

UCLA

UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

"Taking Back the Streets": The Return of the Pedestrian to Parisian Urban Space

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/37z0b18q>

Author

Mullen, Catherine Rachel

Publication Date

2016

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

“Taking Back the Streets”: The Return of the Pedestrian to Parisian Urban Space

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in French and Francophone Studies

by

Catherine Rachel Mullen

2016

© Copyright by

Catherine Rachel Mullen

2016

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

“Taking Back the Streets”: The Return of the Pedestrian to Parisian Urban Space

by

Catherine Rachel Mullen

Doctor of Philosophy in French and Francophone Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Sara E. Melzer, Chair

This dissertation is concerned with the Parisian street as a contemporary site of the adoption and contestation of French Republican values by the French State and pedestrians through iterations of street culture. Street culture is a dynamic entity whose properties and norms depend largely on the society in which it is generated. It evolves as those who *use* the streets, and not merely those who exert power over them, alter their behaviors there, and it also responds to changes that occur to the material sites themselves. This project examines how public spaces in Paris, as *lieux de mémoire* of significant cultural meaning and importance, have come to be viewed as conduits of a particular and problematic French “Republican” ideal: a universalized notion of equality and secularism. I analyze major spatial changes made to the city in the 19th and 20th centuries that dislocated pedestrians from the streets and discuss how, since 2000, the Parisian government has consequently promoted a rhetoric of “returning the streets” to pedestrians. I explore ways in which the Parisian government and pedestrians themselves have sought to “take back the streets” for foot traffic, and I consider the varying motivations behind those efforts. Specifically, I investigate massive state-sponsored renovations of significant

Parisian spaces and the revival of street events as efforts to realize the goal of returning pedestrians to the streets, and thus to the site of the transmission of Republican values. I also examine the inversion of “returning” the streets to pedestrians through pedestrian-motivated initiatives to “take back” the streets. I explore the conceptual, embodied, and artistic practices that pedestrians utilize in Parisian urban spaces to challenge the narrative of cultural assimilation imposed on them by those spaces. Those practices include subjective mapping; physically tracing space in the city through the playful and ephemeral activities of rollerblading and parkour; and the creation and implementation of street art, all of which promote a street culture based on the formation of social bonds.

The dissertation of Catherine Rachel Mullen is approved.

John A. Agnew

Malina Stefanovska

Sara E. Melzer, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION.....	ii
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures.....	vi
Acknowledgements	ix
Vita/Biographical Sketch.....	xi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: City-Sponsored Efforts to ‘Take Back the Streets’ on Behalf of Pedestrians ..	21
“ <i>Économie et culture, même combat</i> ”: Cultural Events as Agents of Assimilation.....	25
From Renovations to New Creations: Paving Space for Pedestrians.....	50
CHAPTER TWO: Inscribing the Self into the City and the City into the Self through Subjective Mapping.....	72
Removed from Society? The Subjective Art of Mapping.....	77
Mapping the Community: Subjective Maps of Belleville and the Paris Metro	84
Mapping Social Ties in Literature: From Scudéry to Modiano	102
CHAPTER THREE: Reclaiming Urban Space, One Step at a Time: the Nomadic Movements of Rollerblading and Parkour.....	118
“ <i>Roller rando</i> ”: Reclaiming Urban Space through Collective Movement.....	124
Parkour: Tracing and Drawing the City with the Body.....	135
CHAPTER FOUR: Reclaiming Belleville, Stone by Stone: Mosaics as Markers of Pedestrian Spaces	150
<i>Inter-reconnaissance</i> in the Streets of Belleville	153
Building Belleville, Stone by Stone: The Mosaic Projects of <i>La Maison de la Plage</i>	161
CONCLUSION	177
BIBLIOGRAPHY	179

List of Figures

Figure 1: The pelle Starck entitled, “La Mairie du Ve arrondissement” (left) explains the history of the building that houses the Mayor of one of the oldest arrondissements in Paris. The pelle Starck “Rue Montorgueil” (right) recounts the ebullient social atmosphere of that street. July 2014. All photographs are my own unless otherwise indicated.	12
Figure 2: During <i>Nuit Blanche</i> 2014, the Salle des Tapisseries in Paris’ City Hall (<i>left</i>) housed the performance art piece “Labyrinth” of Motoi Yamamoto (not pictured). The artist worked from 8pm until the early morning creating designs using salt (<i>right</i>). Photographs by Natalie Hunter. October 2014.	33
Figure 3: “Au Panthéon!” <i>Nuit Blanche</i> 2014 exposition at the Panthéon (5th arrondissement) by artist JR. Photograph by artist. October 2014.	33
Figure 4: An official city publication details the restrictions on drivers during the first <i>Journée sans voiture</i> in 2015. Source: Mairie de Paris.	38
Figure 5: Walkers, bikers, and rollerbladers take over the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, which is usually one of the most heavily trafficked roads in Paris. Photograph by Marc Verhille for the Mairie de Paris. September 2015.	40
Figure 6: Looking west (<i>left</i>) and east (<i>right</i>) at Paris Plages from the Quai de l’Hôtel de Ville in the 4th arrondissement. July 2014.	43
Figure 7: Aerial view of the Place de la République prior to renovation. Source: TVK Architects. October 2011.	60
Figure 8: The Place de la République, looking northwest from the Boulevard Voltaire. Photograph: Clément Guillaume for TVK Architects. November 2014.	61
Figure 9: Stretches of the <i>Berges de Seine</i> on the left bank of the Seine, facing northeast (<i>left and center</i>) and southwest (<i>right</i>). January 2016.	66
Figure 10: A former cargo box converted into a <i>Zzzz</i> space on the <i>Berges de Seine</i> . January 2016.	68
Figure 11 : “ <i>Une carte subjective de Belleville #3—Archipelia 18 et 19 avril 2013</i> ”. Source: <i>Point de rassemblement</i>	87
Figure 12 : “ <i>Une carte subjective de Belleville #6—Les vues de Belleville</i> ”. Source: <i>Point de rassemblement</i>	89
Figure 13: Artist Susan Leen mounts her <i>carte subjective de Belleville</i> at the <i>belvédère</i> of the Parc de Belleville in 2013. Sources: <i>Point de rassemblement</i> (<i>left</i>) and my photo (<i>right</i>). February 2015.	91

Figure 14: Susan Leen’s <i>Une carte subjective de Belleville</i> . Source: Susan Leen.....	93
Figure 16: The <i>Carte du pays de Tendre</i> , an affective map devised by the protagonist of Mlle. de Scudéry’s novel <i>Clélie</i> . Source: <i>Amour-Humour</i>	103
Figure 17: Guy Debord’s “The Naked City”, a Situationist map published in his <i>Oeuvres</i>	115
Figure 18: Two <i>Roller & Coquillages</i> staff (one in the foreground and one in the background, both wearing bright yellow t-shirts) restrict car, bicycle, and foot traffic from crossing the stream of rollerbladers on Boulevard de la Villette, at the edge of the 10 th and 19 th arrondissements. February 2015.....	126
Figure 19: Thousands of rollerbladers participate in a Disney-themed <i>Pari Roller</i> rollerblading excursion, or <i>randonnée</i> . Photograph by Christian Van Hanga (Disneyland).	128
Figure 20: A police car and Red Cross van trail behind the last rollerbladers at a <i>Roller & Coquillages</i> excursion.	129
Figure 21: Rollerbladers cruise down the Boulevard Henri IV toward the Place de la Bastille at the end of a Sunday excursion led by the association <i>Roller & Coquillages</i> . February 2015.	131
Figure 22: Yoann “Zephyr” Leroux demonstrates what lay observers would likely consider a risky move as he jumps, unharnessed and unprotected, from one Parisian rooftop to another. Photograph by Zenzel Photography.	139
Figure 23: Parkour Paris coach Kevin Mercier jumps into the fountain of the Parc de Bercy in Paris’ 12 th arrondissement. The empty fountain is a favorite training spot among parkour <i>traceurs</i> during the winter months. February 2015.	142
Figure 24: Yoann “Zephyr” Leroux surveys the Seine from his perch on a rafter of the Passerelle Simone-de-Beauvoir, a pedestrian footbridge near the Bercy neighborhood in Paris. December 2015.....	143
Figure 25: Yoann “Zephyr” Leroux overlooks the Place du Québec in the Saint-Germain-des-Prés neighborhood, in a still from the Mister S video and interview. Photograph by Misterstrip.....	146
Figure 26: Maps of Paris by Eugène Andriveau-Goujon. “ <i>Plan de Paris fortifié et des communes environnantes</i> ” (above), created in 1839, shows the limits of Paris (outlined in purple), and the adjacent communes (outlined in green). “ <i>Nouvelle division de Paris en 20 arrondissements et 80 quartiers au 1e janvier 1860</i> ” (below), shows the communes fully incorporated into the city of Paris. Source: Atlas historique de Paris.	155
Figure 27: The mosaic façade at the entryway of <i>La Maison de la Plage</i> association’s headquarters, 18 bis rue Dénoyez, in Paris’ 20 th arrondissement. Source: <i>La Maison de la Plage</i>	163

Figure 28: A poster (<i>left</i>) advertises mosaic workshop events sponsored by the associations <i>La Maison de la Place</i> and <i>Paris-Habitat</i> to beautify a wall near 10 bis rue Bisson in Belleville. The final product, “L’oiseau de la rue Bisson” (<i>right</i>). Photograph by Samuel Yniesta. December 2015.....	166
Figure 29: Mosaic tiles (<i>left</i>) cemented onto a column at the belvedere of the Parc de Belleville. Detailed view of a mosaic leaf at the <i>table d’orientation</i> (<i>right</i>). Photographs by Mehdi Zainoune. May 2016.....	167
Figure 30: Mosaic trees and leaves flank both sides of the <i>table d’orientation</i> , and mosaic tiles are mounted below the map. Photograph by Mehdi Zainoune. May 2016.	170
Figure 31: A panoramic photo of the <i>table d’orientation</i> at the summit of the Parc de Belleville. The columns on either side display leaf-shaped mosaics created by Belleville residents. February 2015.....	171
Figure 32: A closer view of “Neo Paris XXI siècle”, one of four featured maps at the <i>table d’orientation</i> in Belleville. February 2015.	172
Figure 33: The “slam” poem <i>La ballade de Belleville</i> , cemented onto a tile displayed below the <i>table d’orientation</i> at the belvedere of the Parc de Belleville. Photo by Mehdi Zainoune. May 2016.....	175

Acknowledgements

This dissertation has been a long time coming, and many people have contributed to its completion. I owe my deepest thanks to Sara Melzer, my dissertation committee chair, who stepped in at a moment of uncertainty for me in my graduate studies, and whose unwavering confidence in me and eternal patience have allowed me to see this project through. I am immensely appreciative of the involvement and input of Malina Stefanovska, who has provided much feedback on this project and others of intellectual interest to us both. I am indebted to John Agnew for his role in expanding the interdisciplinary reach of my project by introducing me to major concepts and key thinkers in the fields of Geography and Urban Studies. I offer my sincere gratitude to Professor Zrinka Stahuljak for her feedback on my prospectus, and also to Professor Laure Murat for facilitating a meeting and interview with Christophe Girard. I must also recognize Kerry Allen for her tireless work and advising, and without whom I could not have completed my studies.

I am grateful to Marc Bouzaafa, Christophe Girard, Yoshka Jacques-Philippe, Yoann Leroux, Kevin Mercier, Michel Mouly, Chantal Rader, and Ludovic Sage, who graciously allowed me to interview (and, in some cases, observe) them for the purposes of my research. I am thankful to Natalie Hunter for kindly hosting me in Paris while I conducted dissertation research there, and to Mehdi Zainoune for playing tourist on my behalf in order to document some of the sites mentioned in this dissertation.

This acknowledgement section would not be complete without mentioning my parents, Jane and Andrew, who have offered steadfast encouragement throughout the pursuit of my Ph.D.

I am profoundly appreciative of Donna Schwartz and Janette Johnson for their unwavering support, and I am so grateful for my friendships with Sarah Case and Catalina Oaida, whom I met at the very beginning of my time at UCLA and who remain dear friends to this day. Finally, I would like to thank my partner, Samuel Yniesta, whose love, laughter, and lightness made even the darkest days of the dissertation process a little bit brighter. Now, on to our next adventure!

Vita/Biographical Sketch

EDUCATION

University of California, Los Angeles

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of French and Francophone Studies, expected September 2016

Emory University, Atlanta, GA

B.A., French Studies (*Summa cum laude*), 2008

B.A., International Studies, 2008

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

2012-2013 Martin Turrell Award for Excellence in Teaching

2010-2012 Graduate Summer Research Mentorship

2009-2011 International Institute Fellowship

2009 Summa Cum Laude in French Studies, Emory University.

SELECTED PAPERS AND PRESENTATIONS

2016 “Remembering Paris: Subjective Maps of Nostalgia in the Works of Guy Debord and Patrick Modiano.” French Graduate Student Conference at CUNY, New York.

2013 “A House of (Dis)illusions: Spaces and Bodies in Jean Genet’s *Le Balcon*.” French and Italian Graduate Student Conference, University of Wisconsin.

2012 “Perversion of Colonial Masculine Discourse through the Performance of Artifice in Genet’s *The Blacks*.” French Graduate Student Conference, UCLA.

2011 “Labyrinthine Spaces and Speech in *Le Retour au désert* by Bernard-Marie Koltès.” French Graduate Conference, University of British Columbia, Vancouver.

2011 “Les espaces et la parole labyrinthins dans *Le Retour au désert* de Bernard-Marie Koltès.” Paper for Graduate Student Research Mentorship, under the direction of Professor Malina Stefanovska.

2010 “À travers le *Spéculum*: la déconstruction du phallocentrisme par la voix ironique de Luce Irigaray.” Paper for Graduate Student Research Mentorship, under the direction of Professor Malina Stefanovska.

2008 “Desire and the Deal in Bernard-Marie Koltès’ *Dans la Solitude des champs de coton*.” Undergraduate Honors Thesis, Emory University, under the direction of Professor Claire Nouvet.

INTRODUCTION

The street is the predominant element of the city.¹ A conduit of movement, the street as a utilitarian space facilitates travel from an origin to a destination² and also provides opportunities for economic exchange and social encounters. Streets literally and figuratively tie the city together, enabling people to position themselves within a larger whole and in relation to those around them.³ Streets can also serve non-utilitarian purposes, becoming spaces of aesthetic and cultural production.

The notion of the street as strictly utilitarian resonates with those familiar with the American urban landscape, where streets function primarily as efficient transportation routes and far less frequently as venues of interpersonal interaction.⁴ The efficiency of travel and movement so treasured in the United States has a less pronounced importance in France, where the street and public spaces in general are remarkable for their versatility. French streets certainly fulfill functional roles, but they are also valuable to the French and to visitors as vehicles of the transmission of French history and values, and are therefore major loci of the construction of French culture.

How can spaces, in this case public spaces in France, contain and transmit such intangible ideals as the history or values of a nation? Acclaimed French historian Pierre Nora calls spaces

¹ Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960, pp. 49.

² Ibid, 54.

³ Ibid.

⁴ For further reference, sociologist Erving Goffman offers a detailed and charming anthropological study of encounters and the contexts and nuances of those interactions. See Goffman, Erving. *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1961.

such as the French street *lieux de mémoire*, self-referential “sites of memory”⁵ to which France assigns cultural value in order to bolster specific historical narratives of that country. All *lieux de mémoire* are material (real), functional (operational) and invested by the collective imagination with a “symbolic aura”.⁶ The sites themselves have no referent: they do not memorialize a specific person or a particular event; rather, they evoke *interpretations* of aspects of national history, interpretations that are gleaned from a historical context but vacated of actual historical content. In that way, they suggest lacunae in the nation’s historical memory and permit cultural authorities to fill in those gaps by attributing value to seemingly banal sites or objects with no symbolic significance. Many (but not all) French public spaces are *lieux de mémoire*: they possess material and functional aspects, but they also carry a symbolic importance that makes them relevant and significant to the formulation of France’s official memory of its own history. The street itself is endowed with a poetic aura in French literature, film, and popular music, as we see in expressions such as “tenir le haut du pave” and “le roi du macadam”.

Parisian streets as *lieux de mémoire* symbolize the values put forth by the French Revolution of 1789, the most important of which is the notion of universalism. The motto of the Revolution, “*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*” (“liberty, equality, brotherhood”), articulated the universalism that the French Revolutionaries championed: equality of all people in the eyes of the state and of society. Universalism, though, is a subjective and problematic ideal, a term that, while not exclusive to France, the French state has nonetheless repeatedly employed to unify French people around a singular understanding of French identity. Understandably, the values that French universalism upholds change depending on the circumstances. Whereas the

⁵ Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les lieux de mémoire." *Representations* 26. Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (1989), pp. 7, 12, and 23.

⁶ Ibid, 19.

universalism of the Revolution reflected the shifting notions of individual and society that emerged after the overthrow of the French monarchy, the universalism of France's colonial "civilizing mission" of the 18th and 19th centuries⁷ placed considerable weight on differences of ethnicity and race.

Equally troublesome as the concept of universalism are the policies of assimilation that the French State enacted in order to impose a so-called French universal identity. "Assimilation" was an official goal of French colonialism and entailed the complete digestion of and subscription to French language and culture by all colonial subjects. After French imperialism ended in the early 1960s, the term became an unsavory reminder of an era that France was eager to forget, a time during which assimilation was associated with cultural whitewashing. A policy of "integration" was officially substituted for assimilation; however, integration directives have come to be seen in France as pursuing assimilation under a different name, as they retain the emphasis on the importance of French values and the French language as necessary requirements of French citizenship.⁸

The Parisian street has long been a *lieu de mémoire* for the transmission of so-called French universalism through an effort of assimilation. The values *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* of the Republican motto are implied or overtly visible in nearly every public space in Paris, as is a distinct desire to explain the past of France as a cultural heritage that belongs, or should at least be inculcated, to all. This educational effort is apparent in the practice of renaming Parisian streets in order to promote certain representations of collective French memory. Whereas in the Middle Ages nearly all streets were named according to the uses they served to those who

⁷ Collard, Susan. "French cultural policy: the special role of the state." *Contemporary French Cultural Studies*, edited by William Kidd and Sian Reynolds, Routledge, 2000, pp. 40.

⁸ Zappi, Sylvia. "French Government Revives Assimilation Policy". *Migration Information Source*. October 2003.

inhabited them, the Revolution of 1789 established street naming in France as a political “republicanizing” practice. In 1793, Abbé Henri Jean-Baptiste Grégoire, an emblematic religious figure of the Revolution, expressed the urgency of renaming the streets in the wake of the establishment of a new government: “*Quand on reconstruit un gouvernement à neuf, aucun abus ne doit échapper à la faux réformatrice ; on doit tout républicaniser [...] Le patriotisme commande un changement de dénominations*”.⁹ Abbé Grégoire and his compatriots recognized the political power of street naming as a driver of the revolutionary ideology.¹⁰ The place of the masses had always been the streets, as opposed to the private palaces and residences of the royalty and nobles. In changing the names of the streets, the Revolutionaries physically and symbolically overthrew the monarchy and turned the streets into tools of civic education.

The street remained a valuable educational instrument to the Empires and Republics that followed the Revolution until the mid-19th century when Parisian spaces underwent massive renovations during the Second Empire. This formidable project was envisioned by the Baron Eugène Haussmann, the Prefect of the Seine under the auspices of Napoléon III. From 1853-1870, Haussmann modified a substantial amount of public spaces, including streets altering their composition and appearance and thus their significance. He replaced rickety streets with wide boulevards, adding *rond-points* (roundabouts) in an effort to facilitate vehicular movement throughout the city, and creating an overall new aesthetic vision of the city that favored cars over foot traffic.

There was a functional and democratic logic behind the formal changes to the street: modernization for the sake of the betterment of the masses. Paris had not expanded outward from

⁹ Milo, Daniel. “Le nom des rues.” *Les lieux de mémoire: La Nation*. Vol. 2, tome 3, edited by Pierre Nora. Paris: Gallimard, vol. 2, no. 3. 1986, pp. 292.

¹⁰ Ibid, 295.

its center as other cities such as London had, and as a result, many crowded Parisian streets were crime-ridden and infested with disease. For that reason, Haussmann pushed the city toward its less populated periphery, and he razed insalubrious neighborhoods. For example, the densely populated *Ile de la Cité*, one of two small islands in the river Seine, became a prime target for demolition because the Empire considered it to be the epicenter of crime in Paris.¹¹ Yet that neighborhood, as well as some of the areas destroyed, has historical significance to many Parisians.¹² The Regime ultimately determined which statues and buildings merited being spared, providing as justification the overall improvement of the quality of life of the people. Yet this Republican mission also served a personal purpose for Napoléon III, who aspired to complete the unrealized urban development ambitions of his uncle, Napoléon Bonaparte, and to rebrand Paris as a modern and luxurious city in time for the 1867 *Exposition universelle*.¹³¹⁴

The residual effects of the Haussmannian renovations were two-fold. First, and a fact that is of capital importance to me in this dissertation, the urbanism of the Second Empire announced the disappearance of the quintessential figure of the street, the pedestrian. Second, the changes made to the city vastly altered the historical narrative its sites embodied and proclaimed, presenting a new narrative of French history through aesthetic alterations, a story featuring a modern, industrialized France bursting forward into a capitalist future. The new, wider boulevards that cut across the entire city carved out more space for modern forms of transport

¹¹ Kirkland, Stephane. *Paris Reborn: Napoléon III, Baron Haussmann, and the Quest to Build a Modern City*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013, pp. 218 and 221.

¹² Hall, Thomas. *Planning Europe's Capital Cities*. London: E and FN Spon, 1997, pp. 79.

¹³ Ibid, 63 and 73.

¹⁴ The irony here lies in the departure of the Second Empire from the Republican values it claimed to espouse. Napoléon III purported to be the ultimate representative of the people, for as the nephew of Napoléon Bonaparte, he claimed to channel the revolutionary principles his uncle embodied. When he was not ruling unilaterally, though, the self-proclaimed emperor relied heavily on the clergy and the bourgeoisie, marking a significant departure from the French Republic envisioned by the 1789 Revolution.

accessible only to the wealthy. They also reinforced the power of the state by providing ample space for military tanks that could easily squash civil uprisings.

A century after Haussmann, a nearly identical phenomenon occurred in which post-War economic ambitions inhibited the presence of pedestrians in the street. Unlike during Haussmann's time, the economic improvement of the 1950s was defined largely by the automobile industry, whose success or lack thereof in a national economy became a barometer of the strength of that economy.¹⁵ The car became the most vital modernized sector of the French economy, and consequently, it encouraged the interiorization¹⁶ or privatization of society: people left the outdoor space of the streets for private, interior space of the car. France, says Kristin Ross, generally experiences modernization as “highly destructive, obliterating a well-developed artisanal culture, a highly developed travel culture, and at least in the 1950s—a grass-roots national culture clearly observable to French and non-French alike”.¹⁷ After two consecutive centuries of spatial modifications triggered by the economics of industrialism and modernization, the pedestrian was all but entirely removed from the space of his or her existence.

Pedestrians are the primary users and occupants of the street. They construct “images” of the city, social and emotional connections to it that rely heavily on the city's layout.¹⁸ It would be impossible to construct an exhaustive list of all of the individuals and figures found in Parisian streets; for example, the streetwalkers of 18th century literature or beggars of Victor Hugo. I have chosen as my point of departure what I believe to be the quintessential street figure of Paris during the 19th century, one whose fate was drastically affected by the Haussmann

¹⁵ Ross, Kristin. *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995, pp. 19.

¹⁶ Ibid, 7 and 11.

¹⁷ Ibid, 22.

¹⁸ See Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960. In this project, Lynch analyzes the perceptions and connections that people establish in and with the city.

renovations: the *flâneur*. The literary embodiment of the flâneur first appeared in the romantic and realist works, respectively, of Honoré de Balzac and Charles Baudelaire and was studied extensively in the 20th century by German theorist Walter Benjamin. A self-proclaimed appreciator of art and the bohemian lifestyle, the *flâneur* actively perused the city in search of the tableau of life: its moments, experiences, and sentiments. He located the culture of the quotidian in the streets themselves. The *flâneur* is surrounded by another symbolically charged literary figure of the popular street user: “*le badaud parisien*”, the curious passive spectator of street happenings and spectacles.

The *flâneur* is an inherently Parisian figure that emerged alongside the burgeoning capitalism. Benjamin muses that Paris itself created the *flâneur*, for that city “enter[s] undivided into the dreams of the passer-by, along with every paving stone, every shop sign, every flight of steps, and every gateway”.¹⁹ Paris before Haussmann presented an ideal landscape for the *flâneur* in which he could maintain his unwavering focus on the streets as vessels of real life. In the literature of that era, the *flâneur*’s whimsical yet serious wandering came to constitute an activity in itself: *flânerie*. Not only could the flâneur indulge in it; so too could others who, on occasion, sought out a taste of what they perceived to be the veritable bohemian, artistic lifestyle.

The streets fueled the *flâneur*’s lifestyle; hence Benjamin’s assertion that *flânerie* could not have existed without the street-like setting of the arcades, the epicenter of Parisian capitalism in the late 19th century.²⁰ He describes those “glass-roofed, marble-paneled corridors [*passages*] extending through whole blocks of buildings”²¹ as quasi-street, quasi-interior spaces²² where the

¹⁹ Benjamin, *Selected Writings*. Vol. 2, edited by Marcus Bullock et al. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1999, pp. 263.

²⁰ Benjamin, Walter. *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, edited Michael W. Jennings. Translated by Howard Eiland. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006. pp. 68.

²¹ Ferdinand von Gall (1845); quoted in *The writer of modern life*, 68.

²² *The Writer of Modern Life*, 68.

flâneur, along with other pedestrians, could amble about or shop unscathed by carriages.²³ The semi-enclosed spaces of the arcades, along with the surrounding streets that spouted into and out of them, became the dwelling place of the *flâneur*. The city was at once a dichotomous “landscape that opens up to [the flâneur] and a parlor that encloses him. [...] He is as much at home among house facades as a citizen is within his four walls”.²⁴ The Parisian urban setting was at once shared and extremely personal, allowing the *flâneur* to bond intimately with the city’s spaces and the people he encountered there.

The radical changes to the Parisian streetscape that were ushered in by Haussmann led to the demise of the *flâneur*, for whom the street was vital. The new city layout imposed a reversal of the entire interior-exterior spatial dynamic: As capitalism expanded its reach, the arcades as a popular shopping venue gave way to the all-encompassing department store.²⁵ Commerce and every-day encounters thus moved inside, depleting the street of its pedestrians. Department stores deprived the street of much of its economic importance, forcing the *flâneur* to wander about the department store’s “labyrinth of commodities as he had once roamed through the labyrinth of the city”.²⁶ The relocation of the *flâneur* indoors was in essence a dislocation from the outdoor street space that had been his *raison d’être*. The *flâneur* emerged as a character in opposition to the alterations made to the city’s spatial arrangement, for his survival depended on the street as a vibrant pedestrian space, a space that was greatly restricted by Haussmann.

The involuntary detachment of the *flâneur* from the once-familiar space of the Parisian streets represented a distancing of the *flâneur* from French society itself. Haussmann’s urbanism

²³ *The Writer of Modern Life*, 84.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 68-69.

²⁵ *Selected Writings*, 263.

²⁶ *The Writer of Modern Life*, 85.

occurred at the expense of pedestrians like the *flâneur*, prompting a major shift in how they perceived the city. The *flâneur*'s conception of his own identity thus came to hinge on a yearning for Paris as it had been before industrialization, Haussmann, and the rise of capitalism. The *flâneur*'s nostalgia for a Paris of the past bleeds into the present in the form of romanticized visions of Paris as an amorous City of Light, a set of narrow, winding streets where people can roam as penniless artists or writers, certain the city will provide inspiration for their creative endeavors. But that wistful ideal is not the reality for the contemporary pedestrian in Parisian public space. The streets and public spaces of Paris became less conducive to ambulatory movement after Haussmann, and that trajectory toward cars and away from pedestrians continued well into the 20th century.

The post-Haussmann layout of Paris and the removal of pedestrians also undermined the effectiveness of the street as a transmitter of Republican values to the everyday person. Around that same time, in the early 1880s, Minister of Public Instruction Jules Ferry succeeded in passing two major education laws rendering schooling free, mandatory, and secular. Because children were obligated to attend, the school consequently became a strategic site, in addition to the street, for the Third Republic in shaping French citizenship.²⁷ The curriculum presented a “universalist *culture générale*”, one that was less universal than it was French, in that it promoted a brand of culture that made no attempt to include non-French cultures. The exclusion of “ethnic” cultures from formal education was justified by the assumption that practices of those cultures been determined to be outside of the purview of French “national heritage”.²⁸

While the street remained a relatively democratic space in spite of its inconvenient

²⁷ Merfeld-Langston, Audra L. “Celebrating Literature to Shape Citizenship: France's 2007 ‘Lire en fête’.” *Modern and Contemporary France* 18.3 (2010), pp. 353.

²⁸ Collard, 40.

layout, the notion of the school as a social equalizer would be reevaluated in 1989 with *l'affaire du voile*, or the affair of the headscarf. That year, three teenage girls were expelled from a middle school in Creil, an administrative commune about 60 kilometers north of Paris, for refusing to remove their headscarf, or *hijab*, which they wore in observance of their Muslim faith. The students were expelled on the grounds of not adhering to the French policy of secularism, which had been enforced in schools even before it was in other institutions.²⁹ In spite of multiple rulings by the *Conseil d'État*, the most powerful judicial body in France, that “wearing the headscarf is compatible with secularism”³⁰, the *affaire du voile* continued well into the 1990s. Public opinion, too, was greatly divided. In 2004, the French National Assembly overturned the previous rulings permitting the headscarf, instead prohibiting, “*le port de signes ou tenues par lesquels les élèves manifestent ostensiblement une appartenance religieuse*”.³¹

The *affaire du voile* revealed the French public school to be a highly contested space, one in which students no longer blindly supported an unquestioned and unrepresentative vision of French citizenship. The seemingly universal principles of integration and *laïcité* espoused by the schools clashed with the values that (in this case) religious students appeared to endorse by wearing clothing that distinguished them from their non-religious peers. The headscarf episode is one among several examples of events that have drawn attention to the challenging questions of how to define French national identity and how to disseminate its ideals if not through the educational system.

The State continues to consider the street a significant space for the transmission of

²⁹ Minister of Public Instruction Jules Ferry pushed for the passage of this law, which required secular education in all public schools.

³⁰ Beller, Elisa T. “The Headscarf Affair: The Conseil d’État on the Role of Religion and Culture in French Society”. *Texas International Law Journal* 39.581 (2003-2004), pp. 620.

³¹ Law N°1378. *L’Assemblée nationale*. 28 January 2004.

French values through assimilation. The streets are literally, geographically French: there is no doubt that they constitute some form of Frenchness, in the very sense that they are the physical grounds of the French state. In addition, *anyone* can use the streets, and everyone *does* use them, at the very least for pragmatic reasons. After the *affaire du voile*, the earliest return to the idea of the Parisian streets as prominent sites of inculcating or practicing Frenchness came in 1992, with the advent of the *pelles* Starck, named for their shape (*pelle* means “oar”) and the architect who conceived them, Richard Starck. The *pelles*, devised by then-Mayor of Paris Chirac, represented a significant instrument used to encourage a singular narrative of French history in order to impose a singular French culture. The *pelles* are signs dispersed throughout the city that provide historical information about the sites in which they appear. At their peak, there were over 750 of the so-called “*spatules*” scattered around Paris, each offering unique facts to passersby or those who sought them out.³² In understanding the problems of social integration, we can better understand why Chirac created the *pelles*, many of which still stand today. They are not merely aesthetic or artistic ornaments but also historical roadmaps that represent an idealized vision of a universalizing French cultural identity, which absorbs and neutralizes foreign peoples, ideas, and objects. The *pelles* Starck are weapons of the street that protect against the threat of cultural dilution.

³² Although government officials have expressed interest in modernizing the *pelles* by making them more technologically relevant, change has been slow because of a lack of ideas: “*Depuis plusieurs années, nous souhaitons faire évoluer les pelles Starck, mais nous n'avons pas d'idées assez séduisantes pour les modifier, explique Jean-Louis Missika, adjoint (PS) de Bertrand Delanoë en charge de l'innovation. Aujourd'hui, les nouvelles technologies sont au point pour offrir davantage de services aux passants.*” See “Les ‘pelles Starck’ ont fait leur temps,” *Le Parisien*, 21 January 2009.



Figure 1: The pelle Starck entitled, “La Mairie du Ve arrondissement” (left) explains the history of the building that houses the Mayor of one of the oldest arrondissements in Paris. The pelle Starck “Rue Montorgueil” (right) recounts the ebullient social atmosphere of that street. July 2014. All photographs are my own unless otherwise indicated.

In addition to the *pelles* Starck, the City of Paris utilizes the French associative structure, which aims to facilitate social bonding and thus instill a sense of unity among Parisians. Whereas the *pelles* Starck are physical manifestations of top-down projects initiated by the City, associations are social manifestations of bottom-up initiatives. The French Law of 1901 granted citizens the right to associate, defining an association as “*une convention par laquelle deux ou plusieurs personnes mettent en commun, d’une façon permanente, leurs connaissances ou leur activité dans un but autre que de partager des bénéfices*”.³³ People form associations based on a shared interest, hobby, or value, and in that way the associative structure captures the

³³ “Loi du 1er juillet 1901 relative au contrat d’association.” *Legifrance*. 6 May 2009. Web. Accessed 5 November 2014.

commonalities that link those otherwise disparate individuals. Associations can consist of two people or two hundred thousand people; regardless of size, though, the motivation behind them remains consistent: to show people how they are alike and can become part of a universal French body.

The street can be a crucial site for associations, depending on their nature and the purpose for which they are organized. The most common form of association are declared associations, groups that possess a legitimate legal status because they have declared their existence at their local police precinct.³⁴ As of 2015, Paris has more than 1,700 declared associations; the region in which Paris is located, Ile-de-France, lists over 2,000.³⁵ Since the French State benefits from the social bonding advanced by associations, it is in the government's interest to help even the smallest associations stay afloat. For instance, associations registered at Parisian precincts qualify to benefit from local government resources such as the *Maison des associations* (MDA), implemented by former Mayor of Paris Bernard Delanoë. The MDA are government offices located in each arrondissement that offer basic support and services to associations registered in their arrondissement.³⁶ Another resource available to Parisian associations is the *Carrefour des associations parisiennes* (CAP),³⁷ which complements the work of the MDAs by providing services to larger associations. It is precisely through the aid of institutions like the MDA and the CAP that the State (and, specifically, large cities such as Paris where those resources exist) attempts to keep the Law of 1901 accessible to all French residents so they can discover their commonalities and develop a feeling of unity in their sameness.

³⁴ The other form of association are *associations de fait*, or by default; if two or more people declare themselves an association without registering at their local precinct, they can self identify as an association but are not eligible for the benefits granted to *associations déclarées*.

³⁵ "Annuaire des associations."

³⁶ Sage, Ludovic. Personal Interview. 26 February 2015.

³⁷ "Carrefour des Associations Parisiennes." *Mairie de Paris*.

Both the *pelles* Starck and the associations contribute to a greater culture of the street in Paris that extends beyond suggestions of French universalism. Culture is not only a state production; it is largely a social construction that can be geographically expressed but also cultivated by space itself.³⁸ The street is the site *par excellence* of the people, and a culture of the street delineates conventional and accepted modes of movement and interaction among people in that space. Street culture is a “context” full of meaning and symbolism,³⁹ and manifestations of street culture can be read as signs of the set of knowledge, experiences, and beliefs that people develop specifically in shared Parisian public spaces.

The characteristics and norms of street culture depend in part on the society in which those spaces are found; however, street culture is pluralistic and inherently adjusts to the voices of all those who *use* the streets, not merely those who exert power over them. Street culture is therefore not a static entity: It evolves as people alter their behaviors in the streets, and it also responds to changes that occur to the material sites themselves. Ethnographer and anthropologist Setha Low underlines the role of urban space in the formation of a culture of the street, which she conceptualizes as a process of “spatializing culture”. To spatialize culture is to consider how culture occurs and develops in lived space, particularly urban sites like the street or the square (*la place*). The street is a site of cultural development because people relate to each other within it, and the ways in which they interact can manifest themselves into practices that alter the spaces themselves and the greater street culture around those sites.

The converse of the spatialization of culture is also true: While people and public spaces affect the culture of the street, so too can street culture define or redefine public spaces. For example, the *Place de la République* in Paris functions as any square might: as central meeting

³⁸ Jackson, Peter. *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1989, pp. 3.

³⁹ Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 14.

point, a transportation hub, a resting spot, or a political stage. But it can be and has been reimagined and repurposed as a site for unintended behaviors, such as skateboarding or breakdancing. To repeat those behaviors over time instills new cultural value or significance in the *Place de la République*; perhaps it can even be thought of as a “skateboard-friendly” square, where as another square may not be as amenable to that behavior. Sites take on different cultural reputations and attitudes through what Low calls “social construction”, a process by which people transform public space through social, phenomenological, and symbolic experiences.⁴⁰ Spaces are not discursive and do not lend themselves to only one reading but instead to multiple interpretations.⁴¹ Individuals who consciously seek to redefine the cultural importance of urban spaces use them for purposes other than those for which they were intended. Some people manage to redefine urban spaces unconsciously as a result of their routines or other behaviors they adopt. The ways in which individuals evolve as a consequence of the public spaces they inhabit, coupled with the practices those people employ to reshape spatial and cultural meaning, are precisely what my study seeks to examine.

How can people challenge the narrative of cultural assimilation imposed on them by public spaces, to the extent that they are even aware of it? We can approach that question by first considering the inherent power structures those spaces can represent. In her study of how town squares in Costa Rica channel historical power dynamics, which in turn alter the perceptions and uses of those spaces by the locals, Low, an anthropologist, draws from Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*, where he examines the constant and complex power relations between the individual and society as articulated by city spaces. Foucault introduces the notion of an

⁴⁰ Low, Setha. *On the Plaza: The Politics of Space and Culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000, pp. 125.

⁴¹ Freshwater, Dawn. “The poetics of space: researching the concept of spatiality through relationality.” *Psychodynamic Practice* 11.2 (May 2005), pp. 177.

economy of power whose purpose is to distribute and enforce discipline throughout society, whether people are aware of it or not.⁴² The power system acts on “subjected and practi[c]ed” bodies that are manipulated and rendered “docile”⁴³ or powerless in order to ensure that the power promote French values remains dissociated from the individual and is instead embodied by public spaces. But Foucault’s “docile body” is as an abstraction of actual living individuals, a characterization that removes individuals of their subjectivity and also disregards their resistance to “architectural forms of social control”.⁴⁴ The people who inhabit public spaces in Paris are not limp bodies; rather, they constitute what Michel de Certeau calls a “network of an antidiscipline”,⁴⁵ with which they challenge the often exclusionary web of universalism symbolized by the streets. Public spaces are designed and built to promote assimilation into French society, and individuals can subversively undermine the overarching strategy of assimilation.

In this dissertation, I address the Parisian street as a contemporary site of the adoption and contestation of French Republican values. Specifically, I examine how public spaces in Paris, as *lieux de mémoire* of significant cultural meaning and importance, are conduits of French Republican universalism. The State and the City of Paris facilitate social bonding in order to promote assimilation into a French national ideal: a universalized notion of equality and secularism. I address how the City of Paris and the people, namely pedestrians, utilize those spaces to foster social bonds, and how their efforts work to promote or subvert the Republican

⁴² Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Vintage Books: New York, 1977, 80.

⁴³ Ibid, 138.

⁴⁴ Low, Setha. “Spatializing Culture: The Social Production and Social Construction of Public Space in Costa Rica.” *American Ethnologist* 23.4 (1996), pp. 862.

⁴⁵ De Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Translated by Steven Rendall. University of California Press: Berkeley, 1984, xv

agenda at work in French society that those spaces relay. I also explore how some individuals oppose the invisible power constraints of the French state through conceptual, artistic, and embodied practices.

In my first chapter, **“City-Sponsored Efforts to ‘Take Back the Streets’ on Behalf of Pedestrians”**, I discuss a campaign initiated by the City of Paris to “return the streets”⁴⁶ to pedestrians, which in practice also works to increase the central role of the street in individuals’ lives. Mayors of Paris Bertrand Delanoë and Anne Hidalgo have both pursued policies to increase the presence of pedestrians in the streets. Their top-down approach—initiated and subsidized largely by the government—to return the streets to pedestrians consists of two kinds of major spatial changes: the enactment of cultural events in urban spaces; and the permanent conversation of motor vehicle spaces into pedestrian-only areas. The City’s emphasis on situating annual cultural events such as *Paris Plage* and *Nuit Blanche* in public spaces seems to be a way of promoting assimilation while producing a sense of belonging. Those and similar events evoke a romanticized, pre-Haussmann vision of Paris, an image that feeds into a larger strategy of maintaining Paris’ status as a global tourist destination. The second way in which the City of Paris has sought to return its streets to pedestrians is by permanently designating spaces previously used by motor vehicles as pedestrian spaces. Through massive renovation projects of heavily trafficked transportation hubs, such as the *Place de la République*, the City aims to create spaces where (nearly) all Parisians can assemble to produce and engage in a culture of the street.

In contrast to Chapter One in which I discuss a top-down strategy to return the street to pedestrians, the remaining chapters illuminate grass-roots efforts by pedestrians themselves to occupy public spaces in Paris and in doing so, to modernize the symbolic values of those sites. In

⁴⁶ This phrase is taken *verbatim* from a speech of former Mayor Bertrand Delanoë of Paris. I explain the context and significance of this rhetoric in Chapter One.

chapter two, **“Inscribing the Self into the City through Subjective Mapping”**, I discuss a bottom-up approach to returning the streets to pedestrians by exploring how individuals devise innovative, personalized conceptualizations of the Parisian cityscape through a process of subjective mapping. Pedestrians iterate their impressions of the city into cartographic representations of their inhabitation of and movement about Paris, maps that are independent of, and sometimes even contrary to, so-called conventional maps of Paris. The act of imagining and illustrating the city’s spaces to reflect individuals’ needs and desires constitutes an active (albeit imaginary) seizure of those spaces.

I examine subjective mapping as a reappropriation of Parisian urban spaces for pedestrians in the renderings of Paris created in the series *Une carte subjective de Belleville* (2013), a set of maps generated by individuals in one particular neighborhood that shows the varying values and sites of importance for each mapper. In addition, I present Silvia Radelli’s *Métrofémnin*, an artist-rendered subjective map that seeks to repossess the Parisian metro map through a feminine lens. Finally, I address subjective mapping as a tool for pedestrians that appears in contemporary French literature about Paris. I illustrate how Guy Debord’s *dérive*, a practice of wandering about the city according to one’s psychogeographical relationship to it, informs subjective mapping in the works of Patrick Modiano. Many of Modiano’s characters struggle to find their “place” in Paris, and the *dérive* continuously serves as a technique for them to reclaim a city in which they otherwise flounder aimlessly. Motivated by a nostalgic yearning for an imaginary Paris, Debord and Modiano demonstrate how subjective mapping can be a symbolic tool.

The symbolic mapping process of Debord and Modiano contrasts greatly with the very real, physical mapping I explore in Chapter Three, **“Reclaiming Urban Space, One Step at a**

Time: the Nomadic Movements of Rollerblading and Parkour". Here I invoke the associative structure to describe two physical disciplines that pedestrians undertake to take back the streets in Parisian urban spaces: rollerblading (*le roller*); and parkour, a practice of intense mental and physical focus comprised of challenging bodily moves in scaling urban spaces. Rollerbladers and parkour practitioners, or *traceurs*, define city spaces according to a series of innovative and unconventional movements as well as ludic behaviors they execute there. Their presence, while highly visible, is equally anonymous and ephemeral. Rollerbladers and parkour *traceurs* leave no trace of their movements, which underlines their anonymity and thus their ability to represent the abstraction of the Parisian pedestrian. They become *roller-citoyen* and *traceur-citoyen*, occupying the streets with their bodies while respecting those around them and the spaces themselves.

The final chapter of the dissertation, **"Reclaiming Belleville, Stone by Stone: Mosaics as Markers of Pedestrian Spaces"**, addresses how street art constitutes an effort on the part of pedestrians in the Belleville neighborhood of Paris to regain a sense of belonging there. Belleville is certainly not the only Parisian neighborhood where street art occurs; however, it is interesting to explore street art there because Belleville has historically been a haven to groups from whom the street was "taken": workers, the poor, and immigrants of various social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds.

The street art in Belleville reflects the diversity of its uniquely blended population through its form and its creation. A predominant form of street art there are mosaics, and the associative structure is an integral part of the creation of them. The reclaiming of the street through mosaic art projects organized by associations such as *La Maison de la Plage* represents a

grassroots, bottom-up effort, which contrasts with the top-down dynamic behind the street events and renovations conjured by the Parisian government (discussed in Chapter one).

This dissertation, then, encourages reflection on what city streets symbolize and how they relay symbolic meaning; how pedestrians interact in streets and in other public spaces in that city; and how the significance of the experiences there creates social bonds and affective ties to the city itself. The City and State governments aid those efforts, and the three pedestrian-generated phenomena show how the street can be reclaimed, symbolically and physically, by its users, who are after all real individuals. These creators give the street new meaning, at times unpredictable and uncontrollable by any established institution. In exploring the prominence of the Parisian street in social and political arenas, we permit a greater analysis of street culture itself and the major impact it has on the ways in which pedestrians relate to the spaces they occupy and the people they share them with.

CHAPTER ONE: City-Sponsored Efforts to ‘Take Back the Streets’ on Behalf of Pedestrians

In his successful 2002 bid to become the Mayor of Paris, Socialist candidate Bertrand Delanoë vowed to “return Paris to its rightful owner”.⁴⁷ He perpetuated a combative, “Take back the streets” rhetoric until the end of his tenure as mayor in 2012. Yet he did not explicitly specify *who* that “rightful owner” was, nor how the city was to be returned to or “won back” by that owner.⁴⁸ Marxist scholar and geographer David Harvey problematizes the question of to whom the city rightfully belongs, arguing that, “the right to the city is an empty signifier. Everything depends on who gets to fill it with meaning”.⁴⁹ The democratic area of the street and of other public spaces are thought of as sites which breed, or at least favor, less elitist forms of culture, while semi-public or private sites such as museums, the opera, and the theater are traditionally mediums through which a less accessible, elitist culture originates. For Delanoë and his successor Mayor Anne Hidalgo, Paris *is* precisely its streets and public spaces, and everyday pedestrians their rightful occupants.

Why, though, was it so imperative that pedestrians regain access to the Parisian street? As I posit in the introduction to this dissertation, I suspect that part of the urgency involves the street as the contemporary symbolic site of the French Republic. The street may arguably be the sole space (real or symbolic) of equality in French society. Whereas the Church and the public school

⁴⁷ *Objets & Mémoires*, edited by Octave Debary and Laurier Turgeon. Montréal: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2007. The original French is: “Mon objectif est de rendre Paris aux Parisiens les berges de leur fleuve”. My translation.

⁴⁸ Girard, Christophe. Personal interview. 19 February 2015. Girard suggests that Delanoë’s rhetoric is perhaps in response to a sentiment that a small elite (certain families and elected officials, for example) has a disproportionately large amount of accessibility to the city. Delanoë hope to “hand over the keys” to *all* Parisians, not just a select few.

⁴⁹ Harvey, *Rebel cities*, xv.

system have both proven to be contested sites incapable of maintaining the policies of the sacred French principle of *laïcité*, or secularism, the street is an undiscriminating and, as of now, still unchallenged site of democracy and equality, making it an ideal space for the transmission of Republican values. The Church, school, and street are all culturally charged sites, and the culture they represent and transmit necessarily evolves, as does the definition of French culture altogether.

The street would play a prominent role in Delanoë's strategy to accomplish his 2002 campaign promise. That year, the Mayor realized two massive street events that remain staples of the street culture scene in Paris. Almost immediately after his term began, he inaugurated *Paris Plages*, a month-long installation of artificial beach in the middle of Paris on a strip of prime Parisian roadway bordering the river Seine. That same year, Delanoë's cabinet initiated *Nuit Blanche* ("Sleepless night"), a one-night "*manifestation culturelle*" that converted the streets of Paris into a "*musée à ciel ouvert*".⁵⁰ Delanoë's mayoral successor, Anne Hidalgo, has expanded on her predecessor's street-centered initiatives with events like the *Journée sans voiture* ("Day without Cars"), in which the City closes heavily trafficked streets to permit pedestrians to freely roam where ordinarily only motor vehicles are permitted.

The plans of the City of Paris to return the streets to pedestrians have extended beyond the creation of street-centered events. In 2008, Delanoë introduced in his campaign reelection speech an ongoing series of renovations of urban spaces throughout the city to be commissioned by the Mayor's office.⁵¹ The spaces to be revamped were iconic Parisian *places*, or squares, including the *Place de la République* and the *Place de la Bastille*. Throughout the mid- to late-

⁵⁰ The office of the Minister of Culture and Education of France, and several media outlets including *Paris Match* and *The Paris Post*, used that expression in presenting the 2014 rendition of *Nuit blanche*.

⁵¹ "Inauguration de la Place de la République." 15 June 2013.

20th century, those two squares had become major transportation hubs for cars and buses with diminished appeal and accommodation to foot traffic. Ironically, those spaces that in name represent the French nation-state (the “République”) and the struggle of the French people to build it (the storming of the “Bastille”) had been nearly entirely vacated of pedestrians (i.e. the people themselves). Considered together, Delanoë’s early initiatives to promote street events and the City’s imperatives to redesign iconic sites in Paris constitute government-led efforts to generate in pedestrians a renewed sense of belonging to the public spaces of their city. The initiatives and financial support of the City to enforce temporary road closures of heavily trafficked streets and to design and oversee costly infrastructure projects raise the question of how the government can justify such massive expenditures merely for the sake of pedestrians.

How can Paris afford to halt motor vehicle circulation essential to the completion of the daily economic transactions that take place there, and how can the government justify such massive expenditures merely for the sake of pedestrians? The redesign and repurposing of the Parisian urban aesthetic address several pressing questions related to public health and the environment (pollution) as well as transportation and ease of movement (traffic). They also advance a major economic agenda: tourism. In the 1980s, the former French Minister of Culture Jack Lang succinctly defined this objective: “*Culture et économie—le même combat*”.⁵² Culture is France’s most profitable commodity, and the tourism industry converts culture into a lucrative product; nearly 9% of the country’s overall GDP in 2015 was generated by tourism alone, making France the sixth largest tourism economy in the world.⁵³

⁵² Collard, Susan. “French cultural policy: the special role of the state.” *Contemporary French Cultural Studies*, edited by William Kidd and Sian Reynolds, Routledge, 2000, pp. 44.

⁵³ “Travel & Tourism: Economic Impact: France.” *World Travel & Tourism Council*, 2015.

In this chapter, I address how the City of Paris, specifically through the cultural policies and initiatives of its mayors, temporarily reappropriates and also permanently alters streets and urban spaces in order to “return” the city to pedestrians, both inhabitants and tourists alike. This top-down approach—initiated and subsidized largely by the government—to return the streets to pedestrians involves two kinds of major spatial changes. First, I will discuss how the Parisian government conceives of and erects temporary cultural events for pedestrians, prohibiting cars in the city’s busiest streets and boulevards in order to democratize public space as well as encourage economic gain through tourism. Festivals such as the *Fête de la musique*, starting by France’s Minister of Culture Jack Lang in 1982, serve as the bedrock for recent street events sponsored by the Parisian government, including *Nuit Blanche*, the *Journée sans voiture*, and *Paris Plages*. Those events realize the “Take back the streets” rhetoric of Mayors Delanoë and Hidalgo because they occur in the historically and culturally charged site of the French street. And while they create a sense of belonging and camaraderie among Parisians, they also reinforce a romantic vision of Paris essential to its tourist industry. Second, I will analyze the City of Paris’ campaigns to permanently designate spaces previously used by motor vehicles as pedestrian-only spaces. The renovations involve permanent transformations of Parisian public spaces into pedestrian-only zones. At one end are the massive overhauls of heavily trafficked transportation hubs, such as the *Place de la République* and the *Place de la Bastille*. The City has interrupted those formerly vehicular routes with the goal of rendering those spaces more attractive to the masses. Other City-sponsored renovations involve smaller, often unused or abandoned spaces that are intended to provide enclaves of pedestrian-friendly space throughout various parts of the city. Those spaces include the *Berges de Seine* and the *coulée verte* (also known as the *promenade plantée*). The imperative of the City of Paris to reconstruct and

repurpose public spaces for pedestrians suggests a renewed valuing of pedestrians in urban spaces.

***“Économie et culture, même combat”*: Cultural Events as Agents of Assimilation**

In addressing the importance of urban space as a cultural milieu in which people reconnect to the city and to each other, it is imperative to consider a street culture itself and to address what it is taken to represent. The street, the site *par excellence* of the people, generally symbolizes low or popular culture, whereas sites such as museums and theaters designate high or elite culture. Popular culture tends to represent the opposite of a more refined culture associated with intellectuals and the intelligentsia, and the two forms are frequently assumed to compete with each other for audiences and recognition. While mass culture tends to be imbricated into the quotidian, activities of high art “interrupt” the flow of the everyday life of the masses and are thus “high[ly] individualized and privatized”.⁵⁴ Hence those who have access to and appreciate refined culture view cultural creations as artifacts or works, “*objects* of a specific, ideal type”.⁵⁵ Those objects are absent from everyday life and isolated to few spaces in which a select subset of the population can appreciate them. Outside of the public’s reach, then, such iterations of high culture are generally unable to generate social bonds in the same way as iterations of low culture.⁵⁶

Yet an oversimplified low/popular and high/elitist binary ignores the fact that culture is a “historical variable”, fluid and evolving as time passes, for it responds directly to how society is organized and to what and who constitute “popular” and “elitist”. There is no such dynamic as an

⁵⁴ Markus, György. “The Path of Culture: From the Refined to the High, from the Popular to Mass Culture.” *Critical Horizons* 14.2 (2013), pp. 138.

⁵⁵ Markus, 131; his emphasis.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 138.

“ahistorical, fixed and unambiguous value-relation between the cultures of particular social ‘elites’ and their ‘masses’”;⁵⁷ instead, popular and elite cultures necessarily stand in relation to one another, and their formation depends on a range of political, social, and geographic variables.⁵⁸

Popular culture, accessible to the masses, is the medium through which people articulate affective relationships and where they “seek to actively construct their own identities”.⁵⁹ Public spaces are crucial sites of cultural and personal development because they are the loci where people of all classes and backgrounds converge, where their behaviors are predictably non-uniform, and where the chance of encountering someone or something unfamiliar is common, even anticipated. Historically, the diversity of the street and the spontaneity it fosters have endowed popular culture with a local and sometimes regional character. In the backdrop of the street, locals have expressed their culture through “*performances*, [...] actively produced *events* of a particular type [which are] integrated into the general flow of collective life”.⁶⁰ Such events or activities of popular culture are incorporated into the everyday and become the basis for social interactions. They bring strangers together for “sufficiently ephemeral” amounts of time to express individual opinions, approaches to life, and differences.⁶¹ People forge connections to each other and to the spaces in which they live by way of low-key, low-stakes interactions in the banal environment of the street.

⁵⁷ Markus, 129.

⁵⁸ See Bourdieu, Pierre, *La Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979.

⁵⁹ Grossberg, Lawrence. *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2013, pp. 85.

⁶⁰ Markus, 130; his emphasis.

⁶¹ Ibid, 138.

It was not until the late 20th century that the French state embraced elements of popular culture as legitimate iterations of French culture worthy of being associated with French identity. Much of the credit (or blame, depending on the source) for such a monumental shift in the definition of French culture goes to former Minister of Culture Jack Lang, who served under President François Mitterrand from 1981-1993. Immediately after his appointment began, Lang proposed unheard of changes to the government's policies on culture, including doubling the cultural budget to 1% of the entire country's fiscal budget and subsidizing "popular culture" programs in order to yield a vision reflective of France's rapidly changing and more pluralistic society.⁶² The 1980s was a period of relative economic decline in France, and opponents feared that Lang's budgetary strategy would further deplete parts of the budget that could not afford to be reduced. In fact, Lang sought to use culture as a means to boost economic performance, declaring, "*Economie et culture, même combat*" ("Economy and culture, they're the same fight"),⁶³ effectively situating culture at the forefront of economic revival. The combative sentiment of the Minister of Culture's declaration in 1982 foreshadows the "Take back the streets" rhetoric to be employed in the early 21st century by Mayors Bertrand Delanoë and Anne Hidalgo of Paris. The sense of urgency to prioritize culture that all three of those prominent French political figures express seems to indicate that French popular culture has become an endangered species worth fighting for.

Lang embraced the theory of a *tout culturel*, in which, "*tout individu est un créateur en puissance, la créativité généralisée étant le terreau dans lequel germent toutes les œuvres, des plus modestes jusqu'aux plus hautes*".⁶⁴ He saw potential for the cultural revival of existing

⁶² Collard, 43.

⁶³ Ibid, 44.

⁶⁴ Rigaud, Jacques. *L'Exception culturelle. Culture et pouvoirs sous la V^e République*. Paris: Grasset, 1995, pp. 126

practices like culinary arts and *bandes dessinées* or comics, both of which the Ministry of Culture had not yet recognized as culturally relevant.⁶⁵ Lang also supported newer practices embraced by France's youth, such as rock, rap and *tag*, or graffiti. He strove to highlight the *dignité culturelle* of those activities, some of which were relatively unconventional while others perhaps too conventional or mundane to be viewed as culturally exceptional. In some cases, though, he altered the real cultural currency of those acts. For example, Lang embarked on rebranding graffiti from messy vandalism to revolutionary art; however, in shining the spotlight on graffiti as such, he effectively recuperated it for the masses and vacated it of its revolutionary power.⁶⁶ Lang's policies reflected a desire to expand the notion of French culture to include not only simply institutional culture but also cultural phenomena and objects generated by all parts of French society.

In his position as Minister of Culture, Lang used the powers of his office to resurrect one of the most "distinctive feature[s] of French cultural life", the festival⁶⁷, in order to "broaden the range of legitimate public engagement with symbolic practice".⁶⁸ He saw the potential for cultural proliferation in organizing large throngs of citizens to assemble in the streets for a festive occasion. In France's contemporary secular society, festivals are a modern replacement for religious ceremonies, "uniting communities and diverse social groups in acts of commemoration, celebration and (more or less spontaneous) festivity".⁶⁹ The State's focus on and sponsorship of amateur artists and other traditionally marginalized figures have granted

⁶⁵ Rigaud, 127.

⁶⁶ In 1992, the Musée du Trocadéro/Musée des monuments français in Paris featured an exhibit that sought to present a trajectory of graffiti both in Europe and the United States as a polemical art much akin to the revolutionary hip-hop movement also coming to prominence at that time.

⁶⁷ McGuigan, Jim. *Rethinking Cultural Policy*. Berkshire: Open University Press, 2004, pp. 68.

⁶⁸ Harris, Sue. "Festivals and fêtes populaires." *Contemporary French Cultural Studies*. Edited by William Kidd and Sian Reynolds, Routledge, 2000, pp. 220.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 222.

those formerly peripheral groups a new “privileged official status”⁷⁰ in France. This “mainstreaming” of art is exemplified by France’s ongoing celebration of theater, the Festival d’Avignon. Actor and director Jean Vilar and other concerned intellectuals initially founded the Festival as a “Dramatic Arts Week” that would tackle what they perceived to be a “conservative Parisian monopoly on artistic and theatre practices”⁷¹ indicative of post-war France. Through the Festival d’Avignon, Vilar aimed to reanimate the “classic spirit of communal and civic renewal”⁷² revered in Ancient festivals, enacting an informal and relaxed atmosphere and insisting that social and educational barriers no longer inhibit the participation of a “genuinely democratic public”.⁷³

In reviving the tradition of all-inclusive festivals, Lang intended to bring mass public exposure to myriad cultural practices in the accessible space of the street.⁷⁴ He engineered a series of festivals, the oldest and most enduring of which is the *Fête de la Musique*, an event that started in France and is now celebrated throughout the world. Initiated nearly at the beginning of his tenure in 1982, this annual music festival is one most attended summer events in Paris. Though only one day long, the event features musical acts in streets throughout the entire city and the Ile-de-France region. Its original slogan, “*Faites de la musique*”, highlights the near identical pronunciation of “*fête*”, meaning festival or celebration, and “*faites*”, an imperative conjugation of the verb *to make* (“Make music!”).⁷⁵ That slogan has a double meaning: it is both a call to celebrate the diverse musical talents of France and a cry for its people to participate, to

⁷⁰ Harris, 222.

⁷¹ Wehle, Philippa. “A History of the Avignon Festival.” *The Drama Review: TDR* 28.1 (Spring 1984), pp. 52.

⁷² Ibid, 52.

⁷³ Ibid, 55.

⁷⁴ Merfeld-Langston, Audra L. “Celebrating Literature to Shape Citizenship: France’s 2007 ‘Lire en fête’.” *Modern and Contemporary France* 18.3 (2010), pp. 345-346.

⁷⁵ Harris, 226. The slogan “*Faites de la musique*” stresses the participatory nature of the festival.

create, whether in the form of dancing, singing, or attendance; after all, without spectators flooding the streets for the free concerts, the festival could not exist. The street is a site in which music is both made *and* celebrated.

Because of the massive mobilization of professional and amateur musicians and the immense spectator participation, the *Fête de la Musique* resembles a “*manifestation populaire*”, or a political demonstration of the people in the streets.⁷⁶ That a one-day festival celebrated in the urban spaces of Paris could be likened to a mass demonstration highlights the symbolic value of the street in French cultural history as a place of assembly and togetherness. It also signals the importance of occupying public spaces in ways that deviate from their prescribed or intended uses. By removing the cars and trucks from Parisian streets and boulevards, the *Fête de la musique* reappropriates those spaces for pedestrians, allowing the latter to build meaningful connections to the spaces and to each other.

Street festivals, then, were one of Lang’s solutions to the culture gap, a way to “prioritize involvement of a ‘non-traditional’ public”⁷⁷ in traditionally less accessible forms of culture. In order to democratize culture and attract a wider range of spectators, Lang divorced traditional cultural forms from their traditional environments, relocating them to urban spaces. He established public spaces as viable venues for “official” culture, such as theater, opera, and art. By initiating festivals and other street events that prioritized “alternative uses and functions of ‘*l’espace public*’”⁷⁸, Lang gave the French masses an avenue by which to reappropriate public spaces presumably for their own needs and wants.

⁷⁶ “Fête de la Musique 2016 à Paris et en île de France, les meilleurs spots.” 21 June 2016.

⁷⁷ Harris, 227.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 227.

The importance of keeping culture within the reach of the public was not lost on Delanoë. During his 12-year tenure as Mayor of Paris, he invented several massive street culture events and also retained many of the ones implemented by Lang, such as the *Fête de la Musique*. Delanoë demonstrated a top-down approach to increase accessibility to culture by making the city the primary actor in rendering high culture more accessible to as many Parisians as possible.⁷⁹ One such government-initiated event is *Nuit Blanche*, an annual nocturnal festival of art in which the City of Paris itself becomes a vast museum space for all to explore and admire.

Nuit Blanche is the brainchild of Christophe Girard, who served as the Adjunct to the Mayor of Cultural Affairs⁸⁰ in Delanoë's administration from 2001 until 2012. The purview of that office includes questions concerning culture and cultural enterprises, heritage, art, nightlife, and relationships among Parisian arrondissements.⁸¹ Before becoming active in political life, Girard began a career in the fashion industry in the late 1970s, working as the *Directeur Général adjoint*⁸² of the fashion house Yves Saint Laurent until 1999. He then became the Strategic Director of the luxury goods conglomerate Moët-Hennessy Louis Vuitton (LVMH), a post he occupied concurrently while serving under Delanoë. Girard brought to the Mayor's administration expert knowledge of fashion, aesthetics, and commerce, a trifecta that would undoubtedly inform his approach to improving the portrayal, reception, and promulgation of culture in Parisian society.

⁷⁹ It should be noted that Delanoë's predecessors as mayor of Paris, former French President Jacques Chirac and Jean Tiberi, implemented policies that periodically converted motor vehicle spaces to pedestrians zones. The impetus for those changes, however, was not the same as Delanoë's democratic vision to open Paris to *all* inhabitants, including working-class citizens. See Vauhini Vara, "Party Politics: In Paris, Mayor Serves, and Volleys, To Keep City of Light Aloft." *The Wall Street Journal*, 23 August 2003.

⁸⁰ Girard's official title in French was *Adjoint au maire de Paris chargé de la culture*.

⁸¹ "Adjoints à la maire." *Mairie de Paris*.

⁸² This post equates roughly to Vice President or Vice CEO.

When Girard first proposed the idea of *Nuit Blanche*, he imagined a quasi-*manifestation de rue* that would center around liberating streets and public spaces from their daily functions in order to give people access to the physical city by way of art and artistic expression. He qualified the label *manifestation de rue* because public space is, after all, “*le patrimoine le plus singulier, le plus habitué de Paris*”, the most basic element of society for which people should not have to struggle but rather that they could use freely. He suggested entrusting select spaces to artists for one night in which they would have (nearly) free rein to invest themselves artistically in those spaces. They would show their works, whether original or not, to Parisians or visitors alike, giving them a new lens through which to see Paris and “[s]es entrailles qu’on n’a pas l’habitude de voir”.⁸³ For Girard, stripping Paris of its external artifice lends insight into the creative potential of the city to be “*une destination un peu sans fin, à l’infini*”.⁸⁴

Nuit Blanche (in English, an “all-nighter” or a “sleepless night”) is a one-night event in which the entire City of Paris is transformed into a vast museum space. Streets throughout Paris are temporary closed to non-pedestrian traffic so that the city becomes an interrupted transmitter of art. Modeled on smaller-scale examples of the French cities of Nantes and Lyon, and of international cities like St. Petersburg, Russia, the Parisian edition of *Nuit Blanche* marked the first time a large metropolis had sponsored a cultural event that opened the city’s urban and civic spaces so widely. Since its inception in 2002 in Paris, *Nuit Blanche* boasts spectacles, art shows, and expositions in the open streets, in art galleries, and even in government buildings in all of the city’s twenty arrondissements. Museums, administrative centers, parks, passageways under bridges, the National Mosque of Paris, the Eiffel Tower, and hospitals are just a few of the

⁸³ Girard.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

venues that remain open all night and invite visitors of all backgrounds and interests to take advantage of the hundreds of art exhibits on display.



Figure 2: During *Nuit Blanche* 2014, the Salle des Tapisseries in Paris' City Hall (*left*) housed the performance art piece “Labyrinth” of Motoi Yamamoto (not pictured). The artist worked from 8pm until the early morning creating designs using salt (*right*). Photographs by Natalie Hunter. October 2014.



Figure 3: “Au Panthéon!” *Nuit Blanche* 2014 exposition at the Panthéon (5th arrondissement) by artist JR. Photograph by artist. October 2014.

To attend *Nuit Blanche* is to walk through, among, even on top of (as with J.R.'s "*Au Panthéon!*" show) art: it is a veritable art walk in which the streets of Paris, too, are objects of art to be appreciated, admired, and even critiqued. Though not every space in Paris is utilized as or explicitly designed to be "art" that evening, the event still covers an immense swath of the city's public and private spaces, both indoors and outdoors. There are thus constant streams of movement as spectators drift in and out of buildings and public spaces, hopping from one arrondissement to the next. But people also go *into* spaces, taking advantage of the access granted them to take in traditional art forms in traditional spaces but also less conventional art in unlikely or unexpected venues. Streets and public spaces in Paris are the backdrop for many *Nuit Blanche* exhibits, and they are also the medium by which Parisians experience the city itself as art.

Girard instilled *Nuit Blanche* with his personal belief that knowing one's city should not be limited to a familiarity with its institutions, monuments, and geographic spaces; rather, knowing the city is to have the keys to the *entire* city, which includes public spaces as well as private and administrative spaces to which Parisians do not usually have access.⁸⁵ Girard asserts that it is through access to the city that Parisians reappropriate their "*patrimoine*", or heritage.⁸⁶ From its inception, then, *Nuit Blanche* was meant to appeal less to art aficionados and more to the everyday person. In fact, Girard envisioned the event specifically as a medium for showing art to those who do not have access or even an interest in what they perceive as "art".⁸⁷ Thus *Nuit Blanche* dismantles narrow definitions of art as limited to strict genres and themes and equally

⁸⁵ Girard.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

challenges the notion that only traditional locales such as museums or theaters house art. The event strives to reframe art as a practice and an experience that occurs, or has the potential to occur ubiquitously in the city.

While *Nuit Blanche* gives the impression of democratizing art as well as the public spaces in which it is presented, there are restrictions on the event that inhibit it from representing or speaking to the masses; hence Girard's insistence that *Nuit Blanche* is not entirely *une manifestation de rue*, in which the masses could protest or demonstrate through art. *Nuit Blanche* is meticulously planned: in order for it to have “*une personnalité, une couleur, une sature, une identification, un style*”, there must be artistic direction, an organizational structure that considers the visions and requests of the mayors of the arrondissements and of the *adjoint de la culture de Paris* (Girard's former poste in the Delanoë administration). Girard warns that *Nuit Blanche* cannot become, “*chacun à la carte avec son association, son artiste. Ça ne serait pas au bon niveau. Il faut que ce soit savant, populaire mais savant*”.⁸⁸ The distinction Girard makes here between “*populaire*” and “*savant*” reveals an underlying suspicion on the part of the City that the general public is not equipped to determine what constitutes art, or at least art that justifies massive road closures. The City has already drawn up a menu of exhibits and spectacles for *Nuit Blanche*, leaving no room for the public to decide what it deems aesthetically worthy of a city art walk. That the City is the purveyor of art that it selects without feedback from the public problematizes the democratizing objective of *Nuit Blanche*.

In another one-day street event, the City of Paris held its inaugural *Journée sans voiture* (“Day without cars”) on September 27, 2015. Although a similar event was initiated in the 1990s throughout France, it fizzled out in subsequent years as fewer municipalities opted to participate.

⁸⁸ Girard.

The revival of the *Journée sans voiture* in Paris began as a grassroots initiative and evolved into a largely symbolic city-sponsored event. A group of concerned citizens (a “*collectif citoyen*”) called *Paris sans voiture* appealed to the Mayor’s office in August 2014 to develop a project in which all vehicular routes in Paris would be closed to motor vehicles for one full day. The group considered pedestrian-only zones a right for all inhabitants so they could occupy the city’s streets without the threat or danger of cars. *Paris sans voiture* activists indicated the cultural significance of welcoming people to experience the streets *without* their cars and scooters, vehicles that belie economic equality in their representation of wealth and affluence. The group’s promotional materials echoed that democratic goal, promising that “chaque habitant pourrait participer, comme lors de la Fête de la musique”⁸⁹ To invoke the long-running *Fête de la Musique* while lobbying for pedestrian-only street event points to the shared democratic missions behind the two events: to promote unity; and unrestrained mobility in and occupation of public spaces.

The *Journée sans voiture*, as envisioned by the *Paris sans voiture* collective, aspires to be as democratic as the festivals that Lang and Mayors Delanoë and Hidalgo have developed and instituted and which have become expectations of contemporary French cultural policy. The citizen group claimed that a day without cars would be an opportunity to “se réapproprier Paris et d’en libérer les rues, ouvertes à notre créativité le temps d’une journée, de découvrir d’autres modes de déplacement...et qui sait, de se lancer à vélo!” This capitalization on the relationship between movement and creativity hints at one of the democratic aspects of removing cars from urban space. The “who knows!” after the ellipsis emits a ludic tone, suggesting that in the absence of cars, people are more prone to encounter unanticipated situations and as a result act in

⁸⁹ “Le Projet: Une journée sans voiture dans TOUT Paris?” *Paris sans voiture: collectif citoyen*. 2016.

creative ways. In a related appeal, the group insists that the focus of the day must not be to ban cars but instead to create a convivial and festive atmosphere, “*une journée [...] engagée et citoyenne*”.⁹⁰ A consequence of a day without cars, at least for the *Paris sans voiture* advocates, would be a populace with a greater desire to petition for their rightful presence in their city’s public areas.

The 2016 *Journée sans voiture* as it took place under the oversight of Mayor Hidalgo consisted of the complete closure of the roads in the centrally located 1st, 2nd, 5th, and 6th arrondissements, to all motor vehicles from 11am until 6pm. The stated purpose of the day was environmental, namely to improve Paris’ air quality, and Hidalgo aimed to demonstrate that reducing motor vehicle traffic in a mere portion of the city could greatly improve the city’s air for all. Not coincidentally, the City organized the event to take place just three months before the COP 21, the United Nations’ annual climate change summit that took place that year in Paris. The Parisian government reserved streets in the dense tourist areas of the Eiffel Tower, Montmartre, the Arc de Triomphe, and the Jardin du Luxembourg exclusively for pedestrians, bikers, and rollerbladers. The perimeters of the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes, parks that flank Paris’ western and eastern city limits, respectively, were also closed to motor vehicles. The City went so far as to designate certain parts of Paris, such as the roads immediately hugging the Seine along the right bank, exclusively for pedestrians. In addition to road closures, the Mayor’s office enforced a citywide speed limit of 20 kilometers per hour in streets that were still open and also strongly advising drivers to avoid the roads (if they were not already discouraged by that temporary low speed limit).

⁹⁰ “Le Projet: Une journée sans voiture dans TOUT Paris?” *Paris sans voiture: collectif citoyen*. 2016.

27 SEPTEMBRE PARIS JOURNÉE SANS VOITURE

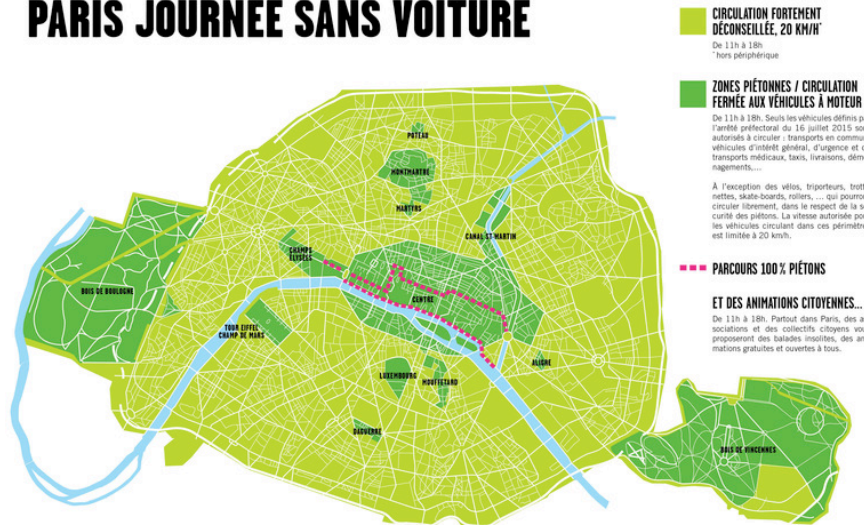


Figure 4: An official city publication details the restrictions on drivers during the first *Journée sans voiture* in 2015. Source: Mairie de Paris.

The Mayor's office touted the *Journée sans voiture* as a success, claiming that the streets were, "*libérées des voitures[,] étaient rendues aux Parisiens, et ils en ont bien profité!*"⁹¹ Here we see the familiar rhetoric of returning the streets to pedestrians, the promise that former Mayor Delanoë made when he first was elected in 2002 and aimed to fulfill through events like *Paris Plages* and *Nuit Blanche*. Paris also recorded dramatically less pollution that day, with significantly diminished carbon dioxide counts in the 4th (the center of Paris) and 8th (the

⁹¹ "Gros succès pour la première Journée sans voiture!" *Mairie de Paris*. 28 September 2015.

Champs-Élysées) arrondissements⁹² The event reduced noise pollution⁹³ and boasted record high Velib' rentals, with a new bike rental nearly every two seconds.⁹⁴

Participants on foot took advantage of the abandoned streets and filled them with activity, demonstrating a newfound freedom in the emptied thoroughfares. The Avenue des Champs-Élysées heading west toward the Arc de Triomphe was swarmed with walkers, rollerbladers, and cyclists. People traversed the Place de l'Etoile, the usually congested roundabout on which the Arc de Triomphe stands, where usually non-vehicular traffic is strictly prohibited and pedestrians must instead use underground tunnels. In other streets throughout Paris during the *Journée sans voiture*, pedestrians moved at a leisurely rather than harried pace as they navigated the specially delimited areas of the city, unafraid of being struck by a car.

⁹² Carbon dioxide emissions decreased by 40% and 30% in those arrondissements, respectively. The pollution recordings were calculated by *Airparif* (*Association de surveillance de la qualité d'air*) an aggregate of the Ministère de l'Environnement. See www.airparif.fr for those pollution recordings as well as for readings for the entire Ile-de-France region.

⁹³ This assessment was calculated by *Bruitparif*, an association created in 2004 by the Conseil régional d'Ile-de-France. See www.bruitparif.fr.

⁹⁴ "Gros succès pour la première Journée sans voiture!" There were 32% more *Velib'* rentals than on an average Sunday.



Figure 5: Walkers, bikers, and rollerbladers take over the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, which is usually one of the most heavily trafficked roads in Paris. Photograph by Marc Verhille for the Mairie de Paris. September 2015.

Hidalgo confirmed that in light of significant quantifiable improvements to the city’s air and noise qualities, there would be a second annual *Journée sans voiture* in 2016, also at the end of September. The second *Journée sans voiture* would include, “un périmètre beaucoup plus large” to incorporate areas throughout “tout Paris”.⁹⁵ In addition, the Mayor announced that the entire Avenue des Champs-Élysées, which was closed for the 2015 event, would be reserved exclusively for pedestrians every Sunday beginning in spring 2016. The Champs-Élysées is a massive artery for motor vehicle transportation in Paris; the only other occasions for which it closes are the annual 14th of July military parade and the final leg of the Tour de France. The opening of this vehicular lifeline, not to mention historically and culturally emblematic space, captures the unique imperative of the City of Paris to “Take Back the Streets” for pedestrians.

⁹⁵ “Journée sans voiture 2016 à Paris : Comment se déplacer ?” *evous*. 16 June 2016.

That the City would forcibly, and possibly to its detriment, vacate the Champs-Élysées of cars demonstrates a continued evolution in Parisian cultural policy toward the democratization of Paris' streets.

In spite of the City's positive review of the event and optimism for its future renditions, the citizen collective *Paris sans voiture* complained that the event's success was limited by the very specific perimeter of car-free space that the City had enacted, one the group deemed "*beaucoup trop restreint*". Only the central arrondissements of Paris were completely closed to cars; however, as the oldest and most tourist heavy sectors of the city, they generally have less traffic, as they are less conducive to driving. Furthermore, in Parisian neighborhoods less frequented by tourists, car traffic was not altogether eliminated. The group concluded that the *Journée sans voiture* did not truly exemplify a day without cars because most of the residents of the designated pedestrian-only spaces do not have cars and traffic is relatively low on Sundays in September (low tourist season). The disappointed citizens' group concluded that the tight spatial constraints of the *Journée sans voiture*, "à rendu l'appropriation de la journée plus difficile; la non limitation du trafic [sic] à toute l'agglomération parisienne a induits [sic] de nombreux effets secondaires négatifs et un manque de lisibilité et de clarté de l'évènement très important".⁹⁶

The *Journée sans voiture* morphed from a pedestrian initiative into an event run nearly exclusively by the city, with fewer democratic ambitions than anticipated. To prohibit motor vehicle traffic in all of the central arrondissements as well as in the environs of major tourist attractions was hardly a coincidence. Home to the Louvre, the Place de la Concorde, and countless hotels, restaurants, and shopping destinations, those four arrondissements experience

⁹⁶ "Le Projet: Une journée sans voiture dans TOUT Paris?" *Paris sans voiture: collectif citoyen*. 2016.

an endless din of cars, buzzing scooters, screeching taxis, and packed tour buses. By reserving those spaces for pedestrians, the City aimed to enhance the romanticized vision of the Parisian streets as conduits where a person on foot could encounter or experience practically anything. The City also boosted the aesthetic appeal of the famed historic sites in those areas, making it easier for pedestrians to admire them and the city overall. The *Journée sans voiture* ultimately echoed the “*Culture et économie, même combat*” mantra uttered by Jack Lang decades earlier. To invite only foot traffic into the iconic spaces of the city, those that are especially representative of picture-perfect Paris, is perhaps less of a democratic initiative to share space equally among pedestrians and drivers than it is a capitalist ambition to sell preconceived images of Paris.

Perhaps there is no image of spaciousness that compares in sheer vastness to the outstretched sea. And the City of Paris has succeeded in bringing not the sea itself but a taste of its spacious beaches to Paris in the form of *Paris Plages*. This temporary summer event purports to provide the leisure of a French beach vacation on the Atlantic or Mediterranean coast, in the very non-maritime, urbanized Parisian context. The City’s anomalous placement of a beach in a cosmopolitan setting such as Paris juxtaposes the cultures of the urban, quotidian street and the idyllic, relaxed beach.

Delanoë announced at the 2002 inaugural opening ceremony of *Paris Plages* that his primary goal with the event was “to give the riverside back to Parisians. It’s a feasible dream. *Paris Plages* will be a nice hangout at which people, with their differences, will mingle. It is a philosophy of the city, a poetic time for sharing and brotherhood”.⁹⁷ According to Delanoë, *Paris Plages* would itself be the definition of a democratic and egalitarian space, a mirage of solidarity

⁹⁷ De la Pradelle, Michèle and Emmanuelle Lallement. “Paris Plage: ‘The City is Ours’.” *American Academy of Political and Social Science* 595 (September 2004), pp. 135.

and compatibility right in the heart of the city. This utopia of “brotherhood” and coexistence would be achieved through the repurposing of the Quai Georges Pompidou into a pedestrian-only beach, complete with 5,000 tons of sand, parasols, chaise lounges, beach volleyball, cafés, and activities meant to attract people of all ages and backgrounds.⁹⁸



Figure 6: Looking west (left) and east (right) at Paris Plages from the Quai de l'Hôtel de Ville in the 4th arrondissement. July 2014.

The use of a major vehicular thoroughfare such as the Quai Georges Pompidou as the locale for *Paris Plages* speaks to the value the City attributes to the annual event. Every summer since the inauguration of *Paris Plages*, the City shuts down the Quai for approximately one-month, usually from mid-July through mid-August, to install in that very space an artificial, cosmopolitan beach scene. The Quai itself parallels the river Seine and is akin to a highway in

⁹⁸ Tresca, Marie-Lorraine. “Paris-Plages 2015: La capital s’ensable.” *Les Echos*. 17 July 2015.

the center of Paris. Drivers that wish to go east or west in Paris without encountering major obstacles take the Quai because it lacks the traffic lights, stop signs, and pedestrian crosswalks of the Parisian surface streets. The closure of the Quai complicates traffic patterns for commuters, taxi drivers, and commercial vehicles. That the City is willing to disrupt an essential road space for the sake of a month-long, pedestrian-only event demonstrates a sizeable commitment to the value of democratic urban spaces.

Delanoë, a Socialist, conceived of *Paris Plages* as an “urban regeneration (and cultural renaissance)”⁹⁹ project that was intended to inspire Parisians and tourists alike to return to the city during its least-crowded summer months, when many French people leave Paris to travel. Anthropologists Michèle de la Pradelle and Emmanuelle Lallement trace the event’s roots to Delanoë’s larger political goal to promote cultural awareness and access to culture, regardless of social class or personal economic capital. In a similar vein, City Hall’s press release about *Paris Plages* advertised that the event would enable everyone who attends “to take possession of public space and to experience city life differently”.¹⁰⁰ Differently indeed, considering that the closest beach to Paris is nearly 125 miles away from the city and that swimming in the Seine is not only illegal but also highly unappealing.

At first glance, it may seem that a scenic beach experience is not the most apt choice for an urban street event; however, *Paris Plages* has become a massive tourist attraction precisely because it presents a particular phenomenon, the beach, in an unexpected setting. This faux-tourist attraction evokes the famous 1936 French law implementing *congés payés*, or paid vacations. The law was conceived as part of the Popular Front government’s goal for

⁹⁹ Gale, Tim. “Urban Beaches, Virtual Worlds, and ‘The End of Tourism’.” *Mobilities* 4.1 (2009), pp. 14.

¹⁰⁰ Quoted in de la Pradelle and Lallement, 135. The authors provide their English translation of the original French press release.

rassemblement, which strove to, “build social democracy within the parliamentary republic”.¹⁰¹ Democratizing access to leisure and cultural activities was fundamental to that objective.

Some social scientists suggest that tourism constitutes a search for authenticity on the part of tourists, while others claim that tourism revolves around “staged authenticity”, a semblance of reality that is actually a protective response to the tourist gaze itself.¹⁰² And tourists drive the creators of those interpretations, for what they really seek are “pseudo-events”,¹⁰³ referents of reality that are themselves representations. Visitors to *Paris Plages* have accepted that the beach displayed there is a representation of a “real” beach. And yet the *Paris Plages* iteration deviates in some remarkable ways from the “real” beach it claims to replicate, not the least of which is that attendees must adhere to the City’s laws and regulations. The common practice at French beaches for women to remove their swimsuit tops is prohibited, and unsavory behaviors that may be ignored (excessive drinking) or go noticed (vandalism) at an actual seaside are strictly regulated at *Paris Plages* in order to keep a welcoming, family-friendly atmosphere.¹⁰⁴

Tourism necessarily involves the differentiation of the ordinary from the extraordinary,¹⁰⁵ and *Paris Plages* unapologetically highlights that binary. The City has substituted a fake, kitschy beach for a real beach; hence the irony that *Paris Plages* is popular *because* of its artificiality,

¹⁰¹ Furlough, Ellen. “Making Mass Vacations: Tourism and Consumer Culture in France, 1930s to 1970s.” *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* 40.2 (April 1998), pp. 252.

¹⁰² MacCannell (1973), quoted in Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage Publications, 1990, pp. 9.

¹⁰³ Boorstin (1964) in Urry, 7. Urry implies a linkage between the “pseudo-event” and Jean Baudrillard’s “simulacra”, especially in relation to how American tourists experience reality and travel. See Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. New York: Harper, 1964 and Baudrillard, *America*. London: Verso, 1988.

¹⁰⁴ Gale, 14.

¹⁰⁵ Urry, 11.

without which it would be “just another beach”.¹⁰⁶ Since *Paris Plages* is built on complete artifice, it requires a participatory audience in order for the event to even take place. Without an actual beach or sea, people are essential to *Paris Plages*’s success, as they become more than mere “users or spectators but the main levers of the scheme, themselves the actors and authors of *Paris Plages*”.¹⁰⁷ Parisians and tourists willingly (consciously and unconsciously) use props provided by the City to perform a day at the beach: They sun themselves on chaise lounges; build sandcastles; play pick-up volleyball; and cool or rinse off under water misters. Passers-by stop to marvel at those sights, unable to conceive of such activities occurring in a bustling, landlocked metropolis like Paris.

Paris Plages provides an example of how urban cultural policy in Paris has a binary structure that involves both top-down and bottom-up movement between the municipality and its people. There is a level of shared responsibility that goes in to constructing *Paris Plages*: The City invests financial capital, ensures the motor vehicle ban on the Quai Georges Pompidou, and erects the scenery that transforms the road into a beach. For their part, the masses (attendees of the event) show their complicity in the make-believe of a Parisian beach scene by performing the activities that make up the spectacle.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, although people are an essential aspect of the *Paris Plages* experience, the event is a largely top-down initiative. The costs to run and maintain it are exorbitant and exceed what individuals or associations could afford, even with some government subsidy. Furthermore, to permit and then enforce the closure of a major traffic route in the center of Paris requires a legitimately good reason, followed by government approval. It would be nearly impossible for a non-governmental entity to obtain that kind of

¹⁰⁶ Gale, 13.

¹⁰⁷ De la Pradelle and Lallement, 143.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 139 and 143.

consent, unless it could justify how such a traffic disruption would benefit the City itself. It does justify that hiccup, of course, in the form of the tourism revenue that such a unique event brings to Paris. French cities such as Rouen and Toulouse have followed suit, as have cities outside of France including Berlin, Brussels, Brisbane, and even Tokyo, staging “pseudobeach” tourist events that yield substantial revenues.

How democratic and accessible is *Paris Plages*, and to what extent can people “take possession” of the space it occupies, especially since the space they would possess does not actually exist in reality? Initially, it seems, the event drew a noticeably heterogeneous group of attendees. In the 2003 *Paris Plages* event, Pradelle and Lallement witnessed an “unusual diversity, otherwise found only in such places as the subway or at events like the street music festival”.¹⁰⁹ By invoking Lang’s monumental *Fête de la musique*, they show how *Paris Plages* aims to emulate that earlier event’s spirit of openness and equality through personal engagement in the democratic space of the street. The anthropologists continue by characterizing *Paris Plages* as an actualization of a “special city, a new Paris that is not a simple juxtaposition of neighborhoods and segregated spaces but a ‘good-natured, convivial Paris: a city where ‘every place would belong to everyone’”.¹¹⁰ By that logic, *Paris Plages* reflects a utopic Paris in which social and economic barriers no longer impede open social relations.

In postmodern tourism, there is process of de-differentiation, of blurring lines and eliminating hierarchies¹¹¹. As such, the notions of high and low culture (referred to earlier in this chapter) seem to disappear because observers of culture are no longer caught up in formal aesthetics, which is traditionally a realm of the intellectual elite. Postmodern culture has

¹⁰⁹ De la Pradelle and Lallement, 137.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 144.

¹¹¹ Urry, 85.

inevitably influenced tourism by blurring, even removing, the boundary between cultural objects and spectators. The audience is encouraged to participate; in the case of *Paris Plages*, spectator participation is especially imperative for without it, the fabricated beach event cannot exist. In theory, *Paris Plages* is set up as a postmodern tourist attraction because it provides equal opportunities for all spectators to participate in the same, shared experience. The de-differentiation of the objects and spectators, and thus of the producers and consumers, reveals how “commerce and culture are indissolubly intertwined”.¹¹²

Superficially, then, *Paris Plages* seems to embody the rhetoric of “Taking back the streets” for pedestrians by eliminating cars in a central Parisian space and reclaiming it for pedestrians. *Paris Plages* is a realization the Mayor’s ambition to revive the human factor in an otherwise postmodern urban space. For a month each year, it dedicates one of the busiest vehicular routes in Paris entirely to foot traffic. It remains a staple summer event that the City continues to organize and financially support to the tune of nearly 1.5 millions euros,¹¹³ likely due to its popularity: in 2014, the event welcomed four million visitors during its month of operation.¹¹⁴ As evidenced by the event’s consistently high attendance, people enjoy the idea of interacting with familiar and strange faces in the environment that *Paris Plages* provides: a space free of car traffic, centrally located on the Seine, with a convivial atmosphere.

To consider the event democratic, though, in the sense that it provides the cultural experience of Parisian public space to all, is problematic. Despite early reports of a wealth of diversity in attendees, Delanoë’s democratic vision of the beach has seemingly waned in the years since the event’s initiation. Observers have remarked that, “in stark contrast to its

¹¹² Urry, 85.

¹¹³ Tresca. “Paris-Plages 2015: La capital s’ensable.”

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

egalitarian origins, *Paris Plages* appears to have developed a reputation as a chic hangout which, judging by a recent operation to prevent vagrants from begging on or near that site, the authorities are keen to preserve”.¹¹⁵ The authorities’ interest in maintaining a certain tone or attitude, particularly one that tends to favor the wealthy and excludes those who appear poor(er), belies the original democratic mission of *Paris Plages*. The recent tendency to subtly control who partakes in *Paris Plages* and how they behave there is a rather undemocratic kind of surveillance. It is clear that *Paris Plages* is a scripted production generated by the City, not a grass-roots creation born of universal democratic fervor. Furthermore, the event does not really democratize Parisian space as it exists so much as it proposes an imaginary version of Paris, providing an idealized, dreamlike quality of a beach that never has existed and can only exist in a spectacle of artifice.

Nuit Blanche, *Journée sans voiture*, and *Paris Plages* are all temporary expositions; at the end of their day- or month-long runs, they are boxed up and shelved until the following year’s rendition is constructed. Although the alterations to the city’s spaces brought by those events are not permanent, the public has received them so favorably that they have earned annual “ownership” of certain streets. Parisians now anticipate the closure of the Quai Georges Pompidou for one month every summer, and they expect to encounter blocked roads throughout the city every October on the night of *Nuit Blanche*. Whether begrudgingly or with open arms, they have embraced the conversion of vehicular routes to pedestrian playgrounds for those events. The efforts of the City of Paris since 2002 have altered the mindset of Parisians toward the street, illustrating how the street, when reserved for pedestrians, can be a powerful unifier, stimulating camaraderie and togetherness.

¹¹⁵ Gale, 125-126.

From Renovations to New Creations: Paving Space for Pedestrians

The facilitation of spatial reappropriation on the part of the state and city governments is not restricted to events and temporary cultural expositions. The City of Paris also affects permanent changes to its urban landscape in order to “take back the streets” for pedestrians. From its wealth of monuments and sites to its leisurely cafés and parks, Paris boasts a virtually unmatched repertoire of sites for tourists and non-tourists alike to explore. That Paris is a feast for the eyes is part of its seductive charm; to peruse its streets is to wander through a vast museum of what Pierre Nora calls “*lieux de mémoire*”, sites instilled with historical and cultural significance that are scripted by cultural elites to evoke specific perceptions of France.¹¹⁶ None of Paris’ streets or sites is without significance: as *lieux de mémoire*, they are “intentionally and unapologetically didactic” and meant to “reinforce a certain understanding of the country, [...] a certain memory of France”.¹¹⁷ What is the “understandings” or “memory” of France, specifically of Paris, that the city’s *lieux de mémoire* present? How are those perspectives on the city then manifested in its geographic and aesthetic appearances?

Paris has long been what Norman M. Klein calls a “scripted space”,¹¹⁸ intentionally laden with markers that steer how people perceive and experience the city. Such spaces, he posits, possess carefully honed scripts to which pedestrians adhere without necessarily realizing it. The

¹¹⁶ Nora, Pierre. “Between Memory and History: Les lieux de mémoire.”. *Memory and Counter-Memory*, special issue of *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), pp. 7, 12, and 23.

¹¹⁷ See Judt, Tony. “A la Recherche du Temps Perdu.” *New York Review of Books* 45.19 (1998). In his review of the English translation of Nora’s *Les Lieux de mémoire*, Judt recounts an anecdote of driving on the French *autoroute* and spotting informational panels off to the side of the road. The signs were relatively uninformative and were not accompanied by an exit ramp. Still, he notes, it was evident that the signs were intended to evoke France’s past.

¹¹⁸ Norman M. Klein (1998), quoted in Huhtamo, Erkki, “(Un)walking at the Fair: About Mobile Visualities at the Universal Exposition of 1900.” *Journal of Visual Culture* 12.1 (April 2013), pp. 64.

scripts are riddled with *lieux de mémoire*, small stars that together form a larger constellation of meaning; sometimes, the scripts themselves are *lieux de mémoire*. The script and *lieux de mémoire* that I treat here focus on Paris as a city that has long cherished its pedestrians but whose spaces have gradually become less conducive to their movement. Consequently, the City of Paris has taken on the responsibility of (re)scripting certain Parisian spaces, *lieux de mémoire* that echo the French Republican values of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité*, specifically with pedestrians' movements in mind. The official discourse promoted in those spaces is not necessary congruent with the unofficial discourse of everyday Parisians.

In addition to altering those landmarks, the City has acted to permanently convert select motor vehicle spaces into pedestrian-only areas, a more marked transformation of urban space than the temporary street closures for events like *Nuit Blanche* and *Paris Plages*. In his campaign reelection speech in 2008, Delanoë introduced the ongoing renovations to be commissioned by the Mayor's office¹¹⁹ as largely *places*, translated into English as plazas or squares, which were first built to accommodate pedestrians but in the last 50 years have become major transportation hubs with diminished appeal to foot traffic. At that time, the two sites to be overhauled were the *Place de la République* and the *Place de la Bastille*. The first of the them to be revamped as part of Delanoë's vision was the *Place de la République*, an apt choice when we consider the extensive pedestrian history of the area of the city in which it is located, at the junction of the 3rd, 10th, and 11th arrondissements. I will focus primarily on the *Place de la République*, as it is the only one of those two sites whose construction has been completed.

The urban renewal proposals of Mayors Delanoë and Hidalgo necessarily contain elements of scripting of those spaces selected for renovation but also of the city as a whole. The

¹¹⁹ "Inauguration de la Place de la République." *Le Nouvel observateur*. 15 June 2013.

renovations create both visible and invisible boundaries between Parisians: by visibly removing cars, the alterations also *invisibly* impose social and cultural restrictions. Boundaries are often inherently arbitrary “political devices for social control and discipline”,¹²⁰ and eliminating cars, buses, and taxis immediately removes the presence of certain social and political actors while inviting others instead. It is interesting to examine how the City of Paris proposed and carried out the renovation of the Place de la République as part of its larger project to revamp plazas in order to increase the presence of pedestrians in those spaces, apparently rendering them more “democratic”. The priorities of their renovations differ from those of the installation of new pedestrian-only spaces in formerly motor vehicle-dominated streets. The *Berges de Seine*, a 2.3-kilometer stretch of pedestrian-only road on the banks of Paris’ central river Seine, attract a different kind of foot traffic than the more historically and politically charged *Place de la République*. Indeed, the *Berges de Seine* have explicit boundaries (on one side, the water; on the other, stone walls), but unlike the plazas, they were not constructed to accommodate large demonstrations or festivals. Therefore, the kinds of spaces that the City of Paris chooses to revamp reveal efforts to control how people use those public spaces and for what purposes.

The “script” of Paris being revised through present-day renovations to its public spaces reflects a historical narrative, actually constructed in the modern day of a city rendered unnavigable by massive urban transformations that favored motor vehicles. Historically, Paris was created as a walkable city: one of the earliest construction projects that increased pedestrian presence in the streets was that of the Pont Neuf bridge in the late 16th century and early 17th centuries. That project set the stage for urban infrastructure renewals that were not associated

¹²⁰ Low, Setha. *On the Plaza: The Politics of Space and Culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000, pp. 155.

directly with the Church or the monarchy.¹²¹ The “New Bridge”, which is now Paris’ oldest standing bridge, was actually the third bridge built in the city but the first to physically link the busiest parts of the left and right banks of the river Seine. The Pont Neuf was reserved exclusively for foot traffic and was free of charge, making it a “great social leveler”, where crowds from all social classes converged and civic pride abounded. Buzzing with merchants, performers, and ambling pedestrians, the Pont Neuf was “full not of marvels but of chaos and commotion”, giving it a lively energy and perpetual sense of motion as well as spontaneity. The bustling souvenir industry of that time promoted the atmosphere of the Pont Neuf as quintessentially Parisian.¹²²

Aesthetically, the Pont Neuf offered a panorama of the heart of the city and the river Seine, creating a “notion of a cityscape, an urban landscape, a magnificent scene made by man rather than nature”.¹²³ Standing on the bridge, Parisian pedestrians were literally and figuratively at the center of the city. From their perspective, Paris seemed to exist just for them. Throughout the 17th century, Henri IV continued to develop Paris as an urban space for pedestrians, and walking about certain parts of the city, particularly in green spaces conducive to promenades such as the Jardin des Tuileries became a voyeuristic experience that entailed seeing and being seen for the wealthy. In 1605, Henri IV oversaw the construction of the Place Royale, which is often considered the “original modern city square”.¹²⁴ This open-air space enclosed by buildings and rife with shops and arcades was intended for public gatherings, to facilitate commerce, and to beautify the city. Like the Pont Neuf, the Place Royale (now the Place des Vosges) was a

¹²¹ Dejean, Joan. *How Paris Became Paris: The Invention of the Modern City*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014, pp. 21.

¹²² *How Paris Became Paris*, 26-29, 31, and 43.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 42.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 44 and 46.

space of social interaction in which to see and be seen.

During the reign of Louis XIV, Paris experienced its first large-scale planned reconstruction that solidified the prominence of the pedestrian in public spaces. There were utilitarian and aesthetic motivations behind Louis XIV's renewal of Paris. Practically speaking, he sought to widen streets in order to facilitate the flow of carriage traffic, but he was not dismissive of the importance of pedestrians to commerce and social matters. In what was previously an enclosed medieval city, Louis XIV ushered in a new era of open, walkable Parisian space by converting former fortifications into a *promenade plantée*, a 36 meter-long network of trees lining the city's periphery.¹²⁵ The purpose of the *promenade plantée* was two-fold: to serve as a "delightful beltway for the city", an "adornment of Paris"; and to provide a public walking space for all Parisians.¹²⁶ In fact, the *Place de la République*, at that time called the *Place du Chateau d'eau*, was built in 1811 on the former site of the *promenade plantée*, at the intersection of the Boulevard du Temple and Boulevard Saint Martin. The streets adjacent to and surrounding that square boasted historic theaters and cafés that made the neighborhood popular and festive.¹²⁷ The plaza and its environs were desirable areas for pedestrians, and the optics of more people in the streets augmented the reputation of Paris as a walkable city.

That reputation would change dramatically in the mid-19th century during France's Second Empire. From 1853-1870, Baron George Eugène Haussmann, prefect of the Seine region (the zones in and around Paris) under Napoléon III, oversaw the largest overhaul of Paris' infrastructure since the Middle Ages. Haussmann's renovations were sketched out to render movement throughout Paris more efficient; to clean up the city by resolving its sewage problem;

¹²⁵ *How Paris Became Paris*, 98.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 106.

¹²⁷ APUR, 2009, pp. 10.

and to avoid revolt against the Second Empire, for wider streets were easier to barricade and could accommodate military vehicles.¹²⁸ He replaced rickety streets with wide boulevards, added *rond-points*, or roundabouts, in an effort to facilitate vehicular traffic throughout the city, and created an overall new aesthetic vision of the city, one in which pedestrians were not the prioritized audience. As noted geographer and anthropologist David Harvey explains, “Paris experienced a dramatic shift from the introverted, private, and personalized urbanism of the July monarchy to an extroverted, public, and collectivized style of urbanism under the Second Empire”.¹²⁹ The streets and public spaces of congregation no longer reflected individuals; instead, they embodied a more vast and homogenous notion of the people.

It is worth noting that an analogous instance of urban spatial realignment occurred during the *Trente glorieuses*, the thirty-year period after World War II that yielded immense economic growth in France. Kristin Ross highlights how both of those historical moments, regardless of the century between them, saw economic renewal and growth, “at the cost of a relentless dismantling of earlier spatial arrangements”.¹³⁰ Paris of the 1950s and 1960s became an “exploitative” site that manipulated the everyday life of Parisians through an omnipotent “management of space”.¹³¹ Part of that exploitation was due to the sheer speed of the modernization that accompanied the economic revival. Unlike in the United States, post-War modernization led by the French state seemed to be motivated by a need to “catch up” to contemporary times. But

¹²⁸ Saalman, Howard. *Haussmann: Paris Transformed*. New York: George Braziller, 1971, pp. 26. While Haussmann’s supporters praised the ease of military mobilization, Saalman writes that his critics could not “shake off a certain repugnance for [the new boulevards] much trumpeted and up to this day unproved usefulness in suppressing popular insurrections”.

¹²⁹ Harvey (1985), quoted in Gregory, Derek, *Geographical Imaginations*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994, pp. 204.

¹³⁰ Ross, Kristin. *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994, pp. 6.

¹³¹ *Ibid*, 8.

while technology advance, people still harbored pre-war mentalities and outlooks.¹³² To “Take back the streets”, then, is perhaps an imaginary return to a romanticized pre-Haussmann era in Paris, or to the decades prior to the near-reenactment of the Haussmannian moment in mid-20th century, when public spaces were more conducive to interpersonal encounters than to cars or military tanks.

The spatial reforms enacted by Haussmann, combined with a shift in the neighborhood dynamics, led to diminished foot traffic. Renowned French historian and geographer Bernard Rouleau characterizes Haussmann’s “*urbanisme*” as the destruction of Paris disguised as its renewal. For Rouleau, the streets were the property of pedestrians, and in restructuring Paris, Haussmann had “destroyed the very pedestrian paths for so long inscribed in the city, and [...] made everything that rendered these places alive completely disappear”.¹³³ By replacing spacious sidewalks and sinewy streets with massive boulevards, roads, and roundabouts, Haussmann’s urban projects vacated those spaces of much of their democratic livelihood and yielded a pronounced disassociation between the city’s physical structure and the lived experience of its inhabitants,¹³⁴ substantially decreased the amount of pedestrian space in the city.

Throughout the 19th century, the strengthening of state structures accompanied that of Parisian urbanism. Its symbolism was inscribed into the infrastructure of the city itself, notably in the *Place de la République*, considered to be a space that could symbolize and project values of the French State.¹³⁵ In 1889, on the centennial of the French Revolution, the name of the site

¹³² Ross, 4.

¹³³ Rouleau (1997), quoted in Jordan, David P. “Haussmann and *Haussmannisation*: The Legacy for Paris.” *French Historical Studies* 27.1 (Winter 2004), pp. 107.

¹³⁴ Gregory, 216.

¹³⁵ Most French cities and villages have at least one street or square named after the Republic, a practice that dates back to the 19th century. See Daniel Milo’s article in *Les Lieux de mémoire* on the tradition of street naming in France, as well as the caption on the front cover of *Anthropology Today* 28.6 (December 2012).

was officially changed from the *Place du Chateau d'eau* to its present name to more aptly symbolize French republicanism. In 1881, the newly proclaimed Third Republic held a competition to commission a monument to be featured at the center of the plaza. The *Place du Chateau d'eau* was selected for the new monument because it was “judged to be ‘in the heart of a quartier which had sacrificed itself for the Republic, a laboring, active, intelligent quarter’”.¹³⁶ A monument proposed by brothers Léopold and Charles Morice won the contest. Their vision featured a 9.5 meter-tall statue of the Marianne, a prominent mythological figure of the French Revolution of 1789, who in her right hand holds an olive branch. The pedestal on which she stands is engraved with allegorical representations of *liberté* (liberty), *égalité* (equality), and *fraternité* (fraternity), the three values expressed in the French Republic’s motto since 1789. Below that, a smaller 3 meter-tall pedestal features a lion and twelve bas-reliefs of events related to the Republic,¹³⁷ including the storming of the Bastille in 1789 and the adoption of the tricolor flag in 1883.¹³⁸ The Morice brothers’ statue ultimately replaced Gabriel Davioud’s fountain as the centerpiece of Haussmann’s rectangular design.¹³⁹

Marianne is a complex figure with intricate and nuanced meanings. Although she is viewed as the symbol of France, successive regimes and republics have claimed her as the embodiment of their proper brand of republicanism. Marianne thus did not become the symbolic representation of the “*régime officiel et durable*” of the State until 1879, when the Republicans finally consolidated power after a turbulent century of revolutions and uprising. Her physical

¹³⁶ Germani, Ian. “Taking Possession of Marianne: The Place de la République as Political Battleground.” *Canadian Journal of History* 45.2 (Autumn 2010), 308. Here, Germani quotes an article printed in the French periodical *Le Temps* on 20 March 1879. The English translation of the excerpt is as found in Germani’s text. “Quarter” most likely translates to the French *quartier*, meaning neighborhood.

¹³⁷ Atelier parisien d’urbanisme (APUR). *Projet d’aménagement de la place de la République: Diagnostic*. Mairie de Paris, January 2009, 12.

¹³⁸ Germani, 312.

¹³⁹ Ibid, 309.

depiction is equally ambiguous. Historian Maurice Agulhon signals depth of interpretations surrounding her clothing and accessories. Images of her robes embroidered with *fleurs de lys* recall the French monarchy prior to 1789 and contradict the republicanism attributed to her after the Revolution. Similarly, her abundance of objects of war likens her to Minerva or Pallas-Athénée, the goddess of war, a force linked to virtuosity and civilization.¹⁴⁰ A reference to “civilization” naturally invokes the civilizing mission associated with French colonialism, which adds yet another layer of complexity to the characterization of the Republicanism and French identity.

With its new name and statue of Marianne, the *Place de la République* gained significant symbolic value for France beyond its social uses. No longer was it a mere crossroads for gallivanting theatergoers: it became a prominent and visible reminder of the birth and endurance of the French state, implying a common national history as well as shared social and political values. On July 14th 1958, on the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille in 1789, President Charles de Gaulle and his Minister of Culture André Malraux expressly chose the *Place de la République* to officially inaugurate France’s enduring Fifth Republic.¹⁴¹ But the *Place de la République* did not singularly represent unity: it was also a “contested territory, the site of [...] symbolic battles fought to possess and to define the significance of the female allegory of the Republic [Marianne]”.¹⁴² On the same day that De Gaulle inaugurated the Fifth Republic, Communist demonstrators countered what they interpreted as the President’s attempt to appropriate the highly symbolic space of the *Place de la République*, rebutting his claim, “to

¹⁴⁰ Agulhon, Maurice. *Marianne au Pouvoir: L’Imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1880 à 1914*. Paris: Flammarion, 1989, pp. 319.

¹⁴¹ APUR, 2009, pp. 12.

¹⁴² Germani, 300-301.

have established a link with the French people”.¹⁴³ Journalist André Courbez corroborated the Communists’ accusation with his publication in the Communist (formerly Socialist) newspaper *L’Humanité* of a chronology of the French Republic since its inception that reflected not ventures of the State but popular movements and manifestations. He declared that because of its association to demonstrators and citizens themselves, “the *Place de la République* belongs to the people of Paris!”.¹⁴⁴ Courbez’ exclamation, along with the Communists’ perception that De Gaulle had exaggerated his connection to the French people, both indicate the value of the *Place de la République* as a site symbolic not necessarily of the French state itself but more of the French nation.

In recent years, though, the appearance of the *Place de la République* has left much to be desired, doing little to attract the people to whom it symbolically belongs. In its own assessment of the plaza in 2011, the Mayor’s office labeled it “*degradée et peu accueillante*”, lacking in both the appeal and function of an urban space. The decision of the City of Paris to restore the *Place de la République* expressly to retain more foot traffic at the expense of drivers constitutes another version of top-down initiatives of the Parisian government to return space to pedestrians. The City considered several proposals to revamp the space, ultimately selecting the design of Parisian firm TVK Architectes Urbanistes. According to the architects, the renovation draws on the concept of an open space available for multiple urban purposes.¹⁴⁵ Their overarching vision was to create a tranquil ambiance that provides a natural escape from cars and trucks and that embodies both classic and contemporary architectural ideals. The architects claim that the bulldozing of the central roundabout that circled the Marianne statue “liberates” the *Place* from

¹⁴³ Germani, 305.

¹⁴⁴ Courbez, quoted in Germani, 306. My emphasis.

¹⁴⁵ “Place de la République.” TVK Architectes urbanistes. 16 June 2013.

the constraints of constant automobile traffic. The flat expanse of concourse that replaced the roundabout instills a similar calmness, as it is reserved strictly for foot and bicycle traffic.



Figure 7: Aerial view of the Place de la République prior to renovation. Source: TVK Architects. October 2011.

Having relegated vehicular traffic to the outside of the square, the space now provides an ever-evolving “*équipement métropolitain*”, becoming a functional object such as furniture, which can take on different forms depending on the occasion. Balance was also a goal of the architects, as they sought to make clear connections between the *Place de la République* and its surrounding boulevards, and to install geometric features (though they were not necessarily striving for symmetry), such as a rectangular reflecting pool, a rectangular café, and rows of trees that parallel the northern and southern borders of the square. In conjunction with the statue of the Marianne, which was not altered during the most recent renovation and which is now encircled

by the vehicle-free rectangular plaza, the layout of the *Place* creates “*un axe réaffirmé*” that inspires harmony and “[*un*] *équilibre serein*”.¹⁴⁶



Figure 8: The Place de la République, looking northwest from the Boulevard Voltaire. Photograph: Clément Guillaume for TVK Architects. November 2014.

Although the renovations were publicized favorably by the Mayor’s office and supported by many Parisians, they triggered controversy from a variety of camps. At the center of the debate (and impossible to ignore given its blatant connection) loomed the daunting question of how the *Place de la République* should represent the French Republic, from which it takes its name. Parisian factions of France’s most prominent political parties complained of an opaque start-to-finish process that involved little public input. Politicians from the three arrondissements closest to the plaza, and therefore the most immediately impacted by the renovation, condemned

¹⁴⁶ “Place de la République.”

a “*vilain gâchis démocratique*”, in which they alleged the Mayor’s office had obscured the entire decision-making process that had gone into the renovation, from the five architectural teams whose designs were being vetted to the nature of their distinct visions for the plaza.¹⁴⁷ The accusation of a lack of democratic participation is ironic, considering the larger goal of the renovation was to make the space more democratic.

Other critics voiced concerns that elaborated on what was meant by the democratization of the sacred Republican space of the *Place de la République*. Adrien Goetz, an editorialist for the center-right French newspaper *Le Figaro*, decried the reconstruction of the plaza as the destruction and “disfiguration” of the space as representative of Republican history and values. He even likened the renovation to “official vandalism” sanctioned by the State.¹⁴⁸ It seems from Goetz’s complaint that the addition of trendy items (such as a water feature and a café) constitute a negation of the plaza as a *lieu de mémoire* of major moments that occurred there, such as General de Gaulle’s declarative proclamation of the Fifth Republic. I highlight Goetz’s article to elucidate how design choices of the *Place de la République* gave way to larger questions about what public spaces represent and how they should be used. The editorial reveals a lack of consensus on how to answer those questions. The arguments of the local politicians cited above and the discontent of inhabitants such as Goetz demonstrate how the plaza itself is “a forum for public conflict over appropriate modes of symbolic representation, and a convenient cover for broader class-based social meanings and conflicts”.¹⁴⁹ The symbolic weight of the renovated

¹⁴⁷ “Réaménagement de la place de la République : une occasion ratée ?” *Communiqué des Verts Paris*. 21 January 2010. The Mayor’s office did not make alternative construction plans for the *Place* available to the public. Critics perceived that choice by the Mayor as an alleged lack of interest in feedback from what it had already termed the “rightful owners” of Paris. Whether a mere oversight or intentional omission, the lack of transparency fueled critics, who labeled the Mayor’s commitment to repurpose Parisian spaces as disingenuous, leaving little room for individuals to propose how to use the city’s spaces.

¹⁴⁸ Goetz, Adrien. “La place de la République défigurée.” *Le Figaro*. 20 June 2013.

¹⁴⁹ Low, 136.

square was certainly at the forefront of the State's objectives, but the troubling question remains of which notions of Republicanism that space would ultimately represent and who would be excluded from its meaning(s).

The renovation of the *Place de la République* is part of a larger campaign by the City of Paris called “*Réinventons nos places!*” to restructure seven additional notable Parisian squares.¹⁵⁰ Mayor Hidalgo seems to want to invite more democratic participation than with earlier renovation of *République*. In the early planning stages of the upcoming renovations, the Mayor opened a fourteen-week window as part of her “*Madame La Maire, j’ai une idée*” discussion forum, in which she elicited feedback from Parisians about matters ranging from budget concerns to use of public space.¹⁵¹ She encouraged dialogue from Parisians about how they wished to see those plazas transformed; in particular, she requested feedback on questions of accessibility, ease of movement through the plazas, and, interestingly, on questions of identity and patrimony¹⁵². At the end of that period, it was confirmed that the squares would all have decreased automobile circulation, but that they would evolve and change in different ways depending on the individual spaces. As for the Place de la Nation, for example, Hidalgo remarked, “*Il y a des avenues haussmanniennes qui sont en fait des impasses, très larges, avec peu de flux automobile, qui offrent un vrai potentiel d'aménagement*”¹⁵³ for pedestrians. Based on an assessment devised by the Council of Paris, the “*Réinventons nos places*” project will

¹⁵⁰ The areas to be renovated and completed by the year 2020 are the *Places des Fêtes, de la Nation, de la Bastille, de la Madeleine, d’Italie, du Panthéon*, and the *Place Gambetta*.

¹⁵¹ “Aménagement de Bastille et Nation: donnez votre avis!” *Le Parisien*. 7 July 2016.

¹⁵² “Réinventons nos Places! Donnez votre avis.” *Mairie de Paris*, 2010. This collaborative site is one in a series called “Madame la Maire, j’ai une idée”. Run by the Mairie de Paris, the series solicits citizens’ ideas for projects in the city. The site for the renovation of the Parisian plazas documents 343 individual proposals.

¹⁵³ “La Mairie de Paris veut boucler la renovation de ses places.” *Les Echos*. 20 November 2015. Says Hidalgo, “There are Haussmannian avenues that are in fact very large impasses, with little automobile flow, that offer real potential for change”. My translation.

necessarily consider aspects of public transportation, the quantity of current pedestrian-friendly areas, the presence of commercial enterprises, and even the amount of sunlight the plazas receive.¹⁵⁴

As the City of Paris continues to renovate prominent Parisian public spaces, it maintains the spaces' names, thus reinforcing their meanings in relation to the French Republic and its citizens. The *Place de la République* continues to evoke Republican values and tradition, in fact reinforcing its apparent democratic nature by making the space more amenable to pedestrians than before. The square invites pedestrians more than ever before, as its layout deters motor vehicles and offers a space entirely devoted to foot traffic. Since its reopening in 2013, it has been a popular point of assembly for both massive planned events as well as impromptu demonstrations and gatherings, particularly after the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015 and the terrorist attacks in the nearby Bastille neighborhood on November 13, 2015.

Mayors Delanoë and Hidalgo have expanded their "Taking back the streets" initiatives beyond the plaza renovations to incorporate new, smaller-scale spaces that illustrate the City's prioritization of pedestrians in public spaces in Paris. A prominent project of that vein is the *Berges de Seine* installation, which involves the addition of pedestrian space where there was little to none before. The *Berges* occupy the Quai d'Orsay, which prior to 2012 was a busy roadway bordering the left bank of the Seine. The *Berges de Seine* do not contain significant symbolism of the French state, at least in terms of their geographic locations. Yet the Parisian government viewed the now-defunct road adjacent to the Seine as an area that could be utilized more effectively as an exclusively pedestrian space. This initiative, of which there are several in Paris including the *Coulée verte* in the 13th arrondissement, illustrates how the City of Paris is

¹⁵⁴ APUR, 2016.

“taking back the streets” for pedestrians by constructing new, fresh spaces for walkers at the expense of drivers.

In 2011, the City of Paris initiated a project to permanently convert an entire 2.3-kilometer stretch of road along the left bank of the Seine into an entirely pedestrian space. Classified in 1991 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as a World Heritage site, the Banks of the Seine represent “outstanding universal value”.¹⁵⁵ They were selected for that designation based on the criteria that they represent “human creative genius” and “an important interchange of human values” in terms of architecture, urban planning, and landscape.¹⁵⁶ The renovated, entirely pedestrian-centered *Berges de Seine* was designed to increase foot traffic overall but particularly in parts of the city where pedestrians are underprivileged. With the decision to permanently remove vehicle traffic from the Quai d’Orsay from the Pont de l’Alma to east of the Pont de la Concorde, the city opened that space exclusively to pedestrians, acknowledging its success in eliminating “*le stress des voitures*”.¹⁵⁷ Delanoë remarked that it was “abhorrent” that a prominent and central space such as the Quai d’Orsay was accessible only to cars, especially in a city where “*les automobilistes...c’est une petite minorité des habitants de la métropole*”.¹⁵⁸ With so few drivers compared to pedestrians, he reasoned, Paris as a modern global city should promote movement within its borders without encouraging cars to utilize disproportional amounts of space.¹⁵⁹ In February 2011, the Conseil de Paris approved Delanoë’s plan for the “*reconquête*”—the

¹⁵⁵ “Paris, Banks of the Seine.” *UNESCO World Heritage Convention*.

¹⁵⁶ “The Criteria for Selection.” *UNESCO World Heritage Convention*. The criteria referenced here are *i*, *ii*, and *iv*.

¹⁵⁷ Benoît, Morgan. “Berges de Seine piétonnes à Paris: accès, activités, infos pratiques.” 23 August 2016.

¹⁵⁸ Delanoë, Bertrand. “Bertrand Delanoë inaugure les aménagements des voies sur berges.” 17 September 2012.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

conquering—of the banks of the Seine by limiting motor vehicle circulation there.¹⁶⁰ Nearly 10 years after both the start of his tenure as Mayor and the inception of the *Paris Plages* event, Delanoë continued to employ the familiar combative rhetoric of taking back the streets, reiterating that in order for pedestrians to “conquer” city space, cars must be removed.



Figure 9: Stretches of the *Berges de Seine* on the left bank of the Seine, facing northeast (*left and center*) and southwest (*right*). January 2016.

With the *Berges de Seine*, Delanoë sought to create a multifaceted public space that could function as both a tourist destination and as an urban home for locals. He enlisted Jean-Christophe Choblet, Director of Public Space Initiatives for the City of Paris, to design the new pedestrian space on Left Bank of the Seine.¹⁶¹ Choblet had also designed the inaugural *Paris Plages* event. For the *Berges de Seine*, Choblet collaborated with Paris-based architect Franklin Azzi and Didier Fusillier, the director of Lille3000, an initiative of the City of Lille, France to create a cumulative arts, culture, and tourism concept. Together, the team designed a

¹⁶⁰ Ravinel, Sophie de. “Voies sur berges: Delanoë vise un aménagement en 2012.” *Le Figaro*. 9 February 2011.

¹⁶¹ In French, Choblet’s full job title is *Directeur de la mission espace publique à la Mairie de Paris*.

“multidisciplinary” space that could meet the demands of the inhabitants of Paris. The focus of the project was primarily on landscape and scenery; architecture; and the ability of the space to welcome and accommodate creative, artistic endeavors.¹⁶² When creating his vision for the *Berges*, Azzi sought to construct what felt like an open building, with an emphasis on “*les aménagements passifs*”, permanent structures such as playgrounds, exercise equipment, and benches. Azzi’s vision to construct the *Berges* as an open building, in this case one built in a consolidated and limited outdoor space, with an agenda to serve the inhabitants of Paris, recalls a community center in the American sense. Like a community center, where individuals and groups utilize government-owned space to participate in independent or shared activities, the *Berges* provide opportunities to take part in free, regularly scheduled (though seasonal) exercise classes, ranging from “Cardio Boxe” to “Corde à sauter” and “Running [pour] débutants”. On the other end of the spectrum, the *Berges* boast spaces of relaxation and quiet, as demonstrated by the *Espaces Zzzz*, two modern “cabins” that individuals or small groups reserve in advance for any purpose, even if just to take a nap. Although people must execute minimal prior planning to use the *Zzzz*, the space itself grants them a small but exclusive pied-à-terre, right in the heart of the city, where “*vous êtes chez vous*”.¹⁶³ In sum, the goal of the Mayor and his team of designers is that everyone feel welcome at the *Berges*, “*sans forcément être rattaché à des animations, à des équipements dédiés pour ça*”,¹⁶⁴ and without feeling obligated to *do* something in the space if one simply wants to *be* there.

¹⁶² Choblet, Jean-Christophe. “Le Projet des Berges de Seine.” 2015.

¹⁶³ Fusillier, Didier. “Le Projet des Berges de Seine.” 2015.

¹⁶⁴ Azzi, Franklin. “Le Projet des Berges de Seine.” 2015.



Figure 10: A former cargo box converted into a Zzzz space on the *Berges de Seine*. January 2016.

The ability to choose how to use the *Berges* speaks to what city planner Didier Fusillier describes as the “do it yourself” spirit of that space, where people have at their disposition materials to engage in various activities so that they can occupy the space to their liking. The “do it yourself” attitude certainly embraces the goal of the creators to return the streets to pedestrians, empowering users of the space to make what they want of it. It also grants power and responsibility to pedestrians to engage in the *Berges* in ways unforeseen by the City and the designers. A spontaneous option for private space along the Seine is the YOU, a cargo box-like structure with glass walls that open onto the *Berges*’ main pathway and the Seine. Open to all without a reservation, the YOU doubles as a space for an urban experiment called “City Lab”. Young entrepreneurs and new, cutting-edge companies that deal with sports, culture, and nature collaborate with the *Berges de Seine* to promote their businesses and, more important for

the City of Paris, attract pedestrians and build momentum for more foot traffic. Official literature on the *Berges* specifies that partner entrepreneurs and companies prioritize “*l’expérimentation urbaine*”,¹⁶⁵ demonstrating the City’s interest in inventing new ways to experience the city, especially by foot. Take Withings, a Paris-based company with international reach that specializes in lifestyle products for meeting health and fitness goals. Every Saturday and Sunday throughout the summer of 2015, Withings sponsored “Coaching Santé 2.0” in which it lent its newest products to people to use and try out while enjoying the *Berges de Seine*. The collaboration between the City of Paris and Withings gives visibility to both while incentivizing people to experience of the city by foot.

In addition to permanent spatial installments for “do it yourself” and communal exercises, games, and relaxation, the *Berges de Seine* provides an aesthetic escape from the bustling city. The site features an archipelago of floating gardens of 1,800 square meters, proposed by Choblet as a way to add more green space.¹⁶⁶ Each of the five island gardens, linked together by small bridge-like walkways, has a theme with corresponding vegetation. On the *Ile prairie* are tall grasses, and the *Ile aux oiseaux* features bushes and grasses specifically meant to attract birds.¹⁶⁷ The floating gardens are significant to the *Berges* not only for their role in the aesthetic beautification of the space but also because they eliminate the ills of the contemporary cityscape from what is now a pedestrian oasis. In place of cars and a hectic roadway, the gardens add a bucolic effect, allowing pedestrians to appreciate the Seine and the Parisian landmarks, all the while feeling removed from the vehicles that impede pedestrians’ movement in the city.

¹⁶⁵ “Les Berges rive droite.” *Mairie de Paris*. 27 May 2015.

¹⁶⁶ Seres, Aude. “Paris: la facture détaillée des Voies sur berges.” *Le Figaro*. 29 November 2011.

¹⁶⁷ “Berges de Seine: le jardin flottant prend forme.” *Atelier parisien d’urbanisme*. 30 May 2013.

The *Berges de Seine* project has been received well by inhabitants of Paris, most of whom do not drive in the city and therefore welcome a respite from motor vehicle traffic. There is, however, an important contingency of merchants and booksellers working on the streets above the Quai d'Orsay who countered the Mayor's plans to restructure the banks of the Seine. They signaled how the removal of cars from the Quai would relocate traffic to the roads above, shifting the pollution and danger from the river banks to the streets where those vendors work.¹⁶⁸

The imperative of the City of Paris to render public spaces pedestrian-friendly recalls Mayor Bertrand Delanoë's first mayoral bid in 2002, when he vowed to "return Paris to its rightful owner". Under the leadership of Mayors Delanoë and his successor Anne Hidalgo, the City has actively sought to redefine how urban spaces are used. The City hosts temporary street events such as *Nuit Blanche* and *Paris Plage* in which major roadways are shut down to promote cultural edification of and social interaction among pedestrians. Similarly, the City has prioritized renovations of areas with significant Republican symbolism, as well as the integration of new pedestrian spaces in an effort to "return" the streets to Parisians.

All of those initiatives demonstrate a top-down power dynamic in the conceptualization and construction of public spaces in Paris. The City itself initiates and subsidizes the temporary events and the permanent renovations in an effort to restore the street as the site of the transmission of French values. Yet there is a glaring enigma in the State's logic: The street events and changes to the urban layout should serve to assemble the French under the uniting values of the Republic; but insofar as these changes are also, or even primarily, created to boost the economy and tourism, they give birth to a paradox, for visitors to France should be want to be French but never actually be able to become truly French. This paradox illuminates

¹⁶⁸ "Projet des berges de Seine, rive droite: 'C'est la fin des bouquinistes et de toute une vie de quartier!'" *Metronews*. 24 September 2015.

the undeniable economic incentive underlying the modifications: the tourist industry. By democratizing the urban spaces of Paris and featuring pedestrians as the prominent actors in those areas, the City perpetuates a romanticized, pre-industrialized image of Paris that underlies much of its tourist industry.

The City of Paris has, to an extent, appropriated the cause of returning the streets to pedestrians; however, there are also symbolic grassroots efforts by pedestrians themselves to make the urban setting more conducive to them. In the following chapter, I will discuss the tactic of subjective mapping as a way in which individuals can figuratively inscribe themselves onto the map of Paris, a map in which they may not otherwise appear.

CHAPTER TWO: Inscribing the Self into the City and the City into the Self through Subjective Mapping

In his 1961 book *The Image of the City*, Lynch identifies and explores the relationships of individuals to their urban surroundings. That seminal study on urban space constitutes one of the first in the field of urban planning to explicitly examine the link between the physical construction of the city and people's emotional attachments to it. Lynch posits that the most important feature of any city is legibility; that is, that the city's parts are arranged in a coherent pattern that people can use to structure and identify their environment.¹⁶⁹ The layout of the city suggests ways in which observers can situate themselves within that urban framework and prompts them to endow what they see with meaning.¹⁷⁰ The physical setting of the city consequently plays a role in shaping its larger social structure, as it provides the physical space onto which social realities and myths are projected and propagated.¹⁷¹

The most ubiquitous way to depict the layout of cities is through maps, functional representations of the elements and features in relation to one another in a given space. Though they are often taken at face value as “factual” or “accurate”, maps are inherently subjective and that can be manipulated to favor specific notions of space or to promote agendas of the maps' commissioners or artists. As such, maps can propagate and even generate myths of how spaces should be used and who can claim to belong there. As maps are disseminated, they “[articulate] the world in mass-produced and stereotyped images”, giving voice to deeply embedded visions

¹⁶⁹ Lynch, 2.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 6.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 3.

of society.¹⁷² They display socially construed versions of something and then propagate those myths through their apparent neutrality, veracity, and omnipotence.

Maps are perhaps one of the most prevalent and relied upon representations of culture. They are essential instruments of both the embodiment, promulgation, and production of cultural knowledge. Maps maintain “the ceaseless reproduction of the culture that brings them into being”.¹⁷³ This constant regeneration of culture through maps, which are cultural artifacts in their own right, occurs when “they make present—they *represent*—the accumulated thought and labor of the past...about the milieu we simultaneously live in and collaborate on bringing [into] being”.¹⁷⁴ In that sense, maps possess a continuous chronology, for they refer to and reveal cultural contexts from many moments in history, conjoining elements of the past and even expectations or hopes for the future into a common present.

In this chapter, I explore the intersection of Parisian urban space, street culture, and affect as depicted by personalized maps, or *cartes subjectives*, of Paris. The enormous and overwhelming corpus of Parisian streets and sites has prompted walkers to create their own guidebooks, maps, and tours to traverse the city. In viewing Paris through the eyes of a subjective cartographer, walkers become amateur mappers who write new scripts of the city. I insist here on the distinction between cartography as a scientific practice and subjective cartography. The mappers I discuss in this chapter are not professional cartographers, and the maps they render and which I discuss do not purport to be official or representative of an official office or institution. I focus instead on artistic and literary figures who tackle the dilemma of situating the self in the vast space of post-modern Paris. Those individuals seek spaces in the city

¹⁷² Harley, J. Brian. “Deconstructing the Map.” *Writing Worlds: Discourse, text, and metaphor in the representation of landscape*. Ed. Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan. London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 246.

¹⁷³ Wood, Denis and John Fels. *The Power of Maps*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1992, pp. 1.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 1.

that reflect their values and in turn assist them in formulating their self-identity and their sense of belonging. They conceive of Paris through a process of subjective mapping in which they capture, both consciously and subconsciously, the elements of the city that are most meaningful to them. They extract meaning from Parisian spaces by surveying it through their own unique perspectives, approaching the city and its spaces from a distinctive mindset informed by personality traits, life experiences, and values. They then portray those sites and routes in personalized and imaginative depictions, iterating their impressions (or as Lynch would suggest, “images”) of the city into cartographic representations of their experiences of inhabiting and moving about Paris.

I propose subjective mapping as a tool by which individuals generate meaningful, affective relationships to the city based on their personal interests and experiences rather than on official or standard accepted narratives expressed by conventional maps of Paris. The perspectives and perceptions of the mappers and thus their representations of Parisian urban spaces can differ significantly from maps commissioned or sanctioned by the government, political parties, or lobbying organizations. Also unlike conventional maps, *cartes subjectives* are not necessarily intended to be didactic or informative; instead, they reveal, “*la trace imprimée par le quartier dans la mémoire et l’imaginaire de ceux qui le pratiquent*”.¹⁷⁵ Subjective maps, then, are artifacts that provide evidence of lived experiences in urban spaces, expressions of an imagined or imaginary vision of life in the city.

Take, for instance, the subjective maps generated by the *Cartes subjectives de Belleville* initiative, a project developed by a local neighborhood association in Paris’ Belleville area. That neighborhood, which I cover in more detail in Chapter Three, is situated in the northeastern

¹⁷⁵ “Une carte subjective de Belleville #6 – Les vues de Belleville.” *Point de Rassemblement*. 16 May 2013.

corner of Paris. Belleville is physically separated from more central parts of Paris, and its geographic distance from the city center is coupled by its history as a haven for workers and immigrants who could not find a home in the wealthier central areas. In the *Cartes subjectives de Belleville* project, contemporary artists and residents whose relationship to Belleville significantly informs their understanding of and sentiments toward Paris use conventional maps (geographic, topographic, and thematic maps are potential example) of their neighborhood as the template on which they place the streets, monuments, parks, and other urban spaces to which they attribute meaning and importance. Those renderings of Belleville often deviate in appearance from the traditional maps we have grown accustomed to seeing, in which sites exist only if they can be located on the north-south-east-west continuum and without consideration for their nongeographic significance. Collective maps of Belleville created under the auspices of the association *Point de rassemblement* demonstrate a collaborative effort between individuals and artists to construct maps that illustrate personal affinities to spaces in Belleville.

Next, I will descend from the streets of Belleville to the cavernous depths of the Parisian subway. *Métrofémnin*, a map and work of art rendered by artist Silvia Radelli in which she considers the ubiquitous Parisian subway map through a gender-conscious lens by altering the names of the subway stops to reflect female historical, literary, artistic, and cultural figures. This map represents a hypothetical reading of a larger swath of Paris than just one neighborhood; in fact, it considers the depiction of the entire underground transportation system as a potentially feminine and feminist space by way of an itinerary that brings traditionally less visible places into prominence. Both the *cartes subjective de Belleville* and *Métrofémnin* express the emotional attachments of their authors to a particular idea(l) of the city, as well as the power of individuals to forge unique paths through Paris and to create equally unique affective relationships to it.

Subjective maps of Paris are not limited to tangible, two-dimensional illustrations; they also exist in imagined forms, especially in literature. Philosopher and activist Guy Debord, a founding member of the Situationist movement of the mid-20th century, followed in the footsteps of Surrealists such as Louis Aragon and André Breton, who viewed the city as a “dreamscape” in which one could “surrender oneself to such enticements, to roam the enchanted metropolis in pursuit of desire and distraction”.¹⁷⁶ Debord and the Situationists roamed the city in a tactic they coined and called the *dérive*. This enabled them to explore mapping as a movement that is generative of affect, and also to show how affect can be generative of mapping. My final study in this chapter will be an exploration of subjective mapping of the Situationist tradition as it appears in the works of Patrick Modiano. That contemporary French author, winner of the 2014 Nobel Prize in Literature, echoes in many ways the connection between space and affect expressed by Debord. For both Debord and Modiano¹⁷⁷, the city of Paris is a template on which they construct real (which I define as geographic maps that use established and universally accepted points and features of the city), imagined, and metaphorical maps of nostalgia based on their memories of and social encounters in Paris. Much in the style and tone of Debord’s *dérives*, Modiano frames his novel around memories and considers how meandering through Parisian space is itself a kind of mapping that conjures nostalgia in its inhabitants. By citing various *repères*, or landmarks, Modiano’s characters inscribe subjective maps of Paris that express a sentiment of nostalgia similar to that of Debord for a Paris of the past, even an imaginary Paris that never existed, as well as a paradoxical sense of entrapment and freedom in the Paris streets.

¹⁷⁶ Gilloch, Graeme. *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City*. Polity Press: Cambridge UK, 1996, pp. 103.

¹⁷⁷ See Breton, André, *Nadja*, Paris: Gallimard, 1962. This autobiographical text, originally published in 1928, details the author’s encounters with a young woman, Nadja. Breton experiments with a stream of consciousness-like narration and relays unexpected or random experiences he has as he wanders about Paris.

Removed from Society? The Subjective Art of Mapping

Maps are arbitrary, in that they describe and impose an abstract structure to a spatial entity that is otherwise limitless and undefined. The process of mapping imposes boundaries and inscribes meaning by providing a theme (whether geographic, topographic, or otherwise) and a lens through which to consider a particular space or place. For instance, when we look at a map of a city, we get a visual representation of what exists in that city: neighborhoods or districts, roads, and notable geographic features; and relationships between those sites and ourselves. We cannot, however, *see* the city with the naked eye precisely as the map depicts it, for it is impossible to gain an aerial perspective that would reveal the entire city at once. The same is true for movement in a geographic space. A map of the United States displays arbitrary lines demarcating the end of one state and the beginning of another, as well as layers of roads and interstates that enable us to traverse spaces; however, we cannot actually *see* the itineraries we trace out on the map as we physically travel them. Especially in the digital age, with computer programs and software that allow us to see the entire world from our screens, we still have to make a choice between seeing a very unspecific whole (the earth) or a more precise but incomplete picture of a region, country, city, or even neighborhood.

Maps, then, are non-real, abstracts representations of real spaces that cannot be seen otherwise. They are imagined constructions that provide artificial views of the whole. The fact that maps exist begs the question of what purpose(s) they serve. Maps serve at least two distinct yet often interrelated functions. First, a map is a utilitarian instrument. It enables people to envision an otherwise inconceivable space: the whole. The ability to “see” that which is invisible allows people to determine what a space consists of, how to navigate it, and their physical place

in it relative to everything and everyone else. The second function of the map is to create an imaginary frame of reference that links the individual to the whole, not merely geographically but also affectively. This function is similar to the utilitarian one, for understanding one's sentimental connection to the city can facilitate physical navigation of it. Maps that frame an emotional perception, though, realize affective relationships to the city through the privileging of certain spaces and places.

All maps necessarily have an author, a subject, and a theme, each of which indicates a certain interest that triggered the creation of those maps in the first place.¹⁷⁸ The subject of a map does not have to be *real*; 17th century *carte de Tendre* of Mme. de Scudery depicts unreal places but is nonetheless a map of that fictitious place. Maps are able to portray imaginary places because at their essence, maps are reifications of an imaginary. They are always, already a representation of an interest; there is always, already something at stake in mapping, for the author(s) created it with an intention in mind. In that way, maps are subjective and express a slanted view. It is, then, a matter of determining the frame or boundaries of the map in order to deem which elements should be included and which ones excluded. On a purely visual level, frames delineate specific spaces and in doing so inevitably isolate or eliminate others. As a result, the social, cultural, and historical implications of those boundaries can be substantial.

Mapping as a manipulative strategy has been used in many societies to control power dynamics between various social actors. Although all maps are reflections of imagined constructions of the world, historically speaking maps have carried immense power if they are commissioned by a government or ruling power, or if they are deemed “scientific”. Authorized maps construct legitimacy because they “extend and reinforce the legal statutes, territorial

¹⁷⁸ Wood, 17.

imperatives and values stemming from the exercise of political power”.¹⁷⁹ They perpetuate the power structures and hierarchies that already exist within a society, constituting another form of what Foucault labels the power-knowledge compound.¹⁸⁰ Maps, then, are endowed with greater authority as they become more relied upon or naturalized. The process of “naturalization” implies certain notions of ideology and hegemony.¹⁸¹ Dominant cultural institutions whose popularity or mere existence depend on the content and interpretation of maps subtly impose a “preferred reading” of the major and minor circumstances that people encounter and how those instances will impact their existence.¹⁸² As maps become naturalized according to dominant ideologies and the powers that deem them legitimate, the maps they create or espouse become *the* maps to consult, and are therefore authoritative, reflecting social constructed norms and ideas that have made those maps viable.

Maps are not simple pictures: they are texts containing rhetoric and metaphor. Geographer, cartographer, and map historical J. Brian Harley employs Derrida’s strategy of deconstruction as a way of sifting through the layers of cultural and historical material inherent in all maps. Comprised of so many elements, as discrete or invisible as it may be, “no map is devoid of an intertextual dimension that involves an essentially plural and diffuse play of meanings across the boundaries of individual maps”.¹⁸³ Maps are judged according to multiple binaries such as accurate and inaccurate; propaganda and truth; or artistic and scientific.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Harley, 243.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 244.

¹⁸¹ Jackson, 3.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Harley, 240.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 238.

Cartography, then, “an art of persuasive communication”, aims to construct convincing representations of those binaries, capitalizing on one half while refuting the other.¹⁸⁵

Cartographers create a “spatial panopticon”, to use Foucault’s term, which implies that power is omnipresent in cartography *as a process*. The internal power of cartography, which stands in opposite to the external power of cartography, which Foucault says is juridical and facilitates surveillance,¹⁸⁶ mimics the panoptical structure of society envisioned by Foucault, and that power becomes apparent when we consider how maps are compiled and categories within them selected; how hierarchies within them are developed; and how they become generalized to represent conventional understandings of space.¹⁸⁷ In other words, maps perpetuate existing power constructs by representing an accepted precedent that relays similar dynamics of authority and control.

Just as language is a symbolic representation of an experience, so too are maps symbolic representations of an experience, whether of a space or an idea or a concept. Roland Barthes approaches maps that are printed and distributed at such a great scale as purveyors of myths. In *Mythologies* he writes that “*le mythe est un langage*”, “*un système de communication*”, and “*un message*”.¹⁸⁸ He elaborates on the mythical power of maps in his essay on the *Guides Bleu*, a series of guidebooks first published in France in the mid-19th century as the *Guides Joanne*. In an effort to recreate an already-existing historic and descriptive guidebook of Switzerland, founder Adolphe Joanne founded what would become the *Guide Bleu* in 1919.

¹⁸⁵ Harley, 242.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 244.

¹⁸⁷ Harley, 244-245.

¹⁸⁸ Barthes, Roland. “Le Guide bleu.” *Mythologies*. Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1957, pp. 9 and 193.

For Barthes, published guidebooks for tourists exemplify how imagined perspectives become part of larger social myths. Such resources present travelers of a certain social stratum with maps, itineraries, and descriptions that inevitably reflect particular stereotypes and (mis)understandings of the places in question. In his study on pervasive myths in French society, he analyzes the *Guide Bleu* of Spain as the epitome of, “une mythologie bourgeoise partiellement périmée, celle qui postulait l’Art (religieux) comme valeur fondamentale de la culture, mais ne considèrait ses ‘richesses’ et ses ‘trésors’ que comme un emmagasinement réconfortant de marchandise (création de musées)”.¹⁸⁹ Travel is meant to reify preconceived notions of places and peoples, allowing travelers to leave the comfort of their homes without sacrificing familiarity.

According to Barthes, the *Guide Bleu* promotes a mythological brand of tourism in which “landscape” (in opposition to “city”) is only considered such if it is “*pittoresque*”,¹⁹⁰ a rather subjective label. Travel as it is advertised and promoted by the *Guide Bleu* constitutes a sort of “‘*panthéon du voyage*’, l’assemblage de ce qui est déterminé esthétiquement valable pour être dans une carte”.¹⁹¹ By presenting only the greatest and most map-worthy parts of Spain, the *Guide* redefines what is historically, socially, and politically valuable in that country. Equally as problematic, the *Guide* vacates places of their humanity: people exist only as stereotypical versions (“types”) conceived of by bourgeois society¹⁹². Ultimately, the *Guide* conceives a new, mythical identity for Spain through its meticulous selection of cultural memorabilia.

¹⁸⁹ Barthes, 124.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 121.

¹⁹¹ Harley, 242.

¹⁹² Barthes, 122.

Barthes concludes that analytical descriptions of places and peoples are unreliable barometers for understanding places and cultures. The *Guides Bleus* do not contain objective and truthful information, says Barthes, and do not reflect realistic inquiries or information that travelers would appreciate. Through blatantly erroneous attempts at description, the *Guide Bleu*

*refuse à la fois l'explication et la phénoménologie : il ne répond en fait à aucune des questions qu'un voyageur moderne peut se poser en traversant un paysage réel, et qui dure. [...] Le spectacle est ainsi sans cesse en voie d'anéantissement, et le Guide devient [...] le contraire même de son affiche, un instrument d'aveuglement.*¹⁹³

The irony of the *Guides* is that instead of revealing sites as they exist, the descriptions belie the experience of actually setting foot in the lands in question. The *Guides* are unable to address real issues of interest or concern to travelers. Rather than presenting a “representation of the past in the present”¹⁹⁴, the *Guides* eliminate references to elements of the past that endure into the present, condensing Spain into a static place void of history and chronology. They instead illustrate the bourgeois construction of travel as spectacle and therefore constitute “instruments of blindness” that actually prevent travelers from becoming familiar with sites and people, and the cultures in which those sites and people are found. Barthes concludes by pointing out the «*franquisme latent du Guide*»¹⁹⁵ that taints the guide’s purported political neutrality or indifference. It disregards the major events and dire consequences of the Spanish civil war, remarking, “*l’effort sérieux et patient de ce peuple est allé jusqu’à la réforme de son système politique*”¹⁹⁶. The *Guide* seems to commend the “Spanish people” for bringing about change in

¹⁹³ Barthes, 123.

¹⁹⁴ Wood, 1, 9, and 10.

¹⁹⁵ Barthes, 124.

¹⁹⁶ Barthes 125. Barthes cites this passage from the *Guide Bleu* itself.

Spain, disregarding the fact that the Spanish civil war, by definition, involved at least two conflicting kinds of “Spanish people”. Barthes exposes the *Guide*’s political slant and critiques it for claiming to paint objective images of places while simultaneously pushing thinly veiled political and social agendas.

While the *Guides bleus* propose problematic narratives that present narrow and restricted images of the places they feature, there is nonetheless a tradition in France of self-proclaimed unofficial guidebooks that do not purport to be omniscient authorities on French space. The trend of personalized renditions of Paris dates back at least to the birth of the French Republic. In 1781, Louis-Sébastien Mercier published his *Tableau de Paris*, a diary of his observations of Parisian space and society in the wake of the Revolution of 1789. He insists that his text is neither an inventory nor a catalog, and that the reader should peruse it cautiously, perhaps even critically. In fact, he orders the reader to “[rectifier] de lui-même ce que l’écrivain aura mal vu, ou ce qu’il aura mal peint ; & la comparaison donnera peut-être au lecteur une envie secrète de revoir l’objet & de le comparer”.¹⁹⁷ Mercier prompts readers to draw their own maps of the city, for his is but a mere “[crayonnement] d’après [ses] vues”,¹⁹⁸ reflecting only his view of Paris. The *Tableau*’s two tomes were extremely popular, due in part to their novelty as a topography of the social life of Parisians, and also because they helped both foreigners and Parisians make sense of Paris’ rapidly shifting urban scene.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson concludes that, “the *Tableau de Paris* inaugurated a new genre and served at once as a model, a standard,

¹⁹⁷ Mercier, Louis-Sébastien. *Tableau de Paris, Nouvelle édition, corrigée et augmentée*. Vol. 1. 1782-1788, v.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ See Zevin, Alexander. “Panoramic Literature in 19th Century Paris: Robert Macaire as a Type of Everyday.” *Paris: Capital of the 19th Century*. 2005.

and a norm for innumerable later works about Paris”.²⁰⁰ The *Tableau* as an “essay-reportage, the urban genre that fascinated and inspired generations of urban explorers”²⁰¹, was thus a model for subsequent literary guidebooks in the 19th century that encouraged readers to find their own paths, rather than adhering strictly to official ones, through Paris.

Mapping the Community: Subjective Maps of Belleville and the Paris Metro

The obligatory negotiation of Paris’ streets has, in fact, allowed great freedom to imaginative pedestrians. With the advent of the Internet, individuals can share and publish their own *cartes subjectives* on personal websites and blogs, attracting both national and international followers. The association *Point de rassemblement*, based in the Parisian suburb of Aubervilliers, has been a visible actor in harnessing community spirit in neighborhoods throughout the Ile-de-France region, including Paris’ own Belleville. The not-for-profit organization insists on the importance of individuals’ perspectives on their urban landscapes, encouraging the growth of “une force collective [...] de développement local”, uniting individuals in a communal whole. As its name would suggest, *Point de rassemblement* brings together urban planners, architects, and other specialists to oversee participatory projects in which communities work to transform, and therefore appropriate their urban areas in meaningful ways.²⁰² The ultimate goal of *Point de rassemblement*’s efforts is to encourage “la capacité d’agir dans la ville et l’espace public” and to empower people to render their spaces a reflection of their wants, needs, and visions.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Ferguson, Priscilla Parkhurst. *Paris as Revolution: Writing the 19th-Century City*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994, pp. 54.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² “Point de rassemblement,” *Ile de France: Projets Citoyens*. 21 November 2013.

²⁰³ “La Carte SUBJECTIVE de Belleville collée!” *Une Table d’Orientation pour Belleville*. 7 June 2013.

Point de rassemblement proposes a categorization of non-conventional, “géographico-artistiques” maps that compose a more expansive group of *cartes sensibles*, or emotional maps.²⁰⁴ Those forms of subjective maps represent a departure from standard cartographic practices, deviating from traditional ways of observing and representing urban spaces. In its “*Plateforme artistique de cartes sensibles*”, *Point de rassemblement* outlines five kinds of emotional maps: subversive, typographic, affective, sensory (tactile, olfactory, gustatory, and auditory), and imaginary. Each of those themes constitutes an innovative perspective from which to approach the representation of geographic spaces. The themes provide a framework for observation, guiding individuals to detect certain characteristics or details in a given space and to render those observations the primary focus of their maps.

As part of its mission to “[d]évelopper la capacité d’agir citoyenne dans la ville et l’espace public à travers différentes interventions urbaines, artistiques, performatives, [et] participatives”,²⁰⁵ *Point de rassemblement* initiated a major community-oriented project in Belleville involving the compilation of individual- and community-generated subjective maps of the lived experiences of individuals in that neighborhood. Using the categories put forth by the Association, I would classify those maps as *cartes affectives*, maps that express the lived experiences of particular spaces. Lived experience can be a walk or stroll, a structured or unstructured visit, or use of a place as a landmark. Affective maps are meant to expose “*une vision partielle, et située d’un territoire*”, not revealing everything but instead presenting slices of how people experience urban spaces. Since those maps are based on experiences, every experience is necessarily significant because what is at stake is defining how and in what ways a

²⁰⁴ “Plateforme artistique de cartes sensibles” *Point de Rassemblement*. 3 September 2013.

²⁰⁵ “Nos engagements”. *Point de rassemblement*. Web. <http://pointderassemblement.blogspot.com/2013/06/une-carte-subjective-de-belleville.html>

space is lived. Affective maps intensify certain areas to show the importance of events, both major and minor, which occur there.²⁰⁶ Events, after all, are traces of lived activity and therefore are traces of “*l’individu qui parcourt les lieux*”.²⁰⁷

The community-wide mapping project in Belleville organized by *Point de rassemblement* took place in the spring of 2013. Individuals submitted personalized maps to the Association that reflect their distinct experiences in Belleville. The Association then named the maps, “Une carte subjective de Belleville #--”, followed by a number. The maps’ titles are uninformative, reflect no personal creativity, and distinguish one map from another only by a digit; however, that anonymity and ambiguity in the names underlines the value of the individual as part of the whole. *Point de rassemblement* then presented many of the community-generated maps of Belleville on its website as a series. The “*Une carte subjective de Belleville*” project demonstrated how individuals act not only *in* but also *on* the urban landscape by delineating and illustrating myriad identities for their neighborhood. They can define the spaces in which they live and work, imposing their subjective impressions on those spaces and exposing them to peers and strangers alike, altering the way people see and experience that area. *Point de rassemblement* strives to strengthen and build a “force collective” in Belleville, and the *cartes subjectives* montage shows how individual perspectives can be compatible with unifying group ideals.

Point de rassemblement enlisted local Belleville associations (including those discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four) to recruit people to participate in the mapping project. The association Archipelia hosted an event in April 2013 at its facility near the Parc de Belleville where local elementary and middle school students made subjective maps of Belleville as they see it through their eyes. Eleven-year-old Fatoumata Bathily, a regular patron of Archipelia’s

²⁰⁶ “Plateforme artistique de cartes sensibles.”

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

after-school activities, expresses her vision of Belleville in the shape of a bow, placing the metro stop Pyrénées at its center.²⁰⁸ On either wing of the bow, she includes neighborhood attractions and stores, adding small illustrations of items that she associates with those places. The sites she selects for her map are in fact real and are located in the environs of the Pyrénées station. She provides directions to give a sense of location and proximity, noting that the Franprix grocery store is “à 2 pas tout là”, a mere “two steps” away from the metro.

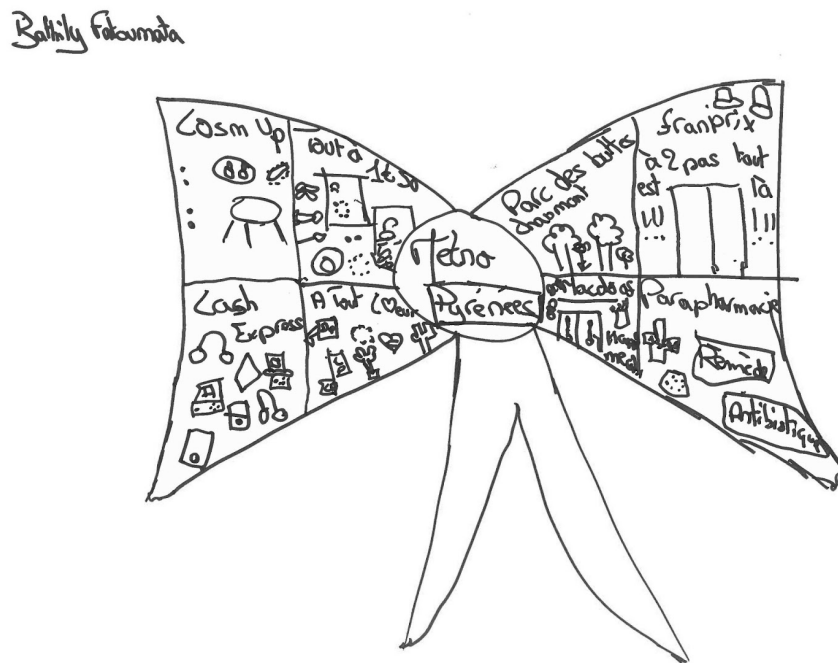


Figure 11: “Une carte subjective de Belleville #3—Archipelia 18 et 19 avril 2013”. Source: *Point de rassemblement*.

Bathily’s map shows commercial landmarks that a conventional map of the area around the Pyrenees metro stop might include, places whose existence could be verified by anyone walking around the neighborhood. Yet Bathily’s representation of her neighborhood shows a complete rejection of traditional cartography and logic. The left and right wings of the bow of

²⁰⁸ “Une carte subjective de Belleville #3 – Archipelia 18 et 19 avril 2013.” *Point de Rassemblement*. 26 April 2013.

Bathily's map correspond approximately to west and east, respectively, of the metro stop; however, Bathily has condensed distances and completely abandoned any kind of scale that could be used to determine relative proximity of sites to one another. On a conventional map, the Parc des Buttes Chaumont spans north and east of all of Bathily's sites. On her *carte subjective*, though, the student artist uses a figure of speech that is quite relative to describe the route from the metro to the Franprix. To be "*à 2 pas de quelque chose*" is not a literal but figurative way of expressing a very short distance. Bathily uses actual, undisputable sites as points of entry for viewers reading her map, but she promptly configures the sites to reflect how they appear in her mind's eye.

Bathily is a child, so it is unlikely that she has selected to portray the geography of that area in such an unconventional map. Nonetheless her conceptualization of space, unfiltered and uncensored by political or social understandings or constraints, demonstrates the unfettered liberty of the individual when left to her own mapping devices. Bathily's map is but one interpretation of how Belleville's inhabitants view and interpret this very socioeconomically and ethnically diverse neighborhood.

Another individual, known as S.B., developed an entirely different map for the *carte subjective* series. In what he describes as a "*carte sensorielle*", the author focuses on "*la présence de nombreuses 'attrapées visuelles' sur le Paris lointain*", such as the massive Montparnasse skyscraper and the Eiffel Tower, which she aligns with the Rue de Belleville. She places the *belvédère* at the summit of the Parc de Belleville toward the top of her map, showing how it opens onto a southwesterly view of Paris, providing "*petites surprises visuelles*" for viewers. Additionally, the author describes the elevation of the neighborhood as one of its major points of interest, "*même s'il oblige les cyclistes à s'armer de courage afin de braver les*

nombreuses côtes le composant".²⁰⁹ The aspects of Belleville that resonate most with S.B. are the elements of visual surprise that each street offers, as well as the physical experience of meandering through the neighborhood. Whether strolling with ease on a flat stretch of sidewalk or struggling to catch one's breath on a challenging hill, "*ces évasions vers le paysage lointain attrape [sic] le promeneur*". He concludes that Belleville's capacity to surprise both the eyes and the body is, "[...] *ce qui m'a le plus marqué [...] quand j'ai commencé à découvrir le quartier il y a une dizaine d'année[s]*".²¹⁰ S.B.'s *carte subjective* intimates to readers the artist's own visceral reactions and emotional attachments to Belleville's streets and landscapes.

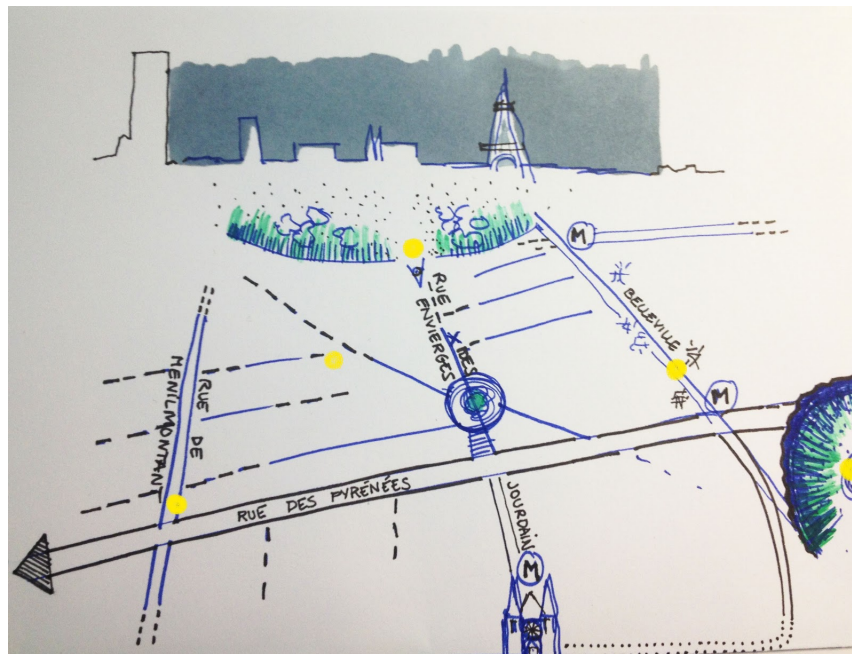


Figure 12 : “Une carte subjective de Belleville #6—Les vues de Belleville”. Source: *Point de rassemblement*.

Perhaps the most enduring *carte subjective de Belleville* is that of visual artist Susan Leen, enlisted by *Point de rassemblement* to create a subjective map that highlights “*des habitudes du quartier, des recoins insolites, des bonnes adresses*”²¹¹ and other unique landmarks

²⁰⁹ “Une carte subjective de Belleville #6 – Les vues de Belleville.” *Point de Rassemblement*. 16 May 2013.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ “Une carte subjective de Belleville.” *Point de rassemblement*. 26 April 2013.

in the Belleville neighborhood of Paris' 20th arrondissement. Leen, who served as an Artist in Residence in 2012-13 at La Forge de Belleville (now La Villa Belleville),²¹² has training in social cartography and develops projects that focus on issues of social inclusion, mobility, and habitat²¹³. She describes her work as being centered on a “mapping language” which she uses to “examine a social and relational geography, questioning the lived reality of space”²¹⁴. Leen’s temporary residence in Belleville and her inquiry into social spaces both inform her map, “Une carte subjective de Belleville #6”, which was printed onto tiles and mounted at the pavilion atop the Parc de Belleville, on a column opposite the *table d’orientation* discussed in Chapter Three of this dissertation.²¹⁵ While the *table d’orientation* presents a way of reading the entire city using the panoramic view of Paris from the *belvédère* at the Parc de Belleville as the point of origin, “*Une carte subjective de Belleville*” brings the focus inward, offering the passer-by an opportunity to “*se glisser dans la peau d’un Belvillois pour découvrir l’imaginaire collectif du quartier*”.²¹⁶

²¹² Villa Belleville is a cultural establishment run by the association AGETA/Collectif Curry Vavart. It is dedicated to visual arts and organizes cultural and social action projects that bring together residents of Belleville.

²¹³ “Info.” *Susan Leen*.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*

²¹⁵ “La Carte SUBJECTIVE de Belleville collée!”

²¹⁶ “Une carte subjective de Belleville.”



Figure 13: Artist Susan Leen mounts her *carte subjective de Belleville* at the *belvédère* of the Parc de Belleville in 2013. Sources: *Point de rassemblement* (left) and my photo (right). February 2015.

Leen's *carte subjective* takes as its shape the outline for the Belleville neighborhood used by conventional maps of Paris. Unlike the map generated by Bathily, Leen's map is somewhat tempered by conventional understandings of mapping. Her map is not outrageously exaggerated in terms of scale, but the artist has enlarged the size of the neighborhood while condensing distances between it and nearby sites, such as the Parc des Buttes Chaumont, the Père Lachaise cemetery, and the metro stops Jourdain and Place des Fêtes. Leen includes some topographical indicators to give a sense of Belleville's hilly terrain and relatively high elevation (compared with the rest of Paris). The center of Leen's map is the Parc de Belleville, its northwestern-most corner absent from her depiction. Scattered throughout the map are gray (with the exception of one yellow), teardrop-shaped labels, each containing a number that corresponds to a description on the legend provided to the left of the map. The legend shows four titles that sort the map's

sites into categories: *Vie du quartier*; *Paysage et curiosités*; *Histoire du quartier*;²¹⁷ and *L'art à Belleville*. Listed below those titles are the same numbers as those on the map accompanied by descriptions of the sites they represent. Finally, *Une carte subjective de Belleville #6* includes a QR (“Quick response”) code which viewers can use to remotely access the map’s complete legend. This added technological tool provides an interactive opportunity for observers who may want to explore the *carte subjective* in more detail or learn about similar projects sponsored by *Point de rassemblement*.

²¹⁷ Leen’s inclusion of a historical section is interesting because it reminds us that like maps, history is also subjective.

Leen's subjective map is both a group and individual endeavor. As a newcomer on an extended stay in Belleville, Leen depended on locals to introduce her to both the neighborhood's well-known establishments and its discrete corners. Though she drafted and configured the map's physical appearance, the residents of Belleville contributed greatly to the decisions of which elements to feature on the map. The categories with which she filters the sites and her descriptions of them in the map's legend provide insight into the collective vision of Belleville that she channels. One of the most prominent communal spaces in a French neighborhood is the market (*marché*). Several days each week, vendors converge on a geographically central space to sell fresh produces and artisanal goods. But the market is also a social space where people anticipate running into neighbors and friends. Leen includes two markets on her map, even advising readers that the "Marché de Belleville" (#27) is "Pas cher!", an opinion undoubtedly shared by other regular shoppers. Another shared cultural space that Leen includes is a soccer field labeled, "Terrain de foot: un vrai repère" (#28). To declare that space "a true landmark" demonstrates its significance to a vast portion of the population. Soccer, like the biweekly market, is a veritable French cultural institution. The inclusion of a space exclusively dedicated to a national pastime such as soccer²¹⁸ is evidence of its value to the Belleville community.

As much as it reveals the priorities and values of many residents, the map also gives insights into the artist's personal interests and into the social encounters she values in her neighborhood. Leen describes #14 on her map, the Église Notre Dame de la Croix, as a "*super église avec des expos de sculpture*".²¹⁹ Whereas the official website of the Mayor of 20th arrondissement describes the history of the church, its architecture and sculpted façade, and the

²¹⁸ Leen also names the Place Palikao (#18) as a popular soccer venue ("*le coin de foot & une bulle dans le quartier*").

²¹⁹ "Une carte subjective de Belleville."

paintings on display there,²²⁰ Leen's limited description foregoes history and painting and focuses instead on the aspect of the church that resonates the most with the artist herself: sculpture. Her personal preferences also appear in her descriptions of restaurants and cafés. She lists many of them by the type of establishment rather than name, such as "Café" (#1), "*Restaurant de copines*" (#2), or "*Restaurant Pho*" (#4). According to Leen, #16 is "*le meilleur troquet*" ("the best bar") in Belleville, an observation that is subjective and probably not shared by all Belleville residents. Leen does not even identify the bar by its name; perhaps, for her, the bar needs no name because she knows it so well. Similarly, she uses the slang word "*troquet*" instead of the standard word "bar", giving the watering hole a popular, colloquial image.

Through Leen's *carte subjective* of Belleville, we reimagine this particular Parisian neighborhood through the personalized and intimate lenses of the greater community and the individual. The map is not meant to be exclusive; after all, it is grafted to the overlook at the Parc de Belleville, visible for all to see. A simple invitation makes this clear: On the upper left corner of the map, above the legend, Leen beckons passersby to engage with her on a treasure hunt in Belleville: "*Partez à la découverte des trésors du quartier!*" In fact, that is precisely how Point de rassemblement envisions all of the subjective maps of Belleville. They are "treasure maps" on which, "*la route exacte n'est pas donnée, il faut flâner, se perdre peut-être parfois, demander sa route et ainsi partager un peu de ce quartier*".²²¹ Become lost, ask directions, and *share* the neighborhood: Far from reiterating the material of conventional maps, the subjective maps of Belleville engender discovery of and attachment to urban space among the collective group as well as the individual.

²²⁰ "L'Église Notre Dame de la Croix." *Mairie du 20^e arrondissement*.

²²¹ "Une carte subjective de Belleville."

French Artist Silvia Radelli undertook a personal mapping project similar to Belleville's *cartes subjectives* series. Her piece, entitled *Métrofémnin*, which she revealed on International Women's Day²²² on March 8, 2014, deals with an existing map of Paris: that of the *métropolitain*, the Parisian subway. The map is part of Radelli's larger work *Vies magnifiques*, a composite project created in 2013, which contains pieces of varying forms and materials. The exposition, advertised with the byline, "*Femmes aimées, admirées, porteuses de vies magnifiques*", focuses on several women writers, thinkers, and mythical characters whom Radelli recognizes in her collage-style art. *Vies magnifiques* has traveled around Paris and been on display in galleries and *associations* in the 5th, 11th, and 18th arrondissements.²²³ The *Métrofémnin* part of the exhibit most recently appeared in Paris' Galerie Bièvre for a three-week stint in March 2015 as part of the "*Femme dans la ville*" exposition sponsored by the Mayor of Paris' 13th arrondissement. Using that title as its theme, the event coincided with International Women's Day and featured street performances, art exhibits, and interactive debates with local female specialist in urban studies to respond to questions of how women occupy and appropriate public space.

The *Métrofémnin* work itself is a Parisian subway map reimagined through a gender-conscious lens where Radelli altered the names of the subway stops to reflect female historical, literary, and cultural figures. What we see first on Radelli's map are the familiar shape and colors of the Paris metro map. The artist selected nearly 100 stations, all named after men, and renamed them in honor of a diverse cast of "*femmes délaissées par la mémoire commune*",²²⁴ creating a

²²² Since 1917, the United Nations' International Women's Day, or International Women's Work Day, is observed every year on March 8.

²²³ Several venues in Paris (by arrondissement) in which *Vies magnifiques* appeared were Galerie L'Aléatoire (5th) in 2013 and March 2014; bookstore Violette and Co. (11th) in November 2014; Association Paris Macadam-Les Arcavals (18th) in February 2015; and Galérie Bièvre (13th) in March 2015. See Radelli, Sylvia, *Facebook*.

²²⁴ "Invitation Vernissage: Silvia Radelli, *Vies Magnifiques*." *Paris Macadam—Les Arcavals*, February 2015.

“female paradise” in which “Eleanor Roosevelt [took] the stop name for her husband out from under him”.²²⁵ Before her recreation of map, only two female figures appeared on it, one of whom was named alongside her husband (the metro stop “Pierre-Marie Curie”).²²⁶

From afar, *Métroféminin* looks identical to the traditional Parisian metro map; it retains the shape of the metro map, so it does not counter the spatial layout, proportions, and boundaries declared by the original Parisian metro map. Up close, however, familiar stop names have disappeared and been replaced by unfamiliar names, or at least ones that seem out of context. The new names are bolded and color-coded according to the color scheme of the traditional metro map and correspond to the metro line(s) to which they belong, while stations that appear the same on both the original and Radelli’s maps, such as Grands Boulevards and Pont de l’Alma, appear in their usual places in a gray, non-bolded font. Next to the map, Radelli provides a legend where she lists the newly baptized stations, categorizing them by metro line and placing their original name in gray next to the new name in the line’s color.

²²⁵ McIntyre, Abby. “If Women Ruled the World: Paris Metro Map Edition.” *Slate*. 19 March 2014.

²²⁶ Caous, Mélanie. “Et si les stations de métro rendaient hommage aux femmes?” *Glamour*. 19 March 2014.

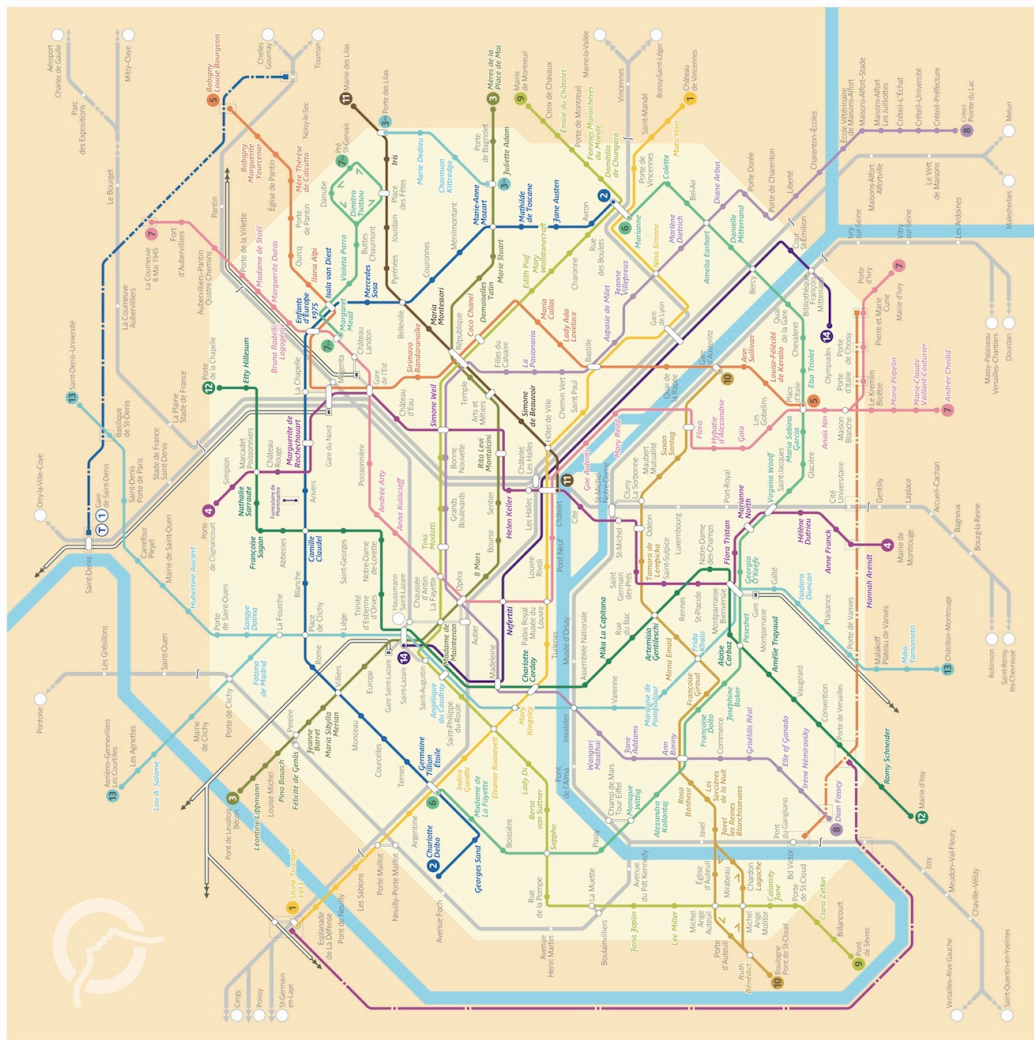


Figure 15: *Métroféminin* by artist Silvia Radelli. Source: Silvia Radelli.



In

Métroféminin, Silvia Radelli

Métroféminin, Radelli assigns female names to subway stops, an act with seemingly little to no significant effect on the geographic structure of the city or on the functioning of the Paris public transportation system. Yet the act of naming endows meaning as well as authority and belonging, and in this instance, Radelli consciously chooses to bestow names on the map that reflect an altogether new way of naming. For Radelli, naming is not an arbitrary process, nor are the selected names arbitrary choices. The newly christened stations are intended to “*raconte[r] une autre histoire du monde*”.²²⁷ Her project of remapping the Parisian subway map has two primary functions. The first is a subversion on the artist’s part of a patriarchal system of remembrance in which the lives and accomplishments of men overshadow those of women, accomplished by the transposition of female names over male names of Parisian metro stations. Although the subway map is hardly an encyclopedia of French history, it highlights specific individuals and moments, so as to paint a male-dominated narrative. In replacing male figures with their female counterparts, Radelli determines those corresponding characters by identifying logical links between them. It is important for the connections to be logical in order for Radelli’s subversive act to work: The replacements have to look evident in order to demonstrate how the act of naming and defining Parisian spaces has been largely determined by a myopic, hypermasculine memory, when they could just as easily have been represented by women. For instance, Radelli attributes the station “Pyramides”, named in homage to Napoléon Bonaparte’s 1798 victory in Egypt, to “Nefertiti”, the ancient Egyptian queen. The two names invoke nearly opposing histories: one of France’s imperialist endeavors the Middle East, the other of ancient Egyptian royalty. Similarly, the “Ranelagh” station, named for an 18th century Irish music aficionado, becomes “Janis Joplin” on Radelli’s map. Here, the artist introduces a layer of internationality to

²²⁷ “Invitation Vernissage: Silvia Radelli, *Vies Magnifiques*.”

the map. Whereas only a handful of the men listed in the original map are non-French, Radelli's map is a veritable mélange of nationalities and national histories. Americans Amelia Earhart, Georgia O'Keeffe, and Helen Keller appear on her map, as do Frida Kahlo of Mexico and Princess Diana of Wales. Thus *Métroféminin* represents a hypothetical reading of Paris as a feminine and feminist space by way of an itinerary that enhances our interest in those places.

Metro stops are markers that provide utilitarian information about neighborhoods and where things are located. They also serve as landmarks by which people identify themselves and the space they occupy within the larger Parisian metropolitan area. Parisians often describe where they live by stating their proximity to the nearest metro stop, for a street name may be too specific and an arrondissement too vast. And each metro stop inevitably conjures particular associations about that area of the city and its inhabitants. Trocadéro and Pont de Neuilly signal wealth and affluence, while Barbès-Rochechouart is home to immigrants and working-class families. Without the markers of the metro stations, the organization of the city is compromised; specific neighborhoods, points of correspondence, and even entire metro lines look unfamiliar and cannot be relied upon to provide helpful directions or references. Therefore, *Métroféminin* serves as a kind of "countermap", one that confronts and dislodges individuals' instinctual or learned knowledge of the city, altering the functional uses of the map.

The gender imbalance inscribed on the Paris metro map and highlighted by Radelli through her work indicates a greater power of maps to script and shape cultural spaces. Beyond her evident focus of her map on gender, *Métroféminin* reflects the subjective way in which Radelli views Paris. The second function of this work of art, then, is to show how maps are tools with which to organize culture and cultural space, using the Parisian metro map as a model. *Métroféminin* forces us to consider how the Paris metro reflects, and perhaps even imposes, a

social and cultural geography of the city. At the surface, we see Paris' metro map as a tool for spatial orientation within the geographic confines of Paris, not just below but also above ground.

Métrofémnin is not only geographically disorienting but also culturally disorienting: it reorganizes cultural space by reframing fundamental notions of French culture. The Parisian metro map is already embedded with cultural signs, and Radelli attributes meaning to those signs precisely by changing them. Take, for instance, Radelli's replacement of the stop name "Nation", which means the (French) people, by the name "Marianne". The figure of the Marianne is a mythical symbol of the French Revolution of 1789 and an enduring representation of the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity on which the Republic was born. Marianne was not a "real" person, but to this day she remains a metaphor for the French people. Her presence is pervasive throughout France: her face appears on French currency and stamps; her silhouette is the official symbol of the French government; and a statuary incarnation of her crowns the Place de la République. But Marianne is perhaps *too* visible in French society and has lost some of her symbolic value due to her ubiquity. As with the other "*femmes délaissées*" that Radelli has selected for her map, Marianne is very much alive symbolically on *Métrofémnin*. She literally stands in for the nation, providing an alternative perspective from which to approach questions of nationhood and French identity. Radelli's choice to include the Marianne on her map precisely exemplifies the importance of this subjective map: It sheds light on underemphasized or ubiquitous female figures, inscribing them onto the cultural space of the metro map in order to reorient how we conceptualize and understand French culture.

Mapping Social Ties in Literature: From Scudéry to Modiano

The intersection of mapping and literature yields textual and visual representations of spaces, people, and social bonds. Considered one of the first literary maps of the early modern period, the *Carte du pays de Tendre*, created by Madeleine de Scudéry in her 17th century novel *Clélie*, illustrates affective relationships not only between the story's protagonists but also among classes in contemporary French society. The *carte de Tendre* as a didactic text is linked to a tradition of similar allegories based on moral spiritual grounds, such as Boileau's *Tableau de Cébès* or Petrarch's "place of enamourment".²²⁸ Whether or not those maps were the direct inspiration for the *carte de Tendre*, they are nonetheless comparable representations of how relationships are performed among individuals and in society.²²⁹

The *carte de Tendre* is a cartography of affect, a skein of emotions that cannot be visualized in its entirety without the imagined perspective facilitated by the map. A prominent figure in salon life, Mlle. de Scudéry invented the *carte de Tendre* as an instruction manual for how to succeed at gaining her friendship. In the novel *Clélie*, the eponymous protagonist creates the map to illustrate how she categorizes her friends and acquaintances, in terms both of her feelings and their magnitude. Clélie is torn between two suitors, Horace and Aronce. Though Horace has the approval of her father, Clélie is emotionally inclined, for reasons she cannot articulate, to Aronce. She seeks to understand her inexplicable attraction to the latter, so she imposes her mind's eye view of sentimental relations onto a map. It is a physical rendering of the complicated twists, turns, and nuances that inevitably confront individuals as they seek to build a relationship with Mlle. de Scudéry, of whom the protagonist Clélie is the fictional avatar.

²²⁸ Munro, James S. *Mademoiselle de Scudéry and the Carte de Tendre*. Durham: University of Durham, 1986, pp. 35-36.

²²⁹ Ibid, 44.



Figure 16: The *Carte du pays de Tendre*, an affective map devised by the protagonist of Mlle. de Scudéry's novel *Clélie*. Source: *Amour-Humour*.

In addition to serving as a visual complement to the text of the novel, the *carte de Tendre* is an authoritative tool for Mlle de Scudéry. In creating the land and map of *Tendre*, Clélie devises a sort of test for her suitors by which she can evaluate whether they meet her requirements for true friendship. On her map she displays several possible itineraries to arrive at true friendship, and it is evident that some routes are preferable to others, for they avoid hazardous regions or obstacles. As it becomes clear that itineraries can have either good or bad implications, we begin to see the map as a reflection of the power of narrative and of Mlle. de Scudéry herself. As an author, she dictates how Clélie's relationships unfold, "describing the route that [has] been followed, thus controlling the nature of the friendship she would bestow on

the person who sought to win her heart”.²³⁰ Although in real life Mlle de Scudéry could not necessarily control the actions of others, she could reward or penalize those who embarked on the path to her *tendre amitié*.

While the *carte de Tendre* is a visual, metaphorical representation of a specific social domain in 17th century France, it is also a force that shapes and acts upon sociability, as does *Clélie*, the *roman de clef* in which the *carte* appears.²³¹ Such novels were “manuals of good behavior and prescriptive as well as descriptive”, providing ideals and goals of how society should be.²³² As such, the *carte de Tendre* could be seen as a “societal artifact”, in that it exemplifies how maps can serve as documents of self-preservation or for posterity.²³³ Although authorship of *Clélie* and the *carte de Tendre* is attributed to Mlle. de Scudéry, it was common for salon participants to draft and write together, signing their finished project in the name of the salon’s hostess.²³⁴ If we see the *carte de Tendre* as a communal effort, it appears to be a “shibboleth, a rallying point for group loyalties” that indeed came to be when M. Pellisson, the inspiration for the Horace character, expressed interest in joining Mlle de Scudéry’s salon.²³⁵ Salon admission needed to be codified explicitly; hence, the *carte de Tendre* was drawn up and came to represent the unified interests of the salon.

The lasting importance of the *carte de Tendre* as a rhetorical literary strategy is that it situates human emotions in socio-historical settings, for its “literary context provides an insight

²³⁰ Orenstein, Gloria Feman. “Journey through Mlle De Scudery’s Carte de Tendre: A 17th Century Salon Woman’s Dream/Country of Affection.” *Femspec* 3.2 (June 2002).

²³¹ Munro, 14.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Munro, 15.

²³⁴ Dejean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France*. New York: Columbia UP, 1991, pp. 72-73.

²³⁵ Munro, 27.

into lived experience”.²³⁶ Dejean corroborates that observation, remarking that, “[Scudéry’s] intricate analysis of the human heart formulated in tandem with a questioning of basic assumptions regarding woman’s social and legal status” were equally foundational to psychological realism.²³⁷ The “psychologically realistic” style of the *Clélie*, to which even her detractors at the time conceded, made a lasting mark on the French novel and, by some accounts, was a model for renowned writers such as Rousseau and Diderot.²³⁸

The psychological realism of Mlle. de Scudéry and writers of that vein underwent a theoretical evaluation in the 20th century. The modern impulse to explore maps and affect together can be attributed in large part to French theorist Guy Debord. Inspired initially by Surrealist thinkers, Debord diverged from that movement and adhered more closely to the Letterists. He eventually went on to found the *Situationiste Internationale*, a group of social revolutionaries heavily influenced by avant-garde movements who believed that continued expansion and socioeconomic development of the city, or urbanism, since the mid-19th century had created physical and societal hierarchies that isolated people from one another and the city.²³⁹ Debord would eventually become one of the most prominent critics of the late industrial society and its dehumanization.

In 1955, Debord coined the term *psychogéographie*, a kind of knowing/knowledge that he defined as, “*l’étude des lois exactes et des effets précis du milieu géographique, consciemment aménagé ou non, agissant directement sur le comportement affectif des individus*”.²⁴⁰ Specifically, Debord’s *psychogeographies* were concerned with the relationship

²³⁶ Munro, 18.

²³⁷ *Tender Geographies*, 92.

²³⁸ Ibid, 86 and 92.

²³⁹ See Debord, Guy. *La Société du spectacle*. Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1967.

²⁴⁰ Debord, *Œuvres*. Paris : Gallimard, 2006, pp. 204.

between geography and the psyche, in particular the sentimental attachment to urban space.²⁴¹ Debord thought about the “psychogeographic relief of Paris” as a metaphor for a “mental map surface”; his perception of the city was inseparable from the psychological and emotions ties that bound him to it.²⁴² As Debord and the Situationists moved throughout Paris, they drew their own psychogeographic schemas, constructing, “idiosyncratic maps, all different and yet all strangely reminiscent of each other”, for they were all traced in the same Parisian landscape.²⁴³

Like Mlle. de Scudéry, Debord sought an escape from the platonic and Cartesian ideal of the suppression of the body by intellect, and instead encouraged spontaneity, creativity, and innovation, which he attributed to movement in the city this is the part to emphasize. As “*promoteurs de création*”, Debord and the members of the *Situationiste Internationale* aimed to detach the experience of the city from prescribed ways of physical movement and routes within it, favoring instead a less intellectual and more instinctual approach.²⁴⁴ In the first issue of the publication *International situationiste* in 1958, Debord introduced the *dérive*, or “drift”, which he defined as a “[m]ode de comportement expérimental lié aux conditions de la société urbaine : technique du passage hâtif à travers des ambiances variées. Se dit aussi, plus particulièrement, pour désigner la durée d’un exercice continu de cette expérience”.²⁴⁵ The *dérive*, a way of traversing the city on foot, combines randomness of movement (of the body and

²⁴¹ Wood, 189-190.

²⁴² Ibid, 194.

²⁴³ Sadler, Simon. *The Situationist City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998, pp. 65.

²⁴⁴ *Œuvres*, 445.

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 358.

in terms of spatial direction) with an individual's acute (if unconscious) psychogeographical understanding of that city.²⁴⁶

Both a mindset and an activity, the *dérive* enables individuals to relate emotionally to their environment, rendering them mindful of their physical placement in the city and yet “drifted” in accordance to how the city moves them beyond their conscious control. Although a *dérive* could indicate predetermined start and end points, a practitioner could still embrace the freedom of creating a random and spontaneous itinerary between them. The city itself can assist in individuals' unconscious navigation of its spaces, as it did the Situationists, offering *plaques tournantes*, geographical points that attracted the drifters to them and subsequently redirected them elsewhere (which I will cover in greater detail later).

For the Situationists, the *dérive* was not merely theoretical; it was a practiced exploration, the goal of which was to become intoxicated by the dreamlike, surreal city. In fact, inebriation was a common prerequisite for the *dérives* upon which Debord and his fellow Situationists embarked. The self-induced drunkenness was meant in part to dampen intellectual power over those participating in the *dérive*; so too was the *dérive* itself a method of intoxication, an anesthetic that Debord hoped would relieve him of his anxiety in light of the commodification of Paris and the disappearance of the spontaneous, unanticipated event.

The Situationists created “situations” or happenings through which they sought to negate the alienation brought on by urbanism. As the Situationists moved throughout the city, they drew their own psychogeographies, constructing “idiosyncratic maps, all different and yet all strangely reminiscent of each other”, for they were all traced over the Parisian landscape.²⁴⁷ As the

²⁴⁶ See Debord, “Théorie de la Dérive.” *Internationale Situationniste* 2 (1958), in *Œuvres*, pp. 251-257. This essay was first published in 1956 in the Belgian Surrealist/Letterist journal *Les Lèvres nues*, vol. 9.

²⁴⁷ Huhtamo, Erkki. “(Un)walking at the Fair: About Mobile Visualities at the Paris Universal Exposition of 1900.” *Journal of Visual Culture* 12.1 (April 2013), pp. 65.

working class began to shrink and Paris underwent major post-war aesthetic changes (such as the construction of housing developments on the periphery and the erasure of *Les Halles* and similar markets), the Situationists became increasingly anxious that those changes foreshadowed “the dawn of a homogenized and historically brainwashed” Paris. The “situations”, which gave its name to the Situationist Internationale, encouraged a “playful yet militant engagement with the city”,²⁴⁸ constituting both a ludic exercise and a serious pedestrian revolution that allowed for the reappropriation of space and social relations in spite of ubiquity of capitalism.²⁴⁹ Psychogeography, what Alastair Bonnett calls the “footloose (and foot-based) geographical praxis”²⁵⁰ best articulated in aimless walks throughout the city, reflects Debord’s nostalgia for a Paris still belonging to the pedestrian and not yet overtaken by car traffic.

It is not surprising, then, that the affective tone realized by Debord and the Situationists through the *dérive* was one of nostalgia for the past, for a Paris prior to massive urbanization projects and the commercialized, capitalist city experience (for Debord, the “spectacle”). It was perhaps even a cry for the Classical era, for Debord appropriated numerous phrases from Blaise Pascal and the Cardinal de Retz, his models for roaming Paris and for writing.²⁵¹ The Situationists longed for the bohemian and working-class Paris of the late-19th and early-20th centuries.²⁵² Bonnett identifies two kinds of nostalgia present in the longing of the Situationists: “rooted” nostalgia, in which intricate and emotional reactions are often bound up with feelings of

²⁴⁸ Bonnett, Alastair. “The Nostalgias of Situationist Subversion.” *Theory Culture Society* 23.5 (2006), pp. 36.

²⁴⁹ In spite of the pervasiveness of capitalism, Situationists nonetheless viewed opportunities to critique and challenge that system. See Plant, Sadie. *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age*. London: Routledge, 1992.

²⁵⁰ Bonnett, 35.

²⁵¹ Consider, for example, Debord’s appropriation of Pascal’s *Discours sur les passions de l’amour*. See Guy Debord and the Situationist International: *Texts and Documents*, edited by Tom McDonough, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004, pp. 222.

²⁵² Bonnett, 34. Bonnett speaks of the “passionate” relationship of the Situationists to Paris. That passion is exemplified by Debord’s *Guide psychogéographique de Paris: Discours sur les passions de l’amour* (1957).

loss associated with childhood;²⁵³ and “unrooted” nostalgia, in which “what we encounter is rarely an attachment to particular periods or places that have been lost. Rather, [it is] a roving disposition; a restless, seemingly self-sufficient, state of yearning”.²⁵⁴ By performing *dérives* in the city, meandering through it according to their psychogeographic knowledge of it, the Situationists awakened within themselves nostalgia for a Paris still belonging to the pedestrian and not yet overtaken by car traffic, a Paris that perhaps have never existed but was instead an imagined ideal of a utopic urban community.²⁵⁵

The continued prominence of psychological realism and a significant recurrence of the phenomenon of *psychogéographie* in literature are evident in the literary maps of French author Patrick Modiano. Like his predecessors Mlle. de Scudéry and Debord, Modiano “writes” maps into his novels and non-fiction works, showing how movement of individuals within city spaces is necessarily linked to their sentimental attachment to it. His maps are not images or graphic representations of geographic space; rather, they are incorporated into the written text itself. Modiano favors Paris as the inspirational ground zero for the figurative maps he illustrates through his narrations. Even in his stories where Paris is not the explicit setting, Modiano inevitably compares the selected setting to places in the French capital.²⁵⁶ Similar to Louis-Sébastien Mercier’s *Tableau de Paris*, Modiano’s novels do not purport to present a touristic guide to Paris; rather, the Parisian spaces he evokes compose the points of the physical and sentimental *dérives* of his characters. Modiano supplements his real Parisian landmarks with imaginary spaces, too. His blending of the referential and the imaginary are reflected directly

²⁵³ Bonnett, 39.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 33.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 35.

²⁵⁶ Zelinsky, Zeno. “Présence urbaine et images maritimes chez Patrick Modiano”. *French Cultural Studies* 23.4 (November 2012), pp. 359.

through his characters, whose wanderings throughout Paris are frequently accompanied by musings about the past and what could have been.²⁵⁷

Modiano's *oeuvre* highlights the subjective and affective values attached to places, attending to established *lieux de mémoire*, all the while articulating the possibility of ignoring, or even subverting, existing *lieux de mémoire*, the scripts from which they are born, and the scripts they help to construct. He prompts his readers to reconsider what constitutes a *lieu de mémoire*; if we no longer accept particular sites as valuable artifacts of a singular, "legitimate" French identity, history, and culture, then we open ourselves up to a more meaningful and personal experience of France's spaces, including Paris.

Although Modiano has an extensive collection of texts, including several novels and autobiographical texts, he structures the bulk of his works in a similar fashion and deals with familiar themes of self-identity, wandering, and nostalgia. For that reason, I have chosen to focus on the novel *Dans le café de la jeunesse perdue*, published in 2007. In that text, Modiano uses the literal geographic places and spaces of Paris as templates for landmarks, or *repères*, with which to construct subjective maps. This novel, which Modiano delivers as four narrations of streams of consciousness, recounts bits and pieces of the story of Jacqueline Delanque, a young Parisian from Pigalle with an unpromising future who is in search of something to remove her from her rather bleak and lonely life. She finds temporary work as a secretary and marries an older, higher-level co-worker before finally, after many evenings of wandering throughout the city in search of solace and meaning, she decides not to return to her husband. Her story is told by four first-person narrators: a patron of the Latin Quarter café that Jacqueline frequents; a private detective, hired by Jacqueline's estranged husband to locate her; a close acquaintance

²⁵⁷ Zelinsky, 360.

who sees the most unguarded sides of Jacqueline; and Jacqueline herself. Each narrator sheds light onto slightly different aspects of Jacqueline's story, portraying (through geographic and literary points of reference) a woman drifting not only through the city but also through life. Although I would argue that each of the narrators subjectively maps Paris for themselves as well as for Jacqueline, I will focus on Jacqueline to streamline my discussion here.

Modiano invokes canonical French authors and books as well as more obscure writers and titles, illustrating an intertextual map that marks the author's act of situating himself and his *oeuvre* within the greater French literary tradition. The most evident (or "surface") map throughout the text is arguably the geographic map of Paris, the city in which the book takes place. Yet even before the novel begins, Modiano constructs the intertextual map, an indicator of his admiration for Debord, the Situationist, counter-cultural thinker for whom the labyrinthine streets of Paris were the greatest source of creativity and individuality. Modiano introduces his novel with an epigraph in which he directly quotes Debord: "*À la moitié du chemin de la vraie vie, nous étions environnés d'une sombre mélancolie, qu'ont exprimée tant de mots railleurs et tristes, dans le café de la jeunesse perdue*". That reference, taken from one of Debord's films, expresses the inevitable sadness of discovering that youth and the past have disappeared, and that we are resigned to live in the present, which, for Debord and the Situationists, was an intolerable reality. Debord's quotation is itself a reference to another literary figure, one who features prominently in Debord's writing: Dante. From the first pages of his novel, then, Modiano transposes a geographical and intertextual *repère*: the *café de la jeunesse perdue* of Guy Debord, and Dante's reference to life's spiritual wanderings.

In his epigraph, Modiano presents a double literary allusion. Already, he marks two literary *lieux de mémoire*, both penned by writers whose texts reveal an utmost concern for the

labored journey of life itself. Modiano frames *dérives* in his text around *lieux de memoire* in Paris, but they are not *lieux de mémoire* that reflect official narratives of France, French society, and French identity. The *lieux de mémoire* in Modiano's novel are indeed *points de repère*, or landmarks, but they vary according to the narrators and characters, and so too does their significance. In *Dans le café de la jeunesse perdue*, there are two prominent forms of *lieux de mémoire*: geographic (real) sites; and figurative, specifically literary, sites. Together, those *lieux de mémoire* are constellations in the narrators' and characters' subjective maps of Paris, maps that express the distinct "*sombre mélancolie*" of nostalgia.

Jacqueline's existence in Paris and in the eyes of herself and the other narrators depends on her aimless movement throughout the city's streets and neighborhoods. Her drifting begins during her adolescent years: while her mother works long hours as a server at the Moulin Rouge, Jacqueline finds herself alone and anxious at home. The detective narrator, Caisley, notes that around that time, Jacqueline was picked up twice by the police for "*vagabondage de mineure*".²⁵⁸ She does not cease to walk, though; in fact, she continues to stroll aimlessly, often adhering to similar itineraries but always, as she says, "walking further and further away".²⁵⁹ The police escort her home after one of her arrests, and once in her apartment, she feels overwhelmed by anxiety and fear, "*cette sensation d'angoisse [...] qui était toujours plus forte que la peur—cette sensation d'être désormais livrée à moi-même, sans aucun recours*".²⁶⁰ Walking gives Jacqueline an escape from herself: guided only by her unconscious psychogeographic handle of the city, she can drift without being in control. The free, untethered movement of her *dérive* is a welcome

²⁵⁸ Modiano, 61.

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 79. My translation.

²⁶⁰ Modiano, 82.

drunkenness that lightly overcomes her,²⁶¹ much like the intoxicated feeling of Debord during his *dérives*. She recalls that carefree sensation when, “*je me suis laissée envahir par une ivresse que l’alcool ou la neige [la cocaïne] ne m’aurait jamais procurée*”.²⁶²

But wandering throughout Paris is not some bohemian, romanticized *flânerie* for Jacqueline; her philosophy, which she succinctly summarizes, is: “*Marche ou crève*”.²⁶³ This is because Jacqueline’s existence is tied nearly exclusively to her endless promenades in the Parisian streets; without them, she is not her true self and is overcome by a restlessness so intense that, “*Mes seuls bons souvenirs sont des souvenirs de fuite ou de fugue*”.²⁶⁴ In those sober moments of stillness, she detects her own unrooted nostalgia for an unrealized past, for what could have been. She abruptly ends reflection on those fond memories of her past walks when she flatly declares, “*Et puis la vie a continué, avec des hauts et des bas*”.²⁶⁵ Without her *dérives*, she has no purpose and cannot meaningfully connect to the city or to those around her; the events of her life become mere ups and downs, blips on a radar screen.

It is through her drifting, then, that Jacqueline searches for and creates connections to Paris and people in Paris. She, like all people, is in search of connections, a necessity that the detective expresses quite profoundly in his narration:

Dans cette vie, qui vous apparaît quelquefois comme un grand terrain vague sans poteau indicateur, au milieu de toutes les lignes de fuite et les horizons perdus, on aimerait

²⁶¹ While she is still underage, Jacqueline wanders into a bar called Sans-Souci, which translates to “Without a care”. She compares the intoxicated feeling she experiences during her walks to one of her first drinks at that bar: “Une ivresse me prenait, si légère...J’en avais éprouvé une semblable le soir où j’avais bu une coupe de champagne au Sans-Souci. J’avais la vie devant moi”. See Modiano, pp. 80-83.

²⁶² Modiano, 102.

²⁶³ Ibid, 99.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 102. Jacqueline acknowledges that this need to flee is part of her composition: “Je n’étais vraiment moi-même qu’à l’instant où je m’enfuyais”.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 103.

*trouver des points de repère, dresser une sorte de cadastre pour n'avoir plus l'impression de naviguer au hasard. Alors, on tisse des liens, on essaye de rendre plus stables des rencontres hasardeuses.*²⁶⁶

Jacqueline develops meaningful relationships to Parisian spaces and other people during her walks; for instance, during her “drifts” throughout Paris, Jacqueline discovers the two most important geographic sites to her: the café Condé and the bookstore Mattei. It is in those two spaces that Jacqueline meets people with whom she feels some connection. She remarks that she stumbled upon the Condé: “*J’allais faire des rencontres. Il suffisait d’entrer dans n’importe quel café*”.²⁶⁷ She becomes particularly enamored of the café Condé, which the first narrator, a fellow patron, remarks has been dubbed by a “sentimental philosopher” as the meeting spot of “*la jeunesse perdue*”.²⁶⁸ The narrator insists on the magnetic power of the Condé to attract passersby, including Jacqueline. The description of this place as irresistible and unavoidable echoes Debord’s and the Situationists’ designation of *plaques tournantes*, places in the city that have a near “magnetic” ability to alter the route of individuals. In “The Naked City”, one of two subjective Situationist maps of Paris, Debord refers in the map’s subtitle to “plaques tournantes”.²⁶⁹ As their literal definition of “hinge” or “railway turntable” implies, *plaques tournantes* are places in the city that tug individuals in different directions, functioning as what Wood calls “psychogeographic switching stations”.²⁷⁰ Individuals who perform the *dérive* drift

²⁶⁶ Modiano, 51-52. The detective Caisley invokes on the words uttered by Jacqueline’s estranged husband: “On essayer de créer des liens”. It is ironic that the husband speaks of the human need to bond with others, when it is precisely his inability to do so with his wife that prompted her to leave him.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 83.

²⁶⁸ Ibid, 16.

²⁶⁹ *Œuvres*, 190-191.

²⁷⁰ Wood, 187.

according to how those spaces pull them, showing a certain power that the city can hold over its inhabitants when they yield to its forces.

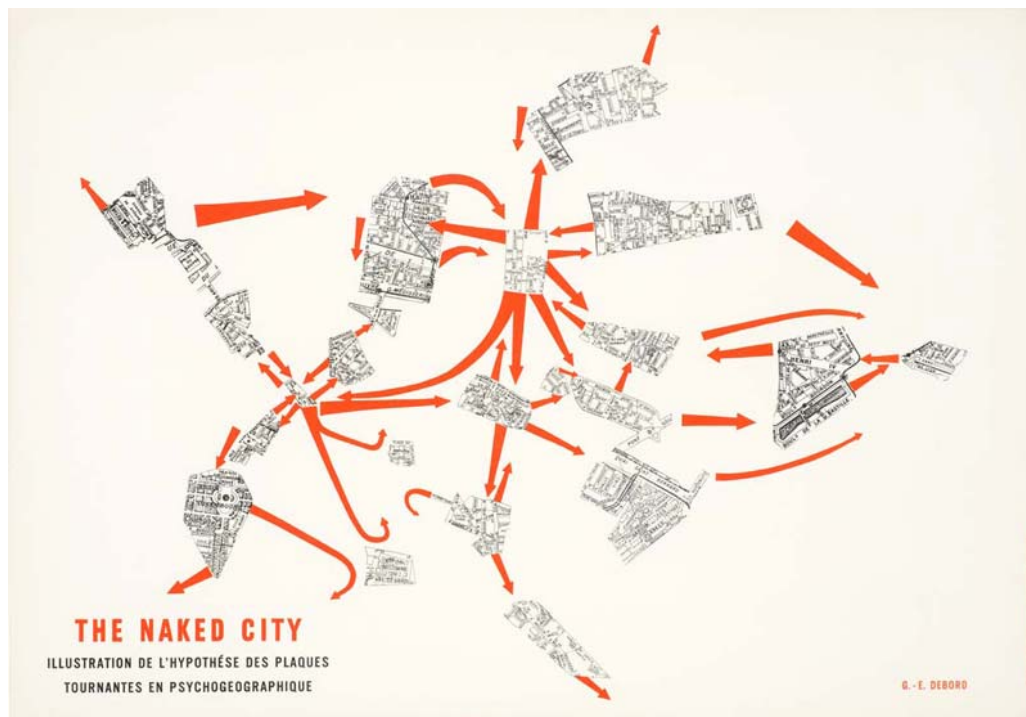


Figure 17: Guy Debord's "The Naked City", a Situationist map published in his *Oeuvres*.

According to the narrator, the Condé is a *plaque tournante*, for, “il était inévitable de dériver vers lui”.²⁷¹ The narrator acknowledges that that café is but one place that beckons people, stating, “J’ai toujours cru que certains endroits sont des aimants et que vous êtes attiré vers eux si vous marchez dans leurs parages. Et cela de manière imperceptible, sans même vous en douter”.²⁷²

The second place of value that she finds on her aimless walks is a bookstore on the boulevard de Clichy. She enjoys its calm and quiet, especially late at night when it remains open with few customers. She admits that like the café Condé, “cette librairie n’a pas été simplement

²⁷¹ Modiano, 18.

²⁷² Ibid.

un refuge mais aussi une étape dans ma vie”.²⁷³ The calm, intellectual feel of both venues soothe her, for in those places of inquiry she also discovers individuals and ideas that permit her to embark on emotional and spiritual *dérives* to escape her loneliness and emptiness. At the Condé, she meets intellectuals, authors, and café regulars who discuss philosophy, art, and the meaning of life. These conversations appeal to Jacqueline and give her access to ways of thinking beyond her physical existence. At her favorite bookstore, she is referred to a text entitled *Horizons perdus* by the mythical author Guy de Vere, about *les sciences occultes*. This undeniable reference to Guy Debord represents a *mise en abyme* where Modiano has inserted Debord himself to reiterate the dreamlike nature of the city that Debord so yearned to experience, even if it were a nonexistent, “occult” image. *Horizons perdus* ironically helps Jacqueline find herself, revealing to her many imaginary horizons and worlds she can explore. She goes on to spend many evenings with the author, de Vere, at group readings that he hosts. Jacqueline stumbled upon Guy de Vere and *Horizons perdus* as she had stumbled upon the café Condé: she did not search for him but found him serendipitously through her *dérive*. As her confidant-narrator Roland notes, “*Guy de Vere ne cherchait aucun disciple...C’était eux qui venait à lui, sans qu’il les sollicite*”.²⁷⁴ Like the café, then, Guy de Vere possess a magnetic aura, one that Jacqueline cannot ignore and towards which she drifts in her physical wanderings in Paris and in her emotional instability.

While we can detail the lives of many people in *Dans le café de la jeunesse perdue*, it is perhaps more interesting to see them and the narrators as well as *lieux de mémoire* on a larger subjective map. This is because the text itself is a subjective map: each narrator recounts his or her part, filling in gaps left by the others. But not all the gaps are filled in, and we really do not

²⁷³ Modiano, 99-100.

²⁷⁴ Ibid, 141.

know all that much about Jacqueline or the other characters. Some readers may be disappointed by the book's format: Some seemingly less important details (to the reader) are stretched into long tangents; other desired pieces of information are never provided; and chronology is subjective, as it changes. But if we step back a bit from the plot and intrigue, we find that Modiano has taken us on a *dérive* of his own, through the minds of several individuals he encounters along his writing journey. It is as Jacqueline says : "*je ne pretais aucune attention à l'intrigue ; seuls les paysages m'intéressaient*".²⁷⁵ It is not the plot of *Dans le café* that counts: it is the journey of *la lecture*, the drifting that we the reader perform, and the textual landmarks along the way that cause us to meander, to follow our own personal thoughts and drift into our own memories, creating for ourselves subjective maps of our reading, and perhaps even of nostalgia.

²⁷⁵ Modiano, 79.

CHAPTER THREE: Reclaiming Urban Space, One Step at a Time: the Nomadic Movements of Rollerblading and Parkour²⁷⁶

The practice of subjective mapping as a way of reclaiming urban space for pedestrians is a discursive and figurative activity where the mappers generate personalized maps of Paris that portray the city as they envision or imagine it, according to their unique perspectives and experiences. The mappers engage with and contest conventional understandings and values of Parisian spaces, especially beliefs or practices that obscure the presence of pedestrians and limit their emotional connection supposedly shared urban spaces. The previous chapter addressed imaginary paths and depictions of the city, delving deep enough into the sensibility of the mapper to uncover in Debord and Modiano the portrayal of an imagined nostalgia, a sense of loss for a version of Paris that never existed. But the act of mapping Paris through a subjective lens is not strictly limited to imagined or theoretical illustrations of the individual in urban space. We can also locate concrete, physical iterations of subjective mapping in the embodied practices of rollerblading and parkour. Those two disciplines as they exist in Paris consist of distinct repertoires of physical movements and have varying levels of visibility to spectators. Rollerbladers and parkour practitioners are not pedestrians and therefore relate differently to urban spaces; their movements are less fundamental than walking and could be labeled alternative in terms of how they navigate urban space by foot. But that is precisely how all three figures are intertwined: they each depend on the street as their primary space of movement, and they navigate it by foot. In that way, rollerbladers and parkour practitioners can represent the

²⁷⁶ The practice of *parkour* originated in France, but the term itself is now used universally. Therefore, I will not italicize “parkour” because it is not exclusive to the French language.

pedestrian as users of the street who use their unmediated bodies to inhabit the city and who rely on its public spaces for their existence.

Rollerblading and parkour are experiments of innovative bodily movements that have gained immense popularity in Paris and throughout France during the past thirty years. They are nomadic urban practices defined by perpetual motion; the scenery around them changes, as do the surfaces they touch, the props they utilize, and the moves and poses they exhibit while moving about Paris. Both disciplines originated in the streets; that is, they were born in the urban setting and have flourished there, garnering significant followings and, more important, the attention of the City of Paris. Rollerblading is the relatively well-known phenomenon of skating, though in this chapter I discuss specifically group rollerblading as it functions to reclaim space in Paris; and parkour (which I describe in greater detail below) is way of moving through urban space that involves full-body, gymnastic like movements. While the disciplines themselves possess distinct sets of physical moves, they share the need to maintain an active presence in the urban spaces of Paris in order to exist. Both rollerblading and parkour exemplify grassroots initiatives to take back the streets for pedestrians, and the unfettered presence of rollerbladers and parkour practitioner, or *traceurs*, has serious implications for the plight of pedestrians in those spaces.

The French associative structure is useful, although to varying degrees, in the effort to restore a sense of belonging to rollerbladers and *traceurs* in the streets of Paris. In chapters two and four, I explore how French associations encourage social bonding by united individuals with shared interests. Associations occupy a similar role in rollerblading and parkour. During *randonnées*, or excursions, that are organized by prominent rollerblading associations, pedestrians on wheels flood the streets and boulevards otherwise occupied by cars, trucks, and

cyclists. The *randonnées* would not be possible without the permission granted by the City of Paris and its police. While rollerblading *randonnées* occupy massive stretches of Parisian streets for a period of several hours, parkour occupies the streets in a subtler but equally influential manner. There are fewer prominent parkour associations in Paris, and their relationship with the government of Paris has not yet reached the strength of that enjoyed by rollerblading associations. Nonetheless, parkour associations mitigate the distance between disparate, individual *traceurs* and the City and advocate for the continued presence and importance of parkour in Paris. Most recently, parkour associations negotiated with the City to ensure the construction of an exclusive parkour training facility in the center of Paris. While it was not overwhelming support from the City of Paris but rather the popularity of parkour among Parisians that even permitted the proposal for the space to garner support, the project required the City's openness to the sport as well as its funding, demonstrating how taking back the streets for pedestrians through parkour also has an undisputable top-down component.

As nomadic disciplines, both rollerblading and parkour are inherently ephemeral: they are done or performed, and then they end. Rollerbladers and *traceurs* are constantly moving, so their presence in urban spaces is short-lived. While they do not permanently physically alter the city, they absolutely change it moment by moment. Perhaps they have been observed and are later remembered or forgotten; but for those who do not see them, it is as if they were never in the streets to begin with. Rollerblading and parkour are practices that disappear, for their actors leave little traces of themselves, compounding their anonymity. An important result of the ephemerality of the disciplines and the anonymity of their practitioners is that the movements and thus experiences of the rollerblader and parkour *traceur* cannot be captured and thus commodified. They can be taught, displayed, shown, and even photographed, but they belong to

those performing them. By remaining anonymous, unknown, and, most important, unable to be commodified, rollerbladers and *traceurs* represent taking back the streets through the practice of communal physical movements. They may be one person or one group, but through their anonymity they represent *any* rollerblader or *traceur*. They stake a claim in all of the city's spaces, not only for themselves but also for the Parisian pedestrian as an abstraction.

Rollerbladers and *traceurs* present new and distinct choreographies by which their bodies can drift through the urban environment. I use the term “drift” here intentionally to invoke the Situationists, the *dérive*²⁷⁷, and psychogeographies, for both rollerblading and parkour hone and demand a psychogeographic knowledge of the city through *détournement*,²⁷⁸ the appropriation and reterritorialization²⁷⁹ of commodified practices and images of urban space. The Situationists exuded a quest for movement in the city that was neither conventional nor condoned. Rollerbladers and *traceurs* depict a similar enthusiasm for experimentation with spontaneous behaviors in unlikely public settings. They seem to approach Paris with a mentality akin to that of Guy Debord and his followers, by which they succumb to the power of the city to influence their mental perceptions of it and their placement in it. Psychogeography, as envisioned by Debord, explores, « *l'interaction de l'urbanisme et du comportement et la perspective des changements révolutionnaires de ce système* »²⁸⁰. To follow the instinct of the body as it is guided by the compass of the city could lead to entirely new ways of conceptualizing the purposes and uses of the city, as well as the power of the individual within it. Rollerbladers and *traceurs* do

²⁷⁷ I discuss the Situationists and Debord's concept of the *dérive* in more detail in Chapter Two.

²⁷⁸ “*Détournement*” denotes a conscious twisting of conventional actions in the city so that they no longer retain their standard meaning (or lack thereof). Through *détournement*, says Debord, individuals redefine their surroundings so as to undermine the city's structures as oppressive, capitalist sites. See Debord, “Mode d'emploi du *détournement*,” *Les Lèvres nues*, vol. 8 (May 1956), in *Œuvres*, pp. 221-229.

²⁷⁹ Stevens, Quentin. *The Ludic City: Exploring the potential of public spaces*. London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 17.

²⁸⁰ *Œuvres*, 289.

not submit entirely to the will of the city or their unconscious intuition. There are codified, less spontaneous forms of each practice; however, at their core, rollerbladers and *traceurs* are “urban adventurers” who see Paris as a “frontier of uncertainty”²⁸¹, a ludic city full of unpredictable outcomes in which they can utilize its spaces in innovative and unintended ways that depart from their standard utilitarian purposes. Rollerblading and parkour can be read as a kind of play in which the actors perform unconventional movements in Paris’ public spaces for purposes other than political or social ones, thus defining those spaces according to the unique behaviors or series of moves they execute there.

The image of the city as “ludic” or playful endows urban spaces with a social value essential to role of rollerblading and parkour as movements that facilitate social bonding. Play is a valuable communicative activity that is viewed by societies as innocuous, influential, or a combination of the two. Gregory Bateson theorized play as a kind of discursive metacommunication by which humans exchange signals that appear to have one meaning but which in fact carry a different message. Through play, actors communicate messages to one another, and there is an inherent expectation that a message will be understood by what it does *not* signify. Play is therefore always part of a larger discourse in which actions correspond to one particular meaning while not corresponding to others.

The structuring and layout of a city’s public spaces largely determines whether that city fosters play or playful movement. Urban engineering researchers Rawlinson and Guaralda analyze the bodily experience of play and how it is perceived in urban space²⁸². On the one hand, many municipalities (and onlookers) tend to view play as an instigator of chaos; alternatively,

²⁸¹ Kidder, Jeffrey L. “Parkour: Adventure, Risk, and Safety in the Urban Environment.” *Qualitative sociology* 36.3 (2013), pp. 233.

²⁸² Rawlinson, Christopher & Guaralda, Mirko, “Play in the city : Parkour and architecture.” April 2011.

fewer municipalities consider play a means to creativity. In traditional western theory and metaphysics, play stands in opposition to seriousness and productivity. It represents an irrational departure from pragmatism and conscious reasoning²⁸³. Depending on how a jurisdiction chooses to view play, it will sponsor design that either stifles play or allows it to flourish. Both situations ultimately affect the emotional attachment of individuals to public spaces and to the city as a whole, though the nature of those attachments differs significantly. Rawlinson and Guaralda report that the current tendency by contemporary governments is to create public spaces that are risk-averse rather than risk-aware. The distinction between spaces that encourage space for risk and those that diminish it is an important one, for municipalities that act on interest instead of the other end up restricting or permitting kinds of human interaction within their spaces. Inevitably, certain populations are favored in this prioritization while others are disadvantaged.

The followings that rollerblading and parkour have garnered over the last three decades consist of individuals seeking the physical and mental benefits of the practices without the desire to make a social statement. Yet their visibility inevitably brings attention to the plight of all kinds of people moving about the city on foot. For that reason, some observers have classified rollerbladers and *traceurs* as activists who seek not only to maintain public space free of cars in which to practice their disciplines but also to fight for the presence of pedestrians in those spaces. There is certainly strength in numbers, as prominent associations for both disciplines have demonstrated; however, their brand of activism is intentionally muted so that the focus remains the welfare of pedestrians as a generic group. The reticence of rollerbladers and *traceurs* to organize themselves into massive political or social movements further demonstrates their

²⁸³ Gilloch (1996), quoted in Stevens, *The Ludic City*, pp. 29.

desire to remain anonymous, perhaps to maintain the universality of the disciplines and, more generally, the universality of the street as a site for social interaction among pedestrians.

Whether in groups or independently, rollerbladers and *traceurs* do not occupy the same space for very long, for mobility is inherent to their disciplines. The ephemerality of their movements reinforces their anonymity; rollerbladers and *traceurs* are not permanent fixtures in the setting but rather temporarily blurs, difficult to distinguish or discern. The short-lived and fleeting nature of their practices permits them to maintain anonymity. They leave no trace of their playful streams of movement, and because of that perpetual anonymity, they are able to become “*roller-citoyen*”²⁸⁴ and *traceur-citoyen* through their anonymity and universality. As such they can represent *any* pedestrian, staking not a personal claim but a fluid, universal one.

“*Roller rando*”:²⁸⁵ Reclaiming Urban Space through Collective Movement

The form of rollerblading that informs this chapter is a group activity in which thousands of pedestrians perform mass *randonnées*, or excursions, throughout the streets of Paris on a weekly basis. I am less concerned here with rollerblading as a primary means of transportation or commuting, though that function is at the origins of rollerblading as a recreational movement (and which I will discuss more below). To rollerblade in Paris, pedestrians trade their shoes for three- or four-wheeled inline skates and set out, individually or in groups, to travel about the city. Many rollerbladers wear protective helmets and pads on their knees and wrists, while less inhibited or more daring riders may shirk from sporting that gear. The rollerblader’s uniform is casual and at his or her discretion, ranging from a t-shirt and jeans to head-to-toe athletic clothing. Regardless of their appearance, rollerbladers revel in the quick-paced, relatively

²⁸⁴ The term *roller-citoyen* is borrowed from Adeline Le Men. I have developed *traceur-citoyen* based on that meaning. See Loret, Alain and Anne-Marie Waser, editors, *Glisse urbaine: l’esprit roller: liberté, apesanteur, tolerance*, Paris, Editions Autrement, 2001.

²⁸⁵ “*Rando*” is a shortened version of *randonnée*, a term I describe at the start of this section.

inexpensive, and ludic aspects of their mode of movement. During any one of their excursions, rollerbladers weave throughout the entire city of Paris, from the left to right banks and back, touching different arrondissements, neighborhoods, and sites. When we imagine the romanticized quintessential pre-Haussmann Parisian street, we envision narrow conduits, wide enough for only one direction of traffic, framed by even narrower sidewalks. To be confronted by a hoard of rollerbladers gliding undisturbed through Paris' most ancient streets and neighborhoods is breathtaking and astounding. When the route occupies one of the vast Haussmannian boulevards, such as the Boulevard de Sébastopol or the Boulevard Henri IV, the space for cars dissolves, and in its place blossoms a surface entirely devoted to rollerbladers. Even Parisians accustomed to seeing those masses of wheeled pedestrians in their medieval city are forced to halt their routines in the face of a *randonnée*. They must stop, sometimes even for an hour, to let the rollerbladers pass. The street becomes, albeit temporarily, a space entirely devoted to rollerblading.



Figure 18: Two *Roller & Coquillages* staff (one in the foreground and one in the background, both wearing bright yellow t-shirts) restrict car, bicycle, and foot traffic from crossing the stream of rollerbladers on Boulevard de la Villette, at the edge of the 10th and 19th arrondissements. February 2015.

Rollerblading first came into prominence in Paris in the early 1990s, and rollerbladers who were particularly skilled and enthusiastic decided to get together on Friday nights at the Place d'Italie in the 13th arrondissement to participate in this new “*jeu urbain*”²⁸⁶. From there, they would traverse the city by way of this unique form of *déplacement*. Rollerblading soared in popularity in 1995, when major public transportation strikes threatened to cut people off from access to their city. Consequently, individuals who were now commuting or running errands on rollerblades stumbled upon the casual Friday night rides, and the number of attendees reached nearly 200. The sport continued to expand its reach in Paris, attaining a nearly mythical status; travel agencies advertised the weekly Friday rides in their promotional literature about Paris.

²⁸⁶ *Glisse urbaine*, 85.

With a steadily increasing number of rollerblade enthusiasts hitting the streets, authorities became concerned about the risks to both rollerbladers and drivers who found themselves suddenly fighting for the same spaces.

The French associative structure has been instrumental in the proliferation and popularity of rollerblading in Paris, allowing rollerblading to obtain official recognition of their sport²⁸⁷. Rollerblading associations grew out of safety concerns shared by the City of Paris and rollerbladers, both aware of the need to formally negotiate use of the city's shared spaces. In 1997, with every-growing attendance at Friday night *randonnées*, the police requested a meeting with avid skaters Adeline Le Men and Boris Belohlavek, to negotiate a reasonable route that would safely accommodate the rollerbladers. At first, the police resisted, fearful to “*laisser tout Paris à la randonnée*”²⁸⁸ and demanded that the skaters create an association to add structure, legitimacy, and accountability to the *randonnées*. The first Parisian rollerblading association, *Pari Roller*, was created that year and began the process of organizing the weekly nighttime *randonnées*, eventually securing permission from the City and police to use their proposed routes. The suggested *randonnées* required the City to shut down major Parisian thoroughfares, sometimes for over an hour at a time. For that reason, initial excursions were capped at 200 to 300 rollerbladers; as of 1999, regular weekly participation was calculated at 10,000 people, a count that could hit 25,000 in good weather²⁸⁹. Today, the police continue to provide car and motorcycle escorts, and first responders (*SAMU*) accompany all authorized *Pari Roller* and *Roller & Coquillages* excursions. Several police vehicles lead the pack and are responsible for emptying the streets on the route before the rollerbladers approach. Another contingency of

²⁸⁷ *Glisse urbaine*, 87. Other cities in France have rollerblading and parkour associations.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 94.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*. 93 and 95.

police vehicles trails the group, signaling its end. In 1998, the first police “*roller brigade*”, a group of officers on rollerblades deployed exclusively for weekly *randonnées*, was created²⁹⁰. Although the funding for that group dissolved in 2013, the mere existence of a special rollerblading police force trained exclusively to work with rollerbladers indicates the influence and importance of the major roller associations in the city of Paris and on its inhabitants.



Figure 19: Thousands of rollerbladers participate in a Disney-themed *Pari Roller* rollerblading excursion, or *randonnée*. Photograph by Christian Van Hanga (Disneyland).

The grass-roots origins of rollerblading are evidenced by the central importance of citizen-initiated and -managed rollerblading associations in reclaiming Parisian spaces for pedestrians. Yet the City’s endorsement of the associations’ *randonnées* and its support through a diligent police presence are imperative to the success of those events, which shows that rollerblading also possess a top-down power component. To empty major and minor streets

²⁹⁰ Rodriguez, Serge Rodriguez and Marion Thuriot. *Le Roller à Paris*. Paris: Parigramme, 1999, pp. 8.

throughout Paris of motor vehicles, cyclists²⁹¹, and pedestrians poses significant logistical challenges, and to do it every week requires significant backing from various City offices. This level of government-sanctioned traffic interruptions to benefit rollerblading is not commonplace. By comparison, American cities such as Los Angeles and New York rarely close roadways for pedestrians, except for major events such as marathons or marches. To temporarily close, say, Wilshire Boulevard or Broadway on a weekly basis would be inconceivable and impossible to accomplish due to lack of public and municipal support.



Figure 20: A police car and Red Cross van trail behind the last rollerbladers at a *Roller & Coquillages* excursion.

Pari Roller and *Roller & Coquillages*, another predominant rollerblading association in Paris, continue to devise and host *randonnées* that attract thousands of rollerbladers every week. *Pari Roller*'s Friday night runs evolved into the sensational "Friday Night Fever" a late evening excursion from 10pm until 1am that draws tens of thousands of people on skates to traverse the city under the stars. The riders are overall more advanced, and *Pari Roller* staffers focus more on

²⁹¹ Bicyclists were permitted to join the roller events until 1999, when their presence among a continuously increasing population of rollerbladers posed too much danger.

managing the larger crowd than on helping individual riders who may need more one-on-one assistance, for instance, while braking down a hill. *Roller & Coquillages* excursions take place on Sunday afternoons and appeal to families as well as beginners, who learn quickly that they can find more technical support there than at *Pari Roller* events. Regardless of the excursions in which Parisian rollerbladers choose to participate (they may align themselves with one association or switch between these two and others), they build a connection to the city that is defined by pleasure rather than work or obligation. The camaraderie fostered by the group dynamic contributes to a sense of unity and strength among the rollerbladers. As a singular, powerful force, they ride to reclaim, if temporarily, the streets on which they glide.

With the existence of *Pari Roller* and *Rollers & Coquillages*, as well as several smaller associations²⁹² offering niche rides and services to particular communities, nearly 50,000 rollerbladers take over Paris' streets on a weekly basis. That statistic reflects summer rides when the weather is cooperative and both Parisians and visitors participate in the events, which are always free and open to all. Depending on the size of the crowd, some streets on that week's route are closed off for nearly an hour at any given point as rollerbladers pass through. Even in the winter months, though, an average of 350 riders turn out for each Sunday and Friday ride, an impressive showing given the chilly and damp weather during those months.

²⁹² *Glace et Roller In-line de Paris* (GRIP), *Mobile en Ville*, and *Gossipskate* are examples of smaller rollerblading associations registered with the Mairie de Paris.



Figure 21: Rollerbladers cruise down the Boulevard Henri IV toward the Place de la Bastille at the end of a Sunday excursion led by the association *Roller & Coquillages*. February 2015.

Rollerblading is indeed a ludic act, and through its participants can distance themselves from work and obligation and instead display creativity when using supposedly predetermined urban spaces. The associations *Pari Roller* and *Roller & Coquillages* are not interested in competitive skating; instead, they seek to foster a playful and safe ambiance where people can relax, interact with strangers, and appreciate Parisian spaces without the interference of vehicles. The intentions of the rollerbladers during those excursions contrast starkly with the monotonous execution of the so-called *métro/boulot/dodo* routine. The experience of rollerblading through Paris with fellow skaters who wear leis around their necks or prop boom boxes on their shoulders is playful and refreshing. Adeline Le Men, president of the skating school *Roller Squad International* (RSI), articulated the importance of rollerblading in the streets to one's quality of life in the urban setting.

Rollerbladers are conscious “militants” of quality of life who identify a direct relationship between how they move about the city and their personal happiness. The act of rollerblading in outdoor urban spaces permits the participant to “*choisir son itinéraire et joindre l’utile à l’agréable*”²⁹³; in contrast, a ride in the metro is dark, loud, and void of beauty, and car trips present their own annoyances. RSI aimed to formalize and propagate a notion of quality of life that would redefine the relationship between citizens and their city, especially in terms of movement within urban spaces²⁹⁴. Rollerblading as a ludic movement helps to build a positive and uplifting connection between people and the city that is distinct from that formed due to obligation. The rollerbladers make the streets their playground, appropriating them for their personal enjoyment and play.

Some early rollerbladers, such as Le Man, classified *randonnées* as political *manifestations (manifs)* or demonstrations intended to lobby for the right of the pedestrian to be in the streets. The founders of rollerblading in Paris, though, preferred not to assume a militant attitude with their sport. Instead, they insisted that their ultimate goal was to coexist with motor vehicles, and thus co-own the city. In 1997, at the same time as *Pari Roller* was born, Le Men and Serge Rodriguez founded the *Roller Squad Institut*, a skating school that sought to present rollerblading to the public as “*une pratique utilitaire, alternative, cityoenne, récréationnelle, de loisirs et sportive*”²⁹⁵. That objective was a “*project citoyen*” (a civil project)²⁹⁶ that was strongly wedded to the theme of cohabitation within the streets; the idea that cars, pedestrians, and rollerbladers could exist together in Paris and must respect each other’s need and desire to use

²⁹³ Interview with Le Men, Adeline (1999), quoted in *Glisse Urbaine*, 92.

²⁹⁴ *Glisse Urbaine*, 91.

²⁹⁵ Article 2 of the Statutes of the RSI, cited in *Glisse urbaine*, 90.

²⁹⁶ *Glisse urbaine*, 91.

shared public spaces. *RSI* gained recognition by the national *Fédération française de roller sports (FFRS)*, the *RSI* became a public platform to respond to the glaring question of how pedestrians, rollerbladers, car drivers, and cyclists were all supposed to coexist harmoniously in the same spaces.

RSI framed group rollerblading as a silent “*manifestation sans banderole*” (“a demonstration without a slogan”) demonstrating for the right of rollerbladers and cars to coexist in Parisian streets. Many rollerbladers, including Le Men and Rodriguez, saw themselves as *roller-citoyen*, unofficial activists for the presence of pedestrians in the streets, whose activism had no label or face, just wheels. As Le Men and Rodriguez noted, from the outset the “activist” side of rollerblading has been less concerned with staking a claim only for rollerbladers; it insisted on coexistence²⁹⁷, and rollerbladers aligned themselves with *citoyens*, or generic citizens, to show that that intention. Rollerbladers were individuals that were part of a larger community of pedestrians in Paris. The quietly combative position of rollerblading as a form of *manifestation* preceded by only a few years the “Take back the streets” rhetoric of Mayor Delanoë. And while *Pari Roller* and *Roller & Coquillages* do not explicitly express the urgency to maintain democratic, multi-use spaces as *RSI* did, their weekly *randonnées* attended by thousands of rollerbladers loudly proclaim that value.

Yet the idea of rollerblading as a *manifestation* could be refuted if we consider that there is no lasting, tangible mark of rollerbladers as political or social activists, or even as individuals. The massive *randonnées* exude a powerful sense of togetherness and uniformity; however, no single *randonnée* repeats another. That is to say, similar rollerblading events take place throughout Paris, but not one can ever be replicated. The dynamic of *randonnées* changes

²⁹⁷ *Glisse urbaine*, 91.

constantly: the participants vary; the weather differs; and even the streets are not the same. Even more specifically, the precise movement that one rollerblader performs at a given place and moment cannot be recreated the exact same way. Performance Studies theorist Richard Schechner asserts that performance is ephemeral and impossible to repeat identically because the precise context and historical circumstances in which it occurred also cannot be repeated. Instead, performances, such as rollerblading *randonnées*, are “twice-behaved” or “restored” behaviors because, in their moment of enactment, they are not being performed for the first time but are reiterations of previous actions²⁹⁸. Restored behaviors are therefore symbolic embodiments of the original, although what they symbolize or signify can vary and can be either intended or unintended. While *randonnées* could potentially echo previous versions, there are unavoidable variables that prevent them from always expressing the same attitude or message, which makes the possibility that they are silent “undercover” demonstrations more problematic.

Whether as silent *manifestations* or apolitical bands of skaters, group *randonnées* present anonymity. Rollerbladers can skate as part of a defined group (such as a *randonnée* run by an association) composed of many anonymous people come together. *Pari Roller* and *Roller & Coquillages* regularly attract hoards of skaters, who in turn do not expect to be recognized for their individual talent or skill. The group they skate with may temporarily define them, but they can remain nameless, faceless individuals that are constitutive of that larger whole. Rollerblades are also anonymous when they skate alone and show no affiliation to a rollerblading group. The group and individual forms of anonymity facilitated by rollerblading make the discipline universally representative of pedestrians, so that “*la masse permet la conquête d’un territoire*

²⁹⁸ Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: an Introduction* New York : Routledge, 1988, pp. 35-36.

réserve”²⁹⁹, that conquered area being the urban spaces in which they skate. The anonymity provided by masses of rollerbladers expands the rollerblading experience to include people from all over the city rather than limiting the field or practice to one group or association, paving the way for the small but meaningful “*victoires éphémères*”³⁰⁰ of pedestrians over cars, trucks, and cyclists.

Parkour: Tracing and Drawing the City with the Body

Parkour, also referred to as *l’art du déplacement*, or the art of displacement, is a discipline that couples intense physical activity with acute mindfulness when navigating Paris. Parkour, like rollerblading, relies on use of the city’s spaces to take back the streets for pedestrians and foot traffic. Unlike rollerblading, though, parkour is often labeled as a subversive, in part because it is a less known and understood discipline. Often categorized as a freestyle dance³⁰¹ or a sport³⁰², the earliest traces of what is now parkour can be attributed to the Frenchman Raymond Belle, a graduate of French military school in 1958 and a former member of the elite *Sapeurs-Pompiers* first-responder squad in Paris. Belle, determined to maintain his supreme physical health and mental acuity, created what he called *parcours*, meaning a route or path, in which he adopted military exercises based largely on *L’Education physique ou l’entraînement complet par la méthode naturelle* (1912) of George Hébert, a former French military officer and naturist theorist. Raymond’s son David followed his father’s lead, first enrolling in the military, then also serving briefly in the *Sapeurs-Pompiers* of Paris. He decided

²⁹⁹ *Glisse urbaine*, 96.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁰¹ See Higgins, Jeanmarie. “The Revitalization of Space: Freestyle Parkour and Its Audiences.” *Southeastern Theatre Conference March 4-8 2009 Birmingham, AL*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009.

³⁰² Kidder refers to parkour as a sport in several of his publications.

to focus solely on his athletic endeavors and spent his days training in the public spaces of Lisse, France, a suburb about 40 kilometers outside of Paris.

In the late 1980s, David Belle³⁰³ rebranded his father's *parcours* practice as *parkour*, an orthographic deviation that likely symbolized his desire shed the banality of the word *parcours* and instead attribute the practice a hint of newness and edginess. He streamlined into a cohesive practice many of the moves that parkour *traceurs* possess to carefully and tactfully perform their discipline: various kinds of jumps (called vaults) from both high and low elevations; flips and somersaults; extended arm hangs from walls or poles; climbing techniques; and landings. Outsiders or critic categorize these moves as stunts; however, when applied in the city setting as a fundamental mode of unmediated transportation, parkour presents possibilities of new ways of occupying and possessing public spaces. Belle and others have expanded the reach of the practice nationally throughout France and also internationally, particularly in Europe but also as far as the United States and Australia.

The goal of parkour, as initially defined by Belle, is to travel from a starting point to a destination in the most efficient way possible. Belle has insisted that parkour should not be a competition³⁰⁴ of bodily abilities but is instead a practice similar to martial arts in which individuals build and maintain physical strength and nimbleness, combining those abilities with a sharp attentiveness to their surroundings. The city itself presents physical obstacles in the form of buildings, streets, curbs, or any other infrastructure, and *traceurs* overcome those “challenges” by executing parkour moves³⁰⁵. Unlike motor vehicle drivers or even other pedestrians, *traceurs*

³⁰³ Throughout the remainder of the chapter, “Belle” will refer to David Belle.

³⁰⁴ Other disciplines have evolved from parkour, such as *l'art du déplacement*, or freerunning (see page 21). Unlike the parkour espoused by David Belle, *l'art du déplacement* emphasizes the aesthetics of the sport's acrobatic moves and organizes world-wide competitions in which practitioners can showcase their abilities.

³⁰⁵ Kidder, pp. 232.

have the advantage of being able to trace unconventional trajectories through Paris to travel from their point of departure to their selected destination because of their physical strength and their adaptability. Routes for parkour practitioners can extend beyond the mere asphalt to the girders of bridges over the Seine or the roofs of apartment buildings. It is common to see a *traceur* scale a graffiti-plastered wall, only then to jump from the top of it onto the railing of a nearby stairwell. Strength, spontaneity, and focus rule the discipline, for as long as the city's structures impede their movement, *traceurs* must adapt to those challenges and know how to overcome them with little warning.

Parkour is ludic in the sense that it allows people to connect to the city in creative and unexpected ways. The utilitarianism of urban spaces takes on new meaning; in the above example of a *traceur* who scales a wall and then descends onto a stairwell, both the wall and the stairs retain their functionality, but not in their conventional senses. For the *traceur*, the wall is no longer a boundary or a container, the stairs no longer a facilitator of upward or downward movement. Playfulness, then, at least in terms of the repurposing of spaces, is an especially pertinent characteristic of parkour, since *traceurs* practice on surfaces that are not intended to be used for that discipline. In their study on play in the urban spaces, Fawlinson and Guaralda cite parkour as an example of a type of play through which individuals establish a meaningful emotional connection to the public spaces they inhabit and frequent.³⁰⁶ They observe how *traceurs* make use, or rather “misuse”, of the limited public spaces they confront in Paris by “deviating” from conventional behavioral standards for those spaces. The choice by Rawlinson and Guaralda of the words “misuse” and “deviation” as stand-ins for the more general and less pejorative term *play* is a significant one, for it indicates how accustomed Western societies have

³⁰⁶ Fawlinson, C.J. and Guaralda, M. “Chaos and Creativity of Play: Designing Emotional Engagement in Public Spaces.” *Out of Control: Proceedings of 8th International Design and Emotion Conference*. London: University of Arts London, Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, 2012, pp. 7.

become to constructing restrictive built spaces that do not include ludic activities as part of their prescribed uses.

Traceurs are regularly accused of misusing space that they see as malleable, and their behaviors often criticized by the general public as dangerous and irresponsible, especially in the hard, unforgiving spaces of the city. Sociologist Jeffrey Kidder, who has studied parkour communities extensively in both the United States and abroad, remarks that there is an internal mechanism within the discipline to defend against accusations that parkour is dangerous. *Traceurs* affirm their self-worth and the value of their practice through a “rhetoric of calculated risk-taking”, which they use to justify and rationalize the risks of some of their behaviors and emphasize their ability to avoid them.³⁰⁷ Kidder also notes that *traceurs* view practice as a way of mitigating the risk of their discipline, for through it they progress and ameliorate their skills. *Traceur* and professional freerunner³⁰⁸ Yoann “Zephyr” Leroux corroborates Kidder’s observation, insisting that *traceurs* must indeed train extensively to gain the strength and reflexes necessary for dangerous situations. Leroux states that taking risks as part of his parkour practice allow him to grow and develop personally as a *traceur*. Leroux notes that police and passers-by critique *traceurs* who practice in the city because their discipline is dangerous; yet, in his opinion, because of their extreme physical strength and mental determination, *traceurs* are likely better trained, albeit by their own methods, to assist in an urgent situation. He invokes David Belle’s expression of “*la base première [de la discipline], qui est d’être fort pour être utile*”³⁰⁹.

³⁰⁷ Kidder, 232.

³⁰⁸ Freerunning was founded by Sébastien Foucan, one of the initial faces of parkour in France. This discipline is similar to parkour in its form and appearance, but it permits greater exploration of the aesthetic value of movements, instead of merely their functionality for efficient travel throughout the city.

³⁰⁹ “Paris rooftop parkour, Yoann Zephyr Leroux with Mister S.” *YouTube*, uploaded by MISTERSTRIPTV, 29 October 2014, 2:40-2 :43.

Leroux and other *traceurs* justify the apparent danger of parkour by insisting on the implications their practice has on the greater community.



Figure 22: Yoann “Zephyr” Leroux demonstrates what lay observers would likely consider a risky move as he jumps, unharnessed and unprotected, from one Parisian rooftop to another. Photograph by Zenzel Photography.

The media and popular culture have both contributed to the propagation of an image of parkour as being thuggish, a practice of criminals, who are “usually young men of color, whose travels through space resemble acts of fleeing from rather than moving toward”.³¹⁰ The 2004 blockbuster Hollywood-style film *Banlieue 13*, directed by Luc Besson, appeals directly to the perception of parkour as an unsanctioned, under-the-radar tactic that can be used as a last resort in overcoming pure evil. In that film, the protagonist, portrayed by David Belle (yes, *the* David Belle!), is a young man living in a hairy Parisian suburb mostly populated by immigrants and

³¹⁰ Higgins, 118.

drug dealers. He and his apparent antithesis (as least as the film frames it), an undercover police officer, are forced by the government to work together on a top-secret mission, which ends up being a ruse. The unlikely partners manage to save the day through parkour, using sheer strength and agility instead of guns or knives to reveal and temper a malicious, corrupt scheme conceived of by government itself. But Belle and his cop friend are not the heroes of Disney films because they can never quite surmount their lowly status. Belle's character decides to remain in the suburbs where he feels most at home and closest to his roots, and his police officer friend, having discovered that everything he stood for was false, distances himself from the sanctioned space of the government and remains close with Belle. The representation of parkour as counterculture in *Banlieue 13* reveals a dissonance between the original goal of parkour as an aesthetically conscious discipline of quotidian movement and its reputation as a means of escape.³¹¹

The notion of “taking back the streets” resonates powerfully among *traceurs* because the discipline consists not only of the use of urban spaces in Paris for their practice but also for defending the practice itself, as it constitutes way of life for those individuals. A conflict then appears between the *traceurs* and the mainstream voices that corner parkour and impose onto the practice an image that does not actually reflect the practice itself. Therefore, *traceurs* practicing parkour as the discipline intends—moving from a start to a destination with the greatest efficiency possible using only the body and the spaces around it—continue to fight to reclaim both the city space for their practice and the practice itself, acting to combat the negative image bestowed on it by mass culture and the media.

Parkour tends to be rehearsed or practiced in groups, especially in metropolitan areas, where empty or abandoned spaces prove ideal for learning how to negotiate the challenges posed

³¹¹ Higgins, 118.

by the city's immovable structures. Those sites are often recognized by locals and society as “familiar instances of failed community planning”—what urban theorist Jane Jacobs calls “border vacuums, deprived of life”³¹². *Traceurs* reimagine the places that city planners have created for everyday users, especially those that have failed in their intended uses. They transform them into sites of creativity and discovery, where they to practice a variety of jumps, flips, and running moves to simulate the unforeseen obstacles they will inevitably encounter when they do parkour throughout the city.

The fountain in the Parc de Bercy in Paris' 12th arrondissement exemplifies a “vacuum” of urban space repurposed and instilled with life by traceurs. During the summer, the square inverted fountain displays a flat surface of water that gives way in one corner to smooth, hive-like formations, down which the water cascades to pooling canyons below. The fountain is drained for the winter, during which it no longer serves its purpose as an ornament of the Parc de Bercy and instead becomes a hub for parkour training and practice. The flat area that extends from three of the fountain's four corners serves as a surface for stretching, calisthenics, and warm-up runs, while the hive-like concrete canyons, which constitute the fountain's fourth corner, provide ample surfaces from which to perform jumps and leaps. The cliffs down which the fountain's water falls in warmer months present a potential danger to passers-by who, if not careful, could tumble into the empty fountain. To the *traceurs*, though, the staggered surfaces, varying heights, and irregular shapes are tools for expanding their repertoire of *parkour* movements. The absence of water from the Bercy fountain renders it a “useless” space, which in that form can then be appropriated and transformed by *traceurs* into a venue for spontaneous and unintended movement.

³¹² Jane Jacobs (1961), quoted in Higgins, 116.



Figure 23: Parkour Paris coach Kevin Mercier jumps into the fountain of the Parc de Bercy in Paris' 12th arrondissement. The empty fountain is a favorite training spot among parkour *traceurs* during the winter months. February 2015.

The empty Bercy fountain is unique among Parisian fountains in that its spaciousness and unusual structure are hardly intimidating or uninviting; in fact, *traceurs* see it as rife with opportunities for creative movements. Kevin Mercier, a 22-year-old economy student and coach with the association Parkour Paris, regularly practices parkour in the Bercy fountain. He meets friends and other parkour coaches there, some of them former students whom he recruited to volunteer with the association. Squatting on a small island in the center of the canyons of the fountain, Mercier assesses his next move. For him, the depth of the empty fountain does not feel like a dangerous, inescapable abyss; instead, the varying heights of the hives and their gradating layers present surfaces with which he can diversify and complicate his repertoire of movements. In addition, *traceurs* regularly play with distances and height when they trace through the city,

testing how far and high or low they can jump. The spaciousness of the fountain, both in its area and depth, provides a sense of freedom for *traceurs* in which to innovate alternative strategies. They “directly experience” the openness by engaging in it with their bodies, thus strengthening their affective connection to that place.³¹³



Figure 24: Yoann “Zephyr” Leroux surveys the Seine from his perch on a rafter of the Passerelle Simone-de-Beauvoir, a pedestrian footbridge near the Bercy neighborhood in Paris. December 2015.

Bercy is one of many Parisian “spaces” that become “places”³¹⁴ of activity and affective importance to *traceurs*. The openness and vastness of the Parisian “skyspace”, for example, as seen from its roofs (such as in the parkour video where *traceurs* hop from rooftop to rooftop in Paris), present myriad possibilities for innovative movements and trajectories (paths to be taken, jumps to be attempted, and monuments to aim for or bypass). After all, *parkour* practitioners are called *traceurs* because they sketch routes throughout the city that are incongruous with more “implicit” paths, such as those delineated by paved streets and sidewalks. *Traceurs* instead respond to their desire to know the city through the corporeal lens, meaning from the body’s perspective. The planned city is, for the *traceur*, a blank canvas upon which to inscribe an

³¹³ Tuan, Yi-fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977, pp. 52.

³¹⁴ Ibid, 17.

innovative, personal, and entirely unique set of movements choreographed for that body, by that body.

Parkour has an expansive cyber-community on social media, both in France and internationally, extending its ability to facilitate social bonds in real and virtual space. *Traceurs* training on their own or with sanctioned associations and spectators provide the most reliable source of documented parkour material such as interviews and videos, taken either by people watching *traceurs* or by the *traceurs* themselves. More *traceurs* use technology such as GoPro cameras to record and share the first-person perspective of their parkour experiences. The ability to visualize the city as a *traceur* would through a mediating device such as a camera transforms the personal experience of parkour into a shared experience. “Point of view” (POV) parkour videos facilitate the advent of communities of *traceurs* and spectators. The “I” becomes “we”, an imagined community³¹⁵ of parkour athletes and those sharing in that corporeal and affective experience of the city. The shared videos and testimonials create a synchronic, real-time relationship between otherwise geographically disparate peoples, who together composed imagined communities that share an interest in parkour. In addition to GoPro videos posted online, recent technological applications such as Snapchat and Instagram have facilitated the accelerated dispersal of parkour videos. Parkour Paris and Parkour UK, two large and relatively known parkour groups, publish their videos on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook.

To practice parkour in the flesh and to render the discipline accessible through online media is indeed to build a community of *traceurs* and admirers; however, any *traceur* will highlight the importance of the highly personal and internal focus essential to the practice.

³¹⁵ Benedict Anderson has devoted a book to what he calls imagined communities, groups that may be geographically separated but who nonetheless possess a sense of unity and kinship. This kind of connectedness develops through the knowledge of and confidence in a shared set of values, and also of language. See *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.

Traceur Yoann Leroux collaborated with YouTube personality Mister S to create a video in which he illustrates his deeply personal and interior experience of parkour. The video, entitled “Paris rooftop parkour”, presages a physical distancing between Leroux and the rest of the city. Only the film’s creator and its privileged viewers accompany Leroux to the rooftops; the cars and pedestrians remain below. Leroux briefly introduces himself before we (the viewers) cut to a clip of him walking in front of us on a ledge. Mister S, sporting the GoPro camera, follows Leroux as he scales walls and buildings, getting ever closer to the sky, until we sit perched with him, far above the Place Saint German, surveying the neighborhood and the splendid panorama of the Parisian rooftops and skyline. Separated from yet still physically conjoined to the city, parkour provides Leroux (and, by way of Mister S, the viewers) a certain freedom from the chaos.

Leroux shows us how his parkour training enables him to escape from the city and yet still remain in it. He does not distance himself from the cosmopolitan frenzy in the illicit, criminal way portrayed by commercial media and films such as *Banlieue 13*. The oppression, he insists, comes from the city itself and oppresses its inhabitants. Leroux rests on a ledge above Paris’ Latin Quarter, while a voiceover seems to tell us his thoughts: “*Quand tu es en ville tu es oppressé par tout ce qui est autour de toi. C’est pour ça qu’on a un autre univers, c’est les toits de Paris. [...] C’est un autre monde. C’est complètement différent. C’est là où on va à respirer*”.³¹⁶ Leroux removes his body from the urban spaces below and uses parkour to relocate to the spacious, limitless world of the rooftops and the sky. The “*autre univers*” that he inhabits above the city is void of streets and cars; he does not need to fight for room or fear for his own safety, for he is in complete control of the space he occupies on the rooftops; he can even breathe

³¹⁶ “Paris rooftop parkour, Yoann Zephyr Leroux with Mister S,” 5:00-5:30.

while on the rooftops. “*Les toits de Paris*” evokes the famous images of the rooftops of Paris, and he equates this recognizable facet of Paris’ landscape to this “other universe” he occupies. Leroux repossesses Paris through his physical occupation, even conquering, of its space; his literal and figurative appropriation of the meanings and uses of the space; and his acknowledgement of himself in it. He achieves personal fulfillment in the contemporary urban setting precisely by distancing himself from the distractions of its spaces, carving out a piece of the city for himself up on the rooftops.



Figure 25: Yoann “Zephyr” Leroux overlooks the Place du Québec in the Saint-Germain-des-Prés neighborhood, in a still from the Mister S video and interview. Photograph by Misterstrip.

Parkour, like rollerblading, relies in part on the French associative structure to create associations that promote and lobby for the interests of the discipline and the *traceurs*. Parkour associations help practitioners train to become physically fit and mentally focused on the discipline. Many associations have coaches who are experienced *traceurs* that assist new and less

experienced followers in honing their skills in controlled environments so that they can safely attempt moves before executing them in less forgiving spaces of Paris itself. Parkour associations have also been instrumental in securing the City's recognition of their discipline, a relationship that resulted in the Parisian government actually *creating* a designated parkour practice space. As with rollerblading, the politics of parkour involve both top-down and bottom-up initiatives, and as interest and participation in parkour has increased over the past decade, the City of Paris has actively sought to recognize parkour as a growing and influential discipline. That acknowledgement came most recently in the form of a parkour gymnasium situated in the newly renovated Les Halles complex, which opened in January 2016.³¹⁷

The example of this officially sanctioned parkour space is not entirely unproblematic. Prior to the construction of the parkour gymnasium, the City solicited proposals from young people in Paris as to how they wished to see the Halles space should be put to use. Parkour was nominated and won by popular vote. It was not the city that proposed a space for parkour; rather, the decision was made democratically without the city's interjection but not necessarily with its overwhelming support, either. According to the association *Parkour Paris*, the City asked for minimal input from parkour associations on how the facility should look, what it should contain, and, perhaps most important, how use of the space should be divided among associations and unaffiliated individuals or groups.³¹⁸ While the City financially supported the installation of the parkour facility, it was in reality the discipline's popularity, established by its visibility in the streets, that enabled parkour to earn such a coveted and historic piece of Parisian real estate.

It is ironic, then, that parkour has gained recognition in Paris due to its highly visible and distinctly memorable form, when its presence is short-lived and ephemeral. The name given to

³¹⁷ "A Centr'Halles Park, sauté qui veut!" *Mairie de Paris*. 20 May 2016.

³¹⁸ Mercier, Kevin. Personal Interview. 17 February 2015. Mercier is a coach for the association *Parkour Paris*.

parkour practitioners, *traceurs*, comes from the French verb *tracer*, to draw or trace. Through their movements, *traceurs* sketch new routes and itineraries throughout Paris. Another interpretation of *traceur* might be someone who leaves a trace, or perhaps *only* a trace, of his or her presence. This second interpretation recalls Derrida's notion of the trace as a sign of what has always, already been but which is no longer visible. This is not to say that if one witnesses a *traceur* appear and then disappear, the *traceur*'s presence is now void; instead, we can consider that the *traceur* has left behind a reminder of its significance, even in its absence. The ephemerality and *always-already* status of *traceurs* echoes to an extent that of rollerbladers in Paris: dynamic beings for whom movement is part of their existence, and ephemerality and anonymity the traces they leave in their wake. Their physical presence in urban spaces is limited, temporary blurs of motion rather than permanent fixtures in the setting. Leroux disappears from the rooftops of Paris as quickly as he ascended them. The short-lived visibility of *traceurs* enables them to remain anonymous, which permits individual *traceurs* to stand in for *every traceur*. They are not seeking fame nor recognition; they seek gratification on a personal level, that being the knowledge that they have used their bodies to overcome the imposing and oppressive narrative of the city projected by its built structures.

Rollerblading and parkour are unique among the efforts to “take back the streets” because these two particular disciplines began in the streets, utilizing urban spaces *before* having the popularity and clout to represent a sociopolitical—or apolitical, but at the very least noticeable—movement for pedestrians. Unlike the government-initiated street events and renovations I covered in Chapter One, or the grassroots aesthetic movements established by local groups and individuals that I will address in the following chapter, rollerblading and parkour have been in urban spaces since their inception. They were generated by the urban setting and could not exist

without them; they require those spaces for their being and practice. In that sense, they have always physically occupied those areas without necessarily *intending* to reclaim them politically. This revelation does not serve to suggest that these practices are more or less legitimate than other methods of reclaiming urban space for pedestrians. Rather, it shows how repeated embodied movements by pedestrians in Paris can yield new social relationships among the disciplines' participants and observers alike, strengthening their links to each other through the Parisian spaces they inhabit and share.

CHAPTER FOUR: Reclaiming Belleville, Stone by Stone: Mosaics as Markers of Pedestrian Spaces

The decades following Baron Haussmann's massive renovation of Paris saw that city transformed from a densely populated haven for foot traffic, to a modern, stale space in which expansive boulevards dominated the urban scene and pedestrian-friendly spaces waned. The effacement of pedestrians in the streets intensified during the post-war era, when France underwent yet another major period of industrial and technological revolution. Mass-manufactured automobiles infiltrated the city's spaces, once again (and echoing Haussmann) at the cost of pedestrians, particularly those who could not afford to find themselves in a car. It was not until the late 20th century that the French and Parisian governments subtly acknowledged that the reduced presence of pedestrians had in fact evolved into an active removal on the part of the State of those people from the city's spaces, an accusation implicit in the "Taking back the streets" rhetoric of Mayors Delanoë and Hidalgo. I describe in greater detail in Chapter One that since the 1990s, the French state and the Parisian government have collaborated to "return" Parisian streets to pedestrians. Locals and tourists on foot have gained access to the city's busy car thoroughfares through temporary art and commercial expositions implanted in Paris' busiest streets, as well as from permanent building and renovation initiatives, such as the installation of the *Berges de Seine* and the conversion of several major Parisian vehicular roundabouts into pedestrian-only zones. Pedestrians themselves contributed to the brainstorming and feedback aspects of the projects, but responsibility and financial burden to actually realize them fell onto the state and the Mayor of Paris. The government sponsorship of major contemporary spatial

renovations of Paris and large-scale events for pedestrians is evidence of a top-down dynamic in the evolution of the Parisian urban environment, in which the government solicits and executes the return of city space to displaced pedestrians.

Yet it would be shortsighted to assume that only the State and City of Paris are able to return the streets to Parisian pedestrians. There is a pronounced grass-roots effort, not on the part of the government but on pedestrians, to reclaim the streets and carve out significant space for foot traffic. In Chapters Two and Three, I provide two examples of the bottom-up (as opposed to top-down) trajectory, in which the pedestrians themselves engage in ways to strengthen their sense of belonging to Paris urban spaces. In addition to subjective mapping, rollerblading, and parkour, Parisian pedestrians reclaim their streets through the aesthetic renewal of urban spaces, with the creation and installation of street art. This chapter examines how residents of Paris' Belleville neighborhood have sought to reclaim space for pedestrians through the creation and installation of street art, specifically mosaics, cemented onto that area's public spaces. Community members develop the mosaics in tandem with professional artists, and the process of creating those works and subsequently displaying them in public spaces illustrates a visible and interactive effort to reclaim those spaces so that they embody the unique histories of the pedestrians who have contributed to Belleville's identity as a refuge for many of Paris' displaced populations since the mid-1800s.

Street art contrasts with more traditional notions of art and its presentation because it emphasizes two major features: the importance of the street, and the importance of the collective. In my discussion of the annual Parisian street art festival *Nuit blanche* in Chapter One, I refer to the four-walled museum as the conventional space of high forms of art. Museums are elitist spaces that serve no other purpose than that of displaying art. They feature works valued almost

entirely for individual artists who created them. Street art, on the other hand, removes the elitist context and the emphasis on the individual artist and observer. Art critic Nicholas Riggle posits that to label pieces as “street art” requires that those pieces use the street as a material resource essential to their meaning.³¹⁹ Similarly, placing street art in a museum removes the essential “material resource” of the street from those pieces and alters their meaning and interpretation.

The street provides the context in which art comes to be viewed differently from a museum piece or even another street image, such as a billboard advertisement. Passersby who stumble upon street art must be “jolted” out of the mundane and awakened into contemplating it; they are seeing it without pretext and are thus forced to interpret it from the perspective of the pedestrian, rather than through keen eye of the museum goer or art critic.³²⁰ But the setting of the street determines more than how art is interpreted. Andrea Baldini, an expert on socially-engaged art practices in the public domain, deems street art a necessarily a subversive art form because, in appearing in the street, it constantly challenges conventional and acceptable uses of that space.³²¹ As such, street art can serve as an empowered and collective declaration of the reclamation of urban space.

In Paris, the process of transforming streets, alleys, and walls into art forms is greatly facilitated by France’s associative structure, the basis of which I describe in greater detail in the introduction of this dissertation. This legislative provision, enacted by the Law of 1901, is uniquely French and has no real equivalent in the United States. It enables individuals to assemble based on common interests and to initiate projects to explore and develop those

³¹⁹ Riggle, Nicholas Alden. “Street Art: The Transfiguration of the Commonplaces.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 68.3 (Summer 2010), pp. 245-246.

³²⁰ Ibid, 249.

³²¹ Baldini, Andrea. “Discussion: Street Art: A Reply to Riggle.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 74.2 (Spring 2016), pp. 188.

interests. The Belleville association *La Maison de la Plage*, in conjunction with similar associations in that neighborhood, assists individuals with urban renewal projects, such as those involving the transformation of public space into art forms. Founded in 2006, *La Maison de la Plage*'s stated objective is “l'utilisation de lieux vides pour vivre et créer [...] venant d'une nécessité d'espace et d'un choix poétique [...] d'occuper de manière collective et créative les surfaces libres de la ville”³²². By insisting on the “occupation” of “empty” spaces in Belleville, *La Maison de la Plage* advances the efforts of Belleville's residents to regain a sense of belong in their streets by way of a collective and creative endeavor, initiated by and for the people of the neighborhood. Furthermore, the “poetic choice” to reclaim space through street art grants immense power to the streets as conduits of communication for the people themselves. The following chapter explores how street art in the Belleville neighborhood of Paris enhances the democratic power of the street as a locus of social bonding and interconnectivity between people and the public spaces they share.

Inter-reconnaissance in the Streets of Belleville

Historically, Belleville's demographic composition has been quite varied, especially compared with that of the rest of Paris. Belleville is located in the northeast corner of Paris. Its approximate borders are the boulevard de Belleville and the rues de Belleville, Ménilmontant, and Piexérécourt. The Revolution of 1789 rendered Belleville a sizeable French commune, and nearly a century later in 1860, the Parisian government annexed the area, officially integrating

³²² “18 bis rue Dénoyez, 75020 Paris, métro Belleville.” *La Maison de la Plage Blog*. 7 December 2006.

Belleville into Paris.³²³ The movement of laborers into Belleville began during the Haussmannian renovations of inner Paris. Poorer Parisians living in the city's center sought economic relief in the city's outskirts, particularly in the rural suburb of Belleville³²⁴. After the Paris Commune and into the early twentieth century, Belleville became known as a predominantly immigrant neighborhood, once again providing a sanctuary for those fleeing their homes, whether for economic or political reasons. The neighborhood has been defined by waves of immigrants from various parts of the Europe and Asia. In the early 1900s, Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe settled there and had a formidable retail presence until the early 1950s³²⁵. Sephardic Tunisian Jews then moved in, and their arrival coincided with an influx of Maghrebi Muslims, to the extent that Belleville became known as Paris' Muslim quarter³²⁶. Since the 1980s and 1990s, immigration of Asian and Turkish populations has noticeably increased in Belleville³²⁷.

³²³ Stott, Carolyn. "Belleville rouge, Belleville noir, Belleville rose: The Complex Identity of a Parisian *quartier*." *Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 12.1 (January 2015), pp. 1.

³²⁴ Kaplan, David H. "Immigration and the making of place in Paris." *Journal of Cultural Geography* 32.1 (2015), pp. 32.

³²⁵ Stott, 4-5.

³²⁶ Kaplan, 31.

³²⁷ Ibid, 32.

How have such linguistically, culturally, religiously, and ethnically diverse groups coexisted relatively harmoniously in small, densely packed streets of this Parisian enclave? The workers and immigrants that have populated Belleville since the early 1900s attach great value to the street as a site of coexistence and familiarity. Sociologist and former Belleville resident Patrick Simon posits that the street has long held a “strategic” position in Belleville and has fostered links between people otherwise unknown to one another. Upon their arrival in Belleville, French blue-collar workers as well as the immigrant populations from Southern Europe and North Africa tended to utilize exterior spaces for their political and social activities, which allowed for an unlikely rapprochement between the native French workers and immigrant groups³²⁸. The shift of activity from inside to outside the home has led to greater “*inter-reconnaissances*” between the community’s residents, a phenomenon on which Belleville’s social scene functions, according to Simon. He defines *inter-reconnaissance* as the visual recognition of neighbors who may not know each other well but who recognize each other’s presence in the public sphere. This quasi-knowledge or understanding of the other is “un compromis entre la communauté villageoise et l’anonymat total, une forme moderne de vie collective qui permet de se reconnaître des appartenances à une société locale tout en produisant de faibles contraintes sur ses propres activités”.³²⁹ In order to engage in their common struggle to reclaim (even if symbolically) urban spaces, the populations of Belleville must avoid the emergence of complete anonymity from one another through self-segregation. In engaging with each other, even somewhat superficially, they learn about their shared struggles as well as the

³²⁸ Simon, Patrick. “L’esprit des lieux.” *Belleville, Belleville: visages d’une planète*, edited by Françoise Morier. Créaphis, 1994, pp. 444. Simon posits that those two subsets of the Parisian population found themselves in similar states of exile; the poor worker kicked out of the center of Paris due to gentrification, and the immigrant having left his or her native country. He calls those groups “*frères d’exil*” (447).

³²⁹ Ibid, 445.

different challenges they face. Through *inter-reconnaissance* they engage with people who are not like them in many ways but with whom they share a common historical experience of feeling uprooted from what were once their urban spaces. The recognition of oneself in relation to others encountered in the streets is essential to the formation of the identity of a *bellevillois*.³³⁰

The “dual image” of Belleville as a haven for displaced workers and an adopted home for immigrant populations continues to shape a mythical perception of the neighborhood, even in the wake of recent bursts of gentrification.³³¹ Patrick Simon characterizes the “*mythe de Belleville*” as the perpetuation of that bifurcated face of Belleville, even at a time when those identifying features no longer define the neighborhood to the same extent. He pinpoints the myth’s genesis to the working class and immigrant populations exerting control over their collective representations, to the point where those images extended beyond the proportions of the actual population³³². In fact, the mythical feelings about Belleville are so widespread that literary critic Eric Prieto has defined what he calls the “Belleville novel”, a genre that features Belleville-like urban settings, protagonists who are outsiders, and a sense of alienation from French society, which seems unable to fully understand the needs of its immigrants³³³. Regardless of whether a separate literary classification of a “Belleville novel” holds water, at the very least it sheds light onto the extent to which a profound identity of Belleville has been imagined and perpetuated.

From the start of the Haussmann renovations to the present, the constituents of Belleville share a common, if temporally separate, moment: relocation to Belleville in response to repressive economic or social conditions. Belleville’s population has seen great variation, from

³³⁰ Simon, 445.

³³¹ Prieto, Eric. “Rhetoric of the Belleville Novel.” *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 8.1 (January 2004), pp. 31.

³³² Simon, 447.

³³³ Prieto, 39.

exploited laborers to new immigrants to the offspring of preceding immigrant groups; yet, in spite of their differences, those groups can bond over a shared history of geographic dislocation. Their relocations inevitably entailed the loss of familiar personal and communal spaces. “Taking back the streets” for Belleville’s residents, then, entails a symbolic reclamation of those seized spaces, and perhaps also a symbolic claim to their own identity which has been compromised by their relocation, through art.

With the aid of the French associative framework, individuals in Belleville mark the neighborhood’s public spaces by plastering the walls of its streets, alleys, and buildings with personalized mosaic art. The mosaics serve a two-fold purpose. First, the *ateliers* where they are made bring people together, reinforcing the “weak ties” that link people who live in the same social community but interact relatively infrequently³³⁴. The *inter-reconnaissance*, the small but nonetheless pertinent social links that exist among Belleville’s populations, connect those otherwise disparate people into a more cohesive unit. Second, the mosaics themselves display the shared history as peoples who were removed, at some point in their history, from spaces to which they felt an earnest sense of belonging. In the face of being unable to reclaim those specific spaces, these amateur artists of Belleville reclaim the neighborhood for themselves, converting Belleville’s urban spaces into tile canvases on which stake their claim to spaces “taken” from them.

Geographer David Kaplan writes that immigrant neighborhoods often reflect their inhabitants through a process of ethnic place-making, in which people endow spaces with personality based on their lifestyles and activities³³⁵. He remarks that Belleville is “clearly

³³⁴ Blokland, Talja and Floris Noordhoff. “The Weakness of Weak Ties.” *Networked Urbanism: Social Capital in the City*, edited by Talja Blockland and Mike Savage. 2008, pp. 107.

³³⁵ Kaplan, 28.

ethnic” and is “perceived that way by the rest of Parisian society”³³⁶. Because of its long history of social heterogeneity, it retains the markings of many different groups that cohabitate there³³⁷. Therefore, unlike other areas of Paris with relatively high concentrations of homogenous immigrant populations, Belleville does not have a single identity because of the diversity of the immigrants living there. The neighborhood’s commercial and physical landscapes support that diversity. Stores and restaurants cater to the immigrant populations that Belleville houses. The signs, businesses, religious institutions, and associations that stand in Belleville’s public spaces reflect the neighborhood’s immense diversity³³⁸.

Belleville’s past and present converge in its streets, and the associations in that neighborhood emphasize the historical and social importance of the street to the neighborhood and its residents. France’s associative structure has provided Belleville residents a productive framework with which to become citizens focused on transforming the public spaces in their neighborhood to reflect their diverse backgrounds and personalities; in other words, making the streets *their own*. The unifying interest that inhabitants share in upholding and bettering their neighborhood is bolstered by the fiscal and administrative benefits that accompany the designation of a group as an association. The *loi de 1901* (law of 1901), passed under the Third Republic, granted people living in France the right to assemble and band together in groups called *associations*. The law effectively enfranchised the masses to congregate liberally, providing French people an equal opportunity to assemble connect socially to one another. Over 100 years later, associations remain one of the most prominent and visible aspects of French social and cultural life.

³³⁶ Kaplan, 32.

³³⁷ Ibid, 32 and 37.

³³⁸ Ibid, 37.

Quite understandably, the *vie associative* in Belleville is bursting with activity that reflects the many backgrounds and interests of its residents. Many of Belleville's associations offer activities related to the area's immigrant demographics, such as Association Wudang San Bao, which is devoted to the practice of tai chi, or Quartiers du Monde, which strives to overcome boundaries that hinder greater levels of connectivity of individuals of different cultural backgrounds. The association Archipelia provides resources to the young people and families of Belleville, tailoring what are generally considered standard social services to meet the specific needs of its constituents³³⁹. In addition to associations like Archipelia that exist to support specific populations, there are also groups in Belleville that attract a broader swath of people familiar with and intrigued by Belleville's distinct social history. The association Trajectoires, for example, explores themes related to working-class populations and immigrants, in the context of the transmission of history and memory.

The Belleville association *Kif kif vivre ensemble* exemplifies the ability of associations to build and strengthen social bonds between Parisians and the spaces in which they live. The Mayor of Paris recently recognized the association in a campaign called *Assoc' du mois*, initiated to recognize the diverse interests and passions held by Parisians³⁴⁰. *Kif kif vivre ensemble* organizes "blind friend dates" in Paris³⁴¹. Although it is officially registered as an association in Belleville, *Kif Kif* is active throughout the city. The association arranges meet-ups between subscribed members (anyone can join) who do not know each other so that members can share meaningful aspects of their neighborhoods. Members sharing their own turf devise a "*surprise*", an activity that can range from organized excursion to a low-key coffee at a favorite locale. The

³³⁹ Bouzaafa, Marc. Personal interview. 18 February 2015.

³⁴⁰ "Assoc' du mois." *Mairie de Paris*. May 2015.

³⁴¹ "Kif kif vivre." *Mairie de Paris*. May 2015.

purpose of those mysterious mini-adventures is to introduce Parisians to people in their city whom they may otherwise never encounter, and to provide a setting in which people can gain insight into life in neighborhoods other than their own³⁴². The emphasis on meeting strangers in unfamiliar neighborhoods speaks to the importance that *Kif kif* and similar associations place on creating social links between individuals unknown to one another as well as emotional connections to different corners of Paris. The recognition by the Mayor in May 2015 of *Kif kif* as an *Assoc' du mois* shows that the city values the association's core principles: awareness of others, inclusion, and togetherness, which are also key components of associations.

Building Belleville, Stone by Stone: The Mosaic Projects of *La Maison de la Plage*

The Belleville association *La Maison de la Plage* harnesses the phenomenon of *inter-reconnaissance* by facilitating mosaic *ateliers*, or workshops, that draw residents into the streets with the purpose of renewing and beautifying otherwise abandoned or run-down spaces. Those projects represent a means of “taking back the streets” by the people themselves, with the economic and social bolstering of the Association. At the Association's *ateliers*, people convert bare walls and barren streets into art forms that not only showcase the neighborhood but also demonstrate an effort to regain ownership or possession of those spaces by the people themselves. The walls, doors, and alleys revamped at those events at the hands of Belleville's residents reflect the personal and very real investment those people make in their local spaces. In that way, the mosaics created by residents with the aid of the Association represents a way of “taking back the streets” by the very people who live in them.

³⁴² The impromptu method of meeting people and discovering the city is quickly catching on. Since Kif Kif's start in February 2014, the association has rapidly expanded beyond Paris into the entire Ile-de-France region, with plans to become active throughout the entire country. See the website for *Kif kif vivre ensemble*.

La Maison de la Plage underlines two objectives for Belleville's urban layout. First, its physical spaces must be welcoming to its inhabitants; empty, abandoned spaces repel people and predispose those spaces to unsavory activities. Second, the spaces must reflect the lives and activities of the people who live and work there. The Association aims to fulfill those two goals through community-generated aesthetic and artistic creation bonding through the shared experience of making pieces of art together, and individuals continually see the results of their collaboration and togetherness once their works have been permanently affixed to the walls and streets of their neighborhood. Those enduring transformations of space, which mark the labor of the residents themselves, serve as unwavering validation of the (amateur and professional) artists' belonging to the Belleville community. In feeling that they *belong* in the space they inhabit, Belleville's residents experience a sense of emotional, if imagined or symbolic, ownership of that space.



Figure 27: The mosaic façade at the entryway of *La Maison de la Plage* association’s headquarters, 18 bis rue Dénoyez, in Paris’ 20th arrondissement. Source: *La Maison de la Plage*.

La Maison de la Plage strives to enable communities and their members to take back their streets through art and creative aesthetic initiatives. The Association was founded by Marie Decraene, a ceramic artist and metalworker whose preferred art forms are collage and mosaic because they necessarily entail the assembly of diverse media in a completely subjective manner that yields “*une nouvelle proposition poétique*”.³⁴³ That is precisely what the innovative mosaics in Belleville express: a poetic declaration of uniqueness, not only of the materials cemented together but also of the social fabric of Belleville itself.

³⁴³ “Marie Descraene.” *La Maison de la plage*.

The *ateliers* organized by La Maison de la Plage host beautification projects meant to promote “*l’embellissement de l’espace l’utilisation, de l’espace, le décroissement, [et] la participation des habitants à la création*”.³⁴⁴ The Association selects locations that are unused or vacant, areas that become the perfect settings for drug deals, trash heaps, and property destruction. Although *La Maison de la Plage* works out the logistics, the community is responsible for the realization of the final products: creative, individually rendered and inspired mosaics. Those pieces are then absorbed into the infrastructure of the community, where they become literally part of the makeup of Belleville’s public spaces including walls, parks, and streets. At the events, “amateur” and “professional” become futile labels, for skill and mastery are irrelevant. What counts at these events, then, is the collaborative spirit fostered and accumulated by the associations involved, and the joining of familiar and unfamiliar faces in a common space in their neighborhood, Belleville, a place that retains value for all of them. People become invested in spaces they influence, and the mosaic projects provide Belleville’s residents, short-term inhabitants, and even passersby to leave permanent vestiges of themselves, little stones glued for eternity that mark the urban spaces as theirs.

The events put together by *La Maison de la Plage* insist on one major idea: “*Devenir actif dans l’espace public, c’est être acteur dans/pour sa ville, et peut-être devenir acteur pour d’autres choses*”.³⁴⁵ By symbolically inscribing their personalities and interests in public space, individuals become *acteurs*, that is empowered participants, in those spaces and implicate themselves in the maintenance and betterment of the city. Their investment in the physical construction of their community presents the possibility that they become “actors” for “other things” as well. At the core of *La Maison de la Plage*, then, is the notion that assembling people

³⁴⁴ “10bis/10ter rue Bisson, 75020.” *La Maison de la Plage*.

³⁴⁵ “belvédère du Parc de Belleville, 75020.” *La Maison de la Plage*.

to work together toward a communal (and, in this case, community) goal may enhance the value of the community itself, meaning its spaces, inhabitants, and connectedness. As a result, they may see value in other aspects of their lives and therefore feel inspired to put work into those areas, regardless of whether those efforts directly relate to or affect Belleville. There is a sense of altruism at work here that admittedly exudes a hint of idealism, if not serious optimism. Regardless of the extent to which *La Maison de la Plage* alters the mindset and level of activism of its constituents, the Association succeeds in creating a visible community whose presence leaves indelible impressions on Belleville's spaces.

Beauty and illumination are regular themes of *La Maison de la Plage*'s mosaic *ateliers*, and the Association aims to instill, by way of the subjective interpretations of the *ateliers*' participants, those qualities in the vacant and run-down spaces it selects to renovate. On October 25, 26, and 27, 2013, *La Maison de la Plage* collaborated with the association *Paris-Habitat* to repair and decorate a dull entry way between 10bis and 10ter rue Bisson in the 20th arrondissement. This rather insipid space, they claimed, suffered from a “*syndrome du renforcement*”, their invented name for spaces in a condition of disrepair that desperately need strengthening and rejuvenation. The two Associations advertised the Bisson event as an opportunity to, “*Participez à l'embellissement de votre quartier*” (see poster below). Aesthetic improvement is a goal of this project, but it remains contingent upon the diligent efforts of the inhabitants-artists. The possessive pronoun “*votre*” assigns an understanding of ownership of the neighborhood to the people who live and work there or identify with it in another way. The activity is a “*création collective*”, a title that recognizes that while all individuals can proclaim their belonging to that public space, the project to beautify it will inevitably require the time, labor, and dedication of many.



Figure 28: A poster (left) advertises mosaic workshop events sponsored by the associations *La Maison de la Place* and *Paris-Habitat* to beautify a wall near 10 bis rue Bisson in Belleville. The final product, “L’oiseau de la rue Bisson” (right). Photograph by Samuel Yniesta. December 2015.

The artistic vision of the rue Bisson project was to cover the nondescript concrete wall and surrounding sidewalk with a mosaic bird. Amateur and professional artists in attendance created and added their own “feathers” so that the end product reflected the work of many in a singular “*réalisation collective*”, a reminder of the social imperative in question at the event. While the associations provided supplies such as stones and glass, people were invited to bring their own personal objects to glue into the mosaic³⁴⁶. After a bit of assembly and touch up by Decraene and other professional artists, “*L’oiseau de la rue Bisson*” was complete.

Many of the mosaics made during the *ateliers* hosted by Belleville’s associations are carefully cemented on to the walls and columns of the Parc de Belleville’s belvedere. From a distance, the walls and columns appear to be decorated by mosaics of mosaics, or groups of mosaicked tiles compiled together. Up close, those tiles relay images of the unique lives of the

³⁴⁶ “10bis/10ter rue Bisson, 75020.”

individuals who created them. Embossed into the permanent infrastructure of that space, the tiles are visible to anyone who walks by them, be they residents, tourists, or other members of the larger Parisian community. They are even visible to people across the globe by way of the Internet, through photographs of them posted on various blogs, forums, and social networking sites.



Figure 29: Mosaic tiles (left) cemented onto a column at the belvedere of the Parc de Belleville. Detailed view of a mosaic leaf at the table d'orientation (right). Photographs by Mehdi Zainoune. May 2016.

The art form of mosaic is an apt choice for street art projects in Belleville. Mosaics are composed of myriad materials and shapes, and their creation is a form of *bricolage*, the melding of random, disparate objects that no longer serve their original purposes. Those items can be whole or broken and incomplete, for regardless of their quality or physical state, they retain meaning for the *bricoleurs*, the individuals who collect them. Once the *bricoleurs* have gathered the ingredients of their metaphorical *bricolage* soup, they combine them to generate a completely new thing that is equally impossible to replicate because it contains one-of-a-kind scraps, traces of moments and lives. Examples of the tiles created during *La Maison de la Plage*'s mosaic workshops contain shells, mug handles, thick strands of rope, various colored pebbles, figurines,

chunks of brick, and pieces of broken dishes. All of those items have a history, but whether their owners or the artists who discover and use them know those backstories is secondary. The significance of the items is in their collective display of many individual lives. The pieces cemented together create wholly new and equally irreplicable images.

Mosaics take their final form only once all of their parts have come together. In that way, the mosaics made through *La Maison de la Plage* symbolize what that association attempts to capture in its urban art projects: the individual as an essential part of the whole, and the street cultivates that collective togetherness. The mosaic tiles themselves evoke through their visual appearance the part-whole dynamic, and they also constitute evidence of the coming together of the people who made them. Much like the *bricoleur* who gathers pieces to assemble into a mosaic, *La Maison de la Plage* gathers disparate people, many unknown to each other, and places them together in the streets of Belleville to make collaborative art that reflects the heterogeneity of the neighborhood and act as permanent vestiges of those moments of collaboration.

The *table d'orientation* is another community-generated, street art “*création participative*”³⁴⁷ organized by *La Maison de la Plage* in conjunction with the Mayor of the 20th arrondissement. The joint endeavor involves a series of maps mounted in a green metal frame at the patio (belvedere) overlooking the Parc de Belleville. Four distinct mosaic maps of the Parisian skyline as seen from the Parc de Belleville’s southwesterly-facing *belvédère* are displayed there at the summit of the park on a rotating basis. At least fourteen other Belleville associations and over 250 residents participated in the realization of the project by helping in

³⁴⁷ The commemorative plaque fixed on a column to the right of the *table d'orientation* reads, “*La table d'orientation de Belleville est une création participative du conseil de quartier, réalisée par la Maison de la Plage avec plus de 250 citoyennes et citoyens de Belleville. Elle a été inaugurée le 16 juin 2012 par Frédérique Calandra, Maire du 20^e arr. Avec soutien de la Mairie du 20^e arrondissement de la Ville de Paris*”.

various capacities, including making mosaics to appear above and next to the *table d'orientation* at the belvedere.³⁴⁸

The aim of the *table d'orientation* project was to provide an opportunity for residents of Belleville to “*maitriser l'espace urbain*”³⁴⁹ by contributing mosaic squares and leaves for the columns to the left and right of the *table d'orientation*, as well as for the swatch of concrete below it. The verb *maitriser* in French translates closely as the ability to master something or possess expert knowledge of it. *Maitriser* can also mean to exhibit ownership or control, though I would propose that ownership here is more symbolic than literal. The call to participate in the creation of the *table d'orientation* mosaics explicitly situates figurative possession of urban space (in this case, of Belleville) in the hands of its inhabitants. The invitation to *maitriser* Belleville's spaces outwardly recognizes the legitimacy of the residents' relationship to the neighborhood's space as one that belongs to them and to which they belong.

As its name suggests, the *table d'orientation* provides a means of orienting oneself in Paris, from the perspective of Belleville. The map is hardly traditional, though, and presents a far more imaginative and subjective way of navigating the city. It shows some of the iconic Parisian landmarks, but it maintains a detached perspective that cannot be mistaken for a generic one found on just any map of Paris; as *La Maison de la Plage* insists, “*une table d'orientation peut être beaucoup plus qu'un tableau de pierre indiquant les points intéressants d'une ville*”.³⁵⁰ As such, the *table d'orientation* in Belleville serves to recognize the value of the neighborhood from the unique and “privileged” view of its inhabitants³⁵¹.

³⁴⁸ “Résumé.” *Une Table d'Orientation pour Belleville*. 26 June 2013.

³⁴⁹ “Une table d'orientation pour Belleville.” *La Maison de la plage*.

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.



Figure 30: Mosaic trees and leaves flank both sides of the *table d'orientation*, and mosaic tiles are mounted below the map. Photograph by Mehdi Zainoune. May 2016.

The panoramic maps of the *table d'orientation* are displayed on a rotating basis so that only one map sits in the frame at a time. Different artists devised the maps, and consequently each one embodies and conveys a unique set of characteristics, ideas, and experiences expressed by those artists. One of the maps that was displayed at the *table d'orientation* in 2015 is entitled, “Néo Paris: XXIX siècle” and presents a futuristic image of Paris’ skyline from the top of the Parc de Belleville.



Figure 31: A panoramic photo of the *table d'orientation* at the summit of the Parc de Belleville. The columns on either side display leaf-shaped mosaics created by Belleville residents. February 2015.

The map is composed of mosaic tiles, mostly black with blue, white, and hints of red stones interspersed. The map locates the geographic position of Belleville in relation to the rest of Paris with approximate precision, by way of a compass placed toward the upper left corner of the map. Next to the compass is a nondescript blob of concrete in the shape of Paris with the river Seine weaving through it and a discrete marking that simply reads, “Paris”. The map features some of the major monuments that come to mind when we think of the Parisian skyline: the Panthéon, the Louvre, the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame de Paris, and the Montparnasse Tower. The context in which those buildings appear on the map, though, has been completely altered. Miniature renditions of the monuments, made of black mosaic stones with a small number next to them, barely stand out from the equally black tiles that represent the sea of Parisian rooftops. Even if viewers have an ounce of familiarity with the city, they can only identify the most prominent monuments by large, balloon-like spheres that serve as labels hovering above the sites against a blue-hued mosaic sky. Futuristic buildings and enterprises scatter the “Neo Paris” horizon. Rockets soar about the sky, which makes the “Astroport de Paris” seem like a fitting building in this vision of the city. “Paris Bulletour” is situated below the black balloons naming the Jussieu

tower and the Sorbonne. A billboard on top of a tall tower reads, “Bienvenue NéoParis”. On the left side of the map, which according to the compass is the southeastern part of Paris, there is an altogether unfamiliar structure that has two torch-like apparatuses spitting out red mosaic flames. While there are familiar aspects of Paris on the *table d’orientation* map, there are also entirely unfamiliar and, at the present scientific moment, unfathomable elements as well.



Figure 32: A closer view of “Neo Paris XXI siècle”, one of four featured maps at the *table d’orientation* in Belleville. February 2015.

The newest *table d’orientation* was installed in December 2015 at the same spot as the previous one. Like “Neo Paris”, the current map displays a panoramic view of Paris as seen from the summit of the Parc de Belleville. Some of the same sites appear on the newest rendition, presented in similar spheres placed throughout the map’s horizon, located in the same general area of Paris where they actually exist. There is a small, orange replica of the shape of Paris in the lower left corner of the *table*. A tiny metal circle pinpoints the location of Belleville, and two arrows extend southward into Paris, one pointing toward the east and the other toward the west. Viewers of this map have a concrete idea of where they stand in relation to the rest of the Paris.

The theme of this *table* is not futuristic fantasy or science fiction. It is still abstract like its predecessor, but its color scheme has changed from a dark blue-black to a brighter yet equally unrealistic one of orange, green, and blue stones. The new map has a different character and therefore alters the vibe of the belvedere and even the view of the city.

The two different maps that I highlight here elicit two starkly different versions and visions of Paris. They both take as their point of departure the belvedere at the Parc de Belleville, but they quickly diverge in terms of perspective. As a result, they present Belleville and Paris differently to spectators, who then gain a new perspective of those places. The *table d'orientation* triggers new mindsets in its viewers; the actual experience of standing at the belvedere changes because the space itself has changed, and the lens through which people see the city has a new tint. In other words, the *table d'orientation* does not present a fixed, objective idea of what the city looks like from Belleville. Rather, it provides dynamic, subjective representations of how one may see Paris. This fluid representation is powerful because it insists on the variation of individuals and their perspectives.

More important, the appearance of several different maps further illustrates that for Belleville's residents, a monolithic map of the neighborhood does not illustrate Belleville as they see and belong to it. Instead, the content of the *table d'orientation* maps varies greatly depending on the artists' perspectives and interests, and the maps represent myriad ways in which individuals feel connected to Belleville. The *table d'orientation* maps convey a sense of belonging experienced by Belleville's residents who, in their artistic collaboration, *maitrisent*, or master, the spaces they mark.

Through the *table d'orientation* maps, Belleville's residents claim the panoramic view of Paris from the summit of Belleville, as well as the parts of the city that they deem relevant to

situating, or orienting, their neighborhood within the larger Parisian landscape. One of the tiles at the foot of the *table d'orientation* reinforces verbally the claims put forward by the other mosaics surrounding the *table*. The tile reads, “*La ballade de Belleville*” and presents the text of a poem about Belleville. The ballad is narrated in the first person, suggesting that the narrator embodies a universal “je” complicit in the writing and delivery of the lyrics. There is no indication on the tile of an author, but the official website for the *table* attributes the poem’s lyrics to Amaranta, “*notre petite slameuse bellevilloise*”³⁵². A *slameuse* is an artist of slam poetry, a practice born in Chicago in 1987 in which artists present their poems in the form of spoken, lyrical performance. The movement arrived in France in 1995, and though it has not spread much beyond Paris and its suburbs, there remains nonetheless a steady stream of competitive and lay slam poets³⁵³. Amaranta Tam, herself from Belleville, has produced a sizable amount of slam poetry about that neighborhood. Her tone is regularly reverent, and she tends to express positive sentiments about her home³⁵⁴. Because she has permitted her text to be displayed on the mosaic tile below the *table d'orientation* as an anonymous work, the ballad can belong to and relay the sentiments of the Belleville community as a whole.

³⁵² “La Ballade de Belleville.” *Une Table d’Orientation de Belleville*. 4 June 2013.

³⁵³ “Qu’est-ce que le slam?” *Ligue slam de France*. 2009.

³⁵⁴ In her poem “Rue Dénoyez”, named for the street in Belleville, Amaranta writes, “*Non son âme n’est pas à vendre/Elle a des choses à faire et part Heureuse et fière/D’avoir ici Des soeurs et des frères*”. See Tam, Amaranta, “Rue Dénoyez.” *Advitam eternslam*. 17 September 2014.



Figure 33: The “slam” poem *La ballade de Belleville*, cemented onto a tile displayed below the *table d'orientation* at the belvedere of the Parc de Belleville. Photo by Mehdi Zainoune. May 2016.

The poem begins in “les cafés de Belleville”, depicting an ambiance of conviviality and togetherness by invoking the traditional image of the café. There are multiple references to singing, song, and emotional verbal expression (“*Mes amis scandaient*”; “*sur leurs lips/ l’universel cri des poèmes*”; “*sur fond de mélodie Philips*”). In those Belleville cafés, an abundance of friends sing and recite poems to express their emotional, even visceral, allegiance to their neighborhood: “*Montant sur scène avec les tripes*”. The term “tripes” usually denotes the intestines or the gut, but its colloquial use implies the most authentic and unfiltered feelings at one’s core³⁵⁵. The narrator and her friends reveal to the world their innermost feelings about Belleville, exposing themselves to criticism and rebuke. And through this emotional display, they propose to challenge even “*les lois mêmes suprêmes*”. That phrase reveals the shifting tones of the poem, which oscillates between admiration for Belleville and camaraderie found there,

³⁵⁵ “Tripes.” *Trésors de la langue française*.

and a veiled combativeness triggered by a post-Haussmannian notion of a Paris whose center encompasses the arrondissements around the Seine but which minimalizes or altogether excludes the “*Nord Est*” corner of the city. The narrator does not align herself here with a band of criminals; rather, she suggests that it is the laws of the land that are unjust and must be challenged. That phrase can be read as a metaphor for the dominance of Paris over Belleville, a neighborhood that was before and after its annexation by Paris a place for those who had no place in Paris proper. The “*lois suprêmes*” may refer not to actual legislation but instead to the narrator’s interpretation of the oppressive way in which Paris’ government and Parisians alike imposed on the neighborhood in ways not befitting the interests or needs of Belleville’s population.

The *table d’orientation* maps are large-scale mosaics; they are made in the same style as the pieces created by amateur artists at the *ateliers* organized by Belleville associations. Unlike the mosaic tiles and leaves, the maps are larger-scale instruments for “taking back the street”. They designate recalibrations of standard maps that assess the city’s layout and borders in an unconventional and critical presentation. Individuals make mosaics that show their perspectives and experiences, but the *table* maps impose a view, even if it is imagined, of Paris. Theirs is an authoritative seizure of the widest-spanning view in the neighborhood, and by installing their maps there, they reclaim the view of Paris. With this reclaimed view, they can rewrite the position and narrative of Belleville in relation to the rest of Paris. The *Bellevillois* can claim their corner of the Paris as the city’s center.

CONCLUSION

The primary aim of this dissertation has been to address how Parisian streets are conduits of French values, and as such how the allowances and constraints that those spaces impose influence the street cultures that emerge there. I intentionally underline the possibility of multiple street cultures, for street culture itself is a pluralistic notion that adopts various forms depending on the groups that generate it. My objective has been to explore contemporary iterations of street culture created or influenced by the French state and by pedestrians as a means to reclaim Parisian urban spaces for foot traffic. The impetus to “reclaim”, “return”, or “take back” the streets for pedestrians stems from an accepted observation that as Parisian spaces have modernized and industrialized, cars have been prioritized users of the streets, while pedestrians have been relegated to peripheral, even private, spaces. I have approached myriad physical manifestations of street culture that have developed in the Parisian urban context, and I have also identified street culture as it appears in representations of the Parisian street in French literature.

In examining street culture in Parisian streets, this dissertation opens up discussion of further questions related to the intersection of street culture, urban studies, and literature. How do forms of street culture in Paris vary from those created in the streets of other French cities, such as Lyon or Marseille? It is equally important to note that cities are not geographically and socially uniform, and that analyses of urban street culture necessarily rely on the kinds of urban areas in question. For example, the center of the city possesses an aesthetic structure and social environment distinct from those of the microcosm of the French *banlieue*, a term that loosely translates to “suburb” but that is incomprehensible if approached from a non-French context. The exploration of street culture in the French *banlieue* would undoubtedly benefit from an analysis

of a rich and ever-expanding corpus of literature devoted to the image and portrayal of the *banlieue*, its residents, and its relationship to large city that neighbors (or overshadows) it.

A literature of street culture, including but not limited to that concerning the *banlieue*, exists in a variety of styles and genres. What is the portrayal of the street in, say, travel journals and blogs, guidebooks, and autobiographies or memoirs? How do those and other literary forms articulate street culture, and in what ways do the narrators or protagonists of the texts negotiate street culture on their own terms? How do different narrative structures alter a reader's interpretation of the street and its representations?

I might also propose how this dissertation prompts inquiry into the intersection of street culture and technology. In the age of the Internet, and with the advent of social media, people have developed more individualized and dislocated methods of interacting and communicating. Despite a plethora of ways in which disparate peoples can connect to each other through cyber platforms, there seems to be a deepening internalization and privatization of daily life in Western societies. That is to say, as technological advances have enabled people to expand their social reach beyond the confines of their physical environments, they have ironically allowed for greater isolation of people from each other and their geographic settings. How does street culture evolve in the wake of the removal of pedestrians from the street itself, not because of spatial alterations but rather due to rapid changes in technologies that mediate interpersonal interactions?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- “A Centr’Halles Park, sauté qui veut!” *Mairie de Paris*. Web. Modified 20 May 2016. www.paris.fr/actualites/a-centr-halles-park-saute-qui-veut-3317 Accessed 23 June.
- “Adjointes à la maire.” *Mairie de Paris*. Web. www.paris.fr/municipalite/la-maire-et-les-elus/adjoints-a-la-maire. Accessed 15 June 2016.
- Agulhon, Maurice. *Marianne au Pouvoir: L’Imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1880 à 1914*. Paris: Flammarion, 1989.
- “Aménagement de Bastille et Nation: donnez votre avis!” *Le Parisien*. 7 July 2016. Web. www.leparisien.fr/espace-premium/paris-75/amenagement-de-bastille-et-nation-donnez-votre-avis-07-07-2015-4924719.php. Accessed 16 February 2016.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.
- Andriveau-Goujon, Eugène. “Plan de Paris fortifié et des communes environnantes.” *Atlas historique de Paris*. Web. paris-atlas-historique.fr/6.html. Accessed 31 August 2016.
- . “Nouvelle division de Paris en 20 arrondissements et 80 quartiers au 1^{er} janvier 1860.” *Atlas historique de Paris*. Web. paris-atlas-historique.fr/6.html. Accessed 31 August 2016.
- “Annuaire des associations.” Web. w35-associations.apps.paris.fr/searchasso/jsp/site/Portal.jsp?page=searchasso. Accessed 9 November 2014.
- “Assoc’ du mois.” *Mairie de Paris*. May 2015. Web. www.paris.fr/associatifs/associations/l-assoc-du-mois/p10063. Accessed 30 May 2015.
- Atelier parisien d’urbanisme (APUR). *Projet d’aménagement de la place de la République: Diagnostic*. Mairie de Paris, January 2009.
- Atelier parisien d’urbanisme (APUR). “Réinventons nos places.” *Réaménagements de 7 places parisiennes*. Mairie de Paris, April 2016.
- Azzi, Franklin. “Le Projet des Berges de Seine.” *Vimeo*, uploaded by TCQVAR x LES BERGES DE SEINE. 2015. Web. vimeo.com/123975159. Accessed 16 February 2016.
- Baldini, Andrea. “Discussion: Street Art: A Reply to Riggle.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 74.2 (Spring 2016), pp. 187-191.
- “La Ballade de Belleville.” *Une Table d’Orientation de Belleville*. 4 June 2013. Web. belorientation.canalblog.com/archives/2013/06/04/27329355.html. Accessed 5 July 2016.

Barthes, Roland. "Le Guide bleu." *Mythologies*. Paris: Editions de Seuil, 1957.

Baudrillard, Jean. *America*. London: Verso, 1988.

Beller, Elisa T. "The Headscarf Affair: The Conseil d'État on the Role of Religion and Culture in French Society". *Texas International Law Journal* 39.581 (2003-2004).

"belvédère du Parc de Belleville, 75020." *La Maison de la Plage*. Web. www.creation-participative.eu/cekenou-zavonf%C3%A8/une-table-d-orientation-pour-belleville/. Accessed 12 October 2015.

Benjamin, Walter. *Selected Writings*. Vol. 2, edited by Marcus Bullock et al. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1999.

---. *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, edited Michael W. Jennings. Translated by Howard Eiland. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Benoît, Morgan. "Berges de Seine piétonnes à Paris: accès, activités, infos pratiques." *evous.fr*. Updated 23 August 2016. Web. www.evous.fr/Visite-illustree-des-berges-de-Seine-a-Paris-a-l-ete-2013,1177710.html#ZMvAjDDZDzYrlxYY.99. Accessed 24 August 2016.

"Berges de Seine: le jardin flottant prend forme." *Atelier parisien d'urbanisme*. 30 May 2013. Web. www.apur.org/article/berges-seine-jardin-flottant-prend-forme. Accessed 16 February 2016.

"Les Berges rive droite." *Mairie de Paris*. 27 May 2015. Web. www.paris.fr/berges. Accessed 16 February 2016.

Blokland, Talja and Floris Noordhoff. "The Weakness of Weak Ties." *Networked Urbanism: Social Capital in the City*, edited by Talja Blokland and Mike Savage. 2008.

Bonnett, Alastair. "The Nostalgias of Situationist Subversion." *Theory Culture Society* 23.5 (2006), pp. 23-48.

Boorstin, Daniel J. *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. New York: Harper, 1964.

Bourdieu, Pierre, *La Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1979.

Bouzaafa, Marc. Personal interview. 18 February 2015.

Breton, André, *Nadja*, Paris: Gallimard, 1962.

Caous, Mélanie. "Et si les stations de métro rendaient hommage aux femmes?" *Glamour*. 19 March 2014. Web. www.glamourparis.com/snacking-du-web/articles/paris-une-carte-de-metro-avec-des-noms-de-femmes-19032014/22416. Accessed 17 July 2015.

“Carrefour des Associations Parisiennes.” *Mairie de Paris*. Web. equipement.paris.fr/carrefour-des-associations-parisiennes-6605. Accessed 3 March 2015.

“Une carte subjective de Belleville.” *Point de rassemblement*. 4 June 2013. Web. pointderassemblement.blogspot.com/2013/06/une-carte-subjective-de-belleville.html. Accessed 28 January 2015.

“La Carte SUBJECTIVE de Belleville collée!” *Une Table d’Orientation pour Belleville*. 7 June 2013. Web. belorientation.canalblog.com/. Accessed 28 January 2015.

“Une carte subjective de Belleville #3 – Archipelia 18 et 19 avril 2013.” *Point de Rassemblement*. 26 April 2013. Web. pointderassemblement.blogspot.com/2013/04/une-carte-subjective-de-belleville-3.html. Accessed 1 April 2016.

“Une carte subjective de Belleville #6 – Les vues de Belleville.” *Point de Rassemblement*. 16 May 2013. Web. pointderassemblement.blogspot.com/2013/05/une-carte-subjective-de-belleville-6.html. Accessed 1 April 2016.

Choblet, Jean-Christophe. “Le Projet des Berges de Seine.” *Vimeo*, uploaded by TCQVAR x LES BERGES DE SEINE. 2015. Web. vimeo.com/123975159. Accessed 16 February 2016.

Collard, Susan. “French cultural policy: the special role of the state.” *Contemporary French Cultural Studies*, edited by William Kidd and Sian Reynolds, Routledge, 2000, pp. 38-50.

“Criteria for Selection”. *UNESCO World Heritage Convention*. Web. whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/. Accessed 14 February 2016.

De Certeau, Michel. *L’Invention du quotidien*. Vol 1, *Arts de faire*, 1980.

De la Pradelle, Michèle and Emmanuelle Lallement. “Paris Plage: ‘The City is Ours’.” *American Academy of Political and Social Science* 595 (September 2004), pp. 134-145.

Debord, Guy. *La Société du spectacle*. Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1967.

---. *Œuvres*. Paris : Gallimard, 2006.

---. “Théorie de la Dérive.” *Internationale Situationniste* 2 (1958). Web. www.larevuedesressources.org/theorie-de-la-derive,038.html. 9 March 2014.

Dejean, Joan. *How Paris Became Paris: The Invention of the Modern City*. Bloomsbury: New York, 2014.

---. *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France*. New York: Columbia UP, 1991.

Delanoë, Bertrand. "Bertrand Delanoë inaugure les aménagements des voies sur berges." *YouTube*, uploaded by mairiedeparis, 17 September 2012. Web. youtu.be/sCPV8pfk5Po. Accessed 16 February 2016.

"L'Église Notre Dame de la Croix." *Mairie du 20^e arrondissement*. Web. www.mairie20.paris.fr/mairie20/jsp/site/Portal.jsp?page_id=928. Accessed 28 January 2015.

Fawlinson, C.J. and Guaralda, M. "Chaos and Creativity of Play: Designing Emotional Engagement in Public Spaces." *Out of Control: Proceedings of 8th International Design and Emotion Conference*. London: University of Arts London, Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, 2012.

Ferguson, Priscilla Parkhurst. *Paris as Revolution: Writing the 19th-Century City*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

"Fête de la Musique 2016 à Paris et en île de France, les meilleurs spots." *Sortir à Paris*. 21 June 2016. Web. www.sortiraparis.com/scenes/concert-musique/guides/53382-fete-de-la-musique-2016-a-paris-et-en-ile-de-france-les-meilleurs-spots#uT8VybXOdmHZmcrcq.99. Accessed 3 July 2016.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Translated by Alan Sheridan. Vintage Books: New York, 1977.

Freshwater, Dawn. "The poetics of space: researching the concept of spatiality through relationality." *Psychodynamic Practice* 11.2 (May 2005), pp. 177-187.

Furlough, Ellen. "Making Mass Vacations: Tourism and Consumer Culture in France, 1930s to 1970s." *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* 40.2 (April 1998), pp. 247-286.

Fusillier, Didier. "Le Projet des Berges de Seine." *Vimeo*, uploaded by TCQVAR x LES BERGES DE SEINE. 2015. Web. vimeo.com/123975159. Accessed 16 February 2016.

Gale, Tim. "Urban Beaches, Virtual Worlds, and 'The End of Tourism'." *Mobilities* 4.1 (2009), pp. 119-138.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Jackson, Peter. *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1989.

Germani, Ian. "Taking Possession of Marianne: The Place de la République as Political Battleground." *Canadian Journal of History* XLV (Autumn 2010), pp. 299-334.

Gilloch, Graeme. *Myth and Metropolis: Walter Benjamin and the City*. Polity Press: Cambridge UK, 1996.

Girard, Christophe. Personal interview. 19 February 2015.

Goetz, Adrien. "La place de la République défigurée." *Le Figaro*. 20 June 2013. Web. www.lefigaro.fr/arts-expositions/2013/06/19/03015-20130619ARTFIG00476-la-place-de-la-republique-defiguree.php Accessed 25 July 2014.

Goffman, Erving. *Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1961.

Gregory, Derek. *Geographical Imaginations*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994.

"Gros succès pour la première Journée sans voiture!" *Mairie de Paris*. 28 September 2015. Web. www.paris.fr/actualites/gros-succes-pour-la-1ere-journee-sans-voiture-2922#retour-en-images-sur-la-premiere-journee-sans-voiture_3. Accessed 14 February 2016.

Grossberg, Lawrence. *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Guy Debord and the Situationist International: Texts and Documents, edited by Tom McDonough, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004, pp. 222.

Hall, Thomas. *Planning Europe's Capital Cities*. London: E and FN Spon, 1997.

Harley, J. B. "Deconstructing the Map". *Writing Worlds: Discourse, text, and metaphor in the representation of landscape*. Ed. Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan. London: Routledge, 1992.

Harris, Sue. "Festivals and fêtes populaires." *Contemporary French Cultural Studies*, edited by William Kidd and Sian Reynolds, Routledge, 2000, pp. 220-228.

Harvey, David. *Rebel Cities*. London: Verso, 2012.

Higgins, Jeanmarie. "The Revitalization of Space: Freestyle Parkour and Its Audiences." *Southeastern Theatre Conference March 4-8 2009 Birmingham, AL*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2009.

Huhtamo, Erkki. "(Un)walking at the Fair: About Mobile Visualities at the Paris Universal Exposition of 1900". *Journal of Visual Culture* 12.1 (April 2013), pp. 61-88.

"Inauguration de la Place de la République." *Le Nouvel observateur*. 15 June 2013. Web. tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/societe/20130615.OBS3456/inauguration-de-la-place-de-la-republique-a-paris.html. Accessed 25 July 2014.

"Info." *Susan Leen*. Web. www.susanleen.com/ABOUT. Accessed 28 January 2015.

“Invitation Vernissage: Silvia Radelli, *Vies Magnifiques*.” *Paris Macadam—Les Arcavals*, February 2015. Web. <https://parismacadam.fr/autres/PMLA-%20Exposition%20militante%20-%20Silvia%20RADELLI.pdf>. Accessed 26 August 2016.

Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. New York: Random House, 1961.

Jordan, David P. “Haussmann and *Haussmannisation*: The Legacy for Paris.” *French Historical Studies* 27.1 (Winter 2004), pp. 87-113.

“Journée sans voiture 2016 à Paris : Comment se déplacer ?” *evous*. 16 June 2016. Web. www.evous.fr/Journee-sans-voiture-a-Paris-Comment-se-deplacer-1188973.html. Accessed 8 July 2016.

Judt, Tony. “A la Recherche du Temps Perdu.” *New York Review of Books* 45.19 (1998), pp. 51-58.

Kaplan, David H. “Immigration and the making of place in Paris.” *Journal of Cultural Geography* 32.1 (2015), pp. 23-29.

Kidder, Jeffrey L. “Parkour: Adventure, Risk, and Safety in the Urban Environment.” *Qualitative sociology* 36.3 (2013), pp. 231-250.

“Kif kif vivre.” *Mairie de Paris*. May 2015. Web. www.paris.fr/associatifs/associations/l-assoc-du-mois/l-assoc-du-mois-kif-kif-vivre-ensemble/rub_10063_actu_153207_port_25546. Accessed 30 May 2015.

Kif kif vivre ensemble. Web. kifkifblog.wordpress.com/. Accessed 30 May 2015.

Kirkland, Stephane. *Paris Reborn: Napoléon III, Baron Haussmann, and the Quest to Build a Modern City*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2013.

Law N°1378. *L’Assemblée nationale*. 28 January 2004. Web. www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/projets/pl1378.asp. Accessed 5 November 2014.

“Liberté, égalité, fraternité.” Front Cover. *Anthropology Today* 28.6 (December 2012), pp. i-ii.

“Loi du 1er juillet 1901 relative au contrat d’association.” *Legifrance*. 6 May 2009. Web. Accessed 5 November 2014.

Loret, Alain and Anne-Marie Waser, editors. *Glisse urbaine: l’esprit roller: liberté, apesanteur, tolerance*. Paris: Editions Autrement, 2001.

Low, Setha. *On the Plaza: The Politics of Space and Culture*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000.

---. "Spatializing Culture: The Social Production and Social Construction of Public Space in Costa Rica." *American Ethnologist* 23.4 (1996), 861-879.

Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960.

MacCannell, Dean. "Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist settings." *American Sociological Review* 79 (1973), pp. 589-603.

"La Mairie de Paris veut boucler la renovation de ses places". *LesEchos.fr*. 20 November 2015. Web. www.lesechos.fr/20/11/2015/LesEchos/22070-354-ECH_la-mairie-de-paris-veut-boucler-la-renovation-de-ses-places.htm. Accessed 16 February 2016.

"Marie Descraene." *La Maison de la plage*. Web. www.creation-participative.eu/kion%C3%A8/directrice/. Accessed 22 April 2016.

Markus, György. "The Path of Culture: From the Refined to the High, from the Popular to Mass Culture". *Critical Horizons* 14.2 (2013), pp. 127-155.

McGuigan, Jim. *Rethinking Cultural Policy*. Berkshire: Open University Press, 2004.

McIntyre, Abby. "If Women Ruled the World: Paris Metro Map Edition." *Slate*. 19 March 2014. Web. www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2014/03/19/silvia_radelli_reimagines_paris_metro_map_naming_stations_after_susan_sontag.html. Accessed 17 July 2015.

Mercier, Kevin. Personal Interview. 17 February 2015.

Mercier, Louis-Sébastien. *Tableau de Paris, Nouvelle edition, corrigée et augmentée*. Vol. 1. 1782-1788.

Merfeld-Langston, Audra L. "Celebrating Literature to Shape Citizenship: France's 2007 'Lire en fête'." *Modern and Contemporary France* 18.3 (2010), pp. 343-356.

Milo, Daniel. "Le nom des rues." *Les lieux de mémoire: La Nation*. Vol. 2, tome 3, edited by Pierre Nora. Paris: Gallimard, vol. 2, no. 3. 1986, pp. 283-315.

Modiano, Patrick. *Dans le café de la jeunesse perdue*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 2007.

Munro, James S. *Mademoiselle de Scudéry and the Carte de Tendre*. Durham: University of Durham, 1986.

Nora, Pierre. "Between Memory and History: Les lieux de mémoire." *Memory and Counter-Memory*, special issue of *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), 7-24.

“Nos engagements”. *Point de rassemblement*. Web. pointderassemblement.blogspot.com/2013/06/une-carte-subjective-de-belleville.html. Accessed 28 January 2015.

“Nuit blanche à Paris: musée à ciel ouvert.” *The Paris Post*. 4 October 2014. Web. www.theparispost.com/nuit-blanche-a-paris-musee-a-ciel-ouvert. Accessed 14 February 2015.

Objets & Mémoires, edited by Octave Debary and Laurier Turgeon. Montréal: Presses de l’Université Laval, 2007.

Orenstein, Gloria Feman. “Journey through Mlle De Scudery’s Carte de Tendre: A 17th Century Salon Woman’s Dream/Country of Affection.” *Femspec* 3.2 (June 2002).

“Paris, Banks of the Seine”. *UNESCO World Heritage Convention*. Web. whc.unesco.org/en/list/600/. Accessed 14 February 2016.

“Paris rooftop parkour, Yoann Zephyr Leroux with Mister S.” *YouTube*, uploaded by MISTERSTRIPTV, 29 October 2014. Web. youtu.be/hr9Z4_BKKoI. Accessed 16 October 2015.

“Les ‘pelles Starck’ ont fait leur temps.” *Le Parisien*. 21 January 2009. Web. www.leparisien.fr/paris-75/les-pelles-starck-ont-fait-leur-temps-21-01-2009-381476.php#xtref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F. Accessed 5 November 2014.

“Place de la République.” TVK Architectes urbanistes. 16 June 2013. Web. republique.tvk.fr/?p=118. Accessed 25 July 2014.

Plant, Sadie. *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age*. London: Routledge, 1992.

“Plateforme artistique de cartes sensibles.” *Point de Rassemblement*. 3 September 2013. Web. pointderassemblement.blogspot.com/2013/09/plateforme-artistique-de-cartes.html. Accessed 2 November 2014.

“Point de rassemblement.” *Ile de France: Projets Citoyens*. 21 November 2013. Web. projetscitoyens.iledefrance.fr/membres/point-de-rassemblement. Accessed 2 November 2014.

Prieto, Eric. “Rhetoric of the Belleville Novel.” *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 8.1 (January 2004), pp. 31-41.

“Le Projet: Une journée sans voiture dans TOUT Paris?” *Paris sans voiture: collectif citoyen*. Web. parissansvoiture.fr/projet/. Accessed 15 April 2016.

“Projet des berges de Seine, rive droite: ‘C’est la fin des bouquinistes et de toute une vie de quartier!’” *Metronews*. 24 September 2015. Web. www.metronews.fr/paris/projet-des-berges-de-seine-rive-droite-c-est-la-fin-des-bouquinistes-et-de-toute-une-vie-de-quartier/mogc!4GbalqsNiQPM/. Accessed 16 February 2016.

- “Qu’est-ce que le slam?” *Ligue slam de France*. 2009. www.ligueslamdefrance.fr/archive/slam.php. Accessed 10 July 2016.
- “Qu’est-ce que la Carte de Tendre?” *Amour—Humour*. Web. www.amour-humour.com/AH_la_carte_du_tendre.htm. Accessed 1 March 2016.
- Radelli, Silvia. *Facebook*. Web. www.facebook.com/Silvia-Radelli-556038771086260/. Accessed 26 August 2016.
- Ravinel, Sophie de. “Voies sur berges: Delanoë vise un aménagement en 2012.” *Le Figaro*. 9 February 2011. Web. www.lefigaro.fr/politique/2011/02/09/01002-20110209ARTFIG00368-voies-sur-berges-delano-e-vise-un-amenagement-en-2012.php. Accessed 16 February 2016.
- Rawlinson, Christopher & Guaralda, Mirko. “Play in the city : Parkour and architecture.” *First International Postgraduate Conference on Engineering, Designing and Developing the Built Environment for Sustainable Wellbeing* 27-29 April 2011, Brisbane, Queensland University of Technology, 2011.
- “Réaménagement de la place de la République : une occasion ratée ?” *Communiqué des Verts Paris*. 21 January 2010. Web. paris11.paris-eelv.fr/spip.php?article289. Accessed 25 July 2014.
- “Réinventons nos Places! Donnez votre avis.” *Mairie de Paris*, 2010. Web. idee.paris.fr/reinventons-nos-places. Accessed 16 February 2016.
- “Résumé.” *Une Table d’Orientation pour Belleville*. 26 June 2013. Web. belorientation.canalblog.com/archives/2013/06/index.html. Accessed 22 April 2016.
- Rigaud, Jacques. *L’Exception culturelle: Culture et pouvoirs sous la V^e République*. Paris: Grasset, 1995.
- Riggle, Nicholas Alden. “Street Art: The Transfiguration of the Commonplaces.” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 68.3 (Summer 2010), pp. 243-257.
- Rodriguez, Serge Rodriguez and Marion Thuriot. *Le Roller à Paris*. Paris: Parigramme, 1999.
- Ross, Kristin. *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994.
- Saalman, Howard. *Haussmann: Paris Transformed*. New York: George Braziller, 1971.
- Sadler, Simon. *The Situationist City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998.
- Sage, Ludovic. Personal Interview. 26 February 2015.
- Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: an Introduction* New York : Routledge, 1988.

Seres, Aude. "Paris: la facture détaillée des Voies sur berges". *Le Figaro*. 29 November 2011. Web. www.lefigaro.fr/actualite-france/2011/11/27/01016-20111127ARTFIG00242-paris-la-facture-detailleedes-voies-sur-berges.php. Accessed 16 February 2016.

Simon, Patrick. "L'esprit des lieux." *Belleville, Belleville: visages d'une planète*, edited by Françoise Morier. Créaphis, 1994.

Stevens, Quentin. *The Ludic City: Exploring the potential of public spaces*. London: Routledge, 2007.

Stott, Carolyn. "Belleville rouge, Belleville noir, Belleville rose: The Complex Identity of a Parisian quartier." *Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 12.1 (January 2015), pp. 2-16.

"Une table d'orientation pour Belleville." *Maison de la Plage*. www.creation-participative.eu/cekenou-zavonf%C3%A8/une-table-d-orientation-pour-belleville/.

Tam, Amaranta. "Rue Dénoyez." *Advitam eternslam*. 17 September 2014. Web. <https://amatam.wordpress.com/2014/09/17/rue-denoyez/>. Accessed 10 July 2016.

Tardieu, Aurélien. "Les incontournables de la Nuit Blanche." *Paris Match*. 4 October 2014. Web. www.parismatch.com/Culture/Art/Les-incontournables-de-Nuit-blanche-2014-604170. Accessed 14 February 2015.

"Travel & Tourism: Economic Impact: France". *World Travel & Tourism Council*. 2015.

Tresca, Marie-Lorraine. "Paris-Plages 2015: La capitale s'ensable." *LesEchos.fr*. 17 July 2015. Web. www.lesechos.fr/17/07/2015/lesechos.fr/021213343196_paris-plages-2015---la-capitale-s-ensable.htm. Accessed 28 January 2016.

"Tripes". *Trésors de la langue française*. Web. atilf.atilf.fr/dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/visusel.exe?65;s=2690641425;r=4;nat=;sol=0;. Accessed 18 June 2016.

Tuan, Yi-fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage Publications, 1990.

Vara, Vauhina. "Party Politics: In Paris, Mayor Serves, and Volleys, To Keep City of Light Aloft." *The Wall Street Journal*. 28 August 2003. Web. on.wsj.com/2c7VbV4. Accessed 3 July 2016.

Wehle, Philippa. "A History of the Avignon Festival." *The Drama Review: TDR* 28.1 (Spring 1984), pp.52-61.

Wood, Denis and John Fels. *The Power of Maps*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1992.

“Work: Carte Subjective de Belleville.” *Susan Leen*. www.susanleen.com/Carte-Subjective-de-Belleville. Accessed 28 January 2015.

Zappi, Sylvia. “French Government Revives Assimilation Policy”. *Migration Information Source*. October 2003. Online. www.migrationpolicy.org/article/french-government-revives-assimilation-policy. Accessed 14 August 2016.

Zelinsky, Zeno. “Présence urbaine et images maritimes chez Patrick Modiano”. *French Cultural Studies* 23.4 (November 2012), pp. 358-365.

Zevin, Alexander. “Panoramic Literature in 19th Century Paris: Robert Macaire as a Type of Everyday.” *Paris: Capital of the 19th Century*. 2005. Web. library.brown.edu/cds/paris/Zevin.html. Accessed 12 November 2014.

“10bis/10ter rue Bisson, 75020.” *La Maison de la plage*. Web. www.creation-participative.eu/cekenou-zavonf%C3%A8/l-oiseau-bisson/. Accessed 22 April 2016.

“18 bis rue Dénoyez, 75020 Paris, métro Belleville.” *La Maison de la Plage Blog*. 7 December 2006. Web. lamaisondelaplag.canalblog.com/archives/2006/12/07/3368788.html. Accessed 22 April 2016.