



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Looking Through an Aperture: A Sensory Reading of “Paris” by Hope Mirrlees and Nevertheless by Marianne Moore with the Concepts of the Self and the Other

Fazlali, Mahtab

Citation

Fazlali, M. (2023). *Looking Through an Aperture: A Sensory Reading of “Paris” by Hope Mirrlees and Nevertheless by Marianne Moore with the Concepts of the Self and the Other.*

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master Thesis, 2023](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3636885>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Looking Through an Aperture:

A Sensory Reading of “Paris” by Hope Mirrlees and *Nevertheless* by
Marianne Moore with the Concepts of the Self and the Other



**Universiteit
Leiden**
Geesteswetenschappen

Mahtab Fazlali

Student number: s3483320

Supervisor: Dr Ruth A. Clemens

Second reader: Dr Annelies E. Schulte Nordholt

Word Count: 17081 words

21 June 2023

For my mum who watches me from heaven;

always

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter One: Theoretical Framework	13
Chapter Two: “Paris” by Hope Mirrlees	27
Chapter Three: <i>Nevertheless</i> by Marianne Moore	36
Conclusion	48
Bibliography	51

Acknowledgements

The world of poetry always astonished me. I hereby pay my homage to the poets past and present in the world, especially to the memory of the Iranian poet, Sohrab Sepehri, whose poems ignited my passion for this genre and taught me and many Iranians to “rinse the eyes and view things differently”¹.

My short experience far from my homeland in search of scholarly progress threw me into the depths of darkness where I stood isolated questioning not only my prior knowledge but also my entire existence. It was with the presence and genuine guidance that I began to see some rays of light. For this, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my thesis supervisor, Dr Ruth Clemens, who patiently listened to me when all I had was tearful distress. She maturely ushered me to take the steps and believed in me where no one else did.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr Annelies Schulte Nordholt, my second reader, who advised me on the right spot to plunge into the world of Emmanuel Levinas. I am also grateful to my professors at Leiden University throughout my master’s year who kindly opened my eyes to some aspects of the realm of scholarly writing that I was unaware of then.

I am eternally grateful to my dad for his sweet composure and his love, and to my brother, Matin, who is the only reason that I smile every day. They are the ones who taught me to take it easy and to keep my warmth like the sun and flow constantly like the river. I am very proud of our firm supportive hands that protected one another when a fall was inevitable from the day of my mum’s untimely flight. Our bitter experience defamiliarized all matters and shed new light on our lives.

¹ Line 283 from Sohrab Sepehri’s (1928-1980) poem “The Sound of Water’s Footsteps”. This long poem, originally composed in 1964, is published today as Sepehri’s fifth book from his eight books of poetry.

I could not have undertaken the journey of writing my thesis without my husband, Omid, who stood by my side and took care of everything while I was reading and writing. He proved that he is truly worthy of his name: Hope.

My journey in writing my thesis taught me to have perseverance, courage of conviction and a strong sense of self. Now I have solid proof that I “also” exist, along with the others. A belief that I had doubts about before. This thesis is a stepping stone for myself to face the world and build further blocks both personally and scholarly.

Lastly, there is no coincidence that my personal turmoil aligned with a collective one in my country. Indeed one must see the depth of darkness to reach for the light. As I conquered mine, I have a strong belief that the time of darkness has come to an end and Iranian perseverance will lead to freedom not only politically but also as a personal practice of one’s everyday life. For this, we also need the practical experience and kind company of the rest of the world, as “Woman, life, freedom” entails not only Iran but also each individual living in the rest of the world.

May no one dwell in loneliness.

Den Haag
June 2023

Introduction

The turn of the twentieth century abounds with changes in artistic productions including the works of anglophone modernist literature. With the flow of modernity and the experience of the First World War, the 1920s saw an inevitable phenomenon which Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) called “a change in human character” (4). In her essay, “Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown” (1924), while claiming that “we are trembling on the verge of one of the great ages of English literature”, Woolf introduces a character, Mrs Brown, whom she asks the audience “never to desert” in their efforts in writing (24). The character of Mrs Brown as an ordinary woman in the eager gaze of Virginia Woolf informs the reader of a bigger concept; a representation of a change. Throughout the course of this thesis, I will show that the selected poems by two twentieth-century anglophone female modernist poets, Hope Mirrlees (1887-1978) and Marianne Moore (1887-1972), have become the means to illustrate a change in the way human gazes at the world or in Emmanuel Levinas’ words “the other”. Present in the poems is the female *flâneur*, a modern urban figure who walks and experiences the city, strolls and does her *flânerie* in the phenomenology of everyday life as she does ordinary activities during the day (“*Flâneur*”).² The concept of phenomenology is the experience of the speaker in the face of the other.

I will use Henri Lefebvre’s critique of everyday life which designates “the most alienating aspects of life like the repetitive nature of work and the fatigue that results from it” (Schilling 31). The female stroller experiences her moments and reshapes what was already familiar around her. Accordingly, defamiliarization is the process of presenting common familiar objects in an unfamiliar way so that the audience sees the world differently. In “Art as

² The importance of the *flâneur* as key participant and observer of city life stems from the nineteenth-century Parisian poet Charles Baudelaire, and the twentieth-century social critic Walter Benjamin.

Technique” (1917), Victor Shklovsky as a Russian formalist and a key figure in the theory of defamiliarization defines that poems “create a vision of the objects instead of serving as a means for knowing it” (24). Here, I argue that the flâneur of the poems is an agent who does this. This change in the speaker’s gaze lines up with the turn of the twentieth century and the time of the First and Second World Wars when, as Julie Vandivere in her article suggests, “the definition of the pre-natal object and post-natal human changed” (285). The turn of the century was the time when the interrelation “between things and people” changed (Vandivere 287). This is what this thesis will convey through an analysis of “Paris” (1919) and *Nevertheless* (1944).

Going back to Mrs Brown, the richness of her existence is visible to Virginia Woolf’s senses, especially to her sense of sight, as she looks at “a woman over sixty” in the carriage (Woolf 6). Woolf’s sense of sight is her means to collect knowledge from the world. Then she starts to re-establish what is already known to get a new understanding of the woman in front of her. In this thesis, with the sensory building blocks introduced by the anthropologist David Howes (1957-), I will apply a sensorial reading of “Paris” by Hope Mirrlees and the collection *Nevertheless* by Marianne Moore, through the five traditional senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. As the senses are the tools to perceive and understand the world, defamiliarization in literature will be a way to redescribe the images in the poems. After the turn of the century, there was a change in people’s sensory experience. For Shklovsky as a key theorist in the modernist turn towards the new and defamiliar look at the world, “Art is thinking in images” (19). The poems illustrate a modernist shift in the experience of the speaker as they are the product of the beginning of the twentieth-century poets. They are defamiliarizing the sensory gaze of the speaker. In order to observe this change, the notion of the gaze of the speaker from her inner world, self, to the outer world, other, has to be discussed. I will use Emanuel Levinas’ concept of the self and the other, as I will later describe the relation between

the two and what it means that the self faces the other. I will then analyse the poems and “delve into the atomic structure of life as it is really lived” (Merrifield 5). The idea is to understand phenomenology in the framework of everyday life as the flâneur of the poems experiences the world in the time of the First and Second World Wars.

I had two reasons for choosing poetry to analyse the change in the human gaze at the world at the time of the First and Second World Wars. One lies within the words of Michael Fagenblat who quotes in *Levinas and Literature* (2020): “The transcendental advantage of literature consists in its way of awakening the self to the elusive presence of the other within the elemental conatus of existence” (XV). In other words, the changes in the twentieth century are reflected in the poems of modernist poets, especially during the World Wars. Literature in itself reflects society and how people behold one another. Although the poems of my two poets are from two different continents and the chosen works have approximately twenty years of distance in their time of composition and printing process, they are creations of two anglophone modernist female poets who write in free verse in the context of the Wars; “Paris” in the First and *Nevertheless* in the Second World War. Furthermore, they have one thing in common: the experience of the city and their gaze at the world in the state of everyday life. A sensory reading of the poems will inform the reader of the change in the human gaze at the outer world through the city and the phenomenology of everyday life.

My other reason lies in the words of T. S. Eliot in his essay “Tradition and Individual Talent” (1919), and the concept that the mind of the poet works as a “catalyst” (40) in the bombard of experience. Eliot, a contemporary of both Mirrlees and Moore, as a poet, critic, and a key figure of literary modernism himself, argues that “the elements which enter the presence of the transforming catalyst, are of two kinds: emotions and feelings” (40). In short, the poet can experience the feelings formulated from the outer world and transfer the experience into words in the shape of a poem. The poet disconnects from the world, yet she

creates something that is closely linked to it, like a prism in contact with the light creating a range of colours. In this way, poems are phenomenological agents and can be discussed as distorting mirrors of the world actively shaping the way the reader views the world rather than just reflecting the image of the world passively. The poems are read with different perspectives to acknowledge the worldview of the time and place of their creation. In the case of this thesis, the modernist female poets from the first half of the twentieth century in the anglophone culture created poems of novelty which break from the past traditions. The poems are in new forms and layouts. Following the French tradition, both “Paris” and *Nevertheless* are in free verse. “Paris” uses calligrams to form a thematically related image. The rhyme in *Nevertheless* also has different beats from past traditions. Thus, the poems have an Avant-garde layout and form. They map the process of multisensory modernist experience. In Eliot’s worldview, the poet’s mind works as a receptacle for storing feelings, phrases, and images which remain in her mind until all the particles waiting to unite to form a new compound are present together (Eliot 40). This “intensity of the artistic process” (Eliot 40), or poetic creation, was the reason to consider that the chosen poems can acknowledge the twentieth-century worldview. By a sensory reading, the poems represent a subjective sensory experience in those years.

As shown above, this thesis focuses on the works of two female poets born in the same year but from two different continents: “Paris” (1919) by the British poet Hope Mirrlees (1887-1978), and the collection *Nevertheless* (1944) by the American poet Marianne Moore (1887-1972). The collection contains six poems; the first of which has the same title as the collection, “Nevertheless”, and five others which are named in order “The Wood Weasel”, “Elephants”, “A Carriage from Sweden”, “The Mind is an Enchanted Thing”, and “In Distrust of Merits”. The philosophical study of the self in contrast to the other in Emmanuel Levinas’ theory along with the notion of phenomenology will be the torch to guide this thesis to the end. Bearing in mind the concept of the change in human character, the experience of the gaze into the world

in every day of life in the twentieth century becomes meaningful. In “Paris”, the female flâneur strolls in the city on one day and there is an exchange between the self and the other as she observes the city of Paris. The poems in *Nevertheless* discuss different dimensions of everyday life as the speaker contemplates fruits or animals or talks about the quality of the weather in another country. The phenomenology or the experience of the speaker and the critic of everyday life from the point of view of the flâneur will be the key to presenting the change in the gaze. Moreover, regarding the time of the publication of the poems, the turn of the twentieth century abounds with instances of social and cultural changes like the mass production of cars, the cinema, or building skyscrapers, and these developments changed the qualities of experience phenomenologically speaking. The two World Wars, on the other hand, were the main sources of the change in experience represented in these poems. This experience in the first half of the twentieth century gave way to a need for more different forms of expression and genres. This is the point of novelty of the poems. All these will be discussed thoroughly in Chapter One, the theoretical framework of this thesis.

As a starting point for my work, I will discuss Emmanuel Levinas and his notion of the self and the other. Emmanuel Levinas was a French philosopher who lived through the twentieth century (1906-1995). In his life span, he endured the major historical events and experienced the two World Wars which connected many of the intellectual movements of the twentieth century. The Second World War had critical effects on Levinas’ philosophy which led him to his definition of the self in the face of the other. In contrast to older traditions, the self is not the same as the other, but something separate who faces it and has a relationship with it. Among Levinas’ notions is the concept of phenomenology, introduced by Edmund Husserl as the concept of experiencing the world. It leads to Levinas’ interpretation of phenomenology and further to the notion of ethics (Moran 320) as the basis of his philosophy. To use Levinas’ concepts, it is important to first read “Paris” and *Nevertheless* sensorially. In doing so, I will

use the concept of sensory reading from anthropologists David Howes and then it will be possible to differentiate between the self and the other with Levinas's theory. All this will be done to extract a change in the human gaze which is reflected in the poems.

Notably, it was the book *Losing Our Minds, Coming to Our Senses* (2021) by M. Mehdi Khorrami and Amir Moosavi about the sensory reading of Persian literature which initially triggered the sensorial reading in my mind. The introduction of the notion of a "sensory turn in history" (Khorrami and Moosavi 26) in the book aligns with the time of the creation of "Paris" and *Nevertheless*. In *Losing Our Mind, Coming to Our Senses*, the term "sensible" is portrayed in English as "the perceptible". This is the point where sensory studies in anthropology merge with literary sensory studies (Khorrami and Moosavi 26). The perceptibility in the "process of defamiliarization" as in Khorrami's words, is where the written words become perceptible (26). Defamiliarization as a notion in Russian Formalism is the key to reading the poems of this thesis. In Shklovsky's "Art as Technique", it is argued that "The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known" (22). In anthropology, this perceptibility considers all senses in action, while what is needed in this thesis equally is a narrative-based understanding of the realities more in touch with the literary sensory studies. Shklovsky further adds that "Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important" (22). This is how the reader can get meaning out of the figurative language like imageries and metaphors in the poems. It is a way to explore how the five traditional senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) are capable of making sense and creating an understanding of the world and the change in human gaze in the first place.

Henceforth, the speaker of "Paris" experiences the world around her while she walks through the city of Paris looking at the world around her describing the "soundscape, tastescape, landscape, smellscape, and touchscape" (Khorrami and Moosavi 27) of her surroundings. In the six poems in *Nevertheless*, the notion of everyday life as whatever remains

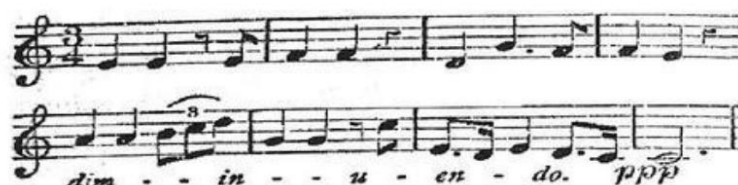
after the daily routine manifests itself as the speaker discusses the fruits or the ordinary life of animals like a Wood Weasel and Elephants. The speaker of “Nevertheless” touches upon the fruits to convey life in action. In “Elephants”, she also talks of the two animals who fight like soldiers but are less fatal, relating it to the Second World War. Through the use of such imageries, these poems make life perceptible in a new defamiliarized way.

Thus, in the works of both poets, there is merely the ordinary everyday life that is before the eyes of the speaker. I will analyse how the poems defamiliarize the world outside through their poetic form and language. Lefebvre also states that “The familiar is not necessarily the known” (132). So, in defamiliarizing the familiar the poems make the changed world known to people in the early twentieth century. The experience of everyday life is a central concern in Levinas’ phenomenological theory as well. In his *Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas* (2011), Michael Morgan argues: “In phenomenology, one tries to bring out the commonly shared features that underlie our everyday experience” (7). Furthermore, the significance of ethics and everyday life is evident in the poems. The notion of “ethics” which Levinas believed “were the philosophy itself” (Morgan 7) will be the next step to digest the poems with, as if there is a responsibility the speaker has toward the other.

Regarding the context, the poems were composed in the time of the World Wars. “Paris” was written after the First World War and *Nevertheless* during the Second. According to Michael Fagenblat, it was Levinas who believed that the World Wars “tore away the drapes of civilization” (X). “It is not simply the end of an illusion”, he says, “but the end of meaning” (Fagenblat X). Such poems created in this context reveal a change in the way people see the world. Fagenblat argues that “the torn drapes reveal the horror of being without any order whatsoever, existence without a world” (X). Although the drapes were torn and the old orders scattered, the poems show that not only there was not an end to the meaning, but also a change happened. People in the twentieth century learned to look at the world differently. Fagenblat

then concludes, “far from presenting the other, the literature that interests Levinas explores the implications of a world deprived of the sense of the other, a world verging toward the abyss of indeterminate, meaningless existence” (X). Here, I cannot agree with Levinas as the innovation in the poems shows a change in the way of looking at the world which is far from meaningless. Consequently, the more detailed theoretical framework of the entire thesis from the sensory reading to the phenomenology of the self and the other will be discussed in Chapter One.

The focus of Chapter Two is the poem “Paris” by Hope Mirrlees. She was the contemporary of Virginia Woolf and T.S. Eliot. Although less well-known than Woolf and Eliot, her poem “Paris” was published by Leonard and Virginia Woolf in 1919. “Paris”, as a long poem, is set in one day like Virginia Woolf’s novel *Mrs Dalloway* (1925). The setting is the city of Paris and different images appear throughout the poem as the flâneur does her flânerie and gazes at the city. As a post-First-World War lyric modernist poem, “Paris” is written in free verse with a set of consecutive imageries different from the traditional poetic form. It uses both prose and verse in an innovative concrete way using the white space on the page, onomatopoeia, and incorporating visual elements. As the speaker starts the poem, she informs the reader of how the city is felt through her senses like how the posters on the city walls are presented to the sense of sight and how they are read. There is even a fragment of music notation in the poem. This representation of music is there to let the reader see and hear what the aural experience of the city is like:



(Mirrlees 92, lines 43-45)

A part of the innovation of the poem is linked to the use of shapes rather than words. Julia Briggs mentions in her “Commentary on Paris” that the lines are a “melancholy aria” taken from the score of Handel’s 1711 opera *Rinaldo* (274). In this example, each line of the notation and the line showing *diminuendo*, a directive to the performer to smoothly decrease the volume of the passage to *PPP*, is regarded as separate lines in the poem. The reader not only looks at the music notation and reads it but also hears Handel’s opera from centuries before and will be “Hu s s h”ed (Mirrlees 42) which is directed in the former line. The visual-aural experience of the reader and the hushed sound of seventeenth-century Paris creates the strongest impression; that of an idea to the concrete experience. A poem that is not simply a poem, and a piece of notation that is not only a written music but one which bears feeling and experience. The defamiliarization makes a new meaning out of the poem which is sensed and perceived by the reader. In a chapter of her dissertation about “Paris”, Ruth Clemens argues that “the inclusion of the music within the poem is part of its socio-political framing of Paris in the years immediately following the end of the First World War” (150). She adds that:

“Paris is the city simultaneously mourning its war dead, the grief experienced by the city of Paris throughout the modern age from the French Revolution to the Napoleonic Wars, the 1848 Revolution, and the 1871 Commune, and the loss of a temporo-cultural age that was killed by the First World War” (Clemens 150)

The experience is felt by the twentieth-century speaker who has experienced the silence after the First World War and the ruin created by it. Briggs mentions that “Paris is alert and responsive to its political moment” (CM 261)³ and the speaker is responding to it. The word “Hu s s h” before the music notation also means more than what the word suggests as the state of being quiet. Clemens argues that “The interrogative ‘Hu s s h’ can also mean listen! – it is

³ An abbreviation of “Hope Mirrlees and Continental Modernism” (2007) by Julia Briggs.

an imperative for a different kind of aural attention” (150). The speaker uses the aural sense to attract the attention of the reader to the sound of the city. As the speaker listens to the music, she is not a passive part of this conversation between the human and the object outside. The self is in relation to the other, and this relation in Levinas’ words is the responsibility that lied in his ethics. Such examples, with the use of language, form, shape or layout, show how by a close sensory reading of a selection of images from the poem and defamiliarization, the senses are activated and the experience is transferred to the reader. This is how this poem becomes an aperture through which a change in the human character is visible. I will analyse and give an academic argument about the poem in Chapter Two.

The focus of Chapter Three will be six poems in *Nevertheless* by Marianne Moore. Like “Paris”, these poems are also lyrical but with a more traditional poetic layout and structure. There are also “reverberating off-rhymes” (Levin 296) which not only help in reading the poem but also give a new beat as to what is going to be sensed. The poems were written during the Second World War and convey the same phenomenology and the worldview of everyday life as in “Paris” except that there is no flâneur who would walk through the city. Instead, there are objects, locations and concepts that are to be read through the senses to show the change in the gaze of the speaker in the twentieth century while making a line between the self and the other. Each poem can be read sensorially and the content provides the ground for it. In the same manner, the focus of the subsections in this chapter will be on different traditional senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Additionally, these six poems: “Nevertheless”, “The Wood Weasel”, “Elephant”, “A Carriage from Sweden”, “The Mind is an Enchanted Thing”, and “In Distrust of Merits” are rich in sensory imageries. As an example, the first poem of the collection, “Nevertheless”, ends with:

[...] What sap
Went through that little thread

To make the cherry red!

(Moore 128, lines 31-33)⁴

Reading these lines sensorially, the image of the colour red, using the sense of sight, is a metaphor for blood. On the other hand, the proprioception, or a sense of movement, with the phrase “went through” communicates the blood circulation which is a metaphor for life and the past tense conveys what was before as if there is not anymore. The combination of red blood and a life that was and is taken now in the context of the War holds the reader’s attention to nothing less than the bitter encounter of the death of the soldiers at the War fronts. In a more philosophical view, this is a battle between the self and the other. The self, the speaker or the “I”, as the holder of life, lover of existence, and the one who gazes passively and unconsciously at the other, which is the world outside that is not the same as the “I”. The result is the experience of the War that is beyond the hands of the self; the experience that is inevitable. This is one example of how reading a part of the poem sensorially helps the reader reach the contrast hidden in Levinas’ notion of the phenomenology of the self as the world inside of the speaker and the other as the world outside and the relationship between them.

As a comparison between the poems of Mirrlees and Moore, there are similarities between “Paris” and *Nevertheless* which provided the choice of the poems initially. Although there is a twenty-year gap between their publication, they are all lyric pieces composed by two modernist female poets who represent their personal experiences through the voice of a woman speaker. The form of the poems is free verse and they focus on sensory experience. There is also a context of the societal chaos of the World Wars in Europe and America as the central focus of the thesis. As a result, a sensory reading of the texts and making sense of the senses in the poems is central to this thesis.

⁴ In the excerpts, I have followed the line spacing as they appear in the book.

I will start with a theoretical framework to make sense of the way that sensory reading can lead to the theory of the self and the other. The question of the change in the human character as Virginia Woolf posed in her essay arises through each chapter but with a turn. In this thesis, the change is a shift in the human gaze. It will be possible through a close sensorial reading of the poems along with the concepts of phenomenology, flâneur and flânerie, and the critique of everyday life. The conclusion focuses mainly on the concept of the change in the human gaze. After analysing the poems and acknowledging the relevant twentieth-century historical context, I conclude that the innovation in the poems and the change in human perspective has roots in history as the definition of the line between a thing and a human altered after the turn of the century. Julie Vandivere argues that the year 1910 was the year that the “line between a pre-natal object and a post-natal human changed” (285) so today “with an understanding of the definitions of fatal personhood alongside Woolf’s Mrs Brown, we have a new understanding that people are things, and things are people” (Vandivere 287). Today, the definition of people and things are interchangeable. In the end, this change in the human gaze is framed in the poems themselves as creations of two modernist female poets, with speakers acting as flâneurs involved in the act of flânerie, living their lives at the beginning of the twentieth century with the experience of the World Wars.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

“Perception, a Cultural Formation”

– Howes, *Empire of the Senses*

The foundation of my theoretical framework is the notion of sensorial reading by David Howes. Having in mind that this thesis aims to portray the poems, “Paris” by Hope Mirrlees and *Nevertheless* by Marianne Moore, as an aperture through which a change in human gaze is visible, I will include the concepts of the self and the other by Emmanuel Levinas in the poems to apprehend the dichotomy between the self as the perceiver of the world, the speaker, and the other as the perceived. Considering that for Levinas human beings are “fundamentally ethical beings” (Morgan 4) and that the poems allow the reader to track a change in human gaze, the link between the poems and real life is displayed in Levinas’ ethics that human beings “are not free and alone, and there is always a responsibility toward the outer world” (Levinas, TO 87-88).⁵ As the speaker of the poems interacts with the world outside, gazing upon and reflecting the external world, the response from the speaker to the other and “the response itself” at the same time is the responsibility; the responsibility that Levinas embraces at the heart of his ethics (Moran 349). A look at phenomenology, as the experience of the world itself, is needed to link the concepts to one another. I will complete my theoretical framework by restating that there is a connection between the female flâneur in everyday life and modern society at the beginning of the twentieth century when each of the two World Wars began to activate a new worldview. It was the time of the creation of the poems.

A sensory look at life is like a sensory study of a poem or a text as a piece of art. Both life and art (poem) meet at one point in between the way of perceiving the world and uttering it with language. In the preface to her first novel, *Madeleine: One of Love’s Jansenists* (1919), Hope Mirrlees also speaks of the meeting point between life and art in a work of fiction. In her

⁵ An Abbreviation for *Time and the Other* (1987) by Emmanuel Levinas.

words, life and art, are “poles apart” (Madeleine vii). As quoted by Mirrlees in the same work, regarding the process of “how life and art can meet in the same work of fiction” (vii), Hope suggests that one way is to “fling down [...] words and acts” and then add the “constructive force of a human consciousness”, then they will be arranged “into the pattern of logic” (Mirrlees, Madeleine vii). This constructive force of a human consciousness which leads to human experience is the key to the following discussion.

David Howes in his book *The Empire of the Senses* argues that in the late twentieth century, semioticians such as Barthes and Ricoeur acknowledged that the world (and actions in the world) can become texts and scholars can study the actions of people and life experiences just like a book (1). Howes then defines that it is when the world becomes “a text” that scholars are able “to comfortably go right on reading even when the book was replaced by a meal, a dance, or a whole way of life” (Howes, ES 1)⁶. In this thesis, the constructive force of human consciousness as stated by Hope Mirrlees (Madeleine vii) takes place through reading the poems as she looks at the world. As I read the poems in the next chapter, they become a means, a pole, or rather an opening which goes hand in hand with life in the time of the Wars. The flâneur in the poems is in exposure to everyday life. Life has been the same but the way of looking at life and presenting them in the poems change. T.S. Eliot in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” while talking about art also states that art is and will remain the same in history but “the material of art is never quite the same” (38). Through her flânerie, that is, walking in the city, looking at objects, or responding to the world outside, the female speaker of the poems is presenting a new gaze at the world and already introduces a divide between the self and the other. This certain way she looks at the world which is presented in the poems shows that with the turn of the century and the outbreak of the World Wars, the changes in life,

⁶ An abbreviation for *The Empire of the Sense* by David Howes.

society, and culture, created a change in the constructive force of human consciousness. The poems are this change.

The turn of the century, the outbreak of Wars, and the changes in human gaze led to a “sensual revolution” (Howes, ES 1). Although the look at the senses or the sensory reading of life has much older roots, in *Losing Our Minds, Coming to Our Senses*, Mehdi Khorrami poses this question: “How many people, present and past, are/were capable of describing the soundscape, tastescape, landscape, smellscape, and touchscape of their quotidian route or habitual environment?” (27). My argument in this thesis is not based on whether the poets were able to describe the environment using their senses. I argue that there is a change in the human gaze at the world in connection to the World Wars at the turn of the century which is presented in the poems. For doing so I will apply a sensory reading, using five traditional senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch), to better analyse the extracts from the poems as the female stroller doing her everyday activities is in contact with the world and makes the divide between the self and the other.

The notion of “sensorial reading” of the text is by the anthropologist David Howes. The twentieth century brought an “ideological revolution” to reshape an understanding of “culture and experience” (Howes, Empire 1). In Howes’ perception, “a scent is not the same as a sentence” so the sensory channels do not work after “linguistic forms of communication” but they both are rather filled with “social significance” (Howes, Empire 3). It is worth mentioning that the senses are not just another potential field of study alongside feminism or colonialism. The senses are “medias” through which we experience and make sense of gender or colonialism (Howes, Empire 4). Thus, with his notions in mind, concentration on the senses in this thesis does not mean that we are “escaping the confines of language” (Howes, ES 4). As Howes argues, there is “an expansion of language into a structural model that dictates all cultural and personal experiences and expressions” (ES 4). He argues that the “fate of the senses” and their

power to “reveal and engage” should be sentenced in “the court of language” and language can be used “creatively, critically, and sensitively” (Howes, ES 4) to help me construct my argument. In other words, the sensory reading and understanding of life as a text is visible in David Howes negating Ludwig Wittgenstein’s quotation (1922) as “The limits of my language are ‘not’ the limits of my world” (ES 1). So the poems represent sensory experience. They open our eyes to the change in human gaze at the world.

For the sensory reading of the texts, I will close read the poems and then analyse them with the theories I bring in this chapter. To do this, I will first start with the notion of “everyday life”. According to Khorrami, the notion of everyday life is “whatever remains after one has eliminated all specialized activities” (Khorrami and Moosavi, 28). This concept first originated with Lucàcs and then turned into the notions of “alienation” and “reification” of the experiences, allowing one to “seize and act on all ‘moments’ of revelation, emotional clarity, and self-presence as the basis for becoming more self-fulfilled” (Shields 228). If alienation works for life, defamiliarization works the same way in literature when analysing “Paris” and *Nevertheless*. In “Art as Technique” while he defines defamiliarization, Victor Shklovsky whose poetics are key to the modernist approach states that art is there “to make objects unfamiliar” (22). The purpose of art, he continues, is to “impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known” (Shklovsky 22). Defamiliarization is tied with the critique of everyday life, as I will show in “Paris” which attributes the speaker who walks through the city of Paris with her feminine gaze to the one of a flâneur, a modern stroller in the city of Paris undertaking flânerie. But this flâneur is not just an observer. According to Khorrami, the flâneur makes efforts to “nurture her senses through flânerie in an urban environment to revolutionize her everyday life through a sense-based aestheticization of it” (Khorrami and Moosavi 45). So with a sensory reading, old meanings will be redefined. In

Nevertheless also this aesthetics is shown through the everyday life of the images read through the theories of the senses.

At this point, I would like to draw light on some of the causes that led to the changes in the “dominant sensations” (Howes, CH 1)⁷ at the start of the twentieth century in the Western world. In an introduction to his book, *A Cultural History of the Senses in The Modern Age*, Howes mentions that these dominant sensations resulted from “a mix of technological developments and social and aesthetic changes” (1). Howes believes that these changes created a path in which the sensory world turned into a “brand-new creation” (Howes, CH 1). Looking at the invention of electricity, the production of automobiles, aeroplanes, trains, skyscrapers, and the film projectors leading to television sets at homes, the turn of the century has been a change from a simple life to materiality and consumerism. This technology-related consumerism not only brought with itself a “heightened awareness of the senses” (Howes, CH 1) but also a tendency from social life to individualism. The results of these changes are reflected in the way people observed their surrounding as they became more aware of the definitions of existence at the turn of the century and as a result, there is a change of the human gaze present in the poems. As we will see in Chapter Three, in “A Carriage from Sweden” there is a speaker from Brooklyn in the middle of the Second World War who looks at the beauty of a Swedish country cart and relates it to the virtues of the nation where it was made. By using the sense of sight, the speaker who watches the cart and sees its beauty goes beyond the individual reflections of a mere piece of art and pities the destructions that the War created in her Land while in the other country, people concentrate on how to design a cart and have “unannoying romance” (Moore 132, line 21). She claims that the cart makes her “feel at home” (Moore 131, line 5) as Sweden is the “Land of the / free and the soil for a spruce-tree” (Moore 132, lines 29-30) which alludes to the Second World War. Unlike America which took part in

⁷ Abbreviation for *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Modern Age* by David Howes.

the Second World War, Sweden remained officially neutral and a sanctuary to the Jews: “Denmark’s sanctuaried Jews” (Moore 132, line 35). In September 1943, with the news of Jews having to be deported by the Nazis on the following day, normal Danes sprang into action and helped their Jewish friends and neighbours to sneak out of Copenhagen and other towns by fishing boats into hiding (Blakemore). History has it that most of the Jews had escaped to neutral Sweden. So, the line: “They say there is a sweeter air/ where it was made, than we have here” (Moore 131, lines 1-2) will communicate bigger concepts out of a cart than just a piece of art in a museum. The concept of humanity and understanding, of being there for one another, and of despair from the present situation in the time of War.

As perception is a “Cultural Formation” (Howes, ES 3), the perspective of human beings changed with the mass production of automobiles which brought with itself connotations of “speed, power, and freedom” (Howes, CH 2). Where one was previously able to enjoy the scene of the trees or houses while on a horse or a cart with moderate speed, it was with the production of automobiles that a car window “framed the world as a series of pictures” (Howes, Cultural History 2). Howes brings an example of Marcel Proust (1871-1922) as an author who used the sense perceptions in his writing to activate memory. This example shows the shift in how the sense of sight experienced a change in what it was used to see. Proust mentions that during his drive to his parents: “houses came rushing towards us, clasping to their bosoms vine or rose-bush” and trees “ran in every direction to escape from us” (qt. in Howes, CH 3). A car, however, isolates the passengers from the outer world or the “environment” which in itself brings a sense of alienation from the world (Howes, CH 3). Howes argues that this isolation from the external world is only related to the haptics, so it is tactile isolation (CH, 3). In his words, this “private mode of travel” transformed the twentieth-century perceptions as social products and “fostered new ways of life and new material world” (Howes, CH 3). Speaking of speed, in “Paris”, as the speaker strolls in the city and heads into a Metro station, she is

bombarded by signs and posters on the walls and the metropolitan modern life is depicted both in the context of the poem and the layout of the words.

Reading “Paris”, the reader faces a vagueness in the meanings as images are coming one after another in the poem. But at the end of the poem, there is a holistic view of the entire city. This has associations in real life at the beginning of the twentieth century while one is in a car looking out of the window at the blurry pictures passing like the example of Proust. The power to distinguish the vagueness of the pictures through the frames of the car window was recognised later when aeroplanes became the means of travel. The visual frame of an aeroplane gave the passenger a “God-like” view of the external world (Howes, CH 5). While the car “blurred the view and only focused on the road”, the visual sense from the sky gave a “cartographic and futuristic idea of the landscape” (Howes, CH 5). The worldview of the twentieth-century human became limitless as there are no borders on the sky and the boundaries of the senses were broken. As the human finds her way up to the sky, she figures there is no God or heaven up there like the “stories and myths” she believed in for centuries (Howes, CH 6), and the memories and the knowledge of the past begin to fall apart. Likewise, in “The Mind is an Enchanted Thing” there is a talk of: “[...] it is memory’s eye; / it’s conscientious inconsistency. / It turns off the veil” (Moore 134, lines 23-25). It is evident in the poems that the turn of the century turned the veils off of people’s eyes. Compared to the world view before the turn of the century, the speaker in the poems talks of the change in the perspective and declares that the mind is changed. That is the change in the human gaze.

In Chapter Three, there will be subsections about the different senses. Although the visual sense comes as the first source of knowledge, there are other senses as well that tickle the imagination and relate the source to the feelings. In an article named “Noise, Memory, and Mediation in *A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu*”, John Attridge discusses the sensory examples

in Proust's novels. As an example of the auditory sense quoted in this article, Proust explains the sound of a car's horn:

“The mechanic sounds the horn so that the gardener will come and open up, this horn whose sound irritates us with its insistence and monotony, but which, however, like all matter, can become beautiful if it is impregnated with a feeling...” (qt. in Attridge 624)

The sound plays a crucial role in the act of conveying to the reader the scene in progress. In “Paris”, the speaker hears the announcement and the sound of the carriage passing under the Seine: “Brekekekek coax coax we are passing under the Seine” (Mirrlees 75, line 10). And there is a line in “Elephants”, the third poem in *Nevertheless*, in which the speaker talks of “Elephant ear-witnesses-to-be of hymns / and glorias” (Moore 130, lines 26-27). In her “animal poetics” (Schuster 139), Moore talks of a fight between two elephants and compares it with the world of men as magicians who defeat their fears: “Houdini's serenity quelling his fears” (130, line 25). The sensory reading of the poem shows that elephants hear the sound of taming as songs, hymns and glorias, in a procession of becoming “the obedient beasts” (Schuster 150). and alludes to the Second World War. The fight between two elephants is compared to the fight among men (the World Wars) and it is suggested that although they are massive, the elephants will never be able to be as destructive or to “devise the atom bomb” (Fowlie 541).

To conclude the changes in the dominant sensations at the beginning of the twentieth century, and to lead this chapter to the notion of Phenomenology, I will bring the example of cinema. Howes argues that with the advent of cinema, people escaped from the “restrictions of everyday life” and “sought release only through their eyes, ears, and their imaginations”, sitting motionless in their seats (CH 13). This aligns with the sense of solitude and individuality of humanity at the turn of the century. There is, however, one point that I cannot agree with Howes. When television was introduced into people's lives it was like another cinema but with

one difference: instead of going out to the public, one sits at her home individually. Howes believes that the haptics of the modern human was changed when television came into people's lives (CH 13). People sat at home watching TV, engaging their sight and ear. My point of disagreement is when Howes argues that the advent of television was "an escape from everyday life" because it was done individually, so to say "passively". I hereby argue that the female speaker of the poems is also strolling individually. But not only acts done individually are "not" passive, or are an escape from everyday life, but also concerning the changes in the human conscience at the turn of the century (mentioned above), this individuality brought a shift in the point of view that has become a constant companion to everyday life. This is the point where I need Levinas' theory about the divide between the self and the other. As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the speaker of the poems is in contact with the world outside, gazing upon and reflecting on it. Attaching Levinas, there is a response in this relationship as the source of this split between the speaker as the self and the world as the other. The response from the speaker to the other and "the response itself" at the same time is the responsibility that is the core of Levinas' ethics. The female speaker of the poems is presenting a new gaze at the world. This change in perspective is happening in the relationship between the speaker of the poems and the outer world. Thus, the change in the "virtual reality" (Howes, CH 1) in the first half of the twentieth century with the context of the World Wars has some key points: Perception of life through the senses, the idea of solitude and individualism, and the critique of everyday life. They all have something in common: Phenomenology.

As a movement that commenced formally with Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), phenomenology was one of the Western philosophical currents at the beginning of the twentieth century. I use Levinas' phenomenology as the most prominent of Husserl's French interpreters, which leans towards ethics to attach it to his concepts of the self and the other. In his *Introduction to Phenomenology*, Dermot Moran explains that Levinas will eventually get to

"the other that is not another self, nor something defined by its relationship with the self, but rather something or someone completely other and unique" (337). He then argues that for Levinas, "all social interactions are already in some sense taking place in the sphere of the other" (Moran 321) just like the speaker in contact with the world.

I will first define what phenomenology is and how it is relevant to the poems in this thesis. Moran believes that the Husserlian Phenomenology is a style of philosophising that "emphasises the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe *phenomena* in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer" (4). In other words, phenomenology is the philosophy of the experience one gathers from the world. For the realm of phenomenology, it is important to free one's self from the "prejudice" and "externally imposed methods" as it is a way to revive the living contact with reality (Moran 5). This reminds me of the definition of a poet by T.S. Eliot who claims that a poet is the unbiased agent who looks at the world "unaffected and conscious" (39) to create a poem. In this thesis, the poems signal a change in the human gaze at the world.

Moran goes further with his definition and brings in Sartre and Merleau-Ponty who used the concept after Husserl and believed that phenomenology was about "broadening the scope of philosophy to about everything, to capture life as it is lived" (5). For this thesis, I have chosen the definition of Emmanuel Levinas, quoted in Moran's *Introduction*, which is closely attentive to how other human beings "inhabit the horizons of experience and present themselves as a 'demand' to others as a call to get outside of the sphere of themselves, their satisfaction and preoccupations" (Moran 5). As it lets people engage directly with the world, phenomenology must carefully describe things as they appear to consciousness.

To line up with what has been mentioned about the concept of phenomenology, I must add the word "intuition". Like the juries in the case of a trial, when I use phenomenology, I

will look at the evidence offered in the poems at first without considering any other history. The concept is called a “reduction of self-experience, environment and life-world” (Moran 12). For the divide between intuition and the sensory reading of the poems, I will have to add the context of the time of the poems. Knowing about the modernity at the turn of the century and the outbreak of the World Wars, it is impossible to read the poems before it has been formulated with my or better the reader’s judgements. Everything in this life happens by particular historical and cultural circumstances (Moran 12). This is where I will bring in Levinas’ phenomenology. Moran believes that Levinas’ contribution consists of orienting phenomenology towards ethics, especially towards the appearance of the other in the subjective sphere (19).

Moran adds that for Levinas the body is the “preceptor of the experience”, something in between “objectivity and consciousness” (13) and its role is the act of understanding and interpreting. As human beings, we cannot split off the subjective domain from the domain of the natural world as scientific naturalism has done. He then adds that for Levinas, phenomenology is the “relationship between humans and the world” (Moran 17) like the relationship between the speaker and the world in the poems. Levinas’ major work is *Totality and Infinity* (1961)⁸ in which he gave phenomenology an ethical orientation believing that ethics is the first philosophy. I have already given an account of the relationship between the speaker of the poems and the world and the responsibility between them. In his chapter about Levinas, Moran admits that phenomenology for Emmanuel Levinas attempts to think through the nature and meaning of the ethical relation, and in his “phenomenology of alterity” (alterité, from the Latin alter meaning the other, as in alternative or alter ego), he puts concern for the other at the centre of his ethics (320). In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas sees all traditional ethics

⁸ The date of the English translation is 2003.

and philosophy as grounded in *egoism*, which understands the relation to the self as the primary relationship (79). Against this egoism, he wants to argue that “the responsibility to the other is the fundamental structure upon which all other social structures rest” (Levinas, TI 79).⁹ Moran believes that for Levinas, the term “ethics” is never an ego-centric mode of behaving, nor the construction of theories, but the term “involves “the effort to constrain one’s freedom and spontaneity to be open to the other person or allow oneself to be constrained by the other” (321). Accordingly, although the female stroller of “Paris” is alone gazing at the city, there is a relationship between her and the world around her, and she is fulfilling her responsibility.

So, I will complete my points about the isolation and individuality of the speaker of the poems: although on her own, she is never alone and is a part of the crowd, a total flâneur. She is both alone and a part of the world as an observer of city life. The one who has come to terms with the “anonymity, alienation and confusion of urban life” and modernity (“Flâneur”). The combination of the isolated ego of a woman flâneur of the poems at the beginning of the twentieth century and the one who is never alone and is restored to the world is the main point of analysis in my chapters, as Moran argues that “the meaning of the world can only be understood by a certain standing back from the world (328). The separation between humans and the world in the case of this thesis happens through a sensory reading of the poems when I as a reader see both the inner and the outer world in the context of the poems. Levinas concludes that “it is not by being in the world that we can say what the world is” (EE 42).¹⁰ The medium of literature, in this case the poems are the way to show the separation between the self and the other.

I have explained what Levinas’ phenomenology is. Now I can discuss the theory of the self and the other. Moran comments that by breaking the philosophy of the same, Levinas

⁹ Abbreviation for *Totality and Infinity* (2003) by Emmanuel Levinas.

¹⁰ Abbreviation for *Existence and Existents* (1978) by Emmanuel Levinas.

illuminated the priority of the other which in Western philosophy had been ignored (337). In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas uses two different words for speaking about the other: l'Autre (the other in general, the non-personal other like language, culture, and institutions... which is translated into English as other, lower case) and l'Autrui (the other person, translated as Other, with uppercase) (71). In my analysis, the entire encounter of the external world will be considered as the other, with lowercase, as that which calls to the speaker, calls for a response from the speaker, the very source of all language and culture, and hence, "a source of instruction" (Moran 337). Compatible with what has been said, "The other is also what challenges the dominance of the present, of presence, the other may be either past or future" (Moran 337). Moran argues that "Time is not a solitary experience of an individual, but a way of relating to others; that is time is not a horizon of being, but a mode of going beyond being, opening up to otherness" (338). So in my poems, anything that is outside of the speaker's conscience will be considered as the other. It can be a quote from Socrates in "Elephants": "The Wisest is he who's not sure what he knows" (Moore 131, line 62), or a tombstone in the same poem: "[...] With the Socrates of / animals as with Sophocles the Bee, on whose / tombstone a hive was incised" (Moore 130, lines 49-51). It is how the speaker faces the other. Her relationship to the other is called the ethic and what I will analyse as the proof of this change in human gaze at the world.

I will use the term "face" as in Levinas' face of the other. When the flâneur of the poems is in contact with the other, she faces the other. For example in "Paris" when the speaker encounters the images in the city, or in the poem "In Distrust of Merits" when the speaker talks about the soldiers who are fighting to die for "medals and positioned victories" (Moore 135, line 1,2), the speaker is facing the other. The notion of the face means the real concrete presence of another person like when we meet someone physically or face to face. But it sometimes comes as "a metaphor for all those aspects of human personhood and culture which escape

objectification which cannot be treated the way we treat objects in the world” (Moran 347). Levinas also believes that a face is not always a concrete entity, but something abstract (MS 96).¹¹ It is in the relation between the self and the other that the conversation begins and language finds its meaning (Moran 348). Here I argue again that by a sensorial reading of the poems, the world becomes the other that the speaker faces.

Having in mind the concepts explained in this chapter, in the next chapter I will close read some excerpts from “Paris” and analyse the traces of the change in the human gaze as the flâneur strolls into the city and experience everyday life.

¹¹ Abbreviation of *Meaning and Sense* (1987) by Emmanuel Levinas.

Chapter Two: “Paris” by Hope Mirrlees

“Paris” (1919) is a long poem published by Virginia and Leonard Woolf. The speaker of the Poem is a female flâneur, a modern urban stroller who walks in the city and observes. The poem combines prose and verse, with a modernist form and layout, using music notations and ends with the constellation of the Great Bear (Ursa Major) in the northern sky. Back in the 1920s, it was recognised for employing “French experiments in language and typography” (Parmar 48). This innovative yet unrecognised poem in the first half of the twentieth century starts with:

PARIS
A POEM

Why was it necessary to admit that this was a poem when the reader already knew what she was going to read? In her “Introduction” to *Hope Mirrlees: Collected Poems (2011)*, Sandeep Parmar explains that “Paris” was received in *The Times Literary Supplement* as “not even belonging to the art of poetry” (48). I suggest, that not only “Paris” is a poem, but this cue at the beginning shows an awareness of “a change” (Woolf 4) that was occurring at the time of its production.

The poem is abundant with “imagery”. The language, layout, form and phrasing of “Paris” distinguishes it as an intellectual piece. But the unrecognised fact about this poem which made confusion at the time of its publication was a quality in the voice of the speaker. Indeed, time was needed for people to comprehend this shift. Relating to the focus of this thesis, “Paris” is different as it was written at a time when a change was happening in the way people looked at the world. If one looks at the definition of poetry over time, there certainly are differences compared to other pieces in this genre. The answer to what *The Times Literary*

Supplement was looking for in a poem could be that they looked for rhyme and meter. There is already a definition for poetry at the levels of language. There have been definitions from the past and the present, from Plato's *Republic* (c. 375 BC) to Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* (1779–81) about the dimensions of this literary genre. What captures the attention when poetry is discussed usually lies in the realm of literature, of contemporary words embedded concisely and rhythmic with figurative language to elevate the imagination, an idea, or a philosophy. I, however, suggest that there is something more to this intellectual piece of a poem than just the definitions and quotations for the word "poem" to imply merely the genre. What lies in the lines of "Paris" is bigger than that and it connects the words in the text to "human consciousness" (Mirrlees, Madeleine vii). About the definition of a poem, Emily Dickinson in one of her letters mentioned that "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can warm me, I know that is poetry" (L. 342a). It is the same with "Paris". According to Jane Harrison, Mirrlees' companion, "Hope felt that Paris was 'the end of her soul' and it is clear that the city fuelled her literary aspirations" (Parmar 29). What I am trying to convey here is that life and poems are connected. As a result of this connection, the change in the human gaze will be visible in "Paris".

At the beginning of the poem, there is a dedication to the Lady of Paris. It is originally in French and written in a frame which suggests that it was a votive plaque hung on a church (Briggs, CP 254)¹². It says: "To Our Lady of Paris in Recognition of graces granted" (Mirrlees 74). The poem then starts with one sentence that summarizes my entire thesis: "I want a holophrase" (Mirrlees 74). A holophrase is a single word which stands for a sentence or an idea (Briggs, CP 253), and in the case of this poem, it will be every single image that comes afterwards to express the existence of this female speaker looking at the other and her response to it. There is a flow of images from the city of Paris in the everyday ordinary life where the

¹² An Abbreviation for "Commentary on Paris" (2011) by Julia Briggs.

female flâneur is walking in. The scattering images in the poem remind me of a quote about the World Wars. Cited in the introduction of *Levinas and Literature* (2020), Michael Fagenblat reminds us of Levinas' worldview after the Second World War that the world is "an eidetic reduction of the historical experience of war, "a world in pieces", "a world turned upside down", which also recalls "the ancient obsession with an end of the world" (XI). The context of War (although "Paris" was written after the First World War) is what makes all the scattered images in the poem connected and make sense in the end. The speaker of the poem gazes at the urban modern world. There is a relationship between the speaker's self and the other which is the external world she faces.

In the next line, after the need for a holophrase is declared, there is an open fire of different images. The female city, Paris is addressed as a woman (Briggs, CP 254), is "the other" which does not leave the solitary flâneur, she has to be a part of the city and face it. From the second line, there are different images from the posters the speaker sees on the metro. She first reads the signs of the metro line which signals where the North and South are. The city locates her body and she responds to it because the body is the "preceptor of the experience" (Moran 13). The flâneur is linked to the other. Mirrlees' home where "Paris" was written was located at the next stop of the metro (Briggs, CP 255). She reads the brand's names on metro walls and sees the posters ranging from shoe polish with its black shine to hot drinking chocolate and wine. Not even a page is turned when the other presents itself with a different "sightscape, tastescape, and smellscape and touchscape" (Khorrami and Moosavi 27). The speaker's ears will also be engaged in the next line: "Brekekekek coax coax" (Mirrlees 75, line 10) as the speaker hears the rattling of the carriages in the metro.

The flâneur goes on in the city and keeps watching. The first signs of human brutality begin to appear in line 17: "CONCORD" (Mirrlees 75) as a single word and the image it gives to the reader. Place de la Concorde is a square formerly used for royal events and guillotining

during the revolution. Julia Briggs in her “Commentary on *Paris*” suggests that the word “Concorde” means agreement and introduces “the theme of the peace process” (256). It nonetheless turns the mind to the War. In Volume One of his *Complete Works* (2009), Levinas mentions what War meant and did to humanity: “War tears away the drapes of civilization” (112). In Levinas’ point of view, the time of War was “not simply the end of illusions but of the end of meaning” (OC 132).¹³ At such a moment, poetry becomes a way to express the dominant thoughts of the era. Peace comes after a struggle or a War but the question is if it remains. People seem to forget their experience of the constant pain with struggles and worries of the soldiers in the War. This is what this excerpt in “Paris” deals with. In the voice of the speaker, the heroes of the war on their horses are forever little boys who play in the playground. In line 23, there is an image of a group of boys playing:

Little boys in black overalls whose hands, sticky with play,
are like the newly furled leaves of the horse chestnut ride
round and round on wooden horses till their heads turn.

(Mirrlees 75, lines 23-25)

The poet has used prose instead of verse. The spacing of the line is different from the rest of the page as presented above. The first line starts with a capital letter but the second and third lines do not follow the same pattern as if there is a need for the reader to finish the sentence to the end to create a complete image. The visual sense is motivated by the use of colours and the shape of the leaves. There is a sense of proprioception as the boys go round and round and the reader can also feel it while reading. This extract pictures little boys in black overalls, using the sense of sight. Seeing the colour black, the speaker conveys a darker side of the world and agony. Levinas reflects that the Second World War was “the end of illusion” (OC 132), and this line in the poem carries the same meaning, it recalls death.

¹³ Abbreviation for *Oeuvres Complètes* (*Complete Works*) by Emmanuel Levinas.

The boys have their hands sticky with play but what have they been doing? Perhaps coming back from school playing in the mud, but “everything in this life happens by particular historical and cultural circumstances” (Moran 12). The image of the War does not leave my head as I read. They are indeed little boys born at a particular time in history when they have to take part in Wars, using guns with sticky hands in sweat, dirt and blood. The sticky hands also give me a feeling of a game as in “Game of Life” where the War seems nothing but a game for some. So many people were killed and “the drapes of civilization torn” (Levinas, CO 112), yet it remains a game. The change in the gaze of the speaker is visible when she uses a metaphor to tie the short-lived furred leaves of the horse chestnuts to the life of the young soldiers. Round and round leads to the dizziness of the head and not knowing where you are. Attached to the bodily senses, the scene shows the picture of the little boys in an everyday routine and redefines them as young soldiers and calls to attention the memory of the First World War. These three lines tighten the knot between the image of people and the link between the present and past which is the other that the speaker faces. One way or another, the speaker by looking at it and mentioning it is in the process of responding to it. This is the ethics that Levinas talks about and it is visible by analysing three lines from “Paris”.

In “Tradition and the Individual Talent” T.S. Eliot argues that “A poet usually distances herself from personal affections and only relates to the external world on an objective basis, or she follows her “continual surrender” (39) of herself. The speaker of the poem, however, is allowed to reflect if she likes or hates something. In line 60 the speaker declares that: “I hate the Etoile / The Bois bores me” (Mirrlees 77, lines 60-61). With the reflection of the speaker, the poem becomes a representative of the human gaze at the world. The flâneur walks “on and on” (Mirrlees 77, line 60) and explores the city as it is represented. As she looks at the city, using her visual sight, she recollects images, combines them with other senses and shares them with the reader. The sound of a rooster is presented as “Do do do miii” (Mirrlees 78, line 78)

when Paris is compared to a “huge home-sick peasant” (Mirrlees 78, Line 71). The other that the speaker faces is not only objects present in front of her but also there is a connection with the time past. Moran argues that “Time is not a solitary experience of an individual, but a way of relating to others (338). In line 126, there is an image of President Wilson who “[...] grins like a dog and runs about the city, / sniffing with innocent enjoyment the diluvial urine of / Gargantua.” (Mirrlees 80, lines 126-127). The relationship between the speaker and the city as the other shows something more than just a stroller looking at lifeless objects. This woman stroller at the turn of the century has the ability to relate to politics and show her frustration at the peace talks in Paris which “promised more than it delivered” (Briggs, CP 262). She even challenges what has been sacred before: “Le petit Jésus fait pipi” (Mirrlees 81, line 135) as the turn of the century brought something more out of people; to question the divine and authority.

Throughout the poem, there are flashbacks to the past and allusions to mythology and mythological figures. As an example, in line 81, there is a talk of Acheron which is “one of the four rivers of the classical underworld” (Briggs, CP 259): “Amid the timeless idleness of Acheron” (Mirrlees 78, line 81). The word “timelessness” stops me while reading the poem. According to Fagenblat when he considers Levinas’ relationship with literature, a poem is “a door, in this loosened self, leading beyond being” (XVI). “Paris” does not have to align with the rules of poetry. It is a modern poem which reflects a change in the gaze of the human at the turn of the century with a female speaker who sees, hears, and smells the experience of life. The speaker of the poem does not need to clarify what she means with more words than what the reader sees in the poem. The change is present. The change is the poem:

T
h
e
r
e

i
s

n
o

l
i
l
y

o
f

t
h
e

v
a
l
l
e
y

(Mirrlees 86-87, lines 236-259)

As one aspect of modernism, like Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), Mirrlees uses calligrammes in her poem which includes different typography and layout to add to the effect of the poem.

Regarding Levinas' relationship to the poetic genre, Moran reflects that a poem is "unique among the arts" as a means that "inscribes the other in the very instant of aesthetic disengagement from the world" (Fagenblat XV). He then argues that literature seems to have been present in Levinas' mind and soul as a way to "awaken the self to the presence of the other" (XV). There are also examples where Levinas talks about the art of poetry being inseparable from humanity. In his *Proper Names* (1996), Levinas quotes Paul Celan that the essence of poetry is so present in human existence that "he cannot see any basic difference between a handshake and a poem" (43) which gives more credit to analyse the poems to get to the soul of life and look for an example of a change in human gaze.

Regarding what the reviews said about "Paris" at the time of its production, in my perspective, "Paris" just exists the way it does. There is no place for a description as it is a reflection of human consciousness at the turn of the century. It is in the phrase "il y a", or "there is" that I find the true place of "Paris". Moran quotes that Levinas translated the term from Heidegger's "es gibt", which is an "expression of the impersonal nature of being that always breaks through the circle of subjectivity" (Moran 334). That is what this poem does. After a century, I as a reader can open the pages of the text and read and analyse the change in the human gaze from it. I cannot disagree more with the reviews of "Paris" at the time of its publication. Fellow writers in the 1920s were looking for the definition of poetry as what it used to be. In *The Art of Twentieth-Century American Poetry*, Charles Altieri quotes from Ezra Pound, a poet and a contemporary of Mirrlees, that "nine out of ten Americans have sold their souls for a quotation. They have wrapped themselves about a formula of words instead of about their own centres" (qt. in Altieri 11). Mirrlees was innovative as she created her own centre. What the reviews did not understand at the time of the poem's publication calling it something other than a poem was that the poem contains a change in the human gaze.

Just like the poem, this chapter ends with the image of the bear. The female flâneur of the poem starts and ends with a salute to the city of Paris. She faces the city and experiences the touch of history in it. Mirrlees made a connection with the city of Paris and made it her own as she ends with the shape of the big bear as a sign of ownership to what she has created:



(Mirrlees 97)¹⁴

In her dissertation, Ruth Clemens states that the figure of the bear recurs throughout Mirrlees' oeuvre, often as "a paratextual constellation serving as a figuration of nomadic authorship" (142). By a sensory reading and analysing Mirrlees' poem, I presented the relationship between the speaker of "Paris" to the external world she faces. I started with the justifications of the word POEM at the beginning and touched upon the different senses through which the city is described. As the flâneur of the poem strolled in the city experiencing everyday life, the outcome of the First World War and its effects on people started to manifest. Throughout the course of this chapter, the different aspects of the soul of the city of Paris and its history was touched upon and the response the self of the speaker made to the city was discussed. The change in the human gaze was apparent through each line of the poem. Having done a close reading of "Paris" in this chapter using the senses, in the following chapter, I talk about each sense individually and bring the examples from different poems in Marianne Moore's *Nevertheless*.

¹⁴ Part of the private code between Hope Mirrlees and Jane Harrison, who sometimes signed off letters to Hope with this star sign in reverse.

Chapter Three: *Nevertheless* by Marianne Moore

This chapter presents a sensory reading of six short poems by Marianne Moore (1887-1972) in a collection called *Nevertheless*. I will argue that the poems act as apertures through which “a change” (Woolf 4) in the human gaze is visible. This change happened after the turn of the century and with the experience of the World Wars. The violence caused by the Second World War and its side effects on people were even more destructive than the First World War. The literature created in those years cannot be unaffected in that sense. What has been written by artists has not been merely focused on the soldiers who battled on the fronts, but the concentration was also on civilian centres where people experienced missile attacks with families losing their beloved ones, and the collective fear created in that era. In the case of the Second World War, the discrimination of the races, and the hatred created in people will also be touched upon in the poems. In these six poems named “Nevertheless”, “The Wood-Weasel”, “Elephants”, “A Carriage From Sweden”, “The Mind is an Enchanting Thing”, and “In Distrust of Merits”, Marianne Moore uses imagery from everyday life to talk about bigger concepts. Published in 1944, when the Second World War was at its height, the poems give the reader no chance but to relate to the time of the World Wars and the impact it made on people’s worldviews.

The notion of sensory reading a War in a piece of text comes from a chapter in *Losing Our Minds, Coming to Our Senses*, where Amir Moosavi writes about the impact of the Iran-Iraq War, which is compared to the First World War for its brutality and destructiveness, and the sensory experience of people in the face of the War (Khorrami and Moosavi 179). He argues that “the bombs, the sound of sirens, the experience of blackouts, the smells and sweltering or freezing temperatures of bomb shelters, the screams, the sounds of prayer, and, of course, the post-attack sights of bombed areas were part of “the sensorial experience of the war” on the various home fronts” (Khorrami and Moosavi 179). The effect that the speaker takes from the

world she faces links to the division between the self and the other. With a sensory reading of the poems, I will take a look at these.

The speaker in *Nevertheless* is a self in the face of the world in the Second World War. Compared to the one in “Paris”, in these six short poems, she is not a flâneur in the sense that she does not walk for pleasure in the urban modern city. She, however, is a part of the modern city and her worldview is that of a flâneur as she is in contact with everyday life, talking about the fruits as in “Nevertheless” or looking at a piece of art in a modern museum in the city as in “A Carriage From Sweden”. Yet the poems are concrete evidence of the change in the human gaze in the face of the modern world. In her modernist poetics, Marianne Moore uses animal imagery. Joshua Schuster in his article about the use of fables in Moore’s poetics argues that “Moore’s animals exist in conditions of modernity that are fundamentally controlled by humans but in which forms of animal subjectivity and expression are not excluded or impossible” (139). It is the case in poems like “The Wood-Weasel” and “Elephants” where the focus is on the actions of the animals but they are metaphors of how people act in this world. There are also other examples of animal imagery like a starfish, a hedgehog, frogs, a deer, etc. in other poems in this collection.

Regarding Moore’s touch in her poems, Elizabeth Gregory in her article about Marianne Moore argues that as a female American modernist poet, Moore hoped to negotiate a position of authority for her own voice (126). The authority is crucial here because in order to be able to say something, one must first have authority. According to Gregory, Moore faced four obstacles while she was writing and all of which made her struggle with a sense of “secondariness” (126). Gregory defines this secondariness with “four impediments” Moore had to meet (126). Her first source of secondariness as a poet was to the poets who came before her. She had to make a combination of “difference and traditionalism” at the same time (Gregory 126). The modernist period also had its own sense of temporal secondariness, and

thirdly, as an American modernist poet, Moore felt the dependence of her culture on European culture which made it more difficult for her to write (Gregory 126). Last and central to the speaker of the poems, Moore was a “Woman” poet who received secondary treatment compared to men (Gregory 126). In her article, Gregory argues how Moore succeeded in her attempts to come out of the shadow of secondariness and her poems turned out to be genuine. I, additionally, argue that Moore’s poems are the tools to observe the change that happened in the human gaze in modern times after the turn of the twentieth century. I will use a sensory reading of the poems. In doing so, this chapter will have different subsections for the different traditional senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Each poem is abundant with imagery and I will use some examples among them to show the divide between the self of the speaker and the other of the external world.

Sight

In the hierarchy of the senses, sight is the first source of knowledge (Alvarado and Fazlali). The use of different colours, shapes, and objects acknowledges the existence of a speaker who faces the external world. The first line of “Nevertheless” starts with:

you’ve seen a strawberry
 that’s had a struggle; yet
 was, where the fragments met,

(Moore 127, lines 1-3)

The first source of knowledge comes from seeing. The speaker pictures the struggle of life with simple imagery of a strawberry in a bush. In this three-lined first stanza, there is no use for capital letters, as if there is no start for what the speaker is experiencing and she jumps in the middle of an ongoing process. As if the speaker has been watching them forever and has now decided to talk about them out of a sudden. The animal poetic also shows itself by the names of a hedgehog or a starfish both with spiky bodies. When reading the entire collection in the

context of the War, the strawberry in the first line along with the other fruits which are in the face of the hedgehog and starfish reminds the reader of the discrimination applied to humanity in history and in particular in the Second World War. There is a strawberry next to an apple, a carrot and so on. They are all fruits and vegetables. In the twists of life, the strawberry struggles. Whatever happens, she cannot be ignored because “yet it was” (Moore 127, line 2), it exists! This brings me back to Levinas’ “il y a” and shows the speaker of the poem is conscious of what she is facing in the other and is responding to the world. This is Levinas’ ethics.

The sense of sight connects life within the life by the image of the seed in an apple. It aligns with Vandivere’s argument about the existence of prenatal objects and humanity. The sense of sight opens the struggle of life again in the mind of the reader when the speaker talks about “the bound twig that’s under-/gone and over-gone, can’t stir” (Moore 128, lines 26-27). By defamiliarizing the twigs which stir, one cannot resist the thought of humanity in the face of the hardships of life. The picture of the strawberry leads to an apple, to the hazel-nuts and pear and carrots, and it ends with the redness of the cherry as the blood which runs in the body which again has its allusions to the worth of life and the fact that people are dying in the context of the Second World War.

In “Elephants”, in order to talk about the amenability of the animal and his trust, the colour white is used three times in two stanzas.

[...] see

the white elephant carry the cushion that
 carries the casket that carries the Tooth.
 Amenable to what, matched with him, are gnat

trustees, he does not step on them as the white-
 canopied blue-cushioned Tooth is augustly
 and slowly returned to the shrine. Though white is

the colour of worship and of mourning, he

is not here to worship and he is too wise
to mourn, —a life prisoner but reconciled.

(Moore 130, lines 34-42)

It is mentioned that the colour white works both for worship and mourning. What captures the attention is the last sentence. For the elephant which is a life prisoner, the one who has to serve the ones who kill and torture him, he is obedient and reconciled. As the poems are read in the context of the Second World War, the colour is associated with the race, in this case with the Jews whose lives are threatened by others, yet they are benign.

Another example of the white colour is in “A Carriage From Sweden”: “[...] it’s a Sweden / of moated white castles, — the bed / of white flowers densely grown in an S / meaning Sweden and stalwartness” (Moore 133, lines 55-58). The white colour is mentioned here while the speaker envies the difference between the countries. One at war with the world and the other away from it. Sweden was not a part of the Second World War. The speaker envies that in Sweden people can have “unannoyed” romance (Moore 130, line 21) and she wonders about the woman for whom this cart was made. The colour white here signals the joy and prosperity of the nation.

The visual imagery in “The Mind is an Enchanting Thing”, works best in a line in which the speaker states that the mind is the “memory’s eye” (Moore 134, line 23). Although the sense of sight means the ability to see, in two of the poems there is a link to being blind to what should be seen. In line 10, “[...] the mind / feeling its way as though blind, / walks along with its eyes on the ground” (Moore 134, lines 10-12). This line is a good example of the sensory experience of the world in which having a sense of sight does not necessarily mean that you can comprehend the world thoroughly. This poem deals with the mind’s scope of abilities and

prepares the reader for the next poem which completely concentrates on the Second World War. The mind that has such abilities, can also be blind to the facts and only look on the ground to find its way. There are many senses which are related to the mind in this poem. As if the mind has the ability to comprehend many senses at the same time. In an interview about how people perceive the world, Dr Piet Devos, a literary scholar who has been deprived of the sense of sight from the age of five, says that “We are all multisensory beings” (Alvarado and Fazlali). There are other senses which help the self to acknowledge the world. Although it is a sensory reading of the poems, being blind does not necessarily guide other senses to feel the world. In “In Distrust of Merits”, the speaker is criticizing the fighters who are “fighting, fighting, fighting the blind / man who thinks he sees” (Moore 135, lines 3-4). I believe it has allusions to the leaders of the Second World War especially to Hitler. In another extract from the same poem, the speaker mentions that “nothing can be so defeating / as a blind man / who can see” (Moore 136, lines 33-35). Here, blindness refers to the blindness of the soul and it alludes openly to the Second World War. In line 41, the speaker talks of the hatred among the races. The other is not an object which can be seen in front of her at the moment of talking. She refers to the history of hatred and slavery of the races:

to the fighting — it’s a promise — ‘We’ll
 never hate black, white, red, yellow, Jew,
 Gentile, Untouchable.’ We are
 not competent to
 make our vows. With set jaw they are fighting,
 fighting, fighting, — some we love whom we know,
 some we love but know not — that
 heart may feel and not be numb.
 It cures me; or am I what
 I can’t believe in?

(Moore 136, lines 50-60)

There cannot be a better example of how the speaker of the poem faces the world. She relates to the other and responds to the experience of the World War. This is what Amir Moosavi argues in his chapter on the war not only about the fighters at the fronts but of people and how they feel in the cities in the face of the War. The flâneur of the poem, cannot find a better phrase to show how humanity's heart has shattered with the experience of the World Wars. That one cannot close her eyes and simply pass what is happening to the other. The self although apart, is closely linked with what she faces.

In Moore's poems, the speaker feels a connection with what she is talking about as in "The Wood-Weasel": "Wood-Weasels shall associate with me" (Moore 128, line 16) and "A Carriage from Sweden": "Made in Sweden: carts are my trade" (Moore 133, line 60). This is the point where the change in the human gaze is visible in the poems. The female flâneur is an active part of society since the turn of the century. Although she is alone, she does not passively encounter the other. There are responses from the self to the other, so the poems are deeply ethical in the sense that they are not only involved with what is done but rather with what should be done. In a way, the female speaker is confirming her relationship with Levinas' the other. She is not united with the other, yet she sees it, experiences it, and regards it as a part of the everyday life she is linked to. The sense of sight, however, is not her only way of comprehending the World.

Hearing

Hearing is the second sense I focused on in my thesis. In the image-rich six-stanza poem, "The Mind is an Enchanted Thing", the first letter is not capitalized like the rest of the poems in the collection. The layout of the lines is in a way that the reader has to read on to the next line to understand what the image leads to. The speaker starts with the title of the poem and reads on to this stream of consciousness used in the poem to find out what this "enchanted mind" is:

The Mind is an Enchanting

Thing

is an enchanted thing
 like the glaze on a
 katydid-wing
 subdivided by sun
 till the nettings are legion.
 Like Giesecking playing Scarlatti;

(Moore 133, lines 1-6)

Related to the sense of hearing, there is an example in line 6 where there is a reference to the famous German pianist Walter Giesecking who plays the pieces by Scarlatti, the Italian seventeenth-century composer. As if the self is facing the mind as the other, regarding it as a broad thing with nets which made a legion. The mind is in charge of the concrete and abstract realities of life and the accomplishments that a composer and a pianist achieve. After talking about the mind as an agent who walks blindly, the speaker adds that this mind has “memory’s ear/ that can hear without / having to hear” (Moore 134, lines 13-15) which again engages the aural sense as the speaker looks and experience the world around her. In “Elephants”, the speaker talks of:

Elephant ear-witnesses-to-be of hymns
 and glorias, these ministrants all grey or
 grey with white on legs or trunk...

(Moore 130, lines 26-28)

The understanding of the world or the other is now on the shoulder of the aural sense. The ear as a body part which has the responsibility of hearing also comes in line 54 when the Elephant:

[...] descended with
 the aid of his ear, expounds the brotherhood
 of creatures to man the encroacher, by the

small word with the dot, meaning know, — the verb *būd*.

(Moore 131, lines 53-67)

Here with a sensorial image, the speaker asks the Elephant of why they are at peace with the brutal humanity. The aural sense is represented less than sight in the literature. So does the next senses.

Smell

It is mentioned in *Losing Our Minds, Coming to Our Senses* that there is a poverty of vocabulary when it comes to talking about the smell (Khorrami and Moosavi 14). The speaker of “The Wood-Weasel”, however, is very powerful in describing the sense of smell. There are two stanzas. The former with ten lines and the latter with six:

emerges daintily, the skunk —
 don't laugh — in sylvian black and white chipmunk
 regalia. The inky thing
 adaptively whited with glistening
 goat-fur, is wood-warden. In his
 ermined well-cuttlefish-inked wool, he is
 determination's totem. Out-
 lawed? His sweet face and powerful feet go about
 in chieftain's coat of Chilcat cloth.
 He is his own protection from the moth,

noble little warrior. That
 otter-skin on it, the living pole-cat,
 smothers anything that stings. Well, —
 this same weasel's playful and his weasel
 friends are, not incongruously.
 Wood-weasels shall associate with me.

(Moore 128)

As the name of the poem suggests, it is about a creature who produces a strong unpleasant smell when he is trying to defend himself. The self of the speaker associates itself with this other as an agent who protects himself in the face of danger. The poem is the shortest in the collection, nevertheless, it is rich in sensory imagery. By using the concept of everyday life in the time of the Second World War, the flaneur of the poem associates herself with the wood-weasel and has used the sense of smell to defamiliarize the protection one is needed in life. That the weasel is its own protection as it has no one, or rather needs no one for protection.

Taste

As the gustatory and olfactory imagery are not represented as much in literature, the only example of the tastescape comes with the word “sweetness”. In “Elephants”, when the speaker associates the elephant with Socrates and Sophocles, he talks about the sweetness of honey which tinctures the importance of the grave:

[...] with the Socrates of
animals as with Sophocles the Bee, on whose
tombstone a hive was incised, sweetness tinctures
his gravity.

(Moore 130, lines 49-52)

The state of being sweet is understandable when one eats something as it is called taste. But there are other connotations as being kind or friendly that are attached to sweetness. The examples are with the Wood-weasel in the poem who has a “sweet face” (Moore 128, line 8). When something is sweet, it can also mean that there is a positive quality about it like in “A Carriage From Sweden”: “They say there is a sweeter air / where it was made, than we have here” (Moore 131, lines 1-2). Again, the speaker experiences the world in its fullness.

Touch

The hands are the first source of acknowledging the world when it comes to tactility. The words like “smooth gourd rind texture” (Moore 132, line 16), “the kiwi’s rain-shawl” (Moore 134,

line 9), or the soldier's "hardest armour" (Moore 136, line 60), they all show how the speaker feels the touch on the surface of the objects. There is also heaviness, lightness, coldness and warmth like "Frost that kills" (Moore 127, line 10), and the sense of movement as in the sap which "went through that little thread" (Moore 128, line 32), or the "Swift steps" of the deer (Moore 132, line 29). The proprioception of the object as where it is placed or if it is standing or is flat on the ground also is seen in the poems like the "vertical spruce tree" (Moore 132, line 36) where everything is vertical like needles. The speaker talks about the tactility of the Second World War and its effects on people.

All in all, Moore was successful in what she did. Not only is there no feeling of secondariness, but also the female flâneur experiences modern life and tells of her encounter. The speaker in *Nevertheless* starts with subtle facts of existence that one will find its way in the ups and downs of life. She talks of determination and being a warrior. The next, she utters the brutality of mankind and goes to other lands to find peace. In the last two poems, she utters more clearly about the circumstance of the human in times of War and how the mind works:

It tears off the veil; tears
 the temptation, the
 mist the heart wears,
 from its eyes, — if the heart
 has a face; it takes apart
 dejection.

(Moore 134, lines 25-30)

The last poem is her point of conduct. She establishes where she stands. The response from the self to the other is made and it is nothing but ethical.

Nevertheless, proved to be abundant with sensorial imagery. A close sensory reading of the poems leads the reader to understand what has been defamiliarized which in the case of this thesis was closely related to the experience of the Second World War. Although different from the flâneur of "Paris", the speaker in *Nevertheless* was a modern female who experienced

her urban world. A change in the human gaze was present throughout the poems as the flâneur gazed at the external world, responded to it and made a distinction between herself and the other.

Conclusion

In her essay, “Mr Bennet and Mrs Brown”, Woolf claimed that “human character changed in or about December 1910” (4). Woolf does not make a distinction between women and men. She just made an example of a servant in the household who came out of the frames of the kitchen and started dealing with matters bigger than her own routine but still relevant to her everyday life, like reading a newspaper: “The Georgian cook is a creature of sunshine and fresh air; in and out of the drawing-room, now to borrow *The Daily Herald*, now to ask advice about a hat” (Woolf 5). The change was not only in people’s character but in the way they “looked at” the external world.

This transformation, however, was not an overnight phenomenon. As she makes her claim, Woolf talks about the way authors in that era deal with objects and how they looked at the world outside. As this thesis claimed to see the proof of a change in the human gaze in the poems, this relationship between the objects in the external world and human beings started to matter. In her article about Woolf’s “Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown”, Julie Vandivere argues that at the turn of the century, the definition of humanity and objects changed as it was the time when “the line between what had been a pre-natal object and post-natal human changed” (285). Considering this change, the position of the female body from what had been a predominantly male territory altered to one which was more confident. And this change fits in with the content. The woman after the turn of the century knows that she has a choice. She knows that her presence matter. And the man after the turn of the century is more aware that not everything is his. People at the turn of the century were not only aware of the external world but also had the audacity to talk about it. By a sensory close reading of “Paris” and *Nevertheless*, it is evident that the First and Second World Wars had an immense impact on people and their world view. The way the speaker talks about the everyday life activities or how she addresses the other reveals her active existence.

In my thesis, I concentrated on a sensory close reading of “Paris” (1919) and *Nevertheless* (1944). The choice of the poems was because they were both written by female modernist writers who composed free verse after the turn of the twentieth century. Levinas’ concept of the self and the other attached itself to the poems because both “Paris” and *Nevertheless* are the products of the twentieth century in the context of the World Wars. The brutality and the affects of the two World Wars always astonished me to the sense that I wanted to write about them.

The choice of the sensory reading was due to the book I had read about the sensory reading of Persian literature, *Losing Our Minds, Coming to Our Senses*. This thesis is significant when it comes to the combination of the turn of the twentieth century and Lefebvre’s notion of defamiliarizing what was already familiar. Reading the poems, the notion of the self and the other seemed inseparable with the context of the Wars and the technological advancements of the twentieth century. The main argument was to analyse the poems sensorially and track a change in the human gaze after the turn of the century in the context of the First and Second World Wars. In Chapter One the theoretical framework was discussed where the flâneur as a female modern stroller walks or experiences the external world and gets in contact with everyday life. I used the notion of Phenomenology to talk about the experience of the speaker and followed Levinas’ concept of the self and the other to discuss the relationship the speaker as a self builds with the other which is the world she beholds in front of her.

Through the pages of Chapter Two and Three, I presented a sensory reading of the poems to show how the female speakers of the poems indicate a change in the gaze of humanity at the beginning of the twentieth century. What the poems share is a female flâneur who is involved in everyday life. She experiences the collective air of the society in which they are positioned. I read the poems with different senses in mind and examined the space created between the self of the speaker and the other or the external world she is exposed to. The World

Wars crushed the human soul and planted such dark seeds that humanity is harvesting in the twenty-first century.

I have never read a book which had “Paris” and *Nevertheless* together or has analysed the works of the two poets sensorially next to one another or talk about the relation of the self and the other in the poems as such. The combination of the concept of the self and the other with Defamiliarization and the phenomenology of everyday life on Mirrlees and Moore’s poems is my contribution to the field of literary studies. This thesis suggests further avenues for research on other poems related to the First and Second World Wars or on the same works but in other concepts like gender studies. One might also find it interesting to read other genres sensorially and focus on the concept of the self and the other.

I have opened the way for other researchers to think about other levels of similarities or differences between “Paris” and *Nevertheless*. The touch of Philosophy on the poems has no end and the notion of the self and the other was only one of the many concepts that could be applied while reading the poems. I have written my thesis with such passion and love that I feel there is no end to it. The senses accompany us through our everyday life. Perhaps there is also a change in the gaze of humanity after the turn of the twenty-first century, and right now in the context of post-Covid life with technologies at its height and people in search of a redefinition for the self and the other.

Bibliography

- Altieri, Charles. *The Art of Twentieth-Century American Poetry: Modernism and After*. Blackwell, 2006.
- Attridge, John. “la Vaste Rumeur D’autrefois: Noise, Memory, and Mediation in *A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu*”. *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 26, no. 3, Sep. 2019, pp. 617-637.
- Bastian Alvarado, Paulina, and Mahtab Fazlali. “Interview with Dr Piet Devos”. *Leiden Elective Academic Periodical*, June 2023, [Introduction - Leiden Elective Academic Periodical \(universiteitleiden.nl\)](#).
- Blakemore, Erin. “Why 90 Percent of Danish Jews Survived the Holocaust.” *History*, 7 January 2019, [Why 90 Percent of Danish Jews Survived the Holocaust | HISTORY](#). Accessed 20 June 2023.
- Briggs, Julia. “Hope Mirrlees and Continental Modernism.” *Gender in Modernism: New Geographies, Complex Intersections*, , edited by Bonnie Kime Scott, University of Illinois Press, 2007, pp. 261-270.
- _____. “Commentary on Paris”. *Hope Mirrlees: Collected Poems*, edited by Sandeep Parmar, Manchester, Carcanet Press, 2011. pp 254-283.
- Clemens, Ruth A. *The Nomadic Footnote: Multilingualism and Transnationalism in Modernist Paratexts*. Dissertation. The university of Leeds, 2019.
- Dickinson, Emily. *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Edited by Thomas H. Johnson and Theodora Ward. Harvard College, Cambridge, Mass, 1970.

Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent". *Perspecta*, vol. 19, 1982, pp. 36–42.
JSTOR, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1567048>. Accessed 18 May 2023.

Fagenblat, Michael. "Introduction: Levinas and Literature, a Marvellous Hypocrisy". *Levinas and Literature: New Directions*, edited by Michael Fagenblat and Arthur Cools, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2020, pp. IX-XXII. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110668926-204>.

"Flâneur." A Dictionary of Human Geography. Oxford University Press, 2013, *Flâneur - Oxford Reference* (leidenuniv.nl). Accessed 4 Jun. 2023.

Fowlie, Wallace. "Marianne Moore." *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 60, no. 3, 1952, pp. 537–47.
JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27538160>. Accessed 20 May 2023.

Elizabeth, Gregory. "Stamps, Money, Pop Culture, and Marianne Moore." *Discourse*, volume 17, no.1, 1994, pp. 123-146.

Howes, David. *A Cultural History of the Senses in The Modern Age*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014. pp. 1-30.

_____. *Empire of the Senses: the Sensual Culture Reader*. Oxford, New York, Berg, 2005.

Khorrami, M. Mehdi, and Amir Moosavi, editors. *Losing Our Minds, Coming to Our Senses: Sensory Readings of Persian Literature and Culture*. Leiden University Press, 2021.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Critique of Everyday Life*. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. 1958. Trans. John Moore. New York, 1991.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Existence and Existents*. Alphonso Lingis, trans. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978. Print.

_____. "Meaning and Sense". *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Dordrecht: Nijhoff, 1987.

_____. *Oeuvres Complètes Tome 1: Carnets de Captivité et Autres Inédits*. Paris: Grasset, 2009.

- ____. "Paul Celan: From Being to the Other". *Proper Names*, Translated by Michael B. Smith. Stanford University Press, 1996.
- ____. *Time and the Other*. Translated by Richard A. Cohen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987.
- ____. *Totality and Infinity: an Essay on Exteriority*. Alphonso Lingis, trans. 27th pr. Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 2003.
- Levin, Harry. *Grounds for Comparison*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.
- Merrifield, Andy. *Henri Lefebvre: A critical Introduction*. London, Routledge, 2006.
- Mirrlees, Hope. "Paris". *Collected Poems*. Edited by Sandeep Parmar, and Julia Briggs. Manchester, Carcanet Press, 2011.
- ____. *Madeleine: One of Love's Jansenists*. London, W. Collins Sons & CO. LTD, 1919.
- Moore, Marianne. *Nevertheless: Collected Poems*. London: Faber and Faber, 1951.
- Moran, Dermot. *Introduction to Phenomenology*. London, Routledge, 2000.
- Morgan, Michael L. *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Parmar, Sandeep. "Introduction". *Hope Mirrlees: Collected Poems*. Carcanet Press, Manchester, 2011. pp. 9-64. ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral-proquest.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/lib/leidenuniv/detail.action?docID=898314>.
- Schilling, Derek. "Everyday Life and the Challenge to History in Post-war France: Braudel, Lefebvre, Certeau". *Diacritics*, vol. 33, no.3, 2003, pp. 23-40.

Schuster, Joshua. "The Fable, the Moral, and the Animal: Reconsidering the Fable in Animal Studies with Marianne Moore's Elephants". *Representing the Modern Animal in Culture*, edited by Jeanne Dubino. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 137-154.

Sepehri, Sohrab. "The Sound of Water's Footsteps". *Arash*, vol.2, no.3, 1965.
<https://sohrabsepehri.org/poems/sedaye-paye-ab/>

Shields, Rob. "Henri Lefebvre", *Profiles in Contemporary Social Theory*. Edited by Anthony Eliot and Bryan S. Turner. Sage Publications, 2001. pp. 226-237.

Shklovsky, Victor. "Art as Technique". *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*. Translated by Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis. 2nd edition. Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 2012, pp. 17-45.

Vandivere, Julie. "Defining Life in Essays and Reports". *Virginia Woolf and the World of Books*. Clemson University Press, 2018. p. 283-288.

Woolf, Virginia. "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown". London, Hogarth Press, 1924.
<http://www.columbia.edu/~em36/MrBennettAndMrsBrown.pdf>.