

"Re-Fashioning *Flanerie* : the Urban *Flaneuse* & Women's Experiences of the Modern City"

This paper will revisit Janet Wolff's argument, made in "The Invisible *Flaneuse*: Women and the Literature of Modernity," that the *Flaneur* can only be understood as a pre-20th century male figure and *Flanerie* limited to urban experiences of the male observer-writer. In light of recent scholarship that finds Wolff's argument outdated and limited (and that begins where Deborah Parson's work in *Streetwalking the Metropolis* ends), I will offer a reading of several works of late-19th and early 20th century literature—bookended by Baudelaire's "*A Une Passante*" and Storm Jameson's "A Day Off" and including novels by Collette, Dreiser, and Rhys—that chronicle the experiences of women engaged in urban practices typically gendered feminine that are not *merely characteristic* of what we might call female *flanerie*, but that also arguably *created the conditions for* the emergence of the urban *Flaneuse*. Such practices include, but are not limited to: various types of "street-walking"; window-shopping and other forms of sartorial observation and appraisal; female consumerism; the homelessness and vagrancy of the urban "kept woman"; and the paradoxical tension between the commodification of female identity and the two-way female gaze that both internalizes and critiques capitalist commodity culture and masculinist economies of exchange that oppress women. The central threads weaving together feminine experiences of the city include fashion, sartorial and commodity, and urban exchange economies that paradoxically and simultaneously include and exclude women from their circulations, as either producers or consumers. The observations and experiences of women living in cities—women who not only walked through and worked in the city, but who also observed urban spectacle and participated in the same aesthetic and social critique of the *flaneur*—offer both a narrative and a critique of feminine experience of the modern city from women's point of view.