagonist and the ambiguous freedoms of metropolitan life have cut her off, but can also be irritated by its demand for sociability and unconditional gratitude. Jan initially provides this after Suzy leaves Carl, but the opportunity for narrative sequencing provided by the leisure his protection affords her in illness makes her angrily critical of his "airs of proprietorship" over her (87), and his display of her as passive object for the potentially jealous gaze of other men. And she realizes that the price of his protection will probably be future sexual favours (83). Her violent emotions—anger, hatred, shame, desperation, fear—block her off from the "nice," "gentle and dignified" persona, implicitly white, English, respectable and middle-class, which will enable her, she thinks, to transcend misery and sordidness (88).
The loved Tony’s reappearance in her life opens new realms of fantasy, which allow her to project a future anterior of maternal subjectivity to the point of maternal recognition of a baby at birth. The fantasy reaffirms a faith in divine providence: “I will never say again that I do not believe in God” (90). Pregnancy apparently barring sex in their eyes, he takes on the role of contrite, concerned and nurturing parental figure. This proffers a sentimentalized pastoral time in her life, in which she rearranges her life narrative by imagining that the foetus, now apostrophized as a baby, might be her and Tony’s. Tony rules out an abortion, called an “operation,” an option which Suzy concedes “had several times lurked at the back” of her “mind” (97). She attempts to manufacture a sentimental bond with the foetus by purchasing “a picture of a ducky baby” with the desired birth features—femaleness, blue eyes, black hair—to hang “on the wall” and “look at ... often” (97). She cannot imagine an “afterwards” (98) of unmarried maternal economic autonomy and responsibility. She is cut off from “familial ... circumscriptions and safety nets” (Woollacott 772).

Even if she cannot project a future anterior for a birthed child, her narrative suggests it through the figure of Ethel’s landlord’s “weird-looking” illegitimate son, whose work is indeterminate, and who is “miserable and white-faced with a sort of hunted expression” (“Triple Sec” 50). Rhys doubles Suzy and the boy under the signs of illegitimate sexuality and marginality in the family of white Englishness.

Tony’s pragmatic cousin Guy, with a “kindness” that “hurts,” brings Suzy to think more about his “verdict,” a sentence of abortion (98); in conversation with her friend Jennie she has to abandon the fantasy that the foetus is her and Tony’s. The return of the repressed horror of Carl and the memory of her drunkenness make her think that the “monster” might be “deformed,” and send her “mad” at the moment of maternal recognition at birth (99). Crying and desperate she decides to have an abortion, that she cannot become a mother. The death of the foetus in abortion becomes the only habitable condition “in which she would not be forced to pass on the so-called shame of her class position and her ‘sex’” (Cornell 89). After her servant Wallace, hired by Jan, kept on by Tony, thinking that Suzy had a miscarriage,
brings her own baby for Suzy to hold and play with, Suzy "sentimentalise[s]" over her dead "baby," feeling "she'd been stolen" away from her. With guilt she acknowledges her own responsibility for her loss ("Triple Sec" 106). Medical abortion, is "purchasable contraband" (Browne 14) for the wealthy Tony. Dr Robinson who agrees to operate insists on payment of forty pounds in gold and dictates to Suzy a letter she must send him "detailing certain symptoms" which would provide a covering justification that he was operating to save her life ("Triple Sec" 102). The blind eye turned to abortions performed to save a woman's life, Stella Browne explains in 1935 as "wholly 'uncovenanted mercies.' They have grown up like other in our adaptable and empiric but incoherent social customs, as a concession which the law does not officially recognize." Such abortions, she points out, are "inevitably mainly a privilege of the minority who can afford high fees and lengthy convalescence" (Browne, Ludovici and Roberts 14). In her study of abortion in Victorian and Edwardian England Patricia Knight highlights the opposition of the medical profession to abortion (62-63). The Royal College of Physicians in 1896, though, had acknowledged that "a certain set of practitioners were known to practise criminal abortion somewhat extensively" (Ministry of Health and Home Office 43). The fee Rhys cites indicates the lucrativeness of performing such abortions for doctors. Performing the service also secures homosocial and commercial bonds with the men who pay for the procedure.

Having made the decision to have an abortion, Suzy finds that the doctors who treat her assume an indiscriminate promiscuity in her. She is shamed by the assumption of indiscriminate promiscuity and by sexual assaults by Dr Smith, the first abortionist she consults, and Dr Barton, the anaesthetist. Their provision of medical contraband seems to license such unprofessional conduct. There are no avenues of complaint about this available to her without incriminating herself.

Experiencing a harrowingly detailed major depressive episode subsequent to the abortion, Suzy consults a doctor, who after learning of her abortion, tells her that her problem is that she is "living unnaturally" by not giving in to her sexual cravings ("Triple Sec" 123). He even shows her medical diagrams to illustrate his contention, an action that disgusts her such that she
makes a hurried departure. One of the distressing symptoms of Suzy's depressive episode is a desire not to be seen, which inhibits sociality and movement, some of the keenest pleasures of the flâneuse. In her room she closely observes the physical signs of depression in the mirror: "All the bones of my neck show—my cheeks are hollow—there are circles under my eyes and lines from my nose to my mouth—my hair is darker—" She frighteningly recognizes herself as "getting perfectly hideous," becoming "a melancholy skeleton!" This change in her appearance is particularly disconcerting because Jennie, an artists' model, has provided her with contacts, so that she might start earning a living posing for artists. Suzy's sense of the freedoms of the streets and the city alters. Her painful self-consciousness makes her feel set apart in the crowd and desire to hide from the gaze of other people. There are days during which she sits staring in her room; others on which she "walk[s] for hours and hours like a demon" (120-121). One assumes that the doctor Suzy consulted about these symptoms showed her diagrams of female sexual and reproductive organs. The acuteness of the distress this causes is surely related not just to offence at the assumption of inherent promiscuity. She is terrified of being looked at clothed in the street; he thinks he can see and confidently categorize the "nature" of her most "private" parts and subsume her subjectivity in it. Her depression lifts after she determines to exercise "pluck" (127), a character quality associated in the period with masculine adventure romance, including imperial adventure romance.

The experience of self-division in Anna Morgan in Voyage in the Dark is temporalized as a lack of fit between her Dominican childhood and England and spatialized as a problematic inhabitation of public spaces in England. Her presence in England is linked with the failure of the turn-of-the-century economic modernization project in Dominica begun under administrator Henry Hesketh Bell, and with her English stepmother's dispossessing her of her inheritance, both economic and cultural. "It was as if a curtain had fallen, hiding everything I had ever known. It was almost like being born again," says Anna of her coming to England. That her colonial difference and the racialized histories, which structure it, cannot be accommodated by the English is indicated by their disbelief in Anna's self-narrativizations. Her
stepmother Hester refuses to credit Anna's claim to whiteness. These are instances of the moral suspicion of the colonial noted by Ann Laura Stoler (qtd. in Woojcott 763).

Minimally lower-middle-class affluence and gentility signalled by clothing worn in public is central, Rhys suggests, to women's ability to feel comfortable in public space and that they "could possess it in a leisurely fashion" (Woojcott 765). Anna in looking at other women while walking window-shopping realizes the optimism of those who can afford fashionable styles of clothing, even if on them they "were like caricatures of the clothes in the shop-windows" (Rhys, *Voyage* 111). People look down on women who dress poorly, reading clothes as signs of respectability and social class (22, see Wolff 41). "The bold free look of a man at a woman he believes to be destitute—you must feel that look on you before you can understand—a good half of history," remarks suffragette convert Vida Levering in Elizabeth Robins's 1907 play *Votes for Women* (118). Being marked out by respectable women as being in "loose" company, Anna finds "terrifying": "the way they look at you. So that you know that they would see you burnt alive without even turning their heads away" (*Voyage* 103).

It is with Walter Jeffries that Anna first experiences herself as a sexual subject. This process is facilitated by her cross-racial identification with a woman, Maillotte Boyd, named on an old Dominican slave-list she has seen. It is this identification which empoweringly enables her to deal with the sneers she senses in Walter's home and her own fear of religious judgement produced by a convent education.

Anna's experiences of sexual danger, sexuality, abandonment, xenophobia, and unmarried pregnancy drive her further into depression and retreat into rooms in which her illness gives her the repeated sense that walls are closing in on her. Her self-birthing as would-be flâneuse is abortive. Fantasies of autonomous movement, plans to leave London, can at least momentarily alleviate her depression (136).

In the delirium produced by the haemorrhage and induced miscarriage Anna's memories compress at times to the point of ellipsis awareness of the sexual dangers for white colonial women in laying claim to
freedoms outside a middle-class propriety that screens them from the life of the street. She remembers Dominica carnival and a childhood horse ride during which she encounters a black female duppy with yaws. The propriety of white women is symbolized spatially by their placement behind jalousies in a family home watching carnival. The dangers are sexual fall; the “eternal grimace of disapproval” in the face of society (140); loss of respectability and racial caste; and syphilis. The most elliptical aspect of this nexus is the association of yaws and syphilis. In the early twentieth century there was a medical debate over whether yaws was “syphilis modified by race and climate” (Rat 120). The recalled rhythms of carnival dance and horse riding, conflated with memories of sexual acts in England, are rhythms which may constitute a phantasmatic denial on Anna’s part of having procured an abortion. These activities might in contemporary medical parlance effect a non-criminal miscarriage by “transmitted mechanical irritation” through “prolonged jarring” of the pregnant body (Taussig 28).

Anna can project a future anterior of maternal subjectivity to a point of dread maternal recognition of the baby at birth. She doesn’t know who the father of the foetus is—he is one of several sexual partners of hers after Carl Redman. In a state of panic and the sense of muddle integral to depression, she tries to think through the medical implications for the baby of the abortifacients she has been taking: “And all the time thinking round and round in a circle that is there inside me, and about all the things I had taken so that if I had it, it would be a monster. The Abbé Sebastian’s Pills, primrose label, one guinea a box, daffodil label, two guineas, orange label, three guineas. No eyes, perhaps. ... No arms, perhaps. ... Pull yourself together” (Rhys, Voyage 143). She quickly decides, “I want not to have it” (146).

The baby is objectified as “it.” In her mind the pregnancy is a dread, unnameable “that” or “it”: “Like seasickness, only worse, and everything heaving up and down. And vomiting. And thinking, ‘It can’t be that, it can’t be that. Oh, it can’t be that. Pull yourself together; it can’t be that. Didn’t I always. ... And besides it’s never happened before. Why should it happen now?’” (138). The language of objectification marks a terror of inhabiting the subjectivity of a pregnant woman.
Her experience has taught her that the kinds of women who have illegitimate children are unspeakably immoral in the eyes of the respectable. She recalls in particular the stigma attached to a Dominican woman, "Miss Jackson Colonel Jackson's illegitimate daughter—yes illegitimate poor old thing but such a charming woman really and she speaks French so beautifully she really is worth what she charges for her lessons of course her mother was—" In spite of Miss Jackson's "straight" body, a visible sign it seems of moral uprightness, she is spoken of condescendingly in the gossipy talk Anna recalls having heard. Miss Jackson's father's social status is cited. The "yellow photographs of men in uniform" in her sitting room suggest that she clings to the prestige of this connection. The "very dark" atmosphere of the room implies the moral shadowiness of the social position accorded her (138-139). Her mother is spoken of in such furtively hushed tones in front of children that she is a blank for Anna.

Linking editorial suppression and abortion through the figure of mutilation, Rhys tells the story in letters and her autobiography of having to capitulate to the demands by Michael Sadlier, of Constable, that she change her original ending to *Voyage in the Dark*. As Mervyn Morris notes, Sadlier "represents commercial instinct and genial male patronage" (3). Reading Part IV reductively as culminating in Anna's death from the abortion, Sadlier, in Rhys's account, insisted: "so gloomy; people won't like it. Why can't she recover and meet a rich man? ... Well, then, a poor, good-natured man ... Oh, give the girl a chance" (Smile Please 127). Jonathan Cape had already withdrawn from its contract to publish the book because of a "dispute about the end" and Hamish Hamilton had also insisted on "severe cuts" (Brown 41). For Constable Rhys did remove Anna's imagining of the foetus during an instrumental abortion, cut 2,400 words from Part IV, change the improvisational style of Anna's delirium after her abortion, and shift sentiments of the female abortionist to the male doctor who attends Anna.

In the first extant version of the abortion scene (still unpublished) Anna phantasmatically connects with the foetus. Anna intimates: "It [the unidentified instrument used by the abortionist] felt its way up to where my life was & opened out tearing me in two so slowly so slowly. The earth heaved
under me & opened in two red & warm.” Anna withdraws consent to the operation, but Mrs Robinson, the abortionist does not acknowledge the imperative. Anna records: “I couldn’t move Too late now to move Too late to. A door opened in my brain. This is pain I began to cry. It’s red, it’s warm.” (Rhys, Add. Mss. 57856). The memory of agony is realized grammatically in the unclear subjects of clauses and referents of pronouns as subjects. The separation of herself (“me”) from the foetus (“my life”), “pain,” “red,” and “warm” become conflated. Savory highlights the ways in which the colour red in *Voyage in the Dark* is associated with “a threatening female hostile to Anna” (100), noting from the published version of this scene the red dress that the abortionist is wearing. In the earlier version Anna’s consciousness of red shifts: impersonal negativity about the poor clothes sense of Mrs Robinson is quickly supplanted by the vivid immediacy of her physical consciousness of abortion, in which foetal blood becomes the embodied threateningly female.

Abortion was a contentious issue in Britain in 1934. A long-running inquiry by the Ministry of Health highlighted the incidence of abortion as a cause of maternal mortality. Abortion law reform was a subject of renewed public debate. Through the first-person narration of Anna Rhys provides the sympathetic “contextual moorings” of Anna’s decision to abort the foetus and experience of abortion. For Rhys the primary issue is not whether to legalize abortions or liberalize abortion law. Rather she highlights the machine-like operation of English and colonial cultures of gendered respectability and modernity, economic and scientific, which make maternal subjectivity seem uninhabitable for the single pregnant woman.

Anna’s site of narration in the text published in 1934 is the place of “starting all over again” referred to by the doctor attending her, who moves “like a machine that was working smoothly” (*Voyage* 159). In the fuller abortion scene, the abortionist “laughed suddenly. Soon you’ll be all ready to start all over again —” (Add. Mss. 57856). The image of the machine emphasizes the impersonality of the doctor’s response to Anna’s situation. His medical intervention it is implied will bring her back inside the machine of dominant and oppressive socioeconomic relations and discursive regimes associated with the industrial modernity of England, the English, and the
British empire. As in other early twentieth-century fiction, the machine is
"metaphor for a human society that was itself organized along the lines of a
single machinelike organism" (Leiss 160). The machine, rather than Anna® or
abortion, "becomes the symbol of degeneracy itself" (Leiss 147). Mary-Lou
Emery reads Anna as a "sacrificial" "victim" of the machine she identifies as a
"threatened Empire" in "social crises" (104). Anna cannot will herself to forget
the "whole business" of seduction, pregnancy and abortion in the way the
serially promiscuous Vincent so blithely advises: "You'll be all right. And then
you must pull yourself together and try to forget about the whole business and
start fresh. Just make up your mind, and you'll forget all about it" (Rhys,
Voyage 147). In telling her story Anna is reclaiming her own humanity
through narrative sequence, refusing the part of the automaton.

Rhys writes over sixty-five years after her abortion that she "didn't
suffer from remorse or guilt," that she "didn't think at all like women are
supposed to think, my predominant feeling was one of intense relief." But this
after placing the event in the context of profound depersonalization of her
body—"I can abstract myself from my body" (Smile Please 118). In
depersonalization, "[s]elf-observations seem completely disinterested or
disinvested, viewed from the point of a spectator or outsider. Not only is the
subject's own body treated with disinterest, but the outside world is also
experienced as flat and disinvested" (Grosz 76-77). Suzy Gray's and Anna
Morgan's experiences of abortion are represented with more graphic
immediacy as they struggle to project a future anterior of maternal
subjectivity and to relate to the foetus. This process is structured by sexed,
classed and raced identifications and disidentifications integral to a young
white Creole woman's difficult negotiations of imperial, sexual, and scientific
modernity in early Georgian England. The enabling conditions for the
emergence of the amateur and the colonial flâneuse make maternal
subjectivity phantasmatically uninhabitable. Neither the positions of the
amateur or flâneuse are empowering for them. They are empowered by telling
their stories in the first person, finding narrative sequence.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Manuscript material has been quoted with the permission of Jean Rhys Ltd. and the Department of Special Collections at the University of Tulsa. Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the conference Women and Modernity: Flapper-Trappers and Modish Maids, University of Melbourne, 4-5 December 2000 and at the Swinging Her Breasts at History conference, organised by the Caribbean Women Writers’ Alliance and Goldsmiths College, University of London, 6-7 April 2001.
NOTES

1 In 1939 the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Abortion commissioned by the British Ministry of Health and the Home Office noted in single pregnant women the “dread of the social stigma which is still attached by large sections of public opinion to the unmarried mother and her illegitimate child” (39).

2 Johnson has influentially analysed the functions of apostrophe in poems about abortion.

3 For a detailed elaboration of this nexus of association see Thomas 108-110.

4 In the original ending Rhys improvises extensively on the theme of stopping: the haemorrhage not stopping; Anna’s memories of a man in Ethel’s flat not stopping a sexual act after she withdraws her consent; the deaths of her mother and father; Hester’s sense of carnival being so lewd it “ought to be stopped” (Voyage IV 385); monies supposed to compensate slaveowners for the abolition of slavery stopping in England; and the horse on the ride stopping dead and throwing her. The thematic structuring is jazz-like, with a theme being introduced and improvised on by memories.

5 In quoting from the manuscript I put inverted commas in contracted words.

6 The phrase is Cannold’s. She comments on the “contextual moorings that make most women’s abortions both comprehensible and justifiable” (19).

7 In one of Rhys’s conceptualizations of the novel Anna’s narrative was to have been the dying statement taken down by a respectably dressed, professional-looking English female stenographer who Anna realizes “doesn’t believe a word of it either” (Rhys, Add. Mss. 57856). Such statements could be tendered as evidence in trials of abortionists. British doctors attending women dying as a result of abortion were advised to have such statements taken. In the manuscript submitted to Constable the site of Anna’s narration is an anticipated blackness, not necessarily physical death—Rhys, for example, also conventionally figures major depressive episodes as a living in blackness. The image also highlights Anna’s sense of a loss of racial caste contingent on being perceived as a “fallen” woman.

8 For priggish and racist Hester racial mixing is the sign of West Indian degeneracy. She sees signs of this in the black blood she thinks taints Anna’s maternal ancestry, in social and cultural proximity of white to black people, and in the illegitimate children of Anna’s Uncle Bo.
BOOKLIST


