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**Dismantling the Figure of the *Flâneur* as a Reliable
Narrator in Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" and Finn's
*The Woman in the Window***

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Declaration

We hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely the result of an honest and personal research and that due reference and acknowledgment are made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

Signature

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Dedications

To Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin, for whom this work would not exist if it were not for them.

To our loving families and supportive friends.

To our dear supervisor Dr. Kechida.

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We would like to thank our families and close friends for their unconditional love and constant support.

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Abstract

This research is a comparative study between two literary works from different literary movements; Edgar Allan Poe's 19th century short story "The Man of the Crowd" and A.J. Finn's contemporary novel *The Woman in the Window*. Considering the time gap between the two works, this thesis attempts to study the evolution of the figure of *flâneur* in "The Man of the Crowd" as the modern version of the *flâneur*, and in *The Woman in the Window* as the postmodern version of the *flâneuse*. According to the works of literary critics Charles Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin, they both mention specific characteristics that shape the figure of the modern *flâneur*, whereas Aimée Boutin (PhD) discusses postmodern aspects of *flânerie*. Thus after the relevant data collection to the *flâneur* and *flânerie*, critical analysis is applied on different literary texts extracted from the two works under study accordingly to the theoretical framework. This process dismantles the figure of the *flâneur* in both works and therefore deduces the evolutionary aspects of postmodern *flânerie*. As a result, the pedestrian modern *flâneur* who wanders the city streets to observe society eventually grows to be the postmodern indoor *flâneuse* who relies on technology to practice *flânerie*.

Keywords: *flâneur*, *flâneuse*, postmodernism, evolution, *flânerie*, alienation, technology

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General Introduction

General Introduction

The field of Social Sciences and Humanities consists of different subfields that each specializes in studying specific subjects. Sometimes notions studied under the field of Social Sciences and Humanities correlate to other subfields. In this case, the iconic figure of the modern *flâneur* perfectly fits this context, as the notion simultaneously correlate to social science, psychology, economy and cultural studies. The figure of the modern *flâneur* is a valuable notion in literature that is defined according to Oxford Dictionary of Critical Theory as a “psycho-social type emblematic of modernity. The essentially untranslatable term was introduced into the critical theory vocabulary by German cultural critic Walter Benjamin.” (Ian Buchanan 186)

This definition paves the way into the topic of this dissertation. This research will study the characteristics and variables of the figure of the modern *flâneur* by dismantling the concept itself in Edgar Allan Poe’s short story “The Man of the Crowd” and in A.J Finn’s novel *The Woman in the Window*. The analyses of Poe’s modern *flâneur* and Finn’s postmodern *flâneuse* will later be compared and contrasted in order to distinguish the key similarities and differences that contribute to the evolution of the modern *flâneur* into the postmodern *flâneuse*. In attempt of doing so, this research will answer questions regarding the characteristics and environmental aspects of both modern and postmodern *flâneur* from “The Man of the Crowd” and *The Woman in the Window*.

The term “*flâneur*” first appeared in early 19th Paris. The figure came to being with the rise of industrialization and the urbanization of post-revolutionary Paris. This concept inspired the narratives of several pieces of literature. The *flâneur* takes on a new form in Honoré de Balzac's *Physiologie du Mariage* (1829). As the notion in

question merges with art in his book to create le *flâneur*-artiste. Interestingly, researchers find Balzac's work to be culturally significant.

Between 1853 and 1870, the *flâneur* was majorly affected by the Haussmannization of Paris.¹ Reconstructions of walkways, structures, residences, eateries, and city spaces were all part of the city's built environment. During that period the female *flâneur* was established in Baudelaire's works, more specifically in his poetry collection *Les Fleurs du Mal*. Critics stated that women are simply too emotionally stirred and expressive to refrain from participating in society and social affairs. Thus women were expected to be easily tempted by the commodities of the metropolis to the point in which they would join in the act of consumerism. However, this never prevented the rise of the *flâneuse*.

Traditional art, according to Baudelaire, has become insufficient for describing and writing about the complexities of modern life. The *flâneur*'s meaning is inextricably linked to his method. The wanderer is someone who seeks to make sense of modernity and its transformations within its aspects. A *Flâneur*, as defined by the famous French poet, is a modern artist who draws inspiration from beauty, modernity, and the fast-paced life that comes with it. As an artist, he believes conservatism prevents artists from reaching their greatest potential.

Poe's adoption of the *flâneur* persona outside of his customary Parisian abode acted similarly to Charles Baudelaire's.² Poe writes in a unique style, one with an ominous despair and specific detailing. Thus, the unidentified narrator plays the English equivalent of a Parisian *flâneur*. Poe brilliantly constructs the environment of the café

¹Georges-Eugène Haussmann improved the landscape of Paris under Emperor Napoleon the third sorders for a more modern look to the city.

²Baudelaire expressed his fascination with the story of "The Man of the Crowd" in his essay "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863)

for the *flâneur* to match that activity. The long walks he takes around town contribute to the depth of his observations.

A *flâneur*, according to Benjamin, is a social historian of modernity who seeks pedestrian connoisseurship.³ Benjamin characterized the *flâneur* as a wealthy figure of modern capitalist life. This urban figure exploits his *flânerie* to sell it as part of consumer society. The *flâneur* strolls around and writes down his impressions. As an example, Benjamin transformed into the persona as a result of his work on the arcades project.

Since his first appearance in 19th century Paris, the *flâneur* has gone a long way. The concept has evolved and matured over the centuries to reach the postcolonial era. However, with a new period, questions may surface concerning the *flâneur*. Indeed, one can query if the new age means the postmodern *flâneur* is any different from his previous forms, or if he has adapted to the contemporary milieu by acquiring new characteristics that assist him in becoming postmodern. The solutions were found in the postmodern *flâneur* criticism of several academics and researchers from the domains of literature and sociology.

When it comes to postmodern *flânerie*, Aimée Boutine (PhD) is an excellent source. In her literary works, she studies the *flâneur* in a postmodern light by comparison to 19th century *flâneur*. She emphasizes that technology is a key feature for postmodern *flânerie*. Just like the Hussmann renovation, technology has changed the method of postmodern *flânerie*. Based on criteria deduced from Boutin's work, Finn's narrator from *The Woman in the Window* can be considered a postmodern *flâneuse* relying on technological tools to practice *flânerie*.

³Walter Benjamin's intense research on the figure of the *flâneur* is found in his book *Arcades Project* (1982)

Another example of postmodern *flânerie* in contemporary literature is the narrator from Block's novel *Weetzie Bat*, who can be considered as a postmodern *flâneuse*. She goes on dates alongside Dirk in the hopes of finding love. While she is at it, she takes a tour of Los Angeles from the luxury of their automobile seats. On another note, the postmodern *flâneur* is no longer as detached from society as the modern *flâneur* was. In fact, this figure can now develop opinions and share them; therefore he/she becomes involved in the spectacle. In today's society, the streets are tiered with skyscrapers and underground passages that provide more exploration area for the postmodern *flâneur*. This made *flânerie* no longer limited to the city of Paris or Europe.

Finn's novel also introduces the female *flâneur* figure, which broadens the notion of *flânerie* and takes it into the postmodern era. A.J. Finn's work *The Woman in the Window* is set in contemporary New York City, and it can be considered as a model of postmodern *flânerie*. Simply because, the protagonist in particular displays aspects and qualities of *flânerie*. However, these aspects and qualities differ from the ones of the modern *flâneur*, thus by studying them in comparison to Poe's modern *flâneur*; this research may finally reach a pattern for the evolution of the modern *flâneur* into the postmodern *flâneuse*.

The studies that approached "The Man of the Crowd" from a modern *flâneur* perspective are concerned with dismantling the narrator of the story's personality into an observer of the city. According to Aimée Boutin in study "Rethinking the *Flâneur: Flânerie* and The Senses", the senses of the *flâneur* act as one to unveil the mysteries and secrets of his environment. Though, the quality of these senses is enhanced through the socio-economic privilege of the individual and in the narrator's case; being a *flâneur* immediately presents him as a wealthy intellect with sharp sight and able physique to hear, see, feel, smell, and touch his subjects of *flânerie* even from afar. (Boutin 126)

Juhani Pallasmaa in his book *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* discusses the feeling of estrangement and detachment the person feels when the built environment around him is solely focused around the visual senses and discards the rest of them. The close link that the *flâneur* feels as the city attracts his observation is interconnected with the architectural part of it and also the social and cultural aspects that help build this man-made environment. Indeed the influence of the metropolis's architecture on the *Flâneur* shows itself in the criticism he writes and describes it with.

A case of the city architecture and its criticism is in Charles Baudelaire's poems from his collection *The Flowers of Evil* where in one titled "To a Passerby" talks of a poet captivated by a woman's beauty and grace. However, she disappears as fast as she appeared and this can display the destruction of old Paris by Haussman and the nostalgic feeling Baudelaire felt as an artist *flâneur* as consequence of this renovation. With a particular purpose of reawakening the senses of the *flâneur*, Boutin claims that his strolls around the city and investigations that follow this activity help the *flâneur* analyze his walks in depth while using his cognitive and physical strength to brain-map the city

The reason behind the importance of the *flâneur*'s senses during his usual activity is because it distinguishes him from the "false *flâneurs*." According to Hazel Hahn idlers, tourists and gapers are part of this flawed equation of *flânerie*. Besides that, Heidi Brevik-Zender emphasizes on the fashion of the *Flâneur* as a key feature to distinguish him from the rest of the crowd and is a puzzle piece constructing his mysterious identity. Interestingly, the average wanderer does not combine his senses or rather does not have the ability to do so unlike his *flâneur* counterpart who through experience; maps the places he wanders and memorizes each and every detail of it by using said senses.

Along with Baudelaire's *flâneur* and his artistic characteristics, he also mentions the *flâneur* from "The Man of the Crowd" in his popular article "The Painter of Modern Life" admiring the English urban figure for his ability of indulging himself with the crowd while paying attention as to not lose his identity among them. In addition, Krueger mentions the use of the *flâneur*'s sense of smell through an analytical reading of this passage; the effluvia discharged from the crowd as a smoke to intoxicate the *flâneur*.

In an ironic approach to the title of "The Man of the Crowd", Walter Benjamin notes the *flâneur* as being a man of leisure and a laid back figure belonging to neither typical social class nor large masses that constructed the low and middle classes of that time. Although, his reasoning behind this slow paced lifestyle is to protest against the capitalist rush resulting from industrialization and enslavement of the worker; the *flâneur* acts as a political figure in some cases discussed by Ross Chambers rather than just being a literary social concept.

Being the innovative artist he is Charles Baudelaire's ideas and creation of the modern *flâneur* as a figure that describes modernity and symbolizes it while simultaneously refuses to be part of it. His type of *flâneur* is declared as avant-garde unlike the popular mainstream *flâneur* found in "panoramic literature" as Benjamin calls it in Gluck's study "The *Flâneur* and The Aesthetic: Appropriation of Urban Culture in Mid-19th-Century Paris. Moreover, the artist *Flâneur* of Honoré De Balzac constructs itself based on intelligence and art connoisseurship, this criterion of being a "true *flâneur*" acts as a foundation for upcoming *flâneurs* for more than two decades (Boutin 128)

Flânerie implants itself as a fantastical element in writings as the *flâneur* manifests his observations of the city in literary works of Benjamin's childhood memories *Berlin Childhood Around 1900* and Francesca Lia Block's debut novel *Weetzie Bat* that speaks of a postmodern *flâneuse*'s nostalgic memories of Los Angeles.

According to Tom McDonough The introspective aspect of *flânerie* is an element of inspiration for producing poetry, which took its effect and solidified Baudelaire's works in multiple verses in his collection of *The Flowers of Evil*. Also, the narrative aspect of it leads to creating thrillers and tales of horror that show accurate depictions of violence, noise pollution and even psychological turmoil in the case of "The Man of the Crowd" and *The Woman in the Window* because "no matter what trail the *Flâneur* may follow, every one of them will lead him to a crime" (Benjamin).

Considering the relevant studies conducted on the concept of the *flâneur* in relation to Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd" or *The Woman in the Window*, no studies whatsoever linked these two works in one study. Thus this dissertation is unique as it intends to study the evolution of the figure of the *flâneur* from Poe's *flâneur* to Finn's postmodern *flâneuse*.

The evolution seen through the changes of the modern to postmodern attributes of the *flâneur* is pertinent to discuss the aim of this dissertation. While the contributions of each evolution will be analyzed separately, a particular period takes the focus of the study in a comparative method between the modern *flâneur* in "The Man of the Crowd" by Edgar Allan Poe and the postmodern *flâneuse* in A.J. Finn's *The Woman in the Window* with a fresh approach of *flânerie* to the novel. Following this, the analyses will discuss and attempt to answer how and what did the modern *flâneur* contribute to the evolution of the postmodern *flâneuse*, and where does the 21st century *flâneuse* from

The Woman in the Window differ from its 19th century image in “The Man of the Crowd”.

In doing so, Walter Benjamin’s critical theory of the modern *flâneur* and its postmodern concept serve as a ground to understand and limit the study on the urban figure and his experiences through the changes he undergoes. The conceptualization of the *flâneur* being a modernist figure that suffers self loss and estrangement from society displays itself in Walter Benjamin, Charles Baudelaire, and Edgar Allan Poe’s writings experienced by authors or their characters respectively. Also, the study analyzes the postmodern *flâneuse* from A.J. Finn’s *The Woman in the Window* seldom studied under the trope of the concept of the *Flâneur*. This will be achieved through a qualitative comparative analysis to explain the unique changes and experiences shared between the “Man of the Crowd” modern anonymous narrator *flâneur* and *The Woman in the Window*’s postmodern *flâneuse* Anna Fox as the narrator of the novel. The comparative study will show the similarities and differences that present the evolutionary aspect between the two *flâneurs*. The result will identify the characteristic aspects of postmodern *flânerie* in Finn’s novel and its category in the numerous types of *flâneurs* discussed in this dissertation.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters; one theoretical chapter and two analytical chapters. The first being a theoretical chapter entitled “Flânerie in Literary Critical Theory” aims to discuss and further elaborates on the concept of the modern *flâneur* in order to give a clear understanding of *flânerie* and the indented approach to the reader. Given the aim of this chapter, it is divided into five sections; the first section “The Parisian Flâneur: a Prehistory” offers important chronologically ordered details concerning the early appearance of the flâneur in the city of Paris. The second section, “The Baudelairian Flâneur” focuses on Charles Baudelaire’s perspective of the flâneur.

While the third section “The Benjaminian Flâneur” elaborates on Walter Benjamin’s perspective of the flâneur and the contributions he brought to the Baudelaire’s original vision of the flâneur. The fourth section titled “Flânerie and Alienation” sheds light on alienation and estrangement in relation to flânerie. Finally, the last section in the first chapter “The Postmodern Flâneur” focuses on the postmodern aspects and characteristics of flânerie following Boutin’s criticism.

While the second and third chapters are mainly analytical chapters, they are concerned with critically analyzing Poe’s short story and Finn’s novel following the theoretical framework from the first chapter. The second chapter focuses on analyzing literary passages taken from “The Man of the Crowd” in reference to *flânerie* and what makes “The Man of the Crowd” a modern *flâneur*. It is divided into two sections “The *Flâneur* of the Crowd” which is a thorough analysis of Poe’s story in relevance to modern *flânerie*. The second section is entitled “Similarities between ‘The Man of the Crowd’ and *The Woman in the Window*” this section lays the similarities between the two works under study.

In parallel, the third chapter entitled “The Postmodern *Flâneuse* in Finn’s *The Woman in the Window*” aims to analytically study postmodern *flânerie* in Finn’s novel *The Woman in the Window* and discusses the key differences that make the narrator a postmodern *flâneuse* by comparison to the modern *flâneur*. This chapter is divided into two sections, where the first section “The Postmodern *Flâneuse* in *The Woman in the Window*” analyzes different passages from the novel to verify the existence of the *flâneuse* as well as to study her characteristics and environmental aspects. The second section titled “The Differences in ‘The Man of the Crowd’ Vs. *The Woman in The Window*” emphasizes the key differences between the two literary works in relevance to

flânerie, and how those differences can be viewed as the evolutionary aspects of *flânerie*.

All in all, this dissertation revolves around the figure of the flâneur in literature specifically in Poe's Short story "The Man of the Crowd" and Finn's novel *The Woman in the Window*. The thesis aims to study the evolution of the *flâneur* from the 19th century London to 21st century New York City. To achieve that, the chapters will attempt to answer questions regarding the characteristics of the modern *flâneur* evolutionary aspects of the postmodern *flâneuse*.

Chapter One: *Flânerie* in the World of Literature

Introduction

1. The Parisian *Flâneur*: a Prehistory
 - 1.1. The *Flâneur* during the First Half of the 19th Century
 - 1.2. The Paris Renovation and its Influence on the *Flâneur*
 - 1.3. The Female *Flâneur*: The *Flâneuse*
2. The Baudelairian *Flâneur*
 - 2.1. Definition and Purpose of The Baudelairian *Flâneur*
 - 2.2. The Artist *Flâneur*
3. The Benjaminian *Flâneur*
 - 3.1. Definition of Benjamin's *flâneur*
 - 3.2. The *Flâneur* in Benjamin's *Arcades Project*
4. *Flânerie* and Alienation
 - 4.1. Alienation and Socio-economic Paradigms
 - 4.2. Alienation and Psychology
5. The Postmodern *Flâneur*
 - 5.1. The Postmodern Mobilized *Flâneur*
 - 5.2. The Postmodern *Flâneur* and Technology

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter aims to dismantle the figure of the modern *flâneur* by studying its evolution in literature since its earliest until its postmodern form while observing how that change has influenced its narration. Part of the process is providing enough information for the reader to comprehend the notion of the *flâneur*. In order to achieve that goal, firstly data-analysis will be provided of the major works that include the *flâneur* as either a narrator or a persona. Then each section will present traits and characteristics of the *flâneur* from the period of time in question.

This chapter is divided into five sections, each one of them focuses on the *flâneur* at a certain period of time. In fact the first section offers information of the early figure of the modern *flâneur* and how it has developed before the coming of Charles Baudelaire. The second section introduces the figure of the modern *flâneur* from the perspective of the French poet Charles Baudelaire, it describes the characteristics and the usage of the wanderer figure in an artistic framework. The third section is a continuum to the previous one, however it focuses on the *flâneur* in the works of critic Walter Benjamin whose work is based on Charles Baudelaire's vision of the modern *flâneur*. This section studies and observes Benjamin's notes on the modern *flâneur*. After that, the fourth section highlights the aspect of alienation and estrangement related to *flânerie* from psychological and socio-economic perspectives. Last but not least, the fifth section introduces the postmodern *flâneur* by observing its existence in the contemporary world and then listing its characteristics.

1. The Parisian *Flâneur*: a Prehistory

The concept of the *flâneur* dates back to the early nineteenth century Paris when writers of that era noticed the figure of the *flâneur* in society, art and literature. That figure came to existence with the rise of industrialization and the urbanization of post-revolutionary Paris. This concept influenced the narratives of multiple literary works, as the figure of the *flâneur* offers more precision of description that helps create close-to-reality emblematic imageries and map out the city with all its ins and outs for the reader. However, with the constant changes that society undergoes, the *flâneur* has gradually changed and adapted to new societal norms that continue to redefine him. This resulted in an evolutionary shift of the *flâneur*'s characteristics and traits that may have influenced the profile of the *flâneur* as a narrator and social observer in literature.

According to sociologists Keith Tester and Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson who both discussed the concept of the *flâneur* in their works namely Tester's essays collection *The Flâneur* (1994) and Ferguson's *Paris as Revolution: Writing the Nineteenth-Century City* (1994) they both agree on the fact that the *flâneur* is not originally Baudelairian as most people may think. Actually they present literary works that are published far before Baudelaire's or Walter's works and they include the term of the *flâneur*. Based on the record they provide, the *flâneur* marked his earliest appearance in an anonymous work from 1806 entitled *Le Flâneur au Salon, ou Mr. Bon-homme Examen Joyeux des Tableaux, Mêlé de Vaudeville* (Ferguson 26).

In this thirty two page pamphlet we meet Monsieur Bon-homme the first Parisian *flâneur* who according to sociologist Ferguson "displays the primary traits of the *flâneur*, namely, his detachment from the ordinary social world and his association to Paris." (Ferguson 84) Which means this pamphlet is what first introduced the *flâneur*

and characterized him to be detached from society as Mr. Bon-homme wanders the streets of Paris indifferent to the commodities offered by the urban city while observing people from a safe distance. Another major characteristic is that the *flâneur* can only be Parisian, or that the act of *flânerie* can only be performed in the city of Paris. According to critics the *flâneur* is born in Paris and dies there as Victor Hugo wrote in his book *Les Misérables* “To wander is human, to *flâner* is Parisian.” This condition of directly relating the *flâneur* to Paris emerged with the concept itself as post-revolutionary Paris seemed to be the setting of widely known literary works, such as Victor Hugo’s *Notre-Dame de Paris* and many other literary masterpieces.

In Keith Tester’s edit of Ferguson’s essay “The *Flâneur* on and off the Streets of Paris” he emphasizes that M. Bon-homme is characterized by more than his detachment from society and strolling in Paris city streets, but also by his social class. He belongs to the middle-class of the social order, which therefore makes him the “bourgeois *flâneur*.”(Tester 26) This note can be considered as an important addition to the notion of the *flâneur*. Sociologist Tester elaborates by describing the bourgeois *flâneur*, based on his analysis of Mr. Bon-homme. He is known for his daily routinely wanders, but what’s unique about him is that he plans his daily walks step by step, unlike the modern or any subsequent *flâneur* who usually wanders aimlessly in search of meaning and inspiration in the city streets of Paris.

1.1. The *Flâneur* during the First Half of the 19th Century

Two decades later the *flâneur* was depicted again in a nonfiction work that is considered by scholars to be culturally significant. In *Physiologie du Mariage* (1829) by Honoré de Balzac the *flâneur* takes on a new form as in this work the concept in question collides with art to produce *le flâneur-artiste* or the artist *flâneur*. According to

Ferguson the credits go to Honoré de Balzac for being the first to create the link between the *flâneur* and the artist; in fact Tester writes in his edit of her work “the honour of making the connection between the *flâneur* and the artist rightfully goes to Balzac.” (Tester 29) She continues by discussing how Balzac first created the path for the artist *flâneur* that will be further developed later on with different writers, thinkers and even artists such as Baudelaire and Walter Benjamin.

The artist *flâneur* is supposed to live up to certain standards to be called a “true *flâneur*.” (Tester 27). Firstly the Balzacian *flâneur* is expected to be highly knowledgeable to reach the level of intellect required to earn the title of the artist *flâneur*. Besides that, a true artist *flâneur* is more driven by individuality, which can be deduced from his observations during his daily wanders while he sees people as individuals instead of groups. Another crucial aspect that contributes to the authenticity of this *flâneur* is his association with art and creativity. The artist *flâneur* unlike any other person is creative and the way he views the world and portrays it in his art is what keeps him away from the typically obnoxious lifestyle. In her essay Ferguson discusses how the artist *flâneur* collects material for his art through the details displayed in architecture, fashion and people in the streets to either project them in paintings, sketches or even text. “The *flâneur*’s very text mirrors the shifting relationship to the city.” (Tester 30) This can mean that the writings or the art produced by the *flâneur* represent his relationship with the ever changing appearance of the city which is a difference that can be detected by comparison to the previous *flâneur*’s observations and this one’s.

A similar work to *Physiologie du Mariage* was originally published in 1841 under the title of *Physiologie du Flâneur* written by Louis Huart is highly relevant to this study as the book stresses the smallest details about the *flâneur*. As discussed earlier in

this section, in *Physiology du Mariage* Balzac introduces the artist *flâneur*, whereas *Physiologie du flâneur* is what frames the figure of the *flâneur* and presents him to the reader with all the aspects and traits that he had accumulated since the concept's earliest appearance. Louis Huart does that by precisising the appearance of the *flâneur*; in fact the book includes multiple sketches of the *flâneur* to help draw the appearance of the typical 19th century *flâneur*. In accordance with Ferguson, she comments stating that "All the illustrations in the *Physiologie du flâneur* show the *flâneur*- top hat, frock coat, cane and/or cigar in hand - surrounded by people very unlike himself." (Ferguson 31) Besides that Huart specifies the interests of the *flâneur* as a social observer and how he finds delight in gazing at buildings, shop-windows and the beauty of women. He also emphasizes the idea of how by making observations the *flâneur* transcends into his own fantasy world inspired by what he sees in the streets of Paris.



Illustration from Louis Huart *Physiologie du flâneur* (1841)

1.2. The Paris Renovation and its Influence on the *Flâneur*

The early 1850s Paris underwent a drastic transformation that had major consequences on the *flâneur*. It was during the reign of Emperor Bonaparte III when he gave orders to George-Eugène Haussmann -also known as Baron Haussmann- to renovate the city of Paris. The urban renewal of the city included reconstructions of its boulevards, buildings, neighborhoods, restaurants, shops and public parks in order to give Paris a more modern charm suitable for the 19th and 20th centuries. Between the period of 1853 and 1870 the *flâneur* was highly influenced by the Haussmannization of Paris which resulted in the appearance of indoor or private *flânerie* and the female *flâneur*.

Based on Ferguson's researches it is thanks to Théophile Gautier for first introducing the indoor *flâneur* through his literary work *Spirite* of 1866. (Ferguson 33) The relocation of the setting for *flânerie* breaks tradition when it comes to strolling around the city streets; however it brings new additions to the notion of the *flâneur* that contributes to its evolution. With the development of the indoor *flâneur*, it becomes noticeable to the select audience how outdoor strolling in the crowded city started to overwhelm the stroller and even give him a sense of social anxiety as he finds himself unable to keep up with too many people around. That explains why the indoor *flâneur* performs *flânerie* in interior spaces relying on his creative imagination and knowledge to teleport himself into different dimensions from the comfort of his interior location. This idea will be further developed with the postmodern *flâneur* in the analytical chapter of *The Woman in the Window* by A.J Finn.

1.3. The Female *Flâneur*: The *Flâneuse*

The female *flâneur* in comparison to the image of the traditional *flâneur* who “haunts the arcades...does not buy...consumes the city at one remove, savouring the display without expenditure, financial or emotional.” (Ferguson 28) And above all has to be a male is what had been debated for decades before the introduction of the female *flâneur*: the *flâneuse*. It was not until 1863 that the Parisian *flâneuse* was introduced in Baudelaire’s poetry collection originally entitled *Les Fleurs du Mal*. before that critics presented many arguments debating why *flânerie* should be restricted to males only. Some of those arguments are that women are far too emotionally excited and expressive to refrain from engagement in society and social affairs. Besides that women were thought to be easily seduced by the commodities of the urban city to the point where they would participate in the act of consumerism, which goes against the values of the *flâneur*. Another argument is that as Ferguson puts it in her article which may imply that women are subjects as part of the view of the *flâneur* and their beauty should be merely savored and immersed by the *flâneur* to inspire him and his imagination.

During the 19th century, the image of the Victorian woman was popular in describing the graceful women of that time and how they had to live up to the perfect standards of the Victorian woman’s characteristics to feel safe and good about themselves. However as the name implies this image was dictated and based on societal norms and traditions of that era, which later on provoked the image of the New Woman to emerge. The image of the New Woman stood against the values of the Victorian woman and aimed at breaking the norms that forced women to be

dependent on men. Along that, the *flâneuse* managed to grow and offer her own perspective and point of view of life.

To further illustrate *flâneuserie*, Marie Bashkirtseff was a Russian artist who based on her journals can be considered a *flâneuse*. In fact an extract taken from her published journal entitled *The Journal of a Young Artist* can prove that:

Wednesday, December 30 [1879] . . . On leaving the studio today I went to the Magasin du Louvre. It would take a Zola to describe this excited, busy, disgusting crowd, running, pushing, with heads thrust forward and eager eyes. I felt ready to faint from heat and weakness. (Marie Bashkirtseff 195)

Monday, July 21 [1884] I walked for more than four hours today in search of a background for my picture; it is to be a street, but I have not yet fixed on the particular spot. (Marie Bashkirtseff 417)

In the passages above, Marie Bashkirtseff writes about her strolling in the city of Paris on her own to run mundane errands and find material for her art, which is exactly what the artist *flâneur* does however perspectives differ from a male to a female *flâneur*. Baudelaire's vision of the modern *flâneur* is more insightful and sheds light on many aspects of the figure of the *flâneur*.

2. The Baudelairian *Flâneur*

As a poet, Baudelaire wrote controversial pieces of art to challenge the traditional and conservative part of it. The idea behind his choice of writings is to awaken a liberated spirit of expression that syncs well with modernity. The poems found in his collection entitled *Flowers of Evil*, is a testimony of the genius and daring artist. Additionally, in "The Painter of Modern Life" Baudelaire inscribes his theory

about modernity and other topics influenced by modernity.⁴ One of the main ideas mentioned in the essay is the figure of the modern *flâneur*, an observer of the modern life and all its elements.

2.1. Definition and Purpose of The Baudelairian *Flâneur*

According to Baudelaire, traditional art became insufficient to describe and write about the complexity of modern life. Thus, he integrated the artist into society and indulged himself as a participant and observer, an individual among a group and a partaker in society. The meaning of the *flâneur* goes hand in hand with his method, he is a wanderer by definition and through his method of wandering, is trying to find the changes modernity brought to life:

The city's modernity is most particularly defined for him by the activities of the observer, whose aim is to derive 'l'éternel du transitoire' ('the eternal from the transitory') and to see the 'poétique dans l'historique' ('the poetic in the historic'). (Christopher Butler 133)

The wanderer is one that finds meaning of modernity and its changes within its elements. Baudelaire focused on three main elements of modernity to shape his *flâneur*, beauty, art and fashion.⁵ In his essay he writes:

He is looking for that quality which you must allow me to call 'modernity'; for I now of no better word to express the idea I have in mind. He makes it his business to extract from fashion whatever element it may contain of poetry within history, to distill the eternal from the transitory. (Baudelaire 12)

⁴See Charles Baudelaire "The Painter of Modern Life" (2010 : 21-25)

⁵See Charles Baudelaire "The Painter of Modern Life" (2010 : 07 - 11)

The man who Charles Baudelaire refers to in this passage is a painter named monsieur G, who later on will be referred to as the *flâneur* painter. He describes him as a solitary man with a great deal of creativity and imagination, that helps him to travel around the crowd with a purpose that is more than a mere *flâneur*; that motif is trying to understand what is different about modernity than the past, what changes did fashion bring in poetry, in describing people's outfits and attitudes in the new writings, and eventually to filter out the transitions of beauty from its eternal definition. Beauty is attractive and captivating, so what did modernity contribute to this eternal concept of beauty to make it even more attractive and captivating.

The *flâneur* is also a protestor against the fast paced capitalist life that is focused around consumerism; he clearly showcased this through a fashion statement in Paris where he took a pet tortoise for a walk. This statement that is expressed through fashion correlates to the modern way of expressing oneself, the *flâneur* is interested in the trendy and the commodities of that era. He listens to people's gossip, he looks around the new shops filled with the latest fashion, food and other goods that are eye candy for the consumer; simultaneously, the eye candy of the *flâneur* as a consumer himself is the crowd and not the commodity itself.

Although it can be seen through Baudelaire's writings that women in the modern era were not as appreciated as men, indeed the idea of *flânerie* was mainly based on a masculine perspective of a bourgeois intellectual gentleman with a sharp eye for observation, and the woman was reduced to a prostitute night figure that is still considered as a commodity and object of pleasure for the man. However, the open mindedness and the diverse mixture of society brought by modernity contributed to shifting and evolving the role of the woman in socio-economic matters.

2.2. The Artist *Flâneur*

He is a poet; more often he comes closer to the novelist or the moralist; he is the painter of the passing moment and of all the suggestions of eternity that it contains.
(Baudelaire 05)

According to the famous French poet, a *flâneur* is a modern artist who takes inspiration from beauty, modernity and the fast paced life it comes with it. As an artist himself, he believed that conservatism stops the artist from achieving his full potential. Indeed, he thought that traditional art narrowed its view about life and no longer was able to carry on and keep up with the social changes that were happening in Paris. Consequently, Baudelaire's *flâneur* as an artist attempted to break these boundaries and challenge those traditional ideas by broadening the subjects discussed in art, such as prostitution, the casual life of an urban city, and the ever changing standards of beauty.

Baudelaire shapes his *flâneur* in his poem "A Une Passante" as a poet who sees a woman passing by; and he is struck by her beauty and grace for just a moment, then she disappears into the crowd. However, this brief period of time makes the poet feel overwhelmed. In the first verse he describes the loud street surrounding him while standing silent among all this noise, this hints at the incognito mode the *flâneur* puts on while he is immersed in the crowd.⁶

the street around me roared with a deafening sound.
Tall, slender, in heavy mourning, majestic grief,
A woman passed, with a glittering hand
Raising, swinging the hem and flounces of her skirt;
Agile and graceful, her leg was like a statue's.
Tense as in a delirium, I drank
From her eyes, pale sky where tempests germinate,
The sweetness that entralls and the pleasure that kills.

⁶See Charles Baudelaire *The Flowers of Evil* (1998 : 188)

A lightning flash... then night! Fleeting beauty
By whose glance I was suddenly reborn,
Will I see you no more before eternity?
Elsewhere, far, far from here! Too late! Never perhaps!
For I know not where you fled, you know not where I go,
O you whom I would have loved, O you who knew it!

(Charles Baudelaire, *A Une Passante*)

In “The Painter of Modern Life” Baudelaire mentions a painter he referred to as Monsieur G. Through Baudelaire’s description we get to extract two qualities of the painter monsieur G that are identical to the *flâneur*, he’s an admirer of crowds and likes the idea of being hidden among them. Monsieur G’s art is a very messy one much like how we see in the modern paintings, the splashes and random colors that are spotted when looking at a painting. It is sort of reminiscent of how a child paints, letting his imagination control him and throwing reason out of the window, he does not care whether the painting should paint a normal face; the child paints the face with an eye bigger than the other a leg higher than the other an arm longer than the other. But according to Baudelaire, painting like a child in a messy way, is a form of genius that he is fascinated by.

Although monsieur G does not attribute the word artist to himself, because he finds it restrictive. Traditionally an artist is put in a box sealed by political correctness and morals. Thus, Baudelaire here mentions how Monsieur G wants to live and be seen as a man of the world, a man that wants to freely understand nature and human nature alike. The nature of Monsieur G is that of a curious child who has a vast imagination and huge sense of exploration and discover. However, it should not be mistaken that just because Monsieur G paints and is curious like a child, that he even inherited the immaturity of a child. He is a genius adult, and this maturity that ties with being an adult gives a logical and clear understanding of the genius of the child. Baudelaire also

asks to consider monsieur G as a combination of a child and a man, it is complimentary, his genius is derived from his childhood and his maturity and reasoning is derived from his manhood; and thanks to this childhood genius, nothing in life became old or indifferent to him.

As a full description of the “perfect” *flâneur*, Baudelaire writes that the stroller’s element of observation and study is the crowd, he feels at home when he’s in the midst of the noise and crowded areas and to be like a prince roaming around his kingdom in disguise in order not to be exposed by his people. But, when Paris’s touristic economy boomed, many foreigners started settling in the French capital, Paris was no longer just a French speaking city. The *flâneur* started hearing different languages around him, observed new ways of salutations, and clothing. Thus, with this social expansion, the *flâneur*’s position as an observer broadened, and he became interested in the relation between the past, the present, the socio-economic and even the psychological aspects of society. This type of *flâneur* belongs to Walter Benjamin, a German literary critic and theorist who resided in Paris.

3. The Benjaminian *Flâneur*

Walter Benjamin is a German literary critic and sociologist who is famous for his work *The Arcades Project*. He lived in Paris throughout the 20th century fleeing his country from the Nazi rule. During his stay in Paris, Benjamin wrote a lot about the city’s history and its architecture, he was fascinated by the atmosphere and the exceptional environment of the French capital. However, what fascinated him more is the literary works that talked about the past and its contribution to the present and future, the ones that talked about modernity’s influence on the socio-economic aspects of society; and ultimately, the literary figure that holds the key of discovery and sharp

observation that is the *flâneur*. Benjamin mentions this figure through his analysis of Charles Baudelaire's works and delves deeper into what it truly means to be a *flâneur*.⁷

3.1. Definition of Benjamin's *Flâneur*

According to Benjamin, a *flâneur* is a historical social investigator of modernity, seeking pedestrian connoisseurship through his observation of the crowd while also paying attention to the socio-economic changes taking place in modern society. Not only did Benjamin emphasize on the fact that the *flâneur* should find a social legitimation for his behavior, but he also clearly mentioned in his notes that the *flâneur* should be depicted as a bourgeois intellectual with a meaningful purpose of *flânerie* acquired through practice and experience in order to set him apart from the usual stroller. Benjamin labeled the *flâneur* as a bourgeois product of modern industrialized life.

performed in the figure of the is that of the detective, the *flâneur* required a social legitimation of his habitus, it suited him very well to see his indolence presented as a plausible front, behind which, in reality, hides the riveted attention of an observer who will not let the unsuspecting malefactor out of his sight. (Benjamin 442)

In his autobiography *Berlin Childhood around 1900*, he uses a *flâneur* figure of himself that spectates his childhood and the visual world of that childhood, one that speaks about a bourgeois Jewish kid that observed courtyards and visited the imperial panorama that allowed him to view the world through a lens.⁸

⁷See Walter Benjamin's "The Writer Of Modern Life : Essays on Charles Baudelaire" (2006 : 170 - 213)

⁸See Walter Benjamin "Berlin Childhood around 1900" (2006)

Being the spectator of his story, he steps back into an observational state of his memories and events that took place back then, he reminisces about the absence of things that used to amuse him as a child in a modern world like the imperial panorama or his imaginary hunchback friend. One where he alludes to the world that ceased to exist in this modern world where he felt alienated and estranged from his childhood environment. The *flâneur* also has for purpose the task of rebuilding a cognitive map of his surroundings, this mapping will later on be manifested in writings of journalists and authors who used *flânerie* and the *flâneur* as a commodity to sell their works. However the socio-economic changes that took place during Bonaparte's reign over France, the demolition of Baudelaire's Paris, and the destruction of Benjamin's childhood Berlin; resulted in creating a sense of estrangement and psychological toll that intoxicated both Benjamin and Baudelaire, crippling their ideas from evolving in an organized manner, where they have to forcibly change and adapt to certain modern standards that they refuse in the first place. Baudelaire has moved to a village, far away from the urban life of the new Paris, and Benjamin fled Germany from Nazi rule, but never did they fled their mental state of loss and confusion caused by a sudden switch of reality. A reality that contrasted their view of the social life.

3.2 The *Flâneur* in Benjamin's *Arcades Project*

According to Anna Friedberg, The fundamental principles of modernity and the city were explored by Benjamin in his work *The arcades project*, in which he used the prototype of Baudelaire's *flâneur* found in his poems *The Flowers Of Evil*. Paris was the capital of nineteenth-century and it had a rich historical value as a city. Its connected streets acted as a blood vessel, carrying the *flâneur* to each and every corner of the city, this is what the arcades project was in its essence.

Benjamin introduced two concepts in his arcades projects to describe our reaction to the modern life, *Erlebnis* as the outrageous stimulation of the urban modern life in the city, which can be traced to an extent in the restrained feeling of the worker because of the condition of his labour. *Erfahrung* as the efficacious concept that refers to the strolling and observations of the city, its corners streets, atmosphere and noise. That is the *flâneur* experience; Benjamin found that Baudelaire's poetry converted outrageous stimulation of *Erlebnis* to the efficacious concept of *Erfahrung*:

The greater the share of the shock factor in particular impressions, the more constantly consciousness has to be alert as a screen against stimuli; the more efficiently it does so, the less do these impressions enter experience (*Erfahrung*), tending to remain in the sphere of a certain hour in one's life (*Erlebnis*). (Benjamin 163)

The stroller who takes these long walks around the city and puts his observations of the architecture of the stores, exhibitions, the vogue into a written form is the *flâneur*. Through his writing of the arcades project, Benjamin turned into a *flâneur*, playing the role of the character within his work, where he looked extensively through texts for his research so much so as a scavenger. A metaphor that refers to Baudelaire's rag picker. Benjamin argues that the *flâneur* is not here to challenge modernity but rather to lead us into a state of going beyond what the past offered to the present and what modernity offers to the future, this is achieved through empathy "Empathy with the commodity is fundamentally empathy with the exchange value itself. The *flâneur* is the virtuoso of this empathy." (Benjamin 448)

However, the easy and fast productions of modernity became a nuisance to the *flâneur*, because it interferes with his method of long immersive observation, he takes the shape of a loiterer and daydreamer opposing the rush and quickness of how time passes that is caused by modernity. And this will eventually lead him/her to stay away from society altogether, and use technological devices to carry on his *flânerie*, which is the case with the postmodern *flâneuse* Anna Fox, the protagonist of *The Woman in the Window*.

That anamnestic intoxication in which the *flâneur* goes about the city not only feeds on the sensory data taking shape before his eyes but often processes itself of abstract knowledge – indeed, of the dead facts – as something experienced and lived through. This felt knowledge travels from one person to another, especially by word of mouth... (Benjamin417)

Eventually, through his *flânerie* he is intoxicated by the visual consumption of objects around him and the thoughts and ideas that awaken from conversations and dialogues between individuals surrounding him. This lets him metaphorically go into the mind of each individual to explore their thoughts and their view of their surroundings, through their linguistic manifestation of thoughts, as in them thinking aloud and commenting about things around them. The abstract knowledge turns concrete by inscribing it in notes and books; such is the role of the *flâneur*.

The idea of alienation as mentioned previously is pertinent to understand the nature of the modern *flâneur*'s struggle with the modern social life. As an observer, he is supposed to only write about what he witnesses, but not react to it. However, it is also important to note that the *flâneur* as a literary figure is shaped by its writer, the writer is the real life manifestation of this *flâneur*, and his view of society definitely affects the

fictional *flâneur*'s view. So, the active role of the writer in refusing some aspect of modernity, such as Baudelaire refusing the destruction of the Parisian arcades, and Benjamin refusing his childhood world; leads to building a psychological part of the *flâneur*, where he finds himself a stranger in a place that he knows every in and out about it.

4. *Flânerie* and Alienation

The concept of the modern *flâneur* is known for its detachment from society, which refers to how alienated and estranged the figure of the *flâneur* is. Alienation is a purely modern concept that is associated with existentialist literature and most usually affects individuals' social existence. Alienation is generally defined as the state of separation of the individual from an object that eventually contributes to his/her loneliness, pessimism and meaninglessness. This concept was approached by many thinkers and philosophers such as Karl Marx, Sartre, Albert Camus, Friedrich Nietzsche and Søren Kierkegaard among others. Alienation can have different types, according to Karl Marx's socio-economic definition of alienation; it can be between the individual and labor, product of labor, other laborers or self.

4.1. Alienation and Socio-economic Paradigms

What Karl Marx means by alienation from other laborers applies to other workers and how they themselves become a commodity while working. In fact Oliver Christ comments on the matter stating that "Owners and workers- who remain uncompromisingly opposed to one another. While the workers create ever more wealth through ongoing production, they also create their own suffering, becoming themselves a commodity to be traded on the labor market." (Oliver Christ 554). Marx criticizes the capitalist mode of economic production by his definition. This idea is highly present

when it comes to the modern *flâneur* as he strolls the streets observing shop-windows and workers while trying to maintain a safe distance to not become part of the buying and selling process. Alienation related to labor is notable in Edgar Allan Poe's work generally and illustrations will be extracted and discussed from *The Man of the Crowd* in the analytical chapters.

4.2. Alienation and Psychology

Karl Marx's definition of alienation approaches the concept from a political dimension; however the specifics of alienation may differentiate from the Marxist ones when approached from a psychological perspective. According to a study conducted by Patrick C.L. Heaven and C.L. Bester (1986) where they based their research on Sexton's psychological study (1983). The study concluded that alienation is most usually related to certain variables that are anxiety, low self-esteem, loneliness and rejection of authority (Patrick C.L. Heaven & C.L. Bester 594). Due to criticism of Sexton's research, Heaven and Bester's study aims to give more precision to her findings by providing specific numbers to examine the extent to which the psychological variables are correct.

Unlike Sexton's research that followed the Keniston Alienation Scale, Heaven and Bester's study relied on the General Alienation Scale to measure the data given (Patrick C.L. Heaven & C.L. Bester 594). Besides that the study was applied on respondents from both North Africa and Australia with different age ranges. The study concluded that all variables related to alienation –anxiety, low self-esteem, attitude to authority- exceed 60% up to 82%. The study also notes that the number of women surpasses the number of alienated men. The data provided by the study emphasizes the directly related variables to alienated people. In fact, the statistics show how anxiety, low self-

esteem and disagreement with authoritative systems contribute to individuals' estrangement and alienation. These points which will be further illustrated with the post modern *flâneuse* from Finn's novel *The Woman in the Window*.

The psychological dimension of alienation sheds light on the indoor *flâneur* who is overwhelmed by social change and may suffer mental health issues that contribute to his/her isolation and estrangement. Alienation is also characterized by the disability of expression which is something remarkable about the modern *flâneur* as the figure chooses silence over expression. Besides that, lack of expression usually leads to lack of communication and this can be another factor to estrangement and isolation. This idea is perfectly depicted in T.S Eliot's Poem entitled "The Love Song of A.J Alfred Prufrock". In the poem, the persona speaks of his insecurities and low self-esteem and how his inaction to change his situation is actually what makes his thoughts spiral in circles in his head. *The Woman in the Window* also discusses the theme of alienation in relation to *flânerie* and how mental health can affect the perception of the narrator. The next section discusses characteristics of postmodern *flânerie*.

5. The Postmodern *Flâneur*

The *flâneur* has come a long path since his earliest appearance in the nineteenth century Paris. The concept evolved and developed throughout the centuries to make its way to the postcolonial era. However, with a new era, questions may rise concerning the *flâneur*. In fact, one may wonder does the new era mean the postmodern *flâneur* is any different than his ancestors, or has he adapted to the postmodern environment by developing new traits that help make him postmodern? And what about his location, is the postmodern *flâneur* still strictly bound to the city of Paris? The answers lay in the

postmodern criticism of the *flâneur* of different scholars and specialists from the fields of literature and social theory.

Fairly enough studies were conducted on the postmodern *flâneur* as an observer and narrator of the metropolitan city, one of which is Jan Susina's article "The Rebirth of the Postmodern Flâneur: Notes on the Postmodern Landscape of Francesca Lia Block's *Weetzie Bat*". In her article Jan Susina debates the accuracy of the depiction of Los Angeles Hollywood in Block's fictional novel *Weetzie Bat*. Susina compares *Weetzie Bat*'s story setting L.A. to other literary works with the same setting to finally reach the conclusion that the L.A. version of Block's novel seems to be personally and intimately described by the author. This can be explained by an exclusive interview with the author where she opens up about the times during which the novel had been written as she says it was "a very lonely time as a way to comfort myself with nostalgic memories of Los Angeles. I thought up most of the plot on my long walk home from school through the blossoming Berkeley hills" ("Genie Story" 28) This in itself can be considered as an act of *flânerie* which inspires the world building of *Weetzie Bat*'s fairytale version of Hollywood.

5.1. The Postmodern Mobilized *Flâneur*

Another point that Susina highlights in her article is how the protagonist of *Weetzie Bat* can be perceived as a postmodern *flâneuse*. As discussed in previous sections, the *flâneur* reached a moment in time where he was no longer required to be pedestrian to perform *flânerie*. The case for *Weetzie Bat* is that she performs *flâneuserie* while driving her best-friend's car. In fact Susina writes In other words, Weetzie drives with Dirk in the hope of finding suitable partners that live up to their expectations and fulfill the dreamy fairytale prophecy. While at it, both Weetzie and Dirk explore the geography of Los Angeles from the comfort of their mobilized car seats.

5.2. The Postmodern *Flâneur* and Technology

In another literary encounter with Aimée Boutin⁹ and *Société* magazine, she offers insights on the figure of the *flâneur* of today. In her interview “The Figure of The *Flâneur* Today” with *Société* she discusses whether the figure of the *flâneur* still exists in the 21st century and how the concept has been influenced by technology and the new architectural, social and racial structures. She also refers to the existence of the *flâneur* in cinema by discussing few contemporary films.

In her attempt of answering the pertinent question about the existence of the *flâneur* in the contemporary world Aimée Boutin says:

The *flâneur* is alive and well in our contemporary society ...one might even say there is a revival of interest in *flânerie* today, though due diligence should be given to the differences between nineteenth century pedestrianism and contemporary urban mobility. (Boutin87/88)

In addition to the illustrations she mentions in her interview from cinema to art to fashion, she manages to strengthen her argument by saying that the figure of the *flâneur* still lives in the postmodern contemporary society. However with difference in times logically the postmodern *flâneur* is different from the traditional one.

Another point that Boutin discusses is the location of *flânerie* for the postmodern *flâneur*. According to her she says that the Benjaminian *flâneur* usually chose to perform *flânerie* in According to her in the contemporary world, the streets are multilayered with skywalks and underground that give further space for the postmodern *flâneur* to explore. However for the department store she claims that it is no longer the catchy location for the *flâneur* anymore with the rise of online shopping, strolling in the

⁹ Aimée Boutin is a Professor of French at Florida State University. She specializes in 19th-century French poetry, women writers, cultural history, gender studies, art history, and the city in literature. Her most recent projects focus on the *flâneur*, the senses, and city noise in nineteenth-century Paris. She is the author of *City of Noise: Sound and Nineteenth-Century Paris* (2015). aboutin@fsu.edu

department store seems to be declining. Boutin also elaborates on how neither Paris nor Europe being the limits for *flânerie* anymore. She claims that back in the day metropolitan cities and spaces were rare, however that is no longer the case in the 21st century as fascinating metropolitan cities exist almost everywhere, which gives access to people to practice *flânerie*.

If it were to compare the postmodern *flâneur* with Benjaminian *flâneur* one may reach Boutin's conclusion as she explains how the postmodern *flâneur* is no longer detached from society. In fact she claims that the *flâneur* is no longer the ambivalent observer he used to be as he now develops opinions about social justice and equality and gets involved in such matters. She further discusses how *flânerie* is still restricted to only certain people as the character of the *flâneur* is still bound by certain criteria. For her the postmodern *flâneur* is always associated with social class, race and gender. She explains how these three criteria create cultural differences. For example, the fact that gendered mobility is still an issue in some Muslim countries as women can't wander the streets on their own limits perspectives from different cultures.

As she proceeds with her interview she reveals more about the traits of the postmodern *flâneur*. In fact when she explains the relationship between the human senses and *flânerie* she says "*flânerie* is increasingly a nocturnal activity. Strolling the city at night brings all the senses into play." (Boutin 90) According to her the sense are crucial to *flânerie* as because of them *flâneurs* discover more details than normal strollers usually do. Through the feel of textures, smells, sights and sounds the *flâneur* distinguishes between one place and another which categorizes every location uniquely. Besides that she claims that postmodern *flânerie* is "increasingly nocturnal" (Boutin 90) because to her all the human sense are activated at night due to security and that should give a more intense experience of *flânerie*.

She finally concludes her interview by relating the *flâneur* to technology and explains how it adds to the notion of the *flâneur*. Based on what she says in the interview with *Société* the concept of the postmodern *flâneur* is highly influenced by technology. With the transportation inventions, such as trains, planes and cars the postmodern *flâneur* gets access to discover not only his local metropolitan city but also other cities from around the globe, and this is purely thanks to the facilities of technology. Consequently tourism can be considered a form of postmodern *flânerie*. Another interesting point from the literary encounter with Boutin is how the internet creates a virtual reality where people can actually practice *flânerie* through their computer screen via applications and websites that project the city for people. This opens doors for the *flâneur* to practice his *flânerie* from the comfort of his own private shelter. This will be further discussed and illustrated with the postmodern *flâneuse* from *The Woman in the Window* by A.J Finn.

Conclusion

There is a dynamic relationship between the *flâneur* and society. His perception changes simultaneously with his environment, the latter influences the wanderer to achieve a deeper understanding of society, and to deduce the pros and cons found within that setting. To understand the mindset of the *flâneur* is to understand how society functions on an artistic socio-economic and psychological level. The *flâneur* is a bourgeois intellect, it's a consistent trait that is common among all forms of the wanderer; be it an artist, social historical detective, an alienated individual or a postmodern *flâneur*. This trait acts as a privilege for the *flâneur* that distinguishes him from the crowd, and enables him to inscribe his observations in meaningful and discernible notes. When the artist paints and draws society in a pleasant way, it means that his *flâneur* has a positive attitude towards that environment. But, it could also mean

that the artist feels restricted, he only paints and writes what the public wants to see and read. By challenging the public point of view, the artistic *flâneur* is putting his observation above all public prejudice, which gives him an individualistic and realistic observation about society. Of course, as it was mentioned previously he is entitled to such freedom thanks to his social class and literacy. Consequently, this sense of freedom evolves the *flâneur* into a social historical detective with a broader and more thorough observation of society. However, the overwhelming feeling of exploration and *flânerie* the wanderer feels can backfire, driving the *flâneur* away from society into an indoor private space. Although this behavior is not a sign of abandoning his research, it's an evolutionary one like any previous form to adapt with the postmodern technological age of information. The evolution of the *flâneur* does not make him lose his characteristics from his previous form, it's a learning process that comes naturally as a reaction to any change in society. Thus, the *flâneur* becomes aware of smarter and often safer ways to observe his surroundings through the use of internet access by smartphones, tablets and computers.

Chapter Two: The Baudelairian/ Benjaminian *Flâneur* in Poe's "The Man of the Crowd"

Introduction

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Conclusion

Introduction

The second chapter of this dissertation aims to analyze the “Man of the Crowd” modern *flâneur*’s personality and environment. The analytical data provides information on the relationship between the *Flâneur* with his built environment and the psychological impact of the public on the figure. Additionally, the chapter presents similarities deduced from the comparative study between “The Man of the Crowd” and *The Woman in the Window*. The chapter is divided into two sections with the first section expanding into two subsections, the environmental and psychological aspect of the anonymous narrator modern *flâneur*. And three sub-subsections in the second subsection to detail the alienation, psyche, the double and subconscious of the narrator modern *flâneur*. The second section analyzes the similarities between the aforementioned works, in order to connect both *Flâneurs*’ experience with the environment and the crowd.

1. The *Flâneur* of the Crowd

“There are some secrets which do not permit themselves to be told.” is one of the first claims Poe began his story with, that of “The Man of the Crowd”. The statement probably refers to the old man that the unnamed narrator refers to as The Man of the Crowd after a failed attempt to analyze the latter. The story takes place in a Dickensian London.¹⁰ A setting of the big smoke that Poe was fascinated by, perhaps due to the gloomy and depressive feel Dickens has given the city. The sense of danger and hopelessness attracted Poe’s pen to write a story of a man intrigued by this environment, an unnamed narrator that manifests the thoughts of Poe about the atmosphere and aesthetic of this city.

¹⁰Lexico defines the term as “Of or reminiscent of the novels of Charles Dickens, especially in suggesting the poor social conditions or comically repulsive characters that they portray.”

Poe's adaptation of the figure of the *flâneur* outside his usual Parisian home followed a similar path that of Charles Baudelaire's *flâneur*. As an artistic poet, Baudelaire was highly interested in the aestheticism invoked by modernity, and he used the figure of the *flâneur* as an artist who walked to observe, interpret and inscribe his findings in artistic literary pieces. Poe follows the same type, but with a pessimistic blue feel; he might have chosen London out of all the European cities because of its predominantly rainy and cloudy climate to preserve his writing style and create a city of his own in the story. Therefore, he managed to write about a unique hotel named the D_ hotel, the enigmatic name of the hotel is a typical symbol of Poe's writings, often mysterious he leaves space for further interpretation of the name to the reader, at first it might seem incomprehensible and at best, satirical. Nevertheless, the hotel's name tells the story of the unnamed narrator's struggle with an illness.

1.1. The Environment of The *Flâneur* Narrator

Interestingly, Poe leaves his narrator unnamed to allegedly allow the reader to name the latter or even imagine him/herself as the narrator. The nameless narrator acts as the English version of the Parisian *flâneur*, and Poe cleverly builds the coffeehouse setting where he starts his *flânerie* to fit this practice, the architectural part of the city essential to the *flâneur*. Case on point, the Parisian streets were easily navigable by foot while containing a tremendous amount of windows to observe the outer part of the city from one's interior place, a house, a restaurant or any other urban building, it helped the *Flâneur* to delve deep and focus on his *flânerie* with comfort and ease. The slow walks he takes around the city are significant to the degree of his observation and interpretation of reality; his speed goes hand in hand with his results of observation, stopping from time to time to further look at something or to take time to inspect the origins of a product, a building or a machine :

By contrast, the *flâneur* remains transfixed before the same object for hours, engaged in complex reflection about the fashion trends indicated by the cloth, about the factory processes that went into its making, about the far-off places where the raw materials originated. What had appeared as an isolated, and selfcontained, commodity to the common observer, was transformed by the flâneur's imagination into a coherent story of exotic adventure and heroic reaction. (Gluck 70)

The unique relationship between the *Flâneur* and the urban environment was invariably characterized by the metaphor of the city as text and the *flâneur* as reader. The image implied that the *flâneur's* gift of imagination enabled him to treat the urban scene as an open book, where he discovered amusement, excitement, adventure and enchantment, unavailable to ordinary spectators. (Gluck 70)

Consequently, his interpretation will be more accurate and grant him the experience to analyze more and more objects around him professionally. The *Flâneur* is disciplined in his walks and interprets his findings in a thought-provoking way thanks to his intellectual background that often plays a role in distinguishing him from the crowd, if one strikes a conversation with a flâneur, he could go on for hours about his immense interest in the little details that may seem trivial to the other but of great significance to the flâneur. For the flâneur, simply strolling is insufficient. Hence, his senses walk with him; his eyes that perceive his surroundings to provoke his cognitive side, so through using his physical strength to roam around the city, his cognitive abilities are encouraged to awaken by the practice of *flânerie*

1.2. The Psychology of the *Flâneur* Narrator

Poe's imagination of the city and his narrator's description of it is one of the several uses of *flânerie*, to inscribe the events of the city is part of observing it. When the *flâneur* roams around to see what is beyond the stone and iron constructing the buildings, he is essentially giving life to these inanimate objects; he talks of their history and age, how they used to be shiny, and new, and now they are dark and old. Regardless, they still keep their significance and value thanks to the *flâneur*'s observation and mention of their history. Thus the *flâneur* acts as a hero and protector of the city's history. Time can destroy the city, but through the *flâneur*'s written interpretations and observations of that city, he stops time and preserves its beauty. At best, he is granting the city immortality.

Although he may not hold any relation to the city, being a stranger, the *flâneur* can still roam around aimlessly to explore his surroundings as long as he perfects the art of *flânerie*; he can be everywhere and still be a *flâneur*. Perhaps this is why the *flâneur* finds himself in texts and works outside of his usual home Paris the French capital. Nevertheless, writing about a *flâneur* outside of Paris strips away all of his unique characteristics as a Parisian, and so this can turn difficult to create a foreign *flâneur*. However, many writers have used the concept of stereotyping when describing foreign characters, though it is encouraged to understand that the word foreigner in this context indicates a stranger that is still a local to the area, not a complete outsider, here we see the unnamed narrator using the concept of physiognomy and stereotyping to justify his description of the crowd.

1.2.1. Alienation in “The Man of the Crowd”

It was well said of a certain German book that “er last sich nicht lessen”—it does not permit itself to be read. There are some secrets which do not permit themselves to be told. Men die nightly in their beds, wringing the hands of ghostly confessors, and looking them piteously in the eyes —die with despair of heart and convulsion of throat, on account of the hideousness of mysteries which will not suffer themselves to be revealed. Now and then, alas, the conscience of man takes up a burthen so heavy in horror that it can be thrown down only into the grave. And thus the essence of all crime is undivulged. (Poe 414)

Poe starts his story by a French epigraph that says: “ce grand malheur de ne pouvoir être seul.” (La Bruyère) which translates to —this great misfortune of not being able to be alone.»Initially, Poe is trying to tell us something about loneliness in the city and the inability to be alone in a crowded area; such is the urban life, a person is always surrounded by people wherever he goes. This idea of not being alone invokes the conclusion of loneliness as an illusion in the city; one can never be alone in a densely populated area, such as 19th century London.¹¹ He begins his introduction by mentioning a German book that no one can read; the strange book is thought-provoking as the reader may wonder why this book permits nobody to read it.

People are usually afraid of the unknown, and certainly here this idea of a sealed book might summon that feeling of fear, the reader may speculate that the book is that of ancient dark magic so evil like Pandora’s Box or one containing a treasure map that of the underground city of Atlantis. Nevertheless, Poe includes secretive and mysterious codes that provoke the reader’s curiosity and sometimes confuse him.

¹¹Due to the global dominance Britain witnessed in the Victorian era, many people sought the country for job opportunities, which led to a problematic overpopulation.

Secrets that do not permit its keeper from revealing them, the forbidden idea of not allowing something to be accessed by anybody repeats itself.

Interestingly, his sentence wording indicates that even though the person would want to tell the secret, he cannot do so. Perhaps a higher power is not letting him, or maybe, he will lose his life if he confesses. The unnamed narrator talks about men that lose their lives during sleep, perhaps after experiencing a horrific nightmare about the public confession of their dark secrets and the repercussions that may come with it while looking at these ghostly figures of their secrets pitifully. They experience strangulation that leads to their inevitable death, and still, their secrets will not be revealed even at the cost of their own lives. In the same paragraph, he speaks of the conscience of man that carries an immense burden with indescribable horror, so malicious that it belongs with the dead and not the living and thus, is buried with the man.

The burden shown in the passage could be the essence of all crime, which might refer to the motive of the crime and the reason behind committing it. Although a criminal is usually proud of his crime and often tries to reveal them, this man who passed away refuses. This man or men were possibly involved in a crime, manslaughter, or witnessed a crime so terrifying and monstrous that they could not even speak about it. In this passage, the reader reads about when the story happened; the narrator reveals that it is taking place in the past; he also reveals the time of day, season, and location.

The D__coffeehouse, as explained, is an indication of the disease the narrator suffers from and is recovering from, which left him mentally energetic and excited. He explains the source of this feeling in detail and even goes further to mention the

reasoning of Leibniz, the German rationalist, and the rhetoric of ancient Greek philosopher Gorgias to level his excitement.

Here the narrator continues explaining his excitement; the simple natural task of breathing entertains him. However, the following sentence warns of a presence of psychopathic behavior within the narrator's psyche; he found pleasure in sources of pain, a rather peculiar feeling to mention and could refer to a sadist nature of the narrator. A *flâneur* characteristic is present here; he feels curious and inquisitive towards everything around him. He is smoking a cigar, reading a newspaper and advertisements, looking at prostitutes, and observing the London streets from the large bow window of the coffeehouse.

This latter is one of the principal thoroughfares of the city, and had been very much crowded during the whole day. But, as the darkness came on, the throng momentarily increased; and, by the time the lamps were well lighted, two dense and continuous tides of population were rushing past the door. At this particular period of the evening I had never before been in a similar situation, and the tumultuous sea of human heads filled me, therefore, with a delicious novelty of emotion. I gave up, at length, all care of things within the hotel, and became absorbed in contemplation of the scene without. (Poe 414)

Henceforth the narrator gives attention to the outside world; he mentions how busy the road was throughout the day. By evening, it became even more populated, which made the narrator filled with —delicious emotions that indeed refer to positive sensations, and so he turns his focus entirely to the crowd ignoring the interior of the coffeehouse. The narrator's observations at first were general and theoretical about the passengers, in categories of masses that he starts to filter and detail them from one

another through their aesthetics and physiognomy, which could be defined as the distinction of one's character through their facial expressions.

1.2.2. The Psyche of the Narrator *Flâneur*

By far the greater number of those who went by had a satisfied, business-like demeanor, and seemed to be thinking only of making their way through the press. Their brows were knit, and their eyes rolled quickly; when pushed against by fellow-wayfarers they evinced no symptom of impatience, but adjusted their clothes and hurried on. Others, still a numerous class, were restless in their movements, had flushed faces, and talked and gesticulated to themselves, as if feeling in solitude on account of the very denseness of the company around. When impeded in their progress, these people suddenly ceased muttering; but redoubled their gesticulations, and awaited, with an absent and overdone smile upon the lips, the course of the persons impeding them” (Poe 415)

He begins with the largest group of passengers; though his description and observations target a distinct group of people, his interpretation of the individuals within the group is still general and stereotypical. Perhaps Poe is trying to deliver an ironic message here, and maybe the narrator's excitement clouds his interpretation as well, making it solely subjective and satirical. It is somewhat paradoxical for the narrator to classify these individuals by giving them all the same knit brows and eyes that roll quickly and not paying attention to anybody when pushed and carry on with their task.

Next, he describes a second class that often use their hands to converse, perhaps to nervousness since they double in speed with their hand gestures once interrupted to keep the person's attention but to notice all of their mouth movements at once is far-fetched and makes the narrator seem somewhat unreliable in his narration and

observation. Their reaction to being pushed or interrupted is to bow respectfully and continue to their destination, maybe it is a sign of discipline for this category of people, or it could be just a mere assumption by the narrator himself.

If jostled, they bowed profusely to the jostlers, and appeared overwhelmed with confusion. There was nothing very distinctive about these two large classes beyond what I have noted. Their habiliments belonged to that order which is pointedly termed the decent. They were undoubtedly noblemen, merchants, attorneys, tradesmen, stock-jobbers- the Eupatrids and the common-places of society- men of leisure and men actively engaged in affairs of their own- conducting business upon their own responsibility. They did not greatly excite my attention. (Poe 415)

The problem that the narrator seems to face is that he is describing many people with detailed adjectives, which seems unattainable and makes his observations invalidated and subjective opinions. Hence, it puts him at risk of practicing his *flânerie* the wrong way, but then again, Poe's intention of making a *flâneur* that focuses on the shallow, superficial aesthetic was deliberate from the start. The narrator claims that besides what he had mentioned, there was no unique characteristic to talk about concerning these two groups, as if they seem uninteresting or dull to him. The narrator moves to observe the group of clerks that he divides into two, the young and old ones; the young group seems to be wearing the latest fashion trends and perfected a classy gentleman's mannerisms with their looks and poses.

The tribe of clerks was an obvious one; and here I discerned two remarkable divisions. There were the junior clerks of flash houses- young gentlemen with tight coats, bright boots, well-oiled hair, and supercilious lips. Setting aside a certain dapperness of carriage, which may be termed deskism for want of a better word, the manner of these persons seemed to be an exact facsimile of what had been the perfection of bon ton about twelve or eighteen months before. They wore the castoff graces of the gentry;- and this, I believe, involves the best definition of the class. (Poe 415)

On the other hand, the old clerks are referred to as the —upperl ones, which could indicate a particular personal preference and bias by the narrator, a devoted group of reliable men. The narrator affirms his observation by describing the purpose of each fashion piece these old men wore as if he is familiar with it. Indeed, he mentions a particular and rather unique odd habit of these upper clerks, holding their pens to their right ears; they also had semi bald heads and wore watches of golden chains, a somewhat vintage choice for a watch yet at that time, very classy.

The division of the upper clerks of staunch firms, or of the “steady old fellows,” it was not possible to mistake. These were known by their coats and pantaloons of black or brown, made to sit comfortably, with white cravats and waistcoats, broad solid-looking shoes, and thick hose or gaiters. They had all slightly bald heads, from which the right ears, long used to pen-holding, had an odd habit of standing off on end. I observed that they always removed or settled their hats with both hands, and wore watches, with short gold chains of a substantial and ancient pattern. Theirs was the affectation of respectability- if indeed there be an affectation so honorable. (Poe 415)

He finishes his observation by describing their behavior as respectable and trustworthy; this category of people appears to have gained the respect and attention of the narrator. Next on his list of observations is the pick-pockets who have an adventurous look that of a thief; as the narrator quickly distinguished them, it seems that he has stumbled upon many of them around the city, he watched this group with wonder, he is bewildered by the fact that an authentic gentleman mistake such low lives as other gentlemen.

There were many individuals of dashing appearance, whom I easily understood as belonging to the race of swell pick-pockets, with which all great cities are infested. I watched these gentry with much inquisitiveness, and found it difficult to imagine how they should ever be mistaken for gentlemen by gentlemen themselves. Their voluminousness of wristband, with an air of excessive frankness, should betray them at once. (Poe 415)

Another gentry that also seemed easily recognizable by the narrator is that of the gamblers; he describes their different clothing styles belonging to most groups he mentions, indicating that a large number of people participate in this unethical and illegal activity. They looked a little ill health-wise, with their excessive drinking and pale skin.

The gamblers, of whom I descried not a few, were still more easily recognizable. They wore every variety of dress, from that of the desperate thimble-rig bully, with velvet waistcoat, fancy neckerchief, gilt chains, and filagree buttons, to that of the scrupulously inornate clergyman, than which nothing could be less liable to suspicion. Still all were distinguished by a certain sodden swarthy of

complexion, a filmy dimness of eye, and pallor and compression of lip. (Poe 416)

Along with this gentry, two groups keep them company, the dandies¹² that care more about their style and wealth than their surroundings and the military men who did not practice their job the right way because corruption pays well, and so does gambling.

There were two other traits, moreover, by which I could always detect them: a guarded lowness of tone in conversation, and a more than ordinary extension of the thumb in a direction at right angles with the fingers. Very often, in company with these sharpers, I observed an order of men somewhat different in habits, but still birds of a kindred feather. They may be defined as the gentlemen who live by their wits. They seem to prey upon the public in two battalions- that of the dandies and that of the military men. Of the first grade the leading features are long locks and smiles; of the second, frogged coats and frowns. (Poe 416)

The narrator makes it evident that there is a decline of social class in this passage, where he starts exploring the low-class citizens consisting of traveling salesman, beggars, and prostitutes showing how life abandoned them. Also, within the same group, there were ones that caused uneasiness to the eyes from their hideousness and to the ears from the loud annoying noise surrounding them, with death being their only one-way ticket from their suffering and misery.

Descending in the scale of what is termed gentility, I found darker and deeper themes for speculation. I saw Jew pedlars, with hawk eyes flashing from countenances whose every other feature wore only an expression of abject

¹²Cambridge dictionary defines the dandy as “a man, especially in the past, who dressed in expensive, fashionable clothes and was very interested in his own appearance”

humility; sturdy professional street beggars scowling upon mendicants of a better stamp, whom despair alone had driven forth into the night for charity; feeble and ghastly invalids, upon whom death had placed a sure hand, and who sidled and tottered through the mob, looking every one beseechingly in the face, as if in search of some chance consolation, some lost hope; modest young girls returning from long and late labor to a cheerless home, and shrinking more tearfully than indignantly from the glances of ruffians, whose direct contact, even, could not be avoided..(Poe 416)

By night time, the narrator's interest deepens along with the darkness of the night; he explains that nocturnal figures find their comfort at night, figures of disturbing physical forms and behavior. Nevertheless, they were a matter of interest for the narrator as he seems to love the night as much as these groups. The peculiar mental state he is in allows him to analyze every individual systematically. This speed of perception enabled him to see and read a long period of history in a matter of seconds as if he can tell the origins of each individual's history and how it contributes to each other in the city, so by reading the history of these individuals, he reads the history of the city.

1.2.3 The Old Man and the Narrator, the Double and the Subconscious

As I endeavored, during the brief minute of my original survey, to form some analysis of the meaning conveyed, there arose confusedly and paradoxically within my mind, the ideas of vast mental power, of caution, of penuriousness, of avarice, of coolness, of malice, of blood-thirstiness, of triumph, of merriment, of excessive terror, of intense- of supreme despair. I felt singularly aroused, startled, fascinated. "How wild a history," I said to myself, "is written within that bosom!" Then came a craving desire to keep the man in view- to know more of him. Hurriedly putting on all overcoat, and seizing my hat and cane, I made

my way into the street, and pushed through the crowd in the direction which I had seen him take; for he had already disappeared. With some little difficulty I at length came within sight of him, approached, and followed him closely, yet cautiously, so as not to attract his attention. (Poe 417)

As he continues inspecting the crowd with his monocle, his observation is interrupted by a sudden notice of an odd-looking man, an old man who had a distinctive look to him, which made the narrator highly suspicious of his identity and unable to neither understand nor analyze him properly. He appeared out of nowhere, and it is as if he disrupted the order of the narrator, the classicist order he built to suitably put every category neatly in its place, but this man seems unusual and does not belong to no category, at least not the ones that the narrator he knows of. So, he grabs his cane and hat, the typical clothing of the *flâneur* to note, and leaves the coffeehouse to chase this odd man with caution. When he approached the old man closely, he described his physical appearance as thin, wearing ragged clothes but of fine texture and carrying a dagger and a diamond on each side. The fine texture of the ragged clothes might suggest that this old man experienced a fall from grace. In other words, he was once a rich man who perhaps went bankrupt and is now living in the streets as a beggar or a homeless man. The dagger indicates a sense of criminality and danger from the man, and the diamond could signify his previous wealth or stolen jewelry.

I had now a good opportunity of examining his person. He was short in stature, very thin, and apparently very feeble. His clothes, generally, were filthy and ragged; but as he came, now and then, within the strong glare of a lamp, I perceived that his linen, although dirty, was of beautiful texture; and my vision deceived me, or, through a rent in a closely buttoned and evidently second handed roquelaire which enveloped him, I caught a glimpse both of a diamond

and of a dagger. These observations heightened my curiosity, and I resolved to follow the stranger whithersoever he should go. (Poe 417)

As a result, the narrator decides to follow this man wherever he goes and thus starts the notion of the stalker *flâneur*. By definition, a stalker is a person that spies on another individual without their consent, it is illegal and scary behavior, but in the narrator's case, he believes that he plays the detective in this case and not the stalker.¹³ Poe seems to make the reader think that the *flâneur* uses his privilege of *flânerie* as an excuse for this behavior. However, the narrator stalks this old man around the city to discover more information about him. It starts to rain, and this makes people use their umbrellas for cover. However, the narrator does not seem to be bothered by the rain.

For my part I did not much regard the rain- the lurking of an old fever in my system rendering the moisture somewhat too dangerously pleasant. Tying a handkerchief about my mouth, I kept on. For half an hour the old man held his way with difficulty along the great thorough fare; and I here walked close at his elbow through fear of losing sight of him. Never once turning his head to look back, he did not observe me. By and by he passed into a cross street, which, although densely filled with people, was not quite so much thronged as the main one he had quitted. Here a change in his demeanor became evident. He walked more slowly and with less object than before- more hesitatingly. He crossed and re-crossed the way repeatedly, without apparent aim; and the press was still so thick, that, at every such movement, I was obliged to follow him closely" (Poe 418)

¹³ Refer to Tom McDonough "The Crimes of the *Flâneur*" for further readings about the assumption of the criminal behavior of the *flâneur*.

The pleasure he feels from it as if the pain he felt from his sickness positively served him. Again his sadistic side appears to the reader. He notices a change of speed in the old man's walk, he starts to walk more slowly with caution, but one thing that seemed repetitive to the narrator is that this old man seems disoriented. He walks back and forth aimlessly, which seems reminiscent of a certain urban figure. Perhaps this old man is *flâneur* as well, but the narrator is neither interested, nor does he notice that about him; he feels as if this old man is a personal threat to his territory of *flânerie*. He believes that he will fail both as a narrator and *flâneur* if he cannot classify this man; this invokes the idea of fear in the narrator. It does not seem obvious whether he is scared of this individual or plain curious, but he does feel threatened by him and his strange behavior. He makes a familiar observation or rather a description of this man's eyes that rolled quickly with his knit brows, the same one he made about the first class of citizens.

During the hour and a half, or thereabouts, which we passed in this place, it required much caution on my part to keep him within reach without attracting his observation. Luckily I wore a pair of caoutchouc overshoes, and could move about in perfect silence. At no moment did he see that I watched him. He entered shop after shop, priced nothing, spoke no word, and looked at all objects with a wild and vacant stare. I was now utterly amazed at his behavior, and firmly resolved that we should not part until I had satisfied myself in some measure respecting him. (Poe 418)

The narrator's persistent chase changes by a sudden change of speed from the old man where he rushes to a bazaar to observe its shops; he entered every one of them there and seemed to be rather knowledgeable and familiar with the place. However, the odd behavior that he displayed for the narrator this time appeared to gain him respect

rather than suspicion from him, as he inspected every shop within the bazaar he did not buy, price, or spoke a single word to anyone, and looked at every object with a long and wild stare. The bazaar closes, and once again, the narrator is almost alone in the street with the old man. It is late at night, and the old man rushes back to the main street of the D__ hotel as if he is looking for something. Oddly enough, the narrator notices the old man turning sad.

He walked moodily some paces up the once populous avenue, then, with a heavy sigh, turned in the direction of the river, and, plunging through a great variety of devious ways, came out, at length, in view of one of the principal theatres. It was about being closed, and the audience were thronging from the doors. I saw the old man gasp as if for breath while he threw himself amid the crowd; but I thought that the intense agony of his countenance had, in some measure, abated. His head again fell upon his breast; he appeared as I had seen him at first. I observed that he now took the course in which had gone the greater number of the audience but, upon the whole, I was at a loss to comprehend the waywardness of his actions (Poe 419)

However, as the crowd exits a nearby theatre, the old man joins them to regain his energy. The narrator describes the impact of the crowd over this man; it is as if the crowd is his reason for living. Time passes, and the place is quiet again as the crowd that exited the theatre retreated to their homes. Yet again, the old man seems sorrowful seen, and the narrator realizes how terrible loneliness is for this man. He hates being alone and thrives where there are people. So he walks towards the nastiest and dimly lit roads in London to find his ambience; the narrator writes of a clear disgust and *mal à l'aise* he feels from the setting. Nevertheless, he is more interested in the impact of the public on the man's mood rather than the place itself. Once again, the man is filled with

life as he hears a noise coming from a bar. The narrator follows him there with an undying lust for a wander, to quickly note, it would seem that the narrator is observing the actions of a *flâneur* through *flânerie*.¹⁴

And here, long, amid the momentarily increasing confusion, did I persist in my pursuit of the stranger. But, as usual, he walked to and fro, and during the day did not pass from out the turmoil of that street. And, as the shades of the second evening came on, I grew wearied unto death, and, stopping fully in front of the wanderer, gazed at him steadily in the face. He noticed me not, but resumed his solemn walk, while I, ceasing to follow, remained absorbed in contemplation. (Poe 420)

Interestingly, this behavior that can seem rather confusing at first could indicate a deeper relationship between the narrator and the old man. Not only are they both *flâneurs*, but the old man could be the reincarnation of the narrator's subconscious or his future self.

This old man, I said at length, is the type and the genius of deep crime. He refuses to be alone. He is The Man of the Crowd. It will be in vain to follow; for I shall learn no more of him, nor of his deeds. The worst heart of the world is a grosser book than the 'Hortulus Animæ,' and perhaps it is but one of the great mercies of God that er last sich nicht lesen.(Poe 420)

Eventually, the narrator abandons this chase that seems to repeat itself through the old man's actions. As long as there is a crowd, he rushes into them and stays there doing nothing. The narrator nicknames this unnamed stranger as The Man of the Crowd

¹⁴This could answer the question about the perception of the crowd towards the *flâneur*, as the narrator being part of the crowd while observing the old man.

and concludes that he can be a criminal as well with his peculiar behavior of hiding within the crowd so professionally, Poe ends his story with the same German idiom of a book that does not allow anyone to read it, the answer is the old man.

2. Similarities between “The Man of the Crowd” and *The Woman in the Window*

The first part of the third chapter is concerned with detailing and justifying the similarities observed in the works analyzed in the second chapter. The comparative study will be composed of three sections. The function of each unit is to display the significant common points deduced from the analyses.

The section of Architectural Sociology’s focus is the built environment mentioned in the works, how it relates to each other, and its role in determining the quality of *flânerie* practiced by both protagonists. The section of Physiognomy’s aim is the similarity between the *flâneur*’s observation concerning the form of the landscape and the crowd. The Humanism section aims to compare the self-concept, self-actualization, and mental conditions that result from the narrators’ interaction with the public.

The detailed similarities serve as an extension to the research’s study of dismantling the evolution of the modern *flâneur* in the 19th and 21st centuries. The similarities will be done in chronological order in parallel to the events of the works to provide an inclusive observation of the narration done by the protagonists. Common characteristics between the narrators in “The Man of the Crowd” and *The Woman in the Window* will further analyze the *flâneurs*’ personalities from a sociological and psychological perspective. Consequently, the additional analysis provided by the comparative study will conclude the impact of outside factors on both narrators.

2.1. Architectural Sociology: the D_Coffeehouse and Anna Fox's House

Architectural sociology is the study of the built environment, otherwise known as the human-made environment consisting of architectural designs influenced by society.¹⁵ The analysis here compares “The Man of the Crowd” setting and the one of *The Woman in the Window*. Poe's set of the story shapes itself by the blue feel of London's climate and the overpopulation it was facing during that period. The built environment mentioned in the story is that of a hotel named the D_hotel that houses a Coffeehouse. The setting is created explicitly for *flânerie* as it is the case with Walter Benjamin's analysis of the Parisian arcades; However, architects seem to ignore the sociological factor in the design process. He concluded that Paris's architecture is perfect for the practice of *flânerie*. Walter Benjamin took a significant interest in Charles Baudelaire's *flâneur* figure to use him as a sociological detective.

Meanwhile, Edgar Allan Poe used the notion of *flânerie* and *flâneur* outside of its usual setting and made an English *flâneur* from Baudelaire's French one. The D_hotel's name is enigmatic, and so is its surroundings; when one tries to imagine the setting, it would seem like a typical 19th century London hotel housing the narrator of the story. What attracted the narrator to this hotel is unknown. Still, it hints at a personal experience. Perhaps the hotel is one of the main settings that provide a comfortable *flânerie* for the narrator. It could also be the D_hotel being a central touristic and meeting spot for the locals. The social gatherings that could take place in this hotel provide an immense subject of observation for the *flâneur*. One argument that can back this claim is London's cultural diversity during the 19th century with the vast migration from its colonies and neighboring countries.

¹⁵For further information about Architectural sociology refer to this website:
<https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/footnotes/dec02/fn17.html>

2.1.1 The Complementary Relation between the Setting and *Flânerie*

The D_hotel is home to the unnamed narrator's *flânerie*. However, he is not the owner of this hotel; he considers it an intimate place that could protect him from being exposed to the rainy weather and other environmental threats, a social space where he can perform his *flânerie* through a window. Similarly, Anna Fox, the narrator from *The Woman in the Window*, is a *flâneuse* that observes her neighbors from her windows. The Harlem house in New York City is home to child psychologist Anna Fox who has agoraphobia caused by the trauma from the passing of her husband and daughter. The house's architecture serves as a headquarters of *flânerie* for Anna Fox; with its windows facing her neighbors', she can investigate their private lives from the comfort of her home using a Nikon camera and the power of the internet. In the movie adaptation, Anna Fox's house looks rather old in design compared to the 21st architecture of the big apple. The setting provides safety for Anna Fox is terrified of leaving home due to her phobia.

The sociology of architecture and its influence on the setting of the two works contributes positively to the practice of *flânerie* as it houses both narrators in a safe space while providing a comfortable opening to the outside world so they can perform their *flânerie* with ease. The following section discusses the common points shared by both narrators when describing their subjects of *flânerie*, whether it be the crowd or the landscape. Besides the practice of *flânerie*, the use of Physiognomy as a secondary practice details the description given by the narrators for Anna Fox's neighbors, pedestrians, and the unnamed narrator's crowd, particularly the individual he refers to as The Man of the Crowd.

2.2. The Practice of Physiognomy by Anna Fox and Poe's Narrator

Oxford's English dictionary defines Physiognomy as: "the supposed art of judging character from facial characteristics." Or generally speaking, it refers to the form of an object, an individual, or a landscape. The practice of this pseudoscience is evident in the observations of Poe's narrator and Anna Fox. Their principal character analysis falls on the physical appearance and often focuses on the facial features of the crowd and the secondary characters in the story. Poe's narrator describes his subjects on a classicist scale based on their fashion and their professional occupation. With a "calm and inquisitive interest in everything," he begins his analysis of the crowd in a generalizing and stereotypical manner as he claims, then he "descended to details, and regarded with minute interest the innumerable varieties of figure, dress, air, gait, visage, and expression of countenance."

2.2.1. Physiognomy in "The Man of the Crowd"

The first on his list was a group that had an attitude for business and serious looks. "Their brows were knit, and their eyes rolled quickly; when pushed against by fellow wayfarers, they evinced no symptom of impatience but adjusted their clothes and hurried on." The facial features, mainly the brows and eyes, were subject of observation for the *flâneur* here; he tries to deliver the serious face that these individuals have and the impatience displayed by them rolling their eyes quickly. The second group "had flushed faces, and talked and gesticulated to themselves" is described as animated ones who use their hands often in a display of stress and excitement with redness in their face indicating a rush of blood from talking fast and competitively; these two groups "They were undoubtedly noblemen, merchants, attorneys, tradesmen, stock-jobbers –the Eupatrids and the common-places of society –men of leisure and men actively engaged

in affairs of their own –conducting business upon their own responsibility. They did not greatly excite my attention.” And their “ Their habiliments belonged to that order which is pointedly termed the decent” thus he has categorized several people based on their physical form and facial expressions and features through the practice of physiognomy.¹⁶

The young and old clerks were his second target. He describes the young ones as the fashionable, classy gentleman who perfected the look of high society and who were part of the gentry. In contrast, the old ones were not as trendy in their fashion choices but won on the respectable and honorable department for the narrator; they were his favorite among the two. The stylish look of the pick-pockets did not fool the narrator in spotting them, and he also mentions their habit of being frank all the time as a sign of sneaky behavior. The gamblers, dandies, and military men are his fourth subject of observation; he describes them as drunken money-hungry men with pale skin that makes them look ill due to their addictive gambling behavior. The dandies and military men were their partners in gambling and looked better in appearance than them probably; they are the winners of each match, and this could be a display of the law of the jungle.

The sixth group comes to his sight when “I saw Jew pedlars, with hawk eyes flashing from countenances whose every other feature wore only an expression of abject humility” the Jew peddlers with sharp eyes but with a sense of low importance ironically. He has indicated that he has descended into a lower social class with poor appearance and questionable behavior. The concept of physiognomy plays a role in describing the facial features of the peddlers and their mental state and view of

¹⁶Poe’s writing usually includes horror in it, and so his characters often look disturbing. This might justify why the narrator views most of the crowd similar to one another.

themselves. Along with this group, he includes the beggars, the feeble miserable-looking kind of people who await their death in the streets. His eighth group consists of women from the most beautiful youths to the ugliest older women, drunkards, and other low lives belonging to this group.

Last but certainly not least is when the narrator spots the old man; this odd-looking man confuses and challenges the narrator's complete view of the crowd. As described by the narrator and while using the pseudoscience of physiognomy: "He was short in stature, very thin, and very feeble. His clothes, generally, were filthy and ragged;" the kind of description one gives to a low life, yet he does not make a final decision for the appearance of this old man, he believes that this old man was once a nobleman as his ragged clothes still preserve that good quality of cloth and he has a diamond and a dagger in possession, which further confuses the narrator about this man. The rest of the story is about the stalker behavior the narrator displays against the old man.

2.2.2. Physiognomy in *The Woman in the Window*

Meanwhile, Anna Fox's practice of *flânerie* and physiognomy goes hand in hand with that of Poe's narrator, as she follows the same analytical approach of facial features and physical appearance. Anna Fox's new neighbors are her main interest of *flânerie* in the novel; the family consists of a father, a mother, and a teenage son, the father large in his physical form and the mother, no sight of her yet. This family interest expands upon all the neighbors of Anna Fox, who she can spy on from her windows and the internet. Interestingly, Anna Fox's child therapist skills are awakened again by the sight of Ethan, the teenage boy crying in front of her. She realizes that from the screaming and spying she does on his family home, his father often has anger issues.

As the story moves on, Anna Fox meets a female whom she thinks is Ethan's mother; besides her nosy behavior, which seems ironic to notice by Anna Fox and her beautiful form, Anna Fox believes that Jane Russell is a victim of the husband's abuse as well. She befriends her, and this makes her interest in the family grow exponentially. The practice of *flânerie* in Anna Fox's case is similar to Poe's narrator, where both share an interest in a particular part of the crowd; in the narrator's case, it is the old man, and for Anna Fox, it is the Russell family. Perhaps this peculiar and privileged interest that these two possess on the *flâneur* exceeds *flânerie* and turns into a personal matter, all of which the upcoming section discusses. Likewise, the practice of physiognomy by both narrators is evident in their character analysis within the story and the novel. Another common point that serves as the climax of both works is the narrator's conclusion over who the old man might be, which he claims to be a criminal for his excellent hiding skills in the crowd and sneaky behavior he displays, while Anna Fox witnesses a crime in the Russell family home to which she believes that Ethan's mom is the victim of.

The common point deduced from the climax is the similar attribute the narrators give to one of their notable characters, which is murder. The narrator accuses the old man of being a murderer, and Anna fox claim that Jane Russell is dead. It seems rather complementary to one another than it being similar with one another; nevertheless, they cross paths of criminology in a victim and murderer way. Later on, Anna Fox's assumption is correct as a plot twist within the novel takes effect, Ethan murders his biological mother, and he uses his adoptive mother as a cover-up for the murder. Here, Anna Fox's child therapist skills are once again awakened but not for the sake of helping Ethan but to properly diagnose him as a psychopathic murderer who wants his next victim to be Anna Fox. The practice of *flânerie* and physiognomy is almost similar. However, *flânerie* takes an intellectual and upper-class individual to perform it;

physiognomy seems not to be as exclusive as *flânerie*. Because it confuses facts with opinions and reality with fiction, one might resemble a victim of abusive behavior. Still, he is the abuser as it is with Ethan in *The Woman in the Window*. Machines such as facial recognition in smartphones use physiognomy, which serves a purpose for better security of the phone; ironically, Anna Fox uses it to stalk on people. The *flâneur* is a criminal to a certain degree, not as dangerous as a murderer but rather a skilled stalker who displays obsessive behavior towards his or her subjects, which was the case for both *flâneurs*. Therefore, further inspection of the *flâneur*'s behavior and the shared interests by both narrators, a humanistic approach to their personality will take place in the next part to understand the effects of the crowd on the narrators and the narrators' impact on the public.

2.3. Humanistic Approach to both Narrators' Personality

According to Dr. Saul McLeod (2015), "Humanistic psychology is a perspective that emphasizes looking at the whole person, and the uniqueness of each individual. Humanistic psychology begins with the existential assumptions that people have free will and are motivated to achieve their potential and self-actualize." It is a psychological notion that focuses on observing the individual and encouraging them to improve their self-image through self-actualization. By doing so, the individual can reach their ideal self under certain conditions, such as unconditional positive regard. Humanist Carl Rogers (1951) explains self-actualization as a progressive state of self-evaluation and reflection with the ultimate purpose of developing self-worth and image by the individual.

2.3.1. The Outcome of Introspection on the Narrators

The psychological experimentation called introspection developed by Dr. Wilhelm Wundt explored this self-reflective behavior commonly linked with meditation. Anna Fox and the narrator indulge in the process of contemplation, intending to find their purpose in life and attempt to understand the perception of others towards them. For instance, the narrator is confused and dumbfounded by the old man as he cannot categorize him as he did with other groups of people. One noticeable notion here is irony; Poe implicitly declares that one can identify and analyze anybody around them efficiently and with confidence. Yet, when faced with an actual life image of themselves, they cannot do so; it is a mirror-like concept where the reflection behaves the exact way as the object it is reflecting. Thus, it is impossible to spot any difference. The previous chapter explained the idea of the double and how the old man signified a reflection of the narrator's future self.

Simultaneously, Dr. Anna Fox's observation of her neighbors and particularly of Ethan makes her question the inappropriate behavior of spying on her neighbors. However, she justifies it by stating that everybody is curious about other people's lives. At the same time, she is envious of other 'normal' women she observes, and she even wishes to be in a book club with her neighbors to be accepted and live everyday life. Dr. Fox is trying to actualize to reach her alleged ideal self. Both narrators are unsatisfied with something. Poe's narrator is frustrated with his inability to analyze the old man. Anna Fox is disappointed in her incapability of overcoming the death of her family and the struggle with her mental condition. Dr. Michael Argyle states that four factors determine our self-esteem: the reaction of others, comparison with others, social roles, and identification.

2.3.2. The Impact of Alienation on the Narrators

People's reactions display their behavior towards others, whether they like them, admire them, or consider them role models. This positive response will help build better self-worth. Continuous doses of these positive affirmations will contribute to maintaining this positive self-image that directs them into achieving their ideal selves. However, if people neglect, verbally abuse and discourage others, the consequential result would be a decrease in self-worth and an increase in mental conditions that feed on this negative outcome; an example of this is alienation. Alienation is a condition where an individual isolates oneself from the environment, people, and even from their own emotions. One of the main symptoms that cause alienation is PTSD; this mental disorder causes the individual to flee from society and mainly from its cause, which eventually leads him or her to become estranged from their environment with the fear of interaction and creating new relationships and friendships.

To the narrator, it seems that the old man lives solely to observe and hide within the crowd. Yet, this ironic self-image that the narrator is criticizing is the same one he has as he constantly describes and condescendingly categorizes the people around him. Moreover, Anna Fox buries her emotional burdens and suffering from alcohol abuse and coping mechanism of imagining herself talking to her dead family; she sadly even contemplates suicide as a last resort from her living condition. Alcohol abuse and suicidal thoughts are complications of alienation when left untreated. Likewise, the outcome of the narrator separating himself from his future image impacts his physical and mental condition, as he appears rather feeble and disoriented, unlike his young self being strong and well-focused on his subjects of *flânerie*. Ironically, he preferred the old clerks over the young ones even if they had an unhealthy physical appearance and mental sharpness.

Conclusion

The “Man of the Crowd” is a title that symbolizes the modern *flâneur*’s relation with the crowd. The latter clarifies the mysteriousness surrounding the old man and the anonymous narrator. Through this story, Poe sends a message of self loss and confusion when an individual confronts himself and fails to understand it. Hence, the narrator surrenders but does not admit defeat as a symbol of running away from one’s flaws and fears instead of facing them. Eventually, this can worsen the feeling of alienation experienced by the anonymous and Dr Fox alike; where both of them resolve to alternative means such as alcohol abuse and indoor *flânerie* to escape the crowd and its psychological impact on both *flâneurs*. The third chapter will analyze postmodern *flâneuse* Anna Fox while stating the differences between the two *flâneurs*.

Chapter Three: The Postmodern *Flâneuse* in Finn's *The Woman in the Window*

Introduction

1. The Postmodern *Flâneuse* in *The Woman in the Window*
 - 1.1. *Flânerie* in *The Woman in the Window*
 - 1.2. The *Flâneuse*'s Environment in *The Woman in the Window*
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2. The Differences in "The Man of the Crowd" Vs. *The Woman in the Window*
 - 2.1. New York City Vs. London
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Conclusion

Introduction

The concept of the *flâneur* is complex, however the data provided on the topic, which serves as the theoretical framework consists of tools that can dismantle the evolutionary complexity of the figure of the *flâneur*. This chapter consists of the application of the theoretical framework on the literary works in the process of analysis. The analysis in this chapter is divided into two parts; one focuses on critically analyzing the postmodern *flâneuse* in Finn's novel *The Woman in the Window*. The second part states and discusses the differences between "The Man of the Crowd" and *The Woman in the Window* in relation to *flânerie*. These two parts are considered as the two main sections for this chapter. Besides that, this chapter analyzes and dissects the figure of the female *flâneur* in this novel to firstly understand this concept in a postmodern context, and secondly to have 21st century postmodern *flâneuse* compared and contrasted with 19th century modern *flâneur* in order to deduce the significant similarities and differences between the two *flâneurs*.

1. The Postmodern *Flâneuse* in *The Woman in the Window*

The Woman in the Window is a contemporary novel written by A.J. Finn. The literary elements of this novel especially the protagonist display aspects and characteristics of *flânerie*. Considering that the story is set in 21st century New York City which is equivalent to Paris or London, significant similarities and differences can be deduced by comparison to the traditional image of the modern *flâneur* portrayed in "The Man of the Crowd". This section will analyze selected passages from the novel following the theoretical framework in order to extract relevant data to postmodern *flânerie*. The analysis will lay the path for spotting similarities and differences between the modern *flâneur* in Poe's short story "The Man of the Crowd" and the postmodern

flâneuse in Finn's novel *The Woman in the Window*, which will be dealt with in the third chapter.

To give a brief summary of the major points in this novel, *The Woman in the Window* tells the story of a post traumatized female psychologist named Anna Fox, whose trauma has forced her to develop a mental illness known as agoraphobia¹⁷. This illness restricts her to remain indoors as much as possible. Consequently she develops an eager interest for idly watching her neighbors from her window using her Nikon camera and also investigating them online to check for any updates in their personal or professional lives. Throughout the novel the reader simultaneously learns about what Agoraphobia is and how the protagonist deals with it, besides to the reason why she reached the state of mind she is in. In addition to that, through the first point of view of the protagonist, the reader investigates a crime that Anna Fox is the only witness to with just her words to back her testimony. However knowing that she is mentally unstable and abuses alcohol the reader may doubt her narration.

1.1. *Flânerie* in *The Woman in the Window*

As defined earlier in the theory for the concept of the modern *flâneur*, this figure is usually known by specific characteristics that shape it. The figure of the *flâneur* knows every secret about the people within view. Its obsession with investigating people usually leads the figure to learn dark secrets, however this figure becomes bored quickly, thus it moves to investigating the next person. Aspects such as, strolling the

¹⁷ “Agoraphobia: in translation the fear of the marketplace, in practice the term for a range of anxiety disorders. First documented in the late 1800s, then “codified as an independent diagnostic entity” a century later, though largely comorbid with panic disorder. You can read all about it, if you like, in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition. DSM-5” (Finn 26)

city streets while idly gazing at people and studying every eye-catching detail about them and more defining elements of *flânerie* are utterly portrayed in Finn's novel: *The Woman in the Window*. In this novel the writer uses first point of view narration through the perspective of the protagonist Anna Fox, who in this literary work is an archetype of the modern *flâneur*; to access her feelings and thoughts easily. Aspects of *flânerie* in this novel are accentuated through the character of the protagonist and her narration that includes precise characters' descriptions, brain mapping and watching people; primarily her neighbors.

Anna shows interest in her new neighbors and she starts investigating them exactly as she had investigated her other neighbors who moved in before:

"Hey there, slugger," he greets me. "New neighbors?"

"Yes."

"Didn't you just get new neighbors?"

"That was two months ago. Two-twelve. The Millers." I pivot, descending the stairs.

"Where are these other people?"

"Two-oh-seven. Across the park."

"Neighborhood's changing." (Finn 9)

Through this dialogue the narrator tricks the reader into believing that she is having a conversation with her husband about her new neighbors, however that is not the case since her husband is dead. In fact, she is having this conversation with herself as a coping mechanism she has developed after the passing of her husband and daughter. Two important points can be deduced from this passage are: *flânerie* is exclusively limited to Anna's neighbors because they are the only objects within her field of vision since she is an indoor *flâneuse*. The other point is time awareness when Anna's imaginary husband asks her "Didn't you just get new neighbors?" and she replies "That

was two months ago.” (Finn 9) This hints at how as a *flâneuse* she is well aware of time and how its passing. These two points are relevant throughout the entire novel.

The Woman in the Window knows her house well enough to know which windows give her the best view to spy and watch her neighbors “I drift upstairs, to the second floor, where the view’s better. “Oh: There are pumpkins everywhere. All the neighbors have one. The Grays have four.” (Finn 8) As a *flâneuse* Anna is precise and incorporates specific measurements and number into her descriptions and observations. In this quote she mentions pumpkins and how all the neighbors have one except for the Grays who own four. The fact that all neighbors have pumpkins is a cultural observation that refers to the celebration of Halloween. Mentioning that the Grays own four pumpkins may mean that they are either wealthy and capable of affording more than just one pumpkin or can simply reflect that the Grays appreciate this yearly celebration thus they may exaggerate in showing that.

Pressing my forehead against the cold glass of the window. Sodium lamps have yet to sprout in this province of Harlem, and the street is lit only by a lemon-wedge of moon, but still I can make them out in silhouette: a man, a woman, and a tall boy, ferrying boxes to the front door. (Finn 10)

This passage gives more precision to the setting of the story, as the narrator states province of Harlem as the location of her house from which she performs indoor *flânerie*. Besides that the passages indicates how nocturnal Anna Fox is. In spite of the darkness and only the natural light of the moon, she still manages to see the shadows of the new family who has moved across from her house. This can be one of the defining skills of the *flâneur* as this skill saves the life of Anna Fox by the end of the novel. “even in the dark I can see that the roof is a wilderness” (Finn 414)

A rangy teenager bursts from the front door of number 207, like a horse from the starting gate, and gallops east down the street, past my front windows. I don't get a good look ... but I catch a bolt of blond, a backpack slung from one shoulder. Then he's gone.

I slug a glass, float upstairs, settle myself at my desk. Reach for my Nikon.

In the kitchen of 207 I can see the father, big and broad, backlit by a television screen. I press the camera to my eye and zoom in: the Today show. I might head down and switch on my own TV, I muse, watch alongside my neighbor. Or I might view it right here, on his set, through the lens. (Finn 16)

The passage above illustrates how the protagonist performs *flânerie* by watching her neighbors and trying to gather any information about their mundane life. The passage begins with the sight of a teenager leaving his house; the writer uses a simile to refer to how fast the teenager is leaving his house like a horse starting a race. Considering the narrator's description, word choice and use of simile it may seem that the narrator views her new neighbors as a species of animals that she is watching a documentary about to learn more about them. The second half of the passage shows how she quietly observes her neighbors in their house from her window. For watching people Anna Fox uses a Nikon camera which according to Aimée Boutin is more of a postmodern form of *flânerie* (Boutin 88-90).

Anna Fox as an archetype of the modern *flâneur*, she is naturally curious and inquisitive. "The husband has been directing traffic. I haven't seen the wife since the night they moved in. I wonder what she looks like." (Finn 16-17) this quote from the novel demonstrates how much attention she is giving her new neighbors and how

interested she to observe and probably study the wife of her new neighbors whom she has not yet seen.

I've just seized a fistful of paper towels when the bell rings again. Who the hell?

I think—or have I said it? David left an hour ago for a job in East Harlem—I watched him from the study—and I'm not expecting any deliveries. (Finn 37)

Anna Fox is the type of person who knows exactly when and who will show up at her door steps, so when she hears the doorbell not knowing who it might be may raise some panic within her due to her agoraphobic tendencies. In fact those she knows exactly the whereabouts of the people who usually visit her like her tenant David whom she watched from her study leave for a job in East Harlem.

After Anna answers to the door and lets in the teenager she has been watching since he and his family have moved in, she has a conversation with him:

“How are you liking your new house?” I ask.

He pauses, kneading the cat's skull with his knuckles. “I miss the old one,” he says after a moment.

“I bet. Where did you live before?” I already know the answer, of course.

“Boston.”

“What brought you to New York?” I know this one, too.

“My dad got a new job.” A transfer, technically, but I'm hardly going to argue. (Finn 40)

This dialogue shows how much information Anna Fox knows about her neighbors but does not share the fact that she knows, instead she asks questions which she knows the answer to in order to seem like a normal curious person, not a freaky person. Besides that just like the typical *flâneur* Anna does not intervene in any of the affairs of the people she watches. As demonstrated in this passage she prefers to make

probabilities or watch the spectacle instead of participating in it. Not until she is forced to.

Considering the fact that Anna Fox is agoraphobic, one may wonder how she manages to live her life. That is what “Agora” is for. It is support group website for agoraphobic patients that provides tips and assistance for a content agoraphobic lifestyle:

“A newcomer has emailed me. I direct her to the survival manual I whipped up back in the spring: “So You Have a Panic Disorder”—I think it sounds agreeably jaunty.

Q: How do I eat?

A: Blue Apron, Plated, HelloFresh . . . there are lots of delivery options available in the US! Those abroad can likely find similar services.

Q: How do I get my medication?

A: All the major pharmacies in the US now come straight to your door. Have your doctor speak to your local pharmacy if there’s a problem.

Q: How do I keep the house clean?

A: Clean it! Hire a cleaning agency or do it yourself.

(I do neither. My place could use a wipe-down.)

Q: What about trash disposal?

A: Your cleaner can take care of this, or you can arrange for a friend to help.

Q: How do I keep from getting bored?

A: Now, that’s the tough question . . .

Et cetera. I’m pleased with the document, on the whole. Would have loved to have had it myself. (Finn 27-28)

This “survival manual” written by Anna Fox answers many questions concerning living an agoraphobic lifestyle, from food/ medication delivery services, housekeeping to trash disposal. For her these are the basic standards that need consistent caring. As for the last point about entertainment she writes “that’s a tough question . . .” as an answer

even though she has an answer for it, but she is probably ashamed to share it publicly. For her watching and online stalking her neighbors in other words *flânerie* is a source of pleasure and entertainment. However, knowing that she is invading other people's privacy is something she is ashamed of.

My laptop sits in a pane of sunlight on the kitchen table. I pry it open, visit the Agora, walk two new recruits through the drill, weigh in on yet another drug debate. (None of them are to be taken with alcohol, I preach.) Once—only once—I cast a quick look at the Russell house. There's Ethan, tapping away at his desk—playing a game, I suppose, or writing a paper; not surfing the Internet, anyway—and in the parlor Alistair sits with a tablet propped in his lap. A twenty-first-century family. (Finn 129)

This passage offers an idea about the typical routine of Anna Fox as an indoor *flâneuse*. She uses her computer to connect with people suffering from the same illness as her so that she would not feel entirely lonely, and also to offer medical assistance/opinion for people who need it. Besides to online *flânerie* she also watches her new neighbor's house from her window at least once a day. She observes the Russell family as “a twenty-first-century family” probably because they are detached from one another, but virtually connected by using modern technology.

In her day to day online communication, Anna Fox developed a skill for analyzing people's messages in order to understand their character or tell what mode they are in:

I note the tone, brisk and insistently upbeat; I clock the language, informal but confident, and the precise punctuation, the infrequent errors. She's intelligent, outgoing. Thorough, too—she spells out numbers, and writes by the way instead

of btw, although maybe that's a function of age. Whatever the case, she's an adult I can work with. (Finn 65)

This passage is an analysis of few messages that Anna received online, she observes the criteria for her analysis and reaches her conclusion that the person she is communicating with is a mature adult person. However, to which extent her analysis is correct considering that the internet is full of fake people pretending to be people they are not. In this case she thinks she is talking to an old woman "GrannyLizzie" who in fact is a fifteen year old teenager.

1.2. The *Flâneuse*'s Environment in *The Woman in the Window*

An important characteristic of *flânerie* is precise description that contributes to the uniqueness of the *flâneur*'s narration. As a *flâneuse* Anna Fox offers precise and detailed descriptions and analysis of houses from the inside and outside, besides to people's appearances. These descriptions are what Anna lives in a four storey "19TH-CENTURY HARLEM" house:

Basement: Or maisonette, according to our broker. Sub-street, floor-through, with its own door; kitchen, bath, bedroom, tiny office. Ed's workspace for eight years—he'd drape the table in blueprints, tack contractor briefs to the wall. Currently tenanted. (Finn 12)

The underground floor is what she refers to as basement simply because it is the underground floor or maisonette because to her it is like a smaller version of a house with its own door. This floor used to be occupied as her husband's workshop, but for the moment she is renting to a man called David.

Garden: Patio, really, accessible via the first floor. A sprawl of limestone tile; a pair of disused Adirondack chairs; a young ash tree slouched in the far corner, gangling and lonely, like a friendless teenager. Every so often I long to hug it. (Finn 12)

The second element about the house is the garden also known as the patio. She describes through where it can be accessible then states some of the elements that her garden/patio consists of. In her description she uses a simile to compare between the lonely ash tree and the friendless teenager. This simile may reflect on her eight year old dead daughter who was lonely and did not have any friends. This is probably why she takes a liking in the new teenager who is the antagonist in the novel.

First floor: Ground floor, if you're British, or premier étage, if you're French. (I am neither, but I spent time in Oxford during my residency—in a maisonette, as it happens—and this past July began studying français online.) Kitchen—open-plan and “gracious” (broker again), with a rear door leading to the garden and a side door to the park. White-birch floors, now blotched with puddles of merlot. In the hall a powder room—the red room, I call it. “Tomato Red,” per the Benjamin Moore catalogue. Living room, equipped with sofa and coffee table and paved in Persian rug, still plush underfoot.” (Finn 12-13)

She refers to the first floor as the ground floor or premier étage which is typically European, and considering that she lived in Oxford before and she has been learning French reflects on her intellectual side and interest in general culture. She briefly describes the types of doors and where each one of them lead to because to a *flâneuse* nothing is the same, there is always a slight detectable difference. The white-birch floors blotched with puddles of merlot alludes to her addiction of alcohol. As for the

rest of the passage she mentions what the rest of the floor consists of to give a clear image of her house.

Second floor: The library (Ed's; shelves full, cracked spines and foxed dust "jackets, all packed tight as teeth) and the study (mine; spare, airy, a desktop Mac poised on an IKEA table—my online-chess battlefield). Second half bath, this one blued in "Heavenly Rapture," which is ambitious language for a room with a toilet. And a deep utility closet I might one day convert into a darkroom, if I ever migrate from digital to film. I think I'm losing interest. (Finn 13)

In the second floor Anna continues on mentioning elements to put the puzzle pieces together to create the final image of her four storey house. She mentions the library and to whom it belongs and mentions the types of books in it and refers to how well-organized and numerous they are by comparing them to teeth in a simile. In addition to the library she mentions the study and that it belongs to her and consists of desktop computer (Mac is the brand) on a table bought from IKEA. Referencing elements is a sign of *flânerie* as these brands are commercial and cultural because sometimes they only last for a short period of time. She mentions the second floor bath and how different it is from the "red room" in the first floor.

Third floor: The master (mistress?) bedroom and bath. I've spent much of my time in bed this year; it's one of those sleep-system mattresses, dually adjustable. Ed programmed his side for an almost downy softness; mine is set to firm ... Also the guest bedroom and en-suite. (Finn 13)

As for the third floor she mentions the master bedroom and wonders whether it could be called mistress bedroom because since her husband is dead she has inherited everything including the house which technically makes her the mistress. She mentions

the dually adjustable mattress and how she and her husband had different preferences. This can reflect their disagreement and divorce if it her husband did not pass away.

Fourth floor: Servants' quarters once upon a time, now Olivia's bedroom and a second spare. Some nights I haunt her room like a ghost. Some days I stand in the doorway, watch the slow traffic of dust motes in the sun. Some weeks I don't visit the fourth floor at all, and it starts to melt into memory, like the feel of rain on my skin. (Finn 13)

Last but not least, the fourth storey of the house which Anna refers to as servants' quarters in the past consider the house was built in the 19th century, but now it is Olivia's bedroom. She thinks how she haunts the room, some other time she just stands there watching the dust motes. This portrays how lonely she feels and how much she misses the presence of her daughter. The use of the present tense in the text is an important technique the writer uses in order to make the reader believe that Anna's husband and daughter are still alive but they are living elsewhere.

Besides to describing the interior of houses to create clear images of her living space, Anna Fox also describes exterior spaces mainly her neighborhood or the street where she lives. Her description of streets and buildings is a basic characteristic of *flânerie* for creating a mind map:

The Miller home across the street ... is one of five townhouses that I can survey from the south-facing windows of my own. To the east stand the identical-twin Gray Sisters: same box cornices crowning the windows, same bottle-green front doors. In the right—the slightly Grayer Sister, I think—live Henry and Lisa Wasserman, longtime residents; “Four decades and counting,” bragged Mrs. Wasserman when we moved in. She'd dropped by to tell us ... how much she

...resented the arrival of “another yuppie clan” in what “used to be a real neighborhood. (Finn 20)

This passage demonstrates the neighborhood where Anna Fox lives, however the narrator only mentions the five houses that she can survey and watch over from her house. She starts with the Miller’s house and mentions from which window she can watch the occurrences inside the house. The writer uses geographical terms when describing the houses and their locations; such as to the east, south-facing, to emphasize the idea of brain mapping. This is a basic trait of the *flâneur*.

The Wassermen, as we dubbed them, haven’t spoken to me since, even though I’m on my own now, a clan unto myself. They don’t seem much friendlier toward the residents of the other Gray Sister, a family called, fittingly, Gray. Twin teenage girls, father a partner at a boutique M&A firm, mother an eager book-club hostess. This month’s selection, advertised on their Meetup page and under review right now, in the Grays’ front room, by eight middle-aged women: Jude the Obscure. (Finn 20-21)

Besides to the Millers, the Narrator moves to the Gray twin sisters whose houses are identical. She mentions details on one of the Gray sisters concerning the children, the occupation of the parents and even specific details concerning the mother’s book-club selection and members. This further proves that Anna Fox is a *flâneuse* who has obsessive interest in spying and stalking her neighbors.

I read it too, imagined I was one of the group, munching coffee cake (none handy) and sipping wine (this I managed). “What did you think of Jude, Anna?” Christine Gray would ask me, and I’d say I found it rather obscure. We’d laugh. They’re laughing now, in fact. I try laughing with them. (Finn 21)

This passage shows how intellectual and generally cultured Anna Fox is. It also demonstrates how she transcends into a different imaginary dimension where she imagines herself as normal as the other women and part of their book-club. Detachment from society usually creates these tendencies in the *flâneur* wanting to know how being integrated in society feels like. Such as is the case with the speaker from T.S. Eliot's poem *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, which reflects how the speaker's insecurities and alienation make him imagine all possible social interaction scenarios especially with women.

West of the Millers are the Takedas. The husband is Japanese, the mother white, their son unearthly beautiful. He's a cellist; in the warm months, he rehearses with the parlor windows thrown open, so Ed used to hoist ours in turn. We danced one night in some long-gone June, Ed and I, to the strains of a Bach suite: swaying in the kitchen, my head on his shoulder, his fingers knotted behind me, as the boy across the street played on. (Finn 21)

After mapping out the eastside of the Millers' house she moves to the Westside to introduce the Takedas family. She mentions ethnic details about them alluding that the family is biracial. Besides that she mentions the son's hobby and how his playing reminds her of past intimate incidents with her husband.

Behold my southern empire and its subjects. None of these people were my friends; most of them I'd not met more than once or twice. Urban life, I suppose. (Finn 21)

In this last passage the narrator addresses the audience by using the second point of view when she uses the verb *behold* to start the sentence. *Behold* which means to gaze upon something observantly is the term the narrator uses to directly ask the audience to

connect her narrative descriptions to be able to brain map her southern empire, by which she means her neighborhood. The neighborhood where her subjects are not friendly to her and by retrospect she is not friendly to them either. In fact, this introduces the concept of the *flâneur*'s introspection.

1.3. The Narrator's Detective Descriptions of Characters

The figure of the *flâneur* is characterized by the overly detailed descriptions of architecture, and individuals. In the novel the narrator focuses on both, as for people she provides for each character a detailed description of their appearance and sometimes manners whenever the writer introduces a new character:

He's tall indeed, baby-faced and blue-eyed, with a flap of sandy hair and a faint scar notching one eyebrow, trailing up his forehead. Maybe fifteen years old. He looks like a boy I once knew, once kissed—summer camp in Maine, a quarter century ago. I like him. (Finn 38)

Through the mesh of my eyelashes I study her. She's what Ed might call, approvingly, a ripe woman: hips and lips full, bust ample, skin mellow, face merry, eyes a gas-jet blue. She wears indigo jeans and a black sweater, scoop-necked, with a silver pendant resting on her chest. Late thirties, I'd guess. She must have been a baby when she had her baby. (Finn 56)

She purses her lips again. Very active mouth, I notice. Possible smoker, although she smells of shea butter. (Finn 57)

These three passages extracted from different chapters within the novel are few of the passages that illustrate how the narrator describes the characters and establishes assumptions about them based on their appearances. From her description it is notable

that the narrator emphasizes the key features of the people she describes. For instance, in the first passage she describes her antagonist by mentioning that he has a scar on of his eyebrows that trace to the back of his head. This is a remarkable detail about a person that standouts. Like a detective the narrator pays attention to eye-catching details about the character. The descriptions provided by the narrator resemble detective's description.

Besides to precise detective descriptions, Anna Fox also compares between the people she describes to spot the slightest differences or similarities:

Slowly I swing my gaze between them. They must be almost the same age, but my escort is already a young man, fully formed, finished in marble; Ethan—gawky, narrow, with his slender shoulders and riven brow—looks like a child next to him. He is a child, I remind myself. (Finn 262)

In a nutshell, following the detailed descriptions of the narrator, it becomes possible to say that the *flâneuse* in *The Woman in the Window* can be an amateur detective. The type of detective who focuses on details out of mere interest, however for Anna Fox her interest only grows she becomes involved with the spectacle.

1.4. *Flânerie* and Introspection in *The Woman in the Window*

In *The Woman in the Window*, images of the narrator are reflected in other characters. The *flâneuse* in this novel watches people who in return watch her back. This is a notion known in experimental psychology as introspection, which by definition means “the process of observing the operations in one’s mind with a view to discovering the laws that govern the mind.” This means that introspection studies a person’s mind by analyzing the person’s experiences to be able to understand his/her perception. In this novel, the narrator’s behavior is reflected in different secondary

characters but especially in the character of the antagonist. However the intentions are not similar as in this case good vs. evil means even though the protagonist's behavior is reflected in her antagonist that does not necessarily mean they have the same good or evil intentions. Besides that, this can also mean that just like the protagonist, the antagonist is a *flâneur*.

He twists his head, looks at the kitchen. "I can see your house from my room," he says. "It's up there." I turn. If he can see the house, that means he's got an easterly view, facing my bedroom. The thought is briefly bothersome (Finn 43)

This passage illustrates introspection in the novel as Anna Fox and her antagonist both can see one another from their house windows. This can mean that the antagonist of the story is probably a *flâneur* too who watches Anna Fox and probably other people. When the antagonist makes this comment Anna realizes that he can view her in her bedroom and that idea makes her feel uncomfortable. However she does not realize that by invading her neighbors' private lives she can make them feel the exact same way.

Anna Fox is a psychologist who after her being diagnosed with agoraphobia she starts offering medical opinion for free in her online support group:

THEDOCTORISIN: Naturally it is. What's happening, I think, is that Richard's passing has fundamentally altered your world, but the world outside has moved on without him. And that's very difficult to face and to accept. (Finn 66)

This passage shows a message sent by Anna Fox to one of the antagonist who pretends to be a grandmother (GrannyLizzie) who is also in contact with Anna virtually. The message is supposed to explain to this fake character that the recent loss of her fake husband is what provoked her fake agoraphobia. However she does not realize that this is what actually has happened to her too when she lost her husband and daughter.

Considering how kaleidoscopic introspection is, this can be one of the introspected sides of the narrator in the novel.

It sounds to me as though these conversations are causing you some mixed feelings,” Dr. Fielding says. This is classic therapist argot: It sounds to me. What I’m hearing. I think you’re saying. We’re interpreters. We’re translators. (Finn 77)

It’s quitting time. I know this without consulting the clock hunched on the mantel, just as Dr. Fielding knows it—after years in practice, both of us can time fifty minutes almost to the second. (Finn 79)

In these two passages introspection is shown in Anna Fox, a doctor in psychology; and her therapist Dr. Fielding. Anna analyzes the doctor-character in relation to her experience as a doctor and she mentions in her thoughts how it applies to Dr. Fielding. She sees a reflection of herself in her doctor so that she starts knowing his next moves before he does them.

I haven’t mentioned the Russells to Dr. Fielding. I know what he’ll say; I can analyze myself: I’ve located in this nuclear unit—this mother, this father, their only child—an echo of my own. One house away, one door down, there’s the family I had, the life that was mine—a life thought lost, irretrievably, except here it is, right across the park. So what? I think. Maybe I say it; these days I’m not sure. (Finn 83)

This is the most prominent passage in the novel because it explains why Anna Fox stalks her neighboring families. Just like the speaker in T.S. Eliot’s poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” Anna assumes what other think of her, which is a assign of over-thinking and being self-critical. In the passage she assumes knowing what her

doctor will say to her if she reveals a certain information to him. Assuming other people's thoughts or actions is a characteristic trait of the flâneur. However, through her thoughts Anna Fox reveals the reason behind her stalking to her neighbors. That reason is that she sees a reflection of the family she used to have in her neighboring families due to terribly missing her family. This explains why she performs *flânerie* on her neighbors, especially families consisting of only parents and a unique child like the Russell family. Just like Prufrock, Anna finds herself uncertain and alienated from her surrounding environment

1.5. Alienation in *The Woman in the Window*

Alienation is another significant aspect of *flânerie*. As discussed in chapter one, alienation is psychologically characterized by certain variables which are anxiety, low self-esteem, loneliness and rejection of authority. These variables are present in *The Woman in the Window* and portrayed through the character of the protagonist Anna Fox:

I study myself in the mirror. Wrinkles like spokes around my eyes. A slur of dark hair, tigered here and there with gray, loose about my shoulders; stubble in the scoop of my armpit. My belly has gone slack. Dimples stipple my thighs. Skin almost luridly pale, veins flowing violet within my arms and legs. (Finn 17)

This passage from the introductory chapters introduces Anna Fox from her own perspective to the reader. She describes herself as an aging tired woman who is no longer physically fit with unhealthy skin. The description provided can hint that the narrator is not satisfied with her body image and consequently it is causing her self-esteem issues. Low self-esteem is one of the variables of alienation that provokes the person to isolate themselves even more because they do not match the beauty standards.

Some passages in the novel show through inner monologue how Anna Fox's thought contradict her actions. A passage that is relevant to alienation is this one:

I follow him. "Thanks so much for coming by."

"See you around," he says, pulling the door open.

No, you won't, I think. "I'm sure you will," I say. (Finn 45)

In this dialogue Anna Fox's antagonist casually say says "see you around" to Anna, and she reassures him that he will. However in her mind she knows he will not see her around, because she knows she will not leave her house due to alienation by relation to her mental illness.

Throughout the novel Anna Fox isolates herself as much as possible from the outside world and she remains inside her house as much as possible. In quote she narrates "I step into the hall—the one area of the house I dislike and distrust, the cool gray zone between my realm and the outside world." (Finn 51) this quote demonstrates how alienated she is from the outside world. She isolates herself in her house by which she refers to as her realm, her personal side of the world.

"You're still comfortable downstairs, I hope?" He's been here two months, ever since Dr. Fielding suggested that a tenant would be useful: someone to run errands, dispose of the trash, assist with general upkeep, et cetera, all in exchange for reduced rent. David was the first to answer my ad, posted on Craigslist; I remember thinking his email was terse, even curt, until I met the man and realized he'd been downright chatty. Just relocated from Boston, experienced handyman, nonsmoker, \$7,000 in the bank. We agreed on a lease that afternoon. (Finn 70-71)

The quoted passage above reveals how Anna Fox reassures maintaining herself alienated through the help of her tenant David. He is more social than she is and she needed his social skills to run errands for her. She mentions how curt he was in his email, but when she met him she found him to be less curt and more talkative, thus she managed to extract personal information about himself from him.

As a *flâneuse* Anna Fox wants only to remain the spectator watching the spectacle, she wants to be as invisible as possible. However in her virtual interactions she starts to become more involved and she hesitantly reveals her identity to one of the people she interacts with online:

I hesitate. I've never shared my name on the Agora, not even with Sally. I don't want anyone to find me, to pair my name with my profession and figure me out, unlock me; yet something in Lizzie's story snags my heart: this elderly widow, alone and bereaved, putting on a brave face beneath those huge skies. She can crack jokes all she wants, but she's housebound, and that's terrifying. (Finn 67)

Through her thoughts one can deduce that she does not want to be known or found by anyone. Considering that GrannyLizzie allegedly experienced similar losses and hardships as Anna Fox, she sympathizes with her and reveals her name which is not much. When she meets her therapist she tells him about it:

"I helped someone yesterday," I say. "A woman in Montana. A grandmother. She's been inside for a month." ... I steam ahead, telling him about GrannyLizzie, how I shared my name with her.

"What made you do that?"

“I felt she was trying to connect.” Isn’t that what—yes, there it is: Isn’t that what Forster exhorted us to do? “Only connect”? *Howards End*—July’s official book club selection. “I wanted to help her. I wanted to be accessible.” (Finn 78)

Through this passage, the reader can understand that Anna Fox is disconnected from other people by keeping her identity hidden. She wants to be accessible but she struggles with having her identity exposed.

Besides to wanting to remain a secret, Anna Fox talks to herself negatively which affects her self-esteem and as a result strengthens her feeling of alienation:

Yet here I am, utterly, literally locked in ... swollen with booze, parted from her family, fucking her tenant. A freak to the neighbors. A joke to the cops. A special case to her doctor. A pity case to her physical therapist. A shut-in. No hero. No sleuth. (Finn 235-236)

I feel completely useless. I feel as though I’m at a movie and the film is over and the lights are up and everyone’s filed out of the theater and I’m still sitting there, trying to work out what happened. (Finn 247)

These two passage projects all the negative points that Anna Fox sees in herself including alcoholism and the way she assumes the people surrounding her perceive her as a freak, a special case, a joke, a pity case, a shut it. By opposition she dreams of being a hero, someone helpful to her community and an investigator of crimes. In the second passage she sums up her situation by using an analogy, which concludes how lost and confused she feels besides to feeling useless. All these negative feelings provoke the state of mind of Anna Fox and push her to be ashamed of herself to the point where she strongly imagining that “My shadow stretches along the carpet, as

though trying to detach itself from me.” (Finn 237) these are signs of extreme self-hatred and self-loath that contribute to Anna’s isolation and alienation.

Last but not least, Anna asks herself an important question, which makes realize that it is a possibility that all the negativity and instability she is struggling with may be a result of being involved too much in the spectacle:

Of course he’s right. A lot of stimulation: yes, indeed. Too much. I’m sleeping too much, drinking too much, thinking too much; too much, too much. De trop. Did I involve myself like this with the Millers when they arrived back in August? They never visited me, no, but still I studied their routines, tracked their movements, tagged them like sharks in the wild. So it isn’t that the Russells are particularly interesting. They’re just particularly nearby. (Finn

This passage shows how Anna Fox has involved herself with the new family that moved to her neighborhood. Unlike the family that moved before them, they visited Anna Fox and involved her in their darkest criminal secret. Anna’s excessive emotions make her feel overwhelmed and overly stimulated. She knows well that she should only have studied the routine of the new family as she studied the families before them, but now it is too late for her because she is no longer a mere spectator, but she has become a part of the spectacle.

1.6. Indoor Online *Flânerie*

In the age of technology *flânerie* has changed and evolved thanks to technological tools that made indoor and mobilized *flânerie* the reality of many postmodern *flâneurs*. Indoor *flânerie* is a result of overwhelming emotions of social anxiety. It is characterized by practicing *flânerie* in interior locations. That is the case with the postmodern *flâneuse* from *The Woman in the Window*. However as Aimée Boutin

mentioned in her literary encounter with *Société* magazine about postmodern *flânerie* , one must pay attention to differences as postmodern *flânerie* has been influenced and reshaped by technology. In fact thanks to certain technological devices mentioned in novel, they enable Anna Fox to perform indoor *flânerie*.

For indoor *flânerie* Anna Fox uses different technological devices:

Mouse. Keyboard. Google. Phone. My tools. I throw one more look at the Russell place. Now her back is to me, a cashmere wall. Good. Keep it that way. This is my house; this is my view. (Finn 241)

This passage mentions the most important tools that enable Anna Fox to practice indoor/ online *flânerie*. The mouse and keyboard are elements of a computer and they refer to Anna's computer. Besides her computer she uses her phone. Both devices cannot work without the internet so Google is the most prominent tool that opens the window for Anna to look up online.

Within Google Anna Fox can access different website that inform about people. For instance Google Maps is one of the online services she uses to map out locations:

It's been a while since I took in the facade, but Google furnishes a street view: whitewashed stone, faintly Beaux-Arts, capped with a widow's walk. From here, of course, I can set my sights only on the side of the house; through its east windows, I've a clear shot into the kitchen, a second-floor parlor, and a bedroom above. (Finn 16)

This passage demonstrates how Anna Fox uses Google Maps to watch her neighbors' houses and view their home facades to learn to which room she has the best view.

In addition to Google Maps, Anna Fox uses Google to search for people in the hope of finding any reliable information about them:

The deed of sale posted yesterday. My new neighbors are Alistair and Jane Russell; they paid \$3.45 million for their humble abode. Google tells me that he's a partner at a midsize consultancy, previously based in Boston. She's untraceable—you try plugging Jane Russell into a search engine. (Finn 20)

In this passage Anna Fox uses Google to learn about her new neighbors. Through Google she learns the names of her new neighbors and how much did the house cost them besides to the husband's profession. As for the wife, she is untraceable which to Anna makes her more interesting.

In the novel, indoor *flânerie* is accentuated through the protagonist's use of internet and other technological devices to watch and investigate other people. After being diagnosed with agoraphobia Anna Fox lost her job as a result of that:

I lost their tears and their troubles and their rage and their relief. I lost nineteen children all told. Twenty, if you count my daughter.

I know where Olivia is now, of course. The others I've been tracking. Not too often—a psychologist isn't supposed to investigate her patients, past patients included—but every month or so, swollen with longing, I'll take to the web. I've got a few Internet research tools at my disposal: a phantom Facebook account; a stale LinkedIn profile. With young people, though, only Google will do, really.

After reading of Ava's spelling-bee championship and Theo's election to the middle school student council, after scanning the Instagram albums of Grace's mother and scrolling through Ben's Twitter feed (he really ought to

activate some privacy settings), after wiping the tears from my cheeks and sinking three glasses of red, I find myself back in my bedroom, browsing photos on my phone. (Finn 46-47)

The passage explains what motivates Anna Fox as a postmodern *flâneuse* to investigate people, specifically her past patients. It is because she misses them and worries about their wellbeing. Thus she relies on the internet to learn about their life updates. She uses the web and internet research tools that include fake Facebook and LinkedIn profiles, Instagram and Twitter besides to Google. These tools also known as social media that people use to share slight updates about their day-to-day lives is where Anna Fox investigates and discreetly inquires for information. The passage also shows how fruitful her investigation is as she finds more than enough information about her past patients to establish that they are being taken care of. Finally the last part of the passage shows how tragically sad is Anna for losing her patients and losing her child in a car accident, then she turns to her phone to see old pictures of her dead daughter.

Aside from Google and technological tools related to internet, Anna Fox practices indoor *flânerie* by using her Nikon camera which she finds better than binoculars:

With a tumbler in one hand and the Nikon in the other, I settle down in the corner of my study, cupped between the south and west windows, and survey the neighborhood—inventory check, Ed likes to say. There's Rita Miller, returning from yoga, bright with sweat, a cell phone stuck to one ear. I adjust the lens and zoom in: She's smiling. I wonder if it's her contractor on the other end. Or her husband. Or neither.

Next door, outside 214, Mrs. Wasserman and her Henry pick their way down the front steps. Off to spread sweetness and light.

I swing my camera west: Two pedestrians loiter outside the double-wide,
one of them pointing at the shutters. “Good bones,” I imagine him saying.

God. I’m inventing conversations now. (Finn 82)

This passage can serve as a perfect demonstration of indoor *flânerie*, because it shows how Anna uses her camera to zoom in with it to assert a closer and clearer view while watching people. In the passage the writer uses terms highly relevant to *flânerie* one of which is the verb survey. This verb makes Anna Fox seem like a guard surveying the neighborhood. In addition to that, the writer illustrates how Anna Fox captures the view of her neighbors inside and outside their houses and even pedestrians she sees strolling in the street outside her windows. Another interesting point that can be extracted from the passage above is how she makes assumptions about people how she attempts to create a conversation in her head of what others are saying simply because of their appearance of body language is a sign of *flânerie*.

Indoor *flânerie* is clearly demonstrated in the novel through the agoraphobic *flâneuse*, who uses different technologies to perform *flânerie*. It is the technological devices such as Smartphone, computer, the internet and others that enable the narrator to practice indoor *flânerie*. If it were not for these means, Anna Fox would be more limited in her practice. The change that technology has brought to the practice of *flânerie* is remarkable, and does not stop to this. In effect it has also changed pedestrianism for mobilized *flânerie*.

1.7. Mobilized *Flânerie* in *The Woman in the Window*

The figure of the *flâneur* has grown and adapted into the different periods of time, and differences are remarkable between the modern *flâneur* from the 19th century and the postmodern *flâneur* from the 21st century. As discussed in the first chapter, *flânerie* has changed due to one major factor which is technology. In fact Âimée Boutin mentions that technology has changed the way people practice *flânerie*. One of those changes is mobilization instead of pedestrianism. This different is reflected in the contemporary novel *The Woman in the Window* where the *flâneuse* practices indoor *flânerie* and mobilized *flânerie*:

I lift my eyes to the window. It's been nearly ten months since I found myself on the streets, or in a car, or in a car on the streets. Ten months since I've seen the city from anywhere besides my house; it feels otherworldly, as though I'm exploring alien terrain, as though I'm coasting through some future civilization. The buildings loom impossibly tall, thrusting like fingers into a rinsed-blue sky above. Signs and shops streak past, blaring color: 99¢ FRESH PIZZA!!!, Starbucks, Whole Foods (when did that set up shop?), an old fire station refitted as a condo building (UNITS FROM \$1.99M). Cool dark alleys; windows blank with sunlight. Sirens keen behind us, and Little shrugs the car to one side as an ambulance pushes past.

We approach an intersection, slow to a stop. I study the traffic light, glowing like an evil eye, and watch the stream of pedestrians flow along the crosswalk: two blue-jeaned mothers pushing strollers, a bent-double old man leaning on a cane, teenagers hunched under hot-pink backpacks, a woman in a turquoise burka. A green balloon, loosed from a pretzel stand, dizzies upward. Sounds invade the car: a giddy shriek, the seafloor rumble of traffic, a bicycle bell trilling. A rage of colors, a riot of sounds. I feel as though I'm in a coral reef. (Finn 165)

This passage perfectly fits the context of mobilized *flânerie* as Anna Fox is riding a car in the streets of New York City. Due to her isolation and sense of alienation she feels as though she is “exploring alien terrain” (Finn 165) As she is gazing out of the car window she does not only realize how tall the building, but she also notices shop-windows and the commercial signs stuck to them. She spots the differences according to her memory of how the streets used to be before the fire station was turned into a condo. Besides to describing the streets she also lays eyes on people referring to them as “pedestrians” who flow like a stream of water into the sea. She describes the mothers as blue-jeaned because of their clothes and she mentions the old man leaning on a cane, which is a basic accessory of the *flâneur* as illustrated in the first chapter. She mentions the woman wearing a burka, which reflects on the diversity of races and faiths within one the society.

2. The Differences in “The Man of the Crowd” Vs. *The Woman in the Window*

Following the detailed analyses of the two literary works; namely Poe’s short story “The Man of the Crowd” and Finn’s novel *The Woman in the Window*, in addition to the second section in the previous chapter that lays the similarities between the two literary works. By opposition, this section states the differences between the same literary works in reference to *flânerie*. As Poe writes in his short story “So vast a difference is there between a London populace and that of the most frequented American city.” (Poe 418) which refers to how different is London from the most crowded American city possibly New York City. The differences produced -by the difference in locations, time periods and types of *flânerie* besides to other points- between the modern *flâneur* and the postmodern *flâneuse* will help explain the evolution of the *flâneur* and its shift from modernity to post-modernity.

2.1. New York City Vs. London

One of the basic environmental characteristics of the traditional *flâneur* is performing *flânerie* in the city of Paris; however this characteristic is no longer conditional for *flânerie*. A proof of that would be the novel of *The Woman in the Window* by A.J. Finn and the short story of “The Man of the Crowd” by Edgar A. Poe, which perfectly demonstrate how *flânerie* has changed to a degree where the *flâneur* is no longer restricted to the City of Paris. The two literary works in fact share some differences due to the difference of the location or the settings of both stories, which influence the descriptions of the narrator *flâneurs*. While the story events in “The Man of the Crowd” take place in the heart of London, the events in *The Woman in the Window* occur in New York City. Even though these two locations are popular and crowded, the crowds are as much different as the two *flâneurs*. The unnamed narrator *flâneur* from “The Man of the Crowd” is different from the *flâneuse* from *The Woman in the Window* due to the background from which these two *flâneurs* come from. This difference impacts the mode of narration of both *flâneurs*. In fact, while Poe’s *flâneur* categorizes people according to social status just by gazing at their clothes and behavior, Finn’s *flâneuse* does not give much importance to clothes as herself is a bourgeois widow who inherited her husband’s wealth yet dresses very humbly and randomly. In that case if the unnamed narrator existed in the fictional universe of Anna Fox, he would most likely mistaken assuming the social status of most people, for which the postmodern *flâneuse* relies on the internet to learn the financial and therefore the social status of people.

The narrator *flâneurs* from “The Man of the Crowd” and *The Woman in the Window* not only come from two different locations with a completely different background and history, but they also come from two different periods of time. The

differences in time are remarkable as Poe's unnamed narrator from 19th century London offers descriptive narrative of the Victorian architecture and fashion. In contrast to that, Finn's postmodern *flâneuse* offers descriptive narrative of the contemporary city architecture while incorporating technological aspects that hint to postmodernity, such as cars, computers, smartphones among other details. These slight details in the descriptions of the environment of the two *flâneurs* are what hint to different periods of time. The differences created by the time difference between the two literary works show how the environment of the two *flâneurs* has gradually shifted from a conventional to a more technological lifestyle where the unnamed *flâneur's* conventional assumptions may not be as correct within the postmodern context.

2.2. Outdoor Vs. Indoor *Flânerie*

Another remarkable difference between Poe's *flâneur* and Finn's *flâneuse* is the type of *flânerie* they practice. The traditional *flâneur* is known for strolling in the urbanized city streets of Paris, which is similar to the modern *flâneur* from "The Man of the Crowd." By opposition, the *flâneuse* from *The Woman in the Window* is more of an introverted indoor type of a *flâneur*. Considering the psychological state of Anna Fox and the fact that she struggles with extreme social anxiety as a symptom of her agoraphobia, this consequently influences the type of *flânerie* she performs. Indoor or interior *flânerie* is a type that rose due to the alienation and detachment of the *flâneur* from his/her social surroundings. While The Man of the Crowd walks around the streets of London following the old man wherever he goes, Anna Fox on the other hand, watches people in their houses and in the neighborhood from the windows of her house. This may strictly limit the field where Anna can practice *flânerie*, but thanks to technology she manages to overcome this obstacle.

2.3. Mobility Vs. Pedestrianism

Similar to the traditional image of the *flâneur*, the modern *flâneur* from “The Man of the Crowd” is a wanderer, a figure that strolls the streets aimlessly observing people and whatever seems pleasurable to the eye until something or someone hooks their attention. In the case of “The Man of the Crowd” it is the poorly dressed old man with a dagger and diamond, as for Anna Fox it is the newly moved family from Boston, The Russells. However, unlike The Man of the Crowd who follows his target on foot, The Woman in the Window watches her target from the interior of her house or while riding in a car. Mobilized *flânerie* is another difference introduced by technology that offers a similar experience of *flânerie*. The only difference is that while The Man of the Crowd follows the whereabouts of the old man both walking, The Woman in the Window observes the pedestrians, buildings and streets from the window of the car she is in. Therefore, it is safe to say that this difference is what distinguishes the modern *flâneur* from the postmodern *flâneuse*.

2.4. 19th Century conventionality Vs. 21st century Technological Advancement

The Traditional or primitive *flâneur* is naturally conventional, whereas the postmodern *flâneur*'s lifestyle is highly influenced by technology, which reflects differently on the attitude of both *flâneurs*. The *flâneur* from “The Man of the Crowd” is more conventional than the postmodern *flâneuse* from *The Woman in the Window*, simply because the modern *flâneur* experiences *flânerie* first-handedly, while the postmodern *flâneuse* uses technological tools and means to perform *flânerie* from her interior setting. Being an indoor *flâneuse*, Anna Fox relies on certain technologies; such as the internet, the computer, the smartphone, the camera and the car. These devices suit

her lifestyle and her type of *flânerie*. However, these technologically advanced tools are what hinder Anna Fox from experiencing *flânerie* first-handedly.

2.5. 19th Century *Flâneur* Vs. 21st Century *Flâneuse*

When the figure of the *flâneur* first appeared in the early 19th century, this figure had always been projected as a male *flâneur*, however in the works of Charles Baudelaire female *flâneurs* started to blossom in his poetry collection “Flowers of Evil.” This introduction opened the door for other *flâneuses* to emerge in different literary works, but one may wonder to which extent the female *flâneur* is committed to the original image of the modern *flâneur*. While both *flâneurs* from “The Man of the Crowd” and *The Woman in the Window* are alienated and detached from society the modern *flâneur* from “The of The Crowd” distantly follows the old man and never interacts with him at all costs, opposed to Anna Fox who breaks tradition and interferes in the affairs of the people she watches. This point can be related to her gender, because instead of doing what the modern *flâneur* would do, which is remaining silent, she listens to the female emotional voice within her and interacts with the people she secretly watches from her house window. This by consequence makes Anna Fox as a postmodern *flâneuse* part of the spectacle, which is considerably something new to *flânerie* in general.

Conclusion

To state it briefly, *flânerie* in *The Woman in The Window* is existent as the protagonist clearly displays characteristics of *flânerie*. Following the analysis, these characteristics can be summed up in the postmodern *flâneuse* from *The Woman in the Window* obsessively stalking her neighbors from her house windows and from her computer window. More *flânerie* characteristics can be detected in the novel such as

mobilized, indoor and online *flânerie*. Besides that other points related to *flânerie* like introspection and alienation can be considered as aspects that influence the perspective of the *flâneuse*. As much as similar are Poe's and Finn's *flâneurs* they are different, and within that difference lay the key evolutionary aspects of *flânerie*. Considering the time gap between the two works, differences in the methods of *flânerie* between 19th century modern *flâneur* and 21st century postmodern *flâneuse* are highly linked to technology. As illustrated from *The Woman in the window*, it is clear how Anna Fox's method of *flânerie* is based on technology and technological devices. This key difference is what contributes to the evolution of Poe's modern *flâneur* into Finn's postmodern *flâneuse*.

General Conclusion

General conclusion:

This dissertation studied the evolutionary concept of the *flâneur* to link the changes the *flâneur* has experienced through each version. The comparative stance done through the similarities and differences between “The Man of the Crowd” and *The Woman in the Window* displayed the consistent complementary relationship between each evolution of the *flâneur* particularly between his modern and postmodern form. The industrialization and the urbanization of post revolutionary Paris paved the way for the earliest form of 19th century *flâneur* that is used as a representative of multiple literary pieces. The characteristics of this urban figure offered him the privilege of describing every part of the city in detail. Along with the societal changes at that time, the urban figure witnessed his first evolution that influenced his narration and observation of that period.

Originally, the concept of the artistic *flâneur* was discovered in Balzac’s *Physiologie du Mariage* (1829), Balzac set some standards to what a “true *flâneur*” is. In the case of the artist *flâneur*, society and its elements act as his inspiration for paintings and writings. Thus this urban figure’s observation evolves from a simple one to a complex creative view of his environment. In addition to Balzac’s work, Louis Huart’s *Physiologie du Flâneur* established the artistic figure in a frame work .In the book Huart draws the physique and fashion of the wanderer figure to display his distinctive look and intellect from the rest of society, and how he transports himself into a state of curiosity whenever he observes his environment. The artistic aspect of the *flâneur* was challenged against the demolition of old Paris under Bonaparte’s reign.

Eventually this major inconvenience contributed to the creation of the indoor *flâneur* and the *flâneuse*. In relation to Balzac's work on the artist *flâneur*, Charles Baudelaire developed an enhanced version of this urban figure under a similar artistic framework but with a twist. The latter refers to the controversial pieces of the poet that discussed topics such as prostitution, night life, cosmetics, and modernity all of which contributed to deliver Baudelaire's message about how traditional art became insufficient to describe the modern life. As a result, he figuratively painted his own version in his work "The Painter of Modern Life". Baudelaire depicted his version of the artistic *flâneur* in one of famous poem collection known as *Les Fleurs du Mal* titled "A Une Passante" where he uses a poet figure that described a woman passing by. Through his descriptions, he revealed aspects of fashion and attitude of women at that time. In addition to his poet *flâneur*, Baudelaire described a painter he refers to as Monsieur G, this artist *flâneur* is a rebel against the term artist, because he finds it restrictive. Thus, his paintings and view of the crowd are unlike no other; this individualistic mind set is part of the artistic *flâneur*. Also, Baudelaire expressed that the child nature of Monsieur G was his essence and source of genius; his mature side is what developed this nature into that of a modern artist and it continues to evolve further in the historical social observer of Walter Benjamin's version of *flâneur*.

To serve his purpose as a historical social observer, Benjamin's *flâneur* expanded his interest from an artistic point of view to a socio-economic one. In order to do this, Benjamin explained that the *flâneur* should find a social identity that helps him validate his *flânerie*. And so he turned into a sociologist like figure to study society's consumerism of that period's commodities and the relation behind advertising a product and the cultural economic background of its client. These observations took place in the Parisian arcades, the architectural piece that serves as home for the *flâneur* and with its

demolition; caused the urban figure to lose part of his identity and replaced it with a new one, where he evolved into an indoor *flâneur*. Moreover, this made the *flâneur* appear in other areas outside of Paris, a prominent figure of *flânerie* is found in one of the main literary works discussed in this dissertation. “The Man of the Crowd” by the American writer Edgar Allan Poe describes a modern English *flâneur* that observes the crowd from the window of a coffeehouse. Eventually, he encounters an old man figure that confuses him and challenges his stereotypical mindset towards the crowd; this old man acts as the future image of the narrator. Given that they are the same person, Poe delivers a message in the story that allows people to understand how the individual is seen by the crowd; hence the remarkable impact of the crowd on the *flâneur*. One of the major effects of the public and the overall environment on the urban figure is on a psychological level, the idea of the double and the narrator’s subconscious in “The Man of the Crowd” is part of this mental issue.

So far, the modern *flâneur* has shifted through multiple identities on an artistic, sociological and psychological level. In *The Woman in the Window*, the *flâneur* jumps into the postmodern society with a female figure as the lead urban narrator. This change of gender is part of the protests by Victorian women and their indulgence in society as active and functional members of society. Due to the technological advances in the postmodern society, the *flâneur* trades his strolls around the city by foot to internet searches by hand and voice commands; nightclubs attract the postmodern *flâneur*’s interest with their cultural, social, racial and gender diversities. Additionally, tourism plays a significant role in expanding *flânerie* globally thanks to the faster and varied means of transportation. On that note, photography and filmography can replace the *flâneur*’s cognitive mapping of the city. It seems that technology and the postmodern life have upgraded the *flâneur*’s identity and updated his methods of *flânerie*. However,

the psychological struggle he suffers from society is still present as shown in Finn's novel.

The book centers on a child therapist who suffers from agoraphobia due to a car accident. As a postmodern *flâneuse*, Anna Fox uses technological devices such as her Nikon camera, iPhone and MacBook to spy on her neighbors. She witnesses a murder and becomes involved in the investigation where she eventually becomes a target, but she saves herself and that marks the end of the book. The first similarity found between the two literary works was the location; the story's environment provides shelter for the narrators and facilitates their practice of *flânerie*. As a result, the setting's influence on the quality of *flânerie* is evident in both works; the anonymous narrator used a monocle to observe the crowd from a window of a coffeehouse while Anna Fox used a camera to spy on her neighbors from her window. Therefore, the architecture of the window is a crucial piece for observation in both stories. Besides using windows for *flânerie*, another standard social architectural part between the two works was the cultural aspect. Although set in the US, she mentions in the book that she has spent time in Oxford, hinting that a similar house design exists there. Thus, the cultural and social factors influenced the built environment found in the two settings.

The second similarity was the character analysis done by the *flâneurs* to the crowd. In the anonymous narrator's case, he describes the crowd's personalities through their physical appearances. Likewise, Anna Fox assumes the character of her neighbors through their ethnic background. Besides that, she uses her laptop to discover more information on her neighbors; it is a device for data gathering and entertainment, much like the newspaper and advertisement readings that the 19th century unnamed narrator was doing. Moreover, the practice of physiognomy led the narrators to common speculation, where they assumed a criminal background of the old man and Ethan. Anna

Fox managed to defend herself, and Ethan fell dead, which marks the resolution of *The Woman in the Window*. Similarly, the ending of “The Man of the Crowd” showed the narrator backing away from the implicit danger displayed by the old man.

The third similarity was the projection of their insecurities over the crowd, ironic observations made by the two, escaping their thoughts and emotions, inability and refusal to accept their imperfections, and determining self-value. Both narrators experience introspection and alienation caused by PTSD and confusion; they feel stuck in a loop. This latter made the narrator run in circles with his future image of the old man and put Dr. Fox on a carousel where she could not resolve her trauma and overcome the death of her family. Dr. Fox is notably similar to the narrator on a self-neglecting level; she disliked the person she becomes because of her phobia and obsession with stalking her neighbors and confessed that she overthinks about everything. The narrator from “The Man of the Crowd” disconnected with his future self and the self-image he was; he was distressed by the old man's fashion and his obsessive behavior with the crowd, and his inability to lead an everyday life without engaging with the public.

On the other hand, differences between the two literary works conclude that technology is the major difference between Poe's modern *flâneur* and Finn's postmodern *flâneuse*. While the modern *flâneur* from “The Man of the Crowd” was pedestrian outdoor *flâneur*, the postmodern *flâneuse* from *The Woman in the Window* is a mobilized indoor *flâneuse*. Due to her alienation and mental state she relies on the internet, her phone and computer to spy on people and reach her own speculative conclusions. In addition to that, the factor of time is important in this context; as the modern *flâneur* in “The Man of the Crowd” is from 19th century London, the postmodern *flâneuse* from *The Woman in the Window* is from the 21st century which

logically invokes major cultural and architectural differences. Another factor that contributed to the evolution of the modern *flâneur* into a postmodern one is gender. During the 19th century the *flâneur* was strictly a male, however this condition changed as now *flânerie* can be performed by both males and females. *The Woman in the Window* is a perfect example of that as she is a postmodern female *flâneur*. These key differences have fairly shown the evolution of the modern *flâneur* from “The Man of the Crowd” into the postmodern *flâneuse* from *The Woman in the Window*.

This dissertation attempted a new reading on Finn’s novel *The Woman in the Window* by comparison to Poe’s Short story “The Man of the Crowd”. The research expanded to three chapters; one theoretical and two analytical chapters that analyzed both literary works from an environmental, sociological and psychological view. By applying Walter Benjamin’s critical theory of the modern *flâneur*, this research aimed to answer how and what are the changes the *flâneur* experienced through his evolution from his modern to postmodern self. To do that, the methodology of qualitative comparative analysis examined both the “The Man of the Crowd” and the *The Woman in the Window* through a method of comparative study. The consequential result of this study introduces new aspects of postmodern *flânerie* in Finn’s novel. These aspects are seen through the technological advances that updated the senses of the postmodern *flâneur*, enhanced his *flânerie* and made him practice *flânerie* from indoor locations. Finally, the research’s contribution to the concept of the *flâneur* was to provide analytical data that offers new perspectives on postmodern *flânerie* in the context of Poe’s “The Man of the Crowd” and Finn’s *The Woman in the Window*. However it does not answer all general or specific questions revolving the figure of the *flâneur* in a different context from the one tackled in this dissertation.

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