Title
Seeing and Then Seeing Again: Empathy, Mood and the Artistic Milieu of New Orleans' Storyville and French Quarter as Manifest by the Photographs and Lives of E.J. Bellocq and George Valentine Dureau

Permalink
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Publication Date
2019

Supplemental Material
https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5ch8t9vj#supplemental

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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Seeing and Then Seeing Again:
Empathy, Mood and the Artistic Milieu of New Orleans' Storyville and French Quarter
as Manifest by the Photographs and Lives of E.J. Bellocq and George Valentine Dureau

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

by

Timothy J. Lithgow

December 2019

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Dedication:

For Anita, Aubrey, Fiona, George, Larry, Lillian, Myrna, Noël and Paul.

Table of Contents

Perhaps it would be as well to say the old conception,
replaced by a later choice, is a way of seeing and then
seeing again.

Lillian Hellman, *Pentimento*, 1973 [1]

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[1] Lillian Hellman, *Pentimento* (New York: Little Brown, 1973), 3. Hellman was born and raised in New Orleans.

Introduction

"One day, quite some time ago, I happened on a photograph," so begins *Camera Lucida*, by Roland Barthes. Likewise, this project was catalyzed after I too happened on a photograph, and Barthes' reasoning forms the basis for the initial discussion presented here.

There have been a very small number of instances where my encounter with an art object (film, music or photography) had a significant, long-term impact on my life. One of these took place during the late 1990s in Louisiana. During that period, I visited New Orleans periodically and I had gotten to know the proprietor of a local photography gallery. A high pressure sales environment this gallery most definitely was not. So, it was a bit surprising when the owner mentioned that there was something she had been wanting to show me. She then went behind the counter and from beneath the far end brought out an army green 16x20" photo box. She returned from behind the counter, pulled the box over and removed the lid. This was the moment when I first saw the work of George Valentine Dureau (b. 1930, New Orleans; d. 2014 New Orleans). [Fig. 1] The Dureau image I saw that day, the one on top, inside the army green box, was *B.J. Robinson,* 1983, a photographic image of a young man who appeared to have no lower body. Robinson was wearing what appeared to be an American flag as a garment, and he had a mysterious pendant, perfectly catching the light, hung around his neck.[2] [Fig. 2] I

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[2] Dureau has many images with the same title. This is because, with rare exceptions, Dureau named his work only by the name of the sitter and the year taken. Thus, every image from the same shoot has the same name, and if a subject had more than one sitting in the same calendar

did not know what to make of the B.J. Robinson image, or the rest of the Dureau work in

that box. At first I wondered if B.J. Robinson was real; yet I presumed so, due to the

apparent age of the print, it would have pre-dated Photoshop. I had never seen a

photograph like this before, and I lacked any framework for this work, why the work

existed, and what it was saying. Interpreting *Camera Lucida*, at least one has said that a

photograph with *studium* only has no life outside the four corners of the image, whereas

an image with punctum does, it goes on living. That being the case, this image certainly

had punctum.[3] Over the next few days I did fabricate a story for B.J. Robinson, one

involving the Viet Nam War. Oddly, my story was very similar to one arrived at by

scholar Melody D. Davis after she encountered this same photograph. We were both

wrong![4]

Stepping back now to revisit *Camera Lucida*, the book is the English translation of

Barthes' French book *La Chambre Claire*, published in 1980 through a commission by

Les Cahiers du Cinema as part of its series of short books on cinema.[5] *Camera Lucida*

continues the spectator-centered approach to artistic works begun with Barthes' 1967

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year, all those images have the same name as well. Over time, he also used variations of a
person's name: first name only, initials, first and last names, first last and middle names.

[3] Jane Gallop, "The Pleasure of the Phototext," *in Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 48.

[4] Melody D. Davis, "Freak Flag: Humour and the Photography of George Dureau," *Paragraph*, 26, nos. 1-2 (2003), 102.

[5] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, translated by Richard Howard, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010); Roland Barthes, *La Chambre Claire: Note sur la Photographie*, (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, Gallimard Seuil, 1980)

essay *The Death of the Author*, where having proposed a shift in emphasis from a single originating author to that of multiple empowered readers. Barthes stated, "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author." [6]

There are three particularly famous features of *Camera Lucida*: one is The Winter Garden Photograph of his mother and the discussion thereof, as well as the concepts *studium* and *punctum*. The theme of death recurs in Barthes' work. An inescapable fact in reading and understanding *Camera Lucida* is that Barthes' mother had died shortly before it was written. His mother, Henriette Barthes, died on October 25, 1977, devastating the son since she had been his beloved companion, and the two had lived together almost his entire life. This somber event casts a pall over *Camera Lucida*." [7]

The Winter Garden Photograph

In the later part of *Camera Lucida*, Barthes refashions his search for the essence of photography, moving from an investigation of many photographs to an intense analysis of just one, the now-famous "Winter Garden Photograph" of his mother.

Ironically, we never see the Winter Garden Photo. We are told that he found it in November 1977, the month after his mother's death. Barthes reports that this photograph

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[6] Intervening Barthes works that also contained the viewer centered approach include *The Pleasure of the Text* (1973), *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* (1975) and *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1977). Geoffrey Batchen, "Palinode, an Introduction to Photography Degree Zero," in *Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 8-9, fn. 31.

[7] Louis-Jean Calvet, *Roland Barthes: A Biography*, trans. Sarah Wykes (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1994), 220, 233.

shows his mother in 1898, at age five, standing next to her seven-year-old brother. [8]

Barthes describes this photograph in detail, both its physical condition ("old ... the

corners blunted from having been pasted into an album, the sepia print had faded") and

its form (two children are standing near a wooden bridge railing in a glassed-in

conservatory at their childhood home, she a little back and holding one finger in her

other hand).[9] But what he finds in this picture is not exactly visible to others. It is

"something inexpressible,"[10] the "air" of his deceased mother,[11] "the truth of the face I

had loved,"[12] and what he calls a utopian and "impossible science of the unique being."[13]

Having discovered "something like an essence of the Photograph" in this particular

picture,[14] Barthes traces the source of this essence to photography's peculiar articulation

of time, i.e., the way photography simultaneously evokes past, present, and future in a

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[8] More than one scholar has proposed that The Winter Garden photo is not produced because it never existed!

[9] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 67.

[10] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 107.

[11] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 107.

[12] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 67.

[13] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 71.

[14] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 73.

single image. As mentioned above, death was a recurring theme for Barthes, thus he states:

> From now on I could do no more than await my total, undialectical death. That is what I read in the Winter Garden Photograph.[15]

Consistent with the theme of observer-centered, uniquely personal meanings promoted throughout *Camera Lucida*, I submit that we should consider this book beyond the context of death, the theme so dominant in Barthes' psyche at the time he wrote it. For a given viewer, in the absence of death as a pervasive aspect of their life, I propose that it is, nevertheless, reasonable to rely upon other core aspects of Barthes' reasoning, such as *studium* and *punctum*.

Studium and *Punctum*

Camera Lucida introduced the concepts of *studium* and *punctum.* These two Latin terms are contrasted by Barthes. He uses these concepts to characterize an individual's uniquely personal response to a photograph, as well as to elucidate the meaning of photography as a medium.[16]

Defining *studium*, Barthes states: "Many photographs are, alas, inert under my gaze." Most photographs elicit in him nothing but polite interest: "[T]hey please or displease

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[15] Roland Barthes*, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 72.

[16] Roland Barthes*, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 26-7.

me without pricking me. ... The *studium* is that very wide field of unconcerned desire, of various interest, of inconsequential taste. ... To recognize the *studium* is inevitably to encounter the photographer's intentions." *Studium* is "of the order of *liking*, not of *loving*." (emphasis original)[17] Barthes contrasts the *studium*-type response with one called *punctum*. He found *punctum* more difficult to characterize, as evinced by his numerous attempts to do so throughout the book.

The second element, *punctum,* "will break (or punctuate) the studium."[18] *Punctum* is induced, Barthes says, by an "element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me." He elaborates on *punctum* with a variety of suggestive and physical analogies, emphasizing, thereby, that simple definitions cannot do the experience justice: "this wound, this prick, this mark made by a pointed instrument," a "sting, speck, cut, little hole - and also a cast of the dice." Later in the book, Barthes proposes yet another punctum: "I now know that there exists another *punctum* (another 'stigmatum') than the 'detail.' This new *punctum*, which is no longer of form but of intensity, is Time," its pure representation, the lacerating emphasis of the 'that has

[17] Roland Barthes*, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 27.

[18] Roland Barthes*, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 26.

been.'[19] Yet, in one telling definition he states, "In this glum desert, suddenly a specific photograph reaches me; it animates me and I animate it."[20]

With these words, "it animates me, and I animate it" Barthes has, whether intentionally or not, articulated the definition for the German concept of aesthetic empathy: *einfühlung*.[21] *Einfühlung* is a once-prominent but more-recently neglected aesthetic approach for considering objects.

In modern English, *einfühlung* has no direct translation, although it once did! That word was empathy. Given the pervasiveness of empathy in modern culture, it is surprising to learn that empathy did not appear in English until 1908, at which point it was a translation of the German *einfühlung*. Empathy (as *einfühlung*) is another paradigm to be used for evaluation here; particularly as an evaluation of how *einfühlung* may impact not just the viewer's response to an object, but also how it impacts the art-maker's creative process.

Einfühlung and Empathy

The history of empathy shows that in aesthetic, scientific, therapeutic, political, and everyday settings, empathy has been credited with the power to shift the self so as to

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[19] Roland Barthes*, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 96.

[20] Roland Barthes*, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981) 20.

[21] Literally,"in-feeling."

enter into and then embody alien forms, to transform one's self into art objects, to inhabit other realities, and to take on the experiences of other persons.

Several inter-related terms should be clarified here. Due to the limitations of language, some are in English and some are in German: *einfühlung*, empathy, *empathie*, and sympathy. Today sympathy is usually defined as a feeling of pity for another, a feeling from a distance. . Sympathy is characterized by feelings of concern about the welfare of others. This does not necessarily imply that one has to actually feel the same feelings or emotions. Sympathy may stem from the apprehension of another's emotional state; it does not have to be congruent with the affective state of the other. In contrast, empathy is an engagement with the experience of another, to inhabit, sometimes even bodily, the other's perspective.[22] *Einfühlung* refers to the aesthetic activity of transferring one's own self into the forms and shapes of things. In contrast, as many understand it today, empathy, now interpersonal, is our capacity to grasp and understand the mental and emotional lives of others. With interpersonal empathy the observer retains selfhood while placing themself into the context of another. Rather than feeling sorry for someone else's misery, empathy enabled a more comprehensive grasp of another's experience. With interpersonal empathy, the observer integrates into the other's experience, doing so, not as the observed, but as themselves. Interpersonal empathy carries with it a spatial dimension—the ability to dwell in another's place and to see from this vantage point, all

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[22] Vanessa Lux, "Measuring the Emotional Quality: Empathy and Sympathy in Empirical Psychology," in *Empathy: Epistemic Problems and Cultural-Historical Perspectives of a Cross-Disciplinary Concept*, eds. Vanessa Lux and Sigrid Weigel (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017).

while being the person of the observer. This more-recent, inter-personal concept of empathy led to the creation of a new German word during the 1950s, *empathie.*

Another New Orleans Photograph

Several years after my encounter with the work of George Dureau in a New Orleans gallery, another gallerist, this time in San Francisco, who just happened to be a Louisiana native, told me about the work of E.J. Bellocq (b. 1873, d. 1949 New Orleans) [Fig. 3], being printed by photographer Lee Friedlander.

Once again, this body of work contained and image that elicited what Barthes would call a "Winter Garden" effect on me: a mesmerizing image of a curvy woman wearing a long white camisole and dark stockings. [Fig. 4] Bellocq too lived and worked in the French Quarter, although, the rest of his biography is much less certain.[23] His images were said to be of prostitutes from New Orleans' former Storyville neighborhood, which at the turn of the last century, existed as something of an outcropping of the French Quarter. [Fig. 5] Presently, the operative assumption is that Bellocq knew these women. However, the reason(s) why he took the images remain unknown.[24] Also unknown, and of great interest to the San Francisco gallery director, was why Bellocq had scratched

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[23] John Szarkowski, ed., *E.J. Bellocq: Storyville Portraits* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 5-18.

[24] Some have suggested that these were taken, not for Bellocq's use, but commercially, for the personal use of the women photographed. One proposal is that they were taken for use in Storyville prostitution directories called "Blue Books." Christian Waguespack, "Posh and Tawdry: Rethinking E.J. Bellocq's Storyville Portraits" (Master's Thesis, University of New Mexico, 2015).

out the women's faces on many of the glass negatives. However, this later "fact" too is only an assumption, the actual negative-scratcher remains unknown.[25]

In considering the lives and work of Bellocq and Dureau an astonishing number of similarities became apparent. These two men worked at different times, the first twenty years of Dureau's life were Bellocq's final two decades. Nevertheless, these two men spent much of their lives in almost identical geographic space: New Orleans distinctive, and tiny, historic French Quarter. Not only that, but almost all of their respective subjects were found in their neighborhood. Both artists work is almost entirely portraiture, and in each case, the subjects they depicted were far from standard subjects of portraiture, they were outsiders. Bellocq's now famous work is understood to be of prostitutes and a sizable portion of Dureau's work is of disabled persons and/or homeless persons. In each case, both artists often depicted their subject's nude. Each man took pictures, almost exclusively, of only one gender. Interestingly, for Bellocq it was women and for Dureau it was men.

Empathy is often identified or assumed in relation to Bellocq's and Dureau's work: there is a sense that each artist knew his sitters, moreover that they were each friendly with those they photographed. These suggestions are of empathy in its interpersonal form.

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[25] See, e.g., [Figs. 25-26]. One theory is that Bellocq's brother, a priest, may have done the scratching, after discovering the negatives following his brother's death. Friedlander tried scratching the negatives. His belief is that the kind of scratching seen likely was done while the negatives were wet. It does not seem to be an effort to conceal the subject's identity, since, as shown in Figures 25 and 26, the subject's face is scratched out in one pose, but not another obviously from the same session. Perhaps these were just images Bellocq did not like. However, why would he then keep a bunch of negatives of shots he did not like? The mystery continues.

What about the other empathy, *einfühlung*? Certainly I had experienced Barthes'

punctum-like experience, and I had found certain of these artists' work engrossing, in an

einfühlung-type way. This *einfühlung* response was mine, as a viewer of their work.

Since these two men had occupied almost identical geographic space, I became

increasingly intrigued by the role of *einfühlung* in the lives of these two artists, the type

of experience possible in their tiny historic neighborhood.[26] Could *einfühlung* help

account for the similarities in their work? How might the immersive experience of the

French Quarter environment have impacted their work, given its small area, the

relatively close proximity of their residences, and given the slow evolution of the

historic neighborhood?[27] This marks a shift in emphasis here, from subjective response

by a viewer, to the kinds of subjective responses taking place within the lives of art

creators.

One challenge with this analysis is the working of *einfühlung* in an everyday built

environment. Much of the work with *einfühlung* focuses on the aesthetics of ideal,

appealing objects, the soaring mountain peak, the antique statue, or the architect-

designed building. Although it is acknowledged that *einfühlung* occurs for all manner of

organic and inorganic objects, there is little work on how this would play out in more

everyday settings. Regardless of its type (the German *einfühlung* or *empathie*), empathy

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[26] They both appear to have spent a great deal of their lives living and working in the northern
part of the French Quarter, near Rampart Street, once the dividing line between Storyville and
the French Quarter..

[27]See, e.g., Sharon Keating, *New Orleans Then and Now* (London: Pavilion, 2017); Sullivan,
Lester, *New Orleans Then & Now* (San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 2003).

is an intersubjectivity yielding supplemental information: both feelings and facts. Thinking along the lines of "if these walls could talk," I submit that Bellocq's and Dureau's *einfühlung* experience of the now 300-year-old French Quarter neighborhood is an enlightening way to think about these two artists and their work.

Thinking of one's aesthetic experience in a built environment through *einfühlung* is not the only German aesthetic philosophical paradigm that is relevant here. Not unrelated to the concept of *einfühlung* is the concept of *stimmung. Stimmung*, like *einfühlung*, lacks an English counterpart.[28] *Stimmung* is famously difficult to translate from German to English. No single word or concept corresponds to *stimmung*. A noun, *stimmung* originated as the act of tuning a musical instrument as well and the quality of being in tune. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *stimmung* came to stand for diverse aspects of aesthetic experience. These aspects include concepts of mood (typically subjective states, the following can have *stimmung*: artwork, animate and inanimate objects, individuals, communal groups and landscape environments); atmosphere (these tend to be more objective: communal groups, landscapes and weather); along with retained ideas related to harmony or being in synchrony.

Stimmung is understood to be influenced by all manner of societal and environmental factors such as such as economics, music, current events, tragedy, festivity, politics and tolerance. Certainly, the long and unique history of New Orleans has created a very distinct, and popular, *stimmung*-type mood, especially in the French Quarter. The

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[28] Unlike *einfühlung*, at no point did *stimmung* have an English counterpart.

stimmung of New Orleans' French Quarter is established by features such as its economics, music, festivity, politics and tolerance. These features reflect the mores and customs that have been arrived at after a long and convoluted regional history. Such *stimmung* cloaks the work of Dureau and Bellocq.

New Orleans' French Quarter is one of Louisiana's oldest communities. Louisiana was founded and ruled by France for nearly 100 years; the region, especially New Orleans and its French Quarter, has a legacy of tolerance; willful ignorance might be a better term, of prostitution and homo-social relationships.[29] New Orleans was founded in 1718 at the French Quarter, and over 300 years of regional history provide the foundation for the mood and aesthetic experience of that environment in the twentieth century, the period when Bellocq and Dureau created their work. These historical traits inform the reasoning about how the two artists came to produce the non-conventional work they did, as well as how they and their work came to be accepted in their community.

From the outset New Orleans inherited a complex set of attitudes towards sin and vice. These attitudes stem from its form of government and legal regulation, its religious teachings, and its cultural norms. These attitudes combined with the frontier conditions of colonial Louisiana and led to the city's libertine attitudes

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[29] "Much of what has been written about prostitution over the centuries is either pious, judgmental diatribe or prurient, pornographic titillation," asserts New Orleans historian and archivist Pamela D. Arceneaux. This adage is borne out with some of the recent scholarship related to Bellocq and Storyville. It was in Storyville, the New Orleans neighborhood contiguous to the French Quarter, where prostitution flourished unimpeded for twenty years at the beginning of the twentieth century. Pamela D. Arceneaux, *Guidebooks to Sin - The Blue Books of Storyville, New Orleans* (New Orleans: Historic New Orleans Collection, 2017), 27.

towards indulgence and desire. These values evolved during eighteenth-century, and became reified in the sexual institutions and culture that came to prominence in nineteenth and twentieth century New Orleans, including the social experiment that was Storyville.

Accordingly, also to be examined here is the peculiar culture and history of New Orleans. In particular, the concurrent evolution of three interconnected New Orleans communities: a culture of sex work and a community of sex workers, male and female; the city's bohemian and quirky artistic community; and, one of the earliest and largest gay communities in the Deep South. The objective here is to explore how one might think and talk about the bohemian, relatively tolerant culture of the city in the mid-twentieth century, how it might both catalyze creative, unconventional thought, while also being an environment that facilitates and sustains artists as they pursue work outside the mainstream. Not limited to, the work of Bellocq and Dureau, the present goal is to consider some non-conventional, historically-supported ways of aesthetic historicization.

Each of the three communities mentioned above (sex industry, bohemian, gay) is prominently based in and around the French Quarter. Ironically, although these aspects of New Orleans' life are commonly appreciated, flaunted even, with the marked exception of prostitution, there is minimal published work on the history of either of the two remaining communities.[30] At present, there are two published dissertations relating

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[30] Concerning the gay community many of this small number of published works relate to two

to the growth and evolution of the gay community in New Orleans.[31] In each case, the

emphasis is on the local establishment of what we currently define as a gay or LGBT

community.[32]

Although less is known about Bellocq's life, it is clear that both he and Dureau were

immersed in the Quarter's bohemian creative community, and at least Dureau was part

of the neighborhood's homosexual community. As will be shown here, Louisiana has

not only a unique history of homosocialization, but a formidable legacy of tolerance of

heterosexual prostitution as well. French mores and frontier conditions produced a

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tragedies: the arson fire of the gay bar Upstairs Lounge in 1973, and the hate crime murder of
Fernando Rios in 1958. See, e.g.:

Clayton Delery, *Out for Queer Blood: The Murder of Fernando Rios and the Failure of New
Orleans Justice* (Jefferson, NC: Exposit, 2017); Johnny Townsend, *Let the Faggots Burn: The
Upstairs Lounge Fire* (St. Petersburg, FL: Booklocker.com, 2011); Clayton Delery-Edwards,
The Up Stairs Lounge Arson: Thirty-Two Deaths in a New Orleans Gay Bar, June 24, 1973
(Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2014); Robert W. Fieseler, *Tinderbox: The Untold Story of
the Up Stairs Lounge Fire and the Rise of Gay Liberation*, (New York: Liveright Publishing,
2018); *Upstairs Lounge: The 1973 New Orleans Gay Mass Murder,* directed by Robert L.
Camina (2018; Dallas, TX: Camina Entertainment, Inc., 2015), Blu-Ray.

[31] One of these, a dissertation by Ryan Prechter, addresses the co-existence and interaction of the
city's gay and bohemian/artistic populations during the twentieth century. The dissertation by
Richard Clark begins earlier than that of Prechter, and contains interesting historical context.
Ryan Prechter, "Gay New Orleans: A History" (PhD dissertation, Georgia State University,
2017); Richard Clark, "City of Desire: A History of Same-Sex Desire in New Orleans, 1917-
1977" (PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 2009).

Concerning the history of the lesbian bar scene in New Orleans, also see: Caroline Olsson, "Not
All That Easy: Survival Strategies in Lesbian Bar Life in New Orleans 1950-1975" (Master's
Thesis, University of New Orleans, 1999).

[32] I want to thank Ryan Prechter for speaking to me and allowing me to review his dissertation
before it was publicly available.

laissez-faire attitude towards sexuality and towards typical heteronormative constraints. The sexual institutions of the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries preserved and preserve those values. Looking at these institutions and this community through the lens of *einfühlung* and *stimmung* provides a useful framework for considering the role of place and environment in the creative process. This approach is useful not only for the French Quarter, but for other creative milieus as well.

Chapter 1: Biographical Information for Dureau and Bellocq

<u>Dureau</u>

George Valentine Dureau was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on December 28, 1930,

and he lived in or very near New Orleans until his death on April 7, 2014, with most of

that time living in the French Quarter. Dureau served in the Army during the years

following WWII. Following his service, Dureau utilized the GI Bill and attended

Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (LSU), where he majored in Art.

Graduating from LSU in 1952, he was then admitted to the architecture program at

Tulane University. Finding that architecture was not to his liking, he withdrew during

his first year. For the next several years, Dureau worked as the window dresser at an

upscale New Orleans department store: Maison Blanche. Not much is documented about

Dureau's life during the 1950s, even so, being something of a showman and raconteur,

his recounting of the period was not necessarily reliable! What is known is that he

pursued the subject of his college studies: painting and drawing. Beginning in 1961,

until 1965, he began having annual solo exhibitions of his paintings at the Downtown

Gallery in New Orleans. In 1965, Dureau had his first museum show; a solo exhibition

at the Isaac Delgado Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA (now named the New Orleans

Museum of Art). As far as exhibitions went, the next dozen years were a fallow period

for Dureau. He was part of a 1973 Artists Biennial, at the New Orleans Museum of Art,

yet it was not until 1977 that he had another significant show, a career retrospective of

his paintings entitled "George Dureau: Selected Works 1960-1977" at the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans.[33]

Although he had only one exhibition between 1965 and 1977, this was, nevertheless, a productive and creative period for the artist. Dureau worked steadily. Most significantly, it was during this period that he began to make art through the medium of photography, and it was photography that brought Dureau his greatest fame.

Dureau identified as a homosexual man.[34] During the 1970s, coinciding with the rise in gay liberation, he became well-known in the gay arts scene nation-wide. Professor Melody D. Davis, notes that "gay photographers such as George Dureau admit that the change in social climate of the sixties helped them realize their interpersonal style."[35] It was through one particular acolyte, Robert Mapplethorpe, that knowledge of Dureau's work spread beyond the gay community and the South. In the 1970s, Mapplethorpe and his patron/partner Sam Wagstaff began a series of visits to Dureau's studio in New

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[33] Information derived from Dureau's CV, obtained at http://arthurrogergallery.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/CV_Dureau_2018.pdf. It is to be noted that there are other published dates for some of these events, such as the bio included in the catalog for his 1977 show at the Contemporary Arts Center. *Dureau* (a catalogue accompanying the exhibition *George Dureau Selected Works, 1960-1977*) (New Orleans: Contemporary Arts Center, 1977)

[34] Dureau disliked the use of the term "gay" as an identifier. Gay for Dureau was an adjective best used to describe songs from musical theater. His papers are now held by the Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC); these include random notes he apparently wrote in preparation for a book. The Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center, George Dureau archive, Box 22: Address/telephone files; "important papers".

[35] Melody D. Davis, "Personality versus Physique," *Art Journal* 53, No. 2, (Summer, 1994): 91; Melody D. Davis, *The Male Nude in Contemporary Photography* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991) 102-5.

Orleans. Dureau's images of nude men are understood to have been a major influence on Mapplethorpe, as Mapplethorpe transitioned from art constructions to photography during the 1970s.

It bears noting that Dureau was fond of drink, sometimes in a problematic way. Normally a charming and very gracious individual, when drinking Dureau could be argumentative and erratic, behaviors that reportedly cast a pall on the first solo show of his photography in New York, at the Robert Samuel Gallery in Manhattan in 1981. Nevertheless, Dureau continued to be productive, working from his large second-floor studio at the corner of Dauphine and Barracks Streets, two blocks off Rampart Street, the northern border of the French Quarter.

Certainly Dureau's best career move took place in 1988 when signed with the Arthur Roger Gallery in New Orleans; the gallery has consistently promoted Dureau's work, giving him more or less annual shows through the present.

Dureau adored his family, he spoke of them often, and he kept a large pile of family photos on a table in his studio. [Fig. 6a-b] Piles of printed material were not a sign of disrespect for Dureau; rather this was one of his preferred methods of art storage, on tables and on the floor. He kept his photographic prints in piles as well. As he approached the last decade of his life, however, he had no known biological family. Dureau succumbed from Alzheimer's disease in 2014, and as Dureau began to decompensate during the late aughts, the Arthur Roger Gallery along with others in the

New Orleans arts community, such as Ogden Museum of Southern Art curator Bradley

Sumrall, became key players in Dureau's support system.[36]

It is not surprising that Dureau was supported by his community later in life. Dureau's

work had consistently embraced the people living in and moving through the French

Quarter, with a key limitation: essentially all of Dureau's photographic work is of men.

This work falls into three overlapping categories: 1) denizens of the French Quarter in

street clothes or standard poses [Figs. 7-9, 17]; 2) nudes [Figs. 10-12]; and, 3) images of

the disabled [Figs. 2, 13-16, 18-19]. A quality that is frequently commented on with

regard to Dureau's photography is his empathetic engagement with the men he

photographed. Concerning Dureau's work, scholar Edward Lucie-Smith notes, "There is

also our sense that the photographer and his subjects have entered into a shared

enterprise, whose purpose is to record not only outward appearances, but an inner sense

of worth in the person being photographed—achieved sometimes against almost

overwhelming odds."[37] Furthermore, in the New York Times' flattering review of his

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[36] Also vital to Dureau's ongoing survival in his later years, as he continued to live alone in his studio, was Katie Nachod, a law librarian at the Louisiana Supreme Court located in the French Quarter. Each day, on her way to and from work, Nachod passed Dureau's studio on Bienville Street, where he moved following Hurricane Katrina. A testament to his graciousness, Dureau had begun to greet Nachod on a regular basis, offering fruits and cheese, eventually escalating to the point that he made her breakfast each day! Nachod managed Dureau's finances and other personal matters as he became increasingly debilitated by Alzheimer's Disease.

[37] Edward Lucie-Smith, "George Dureau: Classical Variations," *New Orleans Art Review*, May 1, 1983.

1981 photography show at the Robert Samuel Gallery, critic Gene Thornton states in a single sentence paragraph: "But his greatest achievement is as a psychologist." [38]

Dureau spoke to this line of thought when he participated in a 1989 artist panel discussion of local "Pre-Pop Modernists" at the Arthur Roger Gallery in New Orleans. [39] The panel was asked about the importance of place to the creative process, when it was Dureau's turn, he stated:[40]

> I never want to take a photograph anywhere else. I never think of painting anything I see anywhere else. Because my pictures don't paint the locale so much as they paint, and the photographs, my relationship to the people that are right around me, and whatever scenes are going on right around me. So I try to create, of course, the ostensible purpose is to create a universal kind of statements in my pictures, but coming from particulars which back them up. Because of that my lifestyle has to be, I guess, like the Southern writers who stay in one spot and follow these people over and over and over, 'til finally out of these tight little limited particular environments you pull some universal sort of statement. Now, that is what one wishes.
>
> But, I know for a fact that in my photographs there is more genuine intimacy and knowledge of the people I photograph, 'cause I've known 'em for 10 years, five years, two years, whatever, than there is in the photographs of other people. Because you cannot put things into a

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[38] Gene Thornton, "Critics Choice," *New York Times*, March 1, 1981, Late Edition (East Coast), A.3.

[39] The participants were Edward Whiteman, Lin Emery, Ida Kohlmeyer, Elemore Morgan, Jr., and George Dureau.

[40] "Pre-Pop Modernists," arthurrogergallery.com, a panel discussion filmed September 12, 1989, 1:24:54, http://arthurrogergallery.com/1989/09/arthur-roger-gallery-1989-panel-discussion-pre-pop-modernists/ at 1:22:45 et seq. The e-version of this 1989 presentation is an attached e-file.

photograph that you didn't know to put there. I mean, so you can't run up the street and give somebody $400 because he's pretty, and make it into a wonderful photograph. You can force it a lot, and it can come out pretty, and it can come out stylish, but it doesn't say much because you have to be unfolding something.

You have to be a director. You have to be telling something of, for me, I have to be telling something of myself as well as of the person and of the relationship between us when I photograph.

So I know that for my photographs, it's been particular and peculiar the fact that I stay put and I know and my models so well, and I know their stories so well, and I know what's going to happen to them and what's happened in the past. You like that?, I know what's going to happen to 'em! I shut up!

And then, unsolicited and as if to drive Dureau's interpersonal engagement point home, an audience member queries whether Dureau had made his red beans and rice yet that week! Dureau did shoot many of the same subjects repeatedly over years of time. Two of his most frequent subjects were the classically-profiled Troy Brown [Fig. 17] and B.J. Robinson, the subject of the first Dureau image I saw, as well as many others. [See, e.g., Figs. 18-19]. Figures 3 and 18 are notable, for these are among the few instances where we have some inkling of the feelings of the subject in Dureau's photographs. According to Dureau, at the time of these images, after Dureau wrapped Robinson in the flag and asked him to pose on his hands, Robinson remarked that, ""wrapped in stars, he would seem as though he were flying."[41]

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[41] Melody D. Davis, "Freak Flag: Humour and the Photography of George Dureau," *Paragraph*, 26, nos. 1-2 (2003), 102.

Dureau more or less retired from art-making around the year 2000, first he ceased photography and later painting. Dureau did continue to make personal snapshots during his treks around New Orleans. I met Dureau around the year 2000 and visited him numerous times in the ensuing years. On one of these visits he and I were sitting at a table upon which he had a pile of snapshots.[42] One of these snapshots was of Troy Brown: A simple color snap of Brown at the bus depot, leaving after a recent visit with Dureau.[43]

Bellocq

What is best-known about Bellocq is his work. Writing in 1996, Susan Sontag says of Bellocq's Storyville images:

> First of all, the pictures are unforgettable – photography's ultimate standard of value. And it's not hard to see why the trove of glass negatives by a hitherto unknown photographer working in New Orleans in the early years of this century became one of the most admired recoveries in photography's widening, ever incomplete history.[44]

This trove consists of glass negatives that yielded 89 prints; see, e.g., [Figs. 4, 20-26, 30-31]. Thirty-four of the prints were exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) an

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[42] Although the visit I am discussing took place at Dureau's next studio, where he moved after Hurricane Katrina, the setting was exceedingly similar to the table shown in the foreground of Figure 6b.

[43] It was a tragic image. Taken about 20-25 years after Figure 17, and dissipated after years of hard living, Brown was almost unrecognizable.

[44] Susan Sontag, "Introduction," in *Bellocq: Photographs from Storyville the Red Light District of New Orleans,* ed., Jonathan Cape (New York: Random House, 1996).

exhibition entitled *E.J. Bellocq: Storyville Portraits* that ran from November 19, 1970 – January 10, 1971. Fifty-two of the prints were published in 1996, in publication entitled *Bellocq: Photographs from Storyville, The Red Light District of New Orleans.*[45] Both of these books are now out of print.

Photographer Lee Friedlander (1934-present) was instrumental in bringing Bellocq's Storyville images into the public sphere. He recounts his first encounter with Bellocq's glass plate negatives as follows:

> Larry Borenstein has an instinct to gather around him rare and beautiful things. I met Larry in 1958 while listening to Kid Thomas's band in Larry's art gallery on St. Peter Street near Bourbon, where many great New Orleans jazz bands would come to play – a story in itself. Among his treasures at that time were the Bellocq plates, and late that night, after the band had gone, Larry showed them to me.[46]

About a year after this encounter Friedlander visited New Orleans and asked Borenstein to show him the Bellocqs again. Returning home to New York, Friedlander talked up the images with his friends and to "magazine and museum folks." His objective was to generate interest in order to, "find a home for them where people could appreciate them and see them." Ultimately, Friedlander was able to convince Borenstein to sell him the

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[45] Jonathan Cape, ed., *Bellocq: Photographs from Storyville the Red Light District of New Orleans* (New York: Random House, 1996).

[46] Lee Friedlander, "Preface," in *Bellocq: Photographs from Storyville the Red Light District of New Orleans,* ed., Jonathan Cape (New York: Random House, 1996), 5.

prints in 1966, the year after Hurricane Betsy that hit New Orleans in 1965.[47] Upon

acquiring the glass negatives, Friedlander began to experiment with various printing

techniques in order to obtain prints with suitable tonal range.[48] It was Friedlander's

prints of Bellocq's work that were exhibited at the 1970 MOMA show.

The biographical information on Ernest J. Bellocq is largely based on a single, and

singular, source: The Museum of Modern Art book that accompanied its 1970

exhibition. [Fig. 27a-d] In the introduction to this publication John Szarkowski,

MOMA's Director of the Department of Photography, states:

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[47] Apparently, the negatives were damaged during 1965's Hurricane Betsy. This damage became evident after a series of prints made during the 1950s or early 1960s were discovered. The provenance of the pre-Betsy prints is varied. Some may have been made as "pornography," whereas others were made as the basis for paintings included in a Life Magazine article about New Orleans history. The paintings bear little resemblance to the Bellocq images. Information regarding the Life Magazine prints derived from personal communication with THNOC reference staff; Julie Saul Gallery, *Press Release, E.J. Bellocq - Storyville Portrait*s, n.d., accessed September 14, 2019, https://juliesaulprojects.com/content/03-exhibition-history/17-2002/01-storyville-portraits/bellocq-02-pr.pdf .

[48] Friedlander ending up settling on a vintage printing technique using Printing Out Paper, a process that involved using the negatives to expose the light sensitive paper in indirect sunlight. The exposures took anywhere from three hours to seven days! Jonathan Cape, ed., *Bellocq: Photographs from Storyville the Red Light District of New Orleans* (New York: Random House, 1996), 5.

> E.J. Bellocq was a commercial photographer who worked in New Orleans
> before and after the first World War. A plausible guess might be that his
> working life reached from about 1895 through the first four decades of this
> century. The thirty-four pictures reproduced here are selected from a group
> of eighty-nine plates – portraits of Storyville prostitutes – which were
> discovered in Bellocq's desk after his death. These negatives were made
> about 1912. As far as is known, they constitute the only fragment of his
> work to have survived.[49]

This is all well and good until one realizes the apparent fact basis of these assertions,

which basis is provided in the Introduction's very next paragraph:

> The following discussion never took place as printed here. It is rather a
> synthesis of four long conversations recorded by Lee Friedlander in 1969,
> plus excerpts from a letter from Al Rose to Lee Friedlander, dated July 12,
> 1968. The source materials have been heavily edited, intermixed, and
> changed in sequence.[50]

Presumptuously, Szarkowski then proceeds to state, "I believe, however, that the

participants' meanings have been accurately preserved."[51] The next 12 pages are then a

fabricated roundtable discussion involving seven participants, along with Szarkowski

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[49] John Szarkowski, ed., *E.J. Bellocq: Storyville Portraits* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 6. Other Bellocq work has since been discovered. This includes some of his regular commercial work, as well as some Storyville prints probably made in the 1950s before the negatives were damaged by Hurricane Betsy in 1965. Julie Saul Gallery, *Press Release, E.J. Bellocq - Storyville Portrait*s, n.d., accessed September 14, 2019, https://juliesaulprojects.com/content/03-exhibition-history/17-2002/01-storyville-portraits/bellocq-02-pr.pdf .

[50] John Szarkowski, ed., *E.J. Bellocq: Storyville Portraits* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 6.

[51] John Szarkowski, ed., *E.J. Bellocq: Storyville Portraits* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 6.

periodically inserting his editorial notes. One of these supposed participants is photographer Lee Friedlander. The remaining six participants were, according to the press release that accompanied publication of the book, "all former acquaintances of Bellocq, a fellow photographer, several musicians, a writer and a former prostitute who knew Bellocq."[52] Bellocq was said to be a commercial photographer for a New Orleans shipbuilding company, and that he was a familiar figure in Storyville, where he was called papá because of his strong French accent.

In the ensuing "discussion," however, Bellocq is presented as a something rather monstrous: a combination of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec and Hercule Poirot, a "small, misshapen man" who talked to himself, had no close friends, and walked with small mincing steps. Szarkowski characterized him as a "hydrocephalic semi-dwarf." while others said he had very narrow shoulders and a very wide "sitdown place," who waddled like a duck and who had a high-pitched staccato-like voice that "sounded like an angry squirrel." One participant went to far as to assert that Bellocq "must have some kind of brain disease."[53]

Subsequent historical investigation has borne out the mundane aspects of Szarkowski's and "the participants" characterization, and called the more provocative aspects into disrepute. The Historic New Orleans Collection now holds additional Bellocq images

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[52] Museum of Modern Art, *Press Release , E.J. Bellocq Storyville Portraits*, December 9, 1970, accessed October 20, 2019, file:///C:/Users/Tim/Downloads/moma_press-release_326711.pdf

[53] John Szarkowski, ed., *E.J. Bellocq: Storyville Portraits* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1970), 8-9.

beyond those known in 1970. For instance, he did architectural photography [Fig. 28] as well as some standard commercial portraiture [Fig. 29]. Notably, rather than a misshapen ogre, he seems to have been a rather standard looking, somewhat dapper fellow. [Fig. 3]

Bellocq's main body of work, the work for which he is now famous, is understood to have been taken either in Storyville [e.g., Fig. 30] or in Bellocq's studio in the French Quarter [Fig. 31].[54]

Commonalities

The French Quarter is a unique milieu: a place of: legalized/accepted sex work; acceptance of homosocial and homosexual relationships, appreciation that different kinds of people, including the disabled, are sexual beings; and, as an over-arching theme, a place of embrace for norm-defiers of all kinds. Empathetic engagement with such norm-defiers characterizes the work of Bellocq and Dureau.[55]

An astonishing number of similarities became apparent in the lives and work of Bellocq and Dureau. These two men worked at different times, Bellocq was 57 when Dureau was born in 1930, and Dureau was only nineteen at the time of Bellocq's death in 1949, at

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[54] Some, such as Susan Sontag, believe that this is instead an image of a brothel parlour.

[55] Alasdair Foster, *Behold the Man, The Male Nude in Photography* (Edinburgh: Stills Gallery, 1988), 35; Valerie Loupe Olsen, "Dureau's Gods and Heros," in *Classical Sensibilities, Images by Alain Gerard Clement and George Dureau* (Houston: The Glassell School of Art of the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, 1998) 12-19; Edward Lucie-Smith, "Introduction," in George Dureau, *New Orleans: Fifty Photographs* (London: GMP Publishers, 1985), 1-5; Nan Goldin, "Bellocq Époque," *Art Forum,* January 1997, 88-142, at 91.

which time Dureau had been away from New Orleans for a few years in Baton Rouge attending college at LSU. Nevertheless, the two men spent much of their lives in almost identical geographic space: New Orleans tiny French Quarter, in particular, the northernmost portion, near the former location of Storyville, and Congo Square, the infamous slave market.

Another similarity relates to their biographies, not so much the facts of them, but the lack of reliable information. Bellocq would have likely remained in obscurity were Friedlander not to have acquired and promoted the images; Dureau was a raconteur in the best of times, and as he became overcome with the effects of Alzheimer's disease, his ability to communicate facts worsened.

However, both men seem to have fit within the eccentric contingent of French Quarter residents, especially in their later years: Bellocq for walking around visiting camera shops and banks, and Dureau for riding through the French Quarter on a chrome bicycle, giving a royal wave to passers-by. Accordingly, Edward Lucie-Smith has said of Dureau: "To walk through the Vieux Carré with him is to be part of a kind of royal progress." [56]

Almost all of each artist's respective images are staged portraits of single individuals, occasionally group portraits of two or three people. In many cases, both artists depicted

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[56] Edward Lucie-Smith, "Introduction" in George Dureau, *New Orleans: Fifty Photographs* (London: GMP Publishers, 1985), 8; Rose, Rex, "The Last Days of Ernest J. Bellocq," Exquisite Corpse (blog), accessed August 20, 2019; http://www.corpse.org/archives/issue_10/gallery/bellocq/index.htm; Personal observations.

their subject's nude. Interestingly, each man took pictures, almost exclusively, of only one gender; for Bellocq it was women and for Dureau it was men.

Not only that, but almost all of their respective subjects were found in their neighborhood. In each case, the subjects they depicted were far from standard portraiture subjects. These were not the local elite, nor were they neighborhood stalwarts like the beat cop, grocer or the landlady. Rather, these were outsiders. Bellocq's work is understood to be of prostitutes and a sizable percentage of Dureau's work is of disabled. A portion of Dureau's subjects are also understood to be homeless or sex workers. Table 1 summarizes commonalities in the lives and works of Bellocq and Dureau.

Table 1.

Shared Qualities in the Work and Lives of Bellocq and Dureau	Bellocq	Dureau
Lived and worked in (northern) French Quarter	√	√
Minimal biographical info available on either artist	√	√
Artist described as a French Quarter eccentric	√	√
Never married	√	√
Lack of much immediate family	√	√
Not trained as a photographer	√	√
Work characterized as showing empathy	√	√
Photographed neighborhood denizens	√	√
Subjects often outsiders	√ Sex Workers	√ Sex Workers Homeless Disabled
Photographed mostly one gender	√ Women	√ Men
Images are staged/posed	√	√
Almost all images are portraits	√	√
Almost all images are individual subjects	√	√
Subjects often nude	√	√
Disability	√ Attributed to artist	√ Subjects in work

Interpersonal empathy is often identified or assumed in relation to both Bellocq's and Dureau's work; there is a sense that each artist knew his sitters, that they were friendly with those they photographed. This is interpersonal empathy in the modern, late twentieth century use of the term. But we should not neglect the original empathy, aesthetic empathy or *einfühlung*.

As will be discussed below, *einfühlung* is the type of experience possible for these two artists in their tiny historic neighborhood. We will explore how the immersive experience of the French Quarter environment experienced by each artist could have informed their work, given the slow evolution of a long-established neighborhood like the French Quarter. [57]

Author and Professor W. Kenneth Holditch said of Dureau, "George Valentine Dureau … is a New Orleanian by birth and has remained one by choice. His creativity, his philosophy, his encompassing view of life, all are entwined with that mixture of contradictory elements that constitutes the carnal atmosphere of his native city." [58] It is with this idea in mind that we turn now to an exploration of historical factors that have led to these norms and culture found in New Orleans in the twentieth century. Thereafter we will look into the implications of the *einfühlung* and *stimmung* of the French Quarter, and how these phenomena can be seen to account for the commonalities in the lives and work, most particularly the respectful depiction of outsiders, of Bellocq and Dureau.

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[57] They both appear to have spent a great deal of their lives living and working in the northern part of the French Quarter, near Rampart Street.

[58] W. Kenneth Holditch, The World of George Dureau, in *Dureau* (a catalogue accompanying the exhibition *George Dureau Selected Works, 1960-1977*) (New Orleans: Contemporary Arts Center, 1977), 5.

In New Orleans in the winter of *'39* there were three male hustlers usually to be found hanging out on a certain corner of Canal Street and one of those streets that dive narrowly into the ancient part of the city. Two of them were just kids of about seventeen and worth only passing attention, but the oldest of the three was an unforgettable youth. His name was Oliver Winemiller and he had been the light heavyweight champion boxer of the Pacific fleet before he lost an arm. Now he looked like a broken statue of Apollo, and he had also the coolness and impassivity of a stone figure.

While the two younger boys exhibited the anxious energy of sparrows, darting in and out of bars, flitting across streets and around corners in pursuit of some likely quarry, Oliver would remain in one spot and wait to be spoken to. He never spoke first, nor solicited with a look. He seemed to be staring above the heads of passersby with an indifference which was not put on, or surly and vain, but had its root in a genuine lack of concern. He paid almost no attention to weather. When the cold rains swept in from the Gulf the two younger boys stood hunched and shuddering in shabby coats that effaced them altogether. But Oliver remained in his skivvy shirt and his dungarees which had faded nearly white from long wear and much washing, and held to his body as smooth as the clothes of sculpture.

Tennessee Williams, *One Arm*, 1945 [59]

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[59] Tennessee Williams, "One Arm," in *Tales of Desire* (New York: New Directions, 2010). One Arm was written in 1945 and first published in 1948. It was mounted as a Broadway stage production in 2011 based on a screenplay Williams wrote in 1967. Ben Brantley, "Hustler on the Streets, Missing Both a Limb and a Capacity to Feel," *New York Times,* June 9, 2011. Accessed August 20, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/10/theater/reviews/one-arm-by-tennessee-williams-theater-review.html

Williams lived in New Orleans, specifically the French Quarter, for more than 40 years. William Archambeault, "Tennessee Williams' Early Days in New Orleans," New Orleans Historical (blog), accessed October 16, 2019, https://neworleanshistorical.org/items/show/957.

Chapter 2: Colonial Foundations of Libertine Tolerance in New Orleans, Louisiana

<u>History</u>

New Orleans was settled over 300 years ago, and during the 18th Century, through a combination of French mores and frontier realities, New Orleans quickly came to provide a sexually-permissive environment. Ribald sexuality was accommodated by way of a code of willful public ignorance. However, a regional precedent for the city's libertine personality predates even New Orleans' founding in 1718.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Louisiana territory was lusted after by major European empires: Spain, France, and England. Each country sought to claim the entrance of the Mississippi River as its own, and to thereby, control the main commercial artery to North America's interior.

Initially, both Spanish and French explorers scouted the Mississippi River Valley but failed to establish any permanent settlement. In 1698, fearing expansion of the English and Spanish into the Mississippi River Valley, Louis Phélypeaux, Le Comte de Pontchartrain, and Minister of the French Navy selected Pierre le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville to colonize Louisiana. Iberville was a non-commissioned military leader from New France (now Canada) where he had already thwarted English encroachment. Iberville established the Louisiana Colony in 1699 with its capital at Biloxi in what is now Mississippi. Iberville's first expedition included a mixed team of French settlers and

Canadian woodsmen, but subsequent arrivals were principally French colonists who brought French values and institutions.

Only seven years later, in 1706, Iberville died. His younger brother, Jean-Baptiste le Moyne de Bienville, assumed leadership of the colony in 1707. It was Bienville who in 1718 founded New Orleans at its present location, 110 miles up-stream from the entrance to the Mississippi River. The crescent-shaped site Bienville selected bordered a sharp bend in the Mississippi and was the highest ground in an expanse of swamps and bayous.[60] In 1723, France made New Orleans the capital of the colony.[61]

As with any community, its values lead to the development of institutions that reflect and preserve them. Three categories of influence have had formative and enduring impact on New Orleans: 1) religious customs (especially Roman Catholic ones), 2) governmental and legal systems, and 3) social norms (especially French ones). These influences have and continue to shape the city's unique culture, and each of these categories of influence is discussed below.

1) Values of the Roman Catholic Church

Roman Catholicism has had a significant impact on the moral and sexual standards of colonial New Orleans. Through the eighteenth century, Catholicism was the state

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[60] Thus, the town's nickname, "The Crescent City."

[61] Light Townsend Cummins, "The Founding of French Louisiana, and Louisiana as a French Colony," in *Louisiana: A History,* 6th ed., eds. Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 32-59.

religion of France, and was a powerful force in French culture; this included mandatory church attendance for mass and on holy days of obligation. Accordingly, French priests accompanied many French expeditions to the Americas, including Iberville's initial voyage. Catholic teachings formed the basis for the colony's moral standards, even if colonists often elected to ignore them. Louisiana historian Carl A. Brasseaux notes that, "clerics repeatedly lamented that their European and Canadian-born parishioners had little regard for their religious message, and even less respect for the dignity traditionally accorded their station in France."[62] Due to the church's impotence, typically an arbiter of morality, the moral tone of French Louisiana was initially determined by Canadian immigrants who constituted the backbone of society in the early colonial period. These North American settlers brought to Louisiana a social and cultural heritage markedly different from that of their French compatriots. These differences stemmed in part from the frontier environment of New France, which afforded colonists far greater personal freedom than was available to their counterparts in the French homeland, and partly from their intimate association with Indians. In the seventeenth century, Canadians were in almost constant contact with native Americans. Accordingly, William J. Eccles has noted, that it is "hardly surprising that the Canadians early adopted much of the Indian way of life and became imbued with some of their characteristics." The result was a

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[62] Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 27-8; Light Townsend Cummins, "Louisiana as a French Colony," in *Louisiana: A History,* 6th ed., eds. Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 61-62.

socio-cultural metamorphosis of New France society. The example of the Canadians was not lost upon the early Louisiana colonists, with whom they were in frequent contact.[63]

The Catholic Church taught that the purpose of sex was reproduction within the sacrament of marriage: any sex act inconsistent with this purpose was deemed sin. French historian Jean Louis Flandrin argues that the function of marriage was "the reproduction of the species;" (likewise, the function of clerical service was "the multiplication of Christians"). Accordingly, non-reproductive sexual acts were *peches contre nature* (sins against nature).[64] Even sex within marriage had its limits. Flandrin quotes St Jerome, "Nothing is more vile than to love a wife like a mistress.…"[65]

Consequently, at least in theory, sexual temperance was espoused in France and its Louisiana colony. In both locales, but especially in colonial New Orleans, theory diverged mightily from reality. New Orleans' colonists regularly failed to meet the Church's moral standards. Ironically, this level of non-compliance is seen to be a

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[63] William John Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier, 1534-1760* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), 89-91, 130.

[64] Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Families in Former Times: Kinship, Household, and Sexuality in Early Modern France,* trans. Richard Southern (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 161-6.

[65] Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Families in Former Times: Kinship, Household, and Sexuality in Early Modern France,* trans. Richard Southern (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 161.

consequence of the Roman Catholic Church's understanding of innate sinfulness that made avoidance of sin a pointless act! [66]

The Catholic Church in colonial Louisiana was confronted by several challenges that undercut its power of moral regulation, and the Catholic Church in Louisiana was even less capable of dictating moral behavior than the home church in France. Relevant factors included lax popular morality, declining authority of the Catholic Church at home and abroad, and the practical realities of colonial living. The Catholic Church in colonial Louisiana had a particularly inadequate administrative structure. It lacked the traditional level of political influence with civil authorities, and this led to battles between religious and government leaders. Furthermore, the church was often unable to police its own members. Many priests neglected their duties, instead pursuing luxury, personal wealth, and political prestige. Colonists tended to disregard moral dictates from those whose own morality was suspect. For instance, in 1725 the Vicar General lamented that many of his priests had been "interdicted in their [French] dioceses and had fled to Louisiana to avoid punishment for their disorderly lives." [67] At least one priest sired a child, and another attempted to seduce the Governor's servant girl during

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[66] According to which, the initial acquisition of knowledge in Eden was a sinful act. Therefore, men and women were creatures of vice, and given to sin their entire lives. Predestined to sin, people cannot, therefore, effectively resist sin. As an ironic consequence, the level of behavior routinely accommodated by the Church was lower than its espoused standards.

[67] Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 34.

confession. It is important to note that many colonial clergy ended up in Louisiana reluctantly, just as had many of their parishioners.[68]

Consequently, given the church's handling of its own matters of morality, it had tenuous control of popular morality, and the responsibility for moral regulation often fell to civil authorities and the community. However, as will be discussed below, the colony also lacked any well-defined criminal code and cultural norms dictated that immorality be ignored unless it rose to the level of a public scandal.

2) Influence of Governmental Form and Legal System

Louisiana's colonists imported French administrative systems: police, government, and legal. Monarchy and patriarchy were at the heart of French mores. France, and its Louisiana colony, adhered to a system of social and sexual control that simultaneously enshrined royal authority and justified paternal power. The authoritarian relationship of the king to his subjects was likened to the absolute authority that a father had over his household. Sharing a justification for power, the king protected paternal power. The king was implicitly discouraged from intervening in matters of sexual morality. If a father disregarded his child's conduct in scandal or prostitution, the king was loath to intervene, as any intervention would suggest a limit to the king's own power.

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[68] Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 27-41.

Consequently, to the extent that the government policed sexuality, it generally took the form of surveillance alone.[69]

Louisiana's first codified legal system was the *Coutume de Paris* "Custom of Paris" written in 1507, subsequently revised in 1580 and 1605. This was a compilation of various laws and customs. In 1664 Louis XIV made the *Coutume* the law of the French colonies, including Louisiana, by means of the charter of the French West India Company. The *Coutume* was almost exclusively directed to civil law, with little guidance on criminal manners. Crime continued to be constrained by a hodgepodge of legal precepts. By the eighteenth century these precedents arose from Catholic rules, societal custom and Roman law, and many of these precedents had been modified by royal edict. Not surprisingly, punishment for different moral crimes varied greatly.[70]

The Louisiana colony inherited the French attitude that public morality was best protected by suppression of scandal. Suppression of knowledge about immoral matters was a manifestation of the belief that enforcing morality laws risked spreading knowledge of the relevant act to the public. People of colonial era France did not believe that one's sexuality was an innate characteristic; as a corollary, royal officials acted as-if

[69] Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Families in Former Times: Kinship, Household, and Sexuality in Early Modern France,* trans. Richard Southern (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 1-2, 118-26.

[70] Jerah Johnson, "La Coutume De Paris: Louisiana's First Law," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 30, no. 2 (1989): 145-55; Edward F Haas, "Louisiana's Legal Heritage: An Introduction," in *Louisiana's Legal Heritage*, ed. Edward Haas (Pensacola, FL: Published for the Louisiana State Museum by Perdido Bay Press, 1983) 1-6.

knowledge of sodomy would inherently result in the spread of the practice among the public. If colonists knew not of an immoral behavior it was assumed that they would neither think it up nor seek to participate. Policing in colonial New Orleans, therefore, tended to be reactive rather than preventative. The king and police handled scandalous behavior, by men or women, as quietly as possible.[71] Were vice afoot, knowledge of it was suppressed. In contrast, if immoral behavior became open and notorious an example would be set; the ruling body of colonial New Orleans, the French Superior Council, tended to act only in situations of overt scandal. Incidents that entailed official intervention were almost always reported in terms of a public scandal.[72]

As with many attitudes towards sexuality, New Orleans inherited similarly subdued attitudes towards same-sex desire. The term homosexual, as an individual or group identifier, was not known until well-after the era of Early Modern France. However,

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[71] Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, Jr., eds., *Homosexuality in Early Modern France: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1-2, 31-2, 76-7.

For example, in 1725, Captain Beauchamp of the Bellone came to the attention of the Superior Council for "his abominable relations ... with a cabin boy." Pere Raphael explained that "the thing had become public; the entire town was filled with it." As punishment, the Superior Council took the cabin boy from the captain and put him on another ship. In defiance of the Council, the captain retrieved the boy and set sail down the Mississippi. In another example, Royal officials in France rebuked the commandant of Mobile for his improper relationship with a woman, "de scandale qu'il donne au public par son mauvais commerce avec le dame Garnier." "Because of the public scandal he created with the Lady Garnier." Richard Clark, "City of Desire: A History of Same-Sex Desire in New Orleans, 1917-1977" (PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 2009), 14-15, citing Chronique de la Regne de Louis XV, 8 vols. (Paris: 1857), v. 1: 424-7.

[72] Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, Jr., eds., *Homosexuality in Early Modern France: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1-2, 31-2, 76-7.

sodomy, an activity commonly associated with homosexuality, was well-known to officials of the time. Under French mores, a "fallen" person might engage in adultery, so too, might the fallen engage in sodomy. Participation in sodomy did not imply a desire for emotional intimacy with members of the same sex.[73]

Although the context seems accommodating, the punishment for sodomy under French law was shocking: death. Jurists relied upon the Bible, social custom, and Roman law precedents that generally prescribed death for sodomy.[74] Once again, there are *caveats*, although the sentence for sodomy was death, wealth and rank were, effectively, mitigating factors and in only a handful of cases was a participant in sodomy killed.[75]

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[73] In practice, the French believed that a man could be a recidivist sodomite and still maintain an emotional relationship with his wife. Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, Jr., eds., *Homosexuality in Early Modern France: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 31-7.

[74] Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, Jr., eds., *Homosexuality in Early Modern France: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1-7.

[75] For instance, in 1533, individuals of high status spoke with the king, intervening in the execution of their friend, an Italian, sentenced to be burned to death. The following year, the civil magistrate at Lyon sentenced a merchant from Florence to burn for acts of sodomy with a young boy and girl. He appealed his case to the French parliament, and he was sent to Chitelet prison at Paris to await retrial. An observer wrote, "in the end, by dint of money, he did not die for it." Police maintained extensive surveillance of sodomy's aristocratic enthusiasts. When the Paris police arrested a young man named Lebel in 1702 for prostitution, he gave the police the names and details of several members of the aristocracy. At the time of his arrest, Lebel, had been about to enter a monastery at Joyenval as a monk, Lebel requested confinement at Saint-Lazare where he could continue his preparations to become a monk. The king consented to Lebel's request if he would cooperate in the police investigation of male prostitution and sodomy.

According to historian Jeffery Merrick, most cases of sodomy that resulted in arrest were adjudicated quietly, with some convicts imprisoned yet others released. In contrast, when open and notorious behavior prevented a quiet resolution, royal officials enforced the law.[76] Once again in matters of morality, it is seen that the basis for New Orleans' seeming tolerance, here in matters of sodomy, is predicated on something other than the exact letter of the law.

French Rulers and Homosexual Practices during the Colonial Era

No discussion of sodomy in colonial-era France would be complete without addressing same-gender sexual activity in the French royal family. Royal same-sex indiscretions gave a cloak of sanction to sodomy. For instance, King Louis XIII and his queen, Anne of Austria, had no children after more than twenty years of marriage, but in 1638, Anne gave birth to her first son, Louis-Dieudonne (Louis XIV). Two years later, Anne gave birth to another son, Philippe de France, due d'Anjou. The second son eventually became known as Philippe I, duc d'Orleans, also referred to as "Monsieur." Louis XIII died three years after Phillippe's birth. Intending to head off any later feuding, Anne validated Philippe's decadence and discouraged his ambitions.[77]

Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, Jr., eds., *Homosexuality in Early Modern France: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 31-37, 40-3, 52-9.

[76] Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, Jr., eds., *Homosexuality in Early Modern France: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 30-2.

[77] Richard Clark, "City of Desire: A History of Same-Sex Desire in New Orleans, 1917-1977" (PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 2009), 19.

By the time that the older brother, Louis XIV, assumed royal authority, Philippe I was a well-known "libertine" whose relationships with men are well-documented. Nevertheless, as required by royal responsibility, Philippe married, twice. Philippe I fathered six children. One of these children was Philippe II, Duke of Orléans in whose honor the city of New Orleans is named. [78]

Sodomy struck even closer to home for Louis XIV, and he was only somewhat less tolerant of the same-sex indiscretions of his children. One son was present at the scene of an orgy at a tavern, and another was a member of a homosexual cabal. Each prince was thoroughly chastised by the king. This was the extent of any penalty for either prince, however, and the king exiled the remaining members of the cabal. Oddly, a single noble escaped any punishment because, as the king explained, the lord's debauchery was so well-known that he was beyond redemption! [79]

Accordingly, the first level of control in matters of morality (same-gender sexuality, prostitution or adultery) resided with family and neighbors. Louis XIV tolerated his brother's liaisons with men. In the case of Louis XIV and his sons, Louis XIV intervened as father rather than king, albeit a father with the ability to exile participants. With each son, Louis XIV chastised the prince and extracted an agreement to curtail such activity in the future. Compartmentalizing his behavior, in the king's royal capacity

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[78] Nancy Nichols Barker, *Brother to the Sun King, Philippe, Duke of Orleans* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 56-65, 237-8.

[79] Jeffrey Merrick and Bryant T. Ragan, Jr., eds., *Homosexuality in Early Modern France: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 118.

he sought to control sodomy by means of surveillance and the implicit encouragement of discretion. Royal same-sex indiscretions gave some level of sanction to sodomy. Thus, during Louis XIV's 72-year rule, from 1643 until 1715, sodomy was generally tolerated.

3) Colonial Conditions and Norms

In addition to Catholic religious constraints and French governance and laws, cultural norms and practices from France also transferred to colonial Louisiana. In the colony these attitudes met frontier realities head on, and as a by-product they morphed into mores unique to Louisiana. From a colonization standpoint, families were functionally important apart from procreative growth. A single man was free to wander the wilderness with only himself to care for, but a husband shouldered responsibilities that bound him to his land. Single men could not be counted on to hold the region for France. A man with a family, however, was constrained by responsibility and represented a permanent foothold. The presence of children provided a credible hope to hold Louisiana beyond the immediate generation; potentially leading to a stable, self-replicating populace.

The first colonists in Louisiana were *Canadiennes* from New France and they laid the foundation for colonial morality. The *Canadiennes* posed a particular problem for Louisiana's leaders because they were simultaneously indispensable and undesirable: indispensable because of their experience on the frontier of New France, yet undesirable as permanent colonists due to their itinerant ways. They were called *coureur de bois* (runners of the woods) because of their wayfaring behavior through backwoods regions.

The *Canadiennes* enjoyed their alcohol and were wantonly promiscuous with Indian women. These North American settlers brought to Louisiana a social and cultural heritage markedly different from that of their French compatriots. These differences stemmed in part from the frontier environment of New France where colonists had far greater personal freedom than their counterparts in France, and partly from their intimate association with Indians. In the seventeenth century, Canadians were in almost constant contact with Native Americans who were less constrained in matters of sexuality than Europeans.[80] Accordingly, William J. Eccles has noted, that it is "hardly surprising that the Canadians early adopted much of the Indian way of life and became imbued with some of their characteristics." The result was a socio-cultural metamorphosis of New France society. The example of the Canadians was not lost upon the early Louisiana colonists, with whom they were in frequent contact. Indeed, the young Canadians deposited at Biloxi by Iberville in 1699-1700 quickly had an impact on their new neighbors when thrust into the frontier setting of the French Gulf Coast.[81]

To the chagrin of governmental and religious leaders, Louisiana men refused to contract marriage, preferring relations with indigenous females. Pere Henry de la Vente wrote, "The principal source of the public and habitual lack of religion in which they have languished for so long is not being able to ... or not wanting to bind oneself to any

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[80] "The Indians had different moral values and chastity was not among them." William J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), 91.

[81] William J. Eccles, *The Canadian Frontier* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969); Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 28-30.

woman through a legitimate marriage. They prefer to maintain scandalous concubines with young Indian women, driven by their proclivity for the extremes of licentiousness. They have bought them under the pretext of keeping them as servants, but actually to seduce them, as they in fact have done." [82]

There was a more fundamental reason for the unmarried ways of men in colonial Louisiana: a lack of French women. Iberville's first voyage to Louisiana included no women. Officials prudently considered women vital to the long-term success of the colony and female colonists were needed to form families. Families held culturally symbolic as well as vital economic importance in the creation of a stable, French settlement. Procreation was the name of the game, and colonial men needed women deemed suitable for marriage.[83]

Colonial officials tried to entice French women to immigrate to Louisiana. However, it was not until the 1730s (colonization began in 1699 and New Orleans was established in 1718) that the gender ratio began to balance out, and in the meantime, men were left to

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[82] Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 30-1.

[83] Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 5-6; Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 30-1.

In an agrarian economy such as eighteenth-century France, the family was the basic social and economic unit. Spouses jointly labored in agricultural production, and each offspring provided another source of potential labor. As children grew, they increasingly-contributed to the subsistence of their household until they were married and the cycle of economic and social procreation began again.

form non-traditional household arrangements. It was not uncommon for men to live

together as private households, often in pairs and other times in larger groupings. Census

data, for instance, showed that many men lived together throughout the Louisiana

colony, and particularly in New Orleans.[84]

It is an understatement to say that many of the French women who initially immigrated

to Louisiana failed to cure the marriage and family woes of the colony. Few women of

any opportunity would leave France for the remote swampy colony. Destitution or

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[84] This does not mean that there were, or were not, sexual relationships involved in the living relationships. Nevertheless, homosocial living relationships were not uncommon. The 1725 census of Dauphine Island lists a Monsieur Renault living with an unnamed man. A year later, in 1726 was the most complete census of the period as it included all of French Louisiana including settlements along the gulf coast. In 1726:

Louis Lamaltie and a male associate formed a household in Providence upriver from New Orleans. At Pointe Coupee, the household of Albert de Cuir consisted of two adult, free white males and three children. In Tonicas Nicholas Paillard lived with a male associate and two servants. In Natchez two men, Louer and Manseau, lived alone as associates. In the settlement of Illinois Messrs. Canarel and Robin each lived alone with an unnamed male associate; and two men named Beausejor and Camarade lived alone. In Natchitoches a man named Dauphine lived with an unnamed man; two men, Jolybois and Dubois, lived together, the same for two men Verger and La Boucherie, as well as Messrs. Duplessis and Tourangeor who owned two slaves. In Billoxy a gunsmith and a commissioner, both men, lived on their own; a Mr. La Motte lived with a male associate named Denis, along with two children. In New Orleans, Concessionnaire Diron d'Artaguette and Officer Augustin Thierry lived alone in a single household. On Chartres Street a Mr. Perry lived with a male associate a servant and two slaves. A court notary, Roussard, lived together with an unnamed man, along with 12 free servants! On what was then Conde Street Messrs. Ozanne and Pannetier, both coopers, lived alone. Also on Rue Conde, a tailor named Malo lived with a man named Louis le Dain along with three slaves. Four men lived together on Rue Chartres while over on Rue Bourbon shoemakers Martin Duchateau and Nicolas Duire resided together; Messrs. Bion and De Montarges lived together on the same street along with a free servant. The men Etienne Patray and David Billon lived alone on Rue de Bienville. Lastly, Messrs. Morriset and Huet lived alone on Rue St. Peter. Charles R. Maduell, Jr., *The Census Tables for the French Colony of Louisiana* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1972), 48-76.

debauchery at home often instigated a voyage to the New World. In 1704, twenty-two women arrived at Biloxi, although not all of them found a willing husband. In 1710, Commandant Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville and Commissaire Nicolas de La Salle, both insisted that the colonial ministry send French women as brides for the region's numerous bachelors. When twelve girls finally reached Louisiana aboard the Baron de La Fauche in 1712 Louisiana officials anticipated the establishment of a more stable society, in which familial responsibilities would force the male colonists to settle down. This was not to be. The prospective brides were not only unattractive, but they soon acquired a dubious reputation, as rumors of their seduction by the ship's officers and passengers circulated throughout Mobile. Only three are reported to have found husbands. On the subject of colonial women, when Louisiana's first governor, Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, was implored by pious missionaries to expel loose women from the colony he retorted, "there would be no females left, and this would not suit the views of the [French] government."[85]

The wars authorized by Louis XIV had effectively bankrupted France. In 1716, the Regent of France, Phillippe d'Orleans, appointed John Law as the Controller General of Finances. In August 1717, Law purchased the *Compagnie du Mississippi* which since 1712 had held exclusive development rights in Louisiana. In 1719, Law consolidated the

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[85] Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 5-6; Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 30-32; Light Townsend Cummins, "The Founding of French Louisiana," and "Louisiana as a French Colony," in *Louisiana: A History*, 6th ed., eds. Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014) 36, 39, 62.

Compagnie du Mississippi with other ventures forming *Compagnie des Indes*. With a goal of profitability, the King granted administration of the Louisiana colony to the private company led by Law.

As far as establishing a stable colony went, the use of indigenous women as concubines and willful immigration were soon joined by another approach with lasting effects on the culture of Louisiana and New Orleans. Starting in 1717, upon purchase of *Compagnie du Mississippi*, Law made a concerted effort to increase Louisiana's population. Approximately 1,300 French criminals were brought to Louisiana by forced immigration between 1717-1720. Notable among this group were 160 prostitutes and 96 teenage *débauchées* from Paris's La Salpétrière, a Parisian prison for prostitutes and debauched women. The women were so dissolute that male colonists refused to marry them. It is no surprise that without a husband for support, many of the women returned to their former profession. Governor Bienville stated, in an epic understatement, that the women, "had not been well selected." Consequently, the forced immigration of these French women introduced prostitution to the colony in a formidable way early on. Thereafter, prostitution flourished in the frontier conditions of Louisiana.[86]

Around 1720, again looking to establish a stable colony, things took an appalling turn. French officials realized the labor force of Indian and French immigrants was inadequate

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[86] Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 31-2; Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 1-8.

and their remedy was acquisition of African slaves. Over subsequent decades the slave trade boomed, overseen by the *Compagnie des Indes*. The *Compagnie des Indes* relinquished its interests in Louisiana in 1731 and the flow of slaves ceased, at which point there were approximately four thousand slaves in Louisiana.

Apart from its fundamental inhumanity, the slave trade created a new problem as far as colonial establishment went. Slaves in New Orleans often lived in their owner's homes and were more likely than the enslaved in agricultural regions to be in interpersonal contact with their owners. Reproduction ensued. Although the *Code Noir,* the colony's slave code, outlawed sexual relationships between Frenchmen and Africans, statistics suggest that New Orleanians regularly ignored such rules. In 1763, 108 individuals of mixed ethnicity lived in New Orleans and 187 lived in the entire colony. Thus, while 30 percent of the colony's population lived in New Orleans, the city contained 58 percent of the colony's total creole/mulatto population.[87]

During the early 18th century, disinterest in religion, drunkenness, and gambling were pervasive vices in Louisiana. Consequently, during this time several ordinances aimed at remedying vice were implemented. They failed.[88] As an example of the state of affairs in the city, in 1744, a French officer in New Orleans complained that his soldiers had been

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[87] Richard Clark, "City of Desire: A History of Same-Sex Desire in New Orleans, 1917-1977" (PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 2009), 24, citing "Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Santo Domingo.," 1.2595.

[88] Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 36-7.

"entirely out of their Senses (sic) for whole Months (sic) together, drinking nothing but Brandy all the Time, and in that Condition cohabit with distempered Women, and yet they are fat, ruddy, and enjoy excellent Health." To his dismay, of the population in general he added: "The most common Pastime of the highest as well as the lowest ... is Women; so that if there are 500 Women married or unmarried in New Orleans, including all ranks, I don't believe, without Exaggeration, that there are ten of them of a blameless character."[89] By the mid-18th century major changes were in store for the colony, as colonial dominion was to change.

Spanish Control of Louisiana

An extra layer of complexity to New Orleans' colonial history is added by the fact of Spanish rule. After Spanish control, however, it was again ruled by France, followed in short order by its acquisition by the United States by way of the Louisiana Purchase. These changes too helped reinforce the libertine character of New Orleans and the colony.

In 1754, a skirmish between French and English troops in the Ohio Valley ultimately created an intercontinental conflict with important consequences for the Louisiana colony. This event is known as the French and Indian War in North America, and the Seven Years War in Europe.[90] This war was settled in in 1763 by The Treaty of Paris,

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[89] Lura Robinson, *It's an Old New Orleans Custom* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1948), 213-4.

[90] The European nations declared a wider war upon one another overseas in 1756, two years into the French and Indian War, and some view the French and Indian War as being merely the American theater of the worldwide Seven Years' War of 1756–63

whereby France was expelled from North America; New Orleans along with the Louisiana colony was ceded to France's ally, Spain.[91]

Although Spain received Louisiana in the 1763 treaty, it was slow to take control, and New Orleans continued as-if under French rule. It was not until 1766 that Antonio de Ulloa, the Spanish king's designated governor, arrived in the colony. Ulloa arrived with few troops, näively expecting to take control of the French garrison and establish his seat at the small town of Balize near the mouth of the Mississippi River. Anti-Spanish sentiment and an unpopular economic policy resulted in an insurrection: Ulloa was expelled from Louisiana in 1768. In August 1769 Spain retaliated: Spanish General Alejandro O'Reilly led 3,600 soldiers and a flotilla of twenty-four warships and took control of New Orleans without contest. General O'Reilly then imposed Spanish governance, restoring, thereby, civil, legal, and economic order to the city.[92]

However, upon taking control of New Orleans the Spanish discovered entrenched cultures of alcohol, prostitution, adultery, and concubinage. Spanish officials responded to these regional proclivities by enacting laws to curtail them. Spain's first major legal and moral reforms occurred in 1769. A particular source of Spanish angst was sexual activity in the colony. On November 25, 1769, General O'Reilly issued a legal code,

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[91] Light Townsend Cummins, "Louisiana as a French Colony," in *Louisiana: A History,* 6th ed., eds. Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 65-7.

[92] John Smith Kendall, *History of New Orleans* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1922), 22-30; Light Townsend Cummins, "Spanish Louisiana," in *Louisiana: A History,* 6th ed., eds. Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 68-75.

based on existing Spanish law that enumerated sexual offenses such as rape, adultery, permitting one's wife to commit adultery, pandering, incest, concubinage with a priest, fornication, and "crime against nature." Despite O'Reilly's code, the people of New Orleans persisted undaunted, and concubinage remained common.[93] In 1786, then-Governor Esteban Rodriguez Miró issued a *banda de buen gobierno* (edict of good government) and, thereby, declared a vendetta against concubinage. Like many purity campaigns before and since, Miró and his successors found enforcement of his edict to be difficult.[94]

Inadvertently, over the time of their dominion Spanish officials added to the provocative reputation of New Orleans. This was the consequence of their seemingly negative reports. For instance, in 1766 Father Clements de Saldaña wrote to a friend that keeping a mistress was so widespread in the colony that no one complained. Similarly, in 1786, Governor Esteban Miró condemned the racial mixing and concubinage that, to him, were too common.[95] In 1795, newly-arrived Bishop Luis Pefialver y Cardenas reported

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[93] John Smith Kendall, *History of New Orleans* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1922), 29; Jack David Lazarus Holmes, "Do It! Don't Do It!: Spanish Laws on Sex and Marriage," in *Louisiana's Legal Heritage*, ed. Edward Haas (Pensacola, FL: Published for the Louisiana State Museum by Perdido Bay Press, 1983), 19-21.

[94] Charles E. A. Gayarré, *History of Louisiana*, 4 vols. (New York: William J. Widdleton, 1867) 3:178-80; Light Townsend Cummins, "Spanish Louisiana," and "The Final Years of Colonial Louisiana," in *Louisiana: A History,* 6th ed., eds. Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 84, 92.

[95] Jack David Lazarus Holmes, "Do It! Don't Do It!: Spanish Laws on Sex and Marriage," in *Louisiana's Legal Heritage*, ed. Edward Haas (Pensacola, Florida: Published for the Louisiana State Museum by Perdido Bay Press, 1983), 22-3.

on the prevalence of "prostitution, adultery, miscegenation, bastardy, and other results of lascivious conduct" in New Orleans.[96] Historian Jack D.L. Holmes notes that most of the Spanish officers in Louisiana maintained a mistress of mixed race; along this line, in 1799, "Bishop Luis" reported: "They do not blush at carrying the illegitimate issue they have by them to be recorded in the parochial registers as their natural children." [97]

Spanish officials failed in their attempts to regulate sexual morality and the local government failed to enforce the laws. New Orleans maintained its ribald ways, persevering in its libertine attitudes toward matters of sex.

The Louisiana Purchase and the End of Colonial Status

The end of New Orleans' colonial period was rapid and unexpected. In 1800, Napoleon Bonaparte forced Spain to retrocede Louisiana to France in the Treaty of San Ildefonso.[98]

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[96] Jack David Lazarus Holmes, "Do It! Don't Do It!: Spanish Laws on Sex and Marriage," in *Louisiana's Legal Heritage*, ed. Edward Haas (Pensacola, Florida: Published for the Louisiana State Museum by Perdido Bay Press, 1983), 21, citing "Luis Penalaver Y Cardenas (Bishop of Louisiana) to Eugenio Llaguno y Amirola (Minister of Grace and Justice), New Orleans, November 1, 1795," (Madrid: Biblioteca Nacional), v. 19, 509.

[97] Jack David Lazarus Holmes, "Do It! Don't Do It!: Spanish Laws on Sex and Marriage," in *Louisiana's Legal Heritage*, ed. Edward Haas (Pensacola, Florida: Published for the Louisiana State Museum by Perdido Bay Press, 1983), 24, citing Louis Houck, ed., *The Spanish Regime in Missouri*, 2 vols. (Chicago: 1909), 221.

[98] Light Townsend Cummins, "The Final Years of Colonial Louisiana," in *Louisiana: A History,* 6th ed., eds. Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 97.

Meanwhile, during this same period U.S. President Thomas Jefferson recognized the value of New Orleans as gateway between America's western-most frontier and world markets. Accordingly, President Jefferson dispatched James Monroe to collaborate with U. S. Ambassador to France, Robert R. Livingston, in order to purchase New Orleans. The Americans held little hope of success after French ministers rebuffed their initial overtures. Then, however, France's leader Napoleon made an astounding offer: he proposed to sell the U.S. the entire Louisiana colony. Exceeding their authority, Monroe and Ambassador Livingston agreed to pay $15 million and settle $5 million in claims against France in exchange for the territory. On December 20, 1803, France formally yielded the Louisiana territory to the United States in ceremonies at the Cabildo in New Orleans. The territorial acquisition created an epic change in the history and culture of New Orleans. With unimpeded, navigable access between the Mississippi River and the open sea, the city became one of the United States' busiest points for exports and immigration, as well as recreation.[99]

By the close of the colonial period, New Orleans's mores were well-established; concubinage, prostitution, drunkenness, and gambling were artifacts of daily life. Royal officials, Catholic clergy, and the public proved either impotent or unwilling to vigorously police sexual morality according to nominal legal and religious standards.

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[99] Light Townsend Cummins, "The Final Years of Colonial Louisiana," in *Louisiana: A History,* 6th ed., eds. Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 97-100; John Smith Kendall, *History of New Orleans* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1922), 39-58.

Brasseaux sums up the status of colonial Louisiana, and the persistence of its "permissive moral climate" since its inception, as follows:

> Embracing the moral code forged in the wilderness by *coureurs de bois*, Louisiana's independent, anticlerical, and hedonistic pioneers effectively resisted the limited moralizing influence of the Catholic clergy while creating a frontier society that reflected their newly acquired values. Their influence is seen most clearly in the rapid conversion of French immigrants to their way of life. Moreover, contrary to popular belief, these libertines and the less conspicuous male deportees had a lasting impact on colonial Louisiana. Indeed, the influx of hundreds of forced emigrants into Louisiana under the Law regime momentarily inundated the colony with persons of dubious moral fiber, and their presence in the colony seriously retarded the moderating influences that demographic growth and the concomitant expansion of governmental and religious authority would normally have had in the area.[100]

In the absence of the moral constraints normally provided by the Catholic Church a frontier morality developed as successive waves of Canadian and French settlers deviated at will from traditional values. Irreligion was often manifested in criminality. Gambling, public drunkenness, and sexual promiscuity were commonplace in the New Orleans and all of the frontier posts in lower Louisiana; this would remain the case for decades after the departure of the French. The persistence of these problems reflects the pervasiveness of the region's frontier values among the civilian population.[101]

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[100] Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 40.

[101] Carl A. Brasseaux, "The Moral Climate of French Colonial Louisiana, 1699-1763," *Louisiana History* 27, no. 1 (1986): 41.

In public, officials and the general population tacitly tolerated most behaviors as long as they escaped public attention, and there was a decided tendency in the city to avoid close scrutinization. New Orleanians enjoyed the paradoxical coexistence of moral rhetoric and immoral behavior in a stable system.

Governance by the United States

New Orleans was the strategic gem in the United States' acquisition of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. This change in governance, along with the influx of emigres from the Haitian Revolution, caused the city's population to balloon from approximately 8,500 in 1803 to over 17,000 by 1810. New Orleans witnessed an ever-changing influx of people and nationalities.[102] New Orleans became, therefore, the shipping and commerce capital of the region and a major world-wide financial center. By 1840, New Orleans had become the third largest and wealthiest city in the nation.[103]

Following the Louisiana Purchase New Orleans quickly became the premier city in the American South. This was a time when rivers and oceans were the thoroughfares to the world and the Port of New Orleans was the sole point of access for the largest river system in North America. All exports from lands drained by the Mississippi passed through the city. The Mississippi River was too shallow to permit upward passage

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[102] Pamela D. Arceneaux, *Guidebooks to Sin - The Blue Books of Storyville, New Orleans* (New Orleans: Historic New Orleans Collection, 2017), 27.

[103] Judith Kelleher Schafer, "Life and Labor in Antebellum Louisiana," in *Louisiana: A History,* 6th ed., eds. Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 164-6.

beyond New Orleans, and river-going cargo vessels were not sea worthy. Thus, export cargo was unloaded and transferred to sea-worthy vessels in the city. Similarly, import goods from around the world were transferred from sea-faring vessels to riverboats.

All the while, the New Orleans' libertine ethos thrived. The city's many economic and business opportunities enticed visitors, especially men. Men came to New Orleans from the North to seek their fortune, and Southern plantation and farm owners came to buy and sell goods. Business visitors too, although not necessarily brought to New Orleans because of vice, reacted to the city in different ways. Some felt this was an opportunity to indulge in normally forbidden activities because the size and transience of the city limited the potential for discovery. The city's decadence fed its mystique in a positive feedback loop. Shamefully, a great deal of New Orleans' economy concerned the slave trade: New Orleans' Congo Square just outside the French Quarter was the largest slave market in the United States. Slave owners visited New Orleans to buy and sell slaves. Many decided to enjoy New Orleans exotic opportunities as *lagniappe*[104] for their visit.[105] New Orleans' bawdy reputation was self-sustaining; open vice attracted visitors who specifically patronized and sustained the vice economy.

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[104] Lagniappe is a Louisiana creole word meaning a little extra something, "something given or obtained gratuitously or by way of good measure." It is considered American French, derived from the Spanish *la ñapa* itself derived from the indigenous Quechua word *yapa*. *Merriam-Webster.com*, "Lagniappe," accessed September 22, 2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lagniappe.

[105] John Smith Kendall, *History of New Orleans* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1922), 685-92; Judith Kelleher Schafer, "The Territorial Period," in *Louisiana: A History,* 6th ed., eds. Bennett H. Wall and John C. Rodrigue (Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 110.

Prostitution flourished uncontrolled in the city throughout the antebellum period. Transience, money, and the pre-existing New Orleans ethos helped sustain prostitution in the community. Prostitution continued to flourish throughout the nineteenth century in New Orleans not only because of its large fluxuating population, but because public entertainments catered almost exclusively to men, and women lacked economic opportunities.

The earliest, largest, and most persistent area of prostitution was in the "Basin." According to historian Al Rose, the Basin District, eventually Basin Street, received its name from a large pit formed beyond the edges of the original city. The pit had been excavated by original city residents for fill to raise the foundations of their homes, but it eventually became a cesspool. Female prostitutes, in search of a place to practice their trade, drained the basin and built New Orleans first tenderloin district. Through the nineteenth century, different areas of prostitution rose to prominence in the city. All the while the Basin District kept going, in part due to its local clientele. These other areas tended to service New Orleans' transient population of sailors, tourists, and immigrants. In contrast, Basin Street tended to entice New Orleans's permanent residents.[106]

Over time, city fathers passed ordinances intended to control and limit prostitution in the city, but the legislation was often inadequate. In 1817, the city's Common Council

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[106] Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 3-8.

passed an ordinance ordering a twenty-five-dollar fine or thirty days in jail for any woman "notoriously abandoned to lewdness. In 1837, the city attempted to bypass the problems related to the prosecution of prostitution by allowing any three "respectable citizens" to denounce a house of prostitution, also giving the mayor authority to evict occupants of the house. In 1839, a new city ordinance forbade prostitutes from inhabiting the ground floor of any building. Prostitutes tended to occupy small room, called cribs that lined the city's alleyways, from which they solicited business and conducted sex work. [Fig. 30] In 1845, prostitutes were forbidden from frequenting coffeehouses and saloons where alcohol was available.[107]

Then, in 1857 prompted by citizen complaints, the New Orleans City Council passed "An Ordinance Concerning Lewd and Abandoned Women," commonly called the Lorette ordinance (Lorette I) the first city regulation to acknowledge the on-going nature of prostitution; whereby, the city sought to regulate prostitution through licensing. This law did not discourage prostitution *per se,* rather the intent was to control the trade by encouraging prostitutes to conduct their business in specific, less respectable, areas of town. It did require operators of brothels to purchase licenses, providing the added benefit of a revenue stream for the city. The Lorette law was short-lived. It failed when landlords, who received substantial rents from prostitutes, pressured the Louisiana Supreme Court, to overturn the entire ordinance; the Louisiana Supreme

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[107] Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 8; Lura Robinson, *It's an Old New Orleans Custom* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1948).

Court did so in 1859, declaring the law null and void on the basis of a minor technicality.[108] An alternative theory for the law's demise is set forth by Storyville historian Al Rose. According to Rose, it was prostitutes that challenged the ordinance. On May 22, 1857, Emma Pickett filed and paid for a license under the new ordinance. Pickett objected to the licensing fee and filed suit to recover her money. The case dragged on through 1859 when an appellate court declared the law unconstitutional because it tended to legitimate the practice of prostitution. The court decision was lauded by the ladies of Basin Street who took to Canal Street and the French Quarter in mass celebration.[109]

It should be noted that Prostitution was not a crime but was considered a vice, a moral failure. In New Orleans, a community infused with the French concept of societal control though surveillance rather than intervention, the visibility of prostitution was discouraged. Laws were crafted to move prostitutes to less prominent areas of the city. "Lewd and abandoned women" were arrested not for the act of sex for money, but on public nuisance charges and were either jailed or fined and released. Male customers

[108] Judith Kelleher Schafer, *Brothels, Depravity, and Abandoned Women: Illegal Sex in Antebellum New Orleans*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2009), 157-8; see also, Chapter 9, "An Ordinance Concerning Lewd and Abandoned Women," 145-54.

It is worth noting that the word "Lorette" in the street lingo of the day indicated a prostitute. The term is associated with a neighborhood in Paris around the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Lorette.

[109] Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 8-9.

faced no criminal consequences for engaging a prostitute's services.[110] Although both

parties to a prostitution transaction were seen to be immoral, heterosexist norms decreed

that women bore the brunt of society's censure and punishment.

A revised version of the Lorette ordinance, also called "An Ordinance Concerning Lewd

and Abandoned Women," was announced in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* on July

12, 1865 (Lorette II). Similar to Lorette I, prostitution itself was essentially allowed to

flourish unrestrained, as long as it remained in "broadly defined, less savory areas of

town."[111] Again demonstrating the profitability to the city of regulated prostitution, an

annual license tax was now collected from two sources: from prostitutes as well as from

the landlords who rented to them. Lorette II also consolidated several earlier regulations

regarding unacceptable behavior such as public drunkenness, overt verbal or visual

solicitation, creating "disturbances;" such that this ordinance allowed the city to collect

various fines from women in the sex trade.[112, 113]

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[110] Abraham Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe* (New York: Century, 1914), 106-11.

[111] Pamela D. Arceneaux, *Guidebooks to Sin - The Blue Books of Storyville, New Orleans* (New Orleans: Historic New Orleans Collection, 2017), 28.

[112] The 1857 Lorette ordinance prohibited black and white prostitutes from working together in the same houses. In the 1865 law, however, racial distinctions were omitted entirely. There is little evidence that racial segregation in was ever enforced in local brothels. Pamela D. Arceneaux, *Guidebooks to Sin - The Blue Books of Storyville, New Orleans* (New Orleans: Historic New Orleans Collection, 2017), 28.

[113] Controlling prostitution in other American cities also proved to be a thorny problem as well. Just over ten years after the demise of the first Lorette ordinance in New Orleans, St. Louis was among the few cities to take extreme legal measures. Its "social evil ordinance," passed on July 5, 1870, began a four-year experiment in regulating the industry by licensing bordellos and by

Accordingly, even with the 1865 ordinance, prostitution continued largely unchecked, and this was exacerbated by pervasive corruption throughout New Orleans's criminal justice system and amongst some city leaders, all of whom profited in some way from the sex trade.[114]

The Civil War brought hard times to New Orleans, and the city's contingent of transient visitors declined in size. Nevertheless, Basin Street continued its business. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, a single block of Burgundy Street between Conti and Bienville streets gained a reputation as New Orleans lowest tenderloin district. It was named Smokey Row because of the large number of mixed-race inhabitants of the area. In July 1885, the city closed the block.[115]

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registering individual prostitutes and examining them for venereal disease on a regular basis. Power was given to the city's new board of health to oversee and enforce the ordinance, but this legislation also ran afoul of complex challenges and court cases disputing jurisdiction between city and state. Thomas Clyde Mackey, "Red Lights Out: A Legal History of Prostitution, Disorderly Houses, and Vice Districts, 1870-1917" (PhD dissertation, Rice University, 1984), 144.

[114] Elizabeth Parish Smith, " Southern Sirens: Disorderly Women and the Fight for Public Order in Reconstruction-Era New Orleans" (PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2013), 30-50.

[115] Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 10, 170-2; Danny Barker, *Buddy Bolden and the Last Days of Storyville*, ed. Alyn Shipton (New York: Cassell, 1998); Alecia P Long, *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865-1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

Storyville

Years after the failure of the Lorette ordinances, and once again in response to public

outcry regarding the proliferation of prostitutes throughout New Orleans, the ultimate

legislative effort to manage and segregate prostitution came with the creation of

Storyville. Alderman Sidney Story (1863-1937) sponsored legislation intended to

regulate the activities of the city's "lewd and abandoned women." Story proposed a

limited vice district, in the Basin Street area, to contain the world's oldest profession.

Pursuant to Story's legislation, prostitutes were denied use of housing for immoral

purposes anywhere outside the designated area. The ordinance sponsored by Story

passed on January 29, 1897 and took effect beginning January 1, 1898.[116] For the next

twenty years, Storyville was arguably the nation's most infamous red-light district.

Anticipating legal challenges to the ordinance, the city did not legalize a crime

recognized in state statute, but it did rigorously enforce these state laws only outside

of the district. What the Storyville ordinance actually meant that state law would *not* be

enforced in the district.

To the embarrassment of Alderman Story, the designated area where prostitutes were

to ply their trade came to be known as Storyville. Storyville was contiguous with and

just north of the French Quarter. It extended from the uptown/upriver side of

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[116] Ordinance No. 13,032, Council Series, was passed on January 29, 1897, but was modified on July 6 to become effective January 1, 1898. Thomas Clyde Mackey, "Red Lights Out: A Legal History of Prostitution, Disorderly Houses, and Vice Districts, 1870-1917" (PhD dissertation, Rice University, 1984), 176-77.

Customhouse (now Iberville) Street to the uptown side of St. Louis Street, and from the lake side of Basin Street to the river side of Robertson Street. Although Story was incensed and embarrassed that his name became associated with the new red-light district, it was some consolation that nearly all of Storyville's inhabitants and patrons simply referred to it as the District.

It is worth noting that prostitution was never limited solely to Storyville, however. The French Quarter had been the scene of prostitution activity before and would be again after the era of Storyville, as the epigram *One Arm* illustrates. One such unofficial pre-Storyville vice area was Anderson County; a cheeky name since it was actually a tiny area within the already compact French Quarter. Anderson County was bounded by Customhouse (now Iberville), St. Peter, Dauphine and Rampart Streets. Anderson County was nicknamed for local entrepreneur and political figure Thomas C. "Tom" Anderson (1858-1931).[117] [Fig. 32]

Blue Books

Capitalism was front and center to the business of Storyville. An enterprising pseudonymous publisher began to sell guidebooks that overviewed to offerings to be had in Storyville. These guides have come to be called blue books.[118] These guides were

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[117] Pamela D. Arceneaux, *Guidebooks to Sin - The Blue Books of Storyville, New Orleans* (New Orleans: Historic New Orleans Collection, 2017), 67.

[118] Not all of the guides were published under that name. The most famous guides are editions of a publication literally titled *Blue Book,* but the term also refers to prostitution guides such as *Hell-O, New Mahogany Hall,* and even *The Red Book.* Hundreds of each publication were

primarily typeset directories listing women working in Storyville, yet they also included

advertisements for individual brothels, luxury products and various goods and services

available in or near Storyville. The blue books also included occasional headshots.

Certain madams and their brothels were presented as premiere examples of such

businesses worldwide. One edition advised, "Read all the 'Ads', as all the best houses

are advertised and are known as the 'Cream of Society.'"[119] The blue books targeted a

specific audience, New Orleans tourists. By the late 19th century New Orleans was an

established tourist and convention destination. Integral to the city's hedonistic allure, the

guidebooks suggested a glamorous, exciting, risqué New Orleans that men could partake

of simply by visiting the bordellos, restaurants and bars, and by buying the advertised

products in the guides. In essence, the blue books promoted the mystique of Storyville

itself.[120] These aspects inform the discussion of *stimmung* which is discussed in more

detail in Chapter 4. The relentless print marketing of Storyville during its existence

secured its legacy, long after its lavish bordellos were razed.[121]

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probably printed; few of the small, pocket-sized books survive; Arceneaux's employer The Historic New Orleans Collection has what is probably the largest archive of these guides.

[119] *Blue Book,* [1903], 2006.0237, Williams Research Center, The Historic New Orleans Collection (hereinafter THNOC).

[120] Jasmine Mir, "Marketplace of Desire: Storyville and the Making of a Tourist City in New Orleans, 1890-1920" (PhD dissertation, New York University, 2005), 74.

[121] Consider, e.g., it literally does not exist, although it has mythic proportions: El Dorado, Shangri-La, Storyville.

Even though Storyville was neither the country's first legally-established red-light district, nor was New Orleans the only city with such legislation, its notoriety has lingered longer than most, adding to the libertine lustre of the city's reputation.[122] The brothel advertisements in the blue books, with their coy references to readily available sexual pleasures, augmented this impression, creating a message so strongly tied into the city's mystique and self-promotion that it continues to define New Orleans as a good-time town to the present day, *laissez les bon temps rouler*.

Storyville Life

Life in the District was often far from rosy for many who made their living there. This is reflected by the sizeable number of fictional accounts of life in Storyville.[123] However, some argue that things were not necessarily as extreme as the maudlin scenarios spun by author Craig L. Foster and newspapers of the time. Foster noted, for example, that for prostitutes plagued with venereal disease, alcoholism, or drug addiction, suicide was

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[122] Many mistakenly believe that New Orleans was the first city in the United States to confine its prostitutes to a geographically prescribed area. That dubious honor may go to Virginia City, Nevada, on the Comstock Lode silver strike, which enacted a location ordinance restricting prostitution as early as 1865 and again in 1868, 1875, and 1878. In this frontier boomtown, however, these attempts were largely ignored. In the late 1880s, Omaha, Nebraska, followed by Waco and San Antonio, Texas, also enacted similar legislation. Notorious vice areas in other prominent American cities of the era, such as New York's Tenderloin, Chicago's Levee, San Francisco's Barbary Coast, and Fort Worth's Hell's Half Acre, as well as those in smaller towns, were not geographically defined by municipal ordinances, but had developed well before the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through years of tradition combined with governmental and police toleration. Pamela D. Arceneaux, *Guidebooks to Sin - The Blue Books of Storyville, New Orleans* (New Orleans: Historic New Orleans Collection, 2017), 29-30.

[123] Natasha Tretheway, *Bellocq's Ophelia,* (St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 2002); Brooke Bergen, *Storyville: A Hidden Mirror*, (Wakefield, RI: Asphodel Press, 1994).

their last hope of release from a miserable existence.[124] Moralists and social reformers of

the era, decrying the evils of prostitution, would have us believe that the scenarios spun

by Foster were the inevitable end for all unrepentant "fallen" women. Closer to reality,

most women who worked as prostitutes did so for a few years or even part-time (such as

at time of festivals such as Bank Holiday, October Fest or Carnival) either to supplement

their incomes during lean times, to achieve the means to start their own businesses, or to

perhaps meet and eventually marry financially secure men. These short-term prostitutes

hoped to better their situation and slip unnoticed back into general society.[125] This data

corresponds to the very period in which Bellocq took his famous images.[126]

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[124] Craig L. Foster, "Tarnished Angels: Prostitution in Storyville, New Orleans, 1900-1910," *Louisiana History* 31, no. 4 (1990): 387-97 at 393.

Considering life in the world of prostitution, although not specifically about Storyville, also see the Marion S. Goldman, "Hazards of the Game," in *Gold Diggers and Silver Miners: Prostitution and Social Life on the Comstock Lode*, Women and Culture Series (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981), 119-20, 124-35.

[125] Elizabeth Topping, "Fact and Fiction Regarding Prostitution in Mid-Nineteenth Century American Cities," *Nineteenth Century* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 8-12.

The seasonal ebb and flow of the sex trade and the existence of the occasional prostitute is also discussed in the literature: Abraham Flexner, "The Supply," in *Prostitution in Europe* (New York: Century, 1914) 19-24, 61-102, at 84-85; Craig L. Foster, "Tarnished Angels: Prostitution in Storyville, New Orleans, 1900-1910," *Louisiana History* 31, no. 4 (1990): 391; Emily Epstein Landau, *Spectacular Wickedness: Sex, Race and Memory in Storyville, New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 151.

[126] Although his conclusions were dire, Foster's data is enlightening. Foster's comparison of US census data from 1900 and 1910 gives interesting insight into the changing demographics of the women of Storyville. During this time period, the median age of Storyville prostitutes crept up (twenty-four in 1900, twenty-six in 1910), and the women were much less likely to be married (17 percent married in 1900, about 1 percent married in 1910). Fewer Louisiana natives were working in Storyville at the end of the decade (45 percent in 1900, 35 percent in 1910). Numbers

Despite the claims of blue book ads (of highly- accomplished, select, first-class ladies), not all women working in even the best of brothels were sophisticated, proper, or charming. Those with some degree of sophistication and charm certainly had a better chance of rising in the profession, however. Many were poor immigrants or were young women newly arrived from rural areas.[127] While the blue books promoted gorgeously furnished houses staffed with beautiful women, all of whom were clever entertainers and charming young ladies, the local newspapers often went out of their way to report wild shenanigans and serious crimes involving these women.[128] These were the women photographed by Bellocq. One author has proposed that the intent of the image was a commercial one, to be cropped and utilized as photographic images in Blue Books, or more conventionally, as work commissioned by the sitters for their own purposes.[129]

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of African American prostitutes working in the District saw a similar decline (38 percent of the population of Storyville in 1900, 28 percent in 1910). The number of children of prostitutes living in the District decreased, from 197 in 1900 to 66 in 1910. Census data for the area also reveals that very often mothers and daughters, aunts and nieces, cousins, or sisters lived and worked together at the same address. Craig L. Foster, "Tarnished Angels: Prostitution in Storyville, New Orleans, 1900-1910," *Louisiana History* 31, no. 4 (1990): 387-97.

[127] Craig L. Foster, "Tarnished Angels: Prostitution in Storyville, New Orleans, 1900-1910," *Louisiana History* 31, no. 4 (1990): 387-97.

[128] Pamela D. Arceneaux, *Guidebooks to Sin - The Blue Books of Storyville, New Orleans* (New Orleans: Historic New Orleans Collection, 2017), 31; citing, "A Battle in a Bagnio," *Daily Picayune*, August 19, 1895, p. 6, col. 5; "Bit Her Hand and Blood Poising [sic] Set in as a Result. Eva Mill, the Victim, is, However, Convalescent-Jennie Donahue Did the Mischief," *Daily States*, October 6, 1900, p. 1, col. 4; and "Redlight Murder Winds Up a Spree," *Daily Picayune*, September 27, 1904, p. 4, col. 1.

[129] Christian Waguespack, "Posh and Tawdry: Rethinking E.J. Bellocq's Storyville Portraits" (Master's Thesis, University of New Mexico, 2015).

<u>The End of Storyville</u>

 The famed district survived until 1917 when Storyville closed, despite resistance

from city leaders, due to restrictions against vice districts within five miles of a naval

base.[130] Storyville was closed, but Mayor Martin Behrman summed up the on-going

New Orleans ethos, "You can make prostitution illegal, but you can't make it

unpopular." [131]

Following the closure of Storyville in 1917, it maintained its long-standing reputation

as a "gay" city, a place of easy morals. "The city surrendered to uncontrolled vice and

saw itself devaluated beyond its worst fears." "The 'action' available to the visitor

nowadays is tawdry and sordid enough to cause oldtimers -some of them at least- to

remember Storyville with affection." [132] By the 1920s, New Orleans' history and

reputation for sexual vice created an attractive haven in the American South for

homosexuals. Writing in 1974, Al Rose stated:

> There are "gay" bars galore, and troupes of male hustlers looking for "new
> friends" along the several Bourbon Street blocks from St. Peter Street up
> to the Jean Lafitte hotel (sic) and in Jackson Square. On some nights there

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[130] Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 166-72; Danny Barker, *Buddy Bolden and the Last Days of Storyville,* ed. Alyn Shipton (New York: Cassell, 1998).

[131] Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 182; Alecia P. Long, *The Great Southern Babylon: Sex, Race, and Respectability in New Orleans, 1865-1920* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).

[132] Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 170, 172.

seem to be more male streetwalkers than female, though there are so many of both sexes that keeping count would be impossible.[133]

To recap, the French established New Orleans in 1718, and straightaway it inherited a complex set of attitudes towards sin and vice. These attitudes combined with the frontier conditions of colonial Louisiana to establish libertine attitudes towards indulgence and desire. The values that developed in eighteenth-century colonial Louisiana were reified in the sexual institutions and culture of nineteenth-century New Orleans. French mores and frontier conditions yielded a *laissez-faire* attitude towards sexuality, and the sexual institutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries preserved those values. These were the conditions that facilitated New Orleans's rise as a center of homosexuality.

"Gay" New Orleans

From the mid-nineteenth century until the late 1960s, New Orleans was often known as "Gay New Orleans;" the term appeared frequently in articles and advertisements. For example, in a 1938 WPA-funded travel publication, author and long-time New Orleanian, Lyle Saxon wrote "all early travelers to New Orleans who recorded their impressions found it a gay town. … Some welcomed this gaiety; others looked upon it with marked disapproval."[134] The association of New Orleans and gaiety persisted. During the 1950s, in an effort to promote tourism, the Louisville & Nashville Railroad

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[133] Al Rose, *Storyville, New Orleans: Being an Authentic, Illustrated Account of the Notorious Red-Light District* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1974), 173.

[134] Louisiana Writers Project, Works Progress Administration, *New Orleans City Guide*, ed. Lyle Saxon and Edward Dreyer (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1938), 212.

produced a color brochure titled "Gay New Orleans"; similarly, in the 1960s, several bus companies reportedly offered tours that promised to show the city's "gay night life." [135]

Of course, the meaning of the term "gay" has evolved over time. At least initially, "gay" meant a sense of abandon and stretching the boundaries of acceptable behavior in pursuit of a good time.[136] The appellation reflected the city's laissez-faire attitudes in general. The city's liberal attitudes towards alcohol, gambling, and sex reinforced this traditional "gay" appellation. Nevertheless, the meaning of the term "gay" did evolve over the twentieth century, and its association with homosexuality arose well-before the 1970s (when the term came into wide-spread use as a community identifier). At least by the early 1930s the term "gay" had an association with homosexuality, and the correlation between the city's nick-name and its long-standing queer sub-culture cannot be ignored.[137] Ultimately, a sizable "gay community" in the contemporary LGBT sense

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[135] G.U. Yager and Ira F. Schwegel, "Gay New Orleans: The Crescent City: Louisville & Nashville R.R.," (Chicago: Poole Bros., Inc., 1940).

[136] *Merriam-Webster* defines gay as given to social pleasures, "keenly alive and exuberant: having or inducing high spirits." *Merriam-Webster.com*, "Gay," accessed September 22, 2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/gay.

[137] In American cinema, the 1934 film *The Thin Man* contains the earliest known use of the term "gay" as a term related to homosexuality. In the film, William Powell is crossing a room when a drunken male guest stumbles into him about to fall. Powell grabs the guest, and as he does Powell begins a sprightly dance with the male guest and says, "That's okay, I'm gay for this one." Four years later a better-known instance of the use of the word gay occurred in 1938's, *Bringing Up Baby*, in which Cary Grant, following a series of calamities, is queried about his attire while wearing a woman's negligée, and replies "Because I've gone gay all of a sudden!" *The Thin Man*, directed by W.S Van Dyke (1934; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2002) DVD; *Bringing Up Baby*, directed by Howard Hawks (1938; Burbank, CA: Warner Home Video, 2005) DVD.

has come to exist in New Orleans. By looking back on the city's long and tortuous history, it seems almost pre-ordained that New Orleans would become home to world-renown gay and bohemian communities.

Following the demise of Storyville vice had spread but still there was no single LGBT "gay world" in 1920s New Orleans. There were sometimes overlapping, but more frequently separate, cultural spheres in which same-sex desire and defiance of gender norms took place. These spheres were part of a greater culture of sexual non-conformity in New Orleans, based on its long-standing *laissez-faire* attitude towards physical indulgence. In the city traditional categories of race, class, and gender were not erased, but were expressed in the overall context of relatively accepted sexuality. The French Quarter and the old Red-Light districts each had been centers of white, black, artistic, and working-class communities in which expressions of same sex-desire were a part. These varied communities were not gay and lesbian in the contemporary post-WWII sense, but they did constitute its cultural predecessors. Homosexual men and women acted on their desire for physical and emotional intimacy with others of their sex within existing communities of race, class, and gender.[138]

Attitudes and opportunities of pre-WWII New Orleans allowed the fulfillment of same-sex desires without necessitating an individual or group identity. Intellectual

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[138] Richard Clark, "City of Desire: A History of Same-Sex Desire in New Orleans, 1917-1977" (PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 2009), 39.

discourse, white pansy culture, black sissy culture, bohemian culture, bachelor culture, and the lingering homosocial world of women were the subcultures that combined after World War II into a more unified gay and lesbian identity. During 1930s prohibition several techniques were used to avoid police raids; these same survival techniques were used by gay bar patrons to evade police during and after the Prohibition era.[139] In contrast, Prechter challenges Clark's argument that a modern gay community before World War II was virtually nonexistent in New Orleans.[140]

Prechter argues that gay men and lesbians successfully exploited the contradictory culture of New Orleans to the benefit of LGBTQ and bohemian communities. Safe spaces were created for themselves, allowing a gay community to grow and thrive within a municipality overtly hostile to homosexuals. The schizophrenic response to homosexuality is part of the long history in New Orleans of being nominally condemning while simultaneously tolerating the very action condemned. Following the end of World War I in 1918, and the dissolution of the red-light district Storyville in 1917, the French Quarter fell victim to years of neglect, and it became seen as a dangerous haven for vice and criminality. Within its tattered borders, as well as in the ashes of the adjacent neighborhood which used to be Storyville, an artistic "Bohemia" was born. Denizens of this bohemian enclave took advantage of the cheap housing while

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[139] Richard Clark, "City of Desire: A History of Same-Sex Desire in New Orleans, 1917-1977" (PhD dissertation, Tulane University, 2009), 40.

[140] Ryan Prechter, "Gay New Orleans: A History" (PhD dissertation, Georgia State University, 2017).

simultaneously being drawn to the French Quarter's cultural and architectural history. This foreshadows the context for the discussion of *einfühlung* below, namely an aesthetic empathetic engagement with their shared historic environment. An artistic community of writers, painters, and performers developed.[141] In some ways, this community was similar in makeup to bohemian Greenwich Village in New York City. Like Greenwich Village, the Quarter became a haven for gay and lesbian transplants. It was also populated and beloved by native gay New Orleans residents. One such resident was Lyle Saxon, an author and historian and one of the first to see the value of both historical preservation and its potential as a haven for artistic subcultures, gay and straight. There were nevertheless racial limitations within the French Quarter during the 1920s, and a segregated African American gay community laid claim to the once-glamorous Storyville neighborhood.

A new awareness of homosexuality and its classification as a deviancy entered the public discourse during the World War II era. The post-war impetus of targeting homosexuals and expelling them not just from the military, but the community,

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[141] The legacy of this artistic community is exemplified by the following, each of whom were born or raised in New Orleans:

E.g., Louis Armstrong, Sandra Bullock, Louis Prima, Lillian Hellman, Aaron Neville, Godfrey Reggio, Tyler Perry, Big Freedia, Fats Domino, Reese Witherspoon, Anne Rice, Lil Wayne, John Besh, Elmore Leonard, Harry Connick, Jr., Paul Prudhomme, Sidney Bechet, Emeril Lagasse, Jon Batiste, Kitty Carlisle Hart, DJ Khaled, Ray Walston, Paul Burke, Patricia Clarkson, John Goodman, Kendall Shaw, Champion Jack Dupree, Ellen DeGeneres, George Rodrigue, Tennessee Williams, Truman Capote, Dorothy Lamour, Jelly Roll Morton, Frank Ocean, Wynton, Ellis and Branford Marsalis, Pauley Perrette, William Faulkner, Huey "Piano" Smith, John Kennedy Toole, Lucinda Williams, and Mahalia Jackson.

expanded the discourse surrounding the New Orleans gay community during the 1940s and 1950s as not only a police matter, but a social one as well. As the dust settled from victories in Europe and the Pacific, soldiers came home to a New Orleans fueled by the political and social spirit of reform.[142]

Spearheading this reform movement in New Orleans was deLesseps "Chep" Morrison, who served as the mayor of New Orleans from 1946 to 1961.[143] Morrison launched his run for mayor in 1945 directly after being discharged from the Army, leaving him six weeks to mount a reform campaign against the incumbent. Describing Morrison's mayoral run, one historian argues that "the general tone of the campaign was that of a holy crusade."[144] Morrison's platform was nominally built on a pledge to destroy political corruption, but the underlying message evoked points to the more vital mission of eradicating the "evil influences" which corruption had allowed to flourish in the city.[145]

The fifteen-year period historians have dubbed the "Morrison Era" is defined by its crackdown on alleged "sex deviates" and a targeted persecution of homosexuals. This

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[142] Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out under Fire: The History of Gay Men and Women in World War II* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 1-7.

[143] Joseph B. Parker, *The Morrison Era: Reform Politics in New Orleans* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 1974).

[144] Joseph B. Parker, *The Morrison Era: Reform Politics in New Orleans* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 1974), 67.

[145] Joseph B. Parker, *The Morrison Era: Reform Politics in New Orleans* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 1974), 62-9.

culture of moral crusading, spearheaded by the mayor, was exacerbated by civic and

neighborhood organizations that targeted the gay community which had expanded

during bohemian years in the 1920s and 1930s. The mayor's half-brother Jacob took

charge of the Vieux Carré Property Owners and Renters Association (VCPORA). Jacob

H. Morrison used the VCPORA in his quest to eradicate homosexuals and other "sex

deviates" from the French Quarter. The irony is that through Jacob Morrison, an

organization which had roots in the French Quarter preservation movement started by

gay men in the 1920s was turned into a weapon used to eradicate their presence from the

French Quarter. As the Morrison Era took shape, the type of moral crusading seen in the

1930s was revived with a vengeance during the 1950s. Consequently, while a young gay

community in New Orleans expanded and became more visible after World War II, the

municipal moral crusading which daunted them before the war was resurrected by

Mayor Morrison, his brother, and their inner circle. Under the Morrison administration,

homosexuality was no longer criminalized in coded ordinances prohibiting "vagrancy"

or "disturbing the peace," but was targeted directly by name. Consequently, being gay in

New Orleans became more dangerous than ever.[146]

Despite having to contend with wartime targeting led by military and health

professionals, the New Orleans gay community after World War II was

flourishing. The writings of poet and author William S. Burroughs indicate that a

vibrant gay scene developing in the city after the war. Burroughs moved to New

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[146] Ryan Prechter, "Gay New Orleans: A History" (PhD dissertation, Georgia State University, 2017), 33.

Orleans in 1948. In his memoir *Junky*, Burroughs reveals that he spent a great deal of his stay in the city getting high and hanging around French Quarter and downtown gay bars searching for drugs and sex with other men. Burroughs bluntly points out in *Junky* that, "In the French Quarter there are several queer bars so full every night the fags spill out on to the sidewalk." Despite his antiquated language, Burroughs writings suggest that the postwar growth of the New Orleans' gay community was significant.[147] Nevertheless, the French Quarter was by no means a panacea for the gay residents. Consistent with other precedents in the history of the city's moral ethos, New Orleans exhibited a schizophrenic response: it was simultaneously legally judgmental, police raids and government-sanctioned persecution did occur, and morally permissive, the longest continually-operating gay bar in America is not hidden in some alley; rather it is on a prominent corner of Bourbon Street in the Quarter.

The Morrison brothers' reign of terror against vice during the 1950s utilized legislative authority by passing ordinances granting the city expanded powers to shut down French Quarter gay bars, as well as police authority manifested in perpetual police raids during the decade. Perhaps most effective was the Morrisons' ability to make moral crusading a cause célèbre in New Orleans during this period. Whereas "Chep" Morrison's position as mayor made him the leader of the political side of this mission, as the chairman of the legislation committee of

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[147] William S. Burroughs, *Junky: The Definitive Text of "Junk"* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 60.

the Vieux Carré Property Owners and Associates, his brother Jacob became the leader for an unhappy citizenry beginning to take an increasingly active role in the city's struggle against vice. For many in the city, the presence of homosexuals in the French Quarter was indicative of larger, unrelated social ills afflicting New Orleans during the 1950s. Police corruption, organized crime, and prostitution were postwar concerns among local residents, but it was the visibility of homosexuals on city streets and the growing realization that gay people were gravitating to the city which provided locals with a tangible enemy they could point to as responsible for the city's perceived moral collapse.[148]

There were many residents without connections to New Orleans politics or police enforcement who joined the Morrisons' fight. Grounded in the belief that police corruption had fostered an environment where vice could thrive, particularly in the French Quarter, several groups were commissioned by the city council to address the issue. These citizen-led committees were given expansive investigative powers which allowed them to subpoena and interrogate those suspected of alleged criminal activity in the city as well as within the police department.[149]

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[148] Ryan Prechter, "Gay New Orleans: A History" (PhD dissertation, Georgia State University, 2017), 35-8; Caroline Olsson, "Not All That Easy: Survival Strategies in Lesbian Bar Life in New Orleans 1950-1975" (Master's Thesis, University of New Orleans, 1999).

[149] Ryan Prechter, "Gay New Orleans: A History" (PhD dissertation, Georgia State University, 2017), 35-8.

The three-member Special Citizens Investigating Committee (SCIC) was formed

by the city council in early 1951 in response to fears concerning organized crime

in the city. The press release announcing the establishment of the SCIC was a

veritable call to action for New Orleans residents, and the release urged citizens to

provide the committee with any information they may have concerning crime in

the city.[150] In particular, twelve questions were asked making clear that the SCIC

was focused on the police corruption which allowed vice to exist, and were

"urged" to provide any information about police payoffs, prostitution, and

"notorious persons." The charge of a committee, staffed by three civilians granted

investigatory powers equal to that of the police, was to destroy criminality that the

police refused to eradicate. According to Prechter, these powerful citizen activists

believed that one reason gay bars existed in the French Quarter was because police

officers did not want to arrest prominent members of society known to frequent

such bars or engaged in the so-called "uptown marriages." The SCIC used

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[150] Ryan Prechter, "Gay New Orleans: A History" (PhD dissertation, Georgia State University, 2017), 35; citing Proposal for an ordinance creating the Special Citizens Investigative Committee Box 11, Folder 4, Special Citizens Investigating Committee Papers, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans (hereafter cited as CANOLA); Press Release, July 7, 1953, Box 11, Folder 5, Special Citizens Investigating Committee Papers, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, LA; Aaron M. Kohn to Joseph L. Scheuring, September 21, 1953, Box 11, Folder 6, Special Citizens Investigating Committee Papers, CANOLA.

undercover investigators and citizen informants to tackle a problem it felt the New

Orleans Police Department was either unable or unwilling to address.[151]

The late 1950s was a particularly difficult period for the New Orleans gay

community. As the definition of what it meant to be gay had been expanding since

the end of World War II, the range of ordinances targeting homosexuals expanded

as well. A gay person becoming the target of violent attacks and police harassment

was not a new phenomenon, but these acts had traditionally taken place out of the

public eye. The 1950s marked a period in New Orleans history when hostility

toward its gay population became a uniquely public cause for many New Orleans

residents.[152]

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[151] Press Release, July 7, 1953, Box 11, Folder 5, Special Citizens Investigating Committee Papers, City Archives, New Orleans Public Library, New Orleans, LA, cited in Ryan Prechter, "Gay New Orleans: A History" (PhD dissertation, Georgia State University, 2017), 36.

[152] Perhaps the most notorious instance of anti-gay terror was the murder of Fernando Rios, a twenty-six-year old tour guide from Mexico, in New Orleans while leading a travel group. Rios happened to be at Café Lafitte in Exile and became the target of three Tulane students that had formulated a plan "to get a queer to roll." When Rios left the bar late that night, the young students followed him into the alley next to St. Louis Cathedral, and savagely beat him on the head and torso, dislocating his jaw and fracturing his skull. They left him in the dark to die on the ground. Meanwhile, his attackers bragged to fraternity brothers that they got about the forty dollars off "a queer" the previous evening.

One of the assailants turned himself in after it was reported that Rios had died. He insisted he hit Rios once because Rios had made "improper advances" toward him. In the trial, the difference between the death penalty and acquittal hinged on whether the intention was to rob Rios as opposed to responding to "improper advances" with violence. The defense's account of the evening alleged that Rios merely grabbed Farrell's arm after propositioning him, attorneys for the three young men were essentially asserting that violence in response to any form of homosexual advance was akin to self-defense.

What the Reformers did not count on was that their attempts to excise homosexuals from the French Quarter did not destroy the city's gay community; rather they strengthened it in unprecedented ways. During this postwar period of vulnerability, gay men and lesbians formed alliances necessitated by the mutual struggle against the growing antigay culture. Before the 1960s, homosexuals in New Orleans had specific locations offering varying degrees of protection in which to congregate and socialize. The Reformers forced them to redefine where gay spaces existed.

The 1960s ultimately became not a decade of dissolution for the New Orleans gay community, but a period of communion. This is perhaps best exemplified by the establishment of gay krewes for Mardi Gras. Not only did the krewes offer a form of campy expression at parade time, they also offered private settings for gay socialization throughout the year.[153]

The nascent gay community survived the attacks wrought by Morrison and others, and the sometimes vicious police harassment. The history of New Orleans, especially the

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The jury acquitted the defendants on all charges. Clayton Delery, *Out for Queer Blood: The Murder of Fernando Rios and the Failure of New Orleans Justice*, (Jefferson, NC: Exposit, 2017).

[153] Howard Philips Smith, "The Royal Krewe of Yuga and the Birth of Gay Carnival in New Orleans," *Krewe of Petronius* (blog), accessed August 2, 2019, https://www.advocate.com/books/2018/1/11/royal-krewe-yuga-and-birth-gay-carnival-new-orleans**;** Reid Mitchell, *All on a Mardi Gras Day: Episodes in the History of New Orleans Carnival* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 143. Howard Philips Smith, *Unveiling the Muse: The Lost History of Gay Carnival in New Orleans* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2017); *The Sons of Tennessee Williams*, directed by Tim Wolff (2010; New York: First Run Features, 2012)

French Quarter, during the 1940s-1960s is a story of survival. These were dangerous years to be gay in New Orleans, and this was the time George Dureau was coming up.

Born in 1930, young George Dureau was among this homosexual community in the French Quarter from the 1940s on. He would have endured both the Morrison era persecution, while also capitalizing on the libertine ways that were so much a part of New Orleans. Whatever footholds the gay and bohemian citizens had made in the French Quarter were being threatened by police raids and the rescinding of liquor licenses to bars catering to gay, lesbian and gender non-conforming patrons.[154] Compounding these attacks were attacks by neighborhood organizations such as VCPORA. Neighborhood organizations that had once been promoted by gay French Quarter residents as mechanisms to preserve the rich history of the neighborhood were now being used as anti-gay weapons. The post-World War II era was a difficult time for the gay community in New Orleans, yet the Morrison Era can be seen to have further developed and strengthened bonds within the gay community, in the contemporary sense, that continues to exist in New Orleans.

Mardi Gras "Carnival"

Even for New Orleanians, one time of year is undeniably known for its gaiety: Carnival Season. Carnival season culminates with Mardi Gras, "Fat Tuesday", that occurs the day before the Wednesday on which Catholic Lent begins. It is long-recognized that rules of

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[154] Caroline Olsson, "Not All That Easy: Survival Strategies in Lesbian Bar Life in New Orleans 1950-1975" (Master's Thesis, University of New Orleans, 1999).

behavior change during this period, most notably on Mardi Gras Day. For example, women entered saloons and openly smoked. Moreover, many participants wore masks while in costumes "in drag" as people of the opposite gender.

In 1855, the *New Orleans Daily Delta* described an impending Mardi Gras Ball as emblematic of "the gaiety of our city." [155] In 1909, Harriet Magruder, wrote that after the arrival of the grand, elegant, and fun-loving Marquis de Vaudreuil as governor in 1788, "the gay little city of New Orleans was in a whirl." [156] In 1931, historian Perry Young reportedly remarked, "the reputation of New Orleans for gaiety - and wickedness- was established at an early date." An illuminating example showcases the city's tendency for both gaiety and wickedness: "Gay New Orleans" the revue created by producer Michael Todd for the 1939-1940 World's Fair in New York. The revue's midnight performance featured two nude acts. In the first act, a carefully placed jet of flaming gas burned away the dancer's costume; in the second act the dancer was entirely nude.[157]

The importance of Mardi Gras to the gay community due its tradition of dressing opposite one's gender in relative safety cannot be understated. During carnival one could express themselves without social or legal backlash. Then as now, the Mardi Gras season might be the only time in which one could shed or challenge heteronormativity.

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[155] "Orleans Theatre," *New Orleans Daily Delta*, 18 February 1855, 2.

[156] Harriet Magruder, A History of Louisiana (New York: D. C. Heath & Co., Publishers, 1909), 109.

[157] E.J. Kahn, Jr., "The Talk of the Town, 'Showman,'" *The New Yorker*, 25 May 1940, 11.

Likewise, at carnival gay residents and visitors to the French Quarter enjoyed the social

possibilities provided by a growing number of gay-friendly bars and nightclubs.[158]

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[158] Frank Perez and Jeffrey Palmquist, *In Exile: The History and Lore Surrounding New Orleans Gay Culture and Its Oldest Gay Bar* (Hurlford, Scotland: LL-Publications, 2012). Dating from 1933, Café Lafitte in Exile is the oldest continually-operating gay bar in North America. It proudly operates on a prominent corner of Bourbon Street in the French Quarter, and has been in this location since 1953.

Chapter 3: The Empathies

Where does the mind stop and the rest of the world begin?

Andy Clark and David Chalmers[159]

The human mind is usually thought of as the workings of an individual brain enclosed within a person's skull. However, is that conception much too simplistic? Rather, one's mind and personhood appear to exist, in some fashion, beyond these physical bounds. Consider, for example, the main character Leonard Shelby in the 2000 film *Memento*, directed by Christopher Nolan. In this film Shelby, as a result of a past assault, has anterograde amnesia (the inability to form new memories) along with short-term memory loss occurring after about five minutes. Shelby is searching for the persons who attacked him and killed his wife, and he adopts a complex set of mechanisms to accommodate his disabilities. These accommodations include an intricate system of Polaroid photographs and tattoos on his body to help track information he can no longer remember. [Fig. 33]

Collectively, Shelby's photographs and his tattooed skin constitute a data storehouse, just as the brain does for an unimpaired person, they are a major part of what he knows.. These photographs and tattooed skin are elements of who he is as a person, aspects that would typically be considered to exist inside a skull; in a person's mind, such as memories, motivations and emotions. A similar, but non-fiction, scenario was explored

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[159] Andy Clark and David Chalmers, "The Extended Mind," *Analysis* 58, no. 1 (1998): 7–19.

by philosophers Andy Clark and David Chalmers in the context of an Alzheimer's patient identified as Otto. Otto always carried a spiral notebook in which he recorded his thoughts and experiences. To retrieve his memories, Otto paged through his notes. For Clark and Chalmers, Otto's simple notebook too was an extension of his self. The notebook, just as had the photos and tattoos of *Memento's* Shelby, was an extension of what the brain does for an unimpaired person. The philosophers then extrapolated from their observations to provide a definition for the human mind.[160]

Accordingly, Clark and Chalmers proposed that the human mind is normally a kind of "extended system." This system extends beyond biological bounds of a brain functioning within a skull. In an era of incessant texting, when people watch their smartphone screens at concerts rather than looking at the performers, when people cannot do math without a calculator, and do not know the names of streets they regularly traverse, the idea of "extended mind" is increasingly evident. We depend on calculators, GPS, the internet, smart phones, and computers for our "memories" and mental aids. The extended mind that encompasses spiral notebooks as well as svelte electronics, calls into question the established idea of selfhood. However, this idea of the extended self is by no means a new one; it has roots in Western aesthetics that go back for more than 100 years. That aesthetic concept is represented by the German word *einfühlung*.

In modern English, *einfühlung* has no direct translation, although at one time it did! That word was empathy. The English word "empathy" did not exist until 1908, and it was

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[160] Andy Clark and David Chalmers, "The Extended Mind," *Analysis* 58, no. 1 (1998): 7–19.

coined as a translation of *einfühlung*. *Einfühlung* is a once-prominent but recently neglected aesthetic approach for considering objects, and refers to the aesthetic activity of transferring one's own feeling self into the forms and shapes of things. *Einfühlung* incorporates both conscious and bodily engagements, and links us to other humans, as well as to animate, inanimate, built and artistic objects.

Consider, for example, how we move in synchrony with a dancer on stage or physically gesture as a pole vaulter approaches the bar. What bowler has not, at some point, leaned away from the gutter as a misdirected ball rolled toward failure? Moreover, do we not experience bodily exhilaration at a soaring peak? On a more anthropomorphic level, we immerse ourselves in the characters of stories we read, films we watch, and plays we view. These felt connections are a form of empathy.

Einfühlung involves the experience of complete dissociation from one's corporeal and personal self. One becomes the object of aesthetic experience, e.g., one *becomes* the inspiring mountain peak [Fig. 34], the frenetic zig-zag pattern [Fig. 35], or the formidably strong dam holding back a full lake [Fig. 36]. In the forgoing examples, it is as-if bodily changed into two things, beyond the aesthetic object itself. Thus, the person experiencing *einfühlung* is, respectively, both: the mountain as well as the embodiment of inspiration, the zig-zag motif and energized; and, the dam itself along with being an embodiment of both strength and/or pressure.

In contrast, social psychologist Lauren Wispé explains that (interpersonal) empathy has been described as "perspective taking," or "role taking," being oneself but observing from the perspective of the observed.[161]

Interpersonal empathy is regularly promoted as a critically important human capacity. Calls for empathy have become more urgent in our current political climate with its steep rise in hate crimes, intolerant speech, and overt racism.[162] Empathy is now a popular topic, in fields as diverse as psychology, marketing, education, health-care, literature, philosophy, business and product design.[163] Literary scholars assert that reading complex literary fiction can increase one's empathy by encouraging "readers to make inferences about characters and be sensitive to emotional nuance and

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[161] Lauren Wispé, *The Psychology of Sympathy* (New York: Plenum Press, 1991), 78-80.

[162] In 2009, empathy became a decisive political player during the confirmation debates of Supreme Court nominee Sonia Sotomayor. President Barack Obama praised empathy as a way to appreciate and understand the lives of those marginalized from social and political power. Senator Orrin Hatch countered: "What does that mean? Usually that's a code word for an activist judge." Conservative critics saw an empathy standard as a dangerous substitution of emotion for rational judgment. During her confirmation hearings, Sotomayor downplayed the role of emotion, seeming to recognize that a wholehearted embrace of empathy might jeopardize her appointment to the court. George Lakoff, "Empathy, Sotomayor, and Democracy: The Conservative Stealth Strategy," *Huffington Post*, May 30, 2009, revised May 25, 2011, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/empathy-sotomayor-and-dem_b_209406; Mark Honigsbaum, "Barack Obama and the 'Empathy Deficit,'" *The Guardian*, January 4, 2013, https://www.theguardian.com/science/2013/jan/04/barack-obama-empathy-deficit ; Gerstein, Josh, "Obama ISO 'Empathy' Shapes Debate," *Politico*, May 4, 2009, https://www.politico.com/story/2009/05/obama-iso-empathy-shapes-debate-022058; Susan Lanzoni, *Empathy: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 4-5.

[163] Susan Lanzoni, Robert Brain, and Allan Young, eds., "Varieties of Empathy in Science, Art and History," *Science in Context,* 25, no. 3 (2012).

complexity."[164] Some contend that if citizens imagine each child as one's own, gun

violence can be reduced; still others claim that empathy can foster a connectedness that

can ameliorate climate change.[165]

Physicians have looked to empathy as a vital factor in a caring and productive doctor-

patient relationship.[166] The position of detached concern, elaborated in the 1960s as the

best strategy for doctors positioning themselves vis-à-vis patients, is rejected in favor of

empathic engagement. Bioethicist Jodi Halpern argues that neither detachment nor

simple emotional resonance is helpful; rather, physicians should imaginatively engage

with the patient's story, using sophisticated emotional reasoning to gain insight into the

patient's situation. Experts in the medical humanities champion empathy as central to

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[164] Casey Kelbauth, "I Know How You're Feeling, I Read Chekhov," *New York Times*, October 3, 2011, https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/10/03/i-know-how-youre-feeling-i-read-chekhov/?partner=rss&emc=rss&mtrref=undefined&gwh=43150678615F1F7352C4D45C8B39 C8B8&gwt=pay&assetType=REGIWALL; David Comer Kidd and Emanuele Castano, "Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind," *Science* 342, no. 6156 (October 18, 2013): 377–380.

[165] See David Roberts, "Newtown: Tragedy, Empathy, and Growing Our Circle of Concern," *Grist* (blog), December 19, 2012, http://grist.org/climate-energy/newtown-tragedy-empathy-and-growing-our-circle-of-concern; Andrew C. Revkin, "Empathy as a Path to Climate (and Energy) Progress," December 20. 2012, https://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/20/empathy-as-a-path-to-climate-and-energy-progress/; Steven Wineman, "Empathy as Resistance: Adversaries Shouldn't See Trump as a Monster," *WBUR* (blog), February 22, 2017, https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2017/02/22/empathy-as-resistance-adversaries-shouldnt-see-trump-as-monster-steven-wineman?utm_source=cc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=nwsltr-17%E2%80%9302%E2%80%9324.

[166] Charon cites psychoanalyst Roy Schafer who described empathy in 1959 as giving up one's own ego and trying on the ego of another. Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 132–133.

understanding the stories of illness that patients tell.[167] The physician's use of empathy

to gain information about the patient's condition is said to improve diagnostic ability and

promote therapeutic dialogue.[168]

Ironically, interpersonal empathy makes it difficult to maintain a clear distinction

between altruism and selfishness. Accordingly, author Frans de Waal states: "There is no

good answer to the eternal question of how altruistic is altruism if motor neurons erase

the distinction between self and other, and if empathy dissolves the boundaries between

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[167] Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Charon, "Narrative Medicine: A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession, and Trust," *JAMA* 286 (October 17, 2001): 1897–1902; Ellen Singer More and Maureen A. Milligan, *The Empathic Practitioner: Empathy, Gender and Medicine* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Howard Spiro, ed., *Empathy and the Practice of Medicine: Beyond Pills and the Scalpel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Susan Lanzoni, *Empathy: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 7; Jodi Halpern, From Detached Concern to Empathy: Humanizing Medical Practice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)..

[168] Concerning empathy in a medical/scientific context, over the last 25 years, neuroscientists have explored empathy, charting putative empathy circuits in the brain. In 1992, Giacomo Rizzolatti and collaborators at the University of Parma, Italy identified a type of neuron in the prefrontal cortex of the macaque monkey that fired not only when the monkey performed an action but also, when the monkey observed a person or another monkey performing that action. Dubbing these "mirror neurons." An impressive number of studies on mirror neurons and the human mirror neuron system have been undertaken. Some neuroscientists postulate that such systems may form a neural substrate for the human behaviors of imitation, social learning, and empathy. In the interdisciplinary new field of social neuroscience, cognitive, social, and developmental psychologists, as well as philosophers, have joined spirited debates on the best ways to characterize empathy and to chart its neural underpinnings.

Giuseppe Di Pellegrino, Luciano Fadiga, Leonardo Fogassi, Vittorio Gallese, and Giacomo Rizzolatti, "Understanding Motor Events: A Neurophysiological Study," *Experimental Brain Research* 91 (1992): 176–180; Giacomo Rizzolatti, Luciano Fadiga, Vittorio Gallese, and Leonardo Fogassi, "Premotor Cortex and the Recognition of Motor Actions," *Cognitive Brain Research* 3, no. 2 (1996): 131–141.

people. If part of the other resides within us, if we feel one with the other, then improving their life automatically resonates within us." Summarizing, de Waal states "If helping is based on what we feel, or how we connect with the victim, doesn't it boil down to helping ourselves?"[169]

The interpersonal form of empathy has been so championed that it now has its detractors. Psychologist Paul Bloom warns that feeling empathy for an individual, e.g., media obsession with a young child fallen down a well, can cause one to lose sight of rational interventions, and consequently empathy can sabotage effective political and moral intervention on a broad scale.[170]

Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy*

Certainly one of the most enduring and influential interpretations of *einfühlung* with regard to art history and aesthetic experience is *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style* (in German *Abstraktion und Einfühlung: Ein Beitrag zur Stilpsychologie*) by Wilhelm Worringer.[171] In this published dissertation, Worringer calls into question the idea that the history of world art can be accounted for by an empathetic engagement (*einfühlung*) with artistic subject matter. He proposes,

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[169] Frans de Waal, *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society* (New York: Harmony Books, 2009), 115-7.

[170] Paul Bloom, *Against Empathy: The Case for Rational Compassion* (New York: Ecco, 2016).

[171] Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style,* trans. Michael Bullock, (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2014).

instead, that the course of world art can be accounted for by swings between two opposed poles: abstraction and empathy. It is important when reading this thesis in English to understand that the empathy being discussed is *einfühlung,* and not the German equivalent of inter-personal empathy, *empathie*. His rationale falsely appears overly simplistic when the understanding of empathy is the contemporary inter-personal one (corresponding to the German *empathie*), he is *not* contrasting meaningful inter-personal understanding with abstract decorative motifs, but the actual transposition of oneself into the aesthetic object of contemplation, whereupon the viewer is literally the object viewed and the feeling it provokes. Accordingly, when Worringer makes statements such as: "To enjoy aesthetically means to enjoy myself in a sensuous object diverse from myself, to empathize myself into it", he is essentially defining his interpretation of *einfühlung*.[172] Comporting with this understanding of *einfühlung* Worringer states:

> Just as the urge to empathy as a pre-assumption of aesthetic experience
> finds its gratification in the beauty of the organic, so the urge to
> abstraction finds its beauty in the life-denying inorganic, in the crystalline
> or, in general terms, in all abstract law and necessity.[173]

He proposes that rather than looking at art history from the concept of ability, that it is best looked at as a history of artistic volition; in this later approach the three factors of

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[172] Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style,* trans. Michael Bullock, (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2014), 5.

[173] Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style,* trans. Michael Bullock, (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2014), 4.

the ability-based materialist approach (utilitarian purpose, raw material, and technique) which had been previously seen as keys to the production of art, in Worringer's system predicated on "absolute artistic volition", these factors instead are negative forces "the coefficients of friction" in the creation of a final art product.[174] What Worringer proceeds to do in his dissertation is to, essentially, set forth a history of the need for art from a psychological perspective. Worringer saw this goal as involving a history of various societies' feelings about the world, which he considered to be, "the psychic state in which, at any given time, mankind found itself in relation to the cosmos, in relation to the phenomena of the external world." [175] An aspect of Worringer's reasoning that undergirds the present thesis regarding our two French Quarter artists is as follows: Worringer sees the manifestation of these psychic needs as being shown in the artwork of a given community or culture. Accordingly, the distinct history and mores of the French Quarter are relevant to an understanding of how artists in the same locale would produce art with similar characteristics. An *einfühlung* experience of the French Quarter, plausibly one shared by Bellocq and Dureau as they encountered the built world around them, is one basis for understanding the commonalities in their lives and work.

Although his concepts are highly influential, it is important to understand that Worringer's concept of *einfühlung* is his own, rather limiting, definition of the term. As

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[174] Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style,* trans. Michael Bullock, (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2014), 10.

[175] Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style,* trans. Michael Bullock, (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino Publishing, 2014), 13.

originally contemplated, one may have an *einfühlung* experience with anything, from a rock to a temple. There was no limitation as to what one may have an *einfühlung* experience with. Accordingly, there would be no limitation whatsoever to having an *einfühlung* experience with abstract subject matter.

<u>The Evolution from *Einfühlung* to *Empathie*</u>

Empathy has quite a convoluted history. In the late nineteenth century psychologists began to examine aesthetic response, in particular, the bodily engagement with form. Researchers evaluated criteria such as a spectator's muscular reactions, breath, and posture in response to aesthetic stimuli.[176] In Germany, *einfühlung* was initially defined by pioneering theorist Theodor Lipps as the projection of inner feelings into objects, feelings such as striving and movement. Literally, *einfühlung* translates as "in-feeling," and it was seen as key to all forms of aesthetic experience. In 1908, in the United States a Cornell psychologist, Edward B. Titchener, offered "empathy" as the English translation of *einfühlung*.[177] Across the Atlantic, also in 1908, psychologist James Ward at the University of Cambridge in England too suggested "empathy" to his colleagues. In

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[176] See, e.g., Susan Lanzoni, "Practicing psychology in the art gallery: Vernon Lee's aesthetics of empathy," *J Hist Behav Sci.* 45, no. 4 (Fall 2009): 330-54.

[177] Although Titchener's term was first misspelled as "enpathy" in a journal, and was overlooked.

1909 the term appeared in psychological textbooks, and by 1913 it became the generally accepted translation of *einfühlung*.[178]

Einfühlung empathy forms a kinesthetic, imaginative entry into things: painting, poetry, sculpture, modern dance, and as I argue the built environment. Initially "empathy" was defined by observable bodily reactions. In one 1939 psychology textbook, e.g., empathy was illustrated with a photograph of a coach raising his own leg while watching an athlete launch himself over a high jump bar. Within three decades we can see that at least two distinct definitions of empathy were on the scene. Yet, even during this time period additional permutations of empathy were underway.[179]

In a parallel history of the term, American psychologists, however, moved away from a focus on the inner workings of the mind in favor of behaviorist descriptions. In the 1920s, sociologists Ernest Burgess and Leonard Cottrell, students of the social psychologist George Herbert Mead, worked to "operationalize" empathy and develop testing criteria.[180] Their goal with operationalized empathy was to reliably access the life histories of their subjects in social science interviews. In 1948, psychologist Rosalind

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[178] Susan Lanzoni, "Empathy's Translations: Three Paths from *Einfühlung* into Anglo-American Psychology," in *Empathy: Epistemic Problems and Cultural-Historical Perspectives of a Cross-Disciplinary Concept*, ed. Vanessa Lux and Sigrid Weigel (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017).

[179] Edwin Boring, H. S. Langfeld, and Harry P. Weld, *Introduction to Psychology* (New York: J. Wiley and Sons, 1939), 274. See Janet Beavin Bavelas, Alex Black, Charles Lemery, and Jennifer Mullett, "Motor Mimicry as Primitive Empathy," in *Empathy and Its Development*, ed. Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 317–38.

[180] Susan Lanzoni, *Empathy: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 11.

Dymond Cartwright, developed the first experimental tests of empathy.[181] Cartwright explicitly rejected empathy's aesthetic meaning; instead she defined it as one subject's ability to predict another's response to a personality assessment. In this iteration empathy had become entirely operation-based.

By mid-century the term empathy had three distinct meanings: *einfühlung* in-feeling, biomorphic muscular positions and reactions, and Cartwright's operational definition as the accuracy of prediction of another's opinion or preference. Empathy, as a person's transformance into art forms, was traded for empathy as an ability to deliver a realistic appraisal of another person. By mid-century, empathy as aesthetic projection and empathy as interpersonal prediction were now opposed.

Empathy was introduced to popular culture after World War II. Following the War, empathy began to appear in venues such as advice columns, in the reasoning underlying advertising campaigns, and in the world of television. In the twenty-first century, empathy is so ubiquitous that it is surprising that the term remained novel into the 1950s. Because both the term and concept were so new, "empathy" was spelled in various ways and nearly always accompanied by some definition for puzzled readers.

Empathy had cachet after WWII in another way, not only did it reflect psychological expertise, but it intimated new possibilities for connection, identification, and understanding that might improve social relations of all kinds. Reader's Digest defined

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[181] Cartwright was a Cottrell student.

"empathy" in 1955 as the "ability to appreciate the other person's feelings without yourself becoming so emotionally involved that your judgment is affected." [182] Although its definitions remained numerous, empathy came to be seen as a panacea for a variety of societal challenges: it could enhance employer-employee relations, forge connections between consumers and advertisers, sell products, and mold harmonious family bonds. It carried a cachet as more specialized and scientific than sympathy, and it became a dominant and galvanizing concept. During the 1950s interpersonal empathy became so prominent that the English term was translated back into the German as *empathie,* augmenting the older *einfühlung*.[183]

Empathy also takes on architectural dimensions. Empathy is a key element in retail consumption. Empathy tropes are used not to flatter constituents on moral terms, but rather to signify alignment with a client and its business goals.

> 'Branded retail theatres' – for sneakers, electronics, cars and, especially, art – are an urban real-estate genre underwritten by the promise that the translation of a brand's strategic empathy with a target psychodemographic can be conveyed in the mood composed by critical connoisseurship. The more precise the mood, the more clearly the brand is felt to 'get it.' [184]

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[182] "How's Your Empathy?," *Reader's Digest* 66, April 1955,: 62–64.

[183] Lux discovered that the German *empathie* first appeared in the 1950s and was adopted by 1961. Vanessa Lux, "Measuring the Emotional Quality: Empathy and Sympathy in Empirical Psychology," in *Empathy: Epistemic Problems and Cultural-Historical Perspectives of a Cross-Disciplinary Concept*, ed. Vanessa Lux and Sigrid Weigel (London: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2017), 121–122.

[184] Bratten, Benjamin H., "Bad Mood: On Design an Empathy," *Architectural Design* 86, no. 6 (November 1, 2016): 96-101, at 99.

Empathy as a design strategy comes in various forms. One may explicitly perform empathy in a promotional manner (branded retail), another may obscure it from the worker/shopper (Muzak), and another may perform it for clients through promotion about how design will connect to and affect end-users (social practice). Prophesying an ever more e-delegated future, Benjamin H. Bratten notes colorfully, "Virtual-reality-as-empathy takes on a new meaning if even flâneuring the mall could be learned through job simulator applications." [185]

Thus, this hundred-year history uncovers a narrative arc: empathy was first understood as the extension of the self, or a projection of one's own implicit movements and reactions into forms, lines, and shapes; personhood was lost in the projection of self into the perceived object. However, by mid-century, empathy took on an alternative meaning, one at odds with this projective meaning along with empathy's particular and intimate connection to the arts. By the postwar era, influenced by a therapeutic and scientific ethos, empathy captured a way to understand another more objectively, on the other's own terms. In common parlance empathy ceased to be an expressive projection of the self into things, nature, or objects; it came to mean the very opposite: the reining in of the self's expressiveness to grasp another's emotions and reactions. [186] Empathy

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[185] Bratten, Benjamin H., "Bad Mood: On Design an Empathy," *Architectural Design* 86, no. 6 (November 1, 2016): 96-101, at 99.

[186] Robert Bellah speaks of an expressive individualism giving way to a postwar therapeutic ethos, which emphasized individual rights and the social virtues of "empathic communication, truth-telling and equitable negotiation." Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M.

aligned with the social virtues of egalitarianism, tied to the recognition of the inherent rights of others.[187] Over the past century art theorists, social scientists, and psychologists consistently touted the importance of empathy as a felt connection that could also transmit knowledge and value.[188] Empathy, however, remains difficult to measure and to systematize.

Despite empathy's complex evolution and changes in definition, repeated themes emerge. Regardless of definition, empathy depends on movement between the poles of similarity and difference, distance and closeness, and immersion and alienation.

Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton*, Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 127.

[187] The recent turn to neurological models of empathy demonstrates another iteration of the changing psychological landscape. It is now commonplace to translate the social phenomenon of empathy into descriptions of the firings of neurons and the lighting up of specific brain areas. In this article, low empathy skills in teens are attributed to brain development, not to parenting: Sue Shellenbarger, "Teens Are Still Developing Empathy Skills," *Wall Street Journal*, October 15, 2013, accessed September 22, 2019, https://www.wsj.com/articles/teens-are-still-developing-empathy-skills-1381876015.

[188] It is not inappropriate to think of empathy with theatrical tropes, given that taking on the role of the other is one of its many definitions. Empathy has been a central theme in drama theory, notably in German playwright Berthold Brecht's campaign against empathy as a viewer's mindless absorption in a theatrical performance. For instance concerning projected text during a production, he stated, "they do not set out to help the spectator but to block him; they prevent his complete empathy, interrupt his being automatically carried away." He denigrated unconscious empathic identification with actors on the stage as politically dangerous, and instead cultivated alienation and critical response in the audience. He sought to divide the audience rather than to elicit a collective response. Psychologists have nonetheless implicitly and explicitly relied on theatrical models and metaphors to describe the workings of empathy.

Bertolt Brecht, "Indirect Impact of the Epic Theatre (Extracts from the Notes to Die Mutter)," in *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic,* ed. John Willet (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 57–62.

Empathy marks a relation between self and other (animate and inanimate) that draws borders but also builds connections. Empathic practices involve modifications of the self-in-relation-to, often requiring a shift or change in the self, an intersubjectivity. It is useful to revisit empathy as a process involving art, imagination and projection, namely to consider empathy as it was first developed over a hundred years ago, as *einfühlung*.

Because *einfühlung* entails the object-embodied emotional or kinesthetic aspect of rational thought, it has tended to be marginalized in scientific studies for many decades.[189] This marginalization does not undercut the legitimacy of the responses we experience upon observation of objects and things. It is this sense of empathy, its *einfühlung* sense, which is relevant here. *Einfühlung* helps account for the commonalities came to exist between the productions of French Quarter New Orleanians E.J. Bellocq and George Dureau.

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[189] Arnold Buchheimer, "The Development of Ideas about Empathy," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 10, no. 1 (1963): 61-9; Gerald Gladstein, "The Historical Roots of Contemporary Empathy Research," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 20 (1984): 38–59; Lauren Wispé, "History of the Concept of Empathy," in *Empathy and Its Development*, ed. Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 17–37.

Shotgun's fingers, long as bananas, thick as dill pickles, pound the keys, and his foot, pounding the floor, shakes the cafe. Shotgun! The biggest show in town! Can't sing worth a damn, but man, can he rattle that piano-listen: *She's cool in the summer and warm in the fall, she's a four-season mama and that ain't all ...* There he goes, his fat mouth yawning like a crocodile's, his wicked red tongue tasting the tune, loving it, making love to it; jelly, Shotgun, jelly-jelly-jelly. Look at him laugh, that black, crazy face all scarred with bullet-shot, all glistening with sweat. Is there any human vice he doesn't know about? A shame, though ... Hardly any white folks ever see Shotgun, for this is a Negro cafe. Last year's dusty Christmas decorations color the peeling arsenic walls; orange-green-purple strips of fluted paper, dangling from naked light bulbs, flutter in the wind of a tired fan; the proprietor, a handsome quadroon with hooded milk-blue eyes, leans over the bar, squalling, "Look here, what you think this is, some kinda charity? Get up that two-bits, nigger, and mighty quick."

And tonight is Saturday. The room floats in cigarette smoke and Saturday-night perfume. All the little greasy wood tables have double rings of chairs, and everyone knows everyone, and for a moment the world is this room, this dark, jazzy, terrible room; our heartbeat is Shotgun's stamping foot, every joyous element of our lives is focused in the shine of his malicious eyes. *I want a big fat mama, yes!*

<div align="right">Truman Capote, New Orleans, 1946 [190]</div>

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[190] Capote, Truman, "New Orleans," in *Portraits and Observations: The Essays of Truman Capote* (New York: Random House, 2007), 8-9.

Capote was born in New Orleans, and spent his early childhood there. He moved back to the city in 1945, when he was 21, and regularly returned to the city throughout his life, as he considered it his hometown. Blake Pontchartrain, "I heard that Truman Capote lived in New Orleans. What Did He Do Here and Where Did He Hang Out?", *Gambit* (blog), Jun 2, 2014, https://www.theadvocate.com/gambit/new_orleans/news/blake_pontchartrain/article_90b13a12-3193-5a3a-a306-e04f411a0758.html.

Chapter 4: The Moods of *Stimmung*

Einfühlung is not the only German concept useful in thinking about the social and creative milieu that envelops a location like the French Quarter. Another German concept not unrelated to *einfühlung* is *stimmung*. Moritz Geiger in "*Zum Problem der Stimmungseinfühlung*" [On the problem of Empathetic *Stimmung*] attempts to identify the inter-related phenomena of *einfühlung* and *stimmung*. In Geiger's work, this research interest in psychological aesthetics, which includes key works such as Theodor Lipps' *Grundlegung der Ästhetik* [Aesthetic Foundations] (1903/1906) and Johannes Volkelt's *System der Ästhetik* [The Aesthetic System] (1905-1914). Geiger studied with Lipps, and in *On the Problem of Empathetic Stimmung* he takes up the central concept of Lipps's aesthetics, *einfühlung*, and its suggestion that aspects of one's psyche are frequently projected into objects as we encounter the world. Aesthetic pleasure is the psyche taking pleasure in itself, and aesthetic values and forms are distinguished by the respective psychic values that they embody. Alongside dynamic values and personality values, other psychic states -for example *stimmungen*- can also be empathized into objects. And this designates the point at which Geiger starts his analysis into *stimmung*.

It is often acknowledged that no single word in any other European language encompasses the range of meanings covered by the German word *stimmung*. In English, the concepts of mood, atmosphere and harmony are the closest approximations, although none of them capture all of *stimmung's* meanings.

Stimmung differs in at least three interesting ways from its English counterparts, mood or atmosphere:[191]

First, *stimmung* refers not only to what is called mood in English, which is typically transitory and not a very reliable take on the world, but also to longer-lasting and more trustworthy affective attitudes. These existential states may be termed "enduring moods" (for lack of a better word). A comparison to the English 'mood' is illuminating. Etymologically, mood is related to the German '*Mut*', which can also denote *stimmungen* (e.g. '*schwermut*' [depression], '*wehmut*' [melancholia]), but *mut* refers more strongly to the subject's interiority than does *stimmung*. Nevertheless, mood can be used in objective (the mood of a landscape) as well as subjective (my mood) contexts. Absent entirely, however, is the dimension of music, which is encompassed in the German *stimmung*.

Second, *stimmung* does not only refer to moods as psychological states of individual human beings, but also to atmospheres, both collective human ones, such as mass panic, and nonhuman ones, such as the melancholy of landscapes or cities.

Third, *stimmung* employs a musical metaphor, the metaphor of a musical instrument tuned. *Stimmung* refers both to the act of tuning and the state of being tuned. Thus, it stands in the tradition of the ancient Greek idea of world harmony or *musica mundana*, to which the good human subject is attuned.

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[191] Angelika Krebs, "*Stimmung*: From Mood to Atmosphere," *Philosophia* 45 (2017).

Discussing mood in the built environment architect Juhani Pallasmaa notes that "studies on vision have been primarily interested in focused perception and static gaze." Pallasmaa's comment does reflect a recurrent issue when evaluating a neighborhood or community such as the French Quarter. As with *einfühlung*, *stimmung's* definition encompasses engagement with routine environmental things, yet the scholarship tends to focus on analysis of specific attractive things, rather than a built environment on a neighborhood level. Pallasmaa proceeds to discuss mood in a way that corresponds to *stimmung*, stating: "The fundamental experience of being embraced by space necessarily calls for diffuse and peripheral perception in motion. It is this omnidirectional, multisensory, embodied and emotive encounter with space and place that makes us insiders and participants."[192] Further, Pallasmaa notes that we gaze intentionally at objects and events, whereas atmospheres (think *stimmung*) come to us "omnidirectionally," similar to acoustic and olfactory sensations. In the same way that music can imbue a space or social situation with a particular mood, the ambience of a landscape, townscape or interior space can project similar integrating and encompassing feelings. Pallasmaa suggests that the atmospheric sense could be named our sixth sense, and it is likely to be existentially our most important sense! Without using the terms, but integrating concepts of *einfühlung* and *stimmung*, Pallasmaa states,

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[192] Pallasmaa, Juhani, "The Sixth Sense: The Meaning of Atmosphere and Mood," *Architectural Design* 86, no. 6 (November/December 2016): 126-33, at 129.

"Simply, we do not stop at our skin; we extend our bodily self by means of our senses and our technological and constructed extensions."[193]

"Life imitates art far more than art imitates life". So wrote Oscar Wilde in *The Decay of Lying,* and this principle works to give us entry to a body of *stimmung* literature, one that helps shed light on the working of *stimmung* in particular places and contexts.[194] This literature comes from cinema studies, where *stimmung* has received attention. Robert Sinnerbrink states in *Stimmung: Exploring the Aesthetics of Mood* that: "It is not the narrative content *per se* but rather the aesthetic dimensions of the image – its giving of life and expression to human figures, spaces and material things – that are essential to the experience of *stimmung*."[195]

The aesthetics of real-world things too give "life and expression to human figures, spaces and material things." Consistent with this assertion, early film scholar Béla Balázs indicates that *stimmung* is "the soul of every art", the "air and the aroma that pervade every work of art, and that lend distinctiveness to a medium and a world." In art and life, mood provides a focusing of affective attunement that is necessary for the successful convergence of participants' emotional responses to scenes or narratives.

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[193] In fact, Pallasmaa considers the appreciation of mood to be the sixth sense for humans. Juhani Pallasmaa, "The Sixth Sense: The Meaning of Atmosphere and Mood," *Architectural Design* 86, no. 6 (November/December 2016): 130.

[194] Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying," in *Intentions*, ed., Geoffrey Sauer (New York: Brentano, [1889] 1905, 1998), 9.

[195] Robert Sinnerbrink, "*Stimmung*: Exploring the Aesthetics of Mood," *Screen* 53.2 (Summer 2012):150.

With this, the aesthetic choices of Bellocq and Dureau can be seen as catalyzed or informed by the mood of their French Quarter environment. In accordance with the approach of scholar Greg M. Smith, mood is an orienting tendency towards discrete emotional states, one that provides a "consistency of expectation" towards emotional stimuli and primes us to select details or cues that are emotionally salient while filtering out or ignoring those that are emotionally irrelevant.[196] In specific geographic environments, as in film, people can show a remarkable degree of emotional convergence, regardless of background, psychological disposition critical faculties and specific taste. How so? Sinnerbrink characterizes Smith's argument as being that film narrative works to achieve emotional engagement – and explain emotional convergence – by the cueing and sustaining of moods: diffuse yet extended non-intentional affective states, which dispose us towards having the kind of emotional responses invited by the narrative. Whereas a director, cinematographer and screenwriter literally construct invitations to moods, they can only hope for the success at achieving a mood as rich and distinctive as a place like the French Quarter, a focused, and little-changed historic environment that leads to states of mood convergence for the people present.

Moods are elicited by cues, music, visuals, emotions, stereotypical events, but also more extreme stimuli such as such as threats, dangers, and sexual stimuli. The French Quarter involves each of these in good measure. Mood contributes to a built environment through a variety of complex cues that nevertheless tend to influence people in similar

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[196] Greg M. Smith, *Film Structure and the Emotion System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

ways. Recurrence is a key aspect of sustained moods, colors, visual or musical motifs;

gestures, expressions and fashion all contribute. Moods give context to our world; they

are part and parcel of how the world is disclosed to us, and as such they can be shared.

Mood serves to focus affective attunement. Accordingly, mood is a baseline attunement,

an "expressive way of revealing time and meaning, as well as affectively charged

aspects of a (fictional) world." (interlineation added)[197]

Moods function in cinematic narrative in a variety of ways. Sinnerbrink sets forth

several types of mood that can function to advance or affect cinematic experience. These

are disclosive mood, episodic mood, transitional mood, and enveloping mood. The most

basic mood is *disclosive mood*, 'scene-setting' that opens up a film's fictional world.

Disclosive mood reveals a cinematic world, and the grounding that pervades the film; it

attunes us to the various tonal qualities of the narrative, its characters, its generic

aspects, and so on. In addition, mood plays an essential role in the composition,

emotional dynamics and dramatic tempo of narrative film. Like musical composition,

film narrative contains 'movements' that develop a theme, introduce variations and

recapitulate motifs (images, objects, gestures, visual figures or musical themes), thus

providing structure and shape while also modulating mood overall; Sinnerbrink refers to

this as *episodic mood*. Episodic moods are repeated in a recurring manner, in order to

replenish or sustain particular moods. In contrast, *transitional moods* are explicit

interludes that interrupt the main narrative development, varying the affective tenor or

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[197] Robert Sinnerbrink, "*Stimmung*: Exploring the Aesthetics of Mood," *Screen* 53.2 (Summer 2012): 155-6.

emotional dynamics in preparation for a different narrative sequence or dramatic development to follow. Lastly, some filmmakers utilize autonomous or enveloping moods. These are sequences that are no longer subordinated to setting up a fictional world, or sustaining or modulating emotionally relevant moods. Enveloping moods envelop and transfigure narrative meaning; this cinematic *stimmung* overrides conventional plot. With enveloping moods, mood-cueing is no longer a background feature guiding our engagement with characters, but a quasi-independent element within the perceived world. With enveloping mood, mood becomes autonomous, taking on a primary rather than a supporting role.[198] The French Quarter provides an enveloping mood.

A cinematic artist that often makes use of the enveloping mood is David Lynch. In the Quarter, as in prototypical Lynch films such as *Blue Velvet*, *Lost Highway*, and *Mulholland Drive* enveloping moods permeate, the mood envelops and transfigures meaning. In Lynch's films enveloping moods saturate the goings-on; mood itself is part of the story. The same can be said of the French Quarter. Interestingly the characteristic of Lynch's films that Sinnerbrink uses to exemplify the development of enveloping mood is also a well-known feature of the French Quarter: the performance interlude.

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[198] Robert Sinnerbrink, "*Stimmung*: Exploring the Aesthetics of Mood," *Screen* 53.2 (Summer 2012):156-62.

Closing

An objective here has been to explore how one might consider the bohemian, relatively tolerant culture of New Orleans, as to how it might both foster creative, unconventional thought, while also being an environment that facilitates and sustains artists as they pursue work outside the mainstream. Looking at this community through the lens of *einfühlung* and *stimmung* provides a useful paradigm for considering the role of place and environment in the creative process. This paradigm is useful not only for the French Quarter, but for other stimulating milieus as well.

From its colonial beginnings, New Orleans inherited a complicated set of attitudes towards sin and vice. Three factors played important roles in establishing New Orleans' unique set of values: the Louisiana colony's form of government and legal regulation, its religious teachings, as well as its inherited cultural norms, many of which came from France. These factors commingled in the frontier conditions of colonial Louisiana and led, in particular, to New Orleans' libertine attitudes towards indulgence and sexuality. The combination of French mores and frontier conditions yielded a *laissez-faire* attitude towards matters of sexuality, including typical heteronormative constraints. Following its colonial period, the sexual institutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries preserved and reified those values. These conditions facilitated the development of three New Orleans communities: a culture of sex work and a community of sex workers, male and female; the city's bohemian and quirky artistic community; and, one of the earliest and largest gay communities in the Deep South. The two artists considered here, E.J. Bellocq and George Dureau, were each

born and lived their lives in New Orleans. Each lived and worked in the French Quarter. Although less is known about Bellocq's life, it is clear that both he and Dureau were immersed in the Quarter's bohemian creative community, and at least Dureau was part of the neighborhood's homosexual community. Living and working there, it is reasonable to believe that each artist engaged with certain aspects of the historic French Quarter. We have no way of knowing if either artist had an *einfühlung* experience with some aspect of their neighborhood, but if they had it could certainly account for the respective ground-breaking nature of their work. The *stimmung* of the French Quarter, its mood, atmosphere and harmonies, comes through in each artist's work, most notably in their shared sense of acceptance.

Collectively, the photographic work of Bellocq and Dureau, although stylistically distinct, shares a number of core attributes. Two New Orleans communities are reflected in this work: acceptance of a sex industry and an acknowledgement of the existence of sex workers (in both portfolios, especially Bellocq's), and the prominence of homosocial relationships and overt presence of a homosexual community (Dureau's work). Each artist integrated persons from their neighborhood into their work. The two images that first triggered my interest in Dureau and Bellocq, Figure 2 and Figure 4, exemplify several key features of the New Orleans area, as well as a number of characteristics shared by the work of these artists.

Starting with the older of the two images [Fig. 4], this Bellocq photograph was taken around 1912 at the artist's studio in the French Quarter or at the subject's

place of work in Storyville. This image is a full figure portrait of a woman that we have been told was a Storyville prostitute. The subject's positioning within the frame is unremarkable, as is the setting. She is centered in the frame before a mundane wall with a door. Her smooth dark hair is up in an understated style, and her head is canted to her right. She looks directly at the viewer. Her facial expression is enigmatic, just slightly more serious than the *Mona Lisa* smile. She holds her hands behind her back, which draws attention to her small waist and relatively wide hips. Her feet are together, with the right slightly forward. Her dark shoes nearly match her dark stockings that reach nearly to her mid-thigh. There are no "naughty bits" exposed.

A couple of things struck me upon first viewing this image: Her curvy figure and wide hips, and her sense of body positivity of comfort in her own skin. Nothing about the pose evokes shame; she looks relaxed and comfortable. In the twenty-first century, her attire is almost street-worthy. At a beach today, this would be conservative. If her stockings were tights, she is essentially dressed like a modern day yoga-panted mall-goer. There is a key exception. To me she looks quite lovely, but her body type does not fit the modern Western concept of female beauty. Beauty standards have evolved in America since I first encountered this image in the early 2000s; the beauty of curvy or thick women is now more appreciated than before. Nevertheless, this sense of positivity still strikes me about this image. An actual woman is seen in Figure 4, she appears comfortable, engaging with the viewer, the woman is neither a stereotype nor an object.

The more recent of the two images, *B.J. Robinson*, 1983, [Fig. 2], introduced me to the work of Dureau. As with the Bellocq image, this too is an image of a local from the neighborhood. It is also a full figure studio portrait of the subject. Robinson's figure is even further outside contemporary ideas of beauty than Bellocq's subject in Figure 4. Yet Robinson too looks good. He is positioned on a cloth-covered bench or table. Almost all the content of the image is in one-half of the frame. If one were to draw a line from the upper left corner to the lower wright, almost all of the information is in the lower left portion of the frame. Robinson lacks legs, yet he is standing. He stands on his hands; his right hand is positioned perpendicular to the viewer, with his fingers pointing to his left, his left hand is behind the right and points in the opposite direction. The pose is flattering, it accentuates his shoulders and strong arms, he appears to be a person with poise. Just like Bellocq's subject, Robinson is looking directly at the viewer. He is shirtless, and his shoulder-length hair is carefully parted in the middle. Two notable signifiers in the photograph, the starry flag worn as garment, and the pendant which is catching the light, together evoked a sense of war-related injury, but Robinson's physique is not the result of trauma, he was born this way. Robinson appears to us as a real person, neither an object nor a freak. Robinson is a thinking, feeling human being. Dureau likened his photographic style as one of directing, and telling a story. We may not know Robinson's actual story, but in the one constructed by Dureau, Robinson's disability is secondary to his humanity.

These two images each include a representative of an ostracized category of people, a prostitute and a disabled man who spent a lot of time on the street. However, prostitute and disabled are labels, objectifications. These are not pictures of objects, of types, but images of real folks. Each subject looks directly at us, and we at them. They are both posed in a flattering way, and each subject looks comfortable and at-ease. If anyone is uncomfortable, it is a viewer.[199]

Worringer's approach to *einfühlung*, whereby the artistic production of a place, is a reflection of that culture's world view is exemplified by the similar qualities in Bellocq's and Dureau's work. The three core aspects of *stimmung* a subjective and collective social attitude, an objective and pronounced atmosphere and climate, along with a distinct affinity for the musical, are all uniquely possessed by New Orleans, especially the French Quarter. To wit, the French Quarter is a real-world embodiment of Sinnerbrink's enveloping mood, where the mood of the place is itself a key player in the unfolding narratives (comedic, sensual or dramatic), going on there. These principles (*einfühlung*, *stimmung*, enveloping mood) do not function solely for the French Quarter. The concepts utilized in the evaluation here provide a meaningful approach for analyzing the work of other artists and places.

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[199] According to Davis. Dureau takes disadvantage and sends it back to its source - those who think in such terms, in other words, all of rest of us confident of body and privileged. Melody D. Davis," Freak Flag: Humour and the Photography of George Dureau," *Paragraph*, 26, nos. 1-2 (2003), 105.

New Orleanian Lillian Hellman's quote from which the name of this essay was taken,

"Seeing and Then Seeing Again," was written as she revisited events from her life. Here,

however, the ones doing the seeing are Bellocq and Dureau. These two men saw and

engaged with a nearly identical milieu, and their output reflects that place. This may well

be accounted for by considering the principles of aesthetic empathy (*einfühlung*) or the

unique mood and atmosphere of their place (*stimmung*), the French Quarter. First

Bellocq saw, and then Dureau saw again, and each has produced a ground-breaking and

engaging body of photographic work.

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The Figures:
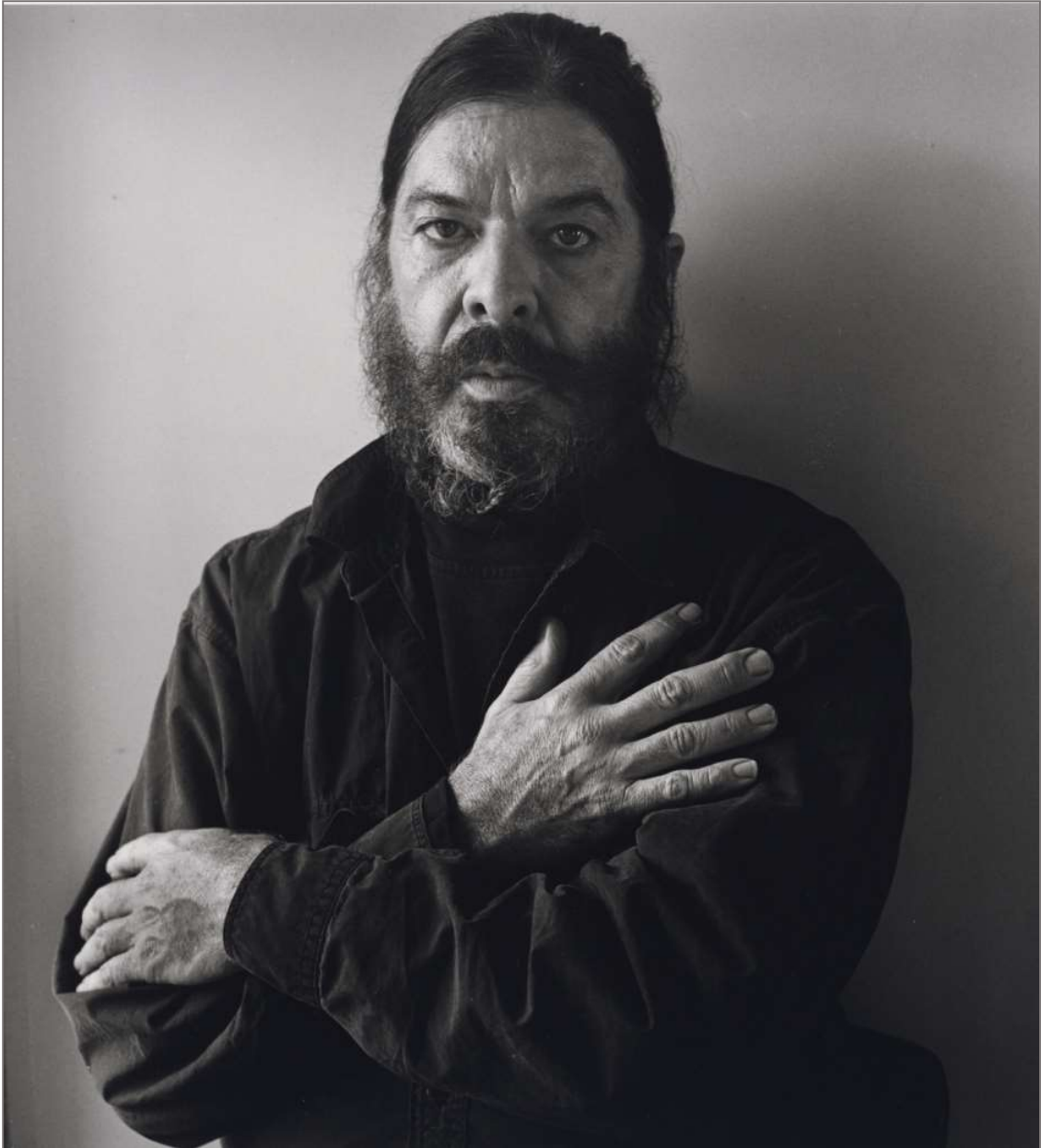
Fig. 1: *George Dureau* (approximate age 80), photographer unknown.
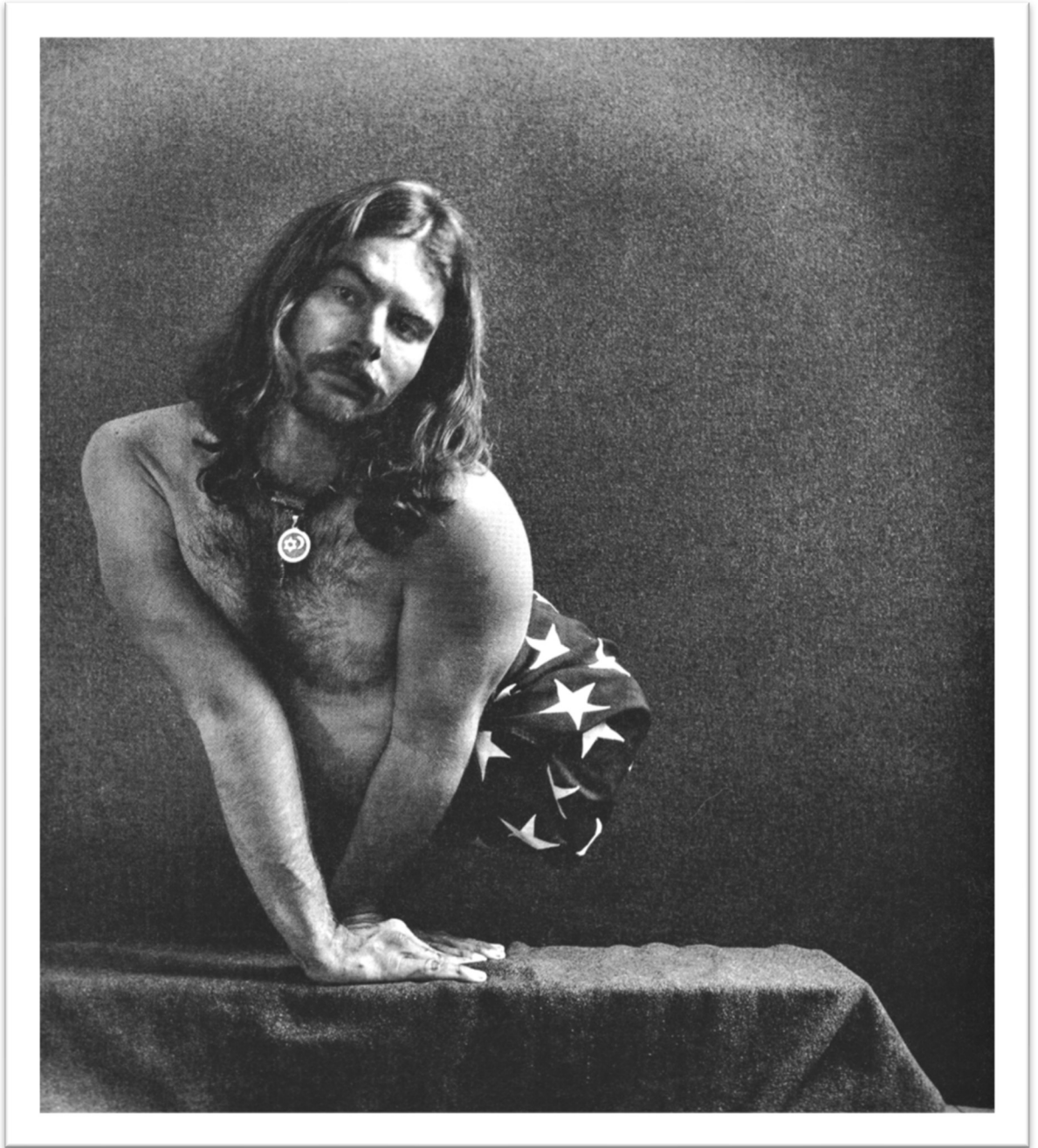
Fig. 2: *B.J. Robinson*, photograph by George Dureau, 1983 (image slightly cropped).

Fig. 3: E.J. Bellocq, image courtesy Tulane Special Collections.

Fig. 4: Untitled "standing camisole woman," photograph by E.J. Bellocq, © Lee Friedlander.

Fig. 5: Map of New Orleans French Quarter and Storyville neighborhoods.

a)

b)
Fig. 6 a-b: Dureau's Studio, photographs ©Tina Freeman.

Fig. 7: *Ernest Beasley*, photograph by George Dureau, 1981.
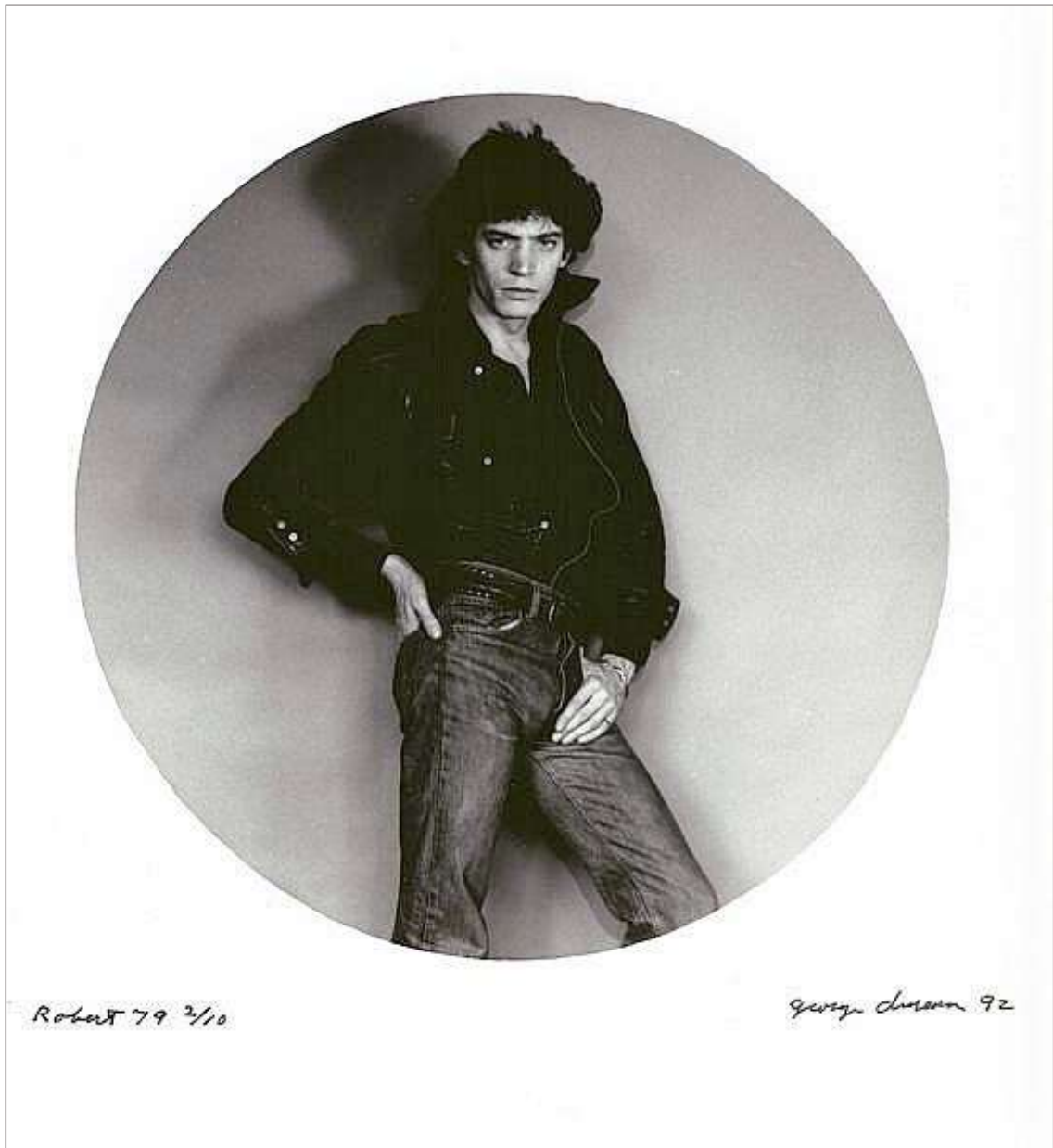
Figure 8: *Robert (Mapplethorpe) 79*, photograph by George Dureau, 1979, printed 1992.

Fig. 9: *Albert with PeeWee*, photograph by George Dureau, n.d.

Fig. 10: *Raymond Maxwell Hall*, photograph by George Dureau, 1979.

Fig 11: *(Otis) Battiste*, photograph by George Dureau, 1989.

Fig 12: *Dave Kopay*, photograph by George Dureau, 1979.
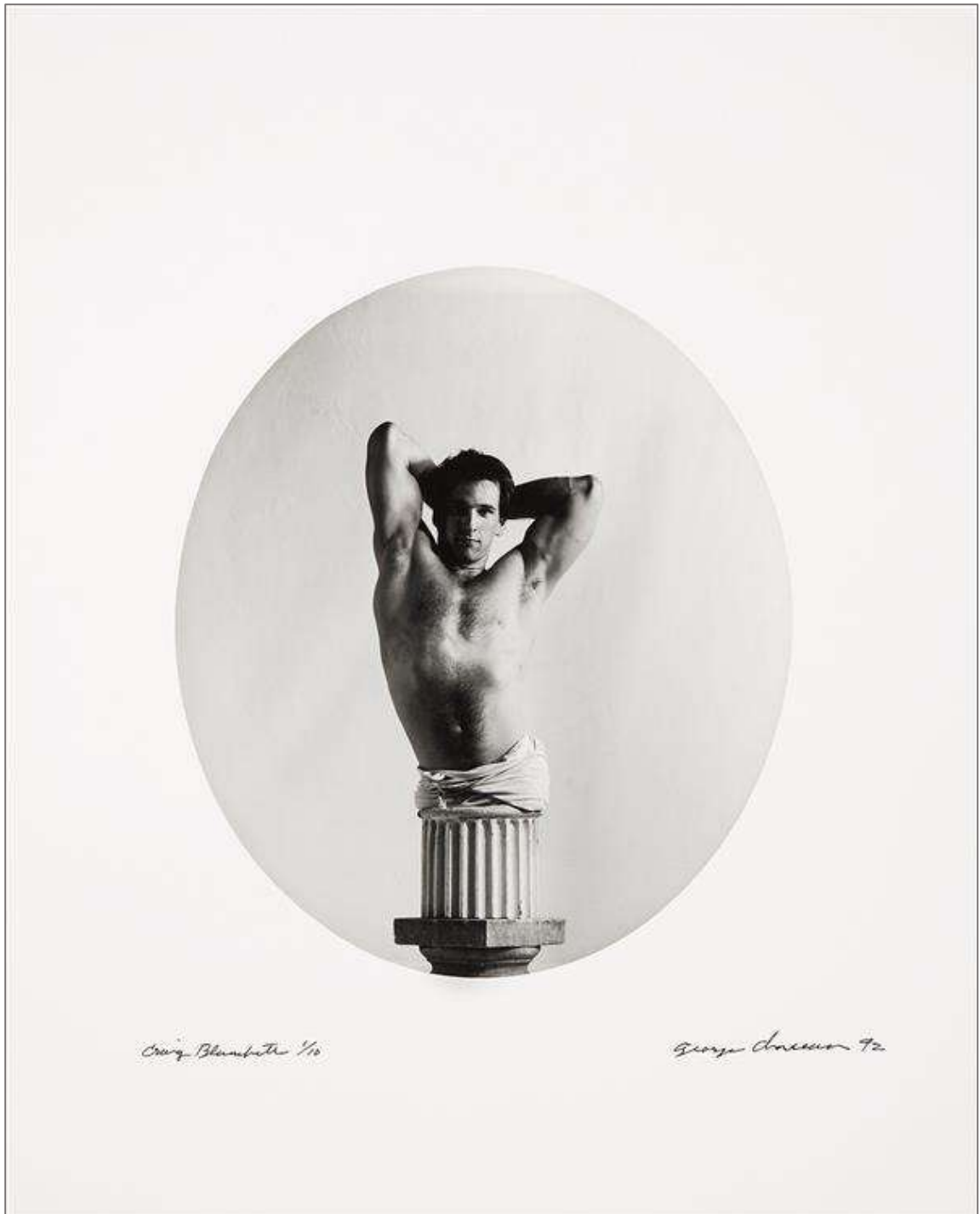
Fig. 13: *Craig Blanchette*, photograph by George Dureau, n.d., printed 1992.

Fig. 14: Untitled (Brian Reeves), photograph by George Dureau, n.d.
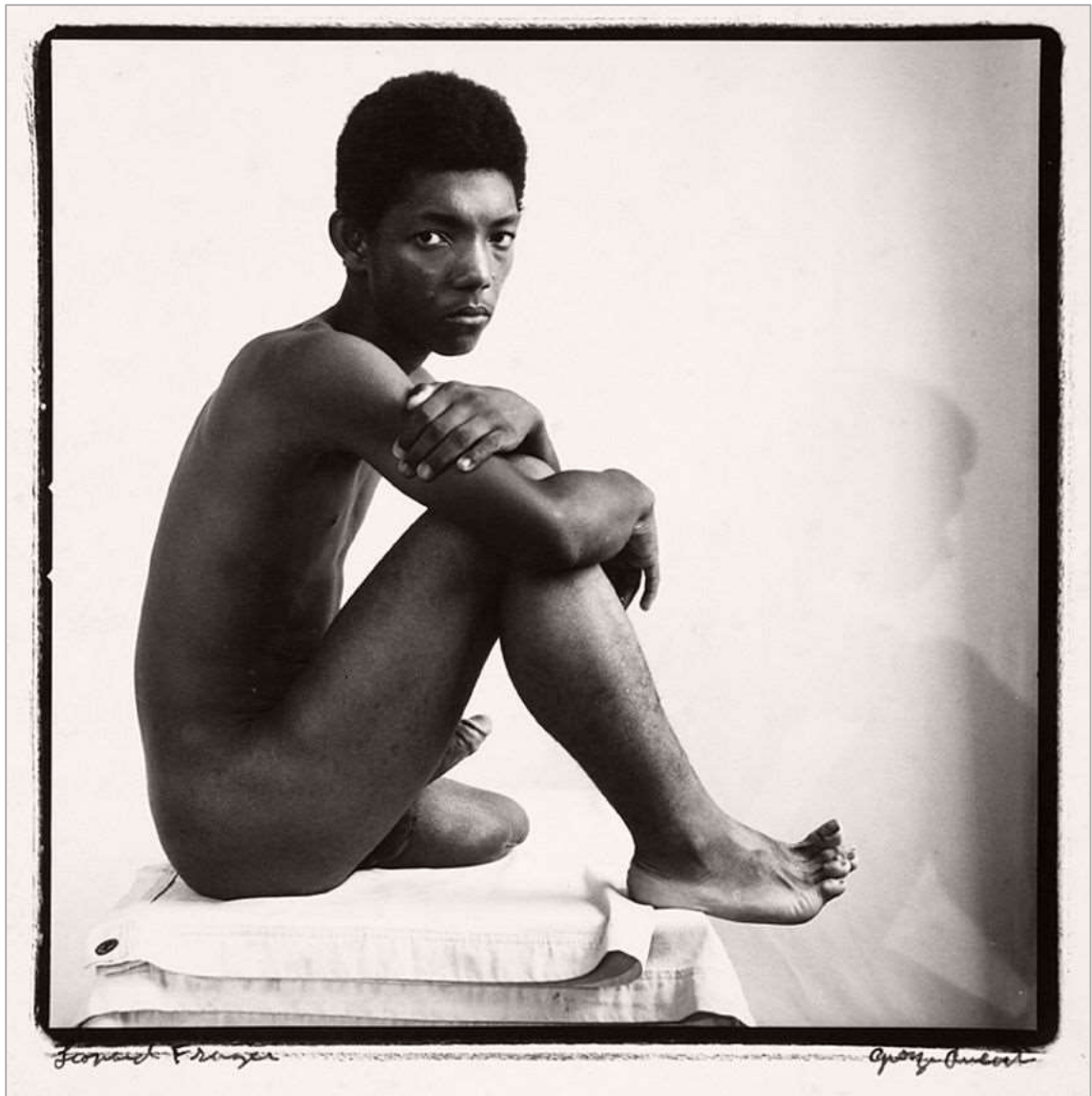
Fig. 15: *Leonard Frazer*, photograph by George Dureau, n.d.

Fig. 16: *Untitled (John Slate)*, photograph by George Dureau, 1983.

Fig. 17: *Troy Joshua Brown*, photograph by George Dureau, 1983.
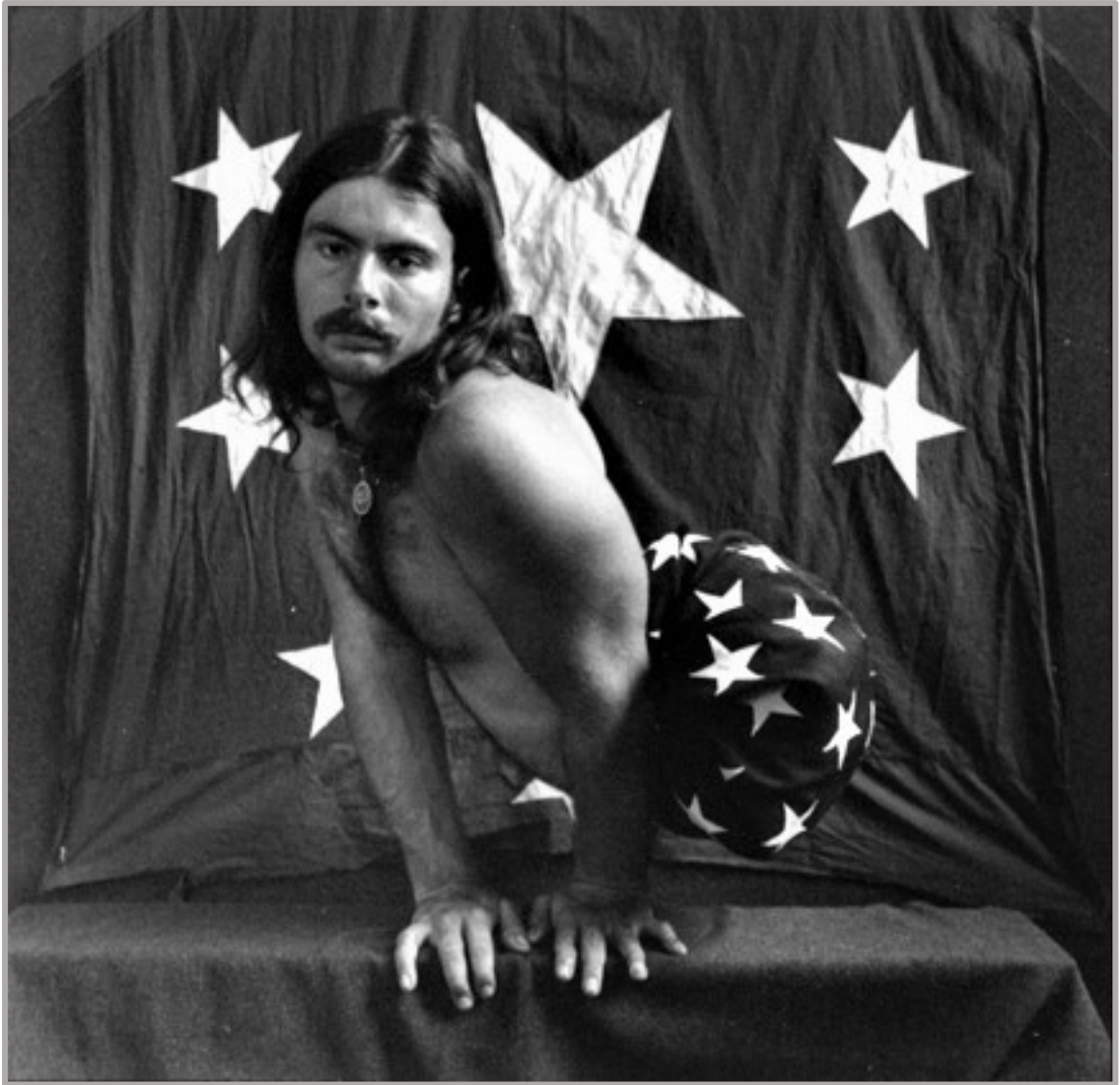
Fig. 18: Untitled (B.J. Robinson), photograph by George Dureau, n.d., aprx. 1983 (image slightly cropped).

Fig. 19: Untitled, (B.J. Robinson), photograph by George Dureau, n.d., aprx. 1993.

Fig. 20: Untitled (striped tights), photograph by E.J. Bellocq, aprx. 1912, © Lee Friedlander.

Fig. 21: Untitled (woman with black dog), photograph by E.J. Bellocq, aprx. 1912, © Lee Friedlander.

Fig. 22: Untitled (masked woman on chaise), photograph by E.J. Bellocq, aprx. 1912, © Lee Friedlander.

Fig. 23: Untitled (smiling woman in chair), photograph by E.J. Bellocq, aprx. 1912, © Lee Friedlander.

Fig. 24: Untitled (sickbed scene), photograph by E.J. Bellocq, aprx. 1912, © Lee Friedlander.

Fig. 25: Untitled (seated in body stocking), photograph by E.J. Bellocq, aprx. 1912, © Lee Friedlander .

Fig. 26: Untitled (standing in body stocking scratched), photograph by E.J. Bellocq, aprx. 1912, © Lee Friedlander .

a)

b)

c)

d)

Figs. 27a-d: Installation shots of *E.J Bellocq: Storyville Portraits*, James Mathews, ©MOMA.

Fig. 28: Dr. George Roeling Home, photograph by E.J. Bellocq.

Fig. 29: Mrs. John F. R Tobin (Provosty) with John W. Tobin II, photograph by E.J. Bellocq.

Fig. 30: Untitled (crib girl), photograph by E.J. Bellocq, aprx. 1912, © Lee Friedlander.

Fig. 31: Untitled (Bellocq's Desk), photograph by E.J. Bellocq, aprx. 1912, © Lee Friedlander .

INTRODUCTION.

What is the good of living if you can't have a good time, or as the proverb goes. Live while you have a chance. You will be dead a long time.

Now the only way to get next to all the good things is to pay particular attention to what this PHAMPLET has to say.

Don't be misguided by tonts or gold brick masons, but look for what ever you desire in this book.

This little book contains all the sporting houses in the tenderloin district, both Storyville and Anderson County.

Now to know you are in Storyville, we will give you the boundry, which is as follows:

N. Basin to N. Robertson, Customhouse to St. Louis. This is Storyville.

Anderson County (old tenderloin) is:

Customhouse street to St. Peter, Dauphine to Rampart streets.

The names in this book constitute the Tenderloin "400", one of the grandest sporting societies in existance to-day, including the popular ASTORIA and ARLINGTON.

ATTENTION.

To tell a landlady from a boarder, their names have been printed in Capital Letters.

* The star on the side of a landlady's name indicates a first class house, where the finest of women and nothing but wine is sold.

The letter "B" on the side of a name indicates a house where beer is sold.

The "No. 69" is the sign of French house.

The Jew will be known by a "J."

Wishing you a good time while making your rounds,   I remain yours

BILLY NEWS.

Fig. 32: Introduction to Blue Book No. 1, note references to (and geographic limitations of) both Storyville as well as "Anderson County" located in the French Quarter.

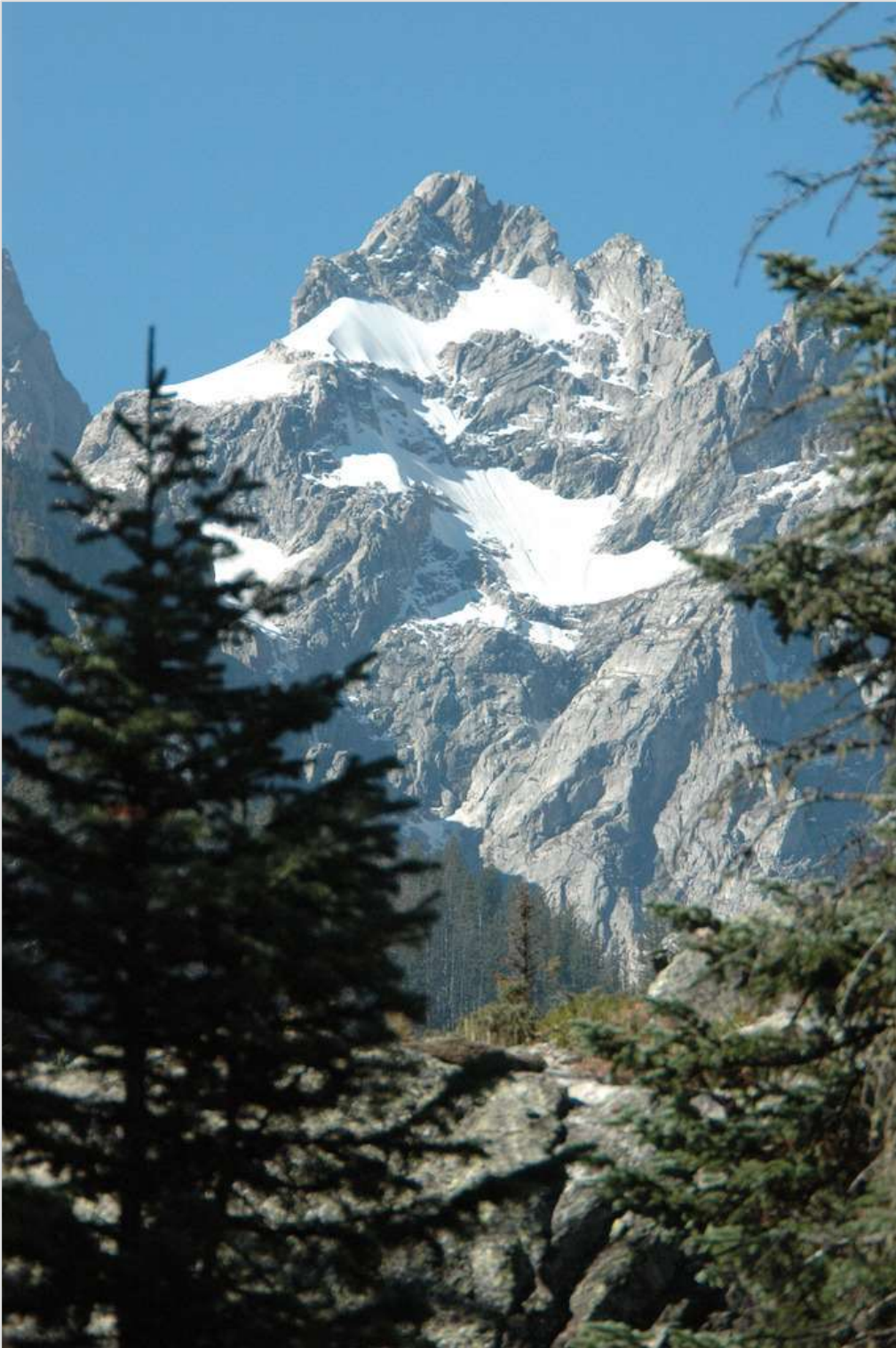Fig. 33: Actor Guy Pearce as the character Shelby in *Memento,* © Newmarket Films (2001) (USA).

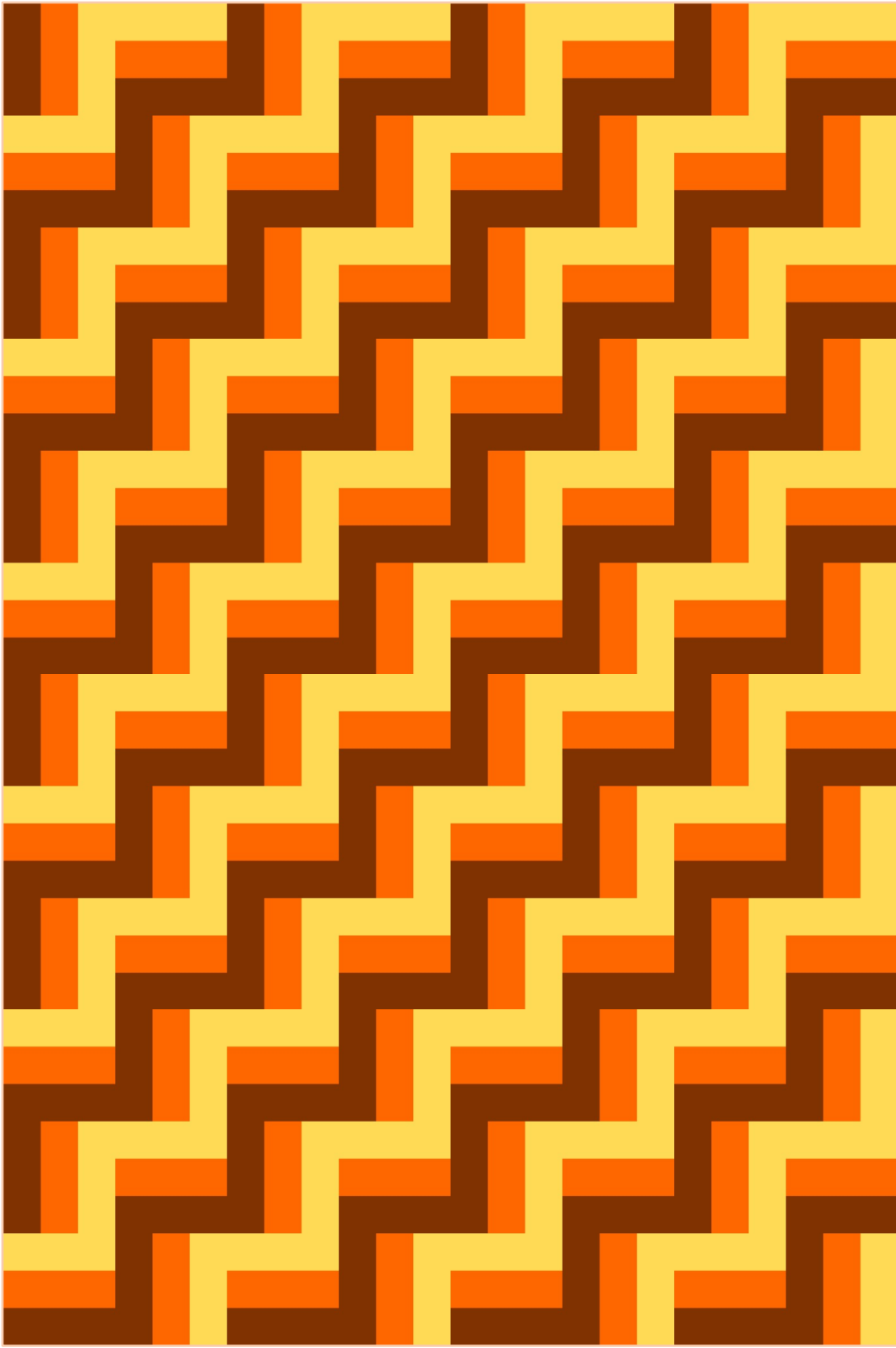Fig. 34: An ascendant peak (*Grand Tetons*, ©Keith Hayes)
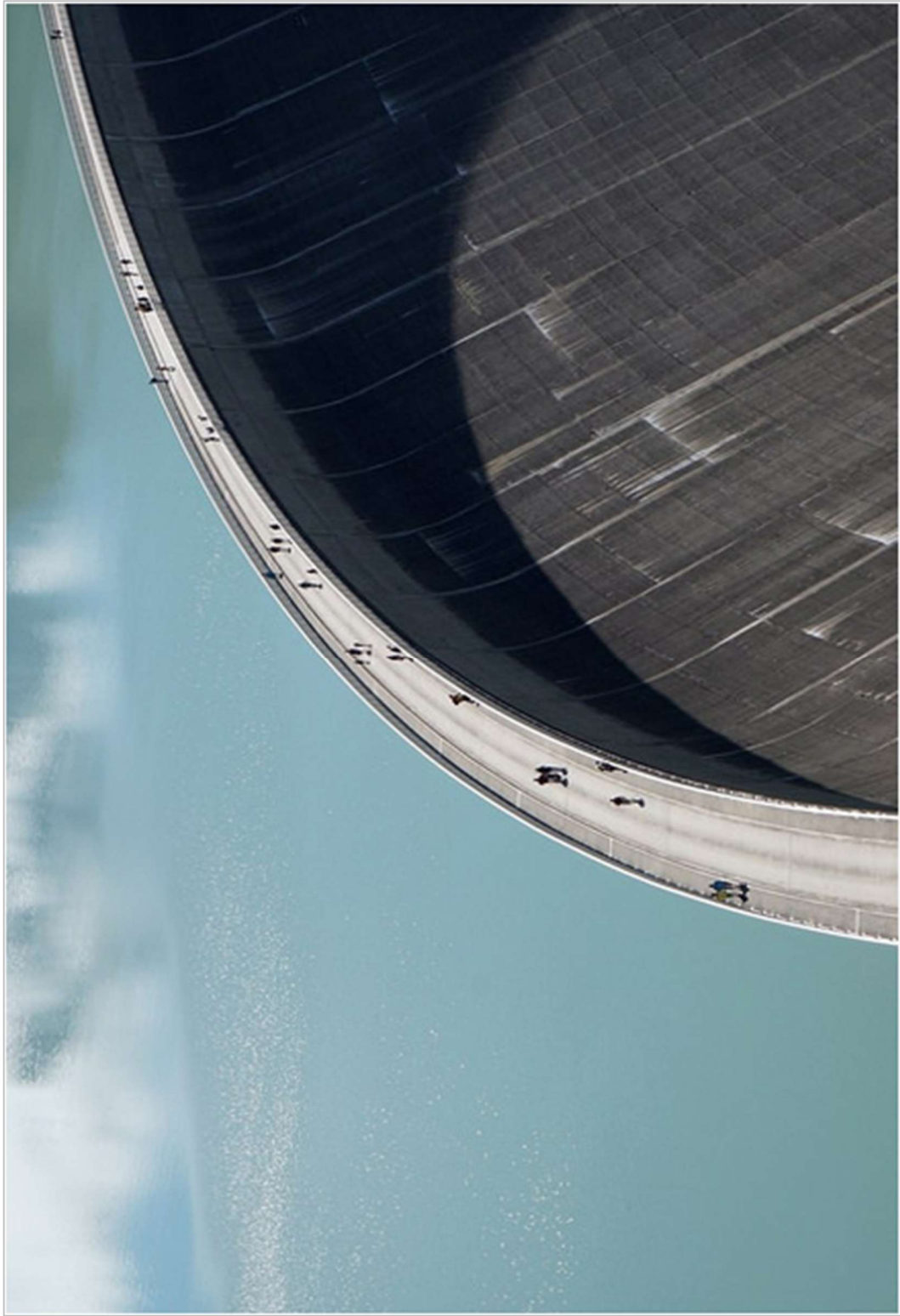
Fig. 35: Energetic zig-zag pattern.

Fig 36: A full lake behind a concrete dam (landscape orientation), photographer unknown.