

Mapping Urban Consciousness: Impression and Spectacle in *The Princess Casamassima*

Ya-Ju Yeh

1. Introduction

Henry James's writings of city are both effable and ineffable. He registers a blueprint of precise cityscapes as the effable and generates a production of psychological mediations within large picturesque appearances as the ineffable. These two expressions find no contradiction in each other since they have been incorporated in James's specific characters whose urban consciousness and mental assessments are concerned with such a labyrinthine metropolis. *The Princess Casamassima* is James's most comprehensive, most sensitive and most encompassing pictures of London. Hardly giving a totalizing recognition of urban landscapes, James renders London primarily as "an origin of consciousness," in reflection of both the underlying social and psychological preoccupations of its spectators. With a sympathetic eye, James addresses essential themes and scenes of pleasure and anxiety, wealth and poverty, possibilities and impossibilities for a way to encounter a spatial expression of urban social relationships. James's angles of London, whether background or foreground, are engaged with a delicate observation of contrasts and conflicts.¹

James presents London with a vast range of unrest of visions and sensibilities. The booming commodity culture reframes urban spectators into immediate shocks of lived experiences. The ever-changing aspects of London always affect spectatorship

¹ Completed in 1886, *The Princess Casamassima* is particularly remarkable in the way it manages a compassionate portrayal of those at the near-bottom of Victorian Britain's social scale. By virtue of James's representation of London activities linked to the underground political conspiracy along with the mimesis of social life, Mark Seltzer suggests that the entanglement of art and power establishes a continuity of "seeing, knowing, and exercising power" while reading the novel as the fantasy of surveillance: a kind of evasion of the realistic panopticon (Seltzer 57). In this respect, James's social concerns on the underworld London seem to affirm and inhere in his political claims. This point of view, however, may dismiss and deaden James's ambivalent perceptions of imagination of London. An observation of contrasts and conflicts, rather than a political treatment of contemporary London, should therefore be examined and explored through spatial representations.

taken up by metropolitan individuals who intrinsically undergo the overwhelming urbanization. In *The Princess Casamassima*, there are two kinds of spectatorship emphasized to explore James's personal style of urban consciousness: impression and spectacle. Each of them has its demarcating and orienting quality. The male protagonist, Hyacinth Robinson, experiences bewilderment as part of becoming fascinated by a modern world since his consciousness is greatly impressed as receptive to the unfathomable material culture. The modern girl, Millicent Henning, distinctively acquaints herself with those disquieting yet intoxicating urban images with regard to discontinuities of commodity spectacles while appropriating interpersonal relationships. These two characters, acting out relatively prominent yet inseparable incompatibility, give vivid scopes to so intricate and varied perspectives of social developments. Highlighting these two characters and their particular spectatorship, this paper aims to investigate that how James's two modes of urban visions, impression and spectacle, are intertwined and scrutinized to reveal distinguished consciousnesses profoundly possessed by and simultaneously reflecting the urban space.

2. A Flâneur of Impression

The concrete representation of urban spectatorship can be best made through the figure of flâneur.² Ideas of flâneur, inaugurated by Charles Baudelaire's "The Painter of Modern Life," along with Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man of the Crowd," and later theorized by Walter Benjamin, are critically intertwined with issues of modernity, spectacle, and urban space. The flâneur concerns himself primarily with some ambivalence toward the intoxication of being in the public and purposed distance of being apart from the public. Among these explorations of urban spectators, Benjamin's flâneur, with reference to Baudelaire's modern hero, is capable of experiencing the big city in his own way—a way close to commodity production. The flâneur derives

² The urban figure of flâneur, who "emerges as a new sort of hero, the product of modernity at the same time as heralding its advent" has received a lot of criticism from feminism, sociology, aesthetics, and so on (Mazlish 43). For more criticisms of the flâneur, see Tester, *The Flâneur*.

his pleasure from seeing the crowd in the way of seeing commodities. An insight into the flâneur denotes that he defines himself by the specificity which he envisages commodity intoxication yet remains conscious of social reality (Benjamin 59–60). The flâneur situates himself in twofold positions of the metropolis: he signifies both a panorama of an authoritative observer and the fluid vision of urban public space. In light of the flâneur, the productive forces of seeing are highlighted within extraordinary landscapes.

Intense seeing and enormous walking fundamentally characterize urban activities. Hyacinth Robinson, who lives a life by book-binding, functions as James's own flâneur. This observant flâneur, albeit so likely as to be a typical bourgeois male subject, is a stroller and viewer with great emotions,

He liked the reflexion of the lamps on the wet pavements, the feeling and smell of the carboniferous London damp; the way the winter fog blurred and suffused the whole place, made it seem bigger and more crowded, produced halos and dim radiations, trickles and evaporations on the plates of glass. (V, 82)

Light, air, smell, and atmosphere of the streets persistently stimulate Hyacinth's obsessions and consciousnesses. The concrete public scenes appear to his eyes at the first sight, and then turn to be part of his sentiments. With steps and steps, his sentiments are erratically projected into those remarkable scenes. They are hence becoming the scenes which exist not outside, but inside his mentality. A variety of persons and things endlessly draws his attention and immerses him with wayward strolls:

The air was foul and sleety, but it refreshed him [. . .]. Bedraggled figures passed in and out and a damp tattered wretched man with a spongy purple face, who had been thrust suddenly across the threshold, stood and whimpered in the brutal blaze of the row of lamps. The puddles glittered roundabout and the silent vista of the street, bordered with low black houses, stretched away, in the wintry

drizzle to right and left, losing itself in the huge tragic city where unmeasured misery lurked beneath the dirty night, ominously, monstrously still, only howling, for its pain, in the heated human cockpit behind him. (XXI, 357–8)

Among wandering and watching, he “reads” cityscapes as a mind which seems thickly impersonal yet implicitly melancholic. He indulges himself in such sadness suggestive of “tragic” under the appearance of London. James gives picture of Hyacinth as a flâneur of impression: “He moved in the midst of these impressions this evening, but he enjoyed them in silence [. . .]” (V, 82).

Standing as a “sociological flâneur,”³ George Simmel casts much light on the correlation between impression and urban space in the essay “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” The psychological basis of urban residents in face of external social forces is, Simmel contends, “stimulated by the difference between a momentary impression and the one which preceded it. Lasting impressions, impressions which differ only slightly from one another, impressions which take a regular and habitual course and show regular and habitual contrasts” (Simmel 175). Impressions are involved with “the rapid crowding of changing images”, which brings out “the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions” (175). Impressions created by a different amount of changing images cause a rupture of sensory foundations of mental life: it sets up a rupture of seeing and thinking. By reacting to “every impression of somebody else,” the mind has “a somewhat distinct feeling” (179).

Simmel is likely to announce the “problem” for an individual who accommodates himself in the adjustments of modern social stimulations. Hyacinth’s impressions, as presupposed, are similar terms to Simmel’s accounts. The aggregation of urban pictures serves to ceaselessly strike Hyacinth’s inner impulses. Consciousness, if there were many, is, to a great extent, derived from every compressed form of London life:

³ David Frisby contends Simmel’s aestheticism and aesthetic experience is concerned with ideological dimension. As a sociological flâneur, Simmel suggests that human interaction inevitably leads to the dualism of subjective and objective culture. For more, see Frisby, *Sociological Impressionism* 68–101.

Sometimes of a Saturday in the long evenings of June and July he made his way into Hyde Park at the hour when the throng of carriages, of riders, of brilliant pedestrians was thickest; [. . .] a tremendous little drama had taken place privately on the stage of his inner consciousness. He wanted to drive in every carriage, to mount on every horse, to feel on his arm the hand of every pretty woman in the place. (XI, 169–70)

What has been really “the thickest” designates not a public existence of the pedestrians, but Hyacinth’s responses to these impressions in the last instance. Hyacinth comes to terms with these disruptive impressions and receives them in disturbing reflection and thoughts. Nevertheless, James’ impressions (or Hyacinth’s) shows less negative tendency than Simmel’s conditions of impressions.⁴ Hyacinth’s impressions are subject to the daily life under temporary social transformations. They demonstrate James’s “conflicted use of the picturesque perspectives” (Bailey 204) since London is showing Hyacinth an inseparable connection with his nascent childhood primal scenes of the forbidding gate of prison, where he saw his mother at the last sight. The recurrent reflections of scenes frequently heighten his wretched memory:

The river had always for Hyacinth a deep beguilement. The ambiguous appeal he had felt as a child in all the aspects of London came back to him from the dark detail of its banks and the sordid agitation of its bosom: the great arches and pillars of the bridges, where the water rushed and the funnels tipped and sounds made an echo and there seemed an overhanging of interminable processions; the miles of ugly wharves and warehouses; the lean protrusions of chimney, mast and crane; the painted signs of grimy industries staring from

⁴ An impression for James is a way of writing and a way of life. In *The Art of Fiction*, James mentions of “a woman of genius” who tells him that the impression is much commended to manage a story (novel) and the way of life (1995: 1513). For James, writings of London, can be “in its broadest definition a personal impression of life; that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression” (1512).

shore to shore; the strange flat obstructive barges, straining and bumping on some business as to which everything was vague but that it was remarkably dirty; the clumsy coasters and colliers which thickened as one went down; [. . .] in short all the grinding, puffing, smoking, splashing activity of the turbid flood. (XXXV, 207–8)

The Thames River permeates his consciousnesses which amount to his individual situation with numerous discrete relationships. Deborah Parsons explicates that impression may have risk to “become incapable of formulating anything other than personal subjective fantasies” (32).⁵ Personal subjective fantasies are seemingly autonomous. The “sympathetic resident” such as James or Hyacinth (Walkowitz 87), seeing London as “the great grey Babylon” (James 1977: vi), however, serves to arouse their imagination out of inhabiting the fabric of social whole, rather than subjective fantasies. Jesse Matz’s account of impression would be more appropriate in Hyacinth’s case: “An impression is never simply a feeling, a thought, or a sensation. It partakes, rather, of a mode of experience that is neither sensuous nor rational, neither felt nor thought, but somewhere in between. Belonging to none of these categories, an impression similarly belongs to no one theoretical way of thinking” (Matz 16). Impressions tend to transcend the limit of emotional expressions since they give rise to certain ambivalence between what an individual has perceived and what he has seen. Impression may range to bring about “many mediations, to express confusion about them, and to produce writing on the basis of this ambivalence” (Matz 17–8). The individual increasingly internalizes urban landscape as his consciousnesses. The individual is markedly solitary, but never indifferent, detached, and rejective. Impressions tend to resemble montage with a material basis in ordinary

⁵ The deficiency of impression, as Deborah Parsons interprets Simmel’s sociological impressionism, tends to emphasize the subjective stance. Parsons points out that Simmel’s modern mind under the minute-changing variety of urban experience may “retreat to a distanced, private space; psychologically into mental detachment” (Parsons 30). Since the individual’s mindset is distanced and detached, “the Impressionist departs from such analysis and constructs reality from his own sensations” and “the world of Impressionism is not simply represented, but also objectified according to the subjectivity of the artist” (32). In this sense, Parsons’s explanation of impression seemingly degrades the eye of an impressionist insofar as she defines the solitary flâneur as a detached impressionist.

objects, yet they yield quite an amount of perceptions and deliberations. An impression includes consequently inner experiences derived from internalization of external metropolitan environments.

For Hyacinth or James, impressions of London are always proliferating and prevailing. As James describes this impossible city,

It is difficult to speak adequately or justly of London [. . .]. It is only magnificent. You can draw up a tremendous list of reasons why it should be insupportable. The fogs, the smoke, the dirt, the darkness, the wet, the distances, the ugliness, the brutal size of the place, the horrible numerosity of society, the manner in which this senseless bigness is fatal to amenity, to convenience, to conversation, to good manners—all this and much more you may expatiate upon. You may call it dreary, heavy, stupid, dull, inhuman, vulgar at heart and tiresome in form. (1987, 217)

Seen in this light, London gives a world of possibilities to which one cannot deduce his experiences in accord with immediate visions. London, “not as a society but as a world” (Kimmey 88), vigorously produces Hyacinth’s impressions and consciousnesses: “his whole walk was peopled with recognitions; he had been dreaming all his life of just such a place and such objects, such a morning and such a chance” (XXII, 6–7).

As a *flâneur* of impression who beholds what impresses him in a blink of his eyes, Hyacinth contemplates London specifically and distinctively wherever he meanders. Hyacinth’s imagination and contemplation are never ceased to be stirred by the interlacing of specific time and space. Hyacinth reveals an obvious urban spectatorship of impression, which internalizes concrete images scattered around London into circulated modes of consciousnesses.⁶

⁶ James suggests that “London is on the whole the most possible form of life. I take it as an artist and as a bachelor; as one who has the passion of observation and whose business is the study of human life. It is the biggest aggregation of human life—the most complete compendium of the world” (1987, 217). James’s claim “I took possession of London” (217) makes explicit his ongoing pursuit of “the income-

3. Woman and Spectacle

Spectacle is an aleatory perspective other than impression in James's consciousness. James contributes a female character, Millicent Henning, to see the very embodiment of cockney commercial prosperity in significantly fluid, changeable viewpoints. For Millicent, what may excite her are by no means the rivers or pavements, but those lined fashion and beauty shops:

Happily she shared Hyacinth's relish of vague perambulation and was still more addicted than he to looking into the windows of shops, before which, in long, contemplative halts, she picked out freely the articles she shouldn't mind having put up for her. He invariably pronounced the objects of her selection hideous and made no scruple to assure her she had the worst taste of any girl in the place. Nothing that he could say to her affronted her so much, for her pretensions in the way of a cultivated judgment were boundless. (XI, 166)

For a natural observer of the city, the shop where Millicent works becomes an epitome of London material life:

She had the pretension of knowing who every one was; not individually and by name, but as regards their exact social station, the quarter of London in which they lived and the amount of money they were prepared to spend in the neighborhood of Buckingham Palace. She had seen the whole town pass through her establishment there [. . .]. (XII, 189)

Central to the commodity culture, Millicent observes persons and scenes in the way

parable, the unparalleled, the exception that cannot be deduced from the rule, to engage the fictional act of observation" (Tingle 62).

of spectacle. The urban life is surrounded by an immense accumulation of spectacles since it is a mode by which capitalism subordinates everyday experience. Guy Debord defines spectacle not as “a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images” (12). This definition emphasizes that social relationships of spectacle make it rather significant. Debord articulates that “the spectacle’s job is to cause a world that is no longer directly perceptible to be seen via different specialized mediations,” and “sight is naturally the most readily adaptable to present-day society’s generalized abstraction” (17). The commodity which characterizes urban spectacle is obvious in its “congealed form” (26), which “excludes quality” (27).

In terms of this exclusion, the spectator may not presuppose a separation between appearance and substance of urban spectacles. Spectacles will bring forth their underlying essence suggestive of complicated clusters of social relations into their appearances. The privileged assumption of division of appearance/substance no longer exists. Unlike Hyacinth’s perspective which supposes an imagined disparity of appearances and what they have to do with individual sentiments, the spectacle means its effect of appearance. The spectatorship of spectacle discourages internalized contemplation. Spectacles are events meant to be seen and perceived from the appearance it creates and reveals.

Millicent has an unusual affinity for London’s commodity culture. Her salient feature draws Hyacinth’s full attention and reflects the endless social activities concerning public amusements. For Millicent, going to public place is nothing more than the commonest and most pleasant in terms that this act is related to the activity of spectacle itself: when it comes to a closer relationship with Hyacinth, “Millicent Henning remarked that it was high time our hero should take her to some place of amusement” (X, 152). The working experience makes her accustomed to the public space: “Millicent partook profusely of tea and bread and butter, with a relish of raspberry jam, and thought the place most comfortable, though he himself, after finding himself ensconced, was visited by doubts of its propriety, suggested, among several things, by photographs, on the walls, of young ladies in tights” (V, 84).

Millicent signifies the new vision of London consumer culture. The way that Millicent models the dress is to model the department store where she works, and at a macroscopic level, to model the big London city. Millicent presently serves as an urbane figure whose consciousness has reached its new direction in its original way of spectacle.

Spectacle eventually dominates the labyrinthine, impenetrable urban space. Millicent herself is the exact product of the metropolitan material world that dazes and intoxicates the urban spectator. James's exposition of Millicent is as sparkling as London spectacles:

She was certainly handsome, with a shining, bold, good-natured eye [. . .] and her robust young figure was rich in feminine curves. [. . .] ; but there was something about her indescribably fresh, successful, and satisfying. She was to her blunt, expanded fingers a daughter of London, of the crowded streets and bristling traffic of the great city; [. . .] it had entered into her blood and bone, the sound of her voice the carriage of her head; she understood it by instinct and loved it with passion; she represented its immense vulgarities and curiosities, its brutality and its knowingness, its good-nature and its impudence, and might have figured, in an allegorical procession, as a kind of glorified townswoman, a nymph of the wilderness of Middlesex, a flower of the clustered parishes, the genius of urban civilization, the muse of cockneyism. (IV, 61–2)

Millicent and spectacles have something in common: vigor, glory, and magnificent appeal. The relationship between Millicent and spectacles refers to a direct parallel: Millicent is always as fabulous as London scenes, and the glaze of London is seen through Millicent. Millicent, the department store, and London, are therefore regarded as “paralleling the concurrent rise and success of the department store itself, both the results of a conscious masquerade and paraded spectacle” (Parsons 58).⁷

⁷ When Hyacinth first saw Millicent, he surely gains a lot of confidence of Millicent's occupation by perceiving “how handsome she was” inasmuch as “he hadn't roamed about London for nothing, and he

In this sense, spectacles are both objects and methods of viewing through Millicent's existence. In James, the female consciousness is potentially open to the changing social phenomena and develops a visual focus out of former conventions. Millicent is the "strength, affectionateness, and warm sensuality" that moves James to the praise of London (Trilling 85). Her observation of human society is not of a nature to impress her with "its high moral tone" which is taken by Hyacinth to judge Millicent "by narrating observations of the most surprising kind, gathered during her career as a shop-girl" (XII, 189). Millicent precisely reveals a way of spectacles of a commercial logic of social life. Avoiding an intensity of hierarchal consciousnesses of scenes, Millicent invites possibilities of visual experiences interrelated to various spectacles explicit in the consumer culture developing.

4. Dissented Urban Consciousnesses

Urban consciousness in the making is increasingly reacting to social transformations and interpersonal relationships. It is a site full of agitations and ferments in which Hyacinth and Millicent dramatically influence each other. Hyacinth's urban consciousness is largely productive and problematic in struggle of two inextricable worlds between the slums where he was born and the commercial communities to which he is adapted. His psychological conflicts take place when understanding a promise of harmony is assumingly impossible. He is in the midst of passions and alienations of the changing urban space. Miss Pinnie, Hyacinth's foster mother, reveals implicit forces of alienation: "From the day she [Millicent] came to look him up in Lomax Place she had taken a position, largely, in his life, and he had seen poor Pinnie's wan countenance grow several degrees more blank" (X, 152). Yet Millicent's appearance reinforces Hyacinth's passions for London's prosperity. She contrasts Miss Pinnie "with the resources of the capital" (IV, 59). For that reason, when

knew that when a girl was so handsome as that, a jocular tone of address, a pleasing freedom, was *de rigueur*" (V, 75–6). Hyacinth immediately takes her for a typical "public" woman, making social judgments about her fancy clothes and splendid looks. Hyacinth's assumptions reveal the discrepancy between male and female conceptions of phenomena of social commodification and their implications.

Hyacinth starts to date with Millicent, in his mind unconsciously emerges Miss Pinnie's shadow: her old implements and "smell of poverty and failure" (IV, 62). During his stay at the Princess Casamassima's Medley Hall, the Pynsent were afraid to send him letters insofar as the connection between Hyacinth and his poor residence may prevent him from an intimacy with the high class. Hyacinth thus suffers greatly from the opposition between old and new arenas of London. Hyacinth's preoccupation with the poor, linked to the specific weather of winter London, makes this ambiguity manifest once more. The air and atmosphere in winter figures both the poor's living and mental conditions:

for the season [winter] was terribly hard; [. . .] the deep perpetual groan of London misery seemed to swell and swell and form the whole undertone of life. The filthy air reached the place in the damp coats of silent men and hung there till it was brewed to a nauseous warmth, and ugly serious faces squared themselves through it, and strong-smelling pipes contributed their element in a fierce dogged manner [. . .]. (XXI, 343)⁸

Hyacinth's consciousness is derived from a dilemma that he is unable to see London without burden and contemplation. His bewilderment remains, and his later roaming of London has been entangled with pleasure and anger:

The influence of his permeating London had closed over him again; [. . .] and as the great city which was most his own lay round him under her pall like an immeasurable breathing monster he felt a vague excitement, as he had felt before, only now with more knowledge, that it was the richest expression of man. [. . .] He suspended, so to say, his small sensibility in the midst of it, to quiver there with joy and hope and ambition as well as with the effort of

⁸ Charles Anderson claims that certainly *The Princess Casamassima* is to a certain extent "Dickensian in the wide panorama it offers of the great capital" (Anderson 144). James is "indirectly indebted to the techniques used by Dickens: farce and melodrama, caricature and the grotesque-picturesque" (144). See Anderson, *Person, Place, and Thing in Henry James's Novels*.

renunciation. (XXXVIII, 266)

Hyacinth is reduced to “a negligible quantity” as Simmel speaks of the metropolitan mind which can “cope less and less with the overgrowth of objective culture” (Simmel 184). In this situation, “the individual has become a mere cog in an enormous organization of things and powers which tear from his hands all progress, spirituality, and value in order to transform them from their subjective form into the form of a purely objective life” (184). The immensity of London and the teeming variety of life is rendered “so clumsy and brutal, and has gathered together so many of the darkest sides of life” that it would be “frivolous to ignore her deformities” (Walkowitz 86). The failure to unravel the confusions of city turns Hyacinth into a concrete circumstance of alienation. For him, the city itself has become a “strangely mingled monster,” which acts as an “ogress who devours human flesh to keep herself alive to do her tremendous work” (86).

Hyacinth’s final walk through London right by the moment before his suicide was “the last resort of loneliness and despair” (Anderson 171):

Anyhow he went forth again into the streets, into the squares, into the parks, solicited by an aimless desire to steep himself yet once again in the great, indifferent city he so knew and so loved and which had had so many of his smiles and tears and confidences. The day was grey and damp, though no rain fell, and London had never appeared to him to wear more proudly and publicly the stamp of her imperial history. He passed slowly to and fro over Westminster bridge and watched the black barges drift on the great brown river; looked up at the huge fretted palace [of Parliament] that rose there as a fortress of the social order which he, like the young David, had been commissioned to attack with a sling and pebble. (XLVII, 419–20)

In front of London, Hyacinth is a subordinate, subject to its uncanny and impenetrable. Though Hyacinth seems unprepared for social changes of urbanized

society, he is aware of his entanglements of dominant material culture: Millicent. Before suicide, he roams along the former streets to look for Millicent, hoping there is something to be grasped:

He remembered his way through the labyrinth of the shop; he knew that her department was on the second floor. He walked through the place, which was crowded, as if he had as good a right as any one else; and as he had entertained himself, on rising, with putting on his holiday garments, in which he made such a distinguished little figure, he was not suspected of any purpose more nefarious than that of looking for some nice thing to give a lady. [. . .] It next became plain to him that the person standing upright before the Captain, as still as a lay-figure and with her back turned to Hyacinth, was the object of his own quest. In spite of her averted face he “spotted” Millicent [. . .] Millicent stood admirably still — the back view of the garment she displayed was magnificent. (XLVII, 422–3)

He loves London. Yet London’s magnificence, like Millicent’s, is impossible to be realized and grasped within one dimension. It seems a hindrance that precludes his emotional authenticity of the society. He endeavors to single out his innocent connection with the beloved streets and places, and what comes to him is, however, an unexpected sense of confusions and agitations.⁹ London stands magnificent as usual: “London seems to have a force and a character of its own, independent of the centuries and the millions of human hands that built it and maintain it” (Raleigh 325). London is still London itself, and Hyacinth is now excluded.

In contrast, Millicent’s urban consciousness keeps up with paces of London. Despite of her origin of Lomax Place, she has a univocal relation with the socio-economic mode of production and consumption. As an urbane woman, she is “remarkably womanly, clear-headed, and confident in her ambition, with a shrewd

⁹ As Virginia Woolf speaks of James, “A spectator, alert, aloof, endlessly interested, endlessly observant, Henry James undoubtedly was; but as obviously, though not so simply, the long-drawn process of adjustment and preparation was from first to last controlled and manipulated by a purpose which, as the years went by, only dealt more powerfully and completely with the treasures of a more complex sensibility” (Woolf 356).

knowledge of the workings of the city and consequent ability to survive within it” (Parsons 57). Millicent’s consciousness of urban space has been embedded within commercial conventions corresponding to her unique femininity: flamboyant, aggressive, and independent. In Hyacinth’s case, the prevalent commercial logic stimulates more obsessions and preoccupations of London life when he takes “interminable, restless, melancholy, moody, yet all-observant strolls through London” (V, 76); whereas Millicent, who possesses an avid “attachment also to any tolerable pretext for wandering through the streets of London and gazing into shop-windows” (IV, 65–6), always gets herself beautifully dressed and looked nice. Millicent’s consciousness is implicated by the way of spectacle. She sees, not reads. She sees Hyacinth as a spectacle: “There was something exotic about him, and yet, with his sharp young face, destitute of bloom but not of sweetness, and a certain conscious cockneyism which pervaded him, he was as strikingly as Millicent, in her own degree, a product of the London streets and the London air” (V, 79). In her eye, Hyacinth should be the same type of person as she. Difference of consciousness does not change her a lot. The more closely Hyacinth gets along with Millicent, the more he has adopted himself to the material culture since “[Millicent] desired at last to raise their common experience to a loftier level, to enjoy what she called a high-class treat” (XI, 166). Her presence renders a consciousness brought about by the spectacular interrelations of urban society extremely active and fluid. London is, for sure, Millicent’s freedom and confidence.

An urbanized consciousness arises so intensive as to enhance the enigmatic complexities of urban space which has exerted profound influences on all aspects of human life: material and mental experiences. For James, London is all about the overall imagination and the spatial consciousness: “the alpha and omega of the whole human enterprise” (Raleigh 325). It is magnificent on the one hand and on the other, “a sudden horror,” and “like a tiger-pounce of homesickness which had been watching its moment” (James 1981, 4). For James, London is

with its magnificent mystifications, which flatters and superfuses, makes

everything brown, rich, dim, vague, magnifies distances and minimises details, confirms the inference of vastness by suggesting that, as the great city makes everything, it makes its own system of weather and its own optical laws. (1981: 9–10)

The optical laws of London are indicated by James, similar to the way of spectacle. Hyacinth's vision of city cannot be patterned into the appearance of material representation, giving up to the dissonance of unstable cockney experiences. Millicent's proclaimed belief in consumer culture and success of life manifests a profusion of urban consciousness surfaced as spatial heterogeneities of London. In James, they coexist as the urbanization of consciousness.¹⁰

6. Conclusion

London has its own temperament. Hyacinth and Millicent, two kinds of spectatorship made up of geographical and sociological perceptions, are allowing us to see London from never diametrical yet intertwined perspectives. Impression and spectacle characterize two expressive forms of consciousnesses: internalized and externalized, individual and interpersonal, concentrated and distracted. Hyacinth's spectatorship has been challenged since spectacles all around force him to physically experience urban space, not to "think" in his mind. Seeing is seeing only. Hyacinth fails to see the way of spectacles. Millicent's vision rewrites the established boundary of cityscapes which are fixedly set by the conceptual male identities. Instead, it gives rise to a potential feminine trait of urban space. Spectacles reveal that male impression is unsatisfying to the expression of modern London. The unstable, fluctuating, and mutable feature of feminine consciousness displays James's mediation of change of London. For James, London is both positive and negative. In spite of its grey brutalities, London offered James an origin of consciousness which produces

¹⁰ David Harvey's account of urbanization of consciousness stresses on the capitalist urbanization which has political and social implications on the labor subject and the confines of the community. See Harvey, *The Urban Experience*.

differentiated yet conflated spectatorships. Urban consciousness is thus remapped under an overpowering structure of space. James's urban consciousness and spectatorship does not impose external and homogenous measures of value or reduce diversity to a single perspective. Rather, it is always the unintended consequences of space which is captured directly by the strong mobilization of particular differentiations.

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