

- 78 Richard Thomas, "Ambushed by the Advertisers," *Guardian* (Saturday 9 August 1997), p. 26.
- 79 Belinda Moore, "Advertising Fulfills a Function Within Society that Written and Spoken Language Cannot Achieve," (unpublished BA dissertation, Central St. Martin's, London, 1994), p. 56.
- 80 Michel Foucault, "Body/Power," Gordon (ed.), *Power/Knowledge*, p. 55.
- 81 Mike Barker, quoted in Thomas, "Ambushed by the Advertisers," p. 26.
- 82 Helen Shannon, quoted in Thomas, "Ambushed by the Advertisers," p. 26.
- 83 Augé, *Non-Places*, p. 107.
- 84 Lefebvre, "Seen From the Window," p. 220.
- 85 Lefebvre, "Right to the City," p. 170.
- 86 George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization of Society: an Investigation Into the Changing Character of Contemporary Social Life* (London: Sage, 1995); George Ritzer, *The McDonaldization Thesis: Explorations and Extensions* (London: Sage, 1997); Barry Smart (ed.), *Resisting McDonaldization* (London: Sage, 1999).
- 87 Jean Baudrillard, "Symbolic Exchange and Death," Mark Poster (ed.), *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), p. 140.
- 88 Lefebvre, "Seen From the Window," p. 225.
- 89 Paul Virilio, "The Overexposed City," Neil Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: a Reader in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 383.
- 90 Martin Heidegger, "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," in *Basic Writings* (London: Routledge, revised edition, 1993), p. 356.

Chapter 14

"Serpentine allurements:" disorderly bodies/disorderly spaces

Jane Rendell

This chapter looks at the bodies and spaces of prostitution in early nineteenth century London, represented through rambling texts, specifically Pierce Egan's *Life in London* of 1821 and the sequel *Finish to Life in London* of 1828. Both theoretical and historical, this chapter interprets the spatiality of prostitution in relation to the work of Luce Irigaray, in particular her notion of the "exchange of women."¹ The argument is divided into three sections. The first looks at the theoretical reasoning behind choosing the "ramble" as an object of study for feminist architectural history. Subsequent sections examine in more detail the disorderly bodies and spaces represented in the rambling texts in relation to "mobility" and "visuality."

Despite disciplinary differences, feminist analysis of gender and space has tended to focus on critiquing the paradigm of the separate spheres (the binary system which describes gendered space as an oppositional and hierarchical with two mutually exclusive categories – the dominant male public realm of the city and the subordinate female private realm of the home). This paradigm is problematic because, as a patriarchal and capitalist ideological device, it perpetuates certain assumptions regarding sex, gender and space, and prioritises the relation of men to the city.

I argue here that the binary parameters of the separate spheres represent a patriarchal appropriation of the public sphere, and instead follow feminist critiques or "deconstructions" of this binary. I suggest that the gendering of space can be reconceptualised through feminist theory, specifically through the work of Irigaray. By looking at rambling, an urban movement which represents early nineteenth century London as a series of gendered spaces, I argue that the gendering of space can be understood as a form of choreography, a series of performed movements between men and women, both real and ideal, material and metaphoric, which are constructed and represented through social relations of looking and moving – exchanging, consuming and displaying.

My decision to focus on the early nineteenth century ramble demonstrates a number of criteria. First, this is an important historical period for contemporary feminists investigating gender and space: it precedes the patriarchal "fixing" of the separate spheres as the most pervasive ideology of gender and space in the mid nineteenth century. But although I consider an examination of the early stages of articulation of an ideology important in order to grasp its workings, it is not my intention

here to explain why the separate spheres came into being; rather, I am interested in looking at how issues of gender were raised in connection with the public spaces of the city.

Second, the ramble represents a spatial configuration which describes the interpenetration of private and public: defined in terms of ownership, the Rambler visits both public and private spaces in the city; defined in terms of spatial morphology, the Rambler visits both inside and outside spaces; and defined in terms of activity, the ramble is involved in both formal and intimate pastimes. In crude terms, I argue that through movement the ramble represents the city as a blurring of public and private.

Third and finally, the spaces visited by the Rambler are places of leisure and consumption – the important notion here is that as a socio-economic activity consumption is neither reproduction nor production and does not fit into the separate spheres ideology. For women in their capacity as workers and consumers, consumption takes place simultaneously both in the home and in the city. Further, following Irigaray, in patriarchal society women are treated as commodities – objects or signs of exchange circulated among men. Women are the objects, as well as the subjects, of consumption. It serves to highlight women's role as commodities that in the early nineteenth century the word commodity was used to refer to a woman's sex: a private commodity was a modest woman, and a public commodity was a prostitute.

In the early nineteenth century, increasing urbanisation and the expansion of capitalism resulted in the rising cultural importance of certain social spaces of leisure, consumption, display and exchange. These were the site of conflicting concerns, those of public patriarchy seeking to control female occupation of the city, worried that their female property – mothers, wives, daughters – would be visually and sexually available to other men, and those of consumer capitalists aiming to extend the roles of women as cheap workers and consumers in the city. In order to examine the gendering of space in early nineteenth century London, this chapter looks at rambling as a mode of movement which celebrates the public spaces of the city and the excitement of urban life from a masculine perspective.

The Rambler visits sites of leisure, pleasure, consumption, exchange and display in early nineteenth century London: the theatre, opera house, pleasure garden, park, club, sporting venue and bazaar. By traversing the city, looking in its open and interior spaces for adventure and entertainment, the Rambler creates a conceptual and physical map of the city. Rambling rethinks London as a series of spaces of flows of movement rather than a series of discrete architectural elements. I argue that the ramble represents such spaces as gendered in a number of ways: through the exclusion of women, in taverns, sporting venues and clubs; and through the establishment of male dominance in spaces occupied by men and women. The perpetual movement of the ramble places urban locations in sequential relation, framing social

events, activities and rituals in time and space. Gender differences are articulated spatially, through relations of movement and vision: moving and being-moved, viewing and being-viewed, consuming and being-consumed, exchanging and being-exchanged, displaying and being-on-display.

RAMBLING

We have already taken a promiscuous ramble from the West towards the East, and it has afforded some amusement; but our stock is abundant, and many objects of curiosity are still in view.²

The gaze of the flâneur articulates and produces a masculine sexuality which in the modern sexual economy enjoys the freedom to look, appraise and possess.³

The verb "to ramble" describes incoherent movement, "to wander in discourse (spoken or written), to write or talk incoherently or without natural sequence of ideas." As a mode of movement, rambling is unrestrained, random and distracted: "a walk (formerly



14.1 George and Robert Cruikshank, "The Corinthian Capital," from Pierce Egan, *Life in London; or, the day and night scenes of Jerry Hawthorne, Esq. and his elegant friend Corinthian Tom, accompanied by Bob Logic, the Oxonian, in their Rambles and Sprees through the Metropolis* (1820–1)

14.2 Abstract

any excursion or journey) without any definite route or pleasure."⁴ In the early nineteenth century, the verb specifically described the exploration of urban space: "This day has been wholly devoted to a ramble about London, to look at curiosities."⁵ Rambling was concerned with the physical and conceptual pursuit of pleasure, specifically sexual pleasure – "to go about in search of sex."⁶ Closely related activities were "ranging" or "rangling" or "intriguing with a variety of women."⁷

The rambling genre has its origins in texts published from the sixteenth century onwards, which delved further into the London underworld, pretending to be authentic and using sensational tales as their framework, but revealing no more than graphic detail. These texts, partly moralising, partly titillating, were aimed at "Johnny Raws" from the country, and not only tempted the reader with the excitement of urban life, but also warned against the corrupting influence and sophisticated criminals of the city. Such texts may be distinguished by their structure and take the form of "spy" tales – journeys through the city.⁸ Spy tales tell of various country gentlemen's initiations to the adventures of city life under the guidance of a street-wise urban relative – wise, that is, to the delights and entertainments, as well as to the tricks and frauds, of the urban realm. The tradition continued into the eighteenth century, focusing on the seamy side of metropolitan life, with stories and pictures of crime, robbery and prostitution.⁹

The term *ramble* appeared alongside that of *spy* in the eighteenth century, and, although they were often used in an interchangeable way, their emphases differed slightly. Spy texts were fascinated with the darker aspects of urban life, while rambles were involved with excitement in the form of fun and pleasure. By the first decades of the nineteenth century, some publications continued to follow earlier models and focus on the detection and exposure of criminal codes, but a number of publications – including *Real Life in London*,¹⁰ Egan's *Life in London*,¹¹ William Heath's *Fashion and Folly*,¹² and Bernard Blackmantle's *The English Spy*¹³ – differed from the earlier texts in a number of ways.

Unlike the earlier primarily scripted descriptions which included only a few black and white woodcuts, the new rambles were highly visual documents, with coloured lithographs, engravings and etchings. Instead of addressing themselves to the country visitor, these new rambles provided a place for urban dwellers to look at themselves. The "look" of the urban explorer changed, from the secretive spy looking but not wanting to be looked at, to the fashionable Rambler of the 1820s, a self-conscious man demanding to be visually appreciated. In the shift from the spy to the Rambler, the importance of urban exploration and knowledge was retained, but the emphasis on the excitement of revealing secret activities was replaced by a new attention to fashion, display and spectacle. In the decade following the Napoleonic Wars, this attention to display coincided historically with the return of military men from Europe,

especially Paris, bringing with them new French fashions and a flamboyant style of military dress. The early nineteenth century Rambler was a highly visible figure, proactive in his occupation of space.

This chapter focuses primarily on *Life in London*, one of the most popular of these early nineteenth century rambling texts. The author was Pierce Egan (1772–1849) and the illustrators George Cruikshank (1792–1878) and Robert Cruikshank (1789–1856). *Life in London* describes the rambles of three young males as they explore London in 1821. The three men are Corinthian Tom, a young Londoner, bachelor, member of the aristocracy, with an inheritance and a London residence – Corinthian House; Robert Logic, Tom's drinking companion, an Oxford student, also with an inheritance, living at the Albany chambers for bachelors; and Tom's cousin, Jerry Hawthorn, a fine sportsman and drinker, who comes from the same class background but lacks credibility as a male due to his rural origin. Through rambles around London, involving various drinking and sporting activities, *Life in London* tells of Jerry's initiation into urban lifestyle and manhood. Rambling played an integral part in producing a public display of heterosexual, upper class masculinity. The Rambler represented the shared features of a new kind of urban masculinity – the mobility, visibility and urbanity of a young, heterosexual, middle to upper class male consumer.

The Rambler's mobility represents an attempt to establish the public realm of the city as a place for men. The Rambler's aim was to partake in a world of pleasure – heterosexual sexual pleasure. Contemporary magazines concerned with sex and whoring described themselves in terms of rambling.¹⁴ The pursuit of women was an important aspect of rambling. All the women whom the Rambler encountered in the public spaces of the city were represented in terms of their sexuality and described as "cyprians." The word is defined as "belonging to Cyprus, an island in the eastern Mediterranean, famous in ancient times for the worship of Aphrodite or Venus," goddess of love, as "licentious, lewd," and, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "applied to prostitutes."¹⁵

The term *cyprian* described women occupying public space as prostitutes, whether or not they were exchanging sex for financial benefit. The *cyprian* was a stimulus to the Rambler. A spectacle – an object of display – her body was the site of the Ramblers' desire and gaze. Corinthian Tom's partner in *Life in London* was the alluring and beautiful *cyprian*, Corinthian Kate. The Rambler's desire for, and pursuit of, these female sexual commodities defined his urban masculinity and heterosexuality. *Life in London* can be described as a mapping of prostitution, in that all the places of public leisure visited were spaces where *cyprians* displayed themselves and picked-up clients. Homes of *cyprians*, such as Corinthian Kate's apartments, were also represented, as were the most exclusive brothels – the "nunneries" of King's Place in west London's St James's. But in *Life in London*, although the Ramblers pursued,

flirted, drank with cyprians and spent money on them,¹⁶ their rambles never took them to a brothel.

In 1828 a sequel was published, *Finish to the Adventures of Tom, Jerry and Logic in their Pursuits through Life in and out of London*.¹⁷ This rambling text also mapped prostitution but in a very different way. Here the spaces of prostitution represented are those where sexual transactions took place: from the nunnery, or the closed residential private brothel, to the lodging house, or low and public brothel, to the street. Corinthian Kate, a figure of desire in *Life in London*, is represented as a figure of disgust in *Finish*. Her decline marks a shift in attitude between the two rambles, from a ramble which celebrates city life and the pleasures of drinking, gambling and whoring to a ramble which moralises about the damaging effects of urban living. In *Finish* the rambles suffer for their pleasures, through debt, disease and death. Corinthian Kate takes her own life. Only Jerry survives, who leaves the city to marry Mary Rosebud and live in the country.

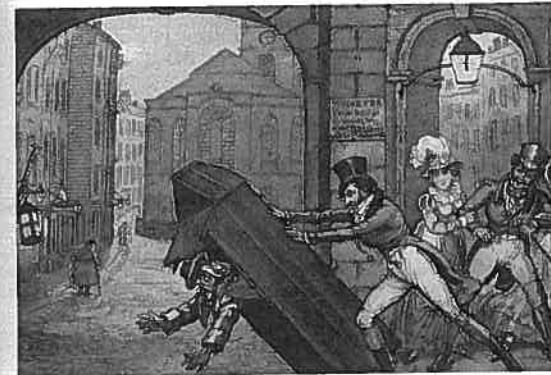
MOBILITY

CORINTHIAN TOM'S unceasing Anxiety to mix with the World uncontrolled.¹⁸

The society we know, our own culture, is based upon the exchange of women. Without the exchange of women, we are told we would fall back into the anarchy (?) of the natural world, the randomness (?) of the animal kingdom. The passage into the social order, into the symbolic order, is assured by the fact that men, or groups of men, circulate women among themselves.¹⁹

In contemporary urban discourse, we are obsessed increasingly by figures who traverse space – flâneur, spy, detective and prostitute. For the Rambler, mobility was a critical aspect of his masculinity and public urban identity. His mobility was both social and spatial – his dominant class position allowed him to mix with a variety of social classes and to move freely between the exclusive clubs, opera houses, assembly rooms in the west of London and working-class taverns and other leisure spaces in Covent Garden's Holy Land and further east in East Smithfield. The juxtaposition of the scene in Allmax, a tavern in the east, and Almack's exclusive assembly rooms in the west, represents the Rambler's mobility – the ability to experience both sides of the city – the prerogative of the dominant upper- or middle-class male.

In *Life in London* the idealised figure of the Corinthian represents the mobility of the Rambler. Corinthian Tom was the archetypal Corinthian, a gentleman with property in the form of land and money, known for his elegant manner, fashionable



14.3 George and Robert Cruikshank, "Tom getting the best of a Charley" from Pierce Egan, *Life in London*



14.4 Abstract

clothes and sportsmanship.²⁰ In social rank, the Corinthian was "the highest order of swell," where swell refers to a "well-dressed" man.²¹ This hierarchy, like "the supereminence of that order of architecture," was determined by decoration, "superlative articles of dress."²² But unlike the swell whose identity was determined only by dress, a crucial aspect of the Corinthian's identity was his class. Class defined the Corinthian's leisure time and gentlemanly attitude, as well as his character, politeness, generosity, good humour and, most importantly, his sportsmanship. Corinthians were "sporting men of rank and fashion" – first class boxers, fencers, hunters and drivers.²³

Sport represented the possibility for male bonding within a class society. Boxing, in particular, by prioritising the ideal qualities of English manhood and creating patriotic unity, appeared to cut across class and political boundaries. Boxing publications were accompanied by images of the stylised heads and torsos of working class bruisers, whose sporting physiques were compared to the celebrated beauty of the classical Greek hero.²⁴ But as well as representing idealised physical attributes, pugilism also promoted admirable social aspects of masculinity – sportsmanship, courage, gallantry, calmness, tolerance, fair-play and honour. For men of different classes, sport and associated leisure activities, such as drinking, offered opportunities for male bonding.²⁵

Sporting societies, such as the Pugilistic Society and the Four-in-Hand coaching club, established shared social codes, including sporting rules, dress, language and manners.²⁶ Such codes, although adopted by upper-class men as an essential aspect of fashionable sporting masculinity, originated as integral parts of lower-class culture. A contemporary etching described how "a modern man of fashion" should "dress like a coachman," "study boxing and bull baiting" and "speak the slang

language fluently."²⁷ The flash lingo or "the canting or slang language" was the language of working-class criminals.²⁸ However, given its close links to cockney or vernacular London language, its use represented urban identity, and flash dictionaries, rambling tales and boxing treatises often published by the same publishers, sometimes as two volume sets,²⁹ were aimed at upper-class men, students and sporting men.³⁰

The corinthian represented an idealised version of the rambler, as an upper-class male, who mixed with different classes through socialising, while retaining his own hierarchical relation. The corinthian column in the frontispiece of *Life in London* represents this ideal social order. At the top of the column are the "ups" or "the flowers of society," the King and the nobles; next are the merchants or "respectables;" at the bottom are the "downs" or "the mechanicals, the humble labourers and the human vegetables." The rambles – Tom, Jerry and Logic – are positioned at the centre of the column, drinking.³¹

Structured around social and spatial contrasts, the ramble represents a culturally diverse journey ranging from high culture to popular culture, from grand interiors to dark streets. The most striking juxtapositions are between the east and the west, represented as two different class zones. From the seventeenth century onwards, the city and the eastern districts surrounding it were commercial and industrial zones, inhabited by the working class mostly in slums, including a large number of immigrants, most numerous the Irish. The west was populated by members of the aristocracy, nobility and wealthy bourgeois class who moved out of the city westwards to new residential squares, first to Covent Garden and Soho and later to St James's and Piccadilly. In search of pleasure, the rambles moved freely between the clubs, opera houses, theatres and arcades in the west of London and the places where "real" life was to be found – the leisure spaces of the working class, from Covent Garden's Holy Land to the taverns of St Giles and East Smithfield. The rambler's desire and ability to mix with a variety of social classes and experience both the west and east of the city represented an important part of his urban identity – his social and spatial mobility.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as London developed into an important centre of consumption, the role of streets became increasingly important as zones of trade, commerce, administration and entertainment. A number of improvements in lighting, paving and drainage facilitated the movement of people and goods and also provided a social space for visual display and consumption.³² The architect John Nash's work in the first decades of the nineteenth century in the fashionable, commercial and residential areas around Piccadilly focused on celebrating urban movement.³³ His urban designs combined classical and romantic elements of town-planning, treating urban elements, streets, buildings and the flow

of traffic like landscapes.³⁴ Regent Street, designed with promenading and walking in mind, was nick-named "Corinthian Path," indicating its high class and fashionable status. The amount of traffic on streets, both vehicular and pedestrian, created a need for adopting distinctive styles of public urban behaviour, such as the fast and aggressive driving of wheeled vehicles or walking on the right hand side of the street.³⁵

Moving was also a defining feature of the cyprian. Cyprians were described as "lady birds" having "lightness and mobility of spirit" or "energy of body and spirit." The names of cyprians spotted by rambles in the park corresponded to birds, such as the Sparrow Hawk and the White Crow.³⁶ Their mobility defined in terms lightness and flightiness referred to their moral constitution – their "moral frailty" – as well as their ability to move. Movement for women held moral connotations, for example, although female magazines encouraged their readers to walk as a suitable form of female exercise, it was only under certain controlled conditions: moderately, in the early morning, with company. Walking in the public streets, especially lingering rather than hurrying, and wearing revealing or conspicuous clothes, was suggestive of a woman's immorality.³⁷

The cyprian was an urban peripatetic – a nymph of the pavé.³⁸ Her mobility in the public places of the city was a cause of concern. Her link to the street, as streetwalker or nightwalker, associated her with the lowest class of prostitute. Whereas the movement of the rambler, his active engagement in the constant pursuit of pleasure, was celebrated as urban exploration, the mobility of the cyprian was represented as the cause of her eventual destruction. Her movement was transgressive, blurring the boundaries between public and private, suggesting the uncontrollability of women in the city. The cyprian body was perceived as disorderly, because as a moving female public body, it flouted patriarchal rules for women's occupation of space.

In Irigaray's essay "Women on the Market," the circulation of women among men is what establishes the operation of society. As mothers, wives, daughters, virgins and prostitutes, women are objects of exchange among men; they are commodities.³⁹ Irigaray's conception of woman-as-commodity – the object of physical and metaphorical exchange among men – is critical to any understanding of the gendering of space through movement, and of the threat caused by the self-determined movement of women in public space. In patriarchy, men are distinguished from women through their relationship to space. In terms of ownership, men own space and women as property; whereas women are owned as property, confined as and in space. In patriarchal relations of exchange, men move through space and subjects of exchange; whereas women are moved through space between men as sexual commodities.

In Irigaray's symbolic order, women have three positions: the mother who represents pure use value, the virgin who represents pure exchange value, and the prostitute who represents both use and exchange value. Mothers are the place and sign of use value, they are private property, excluded from exchange, "reproductive instruments marked with the name of the father and enclosed in his house." Virgins are the place and the sign of exchange value, of social relations between men, "simple envelope veiling[s]." Once these envelopes are violated, women are relegated to the status of use value; they become the private property of one man, and are removed from exchange among men. Virgins are entrapped as and in private property. The prostitute, however, does not fall into the binary opposition of use and exchange value – she is both.

According to Irigaray's work, by taking herself to market and exchanging herself, the prostitute mimics male discourse, in so doing, she disrupts the male economy, exposing the exchange of women at its foundation. For some critics, it is the "ambiguous unity in the prostitute of use and exchange value which positions her as a speaking subject."⁴⁰ Motivated by the desire to sell herself, the cyprian's position as a self-perpetuating, moving subject establishes her as a threat to patriarchal ideologies controlling the circulation of women among men. In patriarchy, the ownership and exchange of property, including women, is controlled by defining boundaries and identifying thresholds which are permanent, closed and fixed around women. Female subjects and spaces which operate within, but also escape, the controlling mechanisms of private property and ownership in patriarchal capitalism and are represented in terms of spatial metaphors of disorder.

Descriptions of bodies of prostitution – disorderly due to their mobility – resonate with descriptions of spaces of prostitution as disorderly in terms of the fluidity of their boundaries and thresholds. The thresholds of buildings other than family homes, known to be occupied by women, such as shops, brothels and theatres, were represented as sites of danger and intrigue. The threshold – the place where the boundary is pierced – where passage occurs from outside to inside represented not only the material transition from exterior to interior, from known public territory to unknown private territory, but also the metaphor of sexual penetration. In particular, the threshold of the brothel was connected with suspicion. It was because entrances to brothels were hidden or tucked away, rather than on display, that men could be accosted, decoyed or lured inside.

The presence of cyprians at the entrance lured men over the threshold to take a "peep at the *Curiosities*" within.⁴¹ The procuress, on the other hand, was represented as a repulsive figure at "the mouth of her cavern,"⁴² guarding the entrance, using various deceits to entrap innocent people. If the threshold to the brothel, the place which allowed movement in and out, was considered problematic, a covered

hole, a trap or snare, in a similar way, so was the cyprian body. In pornographic rambling tales, the spatial metaphors of "closet," "slit" and "catacomb" were used as forms of titillation,⁴³ but the terms "hole," "pit" and "ditch" were also used to describe the sexually immoral or public woman in religious tracts.⁴⁴ The more promiscuous the woman, the deeper and more open the hole.⁴⁵ The cyprian body was perceived as an open body occupying the public realm. Punctured, but not necessarily exposed, it created a treacherous topography, a trap one could fall into – "a serpentine allurement."⁴⁶

The seduced or penetrated body of the cyprian was an open and disorderly medium requiring regulation. The two laws which indirectly controlled prostitution in public space did so through the ordering of disorderly spaces and disorderly bodies. The Disorderly Houses Act of 1752, still not updated in the early nineteenth century, and used to prosecute brothel owners, expressed concern for unregulated public spaces – disorderliness here was the source of "irregularity and crime."⁴⁷ Women's movement on the street was controlled through the Vagrancy Acts, updated in 1822 and 1824, which defined "prostitutes" and "nightwalkers" who were "wandering in public streets" as "idle and disorderly."⁴⁸ Disorderly spaces and bodies were also associated with class trouble, fear of revolution and disputes over property ownership. Such concerns were represented through the various solutions muted to control prostitution, which invariably involved the incarceration of the female body in places for punishment and/or rehabilitation.

From *Life in London* to *Finish*, the decline of the prostitute body and spaces of prostitution are represented in terms which categorise a shift from order to disorder, from contained to fluid, from private to public, from closed to open and from home to street. The more controlled the boundary of a brothel the more respectable it was, thought to be. The cyprian's home, in this case Corinthian Kate's private and elegant apartments in the west of London, represent the most regulated and controlled spaces of prostitution.⁴⁹ Those further east in Covent Garden, such as bagnios or lodging houses and late night drinking venues, were considered less regulated and more open to crime. For example, in *Finish*, Jerry is robbed in one low brothel or lodging house in Covent Garden,⁵⁰ and in another the building catches on fire almost killing him and the cyprian he is with (fire is a recurring motif signifying hell and danger in rambles).⁵¹ Corinthian Kate fares no better. Forced to leave the apartments paid for by Tom, she is found by the ramblers in a state of inebriety and disease under Covent Garden Piazza – an open exposed place. Her figure and face are shown diseased and bloated from alcohol and syphilis.⁵² The squalid room in a lodging house brothel in the east, where Corinthian Kate dies, a place where individuals picked up their own clients in the street and brought them back to the house, is represented as open socially and in terms of its decaying physical fabric and burning materiality.⁵³

VISUALITY

The Rambler in the public streets,
Admires at everything he meets . . .
Ladies you'll find of every class,
In shape, just like the hour glass⁵⁴

[T]he duplicity of the veil's function . . . used to cover a lesser value and overvalue the fetish⁵⁵



14.5 George and Robert Cruikshank, "Jerry in training for a Swell" from Pierce Egan, *Life in London*



14.6 Abstract

Scopophilia, what Sigmund Freud called the desire to look, is stimulated by structures of voyeurism and narcissism, both of which derive pleasure in looking. Voyeurism is a controlling and distanced way of looking in which pleasure is derived from looking at a figure as an object. Narcissistic pleasure is produced by identification with the image and can be considered analogous to Jacques Lacan's mirror stage – just as children form their ego by identifying with the perfect mirror image, so spectators derive pleasure from identification with the perfect image of themselves in others.

Laura Mulvey has argued that various kinds of visual pleasure are constructed through relations of sexual difference, structured by the gendered unconscious rather than the conscious. For example, in the work of Freud, the fear and anxiety of castration which arise in the boy child as a result of looking cause him to invent fetish objects to stand in for the mother's lack of phallus. Here looking is active and gendered masculine, while being-looked-at is passive and feminised. This model of the male gaze and the female spectacle, although binary in nature and over simplified, provides a useful starting point for thinking about the gendering of space through looking.⁵⁶ In the first instance, it positions the rambler as an active "looking" male subject. Representations of the male gaze are integral to the construction of urban masculinity. The rambler's precedent, the London spy, is represented as a voyeur, and his successor, the Parisian flâneur, is associated with a "mobile, free, eroticized and avaricious gaze."⁵⁷ Rambling is connected with visual pleasure, with narcissism and voyeurism, with the desire to look.

For the rambler, looking was connected to exploring and to knowing. *Life in London* provided a "complete cyclopedia" – a new kind of book for a new kind of city – a text which allowed readers to "see life."⁵⁸ By adopting a "camera obscura" view of the city, Egan's rambler became a voyeur, possessing "the invaluable advantages of SEEING and not being seen."⁵⁹ The camera obscura position allowed the viewer to gain visionary control, to frame the object like a picture. On a visit to a low life tavern, a site of potential danger, the rambler's donned disguises which served to distance them from the scene in a voyeuristic manner.⁶⁰ On a visit to Newgate, the reality of the scene – prisoners preparing to die – was suppressed by adopting a panoramic and distancing view, tending towards a surveillant and categorising gaze.⁶¹ Similar elements of spectacular and detached observation were created at this time in other cultural forms, such as Nash's schemes for urban improvement, panoramas and dioramas as new popular forms of entertainment, and the social caricatures of graphic artists.

The rambler and other figures in the ramble, such as the dandy, also demanded visual reciprocity. The rambler as a dandy had a narcissistic body – one associated with its own surface – a surface which made social position apparent through body position and gesture, and the display of materials or ornaments.⁶² Fashion played an essential role in the construction of male urban identity in the early nineteenth century. Rambling tales laid great emphasis on the difference between town and country through ways of dressing.⁶³ In the eighteenth century, court hierarchies of dressing had been rejected in favour of simple and practical styles, derived from the dress of the sporting country gentleman. The John Bull outfit consisted of everyday riding clothes – a top hat, a simple neckcloth, a small coat (cut away in the front), a waistcoat, breeches fitting into riding boots and a stick, later modified to suit urban lifestyles and

a city aesthetic.⁶⁴ In *Life in London*, on arrival in the metropolis, Jerry, the country relative, must first undergo an "elegant metamorphose," discarding his "rustic habit" for fashionable top-boots, white cord breeches, a green coat with brass buttons and a neat waist coat.⁶⁵

The adoption of simple styles made it possible to obscure social rank through dress, and so increasingly subtle codes were used to establish exclusivity. Beau Brummel, the archetypal dandy, rejected finery for a sparse and precise style of dress and an obsessive attention to detail – cleanliness, cut and fit.⁶⁶ The socially aspiring attitude of the dandy who, in order to reject bourgeois notions of thrift and hard work, sought to emulate the leisured life of the aristocracy, posed a class threat. By representing his interest in fashion and display as ridiculous, the dandy was marginalised as a "fashionable non-descript."⁶⁷ His attention to surface effect, a characteristic usually associated with the feminine, was considered unmanly and his appearance was described in terms of exaggerated female forms, such as waists pinched-in with stays.⁶⁸ Alternatively, in relation to the highly decorated masculinities preceding him, the dandy's sleek and unadorned appearance has also been interpreted as a highly erotic version of "unpainted masculinity."⁶⁹

The social ritual of dressing in the correct urban fashion was an important first step in the process of initiation for new rambles. This set of activities took place in the chambers of the urban bachelor with a tailor in attendance. Dressing was followed by an afternoon parade around St James's to purchase new commodities and display self and possessions.⁷⁰ Bond Street and St James's Street catered for the male consumer, with gun shops, booksellers, theatre ticket agents, sporting prints exhibitions, hatters, tailors, cravats, hairdressers, perfumers, jewellers and other expensive tradesmen.⁷¹ Other urban locations visited by rambles within St James's included chambers, hotels, sporting venues, coffee houses, clubs and taverns, all of which played an integral part in producing a public display of heterosexual, upper-class masculinity. The narcissistic aspects of the rambler, represented through the dandy, reflected an intense preoccupation with developing an urban aesthetic and style which opposed those of the corinthian. For the corinthian, fashion was displayed through social mobility, whereas the dandy's most renowned social art was one of exclusivity, "cutting" or ignoring acquaintances in the street.⁷² Unlike the corinthian who mixed with both classes and moved from east to west in search of pleasure, the dandy's social exclusivity required him to remain in the west.⁷³

The rambler, as a narcissistic spectator, derived pleasure from identifying the perfect image of himself in others and required sites for looking at other men. The rambler also desired spaces to display his leisure time and money, his "conspicuous consumption," to other men and women. Possibly the most fashionable places of display for upper-class young men were the ground floor bow windows of the clubs

on St James's Street. Membership of these clubs was extremely select and the famous "Bow Window at White's," built out over the entrance steps in the centre of the front facade in 1811, was inhabited as a space of high fashion by a circle of dandies, including Brummell.⁷⁴ From the bow windows, men could show off their exclusivity to those in the surrounding rival clubs and display status and leisure time to the street. When Crockford's club opened in 1828, the ground floor rooms also possessed windows. These were carefully distinguished as "bay" windows or observatories, from which to "look out" and "survey" the street, in distinction to White's "bow" window, a place in which to be looked at.⁷⁵ The bow window was a place for dandies and rambles to look out and to be looked at.

Although we have seen that "looking" and "being-looked-at" are, in certain cases, reciprocal positions which can both be adopted by one sex, psychoanalytic theories of the male gaze and the female spectacle tend to allow us to consider women only as looked at objects on display. The cyprian body was the site of the rambles' desire and gaze – an object of display in the public spaces in the city. Rambling texts represented female identity in terms of surface spectacle.

The displayed surface of the body is composed of a close relationship between clothes and the fleshy body. In the early nineteenth century, the issue of "covering" was connected with a number of gendered themes around decency. A correct amount and kind of covering represented feminine decency in terms of honesty and modesty, whereas an incorrect covering represented indecency in terms of dishonesty and immodesty. Clothing was expected to be neither too revealing nor too obscuring of the body that lay beneath. To cover too little was immodest, to cover too much was dishonest. Both transgressions were connected with excess, extravagance and with prostitution. An excess of flesh represented exposure and wantonness, and an excess of clothing in the form of decoration represented artifice and vanity.

Strict rules governing the appropriate amount and kind of covering to be worn were recorded as "fashion" in women's magazines.⁷⁶ Fashionable clothing for women of the upper classes in England in the first two decades of the nineteenth century was a highly minimal costume adopted from post-revolutionary Paris, inspired by the democratic politics of Greek culture. The gowns were full length, of a semi-transparent white fabric, worn with minimal undergarments and stockings. Sparse, revealing and décolleté, the waist was raised to draw attention to the breasts. The material was dampened so that it clung to the body like drapery, representing the body as a sculptural form.⁷⁷ But fear of French politics meant that by the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century, nakedness was connected with political radicalism. The exposure of the breast and the transparency of the gown were considered immoral.⁷⁸

In rambles, cyprians were associated with surface value and considered to be kept for "empty shew than real use."⁷⁹ In *Life in London*, the display of breasts

by females in the street and in the theatre and assembly rooms represented them as cyprians.⁸⁰ Cyprians were also distinguished by the excessive display of gaudy dresses and decorative headwear and jewellery. Cyprians were believed to be motivated by "allure,"⁸¹ and by "principles of lust, idleness, or avarice."⁸² Their desire to "dress-up" above their class in order to attract rich clients connected them with wearing deceitful coverings. Similarly, since their occupation could often not be distinguished through their surface appearance, cyprians' clothes also represented deceitfulness. Evidence that some cyprians, dress-lodgers, did not own their clothes but rented them from brothels,⁸³ and that others would pawn their clothes in hard times, substantiated suspicions concerning the dishonest quality of cyprian dress.⁸⁴

In rambling texts associations were made between the pleasures of viewing the city through the controlling and framing techniques of the camera obscura and viewing the female body. Similarly, associations were also made between the surface of buildings and femininity as "to-be-looked-at-ness." The connection between gambling and deceptive appearance featured in descriptions of Crockford's club as a common gaming house "masquerading" as a respectable subscription house in order to create an aura of respectability.⁸⁵ The extravagance of the interior decoration, including the use of glass, mirrors and chandeliers, was considered to be falsely seductive and interpreted by anti-gamblers as part of a plan to seduce the gambler and encourage the play of unrealistically sums of money.⁸⁶ Gambling hells were described as: "temple[s] of ruin, indolence, and guile" and gambling as "an abandoned prostitution of every principle of hallow and virtue."⁸⁷

The issue of display took on a special relevance in relation to the role of actresses and dancers whose bodies were uncovered/exposed on public stages.⁸⁸ On stage, the aspects that a woman usually kept private were made visible, and such visibility, in terms of the overlapping of public and private, was connected to indecency and immorality.⁸⁹ Madame Vestris, a performer best known for her travesty roles, provided a focused example of public display. Playing male figures, dressed in breeches and skin tight trousers, she displayed to the audience her legs, buttocks, hips and thighs.⁹⁰ For audiences largely consisting of young men, the display of Vestris' legs was the focus of attention.⁹¹ The leg of the travesty dancer provided a metaphor for the transgressive eliding of public and private spheres in terms of covering and display, where the display of a female leg on a public stage was read as an act of exposure and wantonness.

The omnibus boxes on stage at the Italian Opera House in St James's formed a focus for the visual pleasure of the male ramblers and patrons of the ballet, providing privileged vantage points for the close scrutiny of the predominantly women dancers and singers. In these boxes, as in the foyers of theatres, men were represented holding

spy glasses to their eyes.⁹² In an etching of the green room at the Italian Opera House in a rambling text, the focus was also on visual display. Here the ramblers represented were engaged in watching and sketching the dancers, using eye glasses, while the dancers surveyed their own bodies and dancing techniques in the large mirrors.⁹³

Two other public female figures encountered by the Rambler, conflated with cyprians and associated with surface and display, were female shoppers and shopgirls. Through their "conspicuous consumption" – the items bought, the clothes worn and the amount of leisure time spent shopping – the female shopper was a visual indication of male wealth and status.⁹⁴ But the commonly held male view of the female shopper was that she was overly concerned with her appearance and therefore trivial, superfluous, overindulgent and extravagant – a "dollymop" or amateur prostitute.⁹⁵ Shopgirls were also considered to be obsessed with their appearance and to have a desire for "finery" beyond their means. Such women were assumed to supplement their incomes with prostitution – to be "slygirls."⁹⁶ The connection of shopgirls and female shoppers with cyprians was closely bound up with issues of surface display, where inappropriate or excessive covering, represented through a fascination with dress and decoration, was considered deceitful. Such surfaces were represented as immoral in their ability to mask what lay beneath: in this case class difference.

If we take traditional models of psychoanalysis where the gaze is constructed through the development of the male subject, it is possible for a female spectator "to look" only if she is identified with an active male, or to consider the construction of female identity in relation to being looked at. For Joan Rivière, woman *is* masquerade, the display or performance of femininity,⁹⁷ but for other feminists masquerade theorised this way is an alienated or false version of femininity.⁹⁸ Irigaray's work utilises the operations of masquerade and mimicry as conscious subversive, destabilising and defamiliarising strategies for flaunting spectacle and speech. Irigaray's theory of "mimicry" shows how, when working within a symbolic system with predetermined notions of feminine and masculine, where there is no theory of the female subject, by deliberately assuming the feminine style assigned to them, women can uncover the mechanisms which exploit them.⁹⁹

In emerging discourses around the threat of female presence in public space, male ambivalence (simultaneous feelings of fear and desire towards female sexuality) placed emphasis on the looked-at nature of the surface, on the tension between display, what was being revealed, and secrecy, what remained hidden. Places occupied by women, such as the bow windows of shops in arcades and boxes at the opera, were represented as sites of intrigue and deceit. The presence of women in both these places presented a threat to patriarchal ideologies concerning women and property. From the late eighteenth century, the great majority of opera box subscribers were women.¹⁰⁰ Arcade shops were also private spaces often owned by women.

Such places provided women with sites from which to display their property-owning status to the street. Male fears of female owned spaces resulted in the representation of both opera box and shop bow window as sites of intrigue.

A critical aspect of gendered identity is played out through spatial relations of movement and vision. Men and women represent their social and gendered relations of equivalence and dominance through positions as spectators and objects of sight, and through free movement and viewed containment in public arenas. The rambler and the cyprian, precursors to the Parisian flâneur and prostitute, are gendered representations of urban space in early nineteenth century London. Thinking about the dialectical relation between identities and spaces, representations and constructions, allows an analysis which pays greater attention to the complexity and fluidity of gendered space. By paying greater attention to the fluidity of urban movement, the figures and spaces of the ramble are a starting point for considering the gendering of public space through the pursuit of pleasure. It is through this complex series of gendered looks and moves that relations of consumption, display and exchange are played out in a way in which the patterning of gendered space is far more complicated than the continuing debate around the separate spheres suggests.

References

- 1 Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is Not One* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 170–91.
- 2 Amateur, *Real Life in London* (London: Jones and Co., 1821–2), pp. 198–9.
- 3 Griselda Pollock "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 79.
- 4 *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, CD-ROM, 2nd edition (1989).
- 5 Nathaniel S. Wheaton, *A Journal of a Residence During Several Months in London* (Hartford CT: H. and F.J. Huntington, 1830), p. 119.
- 6 Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 958.
- 7 Francis Grose, *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (London: S. Hooper, 1788), n. p.
- 8 The semi-narrative structure first appears in Edward Ward, *The London Spy* (London: J. Nutt and J. How, 1698–9).
- 9 See, for example, R. King, *The Complete London Spy for the Present Year 1781* (London: Alex Hogg, 1781).
- 10 Amateur, *Real Life*.
- 11 Pierce Egan, *Life in London* (London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1820–1).

- 12 William Heath, *Fashion and Folly: or the Buck's Pilgrimage* (London: William Sams, 1822).
- 13 Bernard Blackmantle, *The English Spy* (London: Sherwood, Jones and Co., 1825).
- 14 See for example, *The Rambler's Magazine* (London: R. Randall, 1783–9); *The Ranger's Magazine* (London: J. Sudbury, 1795); *The Rambler's Magazine* (London: J. Mitford, 1820); *The Rambler's Magazine* (London: Benbow, 1822); *The Rambler* (London: T. Holt, 1824); *The Rambler's Magazine* (London: J. Mitford, 1828).
- 15 OED; Partridge, *Dictionary*, p. 284.
- 16 Egan, *Life*, pp. 48–9.
- 17 Pierce Egan, *Finish to the Adventures of Tom, Jerry and Logic in their Pursuits through Life in and out of London* (London: J. S. Virtue, 1828).
- 18 Egan, *Life*, p. 72.
- 19 Irigaray, *This Sex*, p. 170.
- 20 Egan, *Life*, chs 3 and 4, pp. 43 and 53.
- 21 Pierce Egan, *Grose's Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* (London: Sherwood, Neely and Jones, 1823), n. p.
- 22 John Badcock, *Slang: a Dictionary of the Turf* (London: T. Hughes, 1823), p. 57.
- 23 Charles Hindley, *The True History of Tom and Jerry* (London: C. Hindley, 1890).
- 24 See for example, Pierce Egan, *Boxiana* (new series) (London: George Virtue, 1828–9).
- 25 Among the accoutrements every rambler should own is a flagon. See Egan, *Life*, title page.
- 26 Egan, *Boxiana* (1818), p. 28; Jacob Larwood, *The Story of the London Parks* (London: Francis Harvey, 1872), v. 8, pp. 282–4.
- 27 See T. Rowlandson, "Three Principal Requisites to form a Modern Man of Fashion," (London: n. d.).
- 28 Grose, *A Classical*, n. p.
- 29 See, for example, George Andrewes, *The Stranger's Guide* (London: J. Bailey, 1808); George Andrewes, *A Dictionary of the Slang* (London: G. Smeeton, 1809); Badcock, *Slang*; John Badcock, *A Living Picture of London, for 1823* (London: W. Clarke, 1828); Egan, *Boxiana*, Egan, *Grose's*; Egan, *Life*; Smeeton, *Flash*, Smeeton, *The Art of Boxing*; George Smeeton, *Doings in London* (London: Smeeton, 1828).
- 30 See Egan, *Grose's*, title page and preface, pp. xxv–xxviii.
- 31 Egan, *Life*, pp. xiii–xiv and 22–4.
- 32 The London Lighting Act of 1761 and the Westminster Paving Acts of 1761 systematised street lighting and paving to a certain extent.
- 33 See, for example, Hemione Hobhouse, *A History of Regent Street* (London: Queen Anne Press, 1975), pp. 72–3.
- 34 See, for example, John Summerson, *John Nash: Architect to King George IV* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1935), pp. 204–5.

- 35 Badcock, *Living*, pp. 47–8.
- 36 Blackmantle, *Spy*, v. 2, pp. 18–9.
- 37 *Belle*, (July 1806), p. 314.
- 38 Smeeton, *Doings*, p. 91.
- 39 Irigaray, *This Sex*, pp. 170–91.
- 40 Shannon Bell, *Reading, Writing and Rewriting the Prostitute Body* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 91.
- 41 Egan, *Life*, p. 167.
- 42 Amateur, *Real*, v.1, p. 524.
- 43 *Rambler's Magazine* (London: J. Mitford, 1828), v.1 n. 1, p. 32. and v. 2 n. 1, p. 212.
- 44 Guardian Society, *Report of the Provisional Committee of the Guardian Society for the Preservation of Public Morals providing Temporary Asylums for Prostitutes* (London: James Low, 1816), p. 33.
- 45 *A Letter to the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of London containing a statement of the Immoral and Disgraceful scenes which are every evening Exhibited in the Public Streets by Crowds of half Naked and Unfortunate Prostitutes* (London: Williams and Smith, 1808), pp. 12–13.
- 46 William Hale, *Considerations on the Causes and the Prevalence of Female Prostitution* (London: E. Justing, 1812), p. 35.
- 47 See "An Act for the Better preventing Thefts and Robberies, and for regulating Places of Publick Entertainment, and Punishing Persons Keeping Disorderly Houses," 25 George II, cap. 36, n. 4 (1752), *Statutes at Large*, 23 George II – 26 George II (1750–2) (Cambridge: Charles Bathurst, 1765), v. 20, pp. 375–80.
- 48 See "An Act for Consolidating into one Act and Amending the Laws relating to Idle and Disorderly Persons, Rogues and Vagabonds, Incurable Rogues and other Vagrants in England," 3 George IV, cap. 40 (1822), *Statutes at Large*, 3 George IV (1822) (London: His Majesty's Statute and Law Printers, 1822), v. 62, pp. 133–42; and "An Act for the Punishment of Idle and Disorderly Persons, and Rogues and Vagabonds, in that part of Great Britain called England," 5 George IV, cap. 83 (1824), *Statutes at Large*, 5 George IV (1824) (London: His Majesty's Printers, 1839), v. 64, pp. 281–9.
- 49 Egan, *Finish*, p. 250.
- 50 Egan, *Finish*, pp. 214–21.
- 51 Egan, *Finish*, pp. 337–43.
- 52 Egan, *Finish*, pp. 294–331.
- 53 Egan, *Finish*, pp. 311–15.
- 54 *Rambler's*, v. 1 n. 3 (March 1822), p. 109.
- 55 Luce Irigaray, *The Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 116.
- 56 See, for example, Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," Laura Mulvey (ed.), *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 14–26.

- 57 See, for example, Janet Wolff, "The Invisible Flâneuse: Women and the Literature of Modernity," *Theory, Culture and Society*, v. 2 n. 3 (1985), pp. 36–46; Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, p. 79.
- 58 Egan, *Life*, pp. 23–4.
- 59 See Chapter 2 entitled "A Camera-Obscura View of the Metropolis, the Light and Shade attached to 'seeing Life,'" Egan, *Life*, p. 18.
- 60 See "TOM and JERRY 'masquerading it' among the cadgers in the Back Slums in the Holy Land," Egan, *Life*, p. 346.
- 61 Egan, *Life*, p. 282.
- 62 Arthur W. Frank, "For a Sociology of the Body: an Analytic Overview," Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth and Bryan S Turner (eds), *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory* (London: Sage, 1991), pp. 36–102; and Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 190.
- 63 Amateur, *Real*, v. 1, p. 102.
- 64 James Laver, *Dandies* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), pp. 10 and 153.
- 65 Egan, *Life*, pp. 145–8.
- 66 Faired Cheviante, *A History of Men's Fashion* (Paris: Flammarion, 1993), p. 9.
- 67 Egan, *Grose's*, n. p.
- 68 See, for example, Robert Cruikshank, "Dandies Dressing" (1818); Richard Dighton, "The Dandy Club," (1818); George Cruikshank, "The Dandies Coat of Arms," (1819); George Cruikshank, "Monstrosities," (1822).
- 69 Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams* (London: Virago, 1985), p. 180.
- 70 See, for example, Amateur, *Real*, v. 1, p. 102; Blackmantle, *Spy*, v. 2, p. 253; Egan, *Life*, p. 213; Captain Gronow, *Reminiscences* (London: Smith, Elder, 1862), pp. 74–9; Heath, *Fashion*, plate 14; Felix MacDonogh, "A Morning Ride in a Noble-Man's Curricule," *The Hermit in London* (London: Henry Colburn, 1819), v.2, pp. 35–42.
- 71 Captain Gronow, *Recollections and Anecdotes* (London: Smith, Elder, 1863), pp. 136–7.
- 72 See, for example, M. Egerton, "The Cut Celestial," "The Cut Infernal" and "The Cut Direct" (1827).
- 73 The dandy, Beau Brummell, once apologised for having been seen as far east as Charing Cross. See Eileen Moers, *The Dandy: Brummell to Beerbohm* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1978), p. 66.
- 74 Gronow, *Reminiscences* (1862), pp. 46 and 62.
- 75 See Robert Cruikshank, "Exterior of Fishmongers-Hall, St James's Street, with a view of a Regular Break down," showing "Portraits of the Master-Fishmonger and many well known Greeks and Pigeons," Blackmantle, *English*, v. 1, p. 373, plate 24.
- 76 *Belle*, (July 1806), p. 231; *Belle*, (July 1809), p. 43.
- 77 *Belle* (February 1806), p. 64.
- 78 *Belle* (February 1806), pp. 16 and 20.

- 79 *Rambler's*, v. 1 n. 4 (April 1822), p. 161.
- 80 Egan, *Life*, p. 173.
- 81 Mary Wilson, *The Whore's Catechism* (London: Sarah Brown, 1830), p. 76.
- 82 Hale, *Considerations*, p. 4.
- 83 *Amateur, Real*, v. 1, p. 571.
- 84 *Amateur, Real*, v. 1, pp. 566–7.
- 85 Deale, *Crockfords or Life in the West* (London: Saunders and Otley, 1828), v. 1, p. 72.
- 86 Deale, *Crockfords*, v. 2, p. 253.
- 87 Heath, *Fashion*, plate 21.
- 88 Anon., *Memoirs* (1836), pp. 7–8.
- 89 Tracy C. Davis, "Private Women and the Public Realm," *Theatre Survey*, v. 35 n. 1 (May 1994), pp. 65–71.
- 90 *The Drama or Theatrical Pocket Magazine*, v. 3 n. 7 (December 1822), p. 316, King's Theatre Archives (1826), Theatre Museum, London.
- 91 Anon., *Memoirs of the Life of Madame Vestris* (London: privately printed, 1830), p. 63.
- 92 Gronow, *Reminiscences* (1862), p. 179.
- 93 See Robert Cruikshank, "The Green Room of the King's Theatre, or Noble Amateurs viewing Foreign Curiosities," *Blackmantle, English*, v. 1, p. 225, plate 11 and pp. 208–9.
- 94 Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).
- 95 Hilary Evans, *The Oldest Profession* (London: David and Charles, 1979), p. 116.
- 96 Dorothy Davis, *A History of Shopping* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 125.
- 97 Joan Rivière, "Womanliness as Masquerade," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, v. 10 (1929), pp. 303–13.
- 98 See, for example, Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator," *Screen*, v. 23, ns 2–4 (September–October 1982), pp. 74–87.
- 99 Irigaray, *Speculum*, pp. 113–7; Irigaray, *This Sex*, p. 84.
- 100 Box 2482, King's Theatre Archives, Theatre Museum, London.

Chapter 15

The construction of identity: Virginia Woolf's city

Barbara Penner

Virginia Woolf had a lifelong fascination with London, making the city – which she once called "the passion of her life"¹ – the subject of countless diary entries, letters, essays and fictional works. It is not surprising, then, that Woolf figures prominently in literary studies of female writers in the city, nor that Elizabeth Wilson refers to her in the conclusion of *The Sphinx in the City*. In Wilson's assertion of the city as an important site of emotional and political freedom for women, Woolf and her fourth novel, *Mrs Dalloway*, seem to provide invaluable evidence of how the female response to modern urban life is more positive than that of men. Wilson states:

In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf exulted in the vitality of a summer's morning in London . . . Acknowledging the unstable and uncertain nature of personal identity, she does not find this alarming, as did Kafka and Musil . . . Mrs. Dalloway and [Dorothy Richardson's] Miriam Henderson are not estranged. For them urban life offers not only adventure, but reassurance. The city is an enveloping presence in their work, and they seem to find its vast amorphousness maternal or even womblike. Instead of disintegrating, they are held by it.²

Upon a closer reading of this paragraph, a strange ambiguity becomes apparent: just whose experience is Wilson describing? She seems to perceive Virginia Woolf and Mrs Dalloway as interchangeable: for instance, it is Woolf, rather than Mrs Dalloway, whom Wilson describes as "exulting" in the vitality of London in the novel. This approach leads to some confusion when Wilson's discussion of Mrs Dalloway and Miriam Henderson ("For them urban life offers not only adventure, but reassurance"), mentions "their work," presumably referring now to Woolf and Richardson. It is unclear to whom the vast amorphousness of the city appears "maternal or even womblike" – the authors, the characters, or both?

In response to canonical accounts of city life and modernity which privilege male experience, Wilson's thesis is that women have experienced the modern city differently to men, and her efforts in *The Sphinx in the City* to provide an alternative history of their experience is of particular significance to feminist scholarship. In order to locate evidence of female experience, Wilson has relied heavily upon a variety of non-traditional sources, including journalistic, autobiographical and literary ones,