Introduction
Negotiating a City Shower

At the 1764 exhibition of the Society of Artists of Great Britain, the artist Edward Penny exhibited a painting described in the catalogue as *A scene taken from Swift's description of a city shower* (Figure 0.1). In Penny's painting, a well-dressed gentleman walking along the street jumps back in surprise as a maidservant twirls her mop, threatening to soil his clothes. The maid herself is somewhat incongruously dressed: her apron stands in contrast to the rich material of her skirt, which, it is suggested, has been handed down to her by her fashionable employer. Both her apron and her pattens (designed to keep shoes clean by lifting the pedestrian above the mud and dirt of the streets) signal her status as a working woman while they also protect the more expensive items of clothing she wears. Although the exhibition catalogue clearly links Penny's work to Swift's poem, the painting does not straightforwardly represent a scene from "A Description of a City Shower" (1710), which instead invokes the image as a metaphor:

> Brisk *Susan* whips her Linen from the Rope,
> While the first drizzling Show'r is born aslope,
> Such is that Sprinkling which some careless Quean
> Flirts on you from her Mop, but not so clean.
> You fly, invoke the Gods; then turning, stop
> To rail; she singing, still whirls on her Mop.[1]

In this comparison, the dirtiness of the water from the mop, which is "not so clean", may at first suggest the contrasting freshness of the rain (a suggestion the poem goes on to undercut). At the same time, rain is clearly presented as an annoyance, and the lack of concern displayed by the "careless Quean" captures the essential truth that a rain shower dampens exposed pedestrians irrespective of their status. In painting this scene, in which the polite, gentlemanly reader that the poem addresses is confronted with and dirtied by the labour of a

[1] Jonathan Swift, "A Description of a City Shower" in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Harold Williams, 3 vols., 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), I: 136–9, ll. 17–22.

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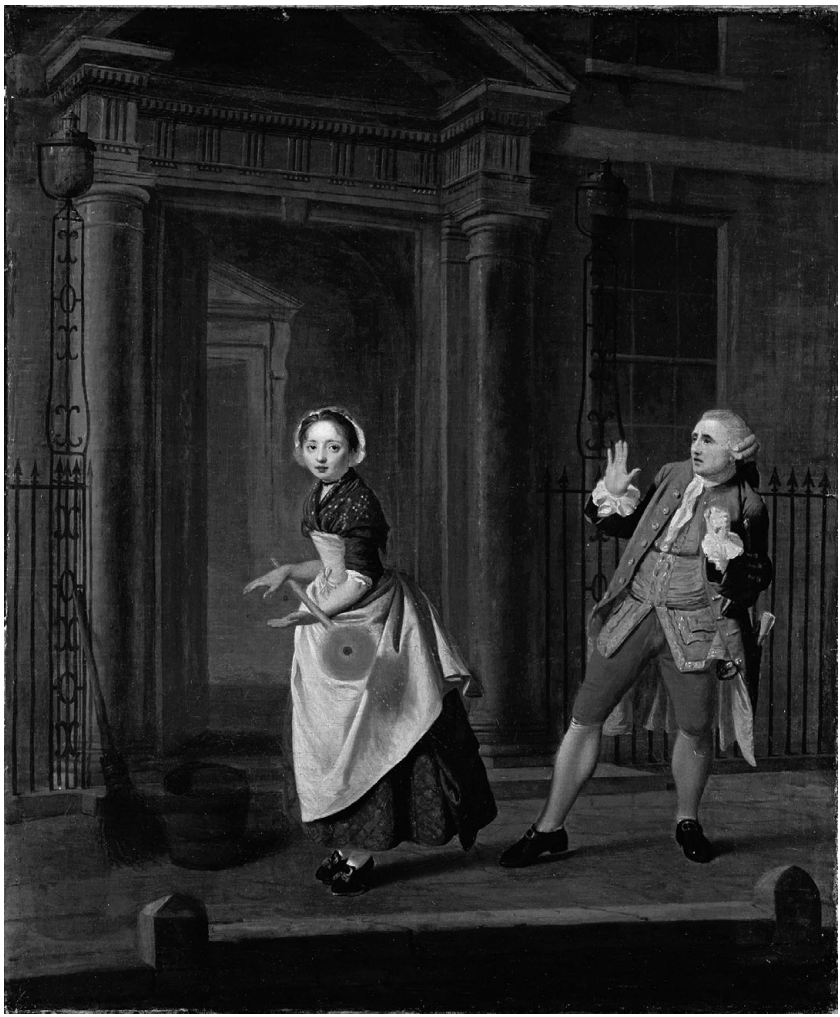


Figure 0.1 Edward Penny (British, 1714–91), *A City Shower* (1764).
© Museum of London.

"Quean" (a term that can mean a "bold or impudent" woman, but is defined by Samuel Johnson as "a worthless woman, generally a strumpet"), Penny suggestively reimagines many of the tensions staged by the poem.[2] In both the painting and the poem, the "shower" brings into focus the various quotidian encounters and inconveniences that are a hallmark of life in eighteenth-century London.

[2] "quean", *Oxford English Dictionary* definition 1; Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 vols. (London: Printed for J. and P. Knapton; T. and T. Longman; C. Hitch and

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This book examines how the representation of walking in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries provides a means to explore fundamental questions about urban life: what the city should look like, how it should function, and how people should interact with one another. It considers how the mobility that the idea of walking affords makes possible the surveys and topographies of London that characterize this period, and how the experience of walking can also be – as it is in Penny's painting – a subject matter in its own right. As an approach to describing the city, walking helped to order and organize accounts of London, offering a way to bring together the various people and places that might be found in a city so frequently represented in terms of bustle and change. As a subject matter, its significance extends far beyond the simple details of how and where to take a stroll, opening up a much broader terrain that includes questions of spectatorship, social performance and social climbing, and personal safety. In what follows I develop a historically specific account of a number of forms of urban pedestrianism that are distinctive, if not unique, to eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century London, exploring the models of mobility and spectatorship that were available to and used by writers in this period.

Far larger than any other European capital, London grew considerably in size and in population over the course of the eighteenth century. Although population figures before the first official census of 1801 are not entirely reliable because of the number of individuals who did not appear in parish registers of births and deaths, it is estimated that London grew from a city of between 575,000 and 600,000 in 1700 to around 650,000 in 1750 (a period when population growth was dependent on new arrivals from the countryside), to 900,000 in 1801, to over 1,600,000 in 1831.[3] Although still legally as well as imaginatively divided into different areas, including Middlesex, Westminster, the City, and the Borough of Southwark, plus various liberties and precincts, these seemed to form in Mr Spectator's words "an Aggregate of various Nations", and the whole of the developed area was, by the early eighteenth century, considered to be London.[4] Writing in the 1720s, Daniel Defoe remarked that "when I speak of *London*, now in the Modern Acceptation, you expect I shall

L. Hawes; A. Millar; and R. and J. Dodsley, 1755), II: n.p. Johnson quotes "Description of a City Shower" in his definition.

[3] "Population" in *The London Encyclopaedia*, ed. Ben Weinreb and Christopher Hibbert (London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 630–32.

[4] *Spectator* 403 (12 June 1712) in *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), III: 506–9, 506.

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take in all that vast Mass of Buildings, reaching from *Black Wall* in the *East*, to *Tot-hill Fields* in the *West*" as well as Southwark, the whole totalling over thirty-six miles in circumference.[5] As it continued to expand over the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, London swallowed up what were once neighbouring villages, which became part of the metropolis.

London's expansion was driven by private development, and throughout the century many proposers of urban improvements lamented the lack of a unified plan for the city and the absence of magnificent buildings that would exemplify the nation's taste and refinement. For critics of the appearance of London, the rejection of proposals for a newly designed cityscape in the wake of the Great Fire was a missed opportunity. Christopher Wren and Robert Hooke produced plans that would have created a more orderly and magnificent city, but these were dismissed in favour of rebuilding along the contours of the streets that had been destroyed. Those proposing urban improvements frequently noted how London's appearance sat at odds with its reputation for commercial and military prowess. In his *Critical Review of the Publick Buildings, Statues, and Ornaments* (1734), James Ralph argued that it was "high time therefore for us to look about us . . . and endeavour to vie with our neighbours in politeness, as well as power and empire".[6] The concerns about a gap between London's wealth on the one hand and its seeming lack of cultural refinement on the other intensified mid-century in the wake of Britain's victories in the Seven Years' War. Urban improvements, some argued, would not only offer evidence of London's – and the nation's – claims to cultural prestige, but they would also transform the manners of the city's inhabitants. According to John Gwynn, "In the same proportion as publick magnificence increases, in the same proportion will a love of elegance increase among all ranks of people", generating a "refinement of taste" that "produces true magnificence and elegance" in a nobleman and "at least cleanliness and decorum" in a mechanic.[7]

While complaints about the appearance of London were a frequent refrain throughout the century, a number of developments did transform

[5] Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain, Divided into Circuits or Journies*, 3 vols. (London: Printed and Sold by G. Strahan, W. Mears, R. Francklin, S. Chapman, R. Stagg, and J. Graves, 1724), II: 95.

[6] James Ralph, *A Critical Review of the Publick Buildings, Statues, and Ornaments in and about London and Westminster* (London: Printed by C. Ackers, 1734), 2.

[7] John Gwynn, *London and Westminster Improved, Illustrated by Plans. To Which is Prefixed, A Discourse on Public Magnificence* (London: Printed for the Author, 1766), 1.

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the cityscape in this period. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, London's westward expansion via squares, Peter Borsay suggests, "went a good way towards ordering and 'civilizing' the vernacular landscape".[8] In the middle of the century, Westminster Bridge and then Blackfriars Bridge added two new crossings over the Thames. In 1760 the gates of the City walls were removed, and in the same decade a range of local improvement acts, including the Westminster Paving Acts and similar laws for the City of London, legislated for the better paving, lighting, and cleaning of the streets, and were designed to make the capital appear and feel more elegant. These various improvements to the urban infrastructure – new river crossings, unimpeded thoroughfares, and better paving and cleaning of the streets – helped to modernize the city and improve the experience of pedestrians at the same time as they also addressed the needs of commerce by improving the flow of traffic.

The dynamic, expanding, and seemingly ever-changing city offered a rich and varied terrain for imaginative writers in the period. Daniel Defoe's criminal protagonists – Moll Flanders and Roxana in particular – are shown to thrive in the busy streets of the capital, concealing and reinventing themselves as they move through crowds and between different parts of the city. Satirists lamented a city they felt had become a byword for corruption, one that Samuel Johnson described in his imitation of Juvenal's Third Satire as "the needy Villain's gen'ral Home, / The Common Shore of *Paris* and of *Rome*" – a place where "the Dregs" of Europe took up residence (his contrasting sense of the pleasures of urban living and his embrace of what Nicholas Hudson terms the "chaotic spontaneity" of the city's development would be captured in his periodicals and recorded in James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1791)).[9] Accounts of the experiences of new arrivals in London – on the stage, in the periodical press, in print satires, and in the eighteenth-century novel – helped to render the familiar strange and sometimes comic for readers who knew London well, and offered readers who had never been to the city a glimpse of its various pleasures and dangers. In works like Oliver Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World* (1762), first published in the *Public Ledger*, and Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778), ostensibly naïve observers shift between a sense of awe and wonder on the one hand and

[8] Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660–1770* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 74.

[9] Samuel Johnson, *London: A Poem, in Imitation of the Third Satire of Juvenal* (London: Printed for R. Doddesley, 1738), 9; Nicholas Hudson, "Samuel Johnson, Urban Culture, and the Geography of Postfire London", *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 42: 3 (2002), 577–600; 578.

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disappointment on the other, while Tobias Smollett's polyvocal epistolary novel *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) rehearses a number of different responses to urban life from a variety of perspectives. The city's inexorable growth and the increasing visibility of its connections to the wider world famously led William Wordsworth and William Blake to explore the alienation of the urban wanderer, while essayists including Charles Lamb, Mary Robinson, Leigh Hunt, and William Hazlitt celebrated urban life in the early nineteenth century.

Just as there is no single narrative that captures how writers and artists understood eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century London, critical discussions of urban culture in this period have focused on a wide variety of topics.[10] Within this field of exploration, a cluster of key critical works have reshaped our understanding of the city in this era, drawing on the works of Henri Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau, and others to examine the construction, experience, and representation of urban space in this period. Miles Ogborn, Cynthia Wall, Erik Bond, and Jane Rendell have considered, respectively, how specific developments, processes, and sites mark the city as exemplifying a new sense of modernity; how a wide variety of eighteenth-century urban texts reinscribed meaning on to the empty spaces left in the wake of the Great Fire; how questions of authority and control in the city were reimagined in the aftermath of the Revolution of 1688; and how the Regency city was constructed architecturally and in texts like Pierce Egan's bestseller *Life in London* (1821) as a space of male pleasure.[11] Walking is an aspect (but not the focus) of these discussions; Wall, Ogborn, and Bond all devote time to John Gay's *Trivia: or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London* (1716), while Rendell is interested in the fashionable male rambler as a mobile figure.

More recently, Catharina Löffler and Emmanuelle Peraldo have explored walking (including in works by Gay and Defoe and, in Löffler's discussion, Burney, John Thelwall, and Wordsworth) in relation to psychogeography as a way of thinking, respectively, about the various forms of

[10] Alison O'Byrne, "London and Urban Culture in the Eighteenth Century", *Literature Compass* (2018). DOI: 10.1111/lic3.12437.

[11] Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies 1680–1780* (New York: Guildford Press, 1998); Cynthia Wall, *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Jane Rendell, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London* (London: Athlone, 2002); Erik Bond, *Reading London: Urban Speculation and Imaginative Government in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007). Other significant accounts of the city in this period include Mark Hallett, *The Spectacle of Difference: Graphic Satire in the Age of Hogarth* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

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urban experience in the period, and how walking in selected literary texts is a performative, sensory experience that contributes to the construction of spatial knowledge.[12] Focusing on a later period, Dana Arnold's account of architecture and urban planning opens by teasing out de Certeau's distinction between panoramic and street-level views in representations of London between 1800 and 1840; while she borrows Gay's subtitle – "The Art of Walking the Streets of London" – for her chapter on the latter, she focuses on the viewpoints and vistas offered to the bourgeois subject by John Nash's improvements to the West End of London.[13] Also with regard to this period, Joanna Guldi has examined the increasing variety of terms to describe walking gaits in London in the first half of the nineteenth century, doing so as a means to think about how digital tools and databases can be used in meaningful ways.[14] In Romantic-period literary studies, the city as subject of literature and as site of literary and cultural production has been explored by Gregory Dart and by the contributors to James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin's *Romantic Metropolis*.[15]

While many of these works include a discussion of walking (often via Gay's *Trivia*), accounts of the role of walking in British literature and culture have focused on two main areas of inquiry. The first of these is Romantic-period poetry, and especially the writing of William Wordsworth. Anne D. Wallace has examined the development of a "peripatetic" mode in Wordsworth and other writers of the nineteenth century, arguing that its articulation is often "a solution to the aesthetic problems connected with – both generating and generated by – the transport revolution and enclosure".[16] Celeste Langan has paid particular attention to walking and vagrancy in Wordsworth's writing, while Robin

[12] Catharina Löffler, *Walking in the City: Urban Experience and Literary Psychogeography in Eighteenth-Century London* (Wiesbaden: J. B. Metzler, 2017); Emmanuelle Peraldo, "Walking the Streets of London in the Eighteenth Century: A Performative Art?" in *Walking and the Aesthetics of Modernity: Pedestrian Mobility in Literature and the Arts*, ed. Klaus Benesch and François Specq (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 3–14.

[13] Dana Arnold, *Re-presenting the Metropolis: Architecture, Urban Experience and Social Life in London 1800–1840* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA and London: University of California Press, 1988), 92–3.

[14] Joanna Guldi, "The History of Walking and the Digital Turn: Stride and Lounge in London, 1808–1851", *The Journal of Modern History* 84: 1 (March 2012), 116–44.

[15] Gregory Dart, *Metropolitan Art and Literature, 1810–1840: Cockney Adventures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin, eds., *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[16] Anne D. Wallace, *Walking, Literature, and English Culture: The Origins and Uses of Peripatetic in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 8, 9.

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Jarvis's account of Romantic pedestrianism has sought to look beyond the poetry of Wordsworth to consider the rise of pedestrian travel more broadly in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.[17] Both Jarvis and Carl Thompson have drawn our attention to the ways in which pedestrian tourism in this period may be thought of as oppositional. At a time when walking as a mode of travel between towns and cities was associated with poverty, vagrancy, and criminality (and pedestrian travellers thereby treated with "mistrust, intolerance and discrimination"), choosing to walk might be understood as "deliberate social nonconformism", reflective of the traveller's "desire not only to identify with the common people, but also distinguish him or herself from other, more despised forms of tourist".[18] The focus on male experiences, and the acknowledgement of women's limited access to a mode of walking figured as freedom, has had, in Ingrid Horrocks's words, "the unintended, but inadvertent, effect of seeming to reconfine women (along with other subjects without access to at least middle-class male privilege) to a stationary position" that her exploration of women wanderers in the Romantic period seeks to counter.[19]

This attention to the emergence of pedestrian travel in the Romantic period – and its association with the poetry of Wordsworth and ideas of vagrancy – has risked obscuring the place of walking in the literature and culture of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century London. Though Penelope Corfield's historical survey of eighteenth-century urban pedestrianism has shown that "walking was . . . an essential mode of transport" in towns and cities in this period and John Urry has emphasized how "walking was afforded new possibilities" in London after the acts to better pave, clean, and light the streets in the 1760s, the points raised by Jarvis and Thompson about the suspicion levelled at pedestrian tourists moving between towns and through the countryside are often taken as applicable to all forms of walking.[20] Peraldo, for example, begins her discussion of walking and psychogeography in Gay and Defoe (published as part of a

[17] Celeste Langan, *Romantic Vagrancy: Wordsworth and the Simulation of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Robin Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997).

[18] Jarvis, *Romantic Writing and Pedestrian Travel*, 27; Carl Thompson, *The Suffering Traveller and the Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 38.

[19] Ingrid Horrocks, *Women Wanderers and the Writing of Mobility, 1784–1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 23.

[20] Penelope Corfield, "Walking the City Streets: The Urban Odyssey in Eighteenth-Century England", *Journal of Urban History* 16: 2 (February 1990), 132–74; 132; John Urry, *Mobilities* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Wiley, 2007), 66.

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collection that looks widely at the place of walking in literature and the arts) with the claim that "In the eighteenth century, walking had not been considered a respectable mode of travel . . . eighteenth-century readers (and writers) associated street-walking with poverty, prostitution, and panhandling."[21] This view has perhaps been further assisted by the second key area of exploration for accounts of walking in British literature and culture, which has focused on London in the Victorian period and after (Karen Newman's exploration of walking in early modern Paris and London, and Matthew Beaumont's exploration of "nightwalking" from Chaucer to Dickens are important exceptions).[22] The wide-ranging discussion of the literature of urban walking in this period has also obscured the extent to which walking shaped accounts of London and urban experience in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[23] The editors of *Walking Histories, 1800–1914*, for example, open their introduction similarly to Peraldo with the statement that "Throughout much of the eighteenth century, respectable English society thought little of walking for pleasure. Only 'footpads' – paupers, beggars, vagabonds, and the poor more generally – went by foot."[24] They then locate many of the developments I will go on to explore – including the middle classes strolling in urban parks, guidebooks taking their readers on a tour around prescribed locations, and what they describe as "a new and particular walking practice that combined observation with ambulation" – as nineteenth-century phenomena.[25]

By contrast, my exploration of walking in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century London recovers a sense of its significance as a means for organizing, experiencing, and representing the city in this period. Just as London figures as a key location in the literature of this period, so walking is often central to representations of London. While London is an

[21] Peraldo, "Walking the Streets of London in the Eighteenth Century", 3.

[22] Karen Newman, *Cultural Capitals: Early Modern London and Paris* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2007); Matthew Beaumont, *Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London, Chaucer to Dickens* (London and New York: Verso, 2015).

[23] See, for example, Deborah Epstein Nord, *Walking the Victorian Streets: Women, Representation, and the City* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995); Deborah Parsons, *Streetwalking the Metropolis: Women, the City, and Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Lauren Elkin, *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice, and London* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2016); and Matthew Beaumont, *The Walker: On Finding and Losing Yourself in the Modern City* (London and New York: Verso, 2020).

[24] Chad Bryant, Arthur Burns, and Paul Readman, "Introduction: Modern Walks" in *Walking Histories, 1800–1914*, ed. Chad Bryant, Arthur Burns, and Paul Readman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 1–32; 2.

[25] Bryant, Burns, and Readman, "Introduction: Modern Walks", 3.

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important setting in poems, plays, periodicals, and novels of this period, my purpose here is not to undertake a literary survey of representations of London in this period, but instead to concentrate on how walking shapes the representation of the city in diverse forms and genres. In paying particular attention to the models of mobility and spectatorship that were available to and used by writers in this period, I demonstrate in the chapters that follow how writers and artists invented new genres and reworked existing ones as a means of exploring the dynamic modernity of the city. The texts explored in Chapter 1, including Ned Ward's *The London Spy* (1698–1700), Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's *Spectator* (1711–14), and Gay's *Trivia*, echo throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and their influence will be seen in works including satires of social climbing on the Mall explored in Chapter 2, in accounts of London that imagine the needs and experiences of new arrivals in Chapter 3, and in the "spy" guides to London explored in Chapter 4. The texts explored in Chapter 5 offer a retrospect on eighteenth-century London, as writers and artists reimagine these earlier accounts of urban life, often revealing them to be comically inadequate for describing the present moment. In thinking about the representation of everyday experiences in London's streets and public places, my account of walking in London also contributes to the recent work on sociability that has invited us to think beyond politeness as a single model for urban manners in the period (albeit one that could be adapted in different ways by different people), to look instead at how sociability was historically and materially constructed in this period, altering its rhythms and forms in different locations and among different groups.[26] Throughout, I highlight how accounts of walking so often present a disjunction between an imagined ideal of urban life and everyday experience; this is sometimes explored in comic terms but is also invoked – as in debates about the appearance of the city – to raise serious questions about the relationship between commerce and refinement.

An imagined ideal of urban life in this period can be found in proposals for urban improvements, and in accounts of the city which present it as the locus of cultural refinement, such as David Hume's essay "On Refinement

[26] See, for example, Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite, eds. *Romantic Conversations: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain, 1770–1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Gillian Russell, *Women, Sociability, and Theatre in Georgian London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Jon Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762–1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Kevin Gilmartin, ed., *Sociable Places: Locating Culture in Romantic-Period Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

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in the Arts" (1752). For Hume, refinement of the arts naturally follows from an advanced stage of civilization when, as he outlines in his essay "Of Commerce", commercial society acquaints men with both "the *pleasures* of luxury and the *profits* of commerce".[27] In his account of refinement in the arts, he argues that

> The more these refined arts advance, the more sociable men become: nor is it possible, that, when enriched with science, and possessed of a fund of conversation, they should be contented to remain in solitude, or live with their fellow-citizens in that distant manner, which is peculiar to ignorant and barbarous nations. They flock into cities; love to receive and communicate knowledge; to show their wit or their breeding; their taste in conversation or living, in clothes or furniture. Curiosity allures the wise; vanity the foolish; and pleasure both. Particular clubs and societies are every where formed: Both sexes meet in an easy and sociable manner; and the tempers of men, as well as their behaviour, refine apace. So that, beside the improvements which they receive from knowledge and the liberal arts, it is impossible but they must feel an encrease of humanity, from the very habit of conversing together, and contributing to each other's pleasure and entertainment.[28]

According to Hume, commercial prosperity generates improvement in the arts, which in turn increases sociability, in so doing improving the manners of men and women. The social interaction facilitated by the leisure time and material comforts brought into being by commerce is thus presented as wholly positive, offering endless possibilities for the mutual self-improvement of city-dwellers, at once the result of their readiness to perform in company and of their being eager spectators of the taste displayed by others.

While Hume does not use the term "polite", his account of the progress and development of society pays tribute to the improving and refining forms of sociability widely associated with politeness. Historians of politeness, most notably Paul Langford and Lawrence Klein, have examined its wide range of meanings in the eighteenth century, covering everything from an individual's manners or sense of taste, to particular forms of cultural production, the appearance of the city, and even to national characteristics that seemingly distinguished Britons from inhabitants of

[27] David Hume, "Of Commerce" in David Hume, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary: A Critical Edition*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp and Mark A. Box, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2021), I: 199–208; 206.

[28] David Hume, "Of Refinement in the Arts" in David Hume, *Essays, Moral, Political, and Literary: A Critical Edition*, ed. Tom L. Beauchamp and Mark A. Box, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2021), I: 209–17; 211.

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other countries.[29] As an urban ideal, politeness was associated with an easy sociability, one exemplified in the club at the heart of Addison and Steele's enormously popular *Spectator*. While accounts from within the period and histories of the eighteenth century often present politeness as readily attainable, more recent work has put this sense of progress under pressure, reminding us of the endurance of violence and cruelty in this period and the ways in which, as Brian Cowan argues, "Normative codes of politeness . . . were necessary because they were so often breached in daily practice."[30] In what follows, we will see how accounts of walking, and works organized via walking, highlight the tensions between an imagined ideal of urban life and London's commercial character in a number of different ways, presenting crowded and busy streets as making pleasurable strolling a challenge, and social ambition and competition as rendering improving sociability all but impossible.

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Returning to Penny's painting, and the poem from which it takes its inspiration, we can see how such representations of walking in London address the city as it might be experienced rather than as an ideal. Swift's "A Description of a City Shower" was first published in Steele's *Tatler* in 1710. In this issue, Isaac Bickerstaff, the periodical's authorial persona, introduces the poem as the work of his "ingenious Kinsman" Humphrey Wagstaff.[31] By situating the poem within its pages and attributing it to Bickerstaff's kinsman, *The Tatler* suggests that the London of mud, filth, and disorder is not wholly separate from, but in fact intimately related to, Bickerstaff's version of the city. "A Description of a City Shower" thus serves as a humorous reminder to the periodical's contemporary audience of what is at stake in the *Tatler*'s broader ideological project to establish the parameters of good conduct and easy sociability in London, and of what needs to be written out to make this project possible.

[29] See in particular Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727–1783* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989) and Lawrence Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[30] Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 260. See also Vic Gatrell, *City of Laughter: Sex and Satire in Eighteenth-Century London* (London: Atlantic, 2006), 17; Simon Dickie, *Cruelty and Laughter: Forgotten Comic Literature and the Unsentimental Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

[31] *Tatler* no. 238 (17 October 1710), in *The Tatler*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2014), III: 225.

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The poem, Bickerstaff explains, transfers "*Virgil*'s *Land Shower*" to the streets of London.[32] In contrast to the shower that cleanses and renews in the *Georgics*, the rain described in "A Description of a City Shower" has very different consequences. Descending from a cloud "That swill'd more Liquor than it could contain, / And like a Drunkard gives it up again", the shower only threatens to make an already dirty city dirtier; as the clouds metaphorically vomit over London, "'Twas doubtful which was Rain, and which was Dust."[33] As the rain begins to fall, women gather in shops where they "Pretend to cheapen Goods, but nothing buy", while "underneath a Shed" a congregation of Whigs and Tories gather, putting aside their political differences in their shared concern "to save their Wigs".[34] This intermixing is mirrored in the street's kennels, or gutters, where the city's waste products jostle together in the confluence of rubbish in the open sewer that is the Fleet:

> Filth of all Hues and Odours seem to tell
> What Street they sail'd from, by their Sight and Smell.
> They, as each Torrent drives, with rapid Force
> From *Smithfield* or St. *Pulchre*'s shape their Course,
> And in huge Confluent join at *Snow-Hill* Ridge,
> Fall from the *Conduit* prone to *Holborn-Bridge*.
> Sweepings from Butchers Stalls, Dung, Guts, and Blood,
> Drown'd Puppies, stinking Sprats, all drench'd in Mud,
> Dead Cats and Turnip-Tops come tumbling down the Flood.[35]

In this final image, the city amounts to little more than its waste products, which "come tumbling down" (as reflected in the shift in meter), inundating the city, rather than being washed away by the shower.

The poem's account of the city as a site of dirt and filth is reinforced by the relationship between the shower and the sewer. As Laura Brown notes, eighteenth-century pronunciations of "shower" and "sewer" make it clear that Swift's title works as a pun, as does the progress of the poem, which begins with a shower but ends with an extended account of overflowing sewers. For Brown, "the sewer seems so deeply inseparable, semantically and phonetically, from the shower as to almost eliminate the effect of surprise" for eighteenth-century readers.[36] This relationship between the shower and the sewer is also emphasized in the poem's already cited image

[32] *Tatler* no. 238; III: 225. [33] Swift, "A Description of a City Shower", ll. 15–6, 26.
[34] Swift, "A Description of a City Shower", ll. 34, 40, 42.
[35] Swift, "A Description of a City Shower", ll. 55–63.
[36] Laura Brown, *Fables of Modernity: Literature and Culture in the English Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 27.

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of the rain cloud "That swill'd more Liquor than it could contain, / And like a Drunkard gives it up again." As Richard Hamblyn discusses, in the seventeenth century René Descartes had proposed that clouds consisted of droplets or particles "formed by compressed vapours given off by objects on the ground", with rain occurring when those drops grow too large to remain aloft.[37] If, as the poem suggests, the sewers and what they transport are the defining feature of London at ground level, then the stench and vapours emanating from them provide the source of the shower: the shower and the sewer are thus one.

Like the poem's opening couplet, which states that "Careful Observers may fortel the Hour / (By sure Prognosticks) when to dread a Show'r", the final lines insist that the city is readable, to the extent that the items in the kennels are described by type and by origin.[38] Yet while the poem begins and ends by suggesting that it is possible to read the city, it also presents this knowledge as insufficient to keep the pedestrian clean. While the poem addresses the reader in such a way as to suggest that they are one of the "Careful Observers" who know when a shower is coming by signs including the "double Stink" of the gutter, "shooting Corns", "old Aches [that] throb" and the "hollow Tooth [that] will rage", it also invites its audience to recognize certain aspects of city life including the scramble for shelter in such a scenario.[39] Swift's poem thus hails the reader in two ways: firstly as someone better prepared to read the city than those who are caught out by the rain, and secondly as someone already familiar with the nuisances and frustrations of city life – indeed, as so familiar with the clash between the pedestrian and a figure such as the "careless Quean" who soils the passer-by with a shower from her mop that the experience has a specific rhetorical purpose by virtue of its familiarity.[40]

Both "A Description of a City Shower" and its companion "A Description of the Morning" – which describes morning through the activities of those who work in the city's streets – were presented to readers of the *Tatler* as written by an author who has "run into a Way perfectly new" and who "makes the Incidents just as they really appear".[41] These poems occupy an ostensibly anomalous place in the pages of the periodical given its efforts to promote politeness and to generate sociability in the new spaces of leisure in the capital. Brean Hammond argues that the

[37] Richard Hamblyn, *The Invention of Clouds: How an Amateur Meteorologist Forged the Language of the Skies* (London: Picador, 2001), 30.
[38] Swift, "A Description of a City Shower", ll. 1–2.
[39] Swift, "A Description of a City Shower", ll. 1, 6, 9, 10.
[40] Swift, "A Description of a City Shower", l. 19.
[41] *Tatler* no. 9 (30 April 1709) I: 79–86, 80.

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poem's inclusion in the periodical renders "A Description of a City Shower" "above all a 'polite' poem . . . [whose] good-humoured irony is part of the friendly, tolerant conversation promoted by Addison and Steele's periodicals".[42] However, while the poem may seem to exemplify the "friendly, tolerant conversation" of Addison and Steele through the interaction between the poet–speaker and the reader, as well as between the Whigs and Tories who "Forget their Fewds, and join to save their Wigs", it also invites readers to recognize who this easy sociability excludes.[43] It addresses the reader as one who would "fly, invoke the Gods; then turning, stop / To rail" at the "careless Quean" who splashes him with water from her mop. The clash between the pedestrian and the maid offers one example of the way in which, as David Fairer outlines, Swift's poem "refuses to embrace variety, and instead pushes difference into blatant incongruity".[44] While the shower that follows does not clean, it might be seen to reveal, exposing both the waste products of the various parts of the city, and in its emphasis on difference and confrontation, the limits of politeness as a strategy of accommodation.

Penny's painting further develops the questions raised by Swift about the possibilities for and limits to polite sociability in the street by transferring the scene from the City, home to commerce, to a fashionable house in a residential street. Although flat flagstones for foot passengers had already been laid in a small number of streets in order to distinguish between spaces for pedestrians and for wheeled traffic, the raised pavement in Penny's painting alludes to one of the key transformations in London in the 1760s: the Westminster Paving Acts, a series of acts beginning in 1762 that sought to regulate the paving and ordering of the streets and sidewalks.[45] The broad, flat, and raised pavement and the lamps gesture towards an ideal of city life in which pedestrians can expect a safe, clean, and easy passage through its streets. The encounter between the gentleman and the maid, though, might be seen to disrupt such a notion of the city, presenting the streets instead as a site of potential conflict, as the polite pedestrian recoils from the maid's twirling mop. The broom which leans

[42] Brean Hammond, "The City in Eighteenth-Century Poetry" in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. John Sitter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 83–107; 84.

[43] Hammond, "The City in Eighteenth-Century Poetry", 84; Swift, "A Description of a City Shower", l. 42.

[44] David Fairer, *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century, 1700–1789* (London: Routledge, 2003), 31–2.

[45] Sidney Webb and Beatrice Webb, *Statutory Authorities for Special Purposes* in *English Local Government*, 10 vols. (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1963), IV: 281, 284.

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against and breaks the lines of the lamppost on the left of the painting further emphasizes the way in which cleaning the streets is itself potentially dirty work.

Indeed, Penny's painting not only draws attention to the labour involved in keeping the pavement clean, but by doing so further suggests that the streets might be always already dirty. In this way, it may obliquely allude to Bernard Mandeville's account of the inverse relationship between commercial dynamism and clean streets outlined in *The Fable of the Bees* (1714), which argues that the individual "Private Vices" that motivate the consumption of luxury goods become "Publick Benefits" as they create employment for the poor.[46] In his "Preface", Mandeville states that

> There are, I believe, few People in *London*, of those that are at any times forc'd to go a foot, but what could wish the Streets of it much cleaner than generally they are; whilst they regard nothing but their own Cloaths and private Conveniency; but when once they come to consider, that what offends them is the result of the Plenty, great Traffick and Opulency of that mighty City, if they have any Concern in its Welfare, they will hardly ever wish to see the Streets of it less dirty. For if we mind the Materials of all sorts that must supply such an infinite number of Trades and Handicrafts, as are always going forward; the vast quantity of Victuals, Drink and Fewel that are daily consum'd in it, and the Waste and Superfluities that must be produc'd from them; the multitudes of Horses and other Cattle that are always dawbing the Streets, the Carts, Coaches and more heavy Carriages that are perpetually wearing and breaking the Pavement of them, and above all the numberless swarm of People that are continually harassing and trampling through every part of them[:] If, I say, we mind all these, we shall find that every Moment must produce new Filth, and considering how far distant the great Streets are from the River side, what Cost and Care soever be bestow'd to remove the Nastiness almost as fast as it is made, it is impossible *London* should be more cleanly before it is less flourishing. Now would I ask if a good Citizen, in consideration of what has been said, might not assert, that dirty Streets are a necessary Evil inseparable from the Felicity of *London*; without being the least hindrance to the cleaning of Shoes, or sweeping of Streets, and consequently without any Prejudice either to the *Blackguard* or the *Scavingers*.[47]

Commerce necessarily generates an endless cycle of dirt and refuse, and unclean streets are a testament to London's commercial dynamism; only a selfish individual looking for "private Conveniency" would wish for

[46] Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (London: Printed for J. Roberts, 1714), title page.
[47] Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*, n.p.

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improvements that would be detrimental to the "Welfare" of the city. Even the dirt produced by commerce is a productive force, giving continual employment to labourers – the blackguard who cleans shoes and the scavenger who cleans the streets – whose work can contain, if not completely prevent, its accumulation.

While the maid's work reminds us of Mandeville's argument that in London "every Moment must produce new Filth", Penny's presentation of the attractive maid is distinct from that of the grotesquely imagined women often described in Swift's writing.[48] At the same time, the effect of the shower that Penny recounts – the sprinkling of dirty water from the maid's mop – bears no connection to the deluge of filth and waste that breaks the bounds of the gutter at the end of Swift's poem. There is no sense in Penny's image of the conjunction of urban sewers and female bodies as sites of teeming excess that Laura Brown explores in Swift's poem, as well as in Gay's *Trivia* and Alexander Pope's *Dunciad* (1728), and we might think of this as a far more decorous account of dirt, one in line with the conventions of painting rather than print satire.[49]

Penny's presentation of the maid looking out at the viewer while she undertakes her work has more in common with the "fancy pictures" of servant women made popular by Philippe Mercier and Henry Robert Morland than with Swift's "careless Quean".[50] Fancy pictures, which often focus on servants, beggars, and street children, developed as a distinct genre in Britain in the early eighteenth century and were especially popular at the exhibitions of the Society of Artists in the 1760s.[51] In the same exhibition that featured Penny's *A Scene taken from Swift's description of a city shower*, for example, Henry Robert Morland exhibited his fancy picture *A ballad-singer* – a work so popular that he exhibited seven different versions of it between 1764 and 1782.[52] In fancy pictures, as in Penny's painting, as Celina Fox explains, "the single figure of the maid dominates the composition and usually, by looking out of the picture in a coy but winning way, involves the spectator in a sentimental exchange" with "girls [who] are neat, pretty, and wear dresses . . . seemingly above their station".[53]

[48] Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*, n.p. [49] Brown, *Fables of Modernity*, 19–52.
[50] Celina Fox, *Londoners* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 132; Anne French, "The Ambiguous Servant" in *Below Stairs: 400 Years of Servants' Portraits*, ed. Giles Waterfield and Anne French (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2003), 121–37; 133–6.
[51] Martin Postle, *Angels and Urchins: The Fancy Picture in Eighteenth-Century British Art* (Nottingham: The Djanogly Art Gallery in association with Lund Humphries, 1998), 6.
[52] Postle, *Angels and Urchins*, 83. [53] Fox, *Londoners*, 132.

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Penny's painting is clearly indebted to this tradition. Viewed on her own, Penny's maid, lifted above and protected from the potentially muddy pavement by her pattens and apron, is removed from any real sense of the dirtiness and labour of her work, much like the women in Mercier and Morland's fancy pictures, while her glance outward engages the attention of the viewer. While she is dressed and prepared for her work in the streets, the fancy-picture presentation of her labour is interrupted by the presence of the gentleman who draws the viewer's attention to the idea of the unclean. Both the poem and painting suggest that the question of dirtiness is only problematic for the passer-by: as a well-dressed pedestrian he stands to benefit most from the maid's efforts to keep the pavement clean but at the same time he is most at risk of being soiled by her work. In the foreground of the painting is a raised platform at the edge of the pavement for the ease of alighting from carriages, alluding to another, perhaps more appropriate, form of transportation for the fashionably dressed gentleman. That the presence of the gentleman draws the viewer's attention to the idea of dirt is also made clear by comparing Penny's maid to the maid in Swift's "A Description of the Morning". There the maid with mop appears alongside others who clean the streets, including an apprentice who prepares the entranceway to his master's shop and a youth who sweeps items into the kennel, as well as a smallcoal-man, a chimney-sweep, and "Brickdust *Moll*".[54] The early morning hour and the absence of polite gentlemen in the street seem to transform the nature of the maid's work from a nuisance to a skilled operation: "Now *Moll* had whirl'd her Mop with dex'trous Airs, / Prepar'd to scrub the Entry and the Stairs."[55]

The scenario that Penny depicts is further mediated by other possible classifications of the painting. Although more properly regarded as a genre piece that depicts scenes from ordinary life, one reviewer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* included Penny's *City Shower* alongside his *Death of General Wolfe* as among the best of the paintings "in the conversation way" at the 1764 exhibition.[56] As David Solkin explains, for eighteenth-century viewers, "any picture which contained numerous full-length portraits of contemporary figures on a relatively small scale qualified as a

[54] Jonathan Swift, "A Description of the Morning" in *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Harold Williams, 3 vols., 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), I: 124–5, l. 14.
[55] Swift, "A Description of the Morning", ll. 7–8.
[56] ["Remarks on the Late Exhibitions at Spring-Gardens"], *Gentleman's Magazine* 34 (May 1764), 222–3; 223.

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conversation-piece".[57] Conversation pieces were associated with a "domestic ideal" and they frequently situated their subjects within "the material artifacts of daily life".[58] To present the painting as a conversation piece, which normally presents a group (often members of a family) in conversation in their usual surroundings, suggests that this might be the gentleman's house, and that the woman works there as his maid. Needless to say, such a reading draws attention to questions of authority and status. The maid is framed by the doorway, linking her to its interior, in a way that the gentleman is not, and, as in Swift's poem, she does not allow the presence of the gentleman to interrupt her work. Her lack of awareness of or concern for the gentleman who stops (an action emphasized in the poem by the enjambment of the line) and who recoils from her suggests a confidence in her place in a hierarchy of activities in the street. Contemporaries did not regard Penny's maid as an assertive figure, however. Reviewers of the 1764 exhibition identified in her not the bold impudence of Swift's "Quean" but instead "as sweet a Simplicity . . . as I ever saw in anything", suggestive of the sentimental exchange between viewer and subject in fancy pictures.[59] For the reviewer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, who read the painting not simply as an illustration of a scene from the poem but as a commentary on Swift's writing of the poem, the maid had "a true native simplicity" that provided a contrast to "the discomposure of the poet at having his cloaths daub'd by the carelessness of the wench, [which] made every one smile".[60]

The nature of Penny's engagement with Swift's poem is thrown into relief by the difference of a later print which is obviously indebted to his painting. In *The Unfortunate Beau* (1772) (Figure 0.2), the maid whose work dirties the well-dressed pedestrian looks out at the viewer with a knowing smirk on her face. She is not the only threat to the clothing of the two gentlemen; the beau on the left gestures towards a mark left on his stocking by a chimney-sweep who remains threateningly close to his pale attire. The use of the term "beau" in the title, highlighting the ostentatious nature of the men's clothing, invites the audience to see them as objects of ridicule who deserve what the maid has dished out to them as her mop

[57] David H. Solkin, "Portraiture in Motion: Edward Penny's 'Marquis of Granby' and the Creation of a Public for English Art", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 49: 1 (Winter 1986), 1–23; 3.
[58] Solkin, "Portraiture in Motion", 3; Klein, "Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century", 877. See also Charles Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1993), 70–73.
[59] *Public Advertiser* Numb. 9209 (5 May 1764), n.p.
[60] ["Remarks on the Late Exhibitions at Spring-Gardens"], 223.

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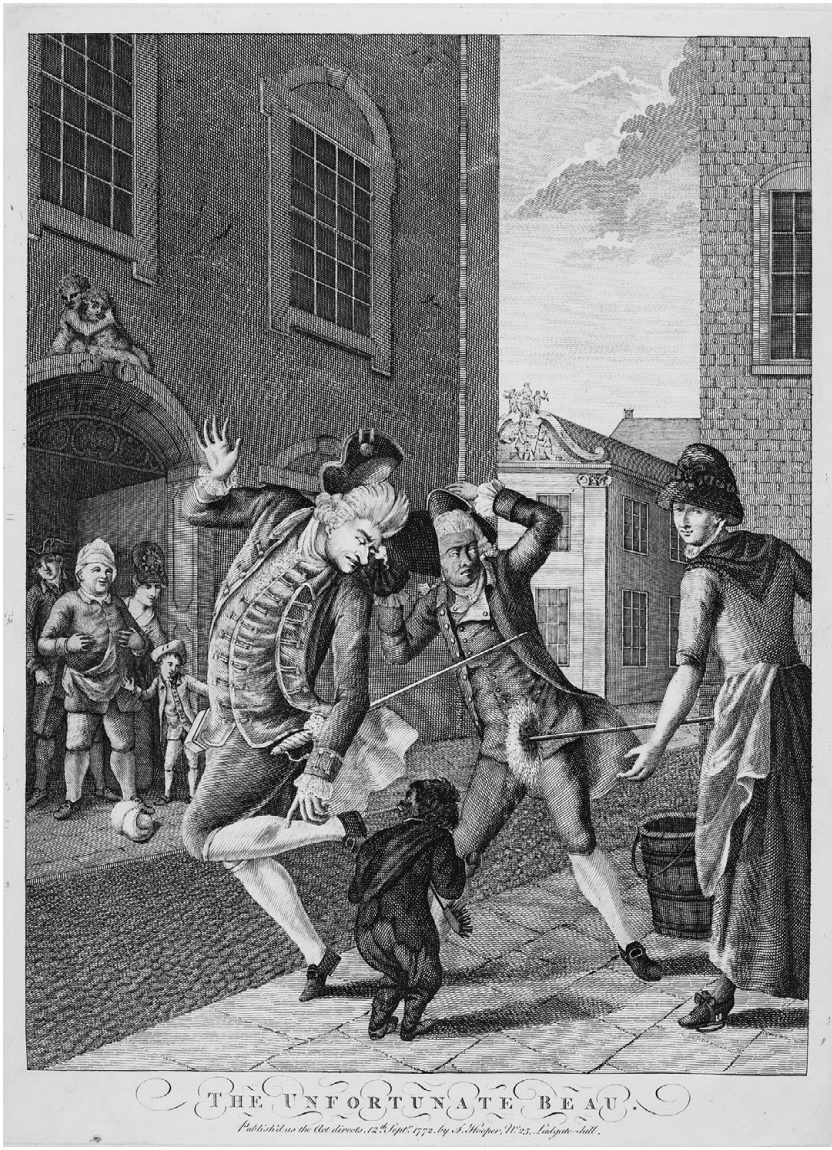


Figure 0.2 *The Unfortunate Beau* (1772).
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prods the groin of the gentleman on the right. While the viewer might not laugh as heartily as the labourer across the street does, the audience's invitation to participate in the amusement shared by the labourer and the maid is reinforced by the smiles of the well-dressed, but not overly dressed, family peering out of the doorway. Whereas Penny presents a familiar experience of urban life as arising from an accidental encounter, *The Unfortunate Beau* comically stages a more confrontational scene, which sits more easily with the conventions of print satire rather than painting.

Hanging on the walls of the Great Room in Spring Gardens, Charing Cross, Penny's painting invited its audience to engage with the maid, who, in fancy-picture style, looks out at the viewer, and to laugh at the contrast between her "true native simplicity" and the pedestrian's "discomposure".[61] In this way, it differs significantly from Swift's poem, which attempts to reinforce a hierarchy that is clearly unstable and under threat by suggesting that "you" (or "we") know what polite behaviour is, but that the "careless Quean" does not.[62] Nevertheless, even as the scenario depicted by Penny is less confrontational than that of *The Unfortunate Beau*, it responds to Swift's poem in such a way as to remind the viewer that everyday encounters on the streets of London challenge any idea of the city as a locus of easy sociability and refinement.

*

Penny's painting and the poem to which it alludes together raise a number of issues that are explored in the chapters of this book. These include the relationship between ideas of improvement and the more quotidian experience of the city; the anxieties and concerns about social intermixing in London's public places; the physical and imaginative ordering and structuring of London's streets; and the circulation, reworking, and persistence of particular tropes and images that is a hallmark of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century accounts of the city. In the chapters that follow, I examine how in John Gay's *Trivia* the act of walking is elevated – at once comically and seriously – into an art that allows the city's commercial life to operate unimpeded by polite walkers wishing to stroll at their leisure; how the pastime of the promenade brought Londoners from across social classes together and thereby provided rich material for satirists; how

[61] ["Remarks on the Late Exhibitions at Spring-Gardens"], 223.
[62] Swift, "A Description of a City Shower", ll. 21, 19.

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strangers were encouraged to walk as a way of exploring London, making the most of the "*Fine and Principal Streets*" that were "the best for Foot Passengers" as they followed the tours outlined in guidebooks; how walking through the city allowed authors of spy guides to draw sharp contrasts between high and low life and to reveal to readers the cheats of London; and how, in the early nineteenth century, the rapid growth of the city led to an increasing sense of both the pleasures and frustrations of urban life, comically explored through the reworking of recurrent tropes and images that is a feature of such accounts of walking in London in this period. I focus on clusters of works that invoke and engage with walking in particular ways and, in the case of the Mall in St James's Park, in a particular place. Other discussions of walking in London in this period might address instead how the experience of walking the city streets is recounted in diaries and letters, the representation of the environs of London, including its suburbs, and strolling in indoor spaces where people gathered to socialize (such as Ranelagh, the Pantheon, and Mrs. Cornelys's assemblies at Carlisle House). In choosing what kinds of texts, locations, and forms of walking to include, I have been led first and foremost by eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century accounts of London, examining those places, or those forms of walking, that were most commonly represented and described.

Chapter 1 explores Gay's *Trivia: or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London*, situating the poet's account of urban pedestrianism within its early eighteenth-century contexts. In arguing that it is possible "to walk clean by Day, and safe by Night" at the same time as it acknowledges that to do so requires specialist instruction, *Trivia* – a poem with obvious debts to Swift's "A Description of a City Shower" – engages with competing accounts of the city.[63] Like Ned Ward's *The London Spy* (1698–1700) and Tom Brown's *Amusements Serious and Comical, Calculated for the Meridian of London* (1700), *Trivia* is alert to the frenetic energy of streets that are full of crowds, coaches, carts, and chairs. At the same time, in championing a form of etiquette based on a hierarchy of activities in the street and that prioritizes the movement of labourers, it offers an alternative account of good conduct and urban sociability to that found in Addison and Steele's *Tatler* and *Spectator*, one adapted to the busy streets of the commercial city. In bringing these different works together, I set up some of the forms of mobility and spectatorship that shaped representations of walking

[63] John Gay, *Trivia: or, The Art of Walking the Streets of London* in *John Gay: Poetry and Prose*, ed. Vinton Dearing, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 2014), I: 134–81; Book I, l. 2.

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throughout the period, and to which works examined in later chapters would return.

In Chapter 2, I turn my attention to the Mall in St James's Park, a fashionable promenade that – unlike pleasure gardens like Vauxhall – was free to enter and had no other entertainments on offer apart from strolling. The opportunity for self-display in such an environment lent itself to comic explorations of the tensions between new, commercial wealth associated with shopkeepers and their families, and inherited rank and status. Beginning with an account of the Mall's distinctiveness in relation to other spaces for promenading, I then examine how various conduct manuals like *The Man of Manners: or, Plebian Polish'd* ([1737?]) and *The Polite Academy* (1762) present the art of walking as one aspect of a broader understanding of easy sociability. While conduct manuals suggest the possibilities for relaxed mixing between ranks, humorous works focus on a sense of social competition, presenting men and women whose money comes from trade and commerce as always looking to emulate those higher up the social ladder. Rather than lament the blurring of distinctions, though, the works I explore here, including satirical surveys of the manners and morals of Londoners like *A Trip through London: Containing Observations on Men and Things* (1728), and mid-century periodicals like *The World* (1753–6) and *The Connoisseur* (1754–6), suggest that upstarts always give themselves away, and status is always discernible in how people move and conduct themselves.

The vexed relationship between commercial wealth and ideas of refinement is also at the heart of debates about the appearance of London in this period. Chapter 3 explores the rise of tourism in London through an exploration of guidebooks like *A New Guide to London; or, Directions to Strangers* (1726) that walk visitors through the city, and via various proposals for urban improvements, such as John Gwynn's *London and Westminster Improved* (1766), that argue that a more magnificent cityscape would attract more tourists to the metropolis. In imagining the needs and interests of travellers, the works explored in this chapter construct a very different type of visitor than those new arrivals whose mistakes provided a source of comedy in *The London Spy* and *Amusements Serious and Comical*, presenting the tourist as both a potential consumer and a potential critic of the city. While guidebooks, proposals for urban improvements, and surveys like Thomas Malton's *A Picturesque Tour through the Cities of London and Westminster* (1792) sometimes articulate concerns that London did not properly support the nation's reputation for commercial and military prowess with convincing claims to progress in the arts,

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accounts of the city by continental visitors, whose expectations were frequently shaped by their familiarity with Addison and Steele's *Spectator*, point to how they understood London as a commercial city to be distinct from its European comparators.

In addition to the topographical tours that catered to visitors to the city, booksellers also fed an interest in urban life through the production of pseudo-guides that take the reader on a ramble through the city, claiming to reveal London's vices. Chapter 4 examines a range of works which signal their indebtedness to Ward's *London Spy* in titles like *The Midnight Spy* (1766), *The New London Spy* ([1771]), and *The Complete Modern London Spy* ([1781]), each claiming to offer the most complete and up-to-date account of urban manners and entertainments. Like Ward and Brown, the anonymous authors of these works commonly describe the city by way of a conversation between a new arrival and a denizen of the city, suggesting that urban mores are potentially inscrutable without the insider knowledge that they claim to provide. I situate the emergence of these narratives within the diverse range of writing that characterizes mid-eighteenth-century print culture, when novels explored the potential dangers of London, the informant narrative was revived, and older works outlining the frauds of London were republished. The repetitive nature of these spy guides produced a reified narrative of the city as a place of snares and frauds in which human relationships are driven by mercenary motives, and I end with a discussion of George Cruikshank's *Picture of London* ([1812?]) as offering a comic retrospect on these works.

Chapter 5 examines a range of early nineteenth-century accounts of walking in London that highlight the pleasures and vexations of urban living, frequently by reimagining eighteenth-century accounts of the city such as Gay's *Trivia*, conduct manuals, and spy guides. After an account of the familiar binary that has shaped our sense of London in this period – the poetry of Blake and Wordsworth with its emphasis on alienation on the one hand, and the periodical writings of Lamb, Hunt, and others that present the city in terms of association, recollection, and pleasure on the other – I turn to a discussion of a range of enormously popular comic works that examine both the vexations and the pleasures of living in a large city. Works like James Beresford's *Miseries of Human Life* (1806) and Pierce Egan's *Life in London* (1821) inspired a range of texts and images that sought to cash in on their popularity. I position these works in relation to eighteenth-century accounts of London explored in the previous chapters, which provide a touchstone for writers and artists as they sometimes seek to distinguish the past from the present, and sometimes look to

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update Gay's sense of "the art of walking the streets of London" for their present moment. Together, these works point to a set of attitudes, manners, and behaviours associated with being a Londoner – someone who revels in the possibilities of and is ready to find amusement in everyday urban living.

In the conclusion, I turn to James Elmes and Thomas Hosmer Shepherd's *Metropolitan Improvements; or London in the Nineteenth Century* (1827). A celebration of the new developments in the West End of London spearheaded in the early nineteenth century by the Prince Regent and John Nash, *Metropolitan Improvements* presents a tour through the new spaces that emerged out of the development of crown land. As it walks the reader through all there is to see, it apparently resolves many of the tensions between commerce and refinement explored in previous chapters. The architectural beauty of the new streets and squares, along with the careful landscaping of Regent's Park, demonstrate a magnificence and grandeur that had formerly been lacking. The new improvements are presented as worthy of a city that is now "the metropolis and mart of the united kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, [and] of our immense colonies and territorial possessions in the East Indies".[64] This new-found confidence presents commerce, refinement, and military strength in easy coexistence and on evident display, offering a clear account of London as a "world city" – albeit that, as I show, the ongoing improvement of London would in turn disclose new problems and questions to be addressed.

[64] James Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements; or London in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Jones and Co., 1827), 104.

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