"The Halls of Temptation": Gender, Politics, and the Construction of the Department Store in Late Victorian London

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On Guy Fawkes Day in 1876 an angry mob of retailers staged a charivari in the fashionable shopping promenade of Westbourne Grove in Bayswater. Their demonstration targeted William Whiteley, a linen-draper rapidly expanding his shop into London's first department store.[1] With his recent addition of a meat and green grocery department, Mr. Whiteley "had made himself exceedingly distasteful" to the "provision dealers in the district." This distaste turned into a raucous procession through the neighborhood's streets. Around noon, "a grotesque and noisy cortège entered the thoroughfare [Westbourne Grove]. At its head was a vehicle, in which a gigantic Guy was propped up . . . vested in the conventional frock coat of a draper . . . conspicuous on the figure was a label with the words 'Live and Let Live' . . . in one hand of the figure a

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[1] Richard S. Lambert, *The Universal Provider: A Study of William Whiteley and the Rise of the London Department Store* (London: George Harrap & Co., 1938). For a detailed analysis of the development of Bayswater's commercial district, also see Erika Rappaport, "The West End and Women's Pleasure: Gender and Commercial Culture in London's West End" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1993), chap. 1. For a general history of shopping, see Alison Adburgham, *Shops and Shopping: 1800–1914; Where and in What Manner the Well-Dressed Englishwoman Bought Her Clothes,* 2d ed. (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1981); Dorothy Davis, *Fairs, Shops and Supermarkets: A History of English Shopping* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966).

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piece of beef bore the label '5 1/2 d.' and in the other was a handkerchief, with the ticket '2 1/2 d. all-linen.' "[2] Dressed in their traditional blue frocks and making "hideous" noises by banging cleavers against marrow bones, Bayswater's butchers finally disposed of Whiteley's effigy in a bonfire in nearby Portobello Road.

The English charivari, "rough music," was a communal protest that censured both public and private behaviors. Female scolds, wife beaters, or couples united in apparently mismatched unions might all be chastised in this way. These noisy protests were also directed at any individual who, as E. P. Thompson described it, rode "rough-shod over local custom."[3] On Guy Fawkes Day, in particular, various "political, industrial, [or] private grievances" might be settled through this elaborate form of street theater.[4] According to Robert Storch, late Victorian Guy Fawkes demonstrations frequently targeted unpopular local figures, including "unscrupulous tradesmen."[5]

With the combination of different goods under one roof, cut-prices, and cash-only trading, William Whiteley had indeed strayed from the norms of the small, independent shopkeeper. In a spirited letter printed in the local newspaper, one of the "victims" of Whiteley's "Wholesale Butchery in Bayswater" complained that he had watched a "startling succession of feats in the art of shutting up your neighbour's shop and driving him elsewhere, but this last daring and audacious feat—this vending of meat and greens as well as silk and satins—overtops them all."[6] Specialized retailers precariously defending their skills and profits saw Whiteley's promiscuous combination of food and clothing as leading to severe economic and social consequences. However, one should not hastily conclude that the treatment of Whiteley's effigy expressed an older trading community's

[2] "Guy Fawkes Day in Westbourne Grove," *Bayswater Chronicle* (November 11, 1876). The journal changed names from the *Bayswater Chronicle and West London Journal* to the *Paddington, Kensington and Bayswater Chronicle* in 1875, but it was generally known by the shorter name, *Bayswater Chronicle*.

[3] E. P. Thompson, "Rough Music," in *Customs in Common* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991), p. 519; D. E. Underdown, "The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England," in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 116–36; Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975), chaps. 4 and 5.

[4] Thompson, p. 481.

[5] Robert D. Storch, " 'Please to Remember the Fifth of November': Conflict, Solidarity and Public Order in Southern England, 1815–1900," in *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. Robert D. Storch (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p. 74.

[6] Senex, "Wholesale Butchery in Bayswater—The Victims," *Bayswater Chronicle* (November 11, 1876).

protest against new forms of retailing. Bayswater's traders were in fact all relatively new to the area, and some were engaged in similar trading practices. These butchers picked up their cleavers and marrow bones to express their collective sense of insecurity in an extremely competitive and fluctuating commercial environment. This ritualized social protest appeared in late Victorian London at a moment when large-scale retailing and rapid urbanization became identified with shifting class, gender, and commercial norms.[7] While scholars have debated the form and effect of shopkeeper political protest against the growth of department stores, cooperatives, and multiples, this article examines how conflicts between specialized retailers and the developing department store reshaped notions of consumption, urban culture, and women's place in the city.

Shopkeeper resentment toward the "Universal Provider," as Whiteley came to be known, took different forms in this west London suburb during the 1870s and 1880s. Although not consistently organized, retailers in Whiteley's shadow vented their frustration on the streets, in the press, and on local government committees.[8] Yet they

[7] For the most recent work on retailing, see Gareth Shaw's articles, "The Evolution and Impact of Large-Scale Retailing in Britain" (pp. 135–65), and "The European Scene: Britain and Germany" (pp. 17–34), both in *The Evolution of Retail Systems, c. 1800–1914,* ed. John Benson and Gareth Shaw (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992). The classic work on retailing in this period remains James B. Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Great Britain: 1850–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954). Also see David Alexander, *Retailing in England during the Industrial Revolution* (London: Athlone Press, 1970); John William Ferry, *A History of the Department Store* (New York: Macmillan, 1960); Hrant Pasdermadjian, *The Department Store: Its Origins, Evolution, and Economics* (London: Newman Books, 1954); David Chaney, "The Department Store as a Cultural Form," *Theory, Culture and Society* 1 (1983): 22–31. Among the many business histories on department stores, Michael Moss and Alison Turton, *A Legend of Retailing: The House of Fraser* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1989), provides a clear overview. For a general analysis of the growth of the mass market, see Hamish Fraser, *The Coming of the Mass Market, 1850–1914* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1981).

[8] Chris Hosgood argues in " 'A Brave and Daring Folk': Shopkeepers and Associational Life in Victorian and Edwardian England" (*Journal of Social History* 26, no. 2 [Winter 1992]: 285–308) that shopkeepers responded to the perceived threat of the growth of department stores, multiples, and cooperatives through the formation of trade associations. Michael J. Winstanley had previously argued that English shopkeepers failed to form a political response to the growth of mass retailing. See Michael J. Winstanley, *The Shopkeeper's World, 1830–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983). Also see Geoffrey Crossick, "Shopkeepers and the State in Britain, 1870–1914," in *Shopkeepers and Master Artisans in Nineteenth-Century Europe,* ed. Geoffrey Crossick and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (London and New York: Methuen, 1984), pp. 239–69, "The Emergence of the Lower Middle-Class in Britain: A Discussion," in *The Lower Middle Class in Britain, 1870–1914,* ed. Geoffrey Crossick (New York: St. Martin's, 1977), pp. 11–60; Thea Vigne and Allen Hawkins, "The Small Shopkeeper in Industrial and Market Towns," in Crossick, ed., pp. 184–209. For an excellent assessment of the French situation, see Philip G. Nord, *Paris Shopkeepers and the Politics*

were rarely as direct as the cleaver-wielding butchers. Specialized shopkeepers employed and ultimately produced bourgeois gender ideology to defend their economic position against the threat of large-scale retailers.[9] They particularly "exposed" the nearly pathological consumer behaviors that such enterprises supposedly encouraged. Whiteley's enemies charged that, by selling an array of commodities, services, and pleasures to a mixed shopping crowd, Whiteley disorganized class, gender, moral, and economic categories. They argued that, by ignoring the cherished boundaries between public and private spheres, Whiteley denied the essential distinction between respectable and immoral women.

Whitely and his supporters, however, rejected this negative depiction of the consuming woman. He legitimized his own institution by characterizing the shopper as a respectable woman enjoying a safe and moderately respectable activity. By the 1880s new images of middle-class womanhood celebrated rather than condemned women's identification with consumption. Although this contented female shopper did not represent the range of women's economic or urban experiences, she came to symbolize a healthy urban economy. Along with this development, the public perception of the department store was transformed from "the halls of temptation" into a recognized and cherished "social sight."[10]

These merchants' arguments and strategies thus illuminate some of the conflicts involved in the creation of consumer culture and demonstrate Joan Scott's assertion that gender, society, and politics are mutually constitutive within specific historical contexts.[11] The growth of mass consumption, urbanization, and definitions of women's place in public life overlapped and influenced one another. The shifting reactions toward the Universal Provider and his customers provides a glimpse at how gender restructured the economy and how the economy redefined gender in late Victorian London.[12]

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of Resentment (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986). Nord persuasively argues that we need to see shopkeeper politics as more complicated than simply as a response to the threat of the big shop. He suggests that department stores were targeted because they symbolized broader shifts in the urban and commercial economy.

[9] For the most comprehensive account of the development and nature of this ideology, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

[10] *Bayswater Chronicle* (November 17, 1888).

[11] Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 46.

[12] For an extremely useful approach to the relations between gender, sexuality, and business in this period, see Peter Bailey, "Parasexuality and Glamour: The Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype," *Gender and History* 2 (Summer 1990): 148–72. See

Westbourne Grove: "A Thoroughfare of Good Shops"

Local elites and country gentry had patronized London's thriving commercial districts for several hundred years.[13] Between the late sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, the aristocracy moved from the City to the newly built avenues and squares of what came to be known as the West End.[14] Commerce soon followed its customers and spread westward to the Burlington Arcade, Old and New Bond Street, Oxford and Regent Street, Piccadilly, and the Strand.[15] During the mid-nineteenth century, suburban shopping centers like Westbourne Grove rapidly developed and soon competed with established West End retail districts.

Bayswater's history as a residential commuter suburb with a fashionable shopping center epitomized suburban commercial growth during this period.[16] The once rural area just north of Hyde Park and

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also Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851–1914* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1990); Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing, and Zola* (New York and London: Methuen, 1985). For an overview of these changes in America, see Kathy Peiss, "Commercial Leisure and the 'Woman Question,' " in *For Fun and Profit: The Transformation of Leisure into Consumption*, ed. Richard Butsch (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), pp. 105–17.

[13] F. J. Fisher, "The Development of London as a Centre of Conspicuous Consumption in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Essays in Economic History*, ed. E. M. Carus-Wilson (London: Edward Arnold, 1962), 2:197–207; Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660–1730* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).

[14] On the development of the east/west division of London in the early modern period, see R. Malcolm Smuts, "The Court and Its Neighborhood: Royal Policy and Urban Growth in the Early Stuart West End," *Journal of British Studies* 30 (April 1991): 117–49; Lawrence Stone, "The Residential Development of the West End of London in the Seventeenth Century," in *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J. H. Hexter*, ed. Barbara Malament (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1980), pp. 167–212; L. D. Schwartz, "Social Class and Social Geography: The Middle Classes in London at the End of the Eighteenth Century," *Social History* 7, no. 2 (May 1982): 167–85; E. J. Power, "The East and West in Early Modern London," in *Wealth and Power in Tudor England: Essays Presented to S. T. Bindoff*, ed. E. W. Ives, R. J. Knecht, and J. J. Scarisbrick (London: Athlone Press, 1978), pp. 167–85.

[15] Donald J. Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London* (London: Holmes & Meier, 1976); Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *London: The Unique City*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass., and London: MIT Press, 1982); Christopher Hibbert, *London: The Biography of a City* (London: Longman's, Green & Co., 1969); Hermione Hobhouse, *A History of Regent Street* (London: Macdonald & Jane's, in association with Queen Anne Press, 1975); Gareth Shaw, "The Role of Retailing in the Urban Economy," in *The Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities*, ed. James H. Johnson and Colin G. Pooley (London: Croom Helm; St. Martin's, 1982), pp. 171–94; P. J. Atkins, "The Spatial Configuration of Class Solidarity in London's West End, 1792–1939," *Urban History Yearbook* (1990): 36–65.

[16] Each inner suburb followed a different pattern of development, however. See D. A. Reeder, "A Theatre of Suburbs: Some Patterns of Development in West London, 1801–1911," in *The Study of Urban History*, ed. H. J. Dyos (New York: St. Martin's,

Kensington Palace Gardens became a lower-class residential neighborhood in the late 1830s when the Great Western Railway opened Paddington Station.[17] The area "improved" at mid-century when the aristocracy built rows of mansions along the edge of Hyde Park and developers constructed middle- and upper-class terraces and squares nearby. With the opening of the first Underground station in 1863, Bayswater became directly linked to the business district in the City and thus seemed specifically designed for the needs of the prosperous middle-class family.[18]

The neighborhood appealed to the bourgeois desire for segregation from the crime, disease, and poverty of the East End and the vulgar commercial activity of the City while remaining accessible to the urban center. Although slums and working-class regions bordered its streets, *The Landlord's and Tenant's Guide* presented the area to prospective residents as having "numerous wide and even roads . . . detached family mansions, stately gentlemen's residences, and villas, with large gardens and lawns in front and at the rear."[19] With its large contingent of former colonial administrators, Bayswater of the 1880s had become quite fashionable. Within a few decades, however, this popularity waned, and its social status dropped precipitously.[20]

The commercial development of Westbourne Grove, the area's main east-west artery, paralleled the rise and fall of the neighborhood.[21] Residential street replaced rural grove, which in turn became a fashionable shopping promenade.[22] By all reports, this transformation was extraordinarily rapid. In 1854 the Grove was still largely residential, with the only shop being a small chemist's. By 1860, milliners, tailors, grocers, tobacconists, ironmongers, bakers, linen-drapers,

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1968), pp. 253–71; and H. J. Dyos, *Victorian Suburb: A Study of the Growth of Camberwell*, 2d ed. (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966).

[17] During the late 1830s and 1840s, worker's houses were built along Bishop's Road and Westbourne Grove. See Lambert (n. 1 above), p. 59. Bayswater Road in the 1840s was known for its "plebeian tea-gardens." See "Bayswater Fresco," *Punch* 5 (1843): 137.

[18] Lambert, pp. 59–61.

[19] Alfred Cox, *The Landlord's and Tenant's Guide* (1853), quoted in Olsen, p. 164.

[20] Thomas Charles Newman, *Many Parts* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1935), p. 106; P. L. Garside, "West End, East End: London, 1890–1940," in *Metropolis, 1890–1940*, ed. Anthony Sutcliff (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984), pp. 221–58. Atkins, pp. 53–55, 61.

[21] By the 1920s and 1930s Westbourne Grove remained a retailing center, but one with decidedly "down-market" establishments. See Michael Bonavia, *London before I Forget* (Upton-upon-Severn: Self Publishing Association, 1990), pp. 131–32.

[22] On the general pattern of retail development in the West End of London, see Gareth Shaw and M. T. Wild, "Retail Patterns in the Victorian City," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 4 (1979): 278–91.

watchmakers, photographic artists, auctioneers, house agents, fishmongers, confectioners, butchers, and stationers lined the Grove.[23] The *Builder* praised this rapid development, noting that "Westbourne-grove, only recently a double line of semi-detached villas . . . is now a thoroughfare of good shops."[24] The *Building News* similarly assumed that Bayswater's commercial growth was an unmitigated benefit since residents need not "go into town" for the most expensive goods.[25] However, for another decade or so this was more publicity than reality.

Westbourne Grove of the early sixties was actually known to retailers as Bankruptcy Avenue.[26] Small traders, however, ignored their possibly insecure prospects and focused on the area's low rents and growing population. As a result, by 1870 "The Grove" was entirely taken over by retailers who prominently displayed both basic provisions and luxury goods such as jewelry, watches, clocks, and decorative objects in their large plate-glass windows.[27] William Whiteley was one of these adventurous, or possibly foolish, shopkeepers who tried their luck in mid-Victorian Bayswater. After a seven-year apprenticeship with a provincial draper and several years working in various London shops, Whiteley opened his own small enterprise in 1863. Aided by two female assistants, he began by selling "fancy goods," especially ribbons, to local residents.[28]

Despite these simple origins, Whiteley later claimed that he had always intended to build a monumental enterprise modeled after the Great Exhibition. As a youth enchanted with the Crystal Palace, he had been struck by the tantalizing way that goods were available to the eye but remained ultimately unattainable.[29] With this story, Whiteley situated his shop within London's emerging culture of spectacle and display, prominently symbolized by the Great Exhibition and glittering West End shops and streets.[30]

Like the Great Exhibition, London's arcades, dioramas, panoramas, bazaars, museums, and department stores addressed the Victo-

[23] Lambert, p. 60.

[24] *Builder* 21 (1863): 766–67, quoted in Olsen, p. 168.

[25] *Building News* 6 (1860): 593, quoted in Olsen, p. 168.

[26] Lambert, pp. 60–61.

[27] "Westbourne Grove," in *London Post Office Directory* (London: Frederick Kelly, 1870), p. 605.

[28] Lambert (n. 1 above), pp. 60–61; Adburgham, *Shops and Shopping* (n.1 above), pp. 149–59.

[29] Lambert, pp. 18–21.

[30] For a discussion of the images of these shops as exhibitions in the 1850s and 1860s, see Rappaport, "The West End and Women's Pleasure" (n. 1 above), pp. 214–28.

rian public as spectators, inviting people to look at goods and associate that looking with pleasure. Tony Bennett has argued that these institutions collectively constituted an "exhibitionary complex." Bourgeois society and its capitalist economy produced techniques and spaces for "the opening up of objects to more public contexts of inspection and visibility."[31] Within these institutions, objects and bodies once displayed in "enclosed and private domains" moved into "progressively more open and public arenas." This transformed both the goods and the spectators into part of the visual spectacle. Indeed, according to Ann Friedberg these institutions "extended 'the field of the visible' and turned visualized experience into commodity forms."[32] Thomas Richards similarly has written that the architecture, interior design, and organization of the Great Exhibition channeled viewer's attention and turned ordinary commodities into cultural signifiers.[33] Victorian commercial culture, then, has been largely associated with visual pleasure and its construction of consumers as both objects and subjects of a desiring gaze. The cultural analysis of these institutions has generally focused on how they produced consumption and consumers by creating certain modes of looking, desiring, and buying and how this structured and restructured class, gender, and other identities.[34]

[31] Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex," *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988): 73–102, 85. For an account of the array of early and mid-Victorian amusements, see Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, Belknap Press, 1978).

[32] Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 15.

[33] Richards (n. 12 above), p. 21. Among the vast literature on commodities as cultural signifiers, see Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods* (New York: Basic, 1979); Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Bland & Red, 1983); Jean Baudrillard, *Selected Writings,* ed. Mark Poster (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1982). For overviews of these theories, see Daniel Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Grant McCracken, *The Meaning of Things: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).

[34] Asa Briggs, *Victorian Things* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988), pp. 52–102; Rosalind Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 64–66; Bowlby (n. 12 above): Michael Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981); Susan Porter Benson, *Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890–1940* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988); William R. Leach, "Transformations in a Culture of Consumption: Women and Department Stores, 1890–1920," *Journal of American History* 71 (September 1984): 319–24, and his recent book, *Land of Desire: Merchants, Power, and the Rise of a New American Culture* (New York: Pantheon, 1993).

Yet the history of these enterprises was also influenced by their particular social, cultural, and political contexts. While they altered class and gender relations, their history was also influenced by class tensions and gender ideals. Judith Walkowitz has characterized the streets of 1880s London as a "contested site of class and gender encounters."[35] A similar struggle over space, social status, and gender norms took place in the large shops of the West End and fashionable suburbs such as Bayswater in the 1870s and 1880s. Economic and gender ideals shaped perceptions of commercial culture, influenced the social geography of retail districts, and affected the history of department store trading.

" . . . when Ladies Go Shopping"

The late 1880s English department store, like those in other countries, boasted extensive and elaborate dining facilities, lavatories, reading and writing rooms, and other services. Luxurious interiors and numerous amenities encouraged customers to spend an entire day shopping within these large comfortable retail palaces.[36] Selling conveniences to a crowd of primarily middle-class women was by no means an accepted idea, however. Amenities facilitated women's presence in the city but raised fears about the morality of consumption and the class and gender relations within the shopping crowd. Early department stores such as Whiteley's emerged within a culture that was profoundly ambivalent about consumption and the urban crowd. This ambivalence animated and was furthered by shopkeeper politics.

The Guy Fawkes Day demonstration culminated at least four years of rancorous dealings between Whiteley and his shopkeeping neighbors. During his first ten years, Whiteley had aggressively acquired leases, renovated interiors, and opened up new clothing and similar departments. In 1872 he began selling entirely new types of commodities when he opened a house agency, a cleaning and dyeing service, and a small refreshment room.[37] The public attacks began with

[35] Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 41.

[36] Rappaport, "The West End and Women's Pleasure," pp. 282–345.

[37] In 1867 Whiteley's included the following departments: Silks, Dresses, Linens, Drapery, Mantles, Millinery, Ladies' outfitting, Haberdashery, Trimming, Gloves, Hosiery, Ribbons, Fancy Goods, Jewellery, Lace, Umbrellas, Furs, and Artificial Flowers. Gross profits were estimated to be around £4,500 for that year. Soon Whiteley also added a dressmaking service, men's outfitting, and furnishing drapery. See Lambert, pp. 67–72.

this latest "innovation." Opponents charged that Whiteley was selling more than just goods, he was now vending new identities.

The furor began when Whiteley applied for a liquor license to serve wine and beer in his new refreshment room. At the general licensing meeting, the magistrates listened to Whiteley and his lawyer's arguments, they read an endorsing petition from several local religious and medical men, but in the end they refused Whiteley's application. Henry Walker, the editor of the *Bayswater Chronicle,* championed this decision. The possibility of lady shoppers imbibing spirits in public violated this editor's, and presumably the magistrates', image of proper Victorian womanhood. Walker asserted that although "Mr. Whiteley may have a large number of ladies visiting his shops and spending hours in making their purchases . . . sherry and silks, or port and piques, need not of necessity go together when ladies go 'shopping.'" A confirmed liberal, Walker still concluded that "there is a point where enterprise should cease to be encouraged."[38] This point was reached when enterprise invited middle-class ladies to indulge too readily in public pleasures.

All those involved in the licensing debate viewed shopping as an inherently female and amusing activity. The disagreement arose over whether this pleasure was healthy and profitable or socially and economically destructive.[39] At the licensing meeting, a Mr. W. Wright argued the case against Whiteley by linking economic expansion with the decline of female morality. Wright first asserted that a person who "carried on the business of a linen draper, a hatter, a bootmaker, an upholsterer, and jeweller . . . had got enough irons in the fire." He then quickly shifted from questioning the legitimacy of large-scale retailing to doubting the morality of encouraging female intemperance. He posited that Mr. Whiteley must have not read the recent *Saturday Review* article warning that drinking was "on the increase amongst ladies" or he would not wish "to offer them a facility for indulging in that propensity." Assailing the character of Whiteley's middle- and upper-class customers still further, Wright implied that the provision of alcoholic beverages might transform these "respectable" ladies into

[38] Henry Walker, "Whitely's Liquor License," *Bayswater Chronicle* (March 23, 1872).

[39] This question was a prominent theme in nearly all texts that depicted shopping in this period. See *The Drapier and Clothier,* vol. 1 (July 1859); Henry Mayhew, ed., *Shops and Companies of London and the Trades and Manufactories of Great Britain* 1 (March–September 1865): 5, 86; "Shopping Without Money," *Leisure Hour* (1865): 110–12; "Going a Shopping," *Leisure Hour* (1866): 198–200; "The Philosophy of Shopping," *Saturday Review* (October 16, 1875): 488–89; "Ladies Shopping," *Warehouseman and Draper's Trade Journal* (July 12, 1873): 374, (January 26, 1878): 46.

prostitutes as well as drunkards. Although he apologetically stated that he had no intention of "questioning the respectability of Mr. Whiteley or his customers," he felt that as many of the shoppers "might be ladies or females dressed to represent them . . . the place might be made a place of assignation." Therefore, Wright urged that "in the interest of morality the application would be refused." Thus, serving alcohol apparently transformed a glorified linen draper's into a brothel housing females "dressed to represent" ladies.[40]

Wright well knew that public drinking signified a form of amusement not enjoyed by a "respectable" woman, for it would mark her as a prostitute looking for clients.[41] This assumption was underscored by a disquieting geographical correlation between the West End clothing and sexual markets.[42] The most fashionable West End shopping areas, such as Regent Street and the Burlington Arcade, were also the most well-known prostitute haunts in London. Even in Bayswater it was not at all clear what pleasures certain shops sold. For example, the owners of the innocent-sounding "Westbourne Grove Coffee and Dining Rooms," also known to regulars as "The Drum and the Monkey," were convicted of running a "disorderly house" in March 1872.[43] Indeed, since Whiteley's was the first shop in London to serve food and drink, it is quite likely that local residents and other observers were not exactly sure what type of institution this renegade retailer was creating. Whiteley's request to serve wine in his shop raised concerns that this rapidly expanding prosperous inner suburb would soon suffer from the ills as well as the benefits associated with urban life.[44]

[40] "Paddington Licensing Meeting," *Bayswater Chronicle* (March 23, 1872).

[41] Robert Thorne, "Places of Refreshment in the Nineteenth-Century City," in *Buildings and Society: Essays on the Social Development of the Built Environment*, ed. Anthony D. King (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 235. Descriptions of West End nightlife nearly always characterize the women who drink, dance, and dine in public as prostitutes. See, e.g., J. Ewing Ritchie, *The Night Side of London* (London: William Tweedle, 1857); Stephen Fiske, *English Photographs* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1869); Donald Shaw, *London in the Sixties* (London: Everett & Co., 1908); Ivan Bloch, *Sexual Life in England Past and Present*, trans. William Forstern (London: Francis Aldor, 1938), and Henry Mayhew; *London Labour and the London Poor*, ed. Peter Quennell (1862; reprint, London: Bracken Books, 1983), pp. 121–27.

[42] Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 139–45; Walkowitz, pp. 50–52. In his detailed description of West End prostitution, Henry Mayhew portrayed its streets and shops as both commercial and sexual marketplaces. Among other trades, he identified milliners, dressmakers, servants, those who serve at bazaars, and "frequenters of fairs" as especially prone to entering the illicit trade. See Mayhew, p. 38.

[43] "Disorderly Houses in Bayswater," *Paddington Times* (March 30, 1872).

[44] On the social and political battles over prostitution during this period, see Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

In opposing Whiteley, then, Wright strategically raised moral concerns regarding the "Great Social Evil," but at the same time he also touched on anxieties created by rapid urbanization, commercial growth, and women's place in this process. While prostitution symbolized the problems associated with these changes, the figure of the prostitute represented the fate of the individual-turned-commodity in a consumer society. Amanda Anderson has recently argued that the pervasive figure of the fallen woman "dramatized predicaments of agency and uncertainties about the nature of selfhood, character, and society."[45] The prostitute drinking in Whiteley's emporium registered wider concerns that consumers would lose all self-control and moral sense, but she also spoke to independent traders' worries that they were on the verge of being "ruined" by the monster shops.[46] For the shopkeeper's independence seemed dramatically challenged by the growth of large-scale retailing.

Wright, like other critics of market culture and mass society, drew on and furthered the perceived relationship between prostitution and women engaged in new consumer activities.[47] By collapsing the distinction between women buying and selling pleasure, Wright invoked

[45] Amanda Anderson, *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture* (Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 2. Also see Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988).

[46] This strategy of conflating marketplaces with sites of prostitution to limit trade competition was by no means new. As Gary Dyer has noted, this was precisely the charge that shopkeepers leveled at bazaars in 1816. West End shopkeepers complained to Parliament that, among "the numerous evils" associated with bazaar's, was the way they increased "places of public promenade [and] intrigue." Despite this argument bazaars became popular places of upper- and middle-class shopping and leisure until late in the century. Like those who opposed the department stores, however, the complaining traders helped construct the middle-class perception that all women in public were prostitutes. See Gary R. Dyer, " 'The Vanity Fair' of Nineteenth Century England: Commerce, Women, and the East in the Ladies' Bazaar," *Nineteenth Century Literature* 46 (September 1991): 196–222, quote at 205.

[47] In Anglo-American and French culture, the prostitute has a long history of symbolizing the commodified self. See Elizabeth Wilson, *The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder and Women* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 55–57; Kathy Peiss, "Making Up, Making Over: Cosmetics, Consumer Culture, and Women's Identity" (paper presented at the Rutgers Center of Historical Analysis, New Brunswick, N.J., January 1992); Mariana Valverde, "The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Woman in Nineteenth Century Social Discourse," *Victorian Studies* 32 (Winter 1989): 169–88; Daniel A. Cohen, "The Murder of Maria Bickford: Fashion, Passion and the Birth of Consumer Culture," *American Studies* 31, no. 2 (Fall 1990): 5–30. The connection between consumer passions and prostitution lasted throughout the nineteenth century. See, e.g., the *Bayswater Chronicle*'s editorial on crime and the love of dress among male and female shop assistants (February 10, 1872); Arthur Sherwell, *Life in West London: A Study in Contrast* (London: Metheun, 1897), pp. 145–48.

the well-known theme of Eliza Linton's notorious article, "The Girl of the Period," published anonymously in 1868 in the *Saturday Review*. Linton had accused modern English girls of "Bayswater and Belgravia" of boldly imitating the ways of the prostitute. Dyeing their hair, painting their faces, and wearing the latest fashions, she warned, led to the use of "slang, bold talk, and fastness; to the love of pleasure and indifference to duty." To support their consumer desires Linton believed that the young middle- and upper-class woman eventually sold herself to a wealthy husband. Her marriage was then simply "the legal barter of herself for so much money."[48]

Linton feared that young women's participation in an urban commercial culture of style and display encouraged sexual, moral, and social disorder. By entering the market as consumers, these girls ruined themselves in the public sphere but also brought market relations into the sacred space of the private home.[49] The dispute over large-scale retailing, then, was also a debate over acceptable feminine spaces and behaviors outside the private home and family circle. This debate in turn produced diverse meanings of shopping and the legitimacy and contours of its pleasures.

Whiteley and his supporters attempted to redefine the immoral associations attached to public amusements and to produce an acceptable public femininity. Charles Mills Roche, Whiteley's solicitor and a prominent local political figure, argued for the license and the concept of Universal Providing by stridently refusing to use the moral language established by his opposition. He first addressed the retailers' economic concerns. Far from ruining the business of local traders, Roche argued that Whiteley had tremendously increased the wealth of the neighborhood. As he now occupied ten separate shops and employed 622 individuals on the premises and another 1,000 out-of-doors, "Mr. Whiteley" Roche asserted, "has been the making of Westbourne Grove."[50] He then confidently claimed that drink was neither a physical nor social pleasure but merely "a great public convenience."[51]

When questioned, Whiteley similarly defended large-scale retailing, casting himself as a benefit to the neighborhood and a provider of

[48] "The Girl of the Period," *Saturday Review* (March 14, 1868): 339–40.

[49] On the reception of this piece and the other articles Linton wrote in the *Saturday Review*, see Nancy Fix Anderson, *Woman against Women in Victorian England: A Life of Eliza Lynn Linton* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 117–36.

[50] Whiteley's was thus one of the largest shops in London. There were other suburban draper's that compared, however. Messrs. Spencer, Turner and Boldero in Lisson Grove had approximately 1,000 employees. See *Warehouseman and Draper's Trade Journal* (December 21, 1872): 643.

[51] *Bayswater Chronicle* (March 23, 1872).

necessities, not a stimulator of desires. He pleaded that, of the nearly four thousand customers who visited his establishment each day, between five hundred and one thousand of them were from the country. Visiting his store from "ten o-clock in the morning until five o-clock in the afternoon," many shoppers had actually asked him "for a glass of wine and a biscuit." Whiteley thus presented himself as only responding to consumer demand, serving a public necessity. By defining drink as a "convenience," not as a luxury or indulgence, Whiteley hoped to remove the perceived moral danger of women as public consumers. "There was not the shadow of foundation," Whiteley concluded, "that if he obtained a license his establishment would become a place of assignation." He finally implied that he removed the moral threat of women's shopping because shoppers were no longer forced to enter places of ill-repute such as a public house to have a drink or other refreshment. The magistrates refused to buy this argument, however. They resolutely denied the application with the suggestion that Mr. Whiteley "had enough to do in looking after his present establishment."[52]

Aside from the rhetoric about the dangers of female intemperance, there was no doubt an economic interest underlying this decision. Before the application had even been discussed at the general licensing meeting, one reporter for the *Paddington Times* had simply assumed that Whiteley wanted to turn a profit serving wine and beer to his hundreds of employees. The newspaper, voicing the concern of the licensed victuallers, concluded that, "at the present time when restrictions of every description are being inflicted upon publicans, it is really a monstrous piece of audacity in a private individual, totally unconnected with the trade, applying for such a license."[53] The actual records of Whiteley's application no longer exist, but other documents suggest that the licensed victuallers had a strong hand in restricting the granting of new licenses. The victuallers filled the meeting halls and frequently submitted opposing petitions.[54] Thus proclamations about immorality and intemperance were socially and legally acceptable methods of restricting trade competition.

[52] Ibid.

[53] *Paddington Times* (March 9, 1872).

[54] The Middlesex County Session Records for the Licensing Committee for 1872 no longer exist, but the Greater London Record Office does hold the records for the later 1870s. The applications from restaurant owners, confectioners, and hoteliers were often opposed by the licensed victuallers. See, e.g., the petition submitted by the "licensed victuallers carrying on business in Bond Street and the vicinity," in opposition to the liquor license of Sir Coutts Lindsay for the Grosvenor Gallery's restaurant in 1878. (Greater London Record Office, class number M/A/CL/1878/71).

As mentioned earlier, the editor of the *Bayswater Chronicle,* Henry Walker, fully supported this limitation on trade, but he turned the event into a mediation on the morality and pleasures of shopping. After the license had been blocked, he quipped, "Shopping has sufficient charm in itself to prevent [customers'] swooning."[55] An avowed proponent of women's emancipation, Walker nonetheless did not share Whiteley's image of women in public life. Instead, he sounded remarkably similar to the conservative moralist Eliza Linton.

Whiteley had tried to construct a new site for alcoholic consumption at a time when most agreed that this was not a public pleasure that middle-class ladies should desire.[56] This specific indulgence was defeated, but the idea of making shopping amusing for women by building a safe, comfortable, and mildly exciting commercial environment was not. The first issue of a new national draper's trade journal applauded Whiteley's refreshment room as one of the many "new ideas" of this "enterprising man." Leaving it to the law of supply and demand to determine the value of the lunch room, the editor wrote, "We offer no opinion on the absolute propriety of such an arrangement. Experience will soon show whether the innovation is acceptable to the visitors and advantageous to trade." His hope for its success was clear, however. He commented, "A Day's Shopping is one of the most agreeable occupations a Lady can devise, but pleasure is toil without agreeable relaxation and rest." Although "wine may not be desireable," he felt sure that a "bun, ice or refreshing fruit beverage," if "attainable in the ladies' room," would enable the "varied attractions" of the dress, millinery, and other departments to be "better appreciated."[57]

Like Whiteley, the trade journal fostered the notion that serving women's bodily needs—albeit in a carefully regulated setting—encouraged consumption without unleashing dangerous passions. Assuaging lingering fears that food would lead to unregulated socializing between the sexes, these drapers suggested they were only modestly altering shopping practice by easing women's access to urban life. Women might have a bun or ice, but only if served in the "ladies room." Building single-sex spaces within the stores and a feminized view of them in general essentially domesticated these institutions and limited public opposition.

These drapers, like others seeking a wider market, encouraged

[55] *Bayswater Chronicle* (March 23, 1872).

[56] On the Victorian temperance movement, see Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815–1872* (London: Faber & Faber, 1971).

[57] *Warehouseman and Draper's Trade Journal* (April 15, 1872): 4.

consumer pleasures while avoiding a radical shift in notions of bourgeois femininity. They did so, however, by casting female shoppers as the agents, not subjects, of economic change. A letter from a "shop assistant" printed in the same issue of the trade journal that applauded Whiteley's new lunch room promised large fashionable West End drapers such as Peter Robinson's, Marshall & Snelgrove's, and Swan & Edgar's that they would be "amply rewarded for their enterprise" if they established elaborate and comfortable ladies rooms for their customers. "Many ladies," wrote this concerned employee,

> especially those who do not reside in town, are in the habit of devoting a day to "shopping." . . . But sheer weariness, the necessity of rest, and the desire to arrange the toilet not unfrequently shorten the visit . . . the pastry cook's is the lady's resort, and the vendor of buns and ices gains little, while probably the draper or silk mercer looses much. I feel certain the ladies would be pleased if in each of these splendid establishments which adorn our large towns, there was a "Ladies Room," fitted with looking glasses and toilet appendages, and provided with neat and obliging female attendants.[58]

As Whiteley had done, this assistant cast his suggestion as a response to customers' requests, not as a device to create new desires. He even quoted "a lady" who supposedly confided in him, "I always feel so much more disposed to be pleased with everything, when I have refreshed myself by washing my hands and arranging my bonnet."[59] While clearly concerned with enlarging their market by encouraging women to do their shopping outside of their own neighborhoods, these drapers consistently asserted that women already delighted in this activity. They naturalized shopping as a female, urban, commercial amusement and argued that its practitioners were the force behind their own expansion. New ideals of femininity and female public places, then, developed as part of the legitimation of a threateningly new form of retailing.

Large-scale retailers thus identified particular activities, amenities, and spaces with women to encourage their presence in public and stimulate more consumption. However, they also did so by excluding shoppers that inhibited the pleasure of these customers. For example, the Army and Navy Co-operative Society, essentially a private department store in the 1870s, refused to serve a male servant who came

[58] Ibid., p. 17.
[59] Ibid.

into the store on an errand for a society member. When criticized for this incident in a front-page article in the *Globe,* an official responded that the messenger "was not considered a fit person to mingle in the crowd of members, including a large proportion of ladies." This official asserted that members had complained of being inconvenienced by "carriers, costermongers and messengers." They had therefore instructed doorkeepers not to admit "such representatives" unless they are "cleanly in appearance and respectably clad."[60] Class segregation was indeed easier in the middle-class cooperatives since shoppers technically had to be members. Nonetheless, the society's policy reflected retailers' ambivalence toward their own customers. They sought a public that was at once large but also domesticated and homogeneous.

However, critics of the new department stores played on this ambivalence by provoking greater fears of the crowd and anxieties about female indulgence.[61] A popular journal, the *Graphic,* for example, satirically labeled Whiteley's lunch room as "an importation from Paris," which should be denounced as "dangerous in the highest degree." In removing the bodily discomfort associated with purchasing, it encouraged "excessive shopping" and thereby was "calculated to play all kinds of unpleasant things with the peace of families."[62] Women already enjoyed shopping in drapers to such a degree that only hunger and fatigue could possibly limit this overwhelming desire. In traditional shops, "after having taken their pleasure among ten thousand pretty things . . . exertion induces . . . a return to their homes." But "under the new system . . . [in which] fatigue and restoration go hand in hand: there need be no flagging, so long as money or credit is available." At Whiteley's,

> They acquire such things as soups, cutlets, omelettes, macaroni, fritters, and so forth, they revel in the accompaniments of cruets full of sherry or claret, or lilliputian bottles of champagne, what is the effect? They have not left the halls of temptation; the voice of the charmer still rings in their ears . . . they return once more to the slaughter . . . [and] in the wild and reckless period that follows things are done in a financial way which would make the angels weep . . . the afternoon's excitement has . . .

[60] *Globe* (December 11, 1876). The original criticism of the Army and Navy Cooperative Society appeared in the *Globe* on December 9, 1876. For clippings on the incident, see House of Fraser Archives (HF/6, 15/1, Archives and Business Records Centre, Glasgow).

[61] "What will he do with It? Wine and Drapery," *Grocery News and Oil Journal* (March 22, 1872), p. 121.

[62] "Lunch with the Linendrapers," *Graphic* (August 3, 1872), p. 98.

> all the attraction of a delightful dream, with a slight dash of an orgy, leaving a lingering pleasure even over repentance.[63]

Women's unrestrained consumer desires were imagined as insatiable appetites entirely depleting husbands' financial resources.

Self-restraint, prudence, even chastity, the main props of bourgeois womanhood, could seemingly be thrown off with a most unnerving sensuous abandon. This image of the seduced woman had as much to do with changing middle-class norms as it did with worries about female shopping orgies. Like the kleptomaniac, the shopper metaphorically stood for a class abandoning itself to consumer desires and giving new meanings to consumption.[64] For although the author of the *Graphic* critique condemned women's lack of control and self-restraint, he also included a diatribe against men. "We all know," he stated, "that there is nothing less agreeable to a man than waiting at a linen draper's while a lady makes a purchase." With a lunch room available, "he has an obvious recourse: he will lunch while the sweet operation is being performed . . . lunch is well known to intensify emotions . . . under the influence of . . . waiting, cheques are written for amounts which would never be figured in cold blood . . . weak men! They purchase a little temporary consolation at who shall say what cost?"[65] Whiteley's small luncheon room, not actually serving sherry, claret, or lilliputian bottles of champagne, inspired scenes of social collapse. Fears about commercial growth were thus articulated through images of dissipation, disrupted family life, and disorderly women.

When Whiteley began to serve refreshments, he seemed to be calling for a shift in women's behavior and in the composition of the shopping public. By permitting women to spend significant periods of time outside of their homes and away from their neighborhoods, Whiteley's lunch room was a small part of a broader shift in London's urban culture and economy during this period. Beginning in the 1870s, and escalating rapidly in the following decades, a host of similar commercial and noncommercial enterprises developed to serve the bodily needs of wealthy women and men in the urban center. Large hotels, restaurants, museums, tea shops, women's clubs, and even public lavatories catered to and stimulated the physical, social, and economic

[63] Ibid.

[64] Elaine S. Abelson, *"When Ladies Go A-Thieving": Middle-Class Shoplifters in the Victorian Department Store* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[65] *Graphic* (August 3, 1872), p. 98.

desires of, among others, middle- and upper-class women shoppers.[66] For example, when the Grosvenor Gallery opened in New Bond Street in 1877, it included very similar amenities as Whiteley's: a buffet bar, billiard room, smoking room, and eventually a library for male and female visitors.[67] The expansion of these amenities promoted public, heterosocial forms of middle-class urban amusement and represented the increasingly nonresidential status of London's shoppers and tourists. For those visitors who lived at some distance and lacked nearby friends and relations particularly required such amenities.

The reactions to Whiteley's growth reflected specific local economic and political grievances and general anxieties resulting from these wider cultural and commercial transformations. To many these changes appeared to afford women indulgent freedoms and improper powers. Critics contended that the "powerful fascination in shopping to most women" came from the "endless possibilities of indulgence which belonged to it." In the 1875 *Saturday Review* article, "The Philosophy of Shopping," the author, probably Eliza Linton, argued that, in "its mystical feminine meaning, to shop is to pass so many hours in a shop on the mere chance of buying something . . . [it] springs immediately from a taste for novel and various entertainment . . . [and] seems to be undertaken for the pure love of the occupation." This lengthy article concluded that the real pleasure associated with shopping came from the experience of being served. While shopping, "the dethroned mistress . . . trodden under foot in her own house," had the authority of "an Oriental potentate." Being patiently served by the "assiduous shopman" afforded "mothers and daughters" the opportunity to "luxuriate" in a deep and intense "sense of power."[68]

While trade journals supported retailing innovations, they were also among the greatest critics of women's shopping habits. Although the drapers' journals generally endorsed Whiteley's practices, they also repeatedly complained about "ladies who go into shops to look and not buy." They noted that this "proceeding" often ended with an assistant being censured and sometimes fined.[69] At the local level, one Bayswater shopkeeper blamed Whiteley for the expansion of this amusement.[70] The Universal Provider offered female consumers

[66] Rappaport, "The West End and Women's Pleasure" (n. 1 above), pp. 149–210.

[67] Colleen Denny, "Sir Coutts Lindsay and the Grosvenor Gallery: Exhibition Reform in Victorian England" (paper presented at the nineteenth annual meeting of the Western Conference on British Studies, Boulder, Colo., October 1992).

[68] "The Philosophy of Shopping," *Saturday Review* (October 16, 1875), p. 488.

[69] *Warehouseman and Draper's Trade Journal* (March 1, 1873): 111.

[70] Justice, "Wholesale Butchery," *Bayswater Chronicle* (November 18, 1876).

greater autonomy and freedom while diminishing the independence of the traditional retailer. Ambiguously celebrating and condemning women's shopping, trade journals and their readers grappled with the consumer culture they had themselves partly created. Bayswater's streets and its local press mirrored this uncertainty.

"Our Local Regent Street"

During the 1870s William Whiteley suffered a number of small defeats, but despite minor setbacks he continued to expand into "non-traditional" trades, such as stationery, household goods, and ironmongery. He started a house building and decoration service, and in 1876 he opened a hairdressing and a small banking department. Some Bayswater merchants sought to restrain this expansion through the avenues of local government, particularly the Paddington vestry and Metropolitan Board of Works.[71] James Flood, a member of the vestry and owner of a house and estate agency competing with Whiteley, led the struggle against the Universal Provider throughout these years.[72]

In order to assuage all local and national opposition, Whiteley also began new methods of promoting himself. While he avoided advertising in the press, Whiteley turned his price lists into weighty catalogs. In 1877 he began to issue an elaborately bound and illustrated yearly diary. *William Whiteley's Diary, Almanac and Handbook of Useful Information* contained advertising, lists of public figures, weights and measures, important addresses to banks, government offices, theaters, museums, and other entertainments. The diary also republished extracts from newspaper articles that praised Whiteley for

[71] For specific details of the many conflicts between Whiteley and these bodies see, Lambert (n. 1 above), esp. pp. 80–115. On shopkeepers and local government, see E. P. Hennock, "The Social Composition of Borough Councils in Two Large Cities," in Dyos, ed. (n. 16 above), pp. 318–35. Chris Hosgood suggests that a distinctive shopkeeping subculture oriented around particular trades developed in this period. There is some evidence to suggest that attitudes toward Whiteley depended on trade, not the size of the shop. It appears that grocers, butchers, and other provision dealers particularly opposed Whiteley, while even small drapers do not seem to have felt threatened. See Hosgood (n. 8 above), pp. 285–90.

[72] Whiteley's dealings with the vestry can be traced in the pages of the local papers such as the *Bayswater Chronicle* and the *Paddington Times* and the Paddington vestry minutes. The minutes are not particularly detailed, however, and the reports in the local newspaper give a fuller picture of the transactions of these meetings. Volumes E, F, and G cover the years from 1874 to 1882 and indicate an ongoing, almost monthly battle between Whiteley's supporters and his enemies on the vestry (Paddington vestry Minutes, Westminster Local Archives, Marylebone branch, London).

taking "charge of you from the cradle to the grave."[73] This publicity stimulated and legitimized shopping desires and department store methods. In this effort Whiteley was greatly aided by the trade journal and newspaper praise he received outside of Bayswater.[74]

Despite Flood's constant opposition, Whiteley continued his growth. Moreover, the Universal Provider's success prompted others to adopt his methods. Only a few months after Whitely's grotesque effigy met its end in Portobello Road, the *Bayswater Chronicle* asserted that the outcry against "our U.P. had all but completely died away." The grocers and poulterers in the vicinity had found that they were doing more business than ever "because Mr. Whiteley's 'Cheap meat' sensation has drawn more people to Westbourne Grove, and made the place a better mart than ever." Walker himself even jokingly claimed to know "some other tradesmen in the Grove and elsewhere who would like their trade to be threatened."[75] When the Brixton Bon Marché opened the next year, Walker cheerfully wrote that it too would soon become "an ornament" of its locality and that "the belles of Brixton and Clapham will now be able to boast of *their* local U.P."[76] Ironically, the same arguments that Whiteley had made four years earlier were now accepted and praised.

In the late seventies and eighties, Henry Walker played a key role in transforming the once-hated "leviathan" into the "local U.P." The *Bayswater Chronicle* now confidently asserted that large-scale retailing benefited neighborhoods by expanding markets and creating retail districts. When Whiteley opened additional premises in 1881 along the Queen's Road (now Queensway), the *Bayswater Chronicle* wholeheartedly praised this new "row of lofty and spacious edifices" as a "frontage certainly superior to that of any other retail house in the metropolis."[77] A second article claimed that because of "the Bayswater Sensation . . . [Queen's-road] at once became a market, and has been thronged in the shopping hours ever since." Moreover, the author wrote, "The Bayswater tradesmen don't seem to mind it. They have learned to accept Whiteley as a fact. . . . 'Better for all of us,'

[73] Extract from the *New York Daily Graphic* (May 12, 1876), quoted in *William Whiteley's Diary: Almanac and Handbook of Useful Information for 1877* (London: William Whiteley's, 1877). The diary was published annually from 1877 to 1915.

[74] See, e.g., the extremely positive accounts of Whiteley's emporium in the *Paddington Times* (November 4, 1876); G. A. Sala, "Young London," *Daily Telegraph* (June 2, 1879); *Modern London: The World's Metropolis, An Epitome of Results* (London: Historical Publishing, 1890), pp. 194–95.

[75] "More Whiteleyana! Cheap Meat!!" *Bayswater Chronicle* (March 10, 1877).

[76] "Another U.P. in the Field," *Bayswater Chronicle* (May 26, 1877).

[77] "Mr. Whiteley's New Promises," *Bayswater Chronicle* (March 26, 1881).

said one of them, 'he makes Bayswater a grand market for all of us except the old-fashioned.' "[78] Former residents recalled Whiteley's effect in nearly the same terms. One remembered that Whiteley's had made Westbourne Grove "one of the principal shopping thoroughfares in London."[79] Another claimed that, in the early eighties, "shoppers were drawn from all over London, and one of the very first places that provincial visitors made for was Whiteley's."[80]

At first glance, such reverence for Whiteley's and Bayswater's growing commercial culture appears paradoxical. The same writers who had attacked Whiteley now heralded his emporium, while those merchants who had not been driven out of business adopted his selling techniques and his arguments. However, this apparent shift was in fact another strategy for dealing with the threat posed by the department store.[81] Like the local shops that surrounded Emile Zola's fictive *Au bonheur des dames,* some Bayswater shopkeepers challenged the department store not with street protests but by sprucing up their interiors, offering special bargains, and paying more attention to window display.[82]

Instead of criticizing Whiteley, the *Bayswater Chronicle* began to advertise the whole neighborhood as a fashionable shopping district. A regular columnist, "The Flâneur in the Grove," and other writers flattered the florists, stationers, butchers, and drapers with lengthy descriptions of their beautiful window displays and quality stock. Such stories promoted the area and individual shops but avoided the traditional distaste of advertising by absenting specific names of stores and the prices of goods.[83]

Bayswater shopkeepers and their local paper turned the fact of having been engulfed by London to their advantage by presenting their suburban neighborhood as a cosmopolitan pleasure center. "Every year," claimed the *Bayswater Chronicle,* "sees Westbourne-grove attracting to itself business which was formerly wont to seek the West End Centres."[84] Another writer observed that "improvements in Westbourne Grove frontages which are now in vogue, are on the increase. Bayswater is getting to look less like a *faubourg* and more like

[78] "Local Gossip," *Bayswater Chronicle* (March 26, 1881).

[79] Newman (n. 20 above), p. 103.

[80] A. M. W. Stirling, *Victorian Sidelights* (London: Ernest Benn, 1954), p. 247.

[81] See Nord's analysis of this form of commercial reaction (n. 8 above), in pp. 82–99.

[82] Emile Zola, *Ladies' Delight,* trans. April Fitzylon (London: Paul Elek, 1960).

[83] See, e.g., *Bayswater Chronicle* (June 22, 1878; February 22, 1879; April 26, 1879; May 3, 1879; June 14, 1879; June 21, 1879; July 5, 1879; and July 19, 1879).

[84] " 'The Bazaar,' Westbourne Grove," *Bayswater Chronicle* (May 3, 1879).

a metropolitan centre."[85] As a blatant piece of commercial propaganda, the local paper contended that the Grove now had "quite a Bond Street air" and thus had become "Our local Regent Street."[86] By 1880, local journalists even claimed that "Westbourne Grove as a shopping thoroughfare has now reached a pitch of unprecedented excellence. Both as a promenade, and a display of tasteful shop windows, it is now more inviting than ever."[87] Embracing the local commercial culture meant celebrating shopping as a legitimate, pleasurable, and fashionable social event.

The *Bayswater Chronicle* thus adopted some of Whiteley's arguments for large-scale trading that he had presented before the general licensing meeting several years earlier. Instead of worrying that a luxurious and comfortable environment would lead to moral ruin, the paper presented shopping as a sign of neighborhood prosperity. The mingling of different social groups became an innocent amusement signifying the street's cosmopolitan quality and appeal:

> The Centre of social gravitation in Bayswater is undoubtedly the few hundred yards of roadway, familiarly known as 'The Grove,'. . . between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. . . . Every class, every age . . . and almost every nationality contribute to the tide of life. . . . It is no doubt an exceedingly delightful and entertaining way of passing the afternoon and seeing the world and one's acquaintances, this gathering in clusters around displays of laces, feathers, jewelry, and what not, thrown before one's very feet as it were, and lavishly tempting the eye on every side. . . . London offers no more seductive allurements for this amusement than to be found in Westbourne Grove.[88]

Although certainly not reflective of the actual interactions on London's streets, a heterogenous shopping crowd demonstrated Bayswater's status as a thriving and modern commercial district. Female shoppers, like the glittering objects on display, became a central part of the urban spectacle. Middle-class women thus won a respectable place in London's commercial districts when their role as consumers came to be seen as necessary to a healthy urban economy.

The more positive and desirable image of department store trading and middle-class women's shopping coincided with a period of falling

[85] *Bayswater Chronicle* (November 1, 1879).

[86] "Shop Windows," *Bayswater Chronicle* (April 26, 1879); "Christmastide in Westbourne Grove," *Bayswater Chronicle* (December 15, 1877).

[87] "Westbourne Grove as a Shopping Promenade," *Bayswater Chronicle* (October 30, 1880).

[88] "Our Local Promenade," *Bayswater Chronicle* (October 28, 1882).

prices, declining profits, and growing competition. For Whiteley the recession meant that after 1876 he would not achieve the same profits for another ten years.[89] In the early seventies, Whiteley had been one of only a few London shopkeepers expanding their businesses by transforming buying and selling into a leisure activity for middle-class women. By the late seventies, however, other shops and middle-class cooperatives all over London, and even in Bayswater, were expanding into multidepartment emporia.[90] When residents and tradesmen spoke of Whiteley's as "their own," this was in many ways a united defense against customers' venturing to other neighborhoods to shop. With department stores growing all over London, Bayswater shopkeepers could no longer imagine that the Universal Provider was their only threat. Those who remained in business had to find a way to accommodate themselves to this modern-day marketplace.

The avid promotion of women's shopping and commercial culture in the *Bayswater Chronicle* was thus tied to structural shifts in both the local and national economies after 1873. The British response to the problems of overproduction and protectionism abroad was not only to tighten the monopoly over the empire but also to enlarge the home market and adopt a more aggressive use of advertising to increase consumption.[91] Retailers in upper- and middle-class areas also attempted to enlarge their markets by promoting the image of consumption as a respectable female amusement.

The use of advertising and positive newspaper editorials and articles did not erase lingering anxieties associated with commercial cul-

[89] Whiteley abandoned his green grocery business later in 1877. The same year his annual net profit fell to £60,000 from the £66,000 reached in 1876 and continued to fall to £50,000 in 1880. During this period, he hardly expanded his premises at all. See Lambert (n. 1 above), p. 94.

[90] On middle-class cooperatives, see J. Hood and B. S. Yamey, "Middle-Class Cooperative Retailing Societies in London, 1864–1900," *Economics of Retailing*, ed. K. A. Tucker and B. S. Yamey (London: Penguin, 1973), pp. 131–45; Jefferys (n. 7 above), pp. 16–17; E. D. Wainwright, *Army and Navy Stores Limited, Centenary Year* (London: Army and Navy Stores, 1971); Alison Adburgham, *Yesterday's Shopping: The Army and Navy Stores Catalogue, 1907* (Devon: David & Charles Reprints, 1969). Middle-class cooperatives, not department stores, often became the primary focus of small shopkeeper's anxiety. See, e.g., *The Times* (February 1–6, 1872); *Saturday Review* (August 1, 1874; November 25, 1876; January 25, 1879; April 10, 1880).

[91] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: From 1750 to the Present Day* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987); Fraser (n. 7 above); Richards (n. 12 above); E. S. Turner, *The Shocking History of Advertising!* (New York: Dutton, 1953); T. R. Nevett, *Advertising in Britain: A History* (London: Heinemann, published on behalf of the History of Advertising Trust, 1982). For an example of the "science" of advertising in this period, see Thomas Smith, *Successful Advertising: Its Secrets Explained*, 7th ed. (London: Mutual Advertising Agency, 1885).

ture or women's presence in the public spaces of the city. These concerns entered the diagnosis of the new "disease" of kleptomania and fed the pervasive fears about the safety of London's streets for "respectable" women.[92] As Walkowitz has shown, in the late 1880s such anxieties over urban space animated national scandals that publicized haunting images of sexual danger.[93] These fears also stimulated even more dramatic attempts to construct comfortable, profitable, and acceptable ways for women to enjoy urban life.[94]

Conclusion

The competing social and economic forces that created London's commercial culture also produced diverse images of the public consuming woman. London's business classes were far from united in their opinions about this culture, economy, and what constituted proper bourgeois womanhood. Despite their differences, both critics and proponents of economic change adhered to and furthered the understanding that shopping was a female activity. While men and women of all classes bought goods in a variety of retail environments, shopping was consistently gendered as a female urban pleasure. By the 1880s, trade journals and newspapers came to imagine that the department store and shopping streets were acceptable places for public women. Shopping came to be considered one of the pleasures of the late nineteenth-century city.[95] This was not exactly the self-improving "rational recreation" that Peter Bailey described as so prevalent during this period. Nor did it involve the licit sexuality that capitalistic managers promoted in the 1890s.[96]

[92] Abelson (n. 65 above). On the question of women's safety, see the numerous letters and articles on the dangers shoppers faced from thieves, beggars, male pests, and others published in the *Bayswater Chronicle* (e.g., October 19, 1879; February 10, 1878; April 2, 1881; July 11, 1885).

[93] Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight* (n. 35 above).

[94] Erika Rappaport, "'A New Era of Shopping': The Promotion of Women's Pleasure in London's West End, 1909–1914," in *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, ed. Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).

[95] This was not the only relationship between women and the city in this period. Indeed, shoppers frequently rejected the new stores and the meanings associated with them. Osbert Lancaster recalled that his "Aunt Jenny" was deeply attached to Whiteley's, but she hated his innovations and viewed Whiteley's as part of her domestic domain. Osbert Lancaster, *All Done from Memory* (London: John Murray, 1953), p. 38. See also Molly Hughes's criticism of Whiteley's in *A London Home in the 1890s* (1946; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 146–47.

[96] I am indebted to Peter Bailey's conceptualization of commercialized leisure in *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830–1885* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), and in his recent article, "Parasexuality and Glamour: The Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype" (n. 12

Between the 1860s and the 1880s, large-scale retailers encouraged middle-class consumption by cleansing public amusements of their immoral image. In essence they legitimated consumer desires by theoretically separating the bodily, social, and emotional pleasures of shopping from other forms of physical pleasure and gender interactions. Those who had worried about the morality of consumption became concerned with how to encourage more and longer shopping and how to increase its pleasures. This transition facilitated the expansion of the late nineteenth-century department store, the development of London's commercial districts, and the production of new ideals of bourgeois femininity.

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above). Also see Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, c. 1780–1880* (New York: St. Martin's, 1980); John Clarke and Chas Critcher, *The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985); John K. Walton and James Walvin, eds., *Leisure in Britain, 1780–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983).