Schjerning, Camilla. "Of chamber pots and scorned houses: Exposing hidden bodies and private matters in eighteenth-century Copenhagen." *Private/Public in 18th-Century Scandinavia*. Ed. Sari Nauman. Ed. Helle Vogt. London,: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. 119–138. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350224926.ch-6>>.

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Of chamber pots and scorned houses: Exposing hidden bodies and private matters in eighteenth-century Copenhagen

Camilla Schjerning

The flight of the chamber pot

One evening in the winter of 1771 the inhabitants of a house in Borgergade, one of the more common areas of Copenhagen, heard a pot smashing in the central courtyard. It was the chamber pot, which had been sitting – as it quite often did – in the gallery outside the door of Anne Svendsdatter, the wife of able seaman Erichsen. The flight of the pot happened at the hands of ordinary seaman Tobias Schultz, who had been fed up with ‘the Spectacle’ of the filled pot. He resolutely emptied its contents on Anne’s doorstep and threw the pot into the courtyard below.

Unfortunately, a physician paying Anne a visit stepped in the mess as he left her house – causing her ‘great Pain and Shame’, as she later recounted in court. The following day, she complained to her landlady, who went to reprimand Tobias – and he, in turn, went to Anne in order to settle the matter. Soon a heated discussion erupted between the two in Anne’s rooms, during which Tobias asked Anne whether she remembered, ‘how last Night Ole the Fiddler lay with [her] in Bed, and that [she] should be careful with her young Lovers in the Door, groping her 10 Cubits up under her Clothes.’¹ Pushing and shoving, the two emerged in the gallery under the loud recital of a common catalogue of insults such as whore, quean, thief and the like. Alarmed by the commotion, Tobias’s parents came rushing down the stairs and joined the scene – witnessed by curious neighbours peering out of doorways and windows.

The following day, Anne turned to the authorities, penning her grievances to the commander of her husband’s naval company. The authorities first tried to settle the dispute between the two parties outside of court, but Anne declined, stating that Tobias, since the initial incident, had repeated his allegations. According to Anne, Tobias had told several of her neighbours that Ole had ‘lain in Bed with me in his bare Shirt and I in my bare Smock, which is too intolerable for me to hear and Accusations for which I am now held in low Repute by the People in the House.’² In the ensuing court case, presented at the Royal and City Court of Copenhagen, Anne called many of

the residents in the house to testify to what had happened, in order to have her honour and good reputation re-established.

While the case of Anne and Tobias may at first sight seem a trivial brawl between neighbours over slanderous remarks and a chamber pot and its contents out of place, the testimonies of this case – and many others like it – open a window onto the everyday construction and contestation of the boundaries between public and private, between hidden and exposed.

Exposing the private

Numerous studies have shown how, in the early modern world, public insults functioned to uphold social order through making illicit and immoral actions publicly known and thus the object of social regulation.³ In order to serve this function, insults and defamation were by nature staged, and public incidents designed to draw an audience. Thus, witnesses often explained, as in the case of Anne Svendsdatter, how they were drawn to windows and doorways, alerted by loud noises or commotion in the house or the street.⁴

As already mentioned in the introduction to this book, several studies have shown how the early modern home was open, its boundaries porous. Rather than distinguishing between public and private events according to the physical spaces in which they took place, the private or public nature of a matter pertained to the question of its perceived relevance to the community; private matters often took place in public and vice versa. As Mary Thomas Crane has argued, in order to have privacy, understood as freedom from interference, in the early modern town, one would go outside.⁵

But privacy could also be a protective cover for illicit activities that, when brought into the public's attention, had harmful potential to the common good, for instance the 'particular Business' conducted in the bawdy houses of Copenhagen as described by Ulrik Langen or the printed scandals described by Jesper Jakobsen in this book. Private matters thus had the potential to arouse powerful and disorderly emotions such as fear, anger, shame and contempt. The potential danger of private made public was also very real to the individual, for instance as the cause of gut-wrenching shame such as that which Anne may have felt, when her guest stepped in the foul mass on her doorstep. It may also have had very real effects in the shape of marital discord, communal contempt or public punishment, when illicit actions such as sexual transgressions or theft were brought to the attention of spouses, neighbours or authorities.

Robert Shoemaker has argued that public insult as a form of community regulation in the streets of London was in decline throughout the eighteenth century, as a result of a profound shift in the relationship between individual and the community, which in turn caused community regulation to lose its legitimacy. The perceived threat of defamatory words declined and the words themselves were rarely the actual cause of the dispute, but became a strategic weapon, a legitimate reason to pester and pressure one's adversary through litigation. Gradually, insults moved into the secluded space of the house and became less public. Moreover, publicly refuting accusations was no longer the preferred way to obtain respectability for many people, particularly those of higher social status.

Rather, they chose not to air their dirty laundry in public, if possible. According to Shoemaker, this especially applied to women, as it was no longer acceptable to discuss matters of female sexuality in public. Shoemaker refers these changes to the transformation of 'the very nature of public and private life' and the advent of a new individualism, which undermined the collective power of communities – Norbert Elias's famous civilizing process. The gradual progress can, according to Shoemaker, be studied in detail through the lens of defamation and its decline, especially among the urban middle classes.⁶ As noted by Katie Barclay, the privacy of the lower orders has been given less attention – Barclay herself offering a discussion of how the Scottish lower orders managed the boundaries between secrecy, privacy and the public.⁷

Cases like the one between Anne Svendsdatter and her neighbour allow us a glimpse into whether similar cultural shifts were at play in the streets and houses of Copenhagen, and how the public staging of insults looked among the lower orders, people far removed from elite's theoretical musings, theoretical musings on public and private spheres. As several articles in this volume demonstrate, the concept of private was rarely used in everyday interactions and even more rarely to describe anything akin to what we today understand as privacy, but rather to describe that which was not the responsibility of neither community nor state.

The cases presented in this article come primarily from the archives of the Royal and City Court (*Hof- og Stadsretten*), a new civic jurisdiction established in 1771 on the initiative of Struensee, whose ambitious reforms are the subject of Langen's chapter in this volume. Its purpose was to end the complex jurisdictional landscape in which every substantial institution sported their separate jurisdiction, making it nearly impossible to pursue cases across social and institutional divides. Cases were led by university-educated procurators, making the litigation more professional, but also more costly. Litigants without means could obtain free process through *beneficium paupertas*, making the court accessible to all, in principle at least – though undoubtedly requiring more effort than the courts of the police, Magistrate or military, from which cases were regularly referred, either because they were not accepted (because they were private quarrels), or could not be settled there. In 1790 a special Commission of Reconciliation (*Forligskommission*) was established in order to keep more interpersonal quarrels out of the court system. Still, a number of civil suits made it to the Royal and City Court unresolved; among them were the cases of defamation and petty violence, which make up the bulk of material for this article.

The court cases, with their detailed depositions and carefully crafted arguments, afford us the opportunity to trace both the spatial practices and communicative strategies that traversed and produced the private–public divide. From words and deeds we may tease out what we analytically understand to be realms of privacy performed and reflected in what was kept secret and hidden, and in particular that which was exposed – the private in the public.

Thus, the following will take a closer look at the communicative and strategic use of private or sensitive information, searching especially the staged public exposures of secret or illicit information, arguing that the perceptions and feelings produced here continuously materialized, pushed and negotiated the boundaries of the private in late-eighteenth-century Copenhagen.

Emotional strategies of exposure

To get at what was concealed and why, we must search out those shameful secrets and instances of exposure which brought the hidden into the public. We must look to the strategies and emotions at play in these practices of exposure and the attempts to 're-cover' intimacies from the public eye and retract them into the safety of the private. Through a closer examination, we can better understand what exposure meant for different people and the feelings it produced, in order to understand how the boundaries between secret, private and public were enacted and materialized in everyday interactions.

This approach draws, among others, on Sara Ahmed's writings on the performativity of emotions. According to Ahmed, while emotions are collective phenomena, they materialize as feelings in the encounters of individual bodies, creating boundaries and situating individual bodies inside or outside the community – thus aligning individual bodies with a collective body. Ahmed argues that situations where feelings are intensified connect these emotions in space and time, thereby producing boundaries between bodies and places. Moreover, the repeated association of specific emotions, such as shame or disgust, to certain bodies or objects makes these emotions 'stick'.⁸

Getting at the individual feelings of people, especially across a divide of almost three centuries, is a task bordering on the impossible. But when dealing with emotions as social and performative, the focus is on how these emotions are put into practice in social interactions – how they do things in the world – rather than what people actually felt in their heart of hearts (supposing that one may distinguish between inner feelings and outer emotions, at all). These emotional practices, a concept coined by Monique Scheer, make use of the body's capacities and embodied social knowledge to elicit effects in the social world – to mobilize, name, communicate and regulate feelings in particular situations.⁹ I take a closer look at how people communicate with and about bodies, employing different emotional practices in order to establish, assert or challenge boundaries, whether these be the boundaries of the physical body, home or more intangible matters of secrecy. Also, I analyse which emotional strategies made certain emotions, such as shame, stick to certain people and places.

I approach the question of privacy from the intricately intertwined realms of the body, intimate information, and the physical boundaries of the house and the household within. I will attempt to show how the boundaries of the individual body aligned with the boundaries of household and community, and how these alignments were shaped by intricate social hierarchies of social status and gender.

A matter of shame

Returning now to the scene of the crime of the emptied pot, we may dig deeper into the emotional practices and politics at play. The entire case was brought about by the nuisance of Anne's chamber pot sitting outside her front door in plain view. Even though the presence of body waste and faecal matter was much higher in the city before the advent of the water closet, it was nonetheless a highly unwanted presence, judging from the endless complaints about 'matter out of place'. The old name of its

place of production, the privy house, also speaks to the highly private matter of its nature, connected with a great deal of shame – especially because faecal matter was closely associated with corruption and debasement.¹⁰

Interestingly, Anne did not seem embarrassed by putting it on display, or perhaps she preferred for others to be confronted with it rather than herself. Tobias, though, made his discomfort quite clear, by not only throwing the pot into the courtyard, but also soiling her threshold, thus intensifying Anne's humiliation by not only having her bodily products – her shame – 'displayed' out of place at her front door, but even worse, seeing an esteemed visitor step in it. Before the court she explained how the incident caused her 'Tort and Shame', resulting in 'great Pain' – conjuring up the visceral cringe of shame caused by the disgust we must imagine the guest to have felt and displayed.

More than an interior feeling, shaming was an emotional strategy, a means of exerting social control and establishing hierarchies.¹¹ The potential of chamber pots and filth in general to make shame and disgust stick, and to function as signifiers of bodily and moral corruption, made it a potent weapon to undermine the dignity and authority of a person.

There are many examples of the pot being used as a weapon. In a complaint from 1791, Sisse Friis, the wife of a naval office clerk, accused Cathrine Hammelev, a seaman's wife, of not only scolding her on a public street, asking how many children she had left at the hospital [The Foundling Institution], but moreover ordering her own children to throw street filth at Sisse.¹² During a brawl between two feuding neighbours (both soldiers' wives) in 1771, Birthe Ortwein flung the fluid contents of a pot out of her window, intended for the displeasure of Dorothea Artmer, who had been gossiping with other neighbours and visitors in the house about Birthe's male acquaintances – unfortunately soiling another woman standing by the front door in the process.¹³ Maria Magdalene Stocklisch was also quick to throw her chamber pot, conveniently at hand, in the direction of blacksmith Gottlieb, when he accosted her in the stairway of their shared house in 1799.¹⁴

The emptying of pots onto the street – and sometimes on 'innocent' passers-by – was a common phenomenon in the early modern city, probably because the content of chamber pots was the most debasing substance and such a powerful elicitor of disgust. The performative power of disgust pertained to not only physical aversions, but also its strong moral component.¹⁵ The chamber pots may sometimes have been a convenient weapon at hand during a conflict, but the disgusting matter, in some instances, appears to have played a symbolic role as a trigger of not only disgust, but also a potential signifier of a person's nature – often the people lowest in the social hierarchy were thought of as the most filthy. Soiling thus made the individual painfully self-aware of being in a body, imagining being seen and judged by others.¹⁶

A body of shame; displaying immodesty

The case of Anne Svendsdatter's shame sheds light on a different kind of bodily exposure, reflected in Tobias's further testimonies in court. According to Tobias, Anne had let young lovers feel her up under her skirt at the front door – exposing

not only her legs, but also her lack of shame. By baring her body, she had revealed her immorality to her neighbours. Moreover, Tobias stated that Anne had lain in bed with another man in her bare smock, essentially claiming that she had been naked. The mere act of being in a bed together was not necessarily a transgression of boundaries – sleeping arrangements often included sharing beds – and Anne was adamant in her claim that her relationship to Ole was strictly ‘honourable’ (*honnet*).¹⁷ But the claim that the two wore nothing but their bare smock and nightshirt exposed the intimacy of their relation. Whether either of these incidents ever took place is of less importance here. The main issue is how Tobias constructed a narrative of shamelessness, signified by Anne’s failure to keep her body covered or hidden from sight and touch.

Space also played an important role in this narrative, as both the doorway and the bed were symbolically laden spaces in terms of the boundaries between private and public. Moreover, space figured in the accusations made by Tobias. Even if a potentially illicit intimacy between Anne and Ole was common knowledge in the house, it was only when Tobias took it out of the realm of secrecy and made it a public matter that it truly became a problem. Even worse, Tobias stated to the neighbours that he had looked Anne ‘under the eyes’ before the court and repeated his accusations, thus pushing them further into the public eye. Because of this public humiliation, Anne Svendsdatter declared that she could not accept a reconciliation out of court.

By presenting witnesses to support her case and give testimony to her good character, Anne actually succeeded in having Tobias punished for his insulting words, for kicking her and for being the initial cause of conflict. The punishment was a public whipping – a common punishment for military men, while civilians tended to be fined. Whether Anne thus succeeded in (re)obtaining the esteem of her neighbours, we will never know.

The exposure of the female body, voluntary or forced, had clear moral connotations and the failure to keep one’s body concealed from others – either due to indifference or direct malice – demonstrated a flaw in one’s character, often seen as a sign of insensibility to shame and other ‘civilizing’ emotions. Being stripped of the socially significant pieces of clothing, intended to determine a person’s social standing and create the protective shield of status, was nearly as shameful as being naked.¹⁸

Nakedness and the shame connected to the female body might conversely be transformed into a weapon in situations of conflict. One afternoon in the summer of 1795, a group of women, mostly wives of Royal Navy seamen, were sitting in the street selling fish. Mounted in front of them on a spike was the head of a lumpsucker – a display which prompted two passing soldiers to stop. An impertinent remark from one of the fishwives soon escalated into a dispute, causing one soldier to lift his cane in a threatening manner, exclaiming that the lot were a group of knacker’s whores (*Rakkerludere*). One of the women stood up, calling him a soldier boy who might discipline only his subordinates, and demonstrated her contempt for him by lifting up her skirts, baring her behind. Through this intentional self-exposure, the potential shame was transformed into a gesture of contempt, meant to elicit embarrassment

in onlookers, being confronted with this most private part of a woman's body. The contempt was as evident when, during a dispute, Anna Hansdatter, the wife of a naval quartermaster, bared her behind to her neighbour, exclaiming, 'this is an old Quean, too.'¹⁹ While such self-exposure may have been an efficient weapon, the suspension of the bashfulness attached to the naked body also reflected back on the perception of women who resorted to such tricks.

The image of the shameless fishwife was a well-known trope in the popular wit of many European countries, and late-eighteenth-century Copenhagen was no exception. A number of witty stories in a local newspaper pass on scenes of fishwives baring themselves to customers and passers-by during quarrels. The lack of modesty and shame fit neatly into a narrative of unruly, immoral and grotesque women:

I could offer my readers a new scene of the Fishwives, how the entire Row, bar a few, was as electrified, how Fists and Foreheads met, Sparks shot from the Eyes, lighting the Locks of these drunken Amazons, where Swearing and Crowing, Storming and Raging was the Tone of the Battle. I could render how intense the Strife was and how it ended, but this would only be to sully my Story and insult every honourable Ear. How can one expect proper behaviour from those, who are not ashamed to publicly be Scum!²⁰

Thus, the women may have gained the upper hand in a dispute, but also placed themselves outside of a community of respectability – perhaps even humanity proper – and definitely the expected female modesty. Privacy and secrecy were essential to the construction of femininity, making the exposed female body a matter of shame.²¹ Precisely because the female body and its sexuality was a potential threat to honour, and therefore something to be hidden and private, it was also 'a public affair, the target of official regulation, informal surveillance, and regular, intimate touch by women and men,' as argued by Laura Gowing.²²

Bounded bodies, bounded houses

One early morning in 1799, the inhabitants of a house on the corner of Prinsensgade awoke to the sound of yelling in the courtyard. Former soldier Peter Groupe, lodging in the back house, rose from his bed at the sound of the disturbance and went down into the courtyard where other inhabitants were already gathering to witness the commotion. From the gallery, shoemaker Fredberg was scolding across the courtyard at Karen Mether, a soldier's wife standing in her window, calling her a 'Whore' and a 'Fuchssvantzer' (someone who sticks their nose in other people's business). Later in court, he stated that he felt entitled to say such things, since Karen had told the landlady and other lodgers what had been spoken between him and his wife. Other witnesses revealed that the initial cause of the quarrel was that Karen had accused Fredberg's wife of soiling the privy house. During the quarrel, Fredberg's wife, carrying a pot in her hand, had told Karen that if she had any honour left in Sweden (where she was from), she should 'sit on this Pot and travel there to fetch it.'²³

Suspended as it was between public and private, the body – especially the female body – was a very vulnerable and potent object for verbal as well as physical attacks during conflict. Another example demonstrates this as well. In the summer of 1771, Boel Hammerschmidt, a tenant in the house of distiller Rohde, had repeatedly been making comments to her neighbours about a physician, who had visited Rohde's wife to administer an enema, 'because she had a Soreness in her Thing,' and similar comments, 'serving to make my House suspicious', as Rohde put it.²⁴ Merely the act of speaking of and referring to the private parts of his wife was clearly a shameful matter for Rohde, even more so when the remarks suggested the public accessibility of private parts. Even so, the intimate suggestions were brought before court, repeated and scrutinized once again – in order to be re-covered from the realm of suspicion and scandal, and into the private. The elaborate staging of the public exposure and accessibility of the body – even if it was only in words, intensified by the spectacle of shouting and screaming, the gathering of a large crowd in windows, doors and the street – called for 'public' action to reinstate the boundaries of not only the women, but also the household. In this sense, the body exposed – Mrs Rohde's body – was an entire household exposed.

Honour operated not only on an individual but also on a collective household level – guarded by the (mostly male) head of household. According to Elizabeth Cohen and Thomas Cohen, in Renaissance Italy, honour attached to both female bodies and houses – both were vested with the family's honour, and because the house embodied its owner's honour and shame, its boundaries had to be carefully guarded, both against physical trespassers and against curious neighbours prying out domestic secrets.²⁵

Gowing has argued that female virtue in the early modern world was understood spatially and that chastity was to a large extent a question of upholding boundaries. Women were perceived as mostly incapable of upholding these boundaries, because from nature's hand the woman was fluid, leaky and open to her surroundings. It was, therefore, up to men to protect female virtue, by controlling and upholding her physical boundaries.²⁶ In the absence of a man, the community was to step in and establish or uphold these boundaries.

Perhaps this was what happened when Tobias breached the privacy of the house and brought the sexual immodesty of Anne to the awareness of neighbours. Was this a reflection of an attempt to reinstate the boundaries of Anne's sexuality in the absence of her husband, who was at sea bound for China? Might we even see the flight of the chamber pot and its shameful contents as a symbolic gesture referring to Anne's bodily shame (or rather lack thereof), put on display for her and the neighbours to see? In support of this, it is worth noting how one witness claimed to have heard Tobias shout 'hear how the cat screams', as he threw the chamber pot into the courtyard. As Robert Darnton has noted in his famous description of *The great cat massacre*, cats served as a reference to female sexuality, used as symbols in *Katzenjammer* and *Charivari* rituals, as described, for example, by Natalie Zemon Davis. Noise and symbolic displays drew attention to the breach of moral customs. Davis also points to the fact that it was often young men who were responsible for reprimanding violations to community morals in this manner.²⁷ It might be no coincidence, then, that the mundane quarrel over a chamber pot turned into a case of slander and accusations of adultery.

The privacy of married life

Other perceived transgressions of the moral order provoked the interest of neighbours as well. This was the case one Saturday morning in 1780, when seaman Smith and his wife, Kirstine, stepped into a coach to go act as godparents for another seaman in the company. Their neighbours, seaman Halvorsen and his wife, were offended because, as they later explained in court, Kirstine Smith was so uppity that she would not greet them. The Halvorsens therefore exclaimed for all in the street to hear 'that it was better if she brought her Bastard with her in the Coach.'²⁸ To defend her good name, Kirstine complained to the Naval Court. She confessed to have given birth to two children before her marriage, but added that since her husband had 'pardoned' her, the neighbours had no business letting her suffer such insults – reflecting a belief that her prior misfortunes were now to be regarded as a private matter. It is noteworthy that Kirstine herself was willing to give up the sensitive details of her past transgressions to exonerate herself. The case also shows how the embarrassing exposure of secrets could be an effective means in status competition, elevating the exposé at the expense of the exposed – meanwhile contributing to continuous negotiation of the boundaries of what was considered secret, private and shameful information.

Past transgressions also came to haunt tripe-maker Thorius in the summer of 1786. In a letter to the chief-of-police, Thorius urged him to put to justice two members of the cavalry regiment, who had gathered a large group of people in front of Thorius's house with 'brutal words and noise-making'. While pointing at Thorius's house, they had called out: 'there lives that Tripe-thing (...), the madame, that sergeant's whore is now finally a wife,' referring to Thorius's wife.²⁹ The insults hinted that Thorius and his wife had lived together as husband and wife before they were married, while they shared a house with the two soldiers. When Thorius himself had become a sergeant, he left the military for the tripe-business, probably in order to be able to marry. The court records show that the very public announcement of the Thorius couple's illicit journey into married life was an elaborate revenge on Thorius's wife, who had accused the two men of stealing. The humiliation was intensified by the loud noises and public staging of the allegations, serving to make curious neighbours aware of the juicy gossip.

The notion that dealings between husband and wife were a matter of privacy and not to be meddled in by nosy neighbours can be found in other cases as well. One evening in 1799, upon having undressed himself and made ready to go to bed, hat-maker's apprentice Wilhelm Lohmann heard knocks on his door. When he opened, he was met by the military guard, who took him into custody for being drunk and disorderly in the house. The other inhabitants reported how they had for some time been witnesses to the domestic dealings between Lohmann and his wife, since the thin board walls allowed them to hear everything that went on in the rooms, especially since Lohmann was 'loud of Nature when he has drunk too much'. On occasions he was so rude to his wife that she feared for her life. The neighbours also recounted how Lohmann had threatened to stab the landlord with a knife if he 'came through his Door and tried to make Peace' between Lohmann and his wife, clearly reflecting a notion that the neighbours should stay out of the dealings between husband and wife.

On the night in question, a neighbour had heard Lohmann tell his wife to fetch some candles. After refusing a couple of times, she eventually left. Upon her return, she tried to convince her husband not to get undressed for bed, but without luck. Shortly after, a military guard arrived and took him, first to the Main Guard (*Hovedvagten*) and afterwards the chamber of police.

When presented to the chamber of police on the morning after his arrest, Lohmann was still inebriated, according to the scribe's notes in the protocol. He confessed to, on occasion, having spoken loudly to his wife, but stressed that this had happened only 'in his own Rooms'. Furthermore, he had had good cause, because she had stolen food and other things, and spent all his money with her 'Coffee Sisters'. Now, he claimed, she had colluded with the landlord to have him arrested, upon which they had robbed him down to 'the bare Shirt on his Body'. Lohmann furthermore expressed his regret at not merely being arrested, but being dragged through the streets, stripped of his autonomy and authority. Adding insult to injury, this had happen in a state of undress, without the proper attire to distinguish him from a common criminal and shield him against condemning gazes (it is worth noting, though, that his wife had attempted to spare him from this humiliation by trying to get him to put on his shirt again).

What was primarily at stake for Lohmann in the litigation was neither secrecy, nor the shame of intimate truths being revealed, but rather anger at what Lohmann perceived as transgressions against both his private property and authority as husband and householder – not least the return of the belongings removed by his wife. Nonetheless, that narrative of honour and violation runs through Lohmann's presentation of his misfortune, as well as a clear perception of the boundaries of both private spaces, private matters and spheres of authority.³⁰

The boundaries of privacy, or freedom from interference, in the dealings between man and wife were porous and the subject of negotiation. Neighbours listened in on what was going on behind closed doors, carefully asserting when law and custom were being breached, thus transforming otherwise private matters of marriage into a public responsibility.³¹

The right to privacy or secrecy in relations was reserved for married couples. Should others attempt to lock doors or meet in secret, neighbours were likely to expose illicit sex and immorality – whether it be for the enjoyment of curious gossips or benefit of community morals.³² The neighbours of Anne Marie just did just that: upon seeing her close the shutters shortly after receiving a male visitor in the absence of her husband, they forced their way into her rooms to conduct a house search.³³

Especially the behaviour of married women alone, in particular military grass widows, was the subject of moral policing. Karen Horslund, the wife of a seaman away on ship, was most definitely the subject of her neighbours' and in particular her landlords' curiosity. On several occasions, the landlord, Jeppe Larsen, and his wife Anne Christina had not only called her out for being an 'Officer's Whore', but also alerted other inhabitants of the house that she was with child, even though her husband had been gone for more than one and a half year. The accusations became impossible to ignore, when one morning in 1771, Karen awoke to find a note nailed to her front door, stating that 'the whoring continues, but the husband is away', written in a hand similar to the landlord's. Upon his return, husband Niels Horslund brought Larsen

and his wife before the court, because they had ‘in a shameful manner’ sought to put his wife in disrepute with their allegations.³⁴ The materialization of the accusations in writing, posted on the front door, mimicked a strategy of the libel or *pasquille* often used for undermining political adversaries.

In the fall of 1797, readers of the local newspaper, *Adresseavisen*, might have raised an eyebrow or two upon reading a small notice from a young man, Johan Nicolai Gran, relating the sad story of his unfortunate engagement to a Jacobine Jæger. The two had met on the day of his return from the West Indies and became engaged that same night – only for Gran to discover that she was ‘prone to Drinking, out of the House on several Nights, and led an indecent Life’. He expressed how he was deeply ‘ashamed that my Character has suffered such a great Injury by getting involved with a Woman of this Sort’, warning all honest people to avoid consorting with her.³⁵

Johan was thus willing to expose himself and swallow his shame in order to publicize the immoral character of his former fiancée for the good of the community – probably also spurred on by a hint of vengefulness. The fact that Jacobine moved from his house to her mother’s, which happened to be one of Copenhagen’s infamous houses, indicates that there was probably some truth to his story of misfortune. Jacobine immediately reacted to the notice in *Adresseavisen* by litigating Gran for defamation at the Royal and City court. Jacobine refused to enter into marriage, even though Johan declared to be willing to uphold his promise. With no prospects of a happy marriage, Johan in 1799 left Copenhagen and sought his fortunes in Norway.

Ruined houses and the shame within

In 1791, Maria Svendsen, a dancer at the Royal Theatre, turned to the Police Court claiming to have been publicly offended, which neither her ‘good Name and Reputation’, nor her position at the theatre could bear. It had all started with a fight, with fists and mouths, between Maria and a maidservant by the name of Christiane Lund, in the street in full daylight. In the midst of the dispute, Maria tore the cape from Christiane’s head and fled with it, seeking refuge in her lodgings in one of the city’s brothels. Christiane called for her to come out, calling her a whore and similar insults. The shouting and commotion soon gathered a crowd, which Christiane used to her advantage by stirring up people, making them cry out and whistle, encouraging them to ‘ruin’ the house. For fear of the mob’s action, the inhabitants ejected Maria back to the street, where she quickly ran away. After the crowd had dispersed, Christiane went home.³⁶

Several of the cases presented here mention the strategic use of noise to draw the attention of neighbours to insults. The stirring of the mob and the potential threat of the crowd were ever present in the early modern city. Also the motif of the ‘ruined house’ was a well-known urban phenomenon with century-old roots. Elizabeth Cohen has described the practice in early modern Rome of attacking a house as a proxy for its owner – a form of ritualized revenge or a moral comment directed at the inhabitants, often on account of sexual impropriety. It regularly began with loud or offensive noises that crossed the threshold into domestic space, and often include the throwing of stones, animal parts and excrement, or the drawing of graffiti.³⁷

Although these disturbances were of a haphazard nature, consisting of improvised gatherings of people in the street, they had similarities to other, more organized types of ritualized shaming, such as *Charivari* or 'rough music' intended for making violations of moral codes public. Even with the lack of choreographed rituals, the mob still followed certain unwritten rules of house-scorning. The sounds, attracting attention, were central. Attacks were often directed towards doors and windows, as liminal zones between domestic and public spaces. Moreover, the sound of the breaking window drew the attention of passers-by. These apertures were symbolically linked to the orifices of the human body, and in particular the female body. As Amanda Vickery argues, 'If windows were eyes, the doors represented the mouth, vagina or anus, and the hearth the breast, heart, soul or womb. Apertures symbolized points of human vulnerability. Ink thrown in windows and excrement daubed on the door were visceral attacks on the person, and were read as such.'³⁸ Making sure that one's house was impenetrable, particularly at night, was thus an important task for the landlord or master of the house, in charge of upholding the morality of the household, symbolically reflected in the locking up for the night.³⁹

One August evening in 1790, Birthe Pedersdatter, the wife of hawker Jens Andersen Biering, returned to her home in Tværgade in Copenhagen to find that a crowd had gathered in front of the house. Several windows had already been smashed. Inside her rooms – situated on the ground floor – she found the seamstress Stine lying on a bench, surrounded by a circle of men. Stine was having a seizure (*slag*) after a heated exchange of insults with a seaman's wife, lodging on the top floors. Both had been standing in their respective windows, and their shouting had gathered a crowd in the street below, whereupon the seaman's wife and her daughter had started to encourage people to smash the windows and 'ruin the House'. As Birthe stood by Stine's side, the seaman's wife shouted out the window, 'there she is, that Whore and *Canaille*'. Birthe demanded to know, to whom she was referring, to which the wife replied, 'It is you'. According to Birthe, the crowd replied to the seaman's wife, 'You yourself is a Whore and *Canaille*'. The seaman's wife then threw a bowl of water and some filth (*skarn*) at Birthe. While Birthe sought refuge in the house, some boys in the street started hurling pebbles at the windows. Birthe ran to fetch the military guard. Upon her return, two of her windows had been broken. She lifted the third and last from its latches and carried it to safety. When the guard arrived, the crowd dispersed.

During the subsequent police chamber investigation, Birthe was questioned about the many women who 'strayed' to visit her day and night. She explained that they ate and drank in her rooms, where she kept a tavern, but then went upstairs to visit *Fynske Stine* (Stine from Funen) – she did not know what they did together. Birthe thus drew boundaries of privacy between the households of her house, claiming to have no knowledge of the tenants' private business – in practice insisting that their actions had nothing to do with her as long as they were concealed to her – i.e. kept private.

Several neighbours, though, offered their testimonies to the 'lecherous hospitality' (*liderligt værtsskab*) kept in the house. They also described the incessant skirmishes between the women frequenting the house. One lodger claimed that the seaman's wife had come to his rooms after the incident saying that everything went as it ought to, 'now neither you nor I have to pay Rent' – pointing to pecuniary incentives for stirring

up the crowd. When Stine and her husband came to the witness's rooms to light a candle, he pleaded with them, whether it was 'right that proper (*skikkelig*) People should suffer like this for their dishonest way of Life (*Keltringe Levned*)' – at which the seaman's wife shouted down the stairs whether he 'sided with the Whores'.⁴⁰ Obviously, the reality of what went on in Stine's rooms was no secret to the neighbours, but it was not talked about or acted upon until a seemingly random dispute offered residents the opportunity to publicly confront the immorality of the household. This opportunity was probably also seized upon by passers-by, who were alerted and inflamed by the insults into taking part in the public staging and shaming, which, at least temporarily, moved and materialized anew the boundaries of privacy within the house.

The incident makes it possible to observe the intricate interplay between different households, owners and individual tenants in one building. The house owners insisted on having no knowledge and part in any illicit encounters taking place in the house, reflecting the notion that tenants had privacy in their own rooms – but just as often, that privacy was refuted, judging from the many clashes between house owners and lodgers.

Moreover, the incident shows the importance of windows, both as semi-public spaces from whence the dispute between the seaman's wife and Stine took off, but also as the main target in the crowd's ensuing attack on the house. Notably, the attack seems to have been directed at the tavern on the ground floor – at least the seaman's wife, living at the top, felt safe to encourage the crowd without fear for her own windows. Even if the disturbance was not a well-planned, intended attack, when the seaman's wife encouraged the destruction, she transformed an interpersonal conflict into a public manifestation or shaming.

Between private conflict and public outrage

Existing studies of riots and mobs in Copenhagen have generally focused on political riots as manifestations of a public sphere, for instance protests directed towards the authorities and their buildings. They have largely excluded smaller cases of disturbances, such as 'private' disputes and skirmishes between drunkards, and outlets for the community's more or less unruly elements, without any obvious political content.⁴¹ While many cases of vandalism against both public and private buildings *may* have been the result of inebriated or restless youth looking for action and outlets of aggression, they also followed certain patterns which made them highly symbolic gestures and performances which had the power to make feelings of shame and suspicions of immorality 'stick' to houses and their inhabitants.

Many of the known cases of house-scorning from Southern Europe were directed at prostitutes or adulterers. Bernard Capp has also noted how the smashing of windows was customary against the houses of prostitutes in early modern England.⁴² In Copenhagen, tavern keeper Curtius had trouble with one of his lodgers on a summer night of 1785. The lodger, Simon Rohde, had been drinking next door, when Curtius, as a respectable householder ought to, closed and locked the gate for the night. When in bed, Curtius woke up to insistent knocks and reluctantly, wearing only his nightshirt,

went to open the gate. Upon Rohde's entry, Curtius demanded that he be quiet, but he instead began scolding the landlord. Curtius turned out Rohde and slammed the gate. A crowd had begun to gather, which spurred on Rohde to smash a window next to the gate while he persisted in spewing insults such as 'Whore' and 'Procuress', now directed at Curtius' wife, who had come out into the street, attempting to prevent the situation from escalating. The incident then quickly turned into moral arguments directed at the alleged immoral livelihood of the Curtius household.

An incident taking place a decade earlier, in 1772, indicates that the accusations were not farfetched. This unfolded in one of the infamous brothel-streets, just as a police patrol was passing to inquire into the business going on in the houses – precisely the type of house calls addressed by the ordinance from Struensee, which is the subject of Ulrik Langen's chapter. Ane Marie Curtius, who was standing in her front door, informed the officers that they had no need to pay a visit to the house across from hers, as 'the people had already turned in and their door been closed for some time'. This comment spurred on her neighbour, Stine Giermand (coincidentally *Fynske Stine*, from the abovementioned case), to step forward from her doorway and proclaim that Ane Marie was the biggest whore and madam of the street – to which Ane Marie replied that Stine slept with anyone for mere coins, 'while her Husband steadied the folding Screen'. These insults played on the ambiguous and ridiculous character of a husband securing the privacy of his wife in an intimate situation, while neglecting his obligation to protect her honour. The officers restored order by escorting the women to their houses and calming down tempers, especially Stine's, who once again reacted to the stressful situation with a seizure.⁴³

The quarrel ended up in court, and to our modern minds, it seems curious that two well-known mistresses of their respective brothels would afford both time and a considerable amount of money pursuing a case in order to clear their names and preserve a secret, which was most likely no secret at all to most people listening in on the dispute. Was it because the accusation that the mistresses themselves were doing the 'dirty work' was an insult to their marriage – and a denial of their social standing and respectability? Or was the charade of the court case a mere display of strength (and wealth, seeing as cases could amount to quite large sums)? Or did their ferocious defences of their good names and reputations reflect an idea that what went on in their respective houses was their private business – and in no way to be perceived as a reflection of their character and the morals of their household?

One evening in the summer of 1772, tavern-keeper Osterbind denied service to some seamen. Shortly after, his house was attacked with stones and chalk, and several windows were smashed. One witness testified that a maid came knocking at her door, asking, 'Does Madame want to see a spectacle, the Tailors Office (*Skræder contoiret*, Osterbind's house in Laxegade) is to be ruined', adding that members of the Royal Navy (*Holmens Folk*) had gone up to her master's workshop, carrying rocks in their pockets.⁴⁴

Another victim of a window-smashing stated to the court that he did 'not run a Tavern, but merely keeps a Girl due to his Wife's weakness' – implying that such attacks usually happened to disorderly houses with a suspiciously high number of servant girls.⁴⁵ Yet another case connects the two phenomena, as a landlord described how a young man took a stick, 'smashed a Window in my Rooms and scolded my

Wife as a Whore, and added that I ran a Brothel'.⁴⁶ It seems that the action of smashing windows was often related to the accusation of a house being disreputable. The most well-known example of this is a series of events known as *Den store Udfejlsesfest* after the fall of Struensee in 1772, where a mob aimed their anger at the bawdy houses of the city. Both Giermand and Curtius were among the victims of the riot.⁴⁷

For sure, in many cases, smashed windows were most likely a pragmatic choice of destructive behaviour, aimed at harming the inhabitants of the house, seeing as windows were easy targets and expensive to replace. Meanwhile, the broken windows had a strong symbolic effect, due to both the distinctive sound of the smashing and the damage, which even after the incident made it known to passers-by that the community had exposed the inhabitants of the house and their transgressions. Especially after the riots of 1772, broken windows would have carried a strong symbolism. Even though local people might have known very well that a certain tavern housed prostitutes, somehow the action of ruining the house transformed this 'tacit' or hidden knowledge into a public fact. Through the physical attack of the space in which immorality resided and was practised, the community made hidden bodily practices, and the shame connected to them, public.

The facade was the face of the household and the symbolism of the ruined windows was strong. Windows and doors were symbolic of prostitution, because women often courted potential customers from there – or, as we have seen, used them as vantage points for exchanging insults. The case of Anne Svendsdatter, but also other cases involved accusations of women letting men explore the hidden secrets under their skirts in doorways. The fact that they did not even try to cover their sinful bodies and secrets to the community seemingly made it even worse.⁴⁸

In her study of a series of attacks on disreputable houses in early-eighteenth-century Stockholm (a riot similar to the one that took place in Copenhagen in 1772), Karin Sennfelt has argued that the attacks can be perceived as the community's means of exerting patriarchal authority in the homes where the moral control of the husband was absent. The public then acted as the missing – or negligent – (male) householder, who was usually responsible for guarding the morality of a house.⁴⁹

Not all cases of house-scorning were related to whorehouses or women living on their own. One very interesting case reflects a different, but also somehow related, story of the community's preoccupation with what went on in the privacy of the household. One afternoon in the spring of 1772, passers-by in St. Kongensgade heard loud shouting and scuffling from brewer Fischer's house. The noise came from the brewer giving his groom Morten Nielsen a good beating in the courtyard, because Morten had refused to do his chores on the terms offered by the brewer. The groom started calling out 'gewalt', signifying to the surroundings that violence was taking place, urging them to interfere. It did not take long before a large group of people had assembled outside the gate to the house. According to Fischer's testimony in the ensuing court case, the crowd was making a lot of noise. In order to have 'Peace in his Courtyard', he slammed close the inner gate doors. Ironically, the insistence of freedom from interference only caused more people to gather in front of the house – the attempt to keep something secret or concealed awoke public suspicion. People present in the crowd later testified to having heard shouts of 'he is going to kill me, I cannot stand it anymore'. A seaman

peered through a crack in the gate, seeing a man flat on the ground, Fischer standing over him, and quickly the rumour spread that the brewer had nearly killed his groom. Suddenly, the gate opened and Fischer faced the crowd, who demanded to know what was going on. The brewer answered that he had merely given the groom a good punch in nose and mouth, to which the crowd responded with flinging street filth at Fischer and the gate. Soon the police appeared to make sure 'that no Harm was done'.⁵⁰

The case shows how the community was quite ready to meddle in what went on in a private courtyard and could be considered a matter of the household between master and groom – demonstrating their perception of Fischer's actions as inappropriate by gathering, shouting and throwing filth. The court agreed with the ruling of the street parliament and found that the brewer with his violent conduct had exceeded the boundaries of 'temperate disciplining', which a head of household was entitled to employ towards disobedient subordinates.

The house-scornings often took their point of departure in 'trivial' conflicts between neighbours or even strangers, but developed along a traditional, ritual 'ruining' of a house, drawing a long tradition of public shaming and communal moral disciplining. The conflicts reflect a particular interest in actions which in different ways constitute trespassing against the boundaries of patriarchal society – either women violating the sacred institution of marriage or husbands neglecting their duties as husbands. But the exposure was also a means for the more powerless members of the early modern city to exert their power and influence towards those who may have been slightly better off, or who were in other aspects of life exerting various types of power over them. In many ways, the power of morality exceeded the limits of gender and/or social status.

Concluding remarks: Making the private public

Approaching secrecy and privacy from its antidote, exposure, has brought us into a world of gossip, slander, social drama and conflict where tempers collide and vengeful remarks turn secrets into potent weapons of defamation. It has taken us into houses, courtyards and back into the streets where crowds gather in front of houses to pass moral judgements on those within – from the interpersonal insults of defamation cases, to the shaming rituals of the crowd. Cases of neighbourly conflicts have let us peer into the 'private' spaces of the homes and the perceptions of their physical and imagined boundaries, as people kept a watchful eye and ear out for the dealings of their neighbours, carefully choosing when knowledge should stay secret or private, and when it was to be public.

The exposure of private in the public as part of everyday conflicts has shed light on how especially the lower orders of late-eighteenth-century Copenhagen perceived the boundaries between public and private, and the feelings they attached to these boundaries as they materialized in everyday negotiations. The incidents presented here show that in late-eighteenth-century Copenhagen people still feared the potential power of insulting words and cared about preserving their good name. To them respectability came from action. They were thus willing to bring slanderers to court in order to 're-cover' delicate or personal information put into public circulation – even if this, according to

Shoemaker, was a phenomenon in decline and mostly in use among the lower orders. Moreover, as the examples given above clearly demonstrate, cases of deformation *were* in fact about much more than words, as they often arose from everyday conflicts over space and/or status in the many crowded houses and tenements of the city. This was an everyday reality, in which insults and the exposure of secret or intimate information became a powerful strategy to undermine, humiliate and shame adversaries.

The emotional strategy of exposure made use of the potentially harmful powers of the private in the public. It therefore opens up a window onto how the boundaries of the private materialized in a continuous negotiation over access to intimate spaces or knowledge. These boundaries were marked by emotional reactions elicited in the exposed or the expositors, such as shame, anger and contempt. Degrading the body through exposing or soiling it served as an efficacious strategy of shaming, underlining verbal insults and making shame or disgust 'stick' to the sinful body. It triggered a heightened awareness of the body and its borders in the individual. The examples given here also show how perceptions of privacy unfolded in relation to different, but intricately related spheres: bodies, spaces and intimate information. Thus the exposure or humiliation of the body served as a symbol of or reference to immodesty, shamelessness and accessibility. The house served as a symbol of the body and the household, reflected in the tainting or violation of a house as a metaphor for the bodies within, and as a way of making legible – and public – the sinful character of a person or an entire household.

Though the many cases of exposure were nearly all brought about, not by a strong moral outrage, but by personal animosities or an urge for revenge, they nonetheless constituted an intentional staging of secret or intimate details in public – stagings that often rehearsed more or less ritualized practices of the public shaming of moral offenders. The intentional shouting and noisemaking, perhaps even clapping and whistling, which signalled that 'public action' was taking place – thus also placed onlookers and potential participants in a specific mindset, and carried the connotation of public disturbance.⁵¹ These ritual markers – rehearsing age-old practices of house-scorning as a symbolic attack on the honour of the house to which they belonged – were part of the emotional practices which marked, challenged and materialized the boundaries between public and private.

Conflicts like the ones presented here – however big or small – took place every day in the houses, courtyards and streets of early modern Copenhagen. Most were settled then and there, and the uncomfortable or embarrassing words or things exposed were re-covered and put back under covers or into the closet. But in that fraction of cases, the transgression of boundaries was of such a nature that the secret and the shame stuck – and the exposure made it into the public light of the courts, for the historian to find and ponder the phenomenon of the private in the public.

Notes

- 1 'Om ieg kunde huske at siste nat at Ole Spillemand laa hos mig i Sengen og ieg skulde kuns passe paa mine Slunker, i gade Døren som ragte mig 10 Alen op under mine Klæder', *Rigsarkivet* (The Danish National Archives, DNA), Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 22 December 1771.

- 2 'Ole Spillemand havde lagt i Sengen hos mig i sin bare Skjorte og ieg i min bare Særk under Dynen, hvilket er mig alt for utaalelig at høre, og ieg for samme Beskyldninger er anset af Folk i Huset', Ibid.; Letter of complaint from Anne Svendsdatter, 27 January 1772.
- 3 Important publications in this field are amongst numerous others: Gowing 2003; Capp 2003; Stewart 1994; Sharpe 1980; Ingram 1988.
- 4 Gowing 1999, 98–9.
- 5 See Crane 2009 and e.g. Bailey 2006; Longfellow 2006; Gowing 2000; Vickery 2008; Barclay 2021. See introduction for further references.
- 6 Shoemaker 2000; Elias 1939.
- 7 Barclay 2021.
- 8 Ahmed 2004, 2014.
- 9 Scheer 2012.
- 10 Bayless 2012; Larrington 2006; Linaa 2016.
- 11 Kilday and Nash 2010.
- 12 DNA, Københavns Politiret, Behandlede sager ved 1. protokol, 23 September 1791. Other examples of dirt or filth as weapons include, e.g., DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, 2. vidnekammer, 28 August 1799; DNA, Københavns Politi, Politiretten, Behandlede sager v. 3. protokol, Letter of 28 March 1789.
- 13 DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 14 September 1771. See also DNA, Pådømte sager, 8 February 1773.
- 14 Ibid., 2. Vidnekammer, 24 August 1799.
- 15 Bayless 2012; Ahmed 2004, 82–100; Miller 1997; Mary Douglas 1966.
- 16 On shame see, e.g., Ahmed 2004, 101–21; Sedgwick 2003; Miller 1993.
- 17 On beds as spaces of sociability see Gowing 2014; Barclay 2017.
- 18 Reinke-Williams 2011, 82.
- 19 Ibid., 2. vidnekammer, 5 November 1771.
- 20 'Jeg kunde fortælle mine Læsere et nyt Optog med Fiskerkiellingerne ved gl. Strand, hvorledes næsten den hele Række paa nogle nær ligesom blev elektrificeret, og Næver og Pander mødte hverandre, saa Gnisterne fløi af Øinene, og antændte Haarlokkerne paa disse Brændeviinsamazoninder; hvor Banden og Galen, Skielden og Smelden, var Feldtmusikken. Jeg kunde opregne hvor heftig Striden blev, og hvorledes den endte; men det var kun at besudle mine Fortællinger, og fornærme ethvert ærbart Øre. Hvad Skikkelighed skal vi vente af dem, som skamme sig ikke ved offentlig at være Afskum!,' *Aftenposten*, no. 77, 29 September 1776.
- 21 Gowing 1999, chap 3; Gowing 2003, 30–40; Paster 1993; Stallybrass 1986.
- 22 Gowing 1999, 16.
- 23 'Har hun nogen Ære i Sverige saa kan hun sætte sig paa denne Bøtte og rejse derover og hente sin Ære', DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 28 August 1799.
- 24 'Fordi hun havde Ørme i sin Tingest ... brugt saadanne Talemaader, som sigtede til at gjøre mit Hus mistænkeligt', DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 14 September 1771.
- 25 Cohen and Cohen 2001.
- 26 Gowing 1999, 55.
- 27 Davis 1971. See also Darnton 1984, 95. Several studies have looked into these types of shaming rituals, mainly with a focus on the elaborate rituals: Ingram 1994; Underdown and Fletcher 1985. See Kilday and Nash 2010 for an overview.
- 28 'At det var bedre om hun tog sin Horeunge med sig i Vognen', DNA, Søetaten, den kombinerede ret, Justits- og domprotokol, 27 February 1780.

- 29 'En del brutale ord og støjen ... der bor det Kalluns-stads ... Madammen den Sergent Hore er nu endelig bleven Kone', DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 9 January 1786.
- 30 Ibid., 9 September 1799. For a more detailed study of the notion of household authority in late-eighteenth-century Copenhagen see Schjerning 2019.
- 31 See, e.g., Amussen 1994; Bailey 2006; Longfellow 2006; Barclay 2021.
- 32 Gowing 1999, 69–73.
- 33 DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 14 October 1799.
- 34 Ibid., 16 January 1771.
- 35 'Jeg erfarede snart, at hun var drikkfældig, var ude adskillige Nætter af Huset, og førte et uanstændigt Levnet ... men skammer mig, at min Caracteer har lidet saa stor Skaar, ved at indlade mig med et Fruentimmer af denne Klasse', Kiøbenhavns Kgl. allene privilegerede Adresse Contoirs Efterretninger, 13, 16, 18 October 1797; DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 10 August 1800.
- 36 DNA, Københavns Politi, Politiretten, Behandlede sager v. 1. protokol, 31 August 1791.
- 37 Cohen 1992. A law from the city of Rome in 1580, with references to a papal edict of 1566, punished those who threw 'excrement, or horn, or similar things at the thresholds and doorways of houses, and whoever throws rocks or stones at their doors, windows, panes, and roofs, to inflict an insult, or befoul the walls'. Cited in Dean 2004, 19. No Danish equivalent exists, only a passage in the Danish law on *Husfred* (House Peace) in which it is specified that to hack or slash another man's table, walls, doors, windows or other belongings were subject to a heavy fine, but there is no mention of symbolic soiling or the like. Danske Lov 1683, 6-9-6. The roots of the practice of stoning houses may be traced back to a regulated ritual practice of hurling stones at Jewish houses, going back as far as at least 538, possibly with reference to a biblical story of the Jews stoning St. Stephen. In particular, in Southern Europe, the Jews were considered legitimate targets of public anger within this ritualized framework, but the attacks also occurred spontaneously all over Europe during the entire early modern period and into the nineteenth century. Jütte 2016; Armstrong 2008, chap. 3.
- 38 Vickery 2008, 153; See also St. George 1998, 128–41.
- 39 Vickery 2008; Flather 2007, 46–7; Schjerning 2015.
- 40 'Ret at skikkelig Folk skulle lide saadan for deres Kieltringe Levnet ... om de ville holde med Horerne'. Københavns Politi, Politiretten, 1. protokol, 27 August 1790. See Schjerning 2013 for further discussions of authority within the households of eighteenth-century Copenhagen.
- 41 Blüdnikow 1986; Stevnsborg 1983. Exceptions are, e.g., Langen 2005 and Langen 2009.
- 42 Cohen 1992, 610; Capp 2003. The women often sought satisfaction in the courts, even though it may have been well known that they were prostitutes.
- 43 DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 3 July 1772.
- 44 'Vil Madamen se Spectacler, Skræder contoiret skal ruineres', Ibid., 22 March 1772. The brothels in general were referred to as 'offices'. Curtius's house was called the soap-office (*sæbe-contoiret*). See *Grev Struenses mærkværdige Testamente, opsat af ham selv og confirmeeret af Lucifer. Kiøbenhavn 1772* (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Bolle Luxdorphs trykkefrihedsskrifter); Stevnsborg 1980, 96.
- 45 'Da jeg dog ikke holder Værtshus, men alene har en Pige formedelst min Kones Svaghed', DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 19 March 1773.

- 46 'Slog en Rude itu og skieldte min Kone for en Hore og tillagde at jeg holdt Horehus', DNA, Københavns Politi, Politiretten, Behandlede sager ved 1. protokol, 2 November 1785.
- 47 See Stjernfelt et al. 2020, chap. 32. See Ulrik Langen's chapter in this volume for a description of the riot.
- 48 DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 14 September 1771.
- 49 Sennefelt 2019.
- 50 DNA, Hof- og Stadsretten, Pådømte sager, 22 March 1773.
- 51 On the sensuous markers of public disturbance see Langen 2017.