

# From Real-Life to Game-Space: the art of Sofa Flânerie

**"A Critical Analysis of the essay: "From Feminine Masquerade to Flâneuse: Agnes Varda's Cléo in the City" Written by Janice Mouton'.**

In this piece of work, I was tasked with critically analysing the strengths and limitations of the article in question, reading around the text and applying an original, current case study to it.

The essay brings forward key theories when exploring the concept of Flânerie:

- Female Masquerade (Doane, 1982)
- Male Gaze (Mulvey, 1975)



To illustrate the value of these concepts in a modern context, I applied the concept of flânerie to a videogame, Assassins Creed: Unity (AC:U).

The videogame was engineered with replication in mind; it displays a very immersive and accurate depiction of Paris in the 19th Century: so accurate, that the videogame is used as reference for the rebuild of Notre-Dame.



The use of these help explain the actions of the film's protagonist, and exactly why she decides to become a Flâneuse.

Mouton explains that Cléo fetishises herself in efforts to disassociate from the reality of illness, mutilation and anything considered not beautiful. With masquerade comes 'non-identity', to which Cléo adheres to.

This would have been the case for many women in society at the time the film is set - desperately trying to adhere to societal norms, losing touch with what makes one individual.

Mouton unnecessarily positions the Flanuer as an identity exclusive to men, which is not true, and she uses case studies that do not happen in Paris.

Texts from the same geographical location would have been more comparative, perhaps a male account would have helped similarly.

In AC: U ones primary objective is to roam the digitised game world, which is factually representative of the streets of 19th century Paris. In-game challenges encourage exploration, which is comparative of an objective based flâneur.

These include people and places of interest, quests and historical landmarks, all of which the player is encouraged to pursue.



Fig. 1

My case study showcases an unbiased account, as the AC:U team are of mixed gender. AC:U provides the stay-at-home Flâneur with a multitude of curiosities to find, all via the in-game map.

This game mechanic imitates that of a Flâneur's practice, to explore and discover hidden gems in a city setting. By observing NPCs, one can see the pre-programmed behavioural patterns implemented in efforts to boost the game's immersive values; similar to how one can sit and observe passerbys.



Fig. 2