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Benjamin's "Flâneur" and Serial Murder- an Ultra-Realist Literary Case Study of Levi Bellfield

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| Abstract: | <p>This paper seeks to develop criminological theory with the application of a literary device known as the "flâneur"- an individual described as a "stroller" - to serial murderer Levi Bellfield. With this application of the "flâneur" to the phenomenon of serial murder, this paper provides a fresh theoretical "lens", and specifically sheds light on how particular serial murderers operate and evade detection in modern society. The importance of modernity to the phenomenon of serial murder is also considered utilising Ultra-Realist theory, resulting in both a micro and macro examination into how the modern urban landscape has subsequently created an environment in which both the serial killer operates and comes to fruition. This synthesis between the application of literary devices, criminological theory and socio-cultural concepts not only raises important and previously neglected questions pertaining to serial murder, but also assisted in forming the more sinister relative of the flâneur: the "dark flâneur".</p> |

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Benjamin's "Flâneur" and Serial Murder- an Ultra-Realist Literary Case Study of Levi Bellfield

Introduction

Shanafelt and Pino (2013) have suggested that, if the criminological study of serial killers is to advance, it must utilise the conceptual tools provided by cognate fields. Thus far, the majority of criminologists working in this area have failed to heed this warning, and criminological accounts of serial murder remain for the most part sterile, descriptive and under-developed (see also Wilson, 2012).

This paper aims to avoid leaden definitional debates and the perils of abstract empiricism. It draws upon ultra-realism, a new and important conceptual framework in criminology, aspects of nineteenth century French literature, and the urban theory of Walter Benjamin, in the hope of contributing to the revitalization of academic work on serial murder (Waugh, 2006). Specifically, this paper seeks to develop the area of study with the application of a literary device known as the "flâneur"-an individual described as a "stroller"- to British serial murderer Levi Bellfield. As such, this paper provides a fresh theoretical "lens", and specifically sheds light of how particular serial murderers operate, develop and evade detection.

The significance of occupational choice for serial murderer has often been overlooked within academic discourse. In particular, authors such as McClellan (2008) and **** and **** (2015a and 2015b; see also **** *et al.*, 2012) have drawn attention to the importance of driving as an occupational choice for serial murderers, there has been diminutive theoretical discussion regarding how such offenders are influenced and interact within the micro and meso context. The implication of modernity on serial murder is also considered, resulting in a micro and macro examination of the influence of the modern urban landscape.

There has been a recent effort to provide a multi-level analysis of serial murder, with Hall and Wilson (2014) providing a macro, meso, and micro level of analysis in an attempt to offer new theoretical insights into the phenomenon of serial murder. For example, in their pursuit for a multi-level theory of serial murder, they employ the concepts of 'pseudo-pacification' and 'special liberty'. Pseudo-pacification, Hall (2012) suggests, was a result of capitalism's ability to reduce the high rates of physical violence that came to depict the pre-enlightenment period, but still produced economically beneficial symbolic violence performed in society

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6 and as socio-symbolic competition (Hall, 2012; see also Winlow, 2014). Special liberty was another consequence of capitalism that
7 has, according to Hall and Wilson (2014), stripped away many of the pre-capitalist, collectivist ideals and in its stead created an
8 environment in which the right to freely express one's motivations and yearnings is continually exerted. Writing in this tradition,
9 Winlow (2014) has also suggested that:
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15 The individual is therefore as free as the external control system allows him to be to act with impunity, free to rob,
16 plunder and destroy without ever acknowledging the harms their activities visit upon others (Winlow, 2014: 175).
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22 Hall and Wilson's multi-level theory fits comfortably with more structural accounts of serial murder, providing further support for
23 arguments that suggest how individuals marginalised in competitive capitalist societies are continually at risk from individuals
24 whose actions are a
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29 'manifestation of the lack of trust and brutality that underlie' such social and cultural contexts (Hall & Wilson, 2014: 651).
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34 Taking the above into consideration, this paper will trace the conceptual origins of the flâneur, along with its female equivalent the
35 flâneuse, prior to their application to serial murderer Levi Bellfield and his three confirmed victims. This synthesis between the
36 application of literary devices, criminological theory and socio-cultural concepts raises important and previously neglected
37 questions of serial murder whilst assisting the formulation of the more sinister "dark flâneur".
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41 42 **Levi Bellfield- Synopsis of a serial murderer** 43 44 45

46 Levi Bellfield (known as the bus stop killer), born on the 17th of May 1968 is one of the United Kingdom's most prolific serial
47 killers. He is, at the time of writing, the only individual in the United Kingdom to ever be sentenced to two separate whole life
48 tariffs for the murders of three young women and the serious assault of one other. It is suspected that Bellfield is responsible for
49 the murders of a multitude of other young women from the early nineties onwards although he has never been charged with these
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7 crimes. Bellfield, a night club bouncer and, by day, a wheel-clamper, committed his murders over a large geographical area
8 whilst supposedly carrying out work-related activities. Thirteen-year old Milly Dowler, Bellfield's first confirmed victim, was last
9 seen on CCTV leaving the railway station in Walton on Thames, Surrey, on 21st March 2002 (Twomey, 2008). Bellfield's
10 second known victim, 19-year old Marsha McDonnell, was assaulted and subsequently died from her injuries sustained from a
11 blunt instrument near her home in Hampton in February 2003 (Barton, 2008). Bellfield's third and final murder victim, 22-year
12 old French student Amelie Delagrang, Was attacked in Twickenham Green on 19th August 2004 (Twomey, 2008). Wansell
13 (2011) notes that Bellfield did not commit any of his known murders whilst working as a nightclub bouncer, but instead
14 exclusively during the hours in which he was working as a self-employed, wheel-clamper.
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21 **Methodology**

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27 As with most research involving serial murder, attempting to gain access to individuals relevant to this study's subject matter
28 proved to be difficult. Taking this into consideration, a case study approach was adopted. Such an approach was selected due to,
29 primarily, case studies offering researchers the necessary tools when examining new research areas (Eisenhardt, 1989).
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34 With regard to the types of data collected we had access to books (both scholarly and 'true crime'), contemporaneous and later
35 newspaper articles, and court transcripts. News articles were collected via Nexis, a search engine, 'which houses all major
36 British newspapers, including both national and regional titles' (Yardley *et al.*, 2014; **** & ****, 2015). True crime books also
37 offered a means by which initial data could be further validated. These included such books as: *The Bus Stop Killer* (Wansell,
38 2011); *Bus Stop Killer: The True Story of Levi Bellfield* (Bell, 2016); and, *Predator - The true story of Levi Bellfield, the man*
39 *who murdered Milly Dowler, Marsha McDonnell and Amelie Delagrang* (McShane, 2011). Many of these books offered more
40 in-depth coverage of the serial murderer in question, often presenting a life history that frequently highlighted Bellfield's
41 professional career, as well as the nature of his offences.
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6 Durham *et al.* (1995:144) note how ‘the true crime genre is an important, yet unstudied, aspect of popular representations of crime’.
7 Whilst it is widely understood that true crime accounts can potentially mislead the public with regard to the realities of crime, the fact
8 that they often present a detailed biography of the offender offers a different data set with which to triangulate other information
9 drawn from other secondary sources. The majority of such popular criminology texts have been utilised to inform the veracity of
10 chronological details offered, though at times the subjective insights of Bellfield’s perspective are utilised where appropriate. It is also
11 worth noting here that considerable care was given in using the more credible references used by those true crime authors included and
12 referred to in this study. Court transcripts, similar to that of newspapers, were collated through the use of LexisNexis, a similar online
13 search engine to that of Nexis, which provides computer-assisted legal research, and further provided extra means to triangulate data.
14 Through this process of triangulation, which is a method that utilises ‘multiple sources of data’ (Merriam, 1995), the researcher[s] can
15 be confident that the truth is being ‘conveyed as truthfully as possible’ (pg.54).
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23 In presenting this case study of Bellfield, we argue that similar to how the flâneur was a product of the modernizing processes of the
24 19th century, the dark flâneur is also a product of similar, yet more recent, social changes- liberal capitalism. For example, the first
25 known case of transient serial murder in the UK – Peter Sutcliffe (the Yorkshire Ripper) - occurred in the mid 1970’s. This was
26 primarily due to the fact that vehicles had become much more accessible to the general public during this period and that, due to the
27 road networks expanding in order to meet the increase in car ownership, more and more locations became accessible that were
28 previously difficult to reach (Donnelly, 2005: 31). From this development, a number of similar serial murderers arose, such as: John
29 Duffy and David Mulcahy (the Railway Rapists); Robert Black; Fred and Rosemary West; Peter Tobin; Steve Wright (the Suffolk
30 Strangler); and, Levi Bellfield (the Bus Stop Killer). The expansion of such road networks are directly attributed to the onset of global
31 capitalism, therefore it is within this paradigm we situate the evolution of the dark flâneur. As such, it is argued that this representation
32 of the dark flâneur was born from this transformative process, and the case of Bellfield is illustrative of the more contemporary
33 examples of such a figure.
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The Flâneur

The term “Flâneur” originated in France and was first used in the 19th century. Its roots are in the French noun *flâneur*, which means an individual who is a "stroller", "lounger", or "loafer" (Benjamin, 1999). *Flânerie* means the undertaking of strolling, with all of its associated connotations. The word flâneur carried with it a set of meanings, which included: the man of leisure; the urban explorer; the idler; and, the connoisseur of the street (Benjamin, 1999). Drawing on the poetry of Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin transformed this literary figure into an object of scholarly significance in the 20th century as a symbolic archetype of the urban, contemporary experience. It is also important to note that the flâneur is an exclusively male archetype. This is important when we consider that out of the approximately 35 serial killers from the UK, only three were female (Wilson *et al.*, 2015). Vronsky (2004) notes that there seems to be almost no records of single female sexual serial killers operating in the same way male serial killers do, and most female serial killers commit their crimes with an accomplice. For example, in the UK both Myra Hindley and Rose West committed their crimes with an accomplice, with only Nurse Beverly Allit committing their murders alone (Wilson, 2007).

Fig. 1



Gustave Caillebotte. Paris Street, Rainy Day, 1877. Art Institute of Chicago

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6 The flâneur is a fellow of the crowd who inhabits the streets and sidewalks, and observes the people and architecture around him,
7 whilst acting in a transitory and indifferent manner with a 'cool but curious eye' (Benjamin, 1999). As a literary device, one may
8 appreciate him as a narrator who is fluent in the hieroglyphic vocabulary of visual culture (Benjamin, 1999). When he adopts the
9 shape of narrator, he performs as both a protagonist and audience – though he never becomes a part of the action that is taking place
10 before him.
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16 Benjamin suggests that the flâneur came to prominence when Paris went through a fundamental architectural change, which
17 consisted of the construction of the arcades - passageways that stretched through numerous neighbourhoods. These etched paths
18 through the city were covered with glass roofs which, according to Benjamin, created somewhat of an interior-exterior juxtaposition
19 for marketing purposes in a burgeoning capitalist society. Baudelaire described these passages as being 'lined with the most elegant
20 shops, so that such an arcade is a city, even a world in miniature' (Baudelaire, 1986: 36-37).
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26 **Fig. 2**
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47 ***Walter Benjamin's the Arcades Project, "The Streets of Paris"***
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52 Within this new, emerging architecture that embodied the arrival of modernity, the flâneur finds himself capable of strolling at
53 his leisure. He observes those individuals that make up the crowds that pass by, takes in the buildings that surround him, and
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6 'the objects for sale--entertaining and enriching his mind with the secret language of the city' (Baudelaire, 1986: 36-37). To
7 both Baudelaire and Benjamin, the flâneur is comfortable in this new, modern world, as this relationship between interior and
8 exterior worlds mirrors his own personal interior-exterior boundaries, which are also unclear:
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16 To him the shiny, enamelled signs of businesses are at least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to a bourgeois
17 in his salon. The walls are the desk against which he presses his notebooks; news-stands are his libraries and the terraces
18 of cafés are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done. (Baudelaire, 1986: 37).
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25 For Benjamin, the flâneur presents a contradiction of sorts pertaining to the modern city, for he is an individual who personifies its
26 position as being 'caught between the insistent mobility of the present and the visible weight of the past' (Ferguson, 1994: 80).
27 Dostoyevsky (1982) furthers this notion, prominently highlighting the correlation between Raskolnikov and poverty. In providing
28 such a juxtaposition, both Dostoyevsky and Benjamin refers to the flâneur as being a huntsman of sorts, noting that 'the flâneur is
29 perhaps that of the hunter – which is to say, that of the oldest type of work' (Benjamin, 1999: 806). The flâneur is, as Benjamin
30 argues, the personification of this 'visible weight of the past', and who is able to stroll through the streets of a modern city with
31 ease – never once being noticed by the bustling crowds that surround him.
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38 Benjamin suggests that flâneur, who once so seamlessly drifted through the streets of Paris, have since disappeared. According to
39 Benjamin, the flâneur vanished as the commercial world gradually abandoned the interior-exterior design of the arcades for the
40 artificially lit shops that were to take their place on the streets of Paris. Here we argue that the flâneur did
41 not disappear. Rather he has transcended the arcades of 19th and 20th century Paris and re-emerged in a more sinister and darker
42 guise. It is here we return to the parallels between the flâneur and that of the hunter. Benjamin notes that the 'heroic flâneur
43 possesses the sharp eye and keen senses of the hunter, the detective, pursuing the traces and clues left by others' (cited in Gilloch,
44 2005: 46).
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6 So too, he notes that the flâneur was an expert in the 'physiognomical appearance of people' (ibid). This ability to observe and
7 examine the physiognomical features of passers-by is perhaps best articulated in Edgar Allan Poe's tale *The Man of the Crowd*
8 (1840), in which the narrator becomes 'aroused, startled, fascinated' (Poe, 2015: 221) by the face of an elderly man, and is
9 compelled to follow this man due to a 'craving desire to keep the man in view - to know more of him' (pg. 221). This need
10 ultimately compels the narrator 'to follow the stranger whithersoever he should go' (pg. 221), and notes that he must maintain a
11 discreet distance so as to 'remain undetected himself' (Gilloch, 2005: 46).
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17 Whilst the traits of the "heroic" flâneur appear to draw upon some of the more positive attributes related to that of a hunter or
18 detective, it raises some interesting questions in relation to that of the flâneur who may be harbouring more sinister intentions. For
19 example, a hunter with the aim to kill beyond the need for instrumental purposes such as food. This opens up the possibility of the
20 "dark flâneur": an individual who is similar to the flâneur of old who embodies the male gaze (Benjamin, 1999), and who
21 personifies thoughts and behaviours condemned in modern society – a "visible weight of the past" that is able to stroll through the
22 modern urban landscape with ease. This concept of the dark flâneur will be applied to the phenomenon of serial murder. Seltzer
23 (2009) argues that serial murder is patterned on modernity's self-image (pg. 168), and that by eliminating others, serial killers
24 eliminate the mass in their own person (Seltzer 1998: 281). So too, they demonstrate their autonomy from routine, their difference
25 from others and, in the moment of violence, realise themselves as autonomous agents. In relation to the concept of the flâneur, the
26 modern serial killer seemingly shares some striking parallels, such as being seemingly one with the crowd, yet striving for
27 autonomy – a means in which to remove themselves from the "machine" of society and thus the hustle and bustle of the crowd that
28 propels it forward. This is further strengthened by the work of Fournel (1867), who argued that the flâneur is always in full
29 possession of his individuality.
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38 **The Flâneuse**

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43 The flâneur is traditionally characterised as being male (Wolf, 1985), though this has indeed not prevented the incarnation of its
44 female equivalent: the flâneuse. It is important to note here that the very existence of the flâneuse has been a subject of debate.
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6 For example, writers such as Janet Wolf (1985) claimed that such a figure could not exist within the late nineteenth century,
7 'because she can't show the same behavior as the flâneur, wandering aimlessly around town' (Nes & Nguyen, 2009: 1). In
8 Particular, Wolf (1985) notes that in 1831 when French Novelist George Sand wanted to experience Paris life and to learn about the
9 ideas and arts of her time, she dressed as a boy, to give herself the freedom she knew women could not share. 'The disguise made
10 the life of the flâneur available to her; as she knew very well, she could not adopt the non-existent role of a flâneuse. Women could
11 not stroll alone in the City' (Wolf, 1985: 41). Despite this, Friedberg (1993) claims that the flâneuse did exist, but in a different
12 form than the flâneur. Nes and Nguyen highlight such discrepancies between the flâneuse and flâneur;
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20 The flâneuse is not a female flâneur, but she is a version of the flâneur. She does not experience the city in the same way
21 as he does. It is hard to define the archetype of the flâneuse, because the flâneur himself consists of paradoxes and many
22 subcategories. Key concepts for flâneur and flâneuse are the amount of spare time, the aesthetic detachment towards
23 objects, crowd and sceneries they see and their ambiguity about it (Nes & Nguyen, 2009: 2).
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30 The largest difference between these two figures is the usage of public space, which has influence in their various perception of the
31 city. For the flâneuse, her domain moved from the interior of her home to the interior of the department store and sometimes even to
32 the streets (Parsons, 2000). The flâneuse is often characterised upon her being a consumer. As noted by Friedberg (1993), 'the
33 department store may have been, as Benjamin put it, the flâneur's last coup, but it was the flâneuse's first' (pg.37). It is important to
34 note here that Friedberg 'was very well aware that this new freedom was not the same as the freedom of the flâneur'
35 (Friedberg, 1993 cited in Nes & Nguyen, 2009: 3).
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41 While the role of the flâneuse would develop into the 20th century to include more urban spaces, 'she was still objectified by men and
42 patriarchal institutes' (Nes & Nguyen, 2009: 3). As the century progressed, women became autonomous, without taking over the
43 absent look and gaze that characterised the flâneur. As we moved closer and into the twenty-first century, the emancipation processes
44 has brought the flâneuse to a more equal position with that of the traditional flâneur in the sharing of much more urban space.
45 However, 'aspects like safety and when and where women are spending time in urban space still have effect on how women use
46 public spaces and affect the public spheres' (Nes & Nguyen, 2009: 3). In Nes and Nguyen's (2009) study on how urban spaces
47 impact upon the movement of the flânerie, they note that;
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4 There are many continuations of old characteristics of flânerie, but there are also new developments in the nuances. The
5 flâneur can wander through the city 24 hours, seven days a week without any problem. Still it is different for the flâneuse,
6 especially when she has no valid excuse to be out there. Often it is bounded to shopping activities (Nes & Nguyen, 2009:
7 6).
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12 For the flâneuse, crowded locations, especially the modern retail orientated landscape (Hayward,2004:29), provide a valid excuse to
13 wander around the streets and provides a sense of security, 'but it's also a component of flânerie: to see and to be seen' (Nes &
14 Nguyen, 2009: 6). In their observations of four towns, Nes and Nguyen (2009) found no gender differences until the shops were
15 closed. 'Suddenly the flâneuses are abandoning streets. Women are using the street as corridors and not as a destination itself' (pg.
16 6). Crucially, Hayward (2004:29) highlights the 'poisoned chalice' of the flâneuse in relation to consumer culture, utilising
17 Laerman's (1993:95) observation that the emergence of retail outlets facilitated social spaces for women to meet without the
18 'traditional fear' of violent men. The observations of Nes and Nguyen (2009) and Hayward (2004) inadvertently share similarities
19 with Wilson's (2007) examination of how particular groups such as the elderly, gay men, sex workers, runaways and throwaways,
20 and children become victims to serial murder due to becoming increasingly marginalised within a society that emphasises
21 materialistic consumption, individualism, anonymity, and less about 'traditionalities of community and family' (Young, 1999: 6).
22 Further to the acknowledgement of the flâneuse's traditional fear of violent men and the correlation with Wilson's (2007) work on
23 victim typology, analysis of traditional texts of the flâneur bolstered the underlying darkness of the flâneur. As Benjamin (1973:224)
24 highlights in his poem 'Delphine et Hippolyte', Baudelaire condemns women as 'lamentable victims', bound for hell (Wolff, 1985).
25 Such disdainful perspectives of women are also highlighted via Wolff (1985) in Baudelaire's 'The Painter of Modern Life' (Mayne,
26 1964) in which prostitutes are compared to an anthill. It is this gendered perspective of the flânerie that we will return to in the
27 subsequent discussion.
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38 **Serial murder through the Ultra-realist lens**

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6 As Brookman (2005) denotes, aside from psychological contributions, the aetiological study of homicide has fundamentally
7 suffered from 'academic neglect'. Furthering this proposition, Hall and Wilson (2014) detail that the socio-economic context of
8 an individual's motivation to take another's life is seldom offered. Such insights are the rationale to utilise the ultra-realist
9 perspective as a means to further the existing knowledge around serial murder. Such a theoretical stance is utilised within this
10 paper as it fundamentally aims to transition past the conceptual limitations of the dominant criminological perspectives since the
11 1980's. This particular theoretical base aims to question the wider harms inflicted upon society by individuals and corporations
12 for their own instrumental and expressive interests (pg.649). Within this remit the perspective aims to offer convincing and viable
13 explanations of the changing nature of crime in the rapidly changing modern landscape, whilst fundamentally transcending past
14 the orthodox scope of criminological enquiry utilising wider academic disciplines (see also Hall and Winlow, 2018). As serial
15 killing has only been recognised as a phenomenon since the late 1970's (Wilson *et al.*, 2015) it is, from this theoretical vantage
16 point, obvious that such criminological contributions will be wholly limited by the negative edifices of contemporary criminology.
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25 Wilson (2012:218) highlights the work of Haggerty (2009:170) whom emphasised that modernity provides the 'key institutional
26 frameworks, motivations, and opportunity structures characteristic of contemporary forms of serial killing'. Combining this
27 statement alongside statistics demonstrating the meteoric rise in serial murderers from the mid-seventies onwards
28 (Wilson,2012:18) lays the justification for the utilisation of the ultra-realist perspective within this paper. Ultra-realism focuses
29 heavily upon the detrimental effects of capitalism and neo-liberalisation as an underpinning of the theoretical facets, therefore the
30 employment of the contemporary school of thought allows us to further investigate the underlying causes of the increase in serial
31 murder in the past three decades. As Wilson states;
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39 "The responsibility for serial killing does not lie so much with the individual serial killer, but can be better found within the social
40 and economic structure of Britain since the 1960's, which...Does not reward the efforts of all and in particular marginalised large
41 sections of society" Wilson (2012:221).
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48 The dataset Wilson (2012:218) presents displays the stark discrepancy of social class and employment held by the majority of
49 those classified as serial killers. Notable offenders such as Dennis Nilsen, a civil servant, and those employed within the medical
50 profession, such as Harold Shipman and Colin Norris, appear to be wholesome middle class educated offenders.
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6 However, they appear infrequently. The vast majority of the offenders within Wilson's dataset are either unemployed or working
7 jobs typically held by those of the working class, as well as those involved in petty criminality. Bellfield is atypical of such
8 categorisation, with his employment throughout the period of his offending including work as a bouncer in local nightclubs and
9 starting his own car clamping business. It is within this context we focus upon Bellfield as a premiere candidate to inform the
10 introduction of the flâneur to the discussion of serial murder.
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16 The phenomenon of serial killers hailing from working class roots, coinciding with the increased frequency of such offences,
17 could be perceived to have a direct correlation with the disintegration of the working classes in the recent past due to the rise of
18 neo-liberalisation and liberal capitalism (discussed extensively by Hall, 2012; Winlow 2001; Hall & Winlow 2013). It is from this
19 juncture we place the dark flâneur in serial murder within both the meso and micro context. Within the meso context we propose
20 the development of *non-places* (Winlow & Hall, 2013) is crucial in the reinvigoration and metamorphous of the flâneur into its
21 deviant counterpart the dark flâneur. The development of the non-places was driven by capitalism, transforming formerly
22 inclusive public places into fundamentally excluding spaces (Atkinson, 2000). The subsequent exclusion from the social of
23 swathes of society proposed by Winlow & Hall (2013), influenced profoundly by the emergence of non-places, propelled the
24 transformation of the traditional flâneur. Due to the degradation of the usual spheres of inhabitation, such changes not only
25 propelled this transition but allowed the dark flâneur to align itself. As Baudelaire (1986:36-37) describes, the Flâneur came to
26 particular prominence during the architectural revolution within Paris and the proliferation of the arcades (brought forth by
27 capitalism). Just as capitalism was the driving force behind the traditional flâneur, the implications of liberal-capitalism is the
28 driving force behind the dark Flâneur. As the arcades and city streets the flâneur traditionally inhabited evanesced
29 (Hayward, 2004), overshadowed by the shopping malls (Winlow and Hall, 2013 and Atkinson, 2003) and gated communities
30 (Atkinson and Flint, 2007) that are intrinsically designed to dissuade those unwilling to or lacking the capital to partake in
31 consumerism, the metamorphous of the flâneur and flâneuse began (Hayward, 2004). Much as Knowles (2015) details in his
32 discussion of the criminally insane and their asylums jettisoned within the neo-liberal era in exchange for luxury housing estates,
33 Benjamin states that the flâneur vanished during the dissipation of the arcades and the onset of such retail outlets that we see
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6 We propose, however, that the flâneur re-orientated to what we describe as the *neo-arcades*. This is partially due to a rejection of
7 the bland homogenisation and McDonaldisation of the city (Winlow & Hall, 2013:126; Ritzer, 2010). Whilst, as Winlow and Hall
8 (2013:139) propose, the working classes aim to transform themselves and their identities into the subject who can effortlessly
9 breeze into the shopping mall, the modern incarnation of the flâneur, intrinsically focussed upon enriching his mind with the secret
10 language of the city (Baudelaire, 1986 36:37), discovers new ways to observe those around him and thus locating himself within
11 the modern incarnations of the arcades. The modern incarnations - the *neo-arcades* - we propose are the night clubs and roads that
12 facilitated Bellfield's offending. In essence, the night time economy and the *non-places* are the *neo-arcades*. Whilst this overview
13 offers the premise of the macro implications of capitalism on the development of the dark flâneur it does not account for the micro
14 context of why the majority of serial murderers' hail from working class routes. The work of Winlow and Hall (2013), when
15 combined with the literature of the traditional flâneur, can offer the premise of such understanding.
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23 Crucial to the plausibility of the dark flâneur is the understanding that social exclusion and a rejection of society's norms are the
24 underlying factors. As Ferguson (1994:80) states, the flâneur is 'caught between the insistent mobility of the present and the
25 visible weight of the past'. Such a statement acts as an echo chamber for Winlow and Hall's (2013) explanation of the working
26 class within the neo-liberal epoch. Whilst as Winlow and Hall observe, the majority of the working class aspire to conform to the
27 ideology of liberal capitalism, the flâneur, entrenched within the observation of Ferguson, does not appease such ideological
28 principals, he is the anomaly. The flâneur is in essence a by-product of social exclusion and a re-orientation of their capital aim,
29 this is what Hayward (2004:27) describes as commodity fetishism. Whilst the majority of the socially excluded within today's
30 society continue to duly participate in capitalisms competitive and unequal consumer culture (Winlow and Hall, 2013; Treadwell *et*
31 *al.* 2013) the flâneur focuses upon alternative capital as a means to achieve in the same manner in which he re-orientated habitation
32 of the 'arcades'.
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41 The implications of this are displayed most starkly within Levi Bellfield's occupational choice. Within the proceeding sections this
42 discussion will be expanded upon, highlighting Bellfield's choice of employment (limited by the constraints of social mobility)
43 influenced his occupational environments. The occupational choices are, it is propositioned, not only within the remit of what has
44 been identified as *neo-arcades*, but facilitating factors affording him to exercise his dark flâneur to varying degrees.
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Occupational choice in the arcades of liberal capitalism- Bouncer

During the onset of his offending Levi Bellfield was employed as a bouncer in a local night club. It is put forth that this employment was crucial to the understanding of his transition to both serial murderer and dark flâneur, with the choice of employment and wider socio-economic and socio-cultural factors contributing to the catalyst of his offending. This discussion is, despite being intrinsically intertwined, never the less threefold. Namely, the disintegration of the traditional working-class employment, masculinity, and nightclubs as the neo-arcades.

As Wilson (2012) observes, the effects of neo-liberalisation has created swathes of society which are unable to obtain the materialistic gains projected upon them by the liberal capitalist culture in which they inhabit. This paradigm faced via those of the traditional working class is most elegantly captured by Winlow *et al.* (2017:14-15) whom state;

From the very start of the neoliberal era we've seen a gradual reduction in the number of traditional working-class jobs. In their place have risen new and unstable labour markets, mostly in the low-grade service sector. These are low paid, none unionised and often part time jobs that have none of the positive symbolism associated with the traditional working-class labour

Expanding upon with Winlow *et al.* (2017:180) states;

All are encouraged to compete, and all are encouraged to accept that anyone from any background has a chance to make it to the very top... Everyone, even those from the most marginalised backgrounds are encouraged to believe that a dream life of consumer indulgence and hedonistic fulfilment could be theirs if they work hard or get lucky

As put forth, the transition of the working classes into employment such as security is a symptom of the fractured communities, lacking the means of seeking employment within the traditional and now decimated industries left in the wake of the rapid neo-liberal globalisation of the past four decades (Winlow, 2001; Winlow *et al.*, 2001). The security industry within the night time economy is however at odds with the societal position those who are employed within it exist.

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6 Those employed within the service industry as a whole routinely struggle to pay rent and salvage their dignity within a thankless
7 and competitive industry overshadowed by insecure employment and low wages. However, their waking hours are filled with the
8 perpetual consumer symbolism of those they are employed to serve which could, we propose, further facilitate their alienation
9 within society. It is within this juxtaposition, between perilous employment and the historically precarious interpretations of
10 masculinity that provides what we propose was the eventual catalyst for Bellfield to search for alternative and innovative methods
11 to reaffirm his dignity and status. It is pertinent at this point therefore, to highlight the relationship between such employment and
12 the emphasis and reliance upon masculinity and intimidation as an essential tool of the profession (Winlow, 2001; Hobbs *et al.*,
13 2003; Ellis, 2015).
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21 Winlow highlights (2001:39); citing the work of Lipman-Blumen (1984:55), how capitalist societies impart to young males that, in
22 order to achieve the goals society bestows upon them, it is imperative to *actively wrestle their accomplishments from the*
23 *environment*. This notion emphasises that society's perception of what masculinity portrays is not only the importance of self-
24 reliance and control, but critically emphasises that the coercion of other members of society and resources is intrinsic to
25 masculinity. It is within this, for lack of a better term, anomic disposition, that working-class males are subjected, that we propose
26 acts as a catalyst for the increase in serial murder.
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32 Combining the aforementioned catalysts within the context of the neo-arcades we begin to build a picture of Bellfield's
33 transformation from petty criminal to serial murder. Bellfield, a modern flâneur struggling with the 'anomic' disposition he found
34 himself within and compounded by his interpretation of masculinity, was routinely inhabiting the neo-arcades
35 (the nightclub). Gilloch (2005:46) notes how the literary flâneur, in order to observe, must maintain a discreet distance as to
36 'remain undetected himself'. Bellfield's position as security personnel not only allowed him to blend seamlessly into the
37 surroundings, undetected by the revellers he oversaw much as Winlow (2001:127-140) describes security staff looking over each
38 other. Not only did this choice of employment allow Bellfield to 'feed' his inner flâneur, it also facilitated the engrained 'hunter
39 instinct' (Benjamin, 1999:806). It could be hypothesised that within this role, whilst in the re-orientation process, Bellfield
40 exercised his flâneur to identify the prime targets for his offending. It must not be neglected that all of his victims were young,
41 well dressed, blonde women.
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6 Whilst Bellfield's employment as a nightclub bouncer may have given inspiration and proximity to young women similar to those
7 whom he attacked and murdered, this particular form of employment did not grant him the ability to roam the streets of London at
8 his will. As such, he was unable to be a spectator and hunter of the crowds. This particular occupation would also be considered as
9 being a busy "node of activity" due to it being a place of recreation and "entertainment" (Brantingham & Brantingham, 2008).
10 Specifically, due to the large volume of people that would enter the nightclub, along with Bellfield's colleagues, the probability of
11 there being suitable guardians that could offer some form of protection would have increased, and subsequently been a deterrent
12 for Bellfield. Here we come to one of the primary distinctions between the flâneur and his more ominous brother - the dark
13 flâneur. For example, while the flâneur is someone who immerses himself within the crowd, the dark flâneur is someone who
14 hunts within the crowd before finding and selecting a suitable victim. It is in this moment that they remove themselves from others
15 by finding a quiet location in which to either abduct or attack their selected victim. Whilst Bellfield's occupation as a nightclub
16 bouncer enabled him to pinpoint his predilection for his forthcoming 'hunt' while enabling him the exercise the 'cool but curious
17 eye' (Benjamin, 1999) of the traditional flâneur, the environment also provided crucial barriers to his ability to indulge his 'dark
18 flâneur'. Fundamentally, it was impossible for him to disappear into the crowd and, given his responsibilities, he was also unable
19 to move as freely as a dark flâneur must. Despite this we recognise his occupation as a nightclub bouncer as the catalyst for his
20 eventual offences. In hunting terms, the neo-arcades became the hunting grounds in which the predator first detected the tracks of
21 his prey.
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31 Within this remit we refer back to the flâneuse. As Hayward (2004) draws attention to the emergence of retail spaces as the world
32 of the flâneuse, we propose night clubs and bars to be another variation of such spaces. However, whilst such spaces allow the
33 modern flâneuse to partake further in the social, such spaces are fraught with increased dangers from violent men (Laermans,
34 1993), as well as decreased awareness due to intoxication associate with such environments. This is not to say Bellfield met his
35 victims within the nightclubs, but the ability of this employment allowed him to explore his inner flâneur whilst facilitating him to
36 find the 'type' of prey he would 'hunt'. This highlights further the 'poisoned chalice' proposed by Hayward (2004) of the
37 reformulated gendered dimensions of public space.
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43 It is at this stage, in the context of the limitations of the contemporary arcadia for the dark flâneur in which refer to the work of
44 Eck (1994), who generated the "problem analysis triangle".
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6 This triangle examines how the presence, or absence of, key factors makes a crime either difficult or 'feasible' (Felson, 2008: 74).
7 With regards to the offender, the lack of a "handler", who is an individual who can exert some form of control over them, is often
8 described as being either their parents, siblings, or spouse (Eck, 1994). With regards to their occupation, this control, it could be
9 argued, can extend to supervisors and superiors. Within the confines of his role as a nightclub bouncer, Bellfield would have been
10 under the supervision of a manager who would have made his ability to engage in his offending behaviour much more difficult
11 than when undertaking his later role as a wheel-clamper. Away from such pressures prescribed by Eck (1994), Bellfield was able
12 to freely travel across a large geographical space and actively engage in offending without the fear of both a "handler", or the
13 presence of capable guardians. Without these confines, Bellfield could at last travel across the streets of London and become lost
14 amongst the crowds – becoming a hunter hidden in plain sight.
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22 **Occupational choice in the late capitalist epoch- Driving**

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26 Unlike his duties as a bouncer where he would have been under some form of managerial oversight, Bellfield owned and managed
27 his wheel-clamping business (Bell, 2011). It is important to not how this could be perceived as a further rejection of the liberal
28 capitalism epoch in which he existed. More importantly, the change of vocation allowed Bellfield to expand his flâneuresque
29 activity beyond the confines of the neo-arcades. Bellfield would often 'go wheel-clamping during the day at a vast range of sites
30 across west London and beyond' (Wansell, 2011: 182), and had the managerial freedom to go where he wanted. In particular he
31 could engage in behaviour that, if he had been under the supervision of others, would have been considered suspicious and a cause
32 for concern. For example, on one occasion when he was wheel-clamping, it was noted that Bellfield resorted to violence by using a
33 bat and knuckle-dusters that were hidden in the car (Wansell, 2011).
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41 It is here that Benjamin's account of the flâneur's "sharp eye" of the hunter can be witnessed in the dark flâneur. Bellfield, once
42 free of managerial oversight and hidden within the confines of his vehicle, was able to search for victims whilst continually being
43 hidden amongst the busy roads of London.
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6 Due to this “occupational freedom” Bellfield was afforded significant amounts of time to engage in his search for suitable
7 victims. He also had ample opportunity to spend time with his victims, as demonstrated during the murder of Milly Dowler
8 (Gammell & Hughes, 2011). With regard to Bellfield’s ability to spend a considerable amount of time seeking suitable victims,
9 Wansell observes that;
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14 He started using it [his van] not only for wheel clamping, but also for his by now habitual nightly drives around
15 west London and his old stomping grounds of Twickenham Green and Strawberry Hill (Wansell, 2011: 184).
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19 The above statement also highlights another important distinction between the flâneur, the dark flâneur and the flâneuse (Nes &
20 Nguyen, 2009). For example, the flâneur’s ‘evening activity seems interchangeable with those of the daytime’ (Houghton, 2000:
21 54), whereas the dark flâneur is most at home under the cover of darkness – hiding in plain sight and further obfuscating their true
22 motives. It is here we refer back to the literary works of Edgar Allen Poe, whose work *the Murders in the Rue Morgue* introduces
23 Detective Dupin. Dupin is a character often compared to the flâneur but prefers the ‘gaslight over daylight’, and demands darkness
24 for concentration (Houghton, 2000: 54). One of Dupin’s most notable traits is his tendency to try and get into the mind of the
25 criminal and, as such, appears to be drawn to the dark. Similar to Dupin, Bellfield, a criminal, is also drawn to the darkness, and it
26 is in these conditions that his hunter’s eyes are at their clearest. The darkness also provides this dark flâneur with another, more
27 practical advantage. In particular, under the cover of darkness Bellfield would have become further concealed within the confines
28 of his vehicle as he traversed the busy roads of London – providing him further means to hide in plain sight. Confounding this is
29 the work of Nes and Nguyen (2009) in relation to the flâneuse. As this paper highlights, the flâneuse is most vulnerable traversing
30 the cityscape whilst in the early evening (the time of Bellfield’s offences) away from the safe confines of the neo-arcades they
31 inhabit. This correlation is evident within the recognition of their self-awareness of vulnerability both in such liminal spaces and
32 time periods (pg. 6). Such vulnerabilities of the flâneuse is evident in Wansell’s (2011:188) account of the murder of Amelie
33 Delagrang. Murdered on Twickenham green by Bellfield upon leaving Crystalz Wine Bar in the early evening after consuming a
34 liberal amount of alcohol with friends, she is cited as asking a friend, Vanessa Roche, to walk her to the bus stop. Such
35 apprehensions correlate with the findings of Nes and Nguyen (2009) in regards to the spaces between what we refer to as the neo-
36 arcades and transport links.
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9 The use of a vehicle also proved to be essential in providing Bellfield with the necessary time needed in order to carry out a
10 successful attack on his victims. This is perhaps best demonstrated again by his attack on French student Amelie Delagrane,
11 whom he followed in his vehicle prior to murdering her. The events leading up to her death were reconstructed at his trial. Brian
12 Altman QC stated that:
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17 Bellfield was driving the van and spotted Amelie at some point along the route and determined to engage her. There
18 was more than enough time for him to wait for her in his van by the green, wait for her to catch up and, when she
19 walked across the green, intercept and attack her...return to the van and drive off (Wansell, 2011: 197).
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24 In other words, Bellfield's vehicle provided him with the means and time to plan and co-ordinate an attack. It also meant that he
25 was able to quickly leave the scene of the crime – generating physical space between himself and his victim. For Bellfield, similar
26 to the flâneur who is described as a 'marginal figure, collecting clues to the metropolis' (Frisby, 1994: 99), collected clues of his
27 own as he traversed the roads of London – clues that would be applied in the commission of murder. For the dark flâneur, who
28 takes Benjamin's parallels with 'the hunter' to its fullest conclusion, the clues that the flâneur so readily seeks are of little
29 consequence. Instead, the dark flâneur hunts and seeks for those parts of the city's 'labyrinth' (pg. 94) that provides them with the
30 most suitable opportunities to commit murder.
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35 **Fig 3.**
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51 *Bellfield, hidden in his vehicle, hunting the streets of London. Sarah Bell, BBC*
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53 *News, 2008*
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8 Bellfield's wheel-clamping business, in comparison to the rather static role of a nightclub bouncer, greatly expanded his activity
9 space and, as a result, his awareness space. With this autonomy, Bellfield was able to "stroll" not only through the neo-arcades but
10 through with wider urban environment and probe his surroundings for clues and hints that may go unnoticed to others (Benjamin,
11 1999). In comparison to his role within the nightclubs, his 'hunting grounds' expanded considerably. The use of a vehicle also
12 relates to another element of the flâneur highlighted by Baudelaire (1986), who noted that, 'for the perfect flâneur...it is an
13 immense joy to set up house in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow of movement' (pg. 9). For this dark flâneur,
14 though, who emerged through the expansion of road networks, his home is his vehicle – a mobile base which allows him to follow
15 the 'ebb and flow' of the city until opportunity presents itself.
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22 Bellfield, who was supposedly engaging in tasks pertaining to his wheel-clamping business, used an absence of managerial control
23 as a means to engage in offending behaviour. For example, Milly was last seen at a bus stop that was situated close to where
24 Bellfield lived at the time ('His Name is Evil: Levi Bellfield', *The Mirror*, 2012; see also Wansell, 2011). Whilst this would be the
25 only known case in which Bellfield abducted and murdered his victim during the day, other characteristics of this particular case
26 were replicated in all of his subsequent murders and attacks. During a Court of Appeal, it was noted that:
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33 He said that the Crown argued that the applicant had been convicted of two offences of murder and one of attempted
34 murder in 2003 and 2004, each of which involved an attack on a lone young woman who had alighted from public
35 transport, but with the additional feature that each of the offences took place in an area of West London bordering on
36 Surrey with which the applicant was familiar and within which the offences involving Milly Dowler were committed
37 (Court Transcript, Court of Appeal, 8th February 2012).
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44 Bellfield appeared to identify and capitalise on criminal opportunities that were conveyed to him by his immediate environment,
45 which was significantly altered and shaped by his decision to start a wheel-clamping business in 2000 (McShane, 2001).
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6 Bellfield's second victim, Marsha McDonnell, was attacked after she got off her bus from Kingston Upon Thames (Moore,
7 2008). Kate Sheedy, Bellfield's third victim who survived the attack, was hit by Bellfield's van after she noticed Bellfield's
8 vehicle following the bus she was on (Wansell, 2011). Bellfield's final victim, Amelie Delagrange, was attacked after 'she missed
9 her stop after taking a bus home from an evening out with friends in the town' ('Bus stop killer's chain of violence', *BBC News*,
10 2008). All of Bellfield's known murders occurred whilst he was working as a wheel-clamper, suggesting that Bellfield associated
11 his opportunities to offend with his employment. It was during these periods that Bellfield would become to personify the darker
12 aspects of the flâneur, a figure that, like a roving soul in search of a body... enters another person whenever he
13 wishes" (Baudelaire, 1986: 55). Though, unlike the archetypal flâneur who simply enjoys the sense of being both himself and
14 someone else as he sees fit (Benjamin, 1999), the dark flâneur instead searches for another person in order to satisfy more sinister
15 motivations and, in the case of Bellfield, reflect 'sadistic sexual undertones' (Brooks *et al.*, 1998 cited in Castle & Hensley, 2002:
16 445).
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24 Bellfield also had access to a vast array of vehicles (Wansell, 2011). Bellfield used one of the key facets of his occupation as a
25 means to obfuscate authorities and hinder their ability to identify the owner of the vehicles they were seeking. For example,
26 Wansell notes:
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34 One of them was the silver hatchback Y57 RJU that Bellfield had purchased the previous November to use in his new
35 clamping business. But that hadn't proved easy to track back to him as, significantly, and for no apparent reason,
36 Bellfield had sold the Corsa on 11 February 2002, just a week after Marsha's murder (Wansell, 2011: 143).
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42 This ability to quickly buy and sell vehicles was evidently perceived by Bellfield as a significant advantage afforded to him with
43 regard to evading the authorities. Bellfield would go onto sell the vehicles he used in his other murders (Wansell, 2011). For
44 Bellfield, his occupation provided him with the necessary tools to successfully obfuscate the Police.
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6 With this ability, afforded to him by his occupation, Bellfield again shares striking parallels with the flâneur in that he is able to
7 'flow like thought through his physical surroundings' (Lopate, 1981), with those seeking to find him unable to do so. With the
8 abilities and liberties his occupation afforded him, Bellfield would truly become to personify the dark flâneur – a figure who
9 combines 'the casual eye of the stroller with the purposeful gaze of the detective' (Rignall, 1992) or, in this case, the killer.
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14 **Discussion**

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18 In applying the concept of the flâneur to the case of Bellfield, the importance of his occupations in relation to his offending has
19 been brought to attention. This offered him important instrumental advantages which made it possible for him to commit
20 numerous acts of murder. In particular, it was his occupation as a wheel-clamper that provided him the means to roam the
21 bustling streets around him and, when opportunity presented itself to, 'follow the stranger whithersoever [she] should go' (Poe,
22 1840: 2210). Bellfield, now free of his constraints as a nightclub bouncer, was fully able to become a hunter capable of wandering
23 through the labyrinth of the metropolis. Missac (1995) notes that the Flâneur:
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31 ...impos[es] himself upon a shop window here, a vagrant here.... gazing into the
32 passing scene as others have gazed into campfires, yet remain[ing] alert and vigilant" all the while (Missac, 1995: 61).
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38 Missac's commentary on the flâneur strikes interesting parallels with Bellfield, who instead of a shop window would cast a 'cool
39 but curious eye' (Benjamin, 1999) during his role and a nightclub bouncer in search of suitable prey. Later, as a wheel-clamper
40 instead of a vagrant, he would impose himself on young women with the most horrific consequences. Also, as demonstrated in
41 Bellfield's tendency to change vehicles on a regular basis, he would remain alert and vigilant of his surroundings, mindful of the
42 possibility that he may eventually be spotted amongst the crowd.
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Fig 4.



Marsha McDonnell leaving the bus Bellfield was following moments before being attacked. Mike Sullivan, The Sun, 2007

For Bellfield his vast array of vehicles – afforded to him by his occupation – gave him the opportunity of being a flâneur harbouring more criminal intentions within the modern, mechanized world. Bellfield as a dark flâneur combines both Seltzer’s (2009) account of how serial murder is patterned on modernity’s self-image, and the attempt to exhibit autonomy amongst the masses by murdering another. Here we see echoes of Dostoyevsky’s *Crime and Punishment* (1951), in which he states that, for Raskolnikov:

“Existence alone had never been enough for him; he had always wanted more. Perhaps it was only from the force of his desires that he had regarded himself as a man to whom more was permitted than to others” (Dostoyevsky, 1951: 554).

There are also elements of the flâneur such as being able to “stroll” amongst the crowd and effectively hide in plain sight. Whereas the traditional flâneur strolls to pass the time that his wealth affords him, treating the people he sees as texts for his own pleasure (Benjamin, 1999), this dark flâneur is afforded such ability by his occupational choice and instead of seeing others as “texts” to be read, are instead prey to be hunted. Indeed, it is integral to highlight that the majority of his victims were of the age-range which frequent nightclubs and other such establishments.

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6 Here we refer to the work of Haggerty (2009), who argued that ‘opportunity structures’ brought about by modernity facilitated
7 easier access to victims and, in relation to women (the flâneuse), they have become more ‘available’ targets due to their
8 increased presence in public space (Wattis, 2016; Nes and Nguyen, 2009). With reference to Wattis (2016), it is also important
9 to consider modernity as gendered, which is:
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15 ...evident in the privileging of the rational, masculine subject as the key agent of modernity, as well as the
16 misogyny inherent to the scientific and philosophical discourses (including criminology) which define the period
17 (Wattis, 2016: 18).
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22 Furthermore, Wattis, with reference to the work of Haggerty (2009), draws attention to the relationship between modern society
23 and the issue of patriarchy and misogyny towards women (Wolff, 1985). In particular, ‘through a distorted mirror, serial killers
24 reflect back and act upon, modernity’s distinctive valuations’ (Haggerty, 2009: 181). With regard to the meso-context referred to
25 in Hall and Wilson (2014), the dark flâneur is a product of, and operates within, the modern urban landscape. This modern urban
26 landscape has subsequently generated a more inviting public space for particular groups within society, but at the same time has
27 led to marginalization and inequality for these same individuals, which represents the ‘mutually reinforcing operation of modernist
28 frameworks of denigration and victimization opportunity structures’ (Haggerty, 2009: 182). This is further reinforced when we
29 consider how Bellfield would often search and attack victims by night. Hall and Wilson (2014) examine the relationship between
30 acts of murder and time of day at a meso-level, referring to the night-time economy and its role in creating spaces in which
31 offenders such as Bellfield are able to take advantage of. In particular, Winlow and Hall (2006 cited in Hall & Wilson, 2014),
32 suggest that the British night-time economy is a ‘commercial liminal space in which competitive individualism, hostility and
33 violence have become normalised as the dark side of alcohol-fuelled fun and hedonism’ (pg. 22). This night-time economy
34 subsequently creates an environment in which the possibility of potential guardians is diminished, and subsequently this increases
35 the availability of victims. For Bellfield, who committed his murders in London, this night-time economy created an ideal meso-
36 context which further reinforced the instrumental advantages afforded to him by his occupational choices within what we label the
37 neo-arcades and associated liminal spaces (Nes & Nguyen, 2009).
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5 The dark flâneur also shares other similarities with the traditional flâneur, in that they both have interesting relationships with both
6 the interior and exterior worlds, though in strikingly different ways. For the traditional flâneur, he is completely at home in this cross
7 between interior and exterior worlds because his own personal interior-exterior boundaries are also ambiguous (Baudelaire, 1986).
8 For Bellfield and the dark flâneur, though, this relationship is witnessed in a more practical manner. For example, it is through the
9 use of a vehicle that provides Bellfield with the means to travel through the crowd in his own private interior world. With this he is
10 able to search for ideal victims that move through the exterior world before him. When opportunities to offend are presented for this
11 dark flâneur, he is able to swiftly move between this interior and exterior world. As demonstrated by the case study, Bellfield would
12 leave his vehicle and travel by foot in order to attack his victims before making a quick getaway by returning to his vehicle - his
13 private interior world. As researched by ***** & ***** (2015) in their study on North American serial killer Dennis Radar – who
14 also used a vehicle in both his occupation and offending - this private world is a place where Bellfield could indulge in his sexual
15 fantasies, which have been discussed more generally as ‘primitive lusts and brutish impulses in ways that might be unacceptable in
16 reality’ (Wilson, 1997: 28). It is in these moments shortly after attacking his victims that he would then return to the road and
17 disappear into the masses.
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26 Unlike the traditional flâneur who is comfortable within the crowd and relishes the anonymity afforded to him at all times, the dark
27 flâneur instead uses such obscurity as a practical means to hunt for suitable prey. As is detailed, the flâneuse evolved through the
28 expansion of commercial space which was also the precipitating factor for the traditional flâneur’s demise. Friedberg (1993: 37)
29 states that ‘the department store may have been, as Benjamin put it, the flâneur’s last coup’, which notably was the flâneuse’s first.
30 The liminal space in which the flâneuse is aware of their vulnerability (Ness & Nguyen, 2009), it is proposed, became the
31 “department store” of the dark flâneur. It is in this moment that we refer back to the work of Seltzer (1998), who argues that, for
32 serial murderers, the act of killing is ultimately an effort to stand apart from the metaphorical crowd and display their autonomy from
33 society. This connection between committing violence with the desire to gain some form of perceived recognition can be seen in
34 Glasser (1998), who argued that ‘perpetrators may view violence as a source of self-affirmation’ (Cited in Ray, 2011: 14).
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6 So too, as Ray (2011) suggests, those who commit acts of violence, such as serial murder, do so as a 'means of achieving status
7 and respect for those who lack other forms of social power' (pg. 14). With this in mind, the dark flâneur is someone who is in fact
8 using the crowd and the anonymity it provides in an effort to actually escape obscurity and, for a brief moment, achieve some form
9 of recognition and status that separates them from the crowd. This relates directly back to the earlier statements encompassing the
10 deficit neo-liberalisation has afforded members of the working class, and how Bellfield chose to reaffirm this deficit not through
11 monetary means but through utilising his perceived special liberty (for a detailed account of special liberty please see Hall,
12 2015:142) to restore his self-identity. As Wansell (2011:183) details, Bellfield was cited as 'bragging' and stating that "the law
13 doesn't apply to people like me".
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20 Wilson (2007) argues that free market economies, a result of neo-liberal values that emerged during late modernity, have created
21 widening 'social inequalities, individualism and a decline in collective social life which have exacerbated marginality, vulnerability
22 and increases in violence' (Dorling, 2004; Hall and Winlow, 2005; Hall, 2012 cited in Wattis, 2016: 6). Whilst the flâneur of old
23 declined through such modernising processes, the fragmentations within the urban landscape created through these developments,
24 including situational crime prevention, has created a landscape more inviting to the dark flâneur as the discussion of the flâneuse
25 has eluded to throughout this piece.
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31 The dark flâneur, in this case Levi Bellfield, is a modern-day hunter who has 'a capacity for violence' (Ray, 2011:15), and who is
32 not deterred by the controlling processes of modernity as discussed by Foucault. This, as demonstrated in the aforementioned case
33 study, is primarily due to his social classification and occupation. In particular, his work allowed him to hide his identity from
34 CCTV and, where necessary, change between vehicles from the vast array afforded to him in his wheel-clamping business. So too,
35 as argued by Seltzer (1998), he was driven by a desire to display his autonomous self from the masses that surrounded him, and
36 ultimately exploited the weakening of social solidarity and disorder (Wirth, 1938) within the modern cityscape.
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Conclusion

There has been almost no scholarly research about the relationship between serial killing and driving as an occupation. Even so, it is clear that a considerable number of British serial killers were employed as drivers of some sort (**** and ****, 2015). Nor has there been much interest in applying literary criticism to gaining insight into the phenomenon of serial murder. The utilisation of the ultra-realist body of theory has been crucial to the understanding of the meso context of serial killing in the neo-liberal world. The key benefit of this area of theory is the inclusion of the ultra-realist perspective as a tool to allow academia to explore the underlying factors and causation of such offenders' response to globalisation within the context of their crimes, alongside the development of an alternative perspective of the victimology of such offenders in the form of the flâneuse. However, the application of a literary device and framework has shed light on how particular serial murderers operate and evade detection in modern society, as well as the accountability of neo-liberal capitalism as a force of the serial killing phenomenon. While it would be wrong to generalise to all known serial killers who are precariously employed within the service sector or use a vehicle in order to commit their offences, this analysis of Bellfield's offending behaviour within the context of the flâneur has aided in better conceptualising the phenomenon of serial murder. Specifically, it has also assisted in better understanding the behaviour of the geographically transient serial murder. Benjamin (1999) states that the flâneur is a casual wanderer, observer and reporter of street-life in the modern city, all the while striving for some form of transcendence – to derive the eternal from the transitory. The dark flâneur is also a wanderer; a hunter of the modern landscape who, like Bellfield, seeks out their prey amongst the masses within the neo-arcades. For the dark flâneur this transcendence stems from more a sinister place – a place in which they kill others in order to eliminate the mass in their own person (Seltzer 1998: 281), and for a brief moment no longer be lost in the globalised crowd.

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