

Special Issue Flânerie

FUORI LUOGO

Rivista di Sociologia
del Territorio, Turismo, Tecnologia

Guest editors

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Flânerie as a way of living, walking
and exploring the city

Introduzione di Giampaolo Nuvolati e Lucia Quaquarelli
Prefazione di Fabio Corbisiero

a cura di

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The Flâneuse and the Experience of Modernity²

I'm not a sociologist but an artist with a background in the study of English literature and a commitment to the life of the city. When I walk as a flâneuse in the city where I am most at home, which is London, what I'm really doing is seeking places in it which resonate with the person I feel myself to be. I am always hopeful that the city will offer me what I can only call an *increase of being*. I walk also for the possibility of encounters with others, in which there is such interest and power to surprise.

In this article I offer some walks through different parts of London whilst also exploring some of the difficulties for the flâneuse and suggesting certain historical contexts for these difficulties. The walks I recount in this paper take me past the Houses of Parliament: through the City of London: past the huge skyscraper known as Shard: and through a street market – in this case, Walworth Road Market. The first three walks take place in streets where the authority is visibly top-down, either emanating from ancient hierarchical centres or from the newer money which has been able to buy the power to command. The last walk of all takes place in a street market where the energy and the resources seem to well up from the workaday population. There is much already to think about here which is political, in these very different characterisations of place, akin to the old-fashioned distinctions between 'high culture' and 'popular culture'. Those distinctions in culture have eroded rapidly in the last fifty years, starting with the social explosions of 1968, but the distinctions between one kind of place and another – between the class hierarchies of rank, class, education, which mark London places – have, I think, eroded much more slowly, if at all.

I want to focus as a flâneuse who wishes to walk freely in her own city, both as wanderer but also inhabitant. Flâneuses (such as journalist Lauren Elkin) have probably walked here all the time, but invisibly. If they were invisible, why was this? Above all, as invisible beings, could they affect anything? What did their invisibility mean, for them and for the city?

I'm on a tube train, rattling along to where my first walk starts, and reflecting on what it is to walk as a woman in London. For a woman, parts of London are easy to walk in and some are not. It depends on being invisible at times, but invisibility is of various sorts. There is sexual invisibility. I certainly have that, being old, and that just is. But there is also political invisibility, which I cannot accept. This is because the claim I am making, to be present in the street, is enmeshed with the political assertion that I have a right to my own share of public space, not more but not less; and this involves visibility. Power-plays of some sort, at some level, must be involved.

Flânerie was certainly a political activity for Walter Benjamin, who haunted the Paris Arcades. The result of his haunting was a founding of a new discipline – sociology – involving his great critique of capitalism, but also his critique of the over-rationalisations of the Marxism of his time: for the huge bundle of notes published after his death and known as The Arcades Project seem to suggest the dreamy phantasmagoria of the Paris arcades and their consumables, and that the power of desire was a phenomenon which Marxism needed to understand and to take into account if it was to be effective. The shopping areas were then and are now perhaps the only parts of the city designed with women in mind as consumers, as mere sources of profit. The other areas seem never to have been built in any way for women workers or women walkers. Women in the past have even felt that they had to walk the city in disguise, thinking of, for example, George Sand, who even assumed a male name.

Away from the shops, the erasure of women's presence in the city is even now barely ending.

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Women have been silenced for so long, and the MeToo movement is courageous indeed – but it is too long overdue. This history of age-old unconsciousness of – or even hostility – to women is etched deep into the city. There are so many city-street fictions which betray this; for example, the detective novel has often turned on the trope of the male stalker and the female victim. The murders, all too real, committed in London streets in 1888 by the man known as Jack the Ripper have been revisited many times in crime fiction and in film, and the Ripper is still such a figure in popular imagination that in 2015 a museum was opened in Cable Street, a deed which itself feminists might well see as monstrous. The 1974-5 television series, *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*, follows the same trope: female victim, male stalker. This cursory list could be extended.

The street is part of public life and symptomatic of it, though we may walk there quietly and anonymously. Historically, for millennia in Europe, only free men were deemed to be real citizens capable of public life, able to walk and talk in the agora, the open space of the city. Many men were enslaved, of course, but even free women were meant to be at home. Even now, onto the solitary, independent figure of the urban woman wanderer some strange shadows are projected. Lone women, refusing to stay at home, mobile, rambling at will, refusing surveillance, may appear not to fit into any category; and uncategorisable disobedient women in the past have been seen as witches, obscurely threatening to the stability of the world, living unprotected on the edges of villages and settlements. Perhaps such women refused male protection, seeing it as a possible precursor to male control. In the past they might be suspected of witchcraft; if so, as a dreadful number were, they were liable to be condemned by male ecclesiastical courts and condemned to death. Male horror of apparently self-sufficient women may be connected with some unconscious fear of women who could not be controlled. The Catholic Church to this day will not allow women priests. The real reasons why this should be so might be worth investigating, but an ancient anxiety in the minds of the priesthood as to the conjunction of women and numinous power cannot be ruled out.

But, to the first of our walks. Here I am, walking moodily on the Thames Embankment opposite the Houses of Parliament. I'm moody, because a walk here leads to thoughts of the place of women in public life. It might be argued that the Houses of Parliament embody the seat of power in the U.K. were it not for the suspicion that true power is vested in the international finance houses in the City of London – or did, before Brexit. Viewed from afar, the Houses of Parliament nonetheless suggest a Victorian Gothic fairy tale beauty. Today Parliament enacts, as always, its ancient sexism. One disturbing example of this (one of many) came from a report in *The Guardian* newspaper at the time of the 2019 election:

«Women's organisations have expressed alarm at the number of female MPs standing down at the upcoming general election who have cited the abuse they face in public office.

Among Tory ranks, the female MPs stepping down are on average ten years younger and have spent a decade less in parliament than retiring male MPs. [...]

The cabinet minister Nicky Morgan has said she will not be standing as a candidate, with one of her reasons being the abuse she has received.[...]

Heidi Allen, the former Conservative MP [...] also said she would not stand, highlighting "the nastiness and intimidation that has become commonplace". [...]

Sam Smethers, the chief executive of the Fawcett Society, said, "We have to confront the fact that our toxic politics is driving good women MPs away. In 2019 it is still a hostile environment for women," she said, adding that the figures should particularly worry the Conservative party, where only one in five MPs are women» (*The Guardian*, 2019).

As in Parliament, so in the streets. The streets where one attempts *flâneuserie* are of a piece with what happens in the House of Commons.

I sometimes go over the river to walk around the City of London, the place of money, not far, in London, from those of law and established religion. I am certainly not meant to be there, as the doormen in every entrance seem to imply. It's a space of huge buildings full of financial tra-

ders at their banks of computers. Men heavily outnumber women in The Square Mile, London's financial heart. Each evening and particularly on Friday evenings the city workers pour out of their offices and stand and drink outside the city pubs. Some of the men stay drinking very late and at last stagger away to find the last tube train. I am angry that I no longer feel able to use the late-night trains to get home because of the city-boy drunks, and the violent quarrels which can break out between them. I have been urinated on and vomited on by these sharply suited young men in late night trains – I'm not sure what happens to the women city workers; self-preservation may drive them away, for some of the suits can become thugs in a blink.

In fact, women have done quite well financially in the City. There are women directors and financial traders. But there is a separation from other kinds of crucial female lived experience in this area: it is only for the mobile, the apparently unattached. What's it like to push a child in a pushchair through the City? The fact is, one isn't meant to.

From the City of London I pass by the Old Bailey, the Central Criminal Court of England and Wales. There is always a big police presence in the area. High up atop of the building, sits the sculpture of Justice and her scales. Pubs abound here, this time full of lawyers, servants of the law courts, chatting, drinking. There are some women but it's still mainly men. Women were only allowed to practice law in the UK in 1920, and by 1931 there were still only a hundred women solicitors countrywide. Now, while there are equal numbers in the offices, there are far fewer to be seen outside in the street.

After one particular walk around the ancient legal offices in the area known, as Temple, and passing The Old Bailey, I went home and opened my copy of Foucault's 'Discipline and Punish' (Foucault, 1974). This seems, as to other feminists, a powerful, necessary, but somehow disturbingly incomplete work; it has always worried me for what it seems to be ignorant of: women's embodied experience. But how could Foucault have known of such experience? That's an easy one to answer - he might have consulted women. It never seems to have occurred to him. Numerous feminist writers have felt similarly about his writing. The academic Angela King comments:

«...although feminists have engaged at length with his theories, Foucault himself never showed much interest in feminism or gender issues. For someone whose project was to elaborate on how power produces subjectivity by focussing on the ways it invests the body, his accounts are curiously gender-neutral and he has been roundly criticised for failing to address or perhaps even to recognise the significance of gender in the play of power...» (King, 2004, p. 29).

Always there are gaps, silences, absences, where women are not.

Still, a very different set of thoughts is triggered when I arrive at the august seventeenth century pile of St Paul's Cathedral. Here I rejoice in my memories of an earlier visit – but it was a visit to the outside, not the inside. This was during the Occupy London sit-in of 2011-12, taking place around St Paul's. It was London's sympathetic response to the Occupy Wall Street movement, protesting the catastrophic failures of the banking system of 2011 which led in the UK to the Conservative government inflicting savage, damaging cuts in public spending. A tented encampment outside St Paul's then duly appeared. The Occupiers in London made a declaration which began,

- «1. The current system is unsustainable. It is undemocratic and unjust. We need alternatives; this is where we work towards them.
2. We are of all ethnicities, backgrounds, genders, generations, sexualities dis/abilities and faiths. We stand together with occupations all over the world. We refuse to pay for the banks' crisis.
3. We do not accept the cuts as either necessary or inevitable. We demand an end to global tax injustice and our democracy representing corporations instead of the people». (Occupy London General Assemblies, 2011).

When I visited the encampment, I found that a great many women were involved in its running. It was well organised, with a tented kitchen and even a library, both with lights – there

must have been a generator. The Canon of St Pauls, the Reverend Giles Fraser, had requested the police to leave, saying, to his credit, that he did not mind the protestors exercising their right to protest peacefully outside.

Wandering on, I come to Hatton Garden, the jewellery centre of London, in close proximity to the City of London and of course to its money. It's London's diamond centre, with streets consisting entirely of jewellery shops. I notice how many women are employed as sales assistants in these, perhaps hired specifically to show off the rings on their feminine hands to potential customers. The merchandise, however, seems available solely for the fat wallets of the city boys. Again, it is believed to be the scene of a violent murder of a young woman in the seventeenth century, memorialised as folk law has it, in the name of one of its corners, Bleeding Heart Yard.

Another day, and I had arrived at London Bridge Station. The surroundings here are dirty London streets and it's a grimy station to arrive at. But it's also a fascinating one to walk round, being a complex labyrinth of beautiful old London brick tunnels with multiple exits. Right above it there's The Shard, a soaring skyscraper offering seventy-two floors of office and residential space topped by a viewing platform and an extremely expensive restaurant.

What The Shard might have given to the very wealthy few who could afford to live there is a panopticon view. The flats were initially offered at fifty million pounds. Up there on the viewing deck it is not like being in a very tall building, but much more like being in an aeroplane. There is a sense of having lost all touch with the ground, with other people, with the human sized. Rightly did the art historian T. J. Clarke write (in another context), 'Modernity is a loss of world'. (Clarke, 2020, p. 21).

The Shard shifts slightly with the wind. Supposing one of these flats ever did sell, the human price of living there must, I think, be a feeling of extreme insecurity. It is hubristic, potentially a target for bombs, seeming to invite disaster. With the Shard appears a crazy over-straining for height, an attempt to alter the skyline (indeed, the building can be seen from Epsom Downs, thirty-seven kilometres away). These seem to be the distorting effects of a toxic masculinity in crazed competition with other architects, delivered by Renzo Piano, a 'starchitect' (who also worked with Richard Rogers on the Pompidou centre in Paris). But something went very wrong: there is not a single resident in the Shard. Its lush apartments remain empty seven years after its opening. It seems that the Qatari sheikh owners have never put them on sale. This is apparently because in London, location is everything where residence is concerned, and the Shard's location, right on top of grubby old London Bridge Station, appears to be the wrong place for apartment-buyers of extreme wealth. From its viewing deck you can see other, lesser kinds of modernist blocks of flats. On other occasions I have walked round those other places, built and owned by various London councils. Unlike the Shard, these are much more modest public housing blocks, and yet again I note as a woman walking the ubiquitous and malign effects of the legacy of another male 'genius' architect who spent decades on public housing schemes: Le Corbusier. He is surely the father of 'star architects', entertaining grossly inflated ideas of himself as a 'genius', with Petainist sympathies during the second world war, rushing to Vichy in France in the hope of heroic architectural commissions from the Nazi-sympathising regime installed there at the time (see Martin Filler, 2009).

Corb' was known to have despised his wife and family life. He assumed that he was a gift to women, as journalist Taya Zinkin reported in the context of a work visit to India:

«As we were getting off the plane he asked me what I was doing that evening: "Catching a train, I am afraid" I said. "Pity. You are fat and I like my women fat. We could have spent a pleasant night together." He said this quite casually. He was not being offensive, he was being factual, so involved in his own ego that it did not occur to him that it might have been better put and more gallant to spend some time on preliminaries [...] And he told me with chuckles of glee how Mrs Sarabhai had pleaded with him for railings or some sort of garde-fou on the terrace and balconies of her house in Ahmedabad. "The good woman was afraid that when her sons get married their children would fall

off and kill themselves, as if I cared. As if I, Le Corbusier would compromise with design for the sake of her unborn brats!» (Zinkin, 1965).

Why does this matter? Because the man was building places where women and children would have to live. What would their walks be like, in the urban desert he proposed for them? His drawings for the 'utopian' Ville Radieuse suggest an inhumanly huge, impersonal environment, the productions of a megalomaniac. Sadly, any walk in London brings into view degraded blocks of flats seemingly inspired by this 'genius's' plans and, though he was only one of a number of modernist architects of his time, among them he was a leader. Whether the modernist blocks remain successful depends entirely on how well they are maintained, on cleanliness, neighbourly consideration, and sadly, policing. They can deteriorate with frightening speed, as London flat-dwellers know all too well.

To balance this, on a different day, a market day, I took a walk down the Walworth Road Market. On first impressions it's a joyous experience of being completely present down here in the streets, instead of far too high up in the sky. A market is an informal, shouty, jokey, palpable shared world, a social world. If modernity is a loss of world, down here, world is richly restored. Or so I thought, the last time I was able to go to the Walworth Road Market.

But now, down there as well as up, something terrible has happened. There is always a state of precarity, for market traders often live on the edge. At the time of writing this, the markets are closed except for essential foodstuffs, because of Covid 19. When it was fully open, many of the market's stalls appeared each week, though some came and went. The traders sell fruit'n'veg, bras'n'panties, trays of cheapo watches made in China ranged in compelling patterned rows, but which probably arrived here by falling off the back of a lorry; barbecued chicken, socks, sizzling stir-fries, glassy jewellery, fragile plastic battery-run toys broken even before they are set going. The far-away in space and time are brought together here. One is led on and on – drawn by desire to find, to discover – what? That elusive Something. There it might always be, still to be discovered, that Something of desire, something unknown, just through here and round here or round the back there...

And the markets are collaboratively produced. It's a place for encounters with others. What is to be discovered there is what a crowd of someone-else's – each with their different centres of being, their different histories, different pleasures – offer on their different stalls. Everything is touchable, solid, sometimes smelly. The traders and their clients are cheek by jowl in a jostling space. That was how London's markets were before the plague of Covid 19 hit them, and as they surely will be one day again, a collaboratively produced labyrinth of amazing surprises. Golborne Road is another, and the markets on Whitechapel Road, Petticoat Lane, Roman Road; not so much fixed places as pedestrian events, happenings. You can't possibly take a car, there is no room, for the markets are all goods for sale and elbows, hands, feet. But they are fragile, these markets, always threatened by the spread of capitalism's glass and steel. Spitalfields market, once famous, remains now only as a half-gutted genteel craft market, melancholy, while Covent Market is now strictly only for tourists.

But walking in a real London market, I am seduced, sometimes taken aback, repelled – but always fascinated, even if this results sometimes in horrible surprises. Sometimes, being nosey, I poke into the sacks of refuse, the discarded boxes and wrappings, even when a rat squirms out. My noseyness shocks even me. But noseyness is surely a symptom of desire for the city, for that more intense sense of being which it can sometimes still offer.

How, then, does my passion for street markets with all their stall-holders' patter, their conversations and mini-spectacles, a passion which is a whole bundle of emotions, relate to more detached powers of observation, which as a flâneuse I also use? Does the force of desire for the many pleasures of the markets preclude the coolness implied in the word 'observation'? Observation implies 'objectivity' – how possible is that, ever? The loving, fascinated eye will see in other ways from the coldly 'objective' eye. But maybe this quality of desirous seeing has an equal right to be

valued. For is the desiring eye, the eye filled with love for the market, 'merely' that of a consumer, to be despised? The 'observant' flâneur wishes 'to know', 'to understand', words which seem to carry the authority of science, while the mind which desires can claim no such authority. There is certainly a collapse of distance in the desiring gaze and a maintenance of distance in the observing one. These ways of looking and of seeing may be incompatible; common sense suggests that these different positions cannot be occupied simultaneously. But perhaps 'common sense' is too literal a kind of sense, too simple to evoke the to-and-fro movement of mind which can occur between modes of seeing. In my own practice of the street, the pleasure in the market environment and the rational awareness of the effects of power and politics in it, which are both so inherent in flâneuserie, seem to alternate in an ongoing oscillation. I walk with a desiring eye in certain places, which does not necessarily blind my observant one. I deny neither aspect of my looking, which is a complex movement between ways of seeing, accepting both, not a stark contradiction.

The markets, with their seething life, lead my mind to Henri Lefebvre's metaphor of the unconscious as a city. For Lefebvre, the city is not the scene of repression but rightly evocative, an endlessly creative, active, productive space. For him the production of space was above all a political process. He suggested that the human unconscious is structured like a city: the city is structured like an unconscious. Lefebvre describes space as the production of a conflict between capital and lived experience in which "lived experience is crushed" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 51). But whose lived experience? Whose unconscious? There are implications in this for women moving in in public space.

In the course of his thinking on the 'Rights to the City', Lefebvre seems to have shifted from the city as a metaphor for the unconscious, to a consideration of the actual city and how it is constantly produced as a process akin to that whereby the psyche maintains itself. Lefebvre's focus was on space as capitalist production, and the need for a shift to a more equitable socialist society, not on gendered space. The academic Mark Purcell writes:

«What 'the right to the city' adds for Lefebvre is a deeply spatial understanding of politics, and in particular an understanding of politics that places urban space at the very center of its vision. [...] The transformation of society presupposes a collective ownership and management of space founded on the permanent participation of the "interested parties," with their multiple, varied and even contradictory interests.» (Purcell, 2014, p. 148).

'Interested parties' might have been taken to include women, were it not for the complex forces which make their interests different from those of men; their interests cannot just be subsumed into a generality, or they will not be genuinely understood as equal users of the city and its public spaces. But there is no specific recognition of women here as being amongst the 'interested parties', those who actively inhabit urban space in the course of their daily lives. As a result, various feminist scholars have picked up on the fact that, revolutionary as Lefebvre's agenda was, it is nonetheless written as though the city as space as well as the city-as-psyche is a 'naturally' masculine one. The scholar Elena Vaccelli introduces her article 'The Gendered Right to the City' by saying that it

'aims at widening the idea of citizenship to encompass a bundle of social, political and spatial rights such as participation, access to resources, right to housing and welfare, having one's work paid for and recognised, and one's voice heard and not silenced. One idea that runs through the articles is that exploring gendered rights to the city should be envisaged as an articulation between gender, ethnicity, race and class. In other words, gendered rights to the city are determined at the intersection with other social categories.' (Vaccelli, 2019).

Vaccelli's words render complex the idea of 'rights to the city' and in doing so blow apart the apparently unconscious assumption in Lefebvre's writing that when it comes to the city, the masculine mode subsumes all others.

I'd like to end on a more positive note. Women need to assert their right to visibility in the city, and where they feel that they cannot go alone, they might feel more able to go in pairs or groups, though there will always be no-go areas where no one is safe, female or male. Some men may be gradually realising that their street manners are unacceptable and perhaps there is less bottom-grabbing and pinching, fewer catcalls, perhaps less verbal abuse towards women (though I am not at all convinced of this). The failing education of boys in matters of relationships with girls and women is a huge issue into which I cannot go here, but it is absolutely key.

From time to time there have been various feminist efforts, often gentle and humorous, to assert female visibility in the city: the practice of yarn-bombing, for example, (a type of street art using metres of colourful knitting or crochet). There have been enormous group knit-ins on the London Underground. These demonstrations are sporadic, good humoured, sociable. But they are only scratchings at a harsh surface. There will always be men who are irredeemably predatory, violent, misogynist, so parts of the city can never be entirely safe for women and children – this is a bitter 'given'. However, parts of the city could be *imagined* differently at the planning stage, in a way which might reduce some of its dangers.

There is a need for far more consciousness on the part of too many male architects and town planners as to how men too often abuse public space, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, *because they feel entitled*. So here is an exercise for them. It is to *imagine themselves as houses*. This is to do with an individual's spatial self-understanding. How much room does one claim for oneself? One might ask, Do I have open doors and windows, or are they closed to other people? Does my 'self-as-house' have any openings at all? Do I sprawl everywhere? In evoking myself using this metaphor, have I thought of my neighbours? If I have, how do I co-exist with them, or have I, entitled, grabbed all the space? This exercise can be performed in drawing or in writing, but the main thing is that it should be done as truthfully and as unselfconsciously as possible. The results can be illuminating - I have carried it out with many people. What do our resultant writings or drawings suggest? I think there may be a strong correlation between our spatial self-image as 'buildings' and our spatial behaviour in the streets. A sense of entitlement to psychological space may well translate into a sense of entitlement to physical space, including the public space of the streets. (Common behaviours such as manspreading on public transport and intimidating boy racers tearing along on their bikes on the pavement come to mind). At least it might be an eye-opener for male architects and town planners as to their own spatial imaginations concerning themselves, and thence to the spatial imaginations and behaviours of many other men. Urban planners might then begin to realise what kinds of male behaviour women constantly encounter in the streets and might come up with some inventive solutions, either to circumvent or minimise it. Might architects and town planners become much more aware of their own metaphorical architecture 'as houses' and really imagine how brutal housing estates impact on women and children, and on women walking through the urban spaces which the tower blocks create? Some of those women are flâneuses, women looking around them, walking reflectively and cursing the environment which toxic masculinity, in a dire conjunction with the profit motive, has created.

If we do imagine ourselves as houses, these, interestingly, tend to be gothic houses. For several years now I have been working on a project called, 'If We Were Houses'. Over that time, I asked over a hundred individuals of all ages and genders to respond to the question, 'If You Were a House, What House Would You Be?' The responses, all unprompted, suggest an overwhelming tendency towards the mode which can best be described as 'gothic'. This word has its own long history and widely ramifying meanings, but briefly, for my purposes here, it can be defined as expressed in the irregular, the crooked, the secretive, the mysterious - the opposite of geometric steel and glass. If planners and architects better understood the spatialities of their own and others' psyches, those parts of the city which are still open to reconfiguration might benefit.

There are now many more women architects – thank goodness – and more women urban planners, but the masculine-produced urban failures of the past remain in too many places a

permanent blight. Different kinds of imagination are needed, not those which find their apotheosis in skyscrapers. It is vital that women walk the city and think about influencing it, actively critique it, rather than fleeing it. It is not a case of just 'making room' for women in the street, as in the workspaces, not just a case of seeing how they can be 'accommodated' or 'fitted in'. We must be much more ambitious than that for the flâneuses of the city, as for every woman. Without them the city is only half of what it might be, an incomplete phenomenon, failing to reach its full potential. Women's presence in the street, as their voices in public institutions, are essential not only to maintain but to add to and indeed transform the urban environment in terms of its use, the experience it offers, and the humane, as opposed to inhumane, imagination which it enacts. The flâneuses are explorers, hoping that their presence might raise awareness, not only of the ways in which cities have the potential to augment each person's individual being but also, and this is crucial, of the possibility of fuller experiences of belonging and therefore of citizenship.

The abstract thought of town planners too often stays in offices. The result may be the acquisition of information but not experience, with disastrous results when it comes to building. Not to practise the street frequently is to be in danger of replicating, to be complicit in, the production of unliveable environments. These can be held in too many ways responsible for the delinquency which appears for example in the murderous stabbings which have been a tragic part of London's effects for too many of its boys – and some of its girls. The unliveable urban environments may even be seen as largely responsible for large scale civic unrest, thinking of the riots of 2011 in Britain's major cities, riots which expressed the very opposite of the experiences of belonging and of citizenship.

Flâneuserie therefore, for me, is a means of investigating links, of understanding causation. The committed flâneuse has a true task: to try, through her walking of streets, to make mental links, to contribute to the raising of awareness of the close and gendered interconnections between place, space, and their real consequences for us all.

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