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Literature, Representation, and the Image of the Francophone City:

Casablanca, Montreal, Marseille

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in French and Francophone Studies

by

Ruth Elizabeth Jones

2014

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Literature, Representation, and the Image of the Francophone City:

Casablanca, Montreal, Marseille

by

Ruth Elizabeth Jones

Doctor of Philosophy in French and Francophone Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Patrick Coleman, Chair

This dissertation is concerned with the construction of the image of the city in twentieth-century Francophone writing that takes as its primary objects the representation of the city in the work of Driss Chraïbi and Abdelkebir Khatibi (Casablanca), Francine Noël (Montreal), and Jean-Claude Izzo (Marseille). The different stylistic iterations of the post Second World War novel offered by these writers, from Khatibi's experimental autobiography to Izzo's *noir* fiction, provide the basis of an analysis of the connections between literary representation and the changing urban environments of Casablanca, Montreal, and Marseille. Relying on planning documents, historical analyses, and urban theory, as well as architectural, political, and literary discourse, to understand the fabric of the cities that surround novels' representations, the dissertation argues that the perceptual descriptions that enrich these narratives of urban life help to characterize new ways of seeing and knowing the complex spaces of each of the cities. As second cities, Casablanca, Montreal, and Marseille invite comparisons to urban capitals, comparisons that, through the French language, become

focused on Paris as an exemplary urban form. The specificity of urban detail on the micro-scale and general absence of macro-scale descriptions of the city in each of the novels questions the validity of an urban image that is dependent on comparisons with a distant center or attempts to raise a city's profile through development. Instead, as this dissertation argues, the literary representation of each of these second cities is the basis of a way of seeing Casablanca, Montreal, or Marseille as a total environment that makes space for narrative and memory, as well as perspective and perception. The novelistic construction of subjectivity and perspective creates a fiction, or imaginary, of urban experience that responds to theorizations of the urban subject in sociology, philosophy, and architecture. In their descriptions of urban space, the novels play on the differences between a collectively formed, and officially sanctioned, image of the city and individual urban imaginaries that bring memory, perception, and atmosphere into the experience of the urban environment.

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The dissertation of Ruth Elizabeth Jones is approved.

Lia Brozgal

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Patrick Coleman, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2014

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Ruth Elizabeth Jones received her AB Honors *cum laude* in Comparative Literature from Dartmouth College in 2006. Her publication “Looking for the Devil’s Bar: Exploring Urban Space from Montreal to Mexico City in Francine Noël’s *La conjuration des bâtards*” appeared in the winter 2013 volume of *Quebec Studies*. She has presented papers at the conferences of the American Comparative Literature Association (2014, 2013), the Pacific Ancient and Modern Languages Association (2012), the American Council for Quebec Studies (2012), and the American Canadian Studies Association (2013, 2011, 2009), as well as being an invited speaker at Dartmouth College (2013). She has been the recipient of the Mary and Melvin Hershenson 1933 Prize in Comparative Literature (Dartmouth College 2006), the Shirley and Ralph Shapiro International Student Fellowship, (UCLA 2008-2010), the Chancellor’s Prize Summer Mentorship Award (UCLA 2009, 2010), the Prix Jean-Cléo Godin (Centre de recherche interuniversitaire sur la littérature et la culture québécoises (CRILCQ), Université de Montréal 2013), and the Dissertation Year Fellowship (UCLA 2013-2014).

Introduction

At the end of Victor Hugo's *Notre Dame de Paris*, the narrator looks out from the towers of the cathedral over the medieval city on the morning of Esmeralda's death. "Une lumière très blanche et très pure faisait saillir vivement à l'œil tous les plans que ses mille maisons présentent à l'orient. L'ombre géante des clochers allait de toit en toit d'un bout de la grande ville à l'autre." [The pure white light brought out vividly the endless varieties of outline which its buildings presented in the east, while the giant shadows of the steeples traversed building after building from one end of the great city to the other.]¹ This brief image recalls two other, much longer, descriptions from earlier in the novel. Book three of Hugo's tragedy of Quasimodo begins with a chapter that provides an extended description of the architecture of Notre Dame, followed by another that describes in great detail the city seen from the tower heights. Woven together by the sounds of bells, this initial image of Paris becomes an extension of the space of all the scenes that follow it. In the final moment when the text looks out over the waking city, the whole of the narrative up to that point, the monument, and the fabric of the Paris established in those early pages combine to fill the second, briefer view. The text invests places that, to its nineteenth-century readers, bore the scars of successive revolutions with a renewed symbolic sense in the continuous fabric of the city's history.

The image of Paris viewed from the heights of Notre Dame is an example of the perspective that Michel de Certeau has indelibly linked with the illusion of readability: the bird's eye view that allows a simplification of the movement and complexity of urban space.² The effectiveness of this view rests on assumptions about its relationship to the city: it allows enough to be seen that the structure can be understood by a viewer who, by virtue the

¹ Victor Hugo, *Notre Dame de Paris*, (Paris: Ollendorf, 1904), 417. *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, trans. Walter J. Cobb (New York: Signet, 1965), 492. For all citations where both the original and a published translation are cited, the citation will take this form the first time it appears in the text. Subsequent citations of the same original and translation will list first the page number of the original, followed by a comma, followed the page number for the corresponding reference in the translation. Translations that appear in the text of this dissertation following their original and that are not referenced in this manner are my own.

² See Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien: arts de faire*.

panorama this elevated perspective allows, acquires control over the space captured in the image. This mastery is an impossible goal; as de Certeau's observations show, ground-level movements allow users to subvert the structures that the bird's eye perspective reveals. Furthermore, when we consider that a city is the construction of layers of systems and organizations, from social structures to traffic patterns to sewers, it becomes clear that an all-encompassing view of the city is only possible through a representation that can reveal multiple layers of information. Yet the view from above remains a particular frame of urban space and the limits it defines become clear in the relationship between the view and the city captured by the panorama. In the context of nineteenth-century Paris, Hugo's description asks the Parisian reader to reintegrate the cathedral into a monumental understanding of the city by offering Notre Dame as a way of seeing as well as a structure with meaning and history for the urban environment that surrounds it. The image also sits on the cusp of the total transformation of the city under the directive of Baron Haussmann in the 1850s, allowing the twentieth century reader, Parisian or not, to doubly temporalize this view of the city. Paris comes to Hugo's reader through history, literature, and memory, through its 1830s form, the representation of the medieval city, and a reader's experience of the recent past. In the context of the narrative, this particular section of text plays on the totalizing panoramic view off the narrative that precedes it, anchoring the viewer's position in an understanding of the intricacies and mysteries of the cathedral as much as in the scene that unfolds from its height.

Paris is not the subject of this dissertation, nor is the nineteenth-century novel: in the chapters that follow I will examine the twentieth-century representation of three cities that offer different examples of the varied urbanisms of the French speaking or Francophone world. Still, Hugo's description of Paris is an important image, one relevant to the methodology and theoretical framework of my work. Like nineteenth-century Paris, Casablanca, Montreal, and Marseille have, in the more recent past, struggled with political upheaval and extensive urban growth. Like Hugo, the authors whose work forms the core of my project employ a language of perception as they attempt to articulate conditions of urban

life and its relationship to a city's history. In the language they choose and in the images of the city their works ultimately create, they challenge our ways of seeing the cities their novels represent.

Unlike Hugo's Paris, however, these three cities are places where the idea of an urban center collides with secondary status, which I read both as a relationship to Paris that is alluded to through language as well as through relations of power and influence articulated in the novels themselves as well as to an idea of the city as a general concept that is made remarkable in relation to its ability to raise its profile in comparison to other urban areas. Nationalism, economy, and human migration mean different things in the three urban examples that provide the context for the following chapters. Casablanca, Montreal, and Marseille all serve centralizing functions in regional and national organizations of territory: Casablanca is the largest city in the Francophone Maghreb, attracting migrants from rural and mountainous regions of Morocco and immigrants from south of the Sahara; Montreal is the cultural center of Quebec, a position complicated by continuing discussions of Québécois nationalism and by its multicultural and multilingual population; Marseille holds onto its history as a major Mediterranean port and the first point of arrival for immigrants from the sea's southern shores, all the while claiming a particular kind of French identity grounded in the topographical and linguistic inflections of the south. Other cities, other images of regional and urban structure, depend on their influence for connections to larger networks of trade and migration. They are points of intersection often described in terms of what they are *not*: Paris, certainly, but also Algiers, Marrakech, New York, Mexico City, Rotterdam and Toronto. As such, their representations offer the possibility of more flexible images, images that are capable of destabilizing, as they shift, ways of understanding their points of reference. Language creates an initial point of contact between disparate centers, even as the urban conditions it describes bring them together outside of the orbits of center-periphery relationships that have been, for some time now, breaking into new geographical and postcolonial organizations.

This dissertation is an argument for the relevance of the image of the city as a way of understanding the nature of literary representation in the late twentieth-century. Historical, narrative, and atmospheric conditions of representation enrich the visual aspects of the texts that are the focus of these chapters, suggesting new parameters for the fictional city's interaction with its counterparts outside of literature, especially the physical city and its visual representations. The three cities that appear here, emerging out of successive waves of French colonial expansion and retraction from the fifteenth- to early twentieth-centuries, react to different terms of urbanism and global and regional positioning and offer expressly different experiences of architecture, development, design and governance by a French or Francophone state.

Returning, briefly, to the example of *Notre Dame de Paris*, Hugo's text shows how the city acts both as the novel's setting and as an image that contains and sets the terms for the narrative. Borders between the imagined, historical version of Paris and the final image of the novel blur, making it difficult to see the lines between representation as a component of narrative and as the expression of a certain, in this case nostalgic and religious, relationship to conditions of urban life. Giuliana Bruno, who has theorized the visual conditions of film and architecture, sees the city as both medium and site, as a folded and textured surface shaped by many acts of representation:

A city can be a canvas to be imaged and imagined, the result of a composite generative process that supersedes architecture per se and even actual building to comprise the way the place is viewed from a variety of perspectives. This includes the ways the city is rendered in different media: how it is photographed in still frames, narrated in literature as poem or tale, portrayed in paintings or drawings, or filmed and circulated in different forms of moving images. An image of the city emerges from this complex projective scenario: a process that makes urban space visible and perceivable. The city's image is thus creatively generated in the arts, and the city itself is compelled, in the end, to closely interact with these visual representations, becoming to some extent the reproduction of an artistic panorama.³

Bruno's description of the panoramic visualization of the city shows the enclosing image as constructed from the multiple views of both representational and perceptual relationships to urban space. As a film scholar whose work expands into architecture and contemporary art

³ Giuliana Bruno, *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 188.

through her understanding of cinematic spatialities, Bruno offers a way of understanding the image of the city through a discourse of space, narrative, medium, and the body. She sees the cinematic eye as essentially haptic, a gaze that moves over and through the spaces it encounters, particularly in the architectural environment of the city. Here, in her description of the city as image, she takes an understanding of film as light, surface, and projection, and uses this understanding to describe the moving images of urban life.

If our ability to visualize and perceive the city is made possible only through the accumulated projections of representations in different media, Bruno's definition suggests that the nature of a particular representation is as important as its points of contact with the physical, cartographical, and architectural realities of urban space. Her definition also suggests that we should always see a particular representation as bound up with an image of the thing itself that exists both inside the representation and outside of it, in an imaginary constructed of multiple images. Each representation is both a point of view and a way of seeing, a subjective position and product of medium, convention, form, and aesthetics. The framings and exclusions that are the result of the restrictions that accompany different points of view reveal different elements of the urban environment, showing that the city is as much a medium through which expression passes as it is the material that becomes the basis for the alternative representations of art. Even in a single clipped image, the continued existence of alternative representations prevents a reduction to a stable, totalizing view.

In Bruno's formulation part of any discussion of the image of the city in the context of its twentieth-century representations becomes a celebration of the multiplicity inherent in the construction of the image as well as in the space itself. Her version of the city image describes a whole that cannot be captured: no single representation can grasp the entirety of an environment. Indeed, the panorama of the multiply imagined city that Bruno offers, the product of an ever-growing number of visual and narrative representations, describes a space without end, a city without totality. When the city cannot be conceived in its wholeness, how do we approach questions of position that accompany narratives of subjective experience? What happens to this image when a key subject, often a protagonist,

undertakes a novelistic journey through which they claim the city as theirs, defining it through their eyes? The city we picture in our minds, Bruno offers, is a projection, the result of the interaction between the mental image of a city and the city itself, a material reality anchored in time and space that participates in multiple personal and historical memories. It thus becomes a site ripe for narrative as well as visual experimentation.

Questions of Image

The chapters that follow will attempt to answer the questions of the previous paragraph for Casablanca, Montreal, and Marseille. As I prepare to do so, I will begin by outlining relevant twentieth-century understandings through the history of the image of the European city. It is this image that eventually leads to the urban forms and textual representations that the three following chapters will address. By taking a historical view of this central concept I am able to discuss the ways in which different modes of seeing, the aspects of vision that create a distinct image, break down in the face of urban conditions and the ways the city and its inhabitants are together shaped into new conditions of urban life. Beginning with the emergence of long perspective avenues in the Italian city of the sixteenth-through eighteenth-centuries, I will make my way through different historical and theoretical ways of framing and seeing urban space. Using twentieth-century theorists of urbanism and perception, I will keep this discussion close to contemporary understandings of the visual and physical environment as I approach the historical conditions that surround the cities that make up my project.

The visual representation of urban space comes first through drawing and paintings of its architectural elements. In paintings of architectural subjects in the Italian renaissance, a new understanding of the geometric principles of perspective and spatial recession allowed artists to project the spaces they depicted beyond the pictorial frame. As artists turned towards the city to display their new skills, urban form began to change, extending avenues to allow for long lines of sight that converged on important monuments. The desire to accurately represent spatial optics lead to a form of urban design that exploited the aesthetics of classical perspective to create meaningful visual connections between

monumental elements. Lewis Mumford describes this convergence of pictorial and urban space as creating distinct planes within the visually perceived city, elements of image that highlight the movement of objects, people, and the viewer's gaze towards a vanishing point. "The long approach and the vista into seemingly unbounded space..." become, in Mumford's description, the defining aspects of an aesthetic in which picture frame and window both open onto the progression of Cartesian space.⁴ This concept of image is only possible if we imagine the city pictured by a single viewer, one who stands at an ideal point in the scene, taking in the clarity of the design of the city/painting. Clear divisions of space and time both imply a global understanding of space and rationalize the flux of social and collective life along linear principles of visual recession, logic, and convergence.

Mumford's description suggests a correlation of society, ideology and image for the perspective city that explains the imagistic qualities of its architecture in terms of the mathematical intuition of painterly ways of seeing. Through shifts in the visual character of the city, new frames emerge which picture streets and monuments in terms of different subjective relationships to space: lines of sight, symbolic architecture, plan, infrastructure, points of connection, and perceptible and representable textures. The orientation of these frames, whether formed by windows, doorways, and the spaces between structures or by the compositional decisions of an artist, brought the elements of the image together in the design of the city itself, ordering urban space to reproduce the dramatic effects that painters' new methods introduced to the pictorial surface. In the city that Mumford describes, the representation is architectural; the urban subject the painter whose gaze frames the scene. It is a city in which the visual image and architectural space are oriented for this individual viewer.

⁴ Lewis Mumford, *The City in History* (New York: Harvest, 1961), 365. Mumford uses the Baroque to describe the cities of this period, but the dates he attributes to it (from the end of the fifteenth-century through the eighteenth) correspond with those of both the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The developments in city image that he describes in the passage cited above refer to the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, so for the sake of continuity with Anthony Vidler's observations, which I will cite later in this introduction, I will use Renaissance to describe this particular form for the European city.

German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk expands on this concept of the interplay between representation and the historical organization of urban space to include the needs of emerging subjectivities in the urban context. Sloterdijk shows the architecture of the city as a representative space, its form arising from changing social conditions that effect this subjective position. In doing so, he makes the urban mass of the modern nation that emerges in the nineteenth-century a product of ideology that creates and adapts space according to its needs. The form of the city becomes more than an expression of an ideal of rational space: taking the example of the gathering of French citizens in Paris' Champs de Mars during the reign of Napoleon I, Sloterdijk argues for a connection between the scale of urban space and the scale of the collective consciousness that it accommodates:

The modernity of the patriotic cult spectacle on the Field of Mars [...] lies in the fact that with it, the forming of a multitudinous, metropolitan crowd into a present mass was an architectural, organizational, and ritual task (and later, a task of the law) that moved into being explicitly orchestrated. [...] 'The masses,' 'the nation,' or 'the people' can only exist as a collective subject when the physical assemblage of the magnitudes is the object of an elaborate production.⁵

A collective subjectivity, the urban mass, replaces the painter's technique and isolated viewing subject. The modern city is given a new sense of order by the mass's need to congregate, which invests empty spaces with the significance of monumental spaces, adding meaning to their openness that in turn helps to define the ideological concepts born out of this new collective – in this case the nation. The mass in its turn becomes part of the structure of the city. No longer a series of pictures subject to a single point of view, the urban space becomes the product of the channels and pools of the masses. As a development of the image of the city, here image begins to intersect with an abstract idea of the social city, which takes form through changes in subjectivity that accompany the end of the aristocratic social order in nineteenth-century Paris. While the new subject is in part determined by its activity – the need for spectacle and for spaces of congregation that Sloterdijk identifies – this is not, strictly speaking, a question of the use of urban space. Rather, we can begin to

⁵ Peter Sloterdijk, "Foam Cities," trans. Julie Di Filippo, *Log 9* (2007) : 72.

see the ways in which different subjectivities create different ways of seeing and understanding the cities that they inhabit.

Between the perspective city that Mumford describes and the modernist city of the twentieth-century, the ideal viewpoint for the image of the city changes along with the sense of collective that Sloterdijk describes. The representations that seem closest to the processes of construction and imagination that shape the physical form of the city by reworking its image also change, as different aspects of urban space become more important to understanding the connections between the parts and the whole and between the city's inhabitants and their environment. Figure-ground replaces perspective as the ideal view: the city is now seen from above, its buildings and monuments becoming figure blocks surrounded by the voids of open space (streets, alleys, parks, plazas). It also solidifies: in representations of the city before modernism, the void space of the street (public space) could be represented as either a figure of shared space which cut through the exclusive ground of private buildings (more common), or as the ground against which the figure of a public monument stood. In representations of the industrial city, especially after modernism brought a strong preference for the purity of geometric form and its expression in the building over the chaos of the open street, convention shifted so that the city's buildings became cartographically defined figures against the ground of public space.⁶ The older version of this relationship, which allows the street to be the figure of urban representation, accepts the perspective street-view as a figuration of an important structure of the urban space. Sloterdijk's image of the Champs de Mars allows us to see how a full and architectural understanding of a city's void space arises at a moment between the coalescence of an urban consciousness and the reduction of that consciousness to vacant ground of the representation.

Art and architectural historian Anthony Vidler describes the shift from the clarity of perspective of the Renaissance city to the positive/negative spaces of modernism's

⁶ For an overview of the history of figure-ground representations of the city, see James Holston, "The Modernist City and the Death of the Street," in *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader*, ed. Setha M. Low (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 265-266.

abstractions as a change in ideology and expression as well as a change in the formal strategies and social structure of these two differently constructed versions of urban space as "...two equally significant fullnesses of being – the city as such and its monuments – the one subsumed in the mental envelope of the other, the figure-ground city of modernism was founded on the erasure of two fullnesses of being..."⁷ Vidler's characterization of the transition from the city of perspective to the very different visual ground of modernism highlights a shift in both the idea of the city and the way in which urban space could be presented and represented. The erasure he points to is the loss of the symbolic concentration of the monumental city. In the figure-ground, the separation of structures seen from an aerial point of view divests them of the relationship to movement and to the individual that allows meaning and vision to coalesce around the points where the perspectival streets of the earlier city come together. His characterization explains the loss of the ordering principal of human optics in a different representation of rational space. It shows the image of the city as tied to the scale of space and the relationship between representational scale and ideological need.

As the representation of the city according to newly solidified understandings of figure and ground reorganizes the understanding of how the modernist city should be viewed, the nature of life in the city, and the nature of the urban environment individual inhabitants perceive, also changes. Modernity introduces new technological means of creating space in the city, and the struggle to define the nature of modern life is the struggle to see these new elements. Metaphorical understandings of this closer, more intimate, version of the city image struggle to find a language to describe how it affects changing relationships between subjects and the urban environment. For Sigfried Kracauer in his collection of essays on modernity, commodity, and urban life, *Mass Ornament: Weimer Essays*, the light that fills Paris' nocturnal streets at the turn of the nineteenth-century transforms the city, as space is now created by different kinds of technology at different times of day. In the illuminated streets, islands of light define new spaces against the

⁷ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 182.

shadows. Unlike the masses that fill the Champs de Mars, for Karcauer, these new elements, though they intersect with the lives of urban inhabitants, are decidedly not human: "...the lights have gathered for their own pleasure, instead of shining for man. Their glowing traces want to illuminate the night but succeed only in chasing it away."⁸ The texture of urban space, the source of the representations with which I am concerned, is active in the quality of light that invades the illuminated city. It assaults its inhabitants with new and fleeting images that complicate the elements of the city outlined by the figure-ground representation – buildings and open spaces – with the solidity of this new light source. The visuals of planning and design project but do not represent their interaction with the past and future conditions of habitation that shape the spaces of the city and the textures of urban life. Like Karcauer's lights, which define their own condition rather than affecting the conditions in which they exist — chasing night away rather than illuminating it — the factors that determine perspective and frame in the urban context, the media of the city, must be received and absorbed if they are to be expressed through any representational medium.

The city that comes after the modernist figure ground described by Vidler must address the absence left by the loss of the monumental city in the space of national refigurations of the urban mass and the new spaces created by technology in the illuminated city of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century. As Karcauer's description suggests, the new sensations of the technological city invite a re-visioning of questions of space, flows, and flux. Politically, this implies a re-questioning of the obstructions of external and invisible beings excluded from the clarity of both plans. The psychogeographic experiments in cartography, architecture, and ephemerality undertaken by the avant-garde collective the Situationniste Internationale (SI) in the 1950s and 1960s provide a way of re-imagining the modernist city through the spaces and relations that have been forced out of its technical and official representations. These experiments sought to reconnect the passage of the individual to the city, disrupting the banality of cartographic order. The SI engaged with the

⁸ Siegfried Karcauer, *Mass Ornament: The Weimer Essays*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 43.

fluidities of urban space and their correlation with the experiences of individual actors. Based around constructed “situations” – events that brought together the spatial and temporal aspects of urban life – Situationist urbanism tested the limits of encounter and engagement as part of a politically charged understanding of awareness and value in the city. It reinvigorated cartographic understandings of the city image with the fragmented narrative of the *derive* and with their defense of the street and of other physical or institutional void spaces in the city as productive for new forms of social interaction and political revolution.

From their appreciation for empty space as richly filled time, outlined in Ivan Chtcheglov’s 1953 “Formulary for a New Urbanism,” published in the first issue of the SI journal, the Situationist approach to the city saw the fullness provided by experience and emotion as an antidote to the rationally ordered city of modernism. Evoking the memory of past spaces, this new city was built around the principle of the encounter that would become the defining feature of their interventions into the real space of Paris in the 1950s and 1960s. The movement that Mumford highlights in his description of the perspective city reappears here as a form of distortion, one that uses figurations of visual space that recall the contortions of the camera’s field of view:

Certain *shifting* angles, certain *receding* perspectives, allow us to glimpse original conceptions of space, but this vision remains fragmentary. It must be sought in the magical locales of fairy tales and surrealist writings: castles, endless walls, little forgotten bars, mammoth caverns, casino mirrors.⁹

The receding avenues and collecting spaces of the city itself, as the Situationists saw it, were no longer the ideal images of urban space. For the city to be mutable and capable of producing the heights of revolutionary intervention and creative freedom the SI saw as the only possible response to their condition as urban inhabitants, it must be de-imaged. Only then could it be re-imagined as a revolutionary space ready for the construction of a new society. In the radical politics, performances, and artistic interventions of the SI, representation became a tool to work out this re-imagining of the city, picturing alternative urban realities with greater possibilities for political play.

⁹ Ivan Chtcheglov, “Formulary for a New Urbanism,” trans. Ken Knabb, *Internationale Situationniste* 1 (1953) : via <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/presitu/formulary.html>.

The Situationist city took its most cohesive form in the wild and constantly restructured atmospheric urbanism of former SI member Constant Nieuwenhuys' post-situationist architectural project for the imagined city of New Babylon, an endless experiment in urban structure and design that exists only in the models, photographs, and drawings produced by its architect. Originally a painter associated with the COBRA group of artists in Belgium, Constant's meeting with Guy Debord led him to both Situationism and to an increased interest in the revolutionary potential of architecture. After his break with the SI, Constant's experimental vision of a city for the future imagined urban space as a continuous, multi-functional environment for a play-based society.

This concept for a city, which Constant called New Babylon, abandoned the structures and divisions of traditional architecture and planning to explore the ways in which the needs and emotions of inhabitants might influence the form and ambience of their environment. It was, in a way, a city of pure imagination, a place of constant change and shifting images, and thus unrepresentable by traditional means. An attempt to build a model of the ideas of urbanism that early Situationist work developed, New Babylon functioned according to the confrontations and desires of its inhabitants. Its architecture, an endless interior characterized by the visual distortions of its transparent walls and assembled according to principles of play, envisioned a workless society where encounters between individuals, from desiring to violent, shaped the atmosphere of the ideal city. In Constant's drawings, as Mark Wigley describes them, both the life and function of New Babylon's structure recede: "Most are neither images of the mechanism nor images of the life going on within it. They operate in some indeterminate zone between, where both the machine and the life become shadowy, as if inviting the viewer or the future inhabitant to complete the picture."¹⁰ The indeterminate zone depends on reception, mediation, and the connection between the qualities of the representation and the viewer's imagination. A collectively imagined city is, through the representation of Constant's urban future, handed over to the

¹⁰ Mark Wigley, "Paper, Scissors, Blur," in *The Activist Drawing: retracing Situationist Architecture from Constant's New Babylon to Beyond*, ed. Mark Wigley and Catherine de Zegher (New York: The Drawing Center 2001), 30.

imagination of its viewers. They are the ones who are invited to complete the image, and the clear and definitive representation is rejected in favor of this indeterminate and subjectively interpreted alternative.

For Kevin Lynch in his 1960 *Image of the City*, urban space becomes a city in part through its availability to image-making. “The urban landscape, among its many roles, is also something to be seen, to be remembered, and to delight in. Giving visual form to the city is a special kind of design problem, and a rather new one at that.”¹¹ Lynch proposes that the city is ultimately a visual experience, but the development of his concept of the image goes beyond the simple framing of urban scenes through a kind of portraiture. Attaching the experience of seeing to those of memory and delight, he suggests that the city is what he terms an “imageable” environment: it is possessed of “that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer.”¹² The well-designed city is, for Lynch, one that produces a strong mental image in those who experience its spaces. Yet his definition does not privilege prescriptive image making; rather, the importance of the viewer’s reaction to imageability makes for a sense of the visual city that is valued for its ability to shape experience. This experience, Lynch allows, can be formed as much from intimate closeness with familiar spaces as it might be from the dramatic impact of a monument. The imageable city is thus above all a readily recognizable and distinctive environment, a place where it is easy to find your way, and is thus also the city seen through repetition, through the patterns of daily life, and through the reactions of individuals to the points of the city that embed themselves deeply in their spatial perceptions.

While Lynch was the first to establish the idea of imageability, he built on a vocabulary useful for discussing the image of the city as a design concern as well as the product of individual reactions to their environment that was itself based in urbanism, architecture, and aesthetics. Where Constant and the SI used the psychological reactions of

¹¹ Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), v.

¹² *ibid* 9. Lynch defines the concept of “imageability” in pages 9-13 of his introduction. His concept is strongly correlated to an idea of use that he takes from Stern’s concept of apparency. Imageability describes the features of an environment that make it memorable to users, allowing them to form distinct mental images of a place.

urban inhabitants to imagine a future city, Lynch saw individuals' responses to spatial conditions as already active in the city of the present. In detailed diagrams of Boston, Los Angeles and Jersey City, he describes the ways in which changes in engagement as well as in the physical or material space of the city affect and are affected by ways of seeing. The making of the image becomes, in turn, a key site of interaction between inhabitants and their environment as well as a crucial design problem. Lynch warns that "[a]n environment which is ordered in precise and final detail may inhibit new patterns of activity. A landscape where every rock tells a story may make difficult the creation of fresh stories."¹³ From the pictorial quality of the perspective city, Lynch brings us to the image of the city as a narrative scene. Moreover, he proposes that designs of urban space must find ways to allow for openings to new views and new stories. For Lynch the image of the city produced by the multiple reactions of its inhabitants is a function of use and memory. The textures and folds of the fabric that constructs the city through its built environment becomes subject to daily acts of narration. Rather than focus on the specifics of individual buildings, his description of the imageable city looks to the ways in which experience and relationships — both personal and spatial — pull the user's gaze towards certain elements of the city, anchoring them as visual touchstones in spatial memory.

Memory, the City, and the Text

What Lynch alludes to through his cognitive model is an image of space constructed through the layers of memory that allow its more imageable features to sink into a multiplicity of associations held by the inhabitants of the city. The duration of an element's presence in the city, and its history in relation to those who inhabit the same environment, is as important to the collectively held image of the city as the structure and appearance of a given element at any one time. While the essential image of a well-designed city might, for Lynch, depend on a particular set of notable elements and effects, it must also have enough loose, un-narrated, space to allow image and meaning to change over time. A city's duration allows for an imaginary of the city to emerge that includes both its present image and past iterations,

¹³ Ibid, 6.

along with the personal associations that create continuity between the two. Elegantly described by Andreas Huyssen, "...the majority of buildings are not palimpsests at all. As Freud once remarked, the same space cannot possibly have two different contents. But an urban imaginary in its temporal reach may well put different things in one place."¹⁴ "Image" suggests a total and singular visual construct and imaginary, as Huyssen employs it here, points to a collective or multiple experience of the city. This is not to say that the city and thus the urban image is not the product of intersections between the imaginaries of multiple actors. Lynch's idea of image recalls Bruno's multiply produced panorama: it assembles projections from multiple sources. Huyssen's imaginary, by introducing time and memory to image and identification, allows a single site to support multiple images. Rather than remaining discrete, the two terms provide a dialogue on the nature of urban representation. Examining the border zone between image and imaginary is an investigation into the ways in which representation and the use of various media express differently the ideas and perceptions of those who rely on the urban imaginary to construct their images of the city. Representation, whether visual, material, or narrative, acts as an intermediary that allows us to move from the internalized imaginary to the externalized image through impression, experience, and transfer.

Bruno describes the artistry of the creative register pulling at the "cartographic surface tension" that bubbles up on the border of the representation and the thing itself. "The fiction of a city develops in this same way, along the artistic trajectory of its image-movement."¹⁵ Visually and bodily experienced narratives that follow the "artistic trajectory" of representation through media define the city. Both optic and, through the emphasis on the movement and on the intimate connection of transfer (the response of the viewer, spectator,

¹⁴ Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 7.

¹⁵ Bruno, *Surface*, 189. Deleuzian in her interest in folds and textures, Bruno is also first and foremost a theorist of cinema and cinematic space. As such, her use of "image-movement" can be read in relation to Giles Deleuze's construction, privileging chance and newness in the combination of the two terms, the primacy of movement, and seeing this as the defining feature of the figure-image of film.

or reader), haptic,¹⁶ the city as an image, as produced as much by representation as by practice comes into being through the empathetic reactions that create its imaginary. Bruno's conception of the haptic experience allows us to engage the body in this production, and to see spatial imaginaries and spatial practices as the result of touching, feeling, moving interactions with the city. The body as well as the eye and the imagination responds to the architecture of the city to create an image of the city that carries with it the significance of an individual's reactions to their surroundings. Deeply connected to the architectural stories that structure the built environment, this city image opens urban space to new as well as to remembered ways of seeing.¹⁷

What, then, constitutes a "way of seeing" in relation to the strategies of representation and image that I have thus far presented here, and what does this way of seeing mean in the context of the particular cities and works of literature that are the subject of this dissertation? Seeing is in part a function of perspective and, as such, is concerned with questions of subject, body, and the organization of pictorial space. The negotiation of represented (viewed) and assumed (viewing) bodies implies a connection between space as represented and as presented. Bodies and image intersect in the medium, which is the site of a particular image. Before establishing the ways in which literature confronts this connection, I would like to *confirm* the vital nature of this perspective based (but not necessarily perspectival) model in relation to the city in general.

Representation allows for variations of degree: of clarity, of abstraction, of subjectivity and of relation. Henri Lefebvre's rejection of the tautological implications of the

¹⁶ See Bruno on film spectatorship "Film's spectatorship is thus a *practice* of space that is dwelt in, as in the built environment. The itinerary of such a practice is similarly drawn by the visitor to a city or its resident, who goes to the highest point – a hill, a skyscraper, a tower – to project herself onto the cityscape, and who also engages the anatomy of the streets, the city's underbelly, as she traverses different urban configurations." Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film*, (Verso: New York, 2002), 62.

¹⁷ For the connection between city image and architectural imaginary, I rely on Bruno's definition of the latter term: "To speak of an architectural imaginary, then, means to understand architecture in the broadest sense: as space, comprising images of built or unbuilt places that are part of a diverse collective practice marked by multiple histories, social perspectives, and intersubjective imagination. Ultimately, an urban imaginary is this composite mental image: a layered form or representation of the way we imagine our lived space." *Surface*, 192-193.

representational frame concern the way it contributes to a fragmentation of space that conceals, rather than reveals, possible breaks in the tautology:

L'image fragment ; elle est un fragment d'espace. Découpage-montage, voilà le premier et le dernier mot de l'art des images. L'erreur et l'illusion ? Elles résideront aussi dans l'œil des artistes et dans leur regard, dans 'l'objectif' du photographe, dans le crayon du dessinateur et sur sa feuille blanche.

[...images fragment; they are themselves fragments of space. Cutting things up and rearranging them, *decoupage* and *montage* – these are the alpha and omega of the art of image-making. As for error and illusion, they reside already in the artist's eye and gaze, in the photographer's lens, in the draftsman's pencil and on his blank sheet of paper.]¹⁸

Lefebvre distrusts this process, the reframing and rearranging of space through the creation of the artistic image. He sees the techniques employed by artists, the methods that allow them to transfer part of the city into the limited frame of the image, as tools of distortion. In doing so, Lefebvre highlights the mediating power of the image, yet his negative assessment of this process depends on the absolute value he attributes to the political possibility of space itself. When that is in doubt, or when we acknowledge, as Bruno does, the extent to which the city and its image are sites of projection, the negative cast of Lefebvre's description of image-making is no longer a necessary condition of this *decoupage* and *montage*. Fragmentation of space can also insert a new, explicit, frame, reorganizing spatial hierarchies and structuring new narrative perspectives to reveal currents and textures not otherwise available to the gaze of the artist or of the viewer. In visual and textual media, different representations participate in different discourses and should be interrogated as a dialogical rather than tautological exercise. I propose seeing the representation of the city as an exercise in dialogue and exchange. In geographical studies, the multiple and the collective have been seen as two alternative ways of seeing the city, especially the large transnational metropolis, the hub and global cities — the capitals — of the late twentieth century. Doreen Massey calls these *world cities*, each one "...a field of multiple actors, trajectories, stories with their own energies – which may mingle in harmony, collide, even

¹⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l'espace* (Paris: Economica, 2000), 115-116. *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 97

annihilate each other.”¹⁹ The process of collision, recombination, and annihilation that she describes is one that allows for multiple differently functioning systems to constantly re-define the textures of urban life. It is a version of city image entirely dependent on action.

If the *world city* is a collision of energies, it is an image of urbanity that borrows from descriptions of the social conditions of the modern city of the early twentieth century. Kracauer saw the crowds of poor suburban Paris as the swirling clusters of nebulae, both the form and observers of the form of the urban masses, “Between purchases they savor the spectacle of the constant disintegration of the complexes to which they belong, a sight that keeps them at the peripheries of life.”²⁰ Massey looks to a larger scale of action, to the forces that, in the context of a world of cities, connects the massing and flows of urban life to larger fields of activities: trade, immigration, telecommunication, and politics. Both images build on the same visual metaphor of flow, but Massey’s understanding of global forces that rearrange the elements of the city complicates the patterns of Kracauer’s nebulae. As these forces move through urban spaces, they pull more than Saturday shoppers into their currents; yet, like the nebulae, Massey’s energies imagine the city constructed, at least in its image, of individuals swirling in concert or spinning off independently to stand as isolated points or form new stellar arrangements.

This version of the city, like Bruno and Lynch’s descriptions of the variability of the image as a product of representation, suggests that perspective must be loosely defined if it is to account for different aspects of the environment in different situations. We have abandoned the linear clarity of recession in favor of a more dynamic way of seeing. These changes can be brought to bear on the historical city, as Rebecca Williamson shows in the ways in which a shift of scholarly perspective from vision to air reveals gaps in pictorial representation of the Renaissance City. Not limiting her understanding of structure to the visual realm allows Williamson to account for air and atmosphere in early modern approaches to the livability and finesse of urban planning. “With air as the witness of the

¹⁹ Deborah Massey, *World City*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 22.

²⁰ Kracauer, *Mass Ornament*, 41.

past, the 'aesthetic' character of the city appears differently. The visual dominance of sight lines and monuments recedes, and largely hidden aspects emerge: infrastructure, legislation, ritual signification, and power struggles."²¹ Couching her discussion of air and breath in the language of aesthetics, Williams accepts that the medium through which the experience of the city might come is not necessarily visual. Yet she does not totally abandon the image of the city as a useful tool for understanding the ways in which design accounts for air as well as light and sight. Instead, she turns to representations that rely on visual media and visual descriptions to picture for the viewer or observer the invisible concerns of urban design. The air of the city that she describes creates avenues of breath rather than lines of sight, but it is no less a structuring element and, as such, understood through a combination of representation and experience.

The conditions that these observers of the city use to understand its order in terms of dynamics and flows are not only sensory; they are also the products of politics and ideology, and often of competing contemporary and historical theorization of the city as system and object. The city is territory, and territory of a particular sort: it exists both inside and outside of political frameworks, its internal dynamics allowing for more mixing than its monumental spaces might indicate. This is especially true in the types of cities this dissertation addresses, places where a remarkable assortment of inhabitants comes together in a space that resists national definition. "The city emerges as a critical institutional environment for the embedding of novel spatial and temporal framings," Saskia Sassen argues, and this is true both of its structure, as architecture and plan as well as social and institutional, and of its representational qualities.²² It is, perhaps, the primary environment of reframing, as well as of visual and haptic strategies that break the frame in their engagement with space as durational, multiple, and fractured. The city adjusts to the conditions of its space. Still, in its representation and design, the city is an expression of the institutions that concern Sassen

²¹ Rebecca Williamson, "The Breath of Cities," in *Aeolian Winds and the Spirit in Renaissance Architecture: Academia Eolia Revisited*, ed. Barbara Kenda (New York: Routledge, 2006), 153.

²² Saskia Sassen, *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 61.

and the relative importance of these institutions to the whole. In the case of novels and the cities that they describe, representation is as much a reaction to the conditions of the city and the possibilities of viewing as it is a sense-making selection of exacting details.

Literature frames the city, ordering or refusing to determine its space through the eyes of a subjective viewer offers commentary on the relationship between human life in urban conditions and the perceivable qualities of urban environments.

This is distinctly a historical phenomenon, coming out of the political and urban transitions of the 1960s and the kind of urbanism, particularly experimental urbanism, and its accompanying representations, which parallels the historical and literary situations that form the bulk of my argument. Casablanca, Montreal, and Marseille are the products and heritors of modernist urbanism and its reactions and as such they challenge the communal perceptions of the city and its ability to be contextualized within the experience of characters that inhabit its varieties of space. Even those aspects of linear cartography referenced and embedded in these narratives — clear passages through space, the vectors and intersections of city streets — are lines without horizons, blurred out as narrative representations shift from questions of view, texture, atmosphere and space to the perspective, emotions, psychology and inner life of their characters. The pictorial quality of the text, despite its engagement with questions of urbanity as space and practice, splits and dissolves.

I am interested in representations that deal with the interplay between urban spatiality and the city image. How do perceptions of space, especially ones that address issues of perspective and strategies of viewing, address a possible opposition between the conditions of confusion that define urban life and the visual aspects of a city? Fredric Jameson frames this struggle as a process by which postmodernism, specifically, searches for a mode of representation “in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at

present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion.”²³ Jameson’s plea for representation is particularly relevant as a way of dealing with the city, of the late twentieth century, because of the way in which he links it to postmodernism’s chaotic afterglow of modernism.²⁴ The divisions of labor and of modernist organization, the categories of rational modernism, create confusion and distance the subject, making it necessary to re-draw a sense of position and perspective. What Jameson’s demand for a mode of representation after modernism means, then, is a re-visualization of conditions through representation.

French, Francophone, and Second Cities

Beginning with the Independence of Morocco in 1956, decolonization created new circulations of French-language literature. These are the texts that form a corpus of Francophone literature, texts that circulate around the central pole of Paris and the legacies of empire in all its stages, from the North American and Caribbean colonies of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries to the more recent administrative experiments in West Africa, the Maghreb, and numerous other far-flung outposts of colonial control.²⁵ If we take into consideration both the cities left in the wake of colonialism and the literature of new networks of exchange in terms of modes of representation, the definition of Francophone as a distinguishing term for literature written in French includes a wide and varied collection of texts. In the different linguistic relations that define their sites of production as well as their connections to different colonial histories and reactions to postcolonial nationalisms, these texts position themselves in different constellations of linguistic politics, cultural identity, and, in the case of the novels and cities discussed here, representational relationships to urban

²³ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 54

²⁴ As a Marxist critic, Jameson’s critique of the failings of modernism are caught up in those of capitalism, and thus come with an image of the popular as both representative of current conditions and as existing, at the time of these writings, in a state of collapse.

²⁵ These include islands in the Pacific and Indian Oceans (e.g. Nouvelle-Calédonie, Réunion), East Africa (e.g. Madagascar), what was French Indochina (Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam), and parts of India and the Middle East. Some holdings are still part of the administrative *départements et territoires d’outre mer* (D.O.M. and T.O.M. administrative designations) while others are independent countries. Texts that grapple with the concept of Francophone include, but are not limited to the work of Lise Gauvin (*L’écrivain francophone à la croisée des langues*) and Edouard Glissant (*Poétique de la relation* and *Traité du tout monde*), as well as Naïm Kattan’s memoir trilogy (*Adieu Babylone*, *Les fruits arrachés* and *La fiancée promise*) address his relationship with French and Arabic and explore what it means to be Jewish, Arab, and Francophone in post World War Two Montreal.

contexts. In the pages that follow, I will propose models of fracture, partition, and refraction through which the novels engage with and attempt to address problems of vision and the visual as literal and metaphorical components of city image, components that are crucial to understanding these cities as both secondary and Francophone. In defining the concept of the second city, the reference point remains the existence of an idea of a primary or capital city, a central comparison to which the second city can be compared.

There are different ways through which this dichotomy can be established. Centrality might be legislated by political primacy; it might be a question of trade and economics that lend a city a degree of prosperity. Friedrich Kittler has a more subtle definition of the capital city, one based on a networked vision of the city that takes into account the variety of intersecting systems that animate the city without bounding it to create clear conditions of limit or edge. "It is not alone the state with its lines or system of borders, its self-induced 'resonance,' which defines the city. Rather in capitals, networks between cities overlap upon other networks between other cities. Beneath, upon, and above the ground, the overloaded nodes make a mockery of every conflation."²⁶ Kittler sees the city as a medium in itself, as a substance born of networks that serves as a conduit for different types of information, from the sensory impact of traffic to the scheduled precision of a train schedule. His rejection of the borders of urban space or the idea of influential resonance as defining the city is a rejection of any way of thinking about urban space that sets it against the ground of a larger territory, creating a discourse of inside and outside the city, rather than the discourse of connection, system, and network that he favors. The capital is a territory of intense intersection, specifically the intersection of networks that connect to different groups and organizations of other, secondary or non-capital cities. If the second city is to be an alternative to this loosely defined networked space, it must serve an alternative function to that of the capital.

²⁶ Friedrich A. Kittler, "A City is a Medium," trans. Matthew Griffin, *New Literary History* 27, no 4 (1996) : 720. Kittler here uses "resonance" in the sense defined by Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *Mille Plateaux*.

While Kittler rejects the imposition of physical, bounded, order on the concept of the city by theorists and planners in his understanding of this type of urban space, the very lack of or impossibility of conflation suggests that capital order lies in its incomparability. Yet he does not completely deny the ordering function of these knotted networked spaces.

“Founding a capital today means that at highway intersections and in train stations, in time tables and computer networks, a new ‘hub’ arises, which centralizes the flow of energy and information.”²⁷ The second city allows networks to define urban space, but does not serve, or serves in a lesser degree, the centralizing, gathering function of the capital. If Kittler seems to suggest that dominant forces in capital organizations are centripetal then those of the second city might, to serve as a contrast, offering remixings of information that are more diffuse than those that occur in the capital. Part of the interest in addressing cities like those included here is that, in competing discourses of primary and secondary status that hold each one up as part of different hierarchies of network and territory, representations of them as non-central and secondary refigure the basis of centrality as a primary and ideal state for describing the complicated visual and perceptual conditions of urban life.

What I want to suggest is that the defining image of the city should be approached as a problem of representation rather than a fact or a clearly defined set of parameters. The image of the city exists in its relationship to strategies of seeing, strategies that are difficult to untangle from cities that, by their form, condition and produce subjects and objects of perception. Representation acts on and produces different conditions of image. Writing under and through the ideologies that inform views from the perspectival to the cartographical, the novels I am interested in here and the cities they depict use relationships to realism and the inner lives of urban subjects to create narratives that engage with uncertainties of politics, the destabilizing effects of a linguistic medium, and literary framework through which mobile and accumulative view points pick out of the complex fabric of the city responsive ways of representing the space that fill the voids they outline in the city image.

²⁷ ibid 725

Casablanca

I begin with Casablanca, often cited as an exemplar of the colonial city, in the face of changing urban conditions and the position of secondariness that pushes on the city in its representation in novels in French from the 1950s and 1960s. To get beyond the negotiations of power between colonizer and colonized, I work out the complexities of atmosphere in the late colonial city as a way of describing the ways in which colonial urbanism addressed the authenticity of the Moroccan city. The importance of an authentic atmosphere as both an illustration of local difference and a tangible connection to traditional lifestyles ways of fundamental concern to the French architects and planners responsible for Casablanca's Moroccan quarters. Memory functions differently in the colonial city than in the preserved royal centers of the Moroccan protectorate, and the architecture of early neighborhoods like the Habous district attempted to compensate for this absent past, placing the city's Moroccan residents in contact with Maghrebi urban history even as they were surrounded by the visual evidence of the modern metropolis.

Casablanca provides the main setting for Driss Chraïbi's *Le passé simple*, in which the white walls of the city's new medina dominate an image of a city driven by corrupt modernities and caught in the stagnant conditions of culture understood as repetition. Rather than splitting the city into French and Moroccan halves, Chraïbi's novel uses the walls of the family house to create a more important division between the narrator's self and the outside world. While Chraïbi's critique of the oppression that accompanies the patriarchal rule of the family is virulent, *Le passé simple* provides a double attack that is embedded within the novel's representation of expectations of perception in establishing modern vs. authentic urbanism in colonial Morocco.

Abdelkebir Khatibi's first novel, *La mémoire tatouée: autobiographie d'un décolonisé*, traces the author's autobiographical journey from his childhood in El Jadida through his time as a student in Paris and on to various transcontinental journeys, yet the year the author spent as a student at the Lycée Lyautey in Casablanca is notably absent from his poetic re-imagining of his Moroccan youth. El Jadida, Essaouira and Marrakech, although not exempt

from critiques of the colonial power on display within them, are productive spaces. They are potent sites of memory, and when they appear in the text it is often in descriptions where a narrative viewpoint moves through their streets or rises to observe a city from above, guiding the reader through different ways of seeing the narrator's environment. Casablanca, meanwhile, offers a slim few pages of complaint and incomprehension as Khatibi's narrator wonders how anyone could make sense of this city.

Both novels address the problems of the colonial situation of the protectorate through the formal and ideological geometries of modernism. The unmappability of the *medina*, in contrast to the rigid organization of the Cartesian colonial city is important for Khatibi's imagining of a Moroccan space, but it is ultimately the corrupt geometries of uncontrolled growth that are so troubling in Casablanca. The geometric figure, its relationship to meaning, and the possibility of free and fluid movement draw the two novels together in contrast to more recent, integrated, and compacted meanings of the city's image that work off of the same strict arrangement of the early twentieth century plan. In reading these examples together, I propose that the literary representation of Casablanca has thus far remained in the background of understandings of the independence-era Moroccan city. The extent to which the texts see the city, and the subjective positions they propose, are points of entry into the relationship between narrative aesthetics and post-independence politics that challenge the direction of urban planning in Morocco, and especially in Casablanca.

Montreal

Montreal writer Francine Noël's novels focus on characters whose experiences of their Quebecois identity create a world of productive crossings and hybridities. Indeed, her 1992 novel *Nous avons tous découvert l'Amérique* (which originally appeared in 1990 under the title *Babel, prise deux*) announces a vision of a millennial Quebecois society in which cultural pluralism and mixing provides the foundation for her characters' everyday lives and their experiences of the city that surrounds them. In her first novel, *Maryse*, Noël experiments with ways of framing the city in terms of individual experience that can be read as a direct response to the city's development of the 1960s and the play on urban and

cinematic environments that took place during Expo 67. Noël's prose style highlights the difficulties of representing the effects of the transition from this most optimistic period to the radical politics of the 1970s on the city and its image.

In her study of translation in Montreal literature, Sherry Simon observes that the historical divisions in space and language that have marked cartographies of Montreal and its literature since the early twentieth-century become increasingly fragmented as the city develops a new literary and social formation in the late twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries. In particular, Simon points out that changes in urban form – in shifts in the populations of the city's traditional immigrant neighborhoods, in the form and use of public and private buildings, in the kinds of public art projects the city cultivates outside of and on the fringes of its populated neighborhoods, in parks, along the river and canal and, in particular, on Mount Royal – can be seen alternately as mirrors of or as alternatives to literary and cultural exchanges.²⁸ While translation is Simon's primary concern, she establishes a way of seeing the physical form of the city as a malleable expression of significant change that is integrated into and mutated by literary representations of the city.

Noël's *Maryse* creates a microcosm of urban life on the island of Montreal that exposes the inner lives of her characters through the fantastic images of the city that filter into her representation. Rejecting the statehood and centrality that was the dream of radical and central political thought in Montreal and its architecture, her literary world, even in the limits it creates, touches on the perceptual expanse of cinematic exploration in the disillusionment of the 1970s. I argue that Noël creates an image of Montreal that attempts to see the post-60s city without scale, as an environment where there are no longer possibilities for expansion. Anticipating the retreat of urban ambitions in the 1980s, *Maryse* is an example of representational editing of the city. By altering the perspective of the narrative so that the microcosm of private life becomes the macro-level driver of the representation of the

²⁸ Sherry Simon, "Introduction," *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of the Divided City* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006), 1-27.

city in *Maryse*, Noël's novel immerses the reader in a version of Montreal that expresses the richness of the grand scale image of the city through personal relationships.

Marseille

Of the three cities addressed in this project, Marseille is, by most definitions, the most problematically Francophone. It is geographically and politically a part of the French hexagon, but also, as both a Mediterranean port involved in colonial trade economies and the metropolitan point of arrival for postcolonial immigrants, a colonial city on the other side of the colonizer/colonized paradigm from Casablanca. Marseille, furthermore, lacks the need to establish an identity through the kind of linguistic and cultural nationalism that is so present in Montreal. However, as a city that straddles the center-periphery dichotomy that this project seeks to address, and as an urban environment that, so long as Paris continues to serve as the model for the French city, is historically and contemporarily outside of that particular metropolitan model, the representation of Marseille addresses problems of image similar to those of Casablanca and Montreal.

Jean-Claude Izzo's late-1990s *polar* detective novels draw on the representational conventions of *noir* fiction to provide a rich portrait of Marseille at the end of the last century. With the sea as its point of focus, the city itself establishes a subjective position. This perspective allows the text to address the way in which the fabric of the port city, in particular the gateway to the French Mediterranean, fluctuates in the reflection of an idealized Orient. *Polar*, as an urban genre, provides its readers with a fascinating sense of closeness to the city streets. It addresses the city as an inhabited abstraction and allows me to ask how, in this final chapter, images break down in the attempt to see the multiplicities of urban space, how movement both spatial and temporal confirms the cinematic spatial immersion that illuminates the borders of the literary representation of the city.

As Alain Guillemin points out, the *polar marseillais*, first appearing on the French literary scene in the 1990s, represents not only part of a re-emergence of the *polar* in France at the end of the last century, but an attempt on the part of certain authors of the genre, including Izzo, to assert a diverse and vibrant *marseillais* identity and critique the rise of the

extreme right in the region, a political shift with serious consequences for Marseille and its many immigrant inhabitants:

D'une part, qu'ils [the authors] soient nés à Marseille ou qu'ils l'aient choisie par élection, qu'ils y résident ou s'en soient éloignés, ils revendiquent une identité marseillaise qui se traduit par l'affirmation d'un fort attachement à une ville injustement calomniée. D'autre part, inscrits ou non dans des réseaux militants, ils rejettent violemment l'extrême droite.
[On the one hand, whether they were born in Marseille or whether they chose it, whether they live in the city or away from it, they support a Marseille identity that comes out in the affirmation of a strong attachment to an unjustly slandered city. On the other hand, whether or not they are part of militant movements, they violently reject the far right]²⁹

While it was a major shipping port throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth-century, Marseille's fortunes have declined significantly in recent years. This is due to a combination of factors, including continuing intense centralization of the French economy in Paris; the decline of industrial production in the region; the evaporation of colonial trade after the decolonization of North Africa in the 1960s; and the fact that the port of Marseille has lagged behind other European shipping centers in updating its facilities.³⁰ The general depression of the local economy led to the proliferation of the kinds of organized crime that provide the source of much of the action in Izzo's work as well as exacerbating social tensions in a city which, in the 1990s, experienced conflict between its large immigrant population and growing political support for the far right.

Izzo's fragmentation of the historical image of Marseille, his interest in the ways in which the city's image so often exists in spite of an absence of visual, material, support, anticipates the form that recent changes to the city's waterfront have taken. His Marseille *polars* offer a reading of the city that includes its relationship to Algiers as well as Paris, refracting colonial and postcolonial projections of the French city in a metaphorical relationship that connects urban space to the Mediterranean Sea. I argue that the stylistic conventions of *noir* and *polar*, as well as the nature of Marseille's built environment, are crucial to the novels' ability to interact with the city in this way.

²⁹ Alain Guillemin, "Le polar 'marseillais': reconstitution d'une identité locale et constitution d'un sous-genre," *a contrario* 1, no. 1 (2003) : 48.

³⁰ See Saskia Sassen *Cities in a World Economy*.

Conclusion

The works of literature I will discuss in the following chapters offer novelistic ways of seeing and image making as reactions to both the visual and atmospheric qualities of the cities they represent and to politics and language in their historical context. From the prototypical colonial city as the site of experimentation in architecture, urbanism, and cultural definition that we find in Casablanca to the late twentieth-century Euro-Mediterranean site of immigration and essentialist French nationalism that is Marseille in the late 1990s, the three cities discussed here span the history of French urbanism in the twentieth-century. Montreal, meanwhile, is a case in which the distorted scales of 1960s architectural vision and the complicated relationships between minority status, language, and nationalism that shaped Quebec's Francophone political scene through the middle of the last century. All three are examples of urban experiences outside of Paris' orbit but within a history of French control. As such, they can be represented as much in terms of divergence from the idea of the Parisian prototype as in terms of continuities of history, migration and association.

The cities that set the parameters of this dissertation are sites of urban and literary engagement that challenges hard and fast ideas of centrality that privilege the example of economic and political capitals in discussions of urbanism, architecture, and visual and narrative representations of the city. Instead, the convergences that I will explore in my analyses of these novelistic imaginings of Casablanca, Montreal, and Marseille, when seen as possible points of focus in observations of distinctly secondary urban examples, offer misdirection and refraction rather than reflecting the visual landscape of the built environment. This project is a way of discussing the nature of representation, a creative process that is involved in multiple moves between interiors and exteriors, between what is imagined and perceived, between what is public and private, fiction and surface. Interiors in the chapters that follow will be architectural (house, church, shopping center, cinema), psychological (interior monologue), textual (inside the text), and social (inside language, class, ethnic or national group). Exteriors will include the natural environment that shapes the city, the social context, history, the realities of the reader and of the city in different

representational situations, and the vague beyond, the world exists as a possibility outside of the total urban reality of the city contained within the pages of a novel on which it appears. In the movements between these, the representation of the city in the novels, the ways in which they engage with the acts of seeing that create an urban image fracture the wholeness of Francophone literature as much as they refract the cities that they would seem to reflect.

I. Casablanca

In literary depictions of the Moroccan city of the late Protectorate period, the first novels of Driss Chraïbi and Abdelkebir Khatibi (*Le passé simple* and *La mémoire tatouée: autobiographie d'un décolonisé*) can be cited as their author's attempts to come to terms with the possibility of a transition from the subjectivity of colonial modernity to what Khatibi references as a decolonized version of the self, one that embraces aspects of European modernism and technological modernization while rejecting the ideology that accompanied their entrance into Moroccan society. Of these two examples, Chraïbi has been seen as the more problematic: the protagonist of *Le passé simple* rejects not only the restrictions of his life in Casablanca during the Second World War, but also the religion and traditions of his father, preferring the Europeaness of his *lycée* classmates. This reading is a simplistic one, not least because it ignores the irony and humor of Chraïbi's work. His protagonist, the adolescent Driss, cannot be understood solely through his relationship to his authoritarian father, aptly referred to as "Seigneur" throughout the novel. We should also consider the physical structures that hold the father's influence, surrounding his rebellious son: the house where this traditional family lives surrounded by signs of modernity (telephone, electric lights, concrete walls); their neighborhood in the Habous (Casablanca's new *medina* and an early application of French colonial urbanism to the needs of the city's Moroccan Muslim population); and the city itself, an ever-growing expression of French ambition fueled both by metropolitan investment and by local opportunism. These particulars of the novel's setting position its story of teenaged rebellion and its critique of tradition in the context of a city built on image and influence.

Part of the interest in addressing the representation of Casablanca, as opposed to other sites of French urban development in the colonial Maghreb, is the fact that the city's historical divergence from pre-colonial urbanism in Morocco allows for alternative readings of early postcolonial Francophone literature. Like the French language in this context, Casablanca in the colonial and early postcolonial context is a site that reveals a complex

interweaving of French and Moroccan interests. Language, meanwhile, provides a background to the critique of colonial urbanism present in both Chraïbi and Khatibi. Farid Laroussi has described the use of French by writers from the Maghreb as a decision that puts the subversion of their postcolonial subjectivity at odds with the place that the language holds in the politics of their countries of origin. "The cruel irony is that Maghrebi Francophone writing is a wandering language that becomes lost the closer it gets to home."³¹ Laroussi describes the dynamics that affect the reception of literature in a language that is often forced, by virtue of literacy levels, linguistic instruction, and political realities, to the elite margins of Maghrebi society.³² This is in contrast to the position this same literature holds in relation to French literary history, a position that places the writing of Francophone Maghrebi authors in response to the role of Enlightenment ideals of humanism in the civilizing mission of French colonialism. As Laroussi puts it, for Francophone writers from the Maghreb, "...their use of the French language does not so much override its humanistic content as it negates the historicity and ends of the colonial language itself. Little wonder that on a purely conceptual basis their works do not invoke, let alone exalt, French literature *per se*."³³ The language of this body of literature thus breaks with a certain literary history as well as with local tradition and the majority language of contemporary urban life.

In the novels I will discuss in this chapter, this background of linguistic politics encounters the differently articulated tensions of the French and Moroccan aspects of the urban experience present in the image of Casablanca. As a representation of the power of the French Protectorate, the city must be rejected by the pro-independence Moroccan text. However, like the place occupied by the literature Laroussi describes, Casablanca, which is both the largest city in post-independence Morocco and the one of the proportionally largest

³¹ Farid Laroussi, "When Francophone Means National: The Case of the Maghreb," *Yale French Studies*, 103 (2003): 85.

³² In Morocco, for instance, these dynamics have resulted in a country that, at the turn of the twentieth century, was characterized by what Laroussi describes as a "schizophrenic" language policy. The official language of government is Arabic, while public schools offer bilingual instruction in French and Arabic. Meanwhile, French is the dominant language of business and media, and the private schools attended by the children of the country's elite are, in general, still enclaves where French reigns as the language of instruction.

³³ *ibid* 86

examples of French colonial urbanism in the Maghreb, is caught in the tension between the legacy of French colonialism and the possibilities of Moroccan independence. The city maintains this position as a consequence of its modern architecture and urban design, which announce an early twentieth-century dream for Casablanca's future, but which make this announcement in the language of French colonialism, a language difficult to translate into Moroccan postcolonialism.

Seen through the French prose of Independence-era writers, Casablanca is a confluence of what the architectural historian Jean-Louis Cohen calls the competing complementary influences of modernism and modernization viewed through the aesthetic and the administrative aspects of the city's design:

[...]colonies are, just like areas back home, territories where *modernization* and *modernity* are each constructed and oppose each other, as distinct but parallel phenomena. Social modernization there does not necessarily occur in tandem with processes that are modern in aesthetic terms. Conversely, radical aesthetics can serve socially conservative policies...³⁴

Modernization, as Cohen uses the term here, refers to the changes wrought by the French colonial government on the social and urban fabric of the colonial city. A key aspect of the civilizing project of French imperialism, modernization was cast as a way to bring European advancements to less modern cultures. While it was in essence an exercise in cultural hierarchy that used difference as a means of justifying French governance, in cities modernization meant infrastructural development that included planning, sanitation, and transportation. While these changes to the structure of the city in the colonial context imposed the authoritarian policies of imperialism (policies that exploited local populations and devalued local cultures in ways that have been well documented),³⁵ they also improved

³⁴ Jean-Louis Cohen, "Architectural History and the Colonial Question: Casablanca, Algiers and Beyond," *Architectural History* 49 (2006): 355

³⁵ While Gwendolyn Wright's work touches on this issue in her descriptions of the authoritarian design principles of the colonial city, these issues were perhaps most obvious in the culture of display, both architectural and human, that surrounded the colonial exhibitions and world's fairs of the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth century. See Patricia Morton *Hybrid Modernities* for insight into the conditions of the French example as well as Dider Daeninckx's novel *Cannibale* (1998), which provides a fictional account of the experiences of the Kanaks brought to Paris from New Caledonia as part of the 1931 *Exposition Coloniale*. The work of Saloni Mathur and Zeynep Çelik provides excellent analyses and theorizations of the intersections between colonial and Orientalist constructs

basic conditions of urban life in ways that, for example, put the colonial city ahead of the metropole in terms of working class housing. Colonial modernization brought together, as Cohen points out, ideas about the technological possibilities for a more habitable city with conservative policies that severely limited the autonomy of the people whose lives were supposed to be improved.

Modernism, as an aesthetic term associated with class politics in its European context, has its ideological basis challenged when it becomes the aesthetic of choice for the colonial government. As Cohen points out, there is nothing to prevent radical aesthetics from serving socially conservative policies, even as processes of modernization that improve conditions of life do not necessarily have to come clothed in the aesthetics of modernism. Casablanca as a modernist colonial city forces critical consideration of the ways both these terms – the technological/social and aesthetic – are affected by the political context within which they are able to gain a hold. Modernism is formal liberation from the ornamentation of the Beaux Arts in architecture and visual media and a break with the constraints of literary style that becomes a means of breaking with literary history for the writers of the Francophone texts that I will address here. Yet in the particular context of the colonial city in Morocco, and especially in Casablanca, formal modernism stands in contrast to the traditional city as evidence of the French control of urban space. In my analysis of these representations of Casablanca, the modernist aesthetics of the city's architecture force Driss Chraïbi, Abdelkebir Khatibi, and their readers to confront the complicated relationship between colonialism, modernism, modernization, and independence that runs through their relationship with the colonial city.

As this chapter moves from an outline of the historical conditions that affect Casablanca's image in colonial and postcolonial contexts to the complicated articulations of public and private urbanity in *Le passé simple*, this tangle of influences will become a fundamental aspect of the representational stakes of the French language literature that, in

of race and culture and display practices in India and Turkey, respectively, that is useful in understanding dynamics that are also present in the French context.

the years before and after Moroccan Independence, confronted the city's place in the emergent nation. My analysis of these concepts in the context of the representation of Casablanca in Chraïbi's *Le passé simple* and Khatibi's *La mémoire tatouée: autobiographie d'un décolonisé* will be the main focus of this chapter. I will begin, however, with an overview of the city's development under the French Protectorate. By establishing key aspects of colonial architecture and urban design in the city, my aim is to provide critical and historical context to the literary discussion. As I move into the image of the city developed by the novels, it will be important to keep in mind the subtle nature of the historical difference between conditions in Morocco when *Le passé simple* was published in 1954, the same year as Morocco's independence, and the publication of Khatibi's *La Mémoire tatouée* in 1971. While both texts situate their representations of Casablanca during the colonial period, the context that surrounds their publication allows us to see their authors in political situations on either side of a major period of decolonization. Chraïbi's text speaks to the nationalism that emerged from a period of often violent protests in Moroccan cities (especially Casablanca), followed by the relatively peaceful hand-over of power from the French administration to Morocco's king: Khatibi's arrives on the tail end of a wide-spread series of decolonization movements and, perhaps most importantly, after the end of the bloody Algerian War, which tore apart Morocco's neighbor from 1954 until 1962. Part of my aim here is to re-situate the critical work that followed the novels' receptions in the light of conditions of colonial modernism and modernity shaped Casablanca under the Protectorate and made for contradictory readings and representations of the city's form in the years surrounding independence.

As I move into my reading of the ways in which first Chraïbi and then Khatibi address the place of modernism in writing and independence through their representations of Casablanca, I approach *Le passé simple* in terms of the relationships between house, neighborhood, city, and territory that run through Chraïbi's first novel. Connecting the house and the city, Chraïbi's text allows me to explore the ways in which the ambiance of domestic and urban life in the novel parallels administrative and architectural strategies under the

Protectorate. The pervasive influences of patriarchy and modernity, rather than the authoritarian characterization of tradition that critics normally identify in Chraïbi's text, inform the way the novel addresses issues of territorial ownership and organization. *Le passé simple* offers us the opportunity for a complex investigation of the colonial nature of authenticity in the modernist city.

This discussion of Chraïbi's novel provides a new framework for reading the short Casablanca section from Khatibi's *La mémoire tatouée*. This later text provides a more direct and concentrated visual representation of Casablanca as Khatibi's narrator attempts to explain the reasons for his dislike of the city. Khatibi's experimental prose works against what he sees as the Cartesian logics of power in the colonial city in an attempt to undo the cultural hierarchies embedded in the organization of space in Morocco under the Protectorate. Going through the geometric language common to both texts, I argue that their representations of the city are part of a broader attempt, particularly evident in Khatibi's writing on art and poetry, to make at least some aspects of aesthetic modernism accessible to the postcolonial or, rather, decolonized, artist.

I will end by considering the legacy of these attempts and their relation to the contemporary image of Casablanca. Nour Eddine Lakhmari's 2008 *nouveau noir* film *Casanegra*, I argue that the ruins of the precarious city sit at the crossroads between speculative ambition and unregulated cultural invasion, the sights and sounds of the city in flux. Theoretically, I take the position that an atmospherics of colonialism is as important to the image of Casablanca as the sense of the city as entity. Complicated power dynamics that defy attempts of classification in terms of colonizer/colonized relationships resulted in conflicting attitudes towards modernism, modernization, and modernity in the work of Moroccan writers of decolonization. Indeed, it is the creation of an atmosphere rather than the analysis of the structure of the city – a kind of urban sensory perception as opposed to sociological or aesthetic consciousness – that Chraïbi describes as contributing to his protagonist's youthful rebellion. For Khatibi, this atmosphere takes the form of a neutral, unfeeling sense of chaos in the city. Both explore the ways in which the colonial context

yields an imitative, as opposed to innovative, aesthetics in a city where design impulses tend both towards an embrace of modernism and an ethnographic approach to traditional Moroccan life. These complications of politics and aesthetics exclude Casablanca from the abstract and geometric models that Khatibi in particular sees as infused with life and actively modern when they appear in the pre-colonial art, the abstract, non-figural traditions of both Arab and Berber art in Morocco liberating modernist forms from colonial ideas of race and power.

A Growing Metropolis

Situated on Morocco's Atlantic coast, Casablanca has been the country's primary port since the early twentieth-century. As such, the city has served as a key player in Morocco's economy and its connection to French and European markets. It is also the country's largest urban area, a raucous and sprawling city characterized by both its distinctive architecture and by its *bidonvilles*, the vast shantytowns and squatter settlements that encircle it, stretching along the highway and rail line that connect Casablanca to the capital of Rabat, just up the coast. Though most of the original *medina*, the Moroccan city that preceded French development, and of the *mellah*, the city's original Jewish quarter, still stand, the greater part of the city is the product of twentieth-century expansions undertaken by French architects and urban planners.

Prior to the Protectorate, Casablanca was a growing fishing and trading port, though not a major royal or ceremonial city. The city's original *medina*, small in comparison with those of Fez and Marrakech, both important cities in the pre-colonial Moroccan monarchy, seems smaller still in comparison to Casablanca's sprawling twentieth-century development. From a population of around 700 in 1836, the city had grown to 20,000 by 1907, including 1,000 Europeans. On the eve of the Protectorate in 1912, the population of the entire city was on the order of some 59,000. By the end of French rule, the city had surpassed 1,000,000 inhabitants.³⁶ As historian Gwendolyn Wright has described it, the city in its early

³⁶ Statistics for the city's population up to 1912 are taken from Rabinow, *French Modern*, 304. Rabinow highlights the fact that this rapid growth was part of a period of exceptional prosperity in the

history under French control was “...not much more than a scruffy village, its expansion due to recent European migration, not to long-standing royal patronage.”³⁷ In the French colony, developments along the Atlantic coast placed political and economic power at the place where goods and resources from the mountains and inland cities met the ships that would take them to markets in France and the rest of Europe. While development in the Mediterranean cities of Algiers and Tunis restructured longstanding trade routes around new systems of empire, Morocco’s Atlantic coast represented the opening of a new shipping corridor from Morocco to France’s western ports.³⁸

The coastal cities not only supported the increase in the traffic of goods and people; their form represented the French vision for Morocco, anchored in a region of intense colonial development and modernization along the coast and especially between Casablanca and Rabat.³⁹ In short, “For the French, Morocco offered a chance to create *de novo* a vision of the contemporary metropolis as a clean, efficient, and elegant setting.”⁴⁰ This new image, executed by Lyautey’s administration, brought planners and architects to Morocco to execute projects that met less resistance in the colonies than in French cities. However, it would be a mistake to see Casablanca as purely a laboratory for urban innovation. Exchanges of ideals between the colony and the metropole and among various parts of the colonial world were constant. Additionally, the concept of association, which sought to geographically and aesthetically separate new development (and European migrants) from preserved *medinas* (and their residents), influenced strategies addressing

city, one in which land speculation lead property prices rise higher than those in Paris (305).

Estimations for the city’s 1950s population come from Cohen and Eleb, *Mythes*, 286.

³⁷ Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 94.

³⁸ While Casablanca served as an important trade hub in the nineteenth-century, creating the France-Casablanca Atlantic connection was one of the aims of Lyautey’s early administration. For a discussion of this evolution, see Oussman, Rabinow, and Wright.

³⁹ Susan Oussman points to the ways in which the city’s different urban history continues to affect narratives of belonging in the late twentieth-century city. “When people in Casablanca insist that their city has no past, they mean that pictures of the past fail to link their own experiences to meaningful stories about the city as [it is] today. Casablanca is the largest city in Morocco, but much of what goes on there can appear meaningless if placed within historical frameworks of urban life in Morocco.” Susan Oussman, *Picturing Casablanca: Portraits of Power in the Modern City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 22.

⁴⁰ Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 88

growing Moroccan as well as European populations in Casablanca. Still, the rhetoric of experimentation brought to the idea of Casablanca as a model city a sense of optimism at the possibilities for the new metropolis.

The first master plan for Casablanca was put into place under the administration of Marechal Hubert Lyautey, who served as Morocco's Governor General from the beginning of the Protectorate in 1912 until 1924. French urbanist Henri Prost based his design for the city on newly developed ideas of functionalist zoning, ordering the territory around the small port and original Moroccan Muslim and Jewish quarters of the pre-conquest city according to use. Wide boulevards ran from the port to the heart of the European neighborhoods: factories, modern docks, a large train station, and commercial and residential areas all had their place in his plan. Architects including Albert Laprade designed the monuments and neighborhoods that shaped the early version of the city to combine modern forms and materials with shapes and decorative elements that recalled the traditional architecture of Morocco's *medinas*. European apartments sported *zillij* tiled details on their façades, integrating local geometric decoration into building types that would have been easily recognized by the city's European residents. Laprade was at the forefront of this trend, integrating local structural and organizational elements, as well as ornamentation, into his designs for both European and Moroccan residents in the city.⁴¹

„ The difference between Lyautey's approach in Morocco and that of the colonial government in Algeria should not be ignored. This difference can be accounted for by a change in the administrative style of French territory in North Africa between the establishment of the Algerian colony following the French invasion of 1830 and the beginning of the French Protectorate in Morocco in 1912.⁴² While in Algeria an ideal of assimilation opened the door for proposals like Le Corbusier's never-built redesign of Algiers (which included the destruction of the city's historic city, the Kasbah), in Morocco the focus

⁴¹ See Jean-Louis Cohen and Monique Eleb, "Questions de style," *Casablanca: Mythes et figures d'une aventure urbaine* (Paris: Hazan, 1998), 149-155, *Casablanca: Colonial Myths and Architectural Ventures*, "Issues of Style," (New York: Monacelli Press, 2002), 159-167.

⁴² Jean-Louis Cohen, "Architectural History and the Colonial Question: Casablanca, Algiers and Beyond," *Architectural History* 49 (2006), 357

shifted to preservation and the division of space. Preservation of historic cities included taking traditional spatial divisions – according to which a large urban Jewish population inhabited the *mellah* or Jewish quarter of the Maghrebi city – as the model for the segregation of colonial space. While the borders between these religious neighborhoods were often porous, allowing for communication and exchange between communities, under the Protectorate policies of separation and preservation, especially from the influence of a growing population of French and other European residents, attempted to limit spatial and social interrelationships. The colonial administration used zoning regulations to control patterns of habitation and encouraged community governance along traditional lines.

Part of the associationist policy that Lyautey adopted for the administration and planning of Moroccan cities in the early twentieth-century involved preserving those aspects of traditional culture and society deemed worthwhile by the French colonial government.

According to Patricia Morton:

Lyautey believed that by preserving local ways of life, association could sponsor the renewal of indigenous culture and the creation of a modern, prosperous colonial state. To this end, he left existing Moroccan cities intact and built new European cities contiguous to them; he retained the traditional Moroccan government, although under indirect French control; and he encouraged indigenous arts and crafts through schools and workshops set up by the French.⁴³

This kind of preservation dictated the form of the colonial city in Morocco. Marrakech is perhaps the best example of this particular philosophy of urban design, with its *ville nouvelle* and *medina* originally divided by a space of undeveloped land, clearly visible in early aerial photographs of the area. In Casablanca, however, the limited size of the original *medina* combined with the administration's ambitious vision for the future of the colonial port made this sort of preservation in isolation impossible.

Here, restrictions could only go so far, and the reality of the colonial city was much more complicated than the clean divisions of its regulation suggest. In Casablanca, European immigrants sought out the more exotic accommodations of the historical city, while wealthy Moroccans built houses in the affluent Anfa neighborhood that integrated local and

⁴³ Morton, *Hybrid Modernities*, 189-190

European forms of domestic architecture.⁴⁴ As Casablanca's Moroccan population grew too large to be housed in its *medina*, even at extreme densities, this approach played a key role in the design of both European and Moroccan neighborhoods in Casablanca. Developments designed for the local population, in particular the Habous district, constructed in stages from the 1920s to the 1940s and designed by Laprade, took advantage of city's housing needs to illustrate the possibilities for traditional design and modern infrastructure as an architectural argument for the benefits of French influence on the Moroccan city. In this new *medina*, Laprade organized the space of the neighborhood around an idealized version of traditional Morocco (public fountains and a communal oven in addition to a mosque and Quaranic school). The infrastructure was decidedly modern, while its aesthetics privileged those aspects of vernacular architecture prized by the modernists.⁴⁵ In Casablanca's development, the Habous highlights the ways in which the first French architects in the city experimented with modernism's relationship to traditional forms. The neighborhood provides a mid-way point in the transition from arabesque details to formal abstraction in colonial modernism based on the spatial organization of traditional areas of Casablanca.

Colonial architects could see in these new developments a kind of homecoming for the modernist cubical volumes that drew on the style of the houses of Moroccan *medinas*.⁴⁶ During the 1930s and 1940s, Casablanca began to change in both style and form as it adapted to house Moroccan and European populations of increasing diversity. As Jean-Louis Cohen makes clear, the new forms accounted for patterns of life and innovation that included programmatic expectations for domestic space that took on specific meaning in the colonial context. "From now on it was less a matter of vocabularies of ornament than of spatial arrangements and volumetric configurations that moved towards a less narrative and

⁴⁴ Cohen and Eleb provide excellent documentation of the remaining early and mid-twentieth century villas in this wealthy Casablanca quarter in *Les mille et une villes de Casablanca*, (Courbevoie : ACR, 2003)

⁴⁵ For a discussion of the connections between modernist aesthetics and 20th century Orientalism, see Zeynep Çelik, "Le Corbusier, Orientalism, Islam," *Assemblage* 17 (1992): 58-77

⁴⁶ Cohen and Eleb, *Mythes et figures*, 195-198

more abstract kind of architecture, but also towards one more mindful of local lifestyles.”⁴⁷

This mindfulness, which the challenges of the Habous district revealed to the architects and planners of Casablanca’s expanding city, was partially responsible for the shift in attention from ornamentation to volume that Cohen describes. The architectural structure and organization of buildings designed in this period show a greater affinity for the forms, as well as the decoration, of traditional Moroccan buildings. Administratively, the different populations of colonial Casablanca might have been distinct, but architecturally they grew closer together as architectural modernism infiltrated the city.

It is important to acknowledge the extent to which fascination with the potential of modernist forms was born out of conditions of inequality that shaped early development in Maghrebian cities under French control. Aesthetic interventions are limited in their ability to effect political situations, and in Casablanca under the Protectorate systematic divisions between populations were an administrative, rather than purely spatial, condition of life for the city’s residents. Official zoning laws restricted the ability of residents, especially Muslim Moroccans, to purchase property outside of their assigned sections of the city. As Wright points out, in architectural discourse coming out of French colonies in the Maghreb:

[...] modernism meant a celebration of the new unornamented aesthetic as inherently progressive. Architectural modernists in North Africa associated equality with a standardized formula for architecture. They did not admit that colonialism inevitably prevented equality, no matter what kind of architecture was built.⁴⁸

This lapse should be seen as integral to understanding not only the way in which the city became an important focus for nationalist politics in the post-war period, but also as the crux of Casablanca’s colonial image and the visible shape of the city. As the citations of the local and exotic disappeared from new buildings in Casablanca in the 1940s and 1950s, the attitude towards the local population shifted from one of ordering to one of observation.

After the Second World War, Michel Ecochard, who took over the city’s urban plan in 1949, brought the aesthetics, ideals, and methodology of the *Congrès international de l’architecture moderne* (CIAM) to the last large-scale projects that would be undertaken

⁴⁷ Cohen, “Architectural History,” 352.

⁴⁸ Wright, *Politics of Design*, 138-139

before the end of the Protectorate.⁴⁹ Attempting to address the chaotic urbanism that had overtaken Prost's city, Ecochard re-configured Casablanca's architectural and planning structures. Influenced in part by his collaboration with archeologists as a planner and architect in the French administration of Syria, he came to the Moroccan project focused on applying scientific principles to the city's post-war housing problems.⁵⁰ As Nathalie De Mazi describes it, this early work formed the foundation of Ecochard's attitude towards historical and vernacular forms in colonial architecture:

In [Ecochard's] second work as an architect [...] [a house built in conjunction with the restoration of the Azem palace in Syria], he gave his interpretation of history, and built with a resolutely modern vocabulary, a logical and sensitive continuation to the existing buildings, a continuation which excluded any use of 'pastiche' or copy however [sic] bearing signs and traces of Syrian architecture.⁵¹

This attitude towards the historical is evident in his own writings on the subject, particularly a short study on geometry and monumental forms in the Mediterranean region, *Filiation de monuments grecs, byzantins et islamiques: une question de géométrie*. In the preface to the published text, Ecochard describes himself as:

[...] un architecte de mon temps, mais je ne voudrais pas qu'une étiquette m'écrase : je ne puis me limiter à notre époque et, refusant tout titre permettant de définir une école, j'aimerais vous faire participer à ma remontée dans le temps, étant certain, si vous me suivez, que seules resteront pour vous les idées, et que temps et espace disparaîtront par l'unicité que nous trouverons dans l'expression matérielle de la pensée humaine, développée sous toutes les latitudes et dans des siècles indistincts.

[...an architect of my time. But I do not wish to be crushed by a label: I cannot limit myself to our era. Refusing any title that might allow the definition of a school, I would like you to accompany my voyage in time. I am certain, if you follow me, that only ideas will remain with you, and that time and space will disappear in the unity that we shall find in the material expression of human thought, developed along all latitudes and in indistinct centuries.]⁵²

⁴⁹ For a history of CIAM in France and its colonies, see Catherine Blaine's "Team 10: The French Context", via Team 10 Online <http://www.team10online.org/research/papers/delft2/blain.pdf>. For a detailed account of Ecochard's involvement in post-war urbanism in Casablanca, see Cohen and Eleb *Colonial Myths* "Michel Ecochard's Controversial Urbanism," 301-323.

⁵⁰ See Eric Verdeil "Michel Ecochard in Lebanon and Syria: The Spread of Modernism, the Building of the Independent States, and the rise of Local Professionals of Planning," *Published Proceedings European Association in Urban History 12th Conference* (Lyon, France 2008) and the catalogue for the 2014 exhibition at the Canadian Centre for Architecture "How Architects, Experts, Politicians, International Agencies, and Citizens Negotiate Modern Planning: Casablanca Chandigarh" <http://www.cca.qc.ca/en/exhibitions/1984-how-architects-experts-politicians-international-agencies>

⁵¹ Nathalie De Mazi, "Homage," 23 available via the archives of the *Model House* project Transcultural Modernism <http://www.transculturalmodernism.org/>

⁵² Michel Ecochard, *Filiation de monuments grecs, byzantins et islamiques: une question de géométrie*, (Paris: Librairie Orientalist Paul Geuthner, 1977), 11

Ecochard presented his research on the settlement patterns in Casablanca's *bidonvilles*, the basis for his proposed housing design and suburban plan for the city, as the head of GAMMA (*Groupe d'architectes modernes marocains*) at the 1953 CIAM conference in Aix-en-Provence.⁵³ The universalism of his vision and the intense observational rigor that accompanied his strategies for Casablanca were translated into a modernist ideal of simplicity of form with an ethnographic edge. Whereas the architects of the Habous district had attempted to replicate the formal arrangements of the traditional Moroccan city, Ecochard focused on understanding the patterns of life of rural Moroccans. His methodology was archeological and ethnographic, and his architecture was intended to be culturally specific. Ecochard's residential developments remain a defining feature of Casablanca's urban architecture and a model for contemporary projects in the city.

At the end of the colonial period Casablanca projected a fading image of colonial possibility. As the independence movement gained momentum, the clarity of vision of Lyautey, Prost, and the city's early architects clashed with the complications of urban migration and colonial planning that made Casablanca the center of the Protectorate economy. The formal elements of the city were too invested with French ideas for Moroccan modernity to produce post-independent images of an urban future. Instead, the structure of the city under colonial urban policy became a breaking point for the mounting wave of nationalist sentiment in Morocco. Wright's commentary provides a succinct assessment of the situation: "...cultural identity, embodied in the particularity of a city, soon became a self-conscious force which fueled nationalism."⁵⁴ As the remaining sections of this chapter will show, the representative aspects of the colonial city collide with aesthetics of representation in French in the early postcolonial Moroccan texts addressed here. The tension between what can be read into the image of the city through colonial politics and what can be extrapolated and repurposed on the basis of form undermines colonizer/colonized

⁵³ See the archives at Transcultural Modernism for images and materials related to this period in Ecochard's career.

⁵⁴ Wright, *Politics of Design*, 303

dichotomies in Casablanca. We are left with a new framework for considering the dynamics of the city and the complications of living past the politics of modernist colonial planning.

Simple Past, Complex Modernities

Casablanca was a colonial city that existed within a double image, and its plan was designed to be seen and read by parallel populations: European and local. Even within the rhetoric of French colonial promotion, the advantages of the new city were characterized differently for the European and native populations. Cohen and Eleb describe the image on popular postcard bringing together these two perspectives on the city through the frame of the traditional Moroccan gate. “Par l’arcade en trou de serrure d’une porte traditionnelle, la ville apparaît à la fois comme le seuil du Maroc pour les Européens et comme la promesse d’un emploi et d’une certaine modernité pour les ruraux marocains.” [...glimpsed through the keyhole arch of a traditional gate, the city is portrayed both as the European threshold to Morocco and as the place where rural Moroccans could find work and a certain degree of modernity.]⁵⁵ Local architecture serves as a symbolic bridge for both populations: for the European tourist, it offers exotic flavor to the comforts of the modern city, while for the Moroccan worker it promises a continuity of cultural experience within the promise of industrial labor. It was the French mandate not simply to maintain buildings of cultural and architectural significance, but to control trade and commerce in the *medina*, creating experiences of luxury and authenticity for visitors while bringing Moroccans to the heart of the colonial project through the promise of employment.

Whereas in historic cities like Fez and Marrakech preservation focused on buildings that fit within the narrative of dynastic and religious authority and the traditional economic structure laid out for the Moroccan people by Lyautey’s administration in Rabat, Casablanca was the promise of the future engineered by colonialism.⁵⁶ When it came to leisure activities, the commercial aspect of Casablanca’s development came to the fore. From the Habous district to themed beach pavilions, the European experience was accounted for in

⁵⁵ Cohen and Eleb, *Mythes et figures*, 201, 215.

⁵⁶ Stacy E. Holden, “The Legacy of French Colonialism: Preservation in Morocco’s Fez Medina,” *APT Bulletin* 39, no 4 (2008): 6.

consumable images of Moroccan culture.⁵⁷ This commercial city is the setting for Driss Chraïbi's first novel, *Le passé simple*, which takes as its protagonist Driss Ferdi, the *lycée*-educated adolescent son of a prominent tea merchant. While the dominant visualized space in the novel is the family house, the relationship between family, house, and city that Chraïbi's text describes provides a critical perspective on the intertwined conditions of tradition, modernity, and wealth that shape colonial society. From Driss' *lycée* in the European part of the city to the family house in the Habous district, *Le passé simple* imagines Casablanca as a city in which the possibilities of modernism that push its protagonist towards rebellion are stifled by the restrictions and hypocrisy of colonial modernism.

Danielle Marx-Scouras places the novel in a genealogy of Moroccan literature from the late colonial period through the 1960s and 1970s that includes Abdellatif Laâbi, Rachid Boujedra, and Abdelhak Serhane as well as Khatibi.⁵⁸ In her 1986 critical volume on Chraïbi's work, Houeria Kadra-Hadjadji condemns the author's first novel as "hostile aux thèses nationalistes" [hostile to nationalist arguments].⁵⁹ She is not the first to note the degree to which Chraïbi's work tends to position itself in opposition to traditional Moroccan society: the book was well-received in the conservative press for its perceived pro-French and pro-colonialism stance and rejected by Moroccan nationalists. Chraïbi himself at one point repudiated *Le passé simple*, succumbing to a critical reception that both embraced and rejected it on the basis of its perceived pro-French thesis.⁶⁰

But not all critics interested in *Le passé simple* agree that the novel takes a positive stance towards French influence in Morocco. The question is partly one of representation: to

⁵⁷ See Cohen and Eleb *Colonial Myths*, "Villas, Beachside Resorts, and Movie Theaters; Hedonism at Work," 393-339. For a discussion of the factors that contributed to the rise of beach tourism in the southern Mediterranean, which provides similar cultural dynamics to those between French tourists and the local population in Casablanca, see Waleed Hazbun, "Modernity on the beach: A postcolonial reading from southern shores," *Tourist Studies* 9 (2009): 203-223.

⁵⁸ Danielle Marx-Scouras "A Literature of Departure: The Cross-Cultural Writing of Driss Chraïbi," *Research in African Literatures* 23, no 2 (1992): 132.

⁵⁹ Houeria Kadra-Hadjadji, *Contestation et révolte dans l'oeuvre de Driss Chraïbi* (Paris: Publisud, 1986), 54.

⁶⁰ Marx-Scouras, "A Literature of Departure," 131.

what degree is an author writing in a particular political situation, especially colonial or postcolonial, expected or even required to take a particular position vis-à-vis history and cultural identity? In Morocco and elsewhere, Chraïbi's novel and the debates surrounding it continue to raise questions concerning literary creation and reception. As recently as 2008, Moroccan critic Said Graioud made use of Chraïbi's narrative of rebellious adolescence to ask questions about "who is entitled to represent Morocco's national culture, under what conditions and what kind of ideological positions they should have towards the country's national language, history and identity."⁶¹ Graioud argues that Chraïbi's early work provides a refutation to those who would argue that Moroccan writers have a responsibility to adhere to a narrow definition of nationalism in their work. While Graioud responds to this ideological constraint through the question of identity in relation to national subjectivity, we can also see his emphasis on the conditions or representation as asking the question of *where* to balance the question of *who* that is that stated focus of his discussion. For my part, I am less interested in the *who* of the identity politics surrounding *Le passé simple* than in ways in which *Le passé simple* uses the *where* invoked by the space of the house and of the city that surrounds it to place its protagonist within a representation of colonial dynamics.

While negative reactions to *Le passé simple* see it as Chraïbi's attempt to reveal the private abuses of the traditional family, the ways in which the dominant trope of the house relates to the city that surrounds it are often ignored. The connections between private and public spaces are not always stable. At times an extension of domestic space and thus subject to its hierarchies, the city also appears in contrast to the house's walled and ordered interior. The protagonist's father's influence as a prominent tea merchant filters Driss' experiences with the city and in particular his interactions with its other inhabitants. He must search for a place in which he might assert his identity as separate from his family. Despite the solidity of its walls, the house develops as an extendable atmosphere that influences the representation of the city as a whole.

⁶¹ Said Graioud, "We Have not Buried the *Simple Past*: The Public Sphere and Post-Colonial Literature in Morocco," *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 20, no. 2 (2008): 146.

The particular nature of the Ferdi house centers the novel's ideological argument on the domestic space, and should be read in the context of the conditions of creation of the house itself, and of its expression as both space and object within the novel. The material conditions of the house, as they are described, show it to be far from a precise condensation of traditional architectural and familial values. Instead, it is structure built of reinforced concrete; a high white building that faces the street, its windows pointing outward. The constant presence of a beggar in the street on which the house stands reinforces this relationship between inside and outside. The beggar's voice, echoing through the window in barking cries, calls to those on the other side of the walls, asking for an answer or an offering. The house remains in constant communication with the street, a relationship between interior and exterior that is atypical for traditional Arab architecture, which organizes open space in the centre of the house, with the result that most windows look inward onto a private courtyard. The descriptions of the house unsettle its ability to stand as a symbol of traditional life, combining the hierarchy of the family with details that distance the building from the conventions of local architecture. Located in the Habous district of the city, the family home is anchored in a French interpretation of traditional architecture adapted to the principles of modernization that governed early development in Casablanca. An entry point into Driss' world and the point from which his revolt into the city takes place, the Ferdi house is representative of a condition that combines modernity and tradition. It parallels the colonial impulses towards ossifying preservation and pejorative modernization that shaped Moroccan cities under the Protectorate. While the father's rhetoric and the architecture of the house — its divided spaces for husband, wife, and children organized into a hierarchy of relative privacy within the house — support an argument for Chraïbi's anti-traditional stance, its materiality and technology are of a piece with the modernization efforts that shaped the city's larger development.

As Cohen and Eleb have pointed out, Casablanca in its early years gradually shifted from a display of European modernity to an urban experiment in Moroccan modernism. The effect was one of architectural and decorative mimicry and appropriation, and as the new city

began to combine elements of this new style with the basic structures of European urbanism, “ces attitudes relèvent selon les cas du *mimétisme*, du *pastiche* ou de *l’adaption*.” [These approaches evolved out of *mimeticism*, *pastiche*, or *adaptation*.]⁶² Cohen and Eleb distinguish between these different forms of reference to local styles, identifying the ways in which different areas of the city and different eras of development sought connections to Moroccan vernacular architecture in different ways. While buildings in European areas of the city, which, especially in the 1920s and 1930s, showed similar layouts and orientation to their counterparts in Paris, were instances of borrowing through *pastiche* and adaptation, those destined to be inhabited by the indigenous population in Casablanca’s new Moroccan areas were more mimetic. Designs for houses in the Habous district mimicked the typologies and architectonics of traditional houses, though this was not an exercise in reproduction. “Inutile de dire qu’un tel mimétisme n’a que des rapports lointains avec les stratégies de *reproduction* bien illustrées par les bâtiments des expositions coloniales,” [Of course, this form bore only a distant relationship to the reproduction strategy so graphically illustrated in colonial exhibition buildings]⁶³ state Cohen and Eleb. In making this caveat, the historians imply not simply that the buildings of the colonial city exhibited visible differences from those of the exhibition, but that the conditions of reference, reproduction, and representation that surround the mimetic design of the Habous district are fundamentally different from those that surrounded the exhibits in Paris in 1931, when the metropole put colonialism on display in the Bois de Vincennes.⁶⁴

As part of the city at large, the Habous was an attempt to improve upon the structure of the *medina* while replicating its ambiance, allowing Moroccan urban life to continue to

⁶² Cohen and Eleb, *Mythes et figures*, 149, 161 original italics

⁶³ *ibid* 149, 161 original italics

⁶⁴ The *Exhibition coloniale* included exhibits from all of France’s colonial holdings, fantasias of local architecture and colonial infrastructure, often built to an exaggerated, monumental scale (a complete reconstruction of the Khmer temples of Angkor Wat, for example, and a traditional hut rendered in massive proportions that served as the Togo pavilion). The relationship between the exhibition, colonial policy, and the social, economic, technological, and architectural dynamics of the French metropole in the 1930s have been explored in recent scholarship on the fair. See Morton’s *Hybrid Modernities* as well as Catherine Hodier, “Decentering the Gaze at French Colonial Exhibitions,” in *Images and Empires: Visuality in Postcolonial Africa*, ed. Paul Stuart Landau and Deborah D. Kaspin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 229-248.

exist within an environment deemed authentic by its French architects. This is in contrast to the reproduction of exemplary vernacular architecture undertaken to represent these same conditions in the metropole, most evident in the crisis of authenticity and narrative that confronted the organizers of the colonial expositions.⁶⁵ Morton describes this as a process of museification. In the context of the exhibition, “The recreated environments produced, or attempted to produce, the ‘real’ context for the people and things brought from the colonies, aided by pavilions that ‘authentically’ reproduced indigenous architecture.”⁶⁶ In the context of the colonial city, the reverse side of this representational problem affects the integration of the architecture that arose from the crosspollination of modernist ideas and vernacular styles lead to a very different, more open and metaphoric, though still colonially dictated, sense of place. This is because, in the context of the city, the exemplary plan of the colonial administration encounters the realities of daily life, use, and activity in a local population that attempts to work to its own advantage even as it is restricted by the structurally imposed constraints of the colonial system. In the Habous, interpretations of spatial conditions by the architects of this new *medina* balanced the recreation of an authentic environment with the accommodation of the different activities of daily life.

This tension between the openness of the metaphor and the stagnation of its repetition in the colonial context reveals the extent to which ideas of both modernity and tradition were fundamental to the colonial project and the construction of the city. By drawing attention to both elements in descriptions of the house, Chraïbi’s text undermines the position of the father as a traditional archetype. The house is, above all, the center of his domain and the symbol of his influence and commercial success. Thus it is a structure built for durability, stability and immutability. “Lorsque le Seigneur a fait construire sa maison, il a

⁶⁵ This crisis was key to Lyautey’s concerns as the organizer of the exposition, his first official role after returning to France at the end of his term as Governor of Morocco. He was concerned that the exhibits educate their French visitors without falling into the trap of spectacle and exoticism while preserving the atmosphere of the colonial sites that were recreated as pavilions in the Bois de Vincennes. One strategy employed to achieve the desired effect was the different directives adopted for the interiors and exteriors of the pavilion buildings. While interiors were given over to modern, museum-style displays, exteriors attempted to recreate a feeling of the authentic colony that would permeate the exhibition grounds.

⁶⁶ Morton, *Hybrid Modernities*, 4.

voulu un édifice qui dure. L'escalier que je monte est en béton. Il me semble sentir s'écraser les os de mes pieds – je suis nu-pieds – mais personne ne m'entendra monter.” [When the Lord had his house built, he wanted a building that would last. The stairs that I climb are of concrete. I feel as if I were crushing the bones of my feet — I'm bare-foot but no one will hear me come up.]⁶⁷ This contradiction between the structure of the body – the cracking of fragile bones against harsh material – and of the house – durable concrete, the manufactured essence of modernism – create dissonance in Chraïbi's image. More than an anchor of tradition, the stability of the house takes the form of anchoring the family's progression within the conditions of colonial modernity, integrating the Ferdis into the contradictions of the systematic hypocrisy of a society in which form and appearance can be selectively read.

This is part of the unusualness of Chraïbi's argument, for it allows no part of the French image of the exotic to move out of the conditions of repetition perpetuated by colonialism. Zeynep Çelik's observation on the conditions of architecture in this case provides a succinct and insightful assessment of the situation:

However, the project [the Habous district] was more than a stylistic exercise; the architect's ambition was to integrate into his design 'values of ambiance' as well as a 'whole way of life.' The spatial and programmatic qualities adhered to these goals: there were narrow streets and courtyard houses, markets, neighborhood ovens, public baths, mosques, and Quaranic schools brought together in a stylistic integrity that had 'preserved everything respectable in the tradition.'⁶⁸

Questions of ambiance and atmosphere, defined as the intangible human aspect that accompanies architecture, infuses the physical structures of the Habous district with French administrative ideas of the appropriate and the authentic. Preserving social structures in the programmatic understanding of his new district, Laprade sought to create a version of modernism that would be compatible with the organizational policies that kept the larger original *medinas* of other Moroccan cities distinct in patterns of habitation as well as form.

⁶⁷ Driss Chraïbi, *Le passé simple*, (Paris: Denoël, 1954), 120. *The Simple Past*, trans. Hugh A. Harter, (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1990), 64.

⁶⁸ Zeynep Çelik, "Speaking Back to Orientalist Discourse," in *Orientalisms Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography*, ed. Jill Beaulieu and Mary Robers (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 33.

As much as Casablanca was the product of the strict zoning of Prost's plan, it was also a city produced by an idea of the non-architectural aspects of urban life. From decorative elements, to the Habous, to beach clubs along the waterfront advertised to French tourists as an experience of an Oriental Riviera, the modern city catered to expectations of atmosphere.⁶⁹ Smells and sounds, which feature prominently in Chraïbi's descriptions of the city, surround the reader with a perceptual environment that highlights the less savory and harmonious aspects of this cultivated authenticity. In *Le passé simple*, Casablanca is the beggar under the window, howling cats and barking dogs, frenetic traffic, smoke, spices, refuse, gasoline, and mud: a distinctly unsavory city. The novel reproduces a colonial obsession with image and environment. Driss' coming of age is as much about his realization that the city he inhabits (and rejects) is constructed through a series of images as it is a question of his relationship to the Moroccan father he has and the European father he chooses. In this, Chraïbi's novel should be understood as an attempt to understand and then articulate the ways in which conditions of life in Casablanca depend on the ways in which the city is represented to its Moroccan inhabitants through the limited views and contrasting structures of its urban design.

In questioning the design of the city, the Belgian situationist architect Constant Nieuwenhuys created the utopian model of New Babylon, a form of urbanism based on constant adaptability, atmosphere, and play. Part of the idea behind this urban future was a sense of limitless space, a city that could not be contained and should not be so in its representation. Mark Wigley sees in the photographic documentation of Constant's models an image of interconnection and complexity:

[The viewer's] fantasies are made possible by sophisticated models that have been photographed in a way that conceals the fact that they are models. We never see their edges. Rather than viewing a small discrete object representing a huge project that may someday be built, we sense a complex, sensuous, built reality. Other

⁶⁹ see Bahíyyih Maroon "Leisure Space: Thematic Style and Cultural Exclusion in Casablanca," in *The Themed Space: Locating Culture, Nation, and Self*, ed. Scott A. Lukas (Lanham : Lexington Books, 2007), 137-151.

spaces often appear in the background. [...] We look into an endless world made up of tightly interconnected but heterogeneous spaces.⁷⁰

What Wigley describes is not a physical structure that exists as limitless environment, but rather a mode of representation that perceives the structure from a perspective such that the lack of edges contribute to its appearance as built reality. In the interconnectivity that the photograph shows as the essential spatiality of this imagined city, New Babylon takes on the limitless quality of a fully developed world rather than that of a structure contained by its exterior walls. With the house standing as the primary architecture of the novel, the multi-sensory and, as I will argue, influence-based representation of the city, defies the edges of the domestic world to suggest a larger sense of environment.

In contrast to the *Seigneur*, Driss' mother lives the life of a traditional archetype of feminine confinement. "Elle avait toujours habité des maisons à portes barricadées et fenêtres grillagées. Des terrasses, il n'y avait que le ciel à voir – et les minarets, symboles." [She had lived all her life in houses with doors barricaded and windows barred. Only the sky could be seen from the terraces, and the minarets, symbols.]⁷¹ The conditions of the mother's confinement draw two features out of the neighborhood that she experiences only through the view from the terrace on the roof of the house. The first is the text's ideological position vis-a-vis a gendered division of public and private. The passage places the minarets as the defining elements of the scene, connecting it, and by extension Islam (they are, after all, characterized as "symbols"), to the restrictions on the mother's movement outside of the house. The second introduces an element of vision and a relationship to the sky that carries over into a more ambivalent representation of her life as part of an urban condition. Here again the window features prominently, but this time it is the screened or barred window of the traditional house. Chraïbi's text mixes representations of the house and city filtered through the experiences of the novel's protagonist with references to images that use traditional forms to support an ideological point of view. In the mother's case, the gaze, when

⁷⁰ Mark Wigley, Constant's *New Babylon: A Hyper-architecture of Desire* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1998), 11.

⁷¹ Chraïbi, *Le passé simple*, 43, 19.

it finally escapes the confines of traditional architecture, lights upon the open sky, a blank nothingness.

The linked relationships to sky and horizon test the limits of urbanity and of the house in Chraïbi's novel. Offered as a non-escape to the mother's confinement, which ends with her suicide, accomplished by leaping from the very roof that offers such a measly vision of freedom (a brief and deadly flight), the sky is a safer exit for Driss, who boards a plane for Paris at the novel's end. The relationship between city and sky develops as both the confirmation of the atemporal conditions of colonial stagnation that infiltrate the urban environment beneath a light-filled void and as the promise of blank space in response to Casablanca's saturation of the senses. Under the summer sun, the sky goes white on the day of a funeral, "Le ciel est flambant blanc, si blanc que je n'en distingue plus le soleil." [The sky is dazzling white, so white that I can't make out the sun.]⁷² Yet the sun is there: "Tout de suite le soleil a cinglé le linceul blanc, jusqu'à le rendre miroitant." [Suddenly the sun lashed out against the white shroud until it reflected like a mirror.]⁷³ The shroud throws back the light that the sky itself does not reveal in its duller kind of whiteness.⁷⁴ It picks up the intended effect of the white city's gleaming buildings, deathly cold and burning. Sun and sky become party to the novel's tragedy, the streets through which a funeral procession travels retreating under them, the body under its gleaming shroud the only visual point of contact for Driss' gaze. Meanwhile, voices call out from windows and whisper rumors between the mourners and the observers in the street, filling the air with sound that holds him firmly on the ground.

There is a kind of beauty to these light effects, an attention to the particularities of sun and detail that keeps a tight circle of focus on Driss' interactions with his surroundings. Yet the interaction between high and low, between the very existence of sky and sun and the excess of the ground, adds an odd brightness of possibility: "Le ciel se couvrait de nuages,

⁷² *ibid* 134, 72.

⁷³ *ibid* 135, 72.

⁷⁴ The funeral is for Driss' youngest brother, Hamid, who dies while Driss is in Fez accompanying his mother on a pilgrimage to her ancestral city. The death, a consequence of their father's brutality, catalyses Driss' rebellion and precipitates his flight from his father's house into the city.

quelques chiens fouinaient dans quelques poubelles, le macadam s'étalait droit devant nous, par endroits brillait, là où une voiture avait pissé son huile et là où tapait un rayon de soleil." [The sky was clouded, a few dogs rummaged through garbage, the macadam stretched out in front of us, shining in places where a car had pissed its oil and where the sun hit it.]⁷⁵ Again, the juxtaposition is not between old and new or even between two halves of a divided city, but between the signs of modernity — the asphalt of the road, the car — and decrepitude — the dogs, the garbage, the wasted oil. Moments of brilliance, a gleaming disgust, feed the central irony of Chraïbi's text. The domination of house, in the novel's critical stance, and nation, in its critical reception, exclude these details.

While the house as an object suggests the architecture of containment that Wigley points out as absent from the images of New Babylon, its representation in the novel, particularly in the scene quoted above, defies this limitation. The sensuous detail of the urban night and the association between different houses in the neighborhood begins to connect the Ferdi house to a larger urban context. Through the windows of the house, the atmospheres of home, neighborhood, and city intermingle, preventing Driss' escape. Sounds and smells, the impossibility of breath, capture him as effectively as the signs of tradition contain his mother. Driss opens his bedroom window onto the city night, an opening that, in the end, offers no release:

Respirer ? respirer quoi ? l'air soi-disant pur du dehors, frémissement nocturne, épilchures des cuisines, amalgame d'urine, de rosée, de crottes de cheval et de ciment frais, détritiques des marchés, bouche putride des pauvres – et par-ci par-là, coup de poing dans ce pseudo-endormi, l'abolement du mendiant. Mais aussi : cette maison en face de moi, ce pâté de maisons, ce derb – où des seigneurs identiques au Seigneur emplissaient et vidaient lentement des théières. Je refermai soigneusement les volets et je fus dans le noir fondamental.

[To breathe? To breathe what? The so-called pure air from outside, a nocturnal chill, the leavings of kitchens, a mixture of urines, of dew, of horse manure and of fresh cement, the refuse of markets, the putrid breath of the poor and here and there, like a fist blow in this semi-sleep, the barking of the beggar. But also, this house in front of me, this block of houses, this neighborhood, where other patriarchs identical to the Lord filled and slowly emptied the teapots. I carefully closed the shutters and was in the fundamental darkness.]⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Chraïbi, *Le passé simple*, 203-204, 114.

⁷⁶ *ibid*, 63, 30.

Passages such as the one cited above paint a portrait of Casablanca that is a harsh representation of city life and, even more so, a critique of the kind of ‘unsanitary’ *medina* conditions the French colonial government sought to improve. However, the location of the house, identified early on, lends the novel a geographical specificity that prevents confusion of the differently zoned and developed areas of the city.⁷⁷ Thus the surroundings cannot be taken as specifically tied to a traditional urban form. Instead, they represent a reaction to a set of conditions, an atmosphere of urban life in which the conditions of the Ferdi house replicate and multiply — “*des seigneurs identitiques au Seigneur*” — conditions unchanging despite the surroundings.

The urban environment of *Le passé simple* is not mediated through visual perception alone; rather, it is represented in the novel as a fully realized sensory experience. For the reader, it involves a relationship between the body and space that prevents the represented environment from being reduced to a series of images. In particular, the olfactory references that overwhelm Driss complement his emotional reaction to the neighborhood and avoid visual metaphor. These descriptions use smell to characterize Driss’ physical, visceral, reaction to his environment. When unsavory smells justify Driss’ adverse reaction to his surroundings, his reaction to their unpleasantness shows him immersed in a world every aspect of which assaults him and justifies his desire to escape. Pleasant smells add irony to an otherwise negative description of the environment. This passage and others of a similar vein are also biting satire of the florid descriptions of a sensual, perfumed, exotic Orient typical of nineteenth and early twentieth-century prose. Describing the commentary that accompanied the 1931 colonial exhibition in Paris, Morton makes exactly this connection. “In the literary conventions of the day, commentators described these sensual details to transport readers into its simulated colonial environment.”⁷⁸ The details of Chraïbi’s text filter the Orientalist experience of the colonial city through the senses of his rebellious Moroccan

⁷⁷ The house itself is on what was at the time the rue d’Angora, now the rue Maâmora. It is specifically identified in Driss’ first return home, “...trajet maison-lycée et vice versa immuable – tout est immuable – et jusqu’à la rue d’Angora [rue Maâmora], jusqu’à la maison en ciment armée...” (Chraïbi 17)

⁷⁸ Morton, *Hybrid Modernities*, 133

protagonist. This is the heart of the irony that fills *Le passé simple*: Chraïbi's critique of tradition comes through prose that uses the exaggerated style of the nineteenth-century to describe the everyday grime of the modern colonial city. The absurdity of the resulting images targets not only traditional patriarchy, but also the repetition of images that idealize this "authentic" version of Moroccan life.

Çelik, describing responses to Orientalist aesthetics in terms of their ability to confront images that misrepresent social and cultural dynamics to maintain cultural hierarchies, presents a succinct assessment of the basic politics of the response. "When the Oriental artists and intellectuals speak and begin shaping the terms of the debate, the Orient as represented by the West sheds its homogeneity, timelessness, and passivity, and becomes nuanced and complicated. It can no longer fit the frozen categories."⁷⁹ I would argue that Chraïbi's first novel presents the situation of the Moroccan Protectorate as one in which Orientalist images enable the idealization of authenticity. The juxtaposition between old and new that were prevalent in colonial demonstrations like the 1931 Colonial Exhibition as well as in popular images, postcards, film, and official discourse, are present in Chraïbi's representation of the city. Casablanca, as an extension of the father's house, becomes an urban environment in which colonial attitudes towards the local population pervade even the modern structures of the European city.

The appreciation of the neighborhood as an intermediary zone that contains the failings of both sides, the irony of these sunlit street scenes, struggles to find a ground beyond the explicatory and in the representational. It is almost as if what is true for Driss in his revolt is true for Casablanca as well. Wandering the streets after leaving his father's house, he arrives at the house of a friend who greets him by commenting on a change in the moon phase:

- La nouvelle lune est née ce soir, dit-il
- Je ne l'ai pas vue, répondais-je tristement. Mais il paraît.
- Si, si, insista-t-il.
- The new moon was born tonight, he said.
- I haven't noticed it, I said sadly. But it seems so.

⁷⁹ Çelik, "Speaking Back," 21

- Yes, it has been, he insisted.⁸⁰

The city is a space of repetition, motion without movement or acceleration. The restrictions, the sky that offers nothing, the moon that Driss does not or cannot see, are conditioned by the novel's treatment of the urban space as held together, much as the house is, at once by habit and by the material insistence of walls, again the question of simple durability, of new-founded legacy. An absence in the sky that escapes notice, the moon becomes a metaphor for Driss' rebellion, his break with his father lost in the city.

To the extent that *Le passé simple* expresses an urban consciousness or urban view, it is one framed in conditions of space, habit, and influence, even more than power and authority, evident in the representation of the house. It is this interior condition against which Driss' rebellious subjectivity takes aim, and its extension becomes, over the course of the narrative, the rejection of the city and its larger, urban, conditions resolved by his ultimate departure. "Je regarde Casablanca fuir et se rapetisser," Driss' narration declares as his plane turns north, "A moi maintenant de jouir." [I see Casablanca slipping away and growing smaller. Now it's my time to exalt.]⁸¹ This ultimate declaration and its centering on the city itself, comes from the extension and reconstruction over the course of the narrative of a formal and systematic organization of urban conditions, Casablanca seen and breathed out as an extension of the controlled space of the house.

Chraïbi does not valorize Driss' surroundings, but neither does the city he describes fit perfectly into a colonial schema in which modern and pre-modern are kept separate.⁸² Casablanca, as we have seen, forced the colonial administration to mix modern architecture with their ideal of a pre-modern Moroccan population when the city's housing needs overwhelmed the capacities of its *medina*. Instead, it is the exploitation of colonial conditions and traditional expectations for personal gain that allows the father to gain and retain

⁸⁰ Chraïbi, *Le passé simple*, 179, 99.

⁸¹ *ibid* 272, 157.

⁸² This separation was less apparent in Casablanca than in other Moroccan cities, notably because the city's rapid growth forced the inclusion of new neighborhoods for Moroccan as well as French inhabitants. In Marrakech, for example, land was left open to separate the *medina* from the new city, and strict limits imposed on building in the historic center.

influence. Taking his son to his property outside of the city, a country house and farm that would seem to hold up an ideal of a pastoral life, *Seigneur* brings Driss into his plans for the land after the war:

Je poursuis : bénéfices immédiatement investis dans l'achat de terrains vagues, aux portes de Casablanca, 5 sous le mètre carré, une aubaine. Je calcule, il y aura l'après-guerre, les Américains ont débarqué, des affairistes, des cités surgissent du sol, des aérodromes se dessinent, dans peu d'années, je suis patient, mes terrains vagues se vendront 5 000 francs le mètre carré. Voilà ce que l'on demande à un haj au siècle Vingt – et comme un haj se révolte et use.

[To go on: the immediate benefits invested in the purchase of waste ground at the entrance to Casablanca at 5 *sous* the square meter was a windfall. I made a calculation. The Americans have landed. In the post-war period, that means business men, cities coming up out of the ground, airports being designed. In a few years if I'm patient, my lands will sell at 5,000 francs the square meter. That's what's expected of a *haj* in the twentieth century — and how a *haj* rebels and utilizes.]⁸³

The *haj* appellation, an indication that the father has completed the pilgrimage to Mecca that is one of the eight pillars of Islam, here says more about the position this designation confers on a wealthy merchant than about the father's supposed piety. Indeed, in this same section Driss' father admits to his son that, though he did complete the *haj*, it was only once and not the four times he claimed when he returned to Morocco after four years absence.⁸⁴ Far from being a strict adherent of traditional ideals, the father reveals himself as a participant in the colonial system. He, like Laparde's design for the Habous, takes those aspects deemed to be most picturesque and authentic to the administrators of his country and uses them to his advantage to gain control of the tea market and to escape his family for three years explained, though not maintained, as pilgrimage. The problem is not the confines of tradition so much as the ways in which the expected extension of patriarchal influence from house to city redirects and diffuses Driss' attempts to break with his father by assimilation, revolt, persuasion, or violence.

Lost Voice, Lost City

⁸³ Chraïbi, *Le passé simple*, 264-265, 152.

⁸⁴ The *haj* is the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, an event that involves multiple stages and takes place over a number of days. Those who complete the *haj* may add the appellation to their names. In order to complete the *haj* more than once, a person must return to Mecca in different years. Thus when Driss' father claims that he is "four times *haj*" he uses the pilgrimage as an irrefutable reason for his multi-year absence from his family. In reality, Driss learns, his father was only once *haj* and spent the three years following his religious journey building business in Egypt.

Revolt in *Le passé simple* is direct; indeed, it is the driving force of the novel's plot. Though it is less focused on a single figure of authority, Abdelkebir Khatibi's first novel, *La mémoire tatouée: autobiographie d'un décolonisé*, offers a version of rebellion in text, style, and in its representation of colonial space in Morocco. Khatibi's text organizes a remembered childhood, adolescence, and adulthood around a series of narrative and geographical arcs, meanders, and divergences. The text takes the reader with its author/narrator from childhood in El Jadida and Essaouira, to adolescence in Marrakech and Casablanca, young adulthood in Paris, and adulthood in a rapid succession of foreign cities and tangential ruminations on the figure of the nomad and the symbolic space of the desert. The movement that fills Khatibi's narration pushes the figure of the narrator towards distance, to what Lucy Stone McNeece has described as a kind of loss: "Suspending personal affinities and affiliations, the writer must become a kind of 'orphan,' not a 'ward of the state' but an exile in his or her own land."⁸⁵ This is the position from which Khatibi, Stone McNeece argues, might best allow himself "...the incessant pursuit of – and delight in – the intractable distance that separates," dividing intimacies into experiences of self and other and fragmenting the self into multiple, interior, others.⁸⁶ In the cities in *La mémoire tatouée*, movement both slow and fast through remembered streets is a key feature of Khatibi's poetic narrative style. The specifics of each city described in the novel become the basis for imagistic representations that use remembered space to recall feeling, putting emotion and affective memory of place into the service of the narrative.

Alison Rice, writing on the transpositions and transcriptions that characterize Khatibi's work, observes that the author "...outlines his journeys in a vertiginous tour of the globe [...] He takes the reader on a whirlwind world tour..."⁸⁷ The speed that Rice identifies and the distortion of view it produces are active both in the novel's succession of place

⁸⁵ Lucy Stone McNeece, "Rescripting Modernity: Abdelkebir Khatibi and the Archaeology of Signs," in *Maghribian Mosaic: a Literature in Translation*, ed. Mildred Mortimer (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001), 83.

⁸⁶ *ibid* 87

⁸⁷ Alison Rice, *Time Signatures: Contextualizing Contemporary Francophone Autobiographical Writing From the Maghreb* (Oxford: Lexington, 2008), 268.

references and in its representation of the cities and spaces it describes in detail. In the context of Khatibi's narrative, vertigo – a loss of an orienting point, an exaggerated feeling of motion that distorts perception of depth and results in the loss of balance – is the result of rapid successions of images that prevent the reader from feeling firmly grounded in the space of the narrative. Khatibi's style reveals a cinematic approach to the order of images in the text, one that replicates techniques of panning shots, zooms, and cuts rather than the perspective of an individual subject immersed in the environment.

This series of effects emerges early in the novel, becoming the main mode of spatial representation as the narrative moves from the remembered places of childhood to the experiences of travel that Rice describes. In this progression, descriptions of Casablanca as a city of youthful alienation stand out as a turning point in the novel's representational mode. Between comfort and freedom, Casablanca is the city where flight becomes a necessity, a means of escape. "Personne ne m'attendait, ni ici, ne dehors, j'imaginai des rendez-vous aériens, c'était ma manière de survivre." [No one was waiting for me, neither here or outside. I imagined aerial encounters, it was my way of surviving.]⁸⁸ Whereas in early cities (El Jadida, Essouaria, Marrakech), the narrative perspective moves back and forth between the aerial panorama of the bird's eye view and the child's view of the streets of the *medina*, in Casablanca, with its different urban structure and colonial order, the orienting power of the gaze is no longer enough for the narrator's emerging self to find a place in the urban environment.

Richard Koeck describes the cinematic effects of architecture in the city as a way of understanding the narrative qualities of urban space. "Like films, architecture and entire cities can have linear, non-linear and multi narrative qualities. Unlike film, this narrative quality is linked in architecture to our bodily movement through space and our engagement with the social practices occurring in those spaces."⁸⁹ Koeck's version of architectural urban

⁸⁸ Abdelkebir Khatibi, *La mémoire tatouée: autobiographie d'un décolonisé*, in *Oeuvres de Abdelkebir Khatibi v.1 : romans et récits* (Paris: Editions de la différence, 2008), 70.

⁸⁹ Richard Koeck, "Cine-Montage: The Spatial Editing of Cities," in *The City and the Moving Image: Urban Projections*, ed. Richard Koeck and Les Roberts (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 210.

space relies on a phenomenological reading of the city that attempts to understand the sense-making involved in the individual's relationship to an environment. As a way of beginning my discussion of Khatibi's representation of Casablanca, I would like to focus on the qualities of narrative that Koeck highlights as fundamental aspects of the literary representation of the city. While Chraïbi embeds the narrative of his protagonist's revolt in the fabric of the city, Khatibi's text fragments elements of story to avoid a clear novelistic arc. Instead, the *La mémoire tatouée* uses relationships between memory, space, and subjectivity to explore context and the construction of the self. He exploits the narrative qualities of the labyrinthine *medina* to build a literary aesthetic. The different relationships of clarity and chaos in Casablanca's precise plan and seething humanity challenge the relationships to space that Khatibi places at the heart of a text that decolonizes.

As remembered cities of childhood, the novel's early locations – El Jadida, Essouaria, Marrakech, and Casablanca – are the sums of parts recalled:

Par le jeu de la dissimulation, le souvenir métamorphose la ville de notre passé en nostalgie blanche : les chemins partent et aboutissent au même nœud, les quartiers se renvoient les uns aux autres dans un puzzle de formes, de surfaces et de couleurs.

[Through the game of disguise, memory metamorphosizes the city of our past into a white nostalgia: streets diverge and converge on the same knot, neighborhoods recall each other in a puzzle of forms, surfaces and colors.]⁹⁰

The blankness of this “white nostalgia” suggests the blank page and an absence of meaning beyond what is gained in the reconstruction of remembered forms. This creative nostalgia acknowledges the impossibility of a complete reconstruction of a remembered place while at the same time the remembered fragments of the city, reduced to a visual language of non-representative elements, replace the specificity of the remembered place with the possibility or new creation. Those fragments of images that appear most readily are reborn as a city of emotionally heightened impressions. This recombinatory model, which describes the experience of remembering the novel's first city, El Jadida, becomes the basis for later textual perambulations in other remembered cities, including Casablanca. “Voyages ou

⁹⁰ Khatibi, *La mémoire tatouée*, 129.

danse?” [voyages or dance?] Khatibi asks, looking back on the journeys he has taken.⁹¹ The difference between these two terms is based in rhythm’s relationship to space as much as in different ways of moving. Dance takes the successive relocations of the nomad and translates them into a visual, physical, and musical aesthetic mode. The reworking of text and spatial relations as formal play, as dance, is fundamental to Khatibi’s ability to weave narrative and poetic threads through the entirety of this first work. Phrases of movement and quick, cinematic changes of view emphasize the freedom and autonomy of the writer’s body and expression. Yet, among the multiple cities through which the novel dances, Casablanca remains a city apart, a city that offers the narrator no rhythm to follow.

The impossibility of understanding this city without rhythm lies in what the beat-generating structure of the city cuts short: the very writing that *La mémoire tatouée* offers as a decolonizing act through its ability to recall the memory of colonized space. Casablanca, meanwhile, is “ville quelque peu détestable qui m’a volé ma parole,” the [rather detestable city that stole my voice from me.]⁹² A harsh assessment, for a city, particularly in a narrative where travel and the experience of living at the heart of urban environments, in Morocco and abroad, plays an important role in developing its narrator’s persona. What does it mean for the city to steal the writer’s voice? What relationship between the writer and a particular environment drives the narrator of Khatibi’s novel to make this kind of statement, tying words and creativity to the surroundings that produce them? For Khatibi, these questions are caught up in Casablanca’s colonial history, its design and relationship to modernity that troubles the decolonizing openness that characterizes *La mémoire tatouée*. The loss of the pre-colonial past, a loss complicated by the minor character of that history in Casablanca, leads to the disorientation of being lost, in the displacement that is the result of the repetition and foreignness of the new city. The alienation of the new, which creates an urban environment without precedent or inhabited logic, is an untreatable wound for the writer who

⁹¹ *ibid* 102.

⁹² *ibid* 71

must leave the city in order to regain a productive relationship to language and his creative self.

Like *Le passé simple*, *La mémoire tatouée* presents an image of Casablanca as a city stuck in an ever-repeating present. Shifting from the problem of remembering a city seemingly without a Moroccan past to a present-tense statement that suggests a continued discomfort with Casablanca, Khatibi's narrator describes a city where one should not try too hard to find one's way or to make sense of one's surroundings: "Mieux: se faire guider par simple rotation." [It's better to let yourself follow along in simple rotation.]⁹³ Khatibi pictures the movement of Casablanca as passive, circular, characterized by repetition much as the city is in Chraïbi's novel. Casablanca's organization excludes it from the freedom and connectivity that characterizes the decolonization of identity and territory that runs through the rest of *La mémoire tatouée*.

Livability and experience take precedence over other factors in Khatibi's descriptions, and while it is perhaps no surprise that the city of discomfort in a novel subtitled "*autobiographie d'un décolonisé*" is the showpiece of French colonial urbanism, it is important to note that, in *La mémoire tatouée*, aesthetic consideration is focused more on intimate details than on monumental structures. The geometric metaphor that runs through the novel's approach to space and its navigation/negotiation appears here in apparent opposition to the movement that defines the city. Chaos, poverty, and displacement are the defining features of Khatibi's Casablanca. While lacking the familiar bustle of the other Moroccan cities of the novel, it is not completely defined by the Cartesian stasis of Marrakech's new city. Instead, Casablanca upsets in its pulling together of colonial infrastructure and indigenous life and politics, unsettling both and foreshadowing a distinctly Moroccan modernity.

Finding disorder in this most planned and ordered of cities becomes one of the aims of Khatibi's Casablanca section of *La mémoire tatouée*: instead of order in chaos, the city becomes an example of chaos in order, a metaphor for colonial power that upsets its

⁹³ *ibid* 70

modernizing teleology. Opposing the planned growth of the colonial city not to the alternative local urban form of the *medina* but, instead, to the sprawling and unmanageable *bidonvilles* that house a large proportion of the city's Moroccan residents calls into question the modernist utopia of Casablanca's urban design. "C'est ainsi que la ville s'agrandissait, miracle industriel bien qu'on n'y vît pas de raison logique, ni de conditions nécessaires et dirait-on immanentes, la ville s'agrandissait, contre tout le monde." [This is how the city grew, an industrial miracle even though we don't see there any logical reason, nor necessary and, let us say, immanent conditions, against everyone.]⁹⁴ By calling the reasons for Casablanca's selection as a major industrial center arbitrary because their logic was colonial rather than Moroccan, Khatibi refuses to see the French development of the city as rational, instead seeing the city through the unregulated growth of its *bidonvilles*. Khatibi's representation of Casablanca suggests that the dichotomy of order and chaos that divided the *ville nouvelle* and the *medina* in the Moroccan city under French control, the opposition that Khatibi uses as the basis for his response to colonial logics of control, does not stand up to attempts to decolonize Casablanca's different urban environment.

This aspect of Casablanca's organization unsettles the criticism in Khatibi's text. Indeed, as it appears in *Le passé simple*, the city is far from the Cartesian ideal that Khatibi takes as the fundamental characteristic of the colonial city. What Casablanca does yield, in this text from 1971, is a troubling possibility for the urban future in independent Morocco. What does it mean that the energy of the decolonized nation that emerges at the end of the Casablanca passage in *La mémoire tatouée* flows along the same broad avenues and around the same traffic circles as did the French vision for an ideal modern city founded on the colonial ground? While the image of the city in Khatibi's text is critical, the representation works against privileging the modern aspects of the city design in assigning credit for growth. Instead, the novel turns to the *bidonvilles* as the urban typology that infiltrates the city. Casablanca is thus caught in the problem of being too much determined by the opposite of

⁹⁴ *ibid* 70.

geometric clarity: not even the labyrinthine order of the *medina* can make sense of the metropolis in the eye of the novel's narrator.

Khatibi's characterization of the urban experience throughout *La mémoire tatouée* is one of sensory stimuli and individual exploration, and his few pages on Casablanca are no exception. However, whereas in other cities and, I would argue, especially in the other Moroccan cities of the novel, that sensory experience is enabled by movement through space that is highly personalized and productive. Khatibi's treatment of urban space resembles the productive itineraries of Michel de Certeau and other phenomenological treatments of bodies in space while dealing differently with de Certeau's emphasis on liminality and on the asyndetic and synecdochic ways in which we, as urban subjects in particular, create environments of the familiar. For both Khatibi and de Certeau, creative and affective reactions to ordered environments are crucial means by which individuals are able to subvert a totalizing perspective that reads and creates order.⁹⁵ The city becomes a place of habitation when it is traversed in such a manner that the variety and changeability of the paths of innumerable walkers defy any attempt to record their passage and thus of reading a single meaning into a space conceived and governed according to a single and singular plan. De Certeau turns these paths into the unreadable text of a city's everyday, while for Khatibi they are more properly one aspect of the labyrinth that is the *medina*.

Writing in the aftermath of the Paris protests and general strike of May 1968, de Certeau sets up a contrast between the conceptualization of urban space as a key component to his understanding of the ways in which the everyday practices of individuals are able to subvert systems of power, undermining totalizing social plans with the lived reality of the personal and the routine. For de Certeau, the city conceived as a whole, a single unit seen as from a great height, is the city removed from the life of its inhabitants: it becomes an object of contemplation, but it only exists at a remove from itself and cannot be viewed from a more intimate perspective. This readable city is a dictated text, easily

⁹⁵ We see this most clearly in the famous icarian perspective of the first paragraphs of de Certeau's "Marches dans la ville" in which Manhattan is seen from the top floor of the World Trade Center.

schematized, while the city as a place lived and created by the multitude of actors that inhabit it is enriched and obscured by their manipulations of the urban text, such that “[u]ne ville *transhumante*, ou métaphorique, s’insinue ainsi dans le texte clair de la ville planifiée et lisible.” [A migrational, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city.]⁹⁶ Yet the experience of the city, as de Certeau defines it, is determined by movement rather than by observation, by walking (which for him is a form of writing) rather than by seeing:

Producteurs méconnus, poètes de leurs affaires, inventeurs de sentiers dans les jungles de la rationalité fonctionnaliste, les consommateurs produisent quelque chose qui a la figure des ‘lignes d’erre’ dont parle Deligny. Ils tracent des ‘trajectoires indéterminées’, apparemment insensées parce qu’elles ne sont pas cohérentes avec l’espace bâti, écrit et préfabriqué où elles se déplacent.
[Unrecognized producers, poets of their own affairs, trailblazers in the jungles of functionalist rationality, consumers produce something resembling the “*lignes d’erre*” described by Deligny. They trace “indeterminate trajectories” that are apparently meaningless, since they do not cohere with the constructed, written, and prefabricated space through which they move.]⁹⁷

Thus, on the one hand the city is an object of consumption, a schematic whole, while on the other it is ultimately inconceivable and un-readable as the fragmentary and endlessly reproduced and repurposed secondary product of those who, by living in it, consume its space. It is also, therefore, though not unproblematically, always undergoing a process of complexification, the accumulation of infinite personal and affective detail subject to change with the passage of time.⁹⁸

Khatibi’s discomfort can be seen as a form of this rejection of the planned city; is not the colonial city an acme of focused urban planning, a space designed, as Wright has argued, to uphold and legitimize a specific system of power and governance? Certainly in Khatibi’s different reactions to the new and old cities in El Jadida — the *medina* and the Parc Spiney — point to a specific critique of the colonial order. However, it is not merely the use

⁹⁶ Michel De Certeau, *L’invention du quotidien 1: arts de faire*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1990), 142 original italics, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 93.

⁹⁷ *ibid* 57, 34

⁹⁸ While de Certeau is primarily concerned with the inhabitants of the city, a visitor’s trajectories are not excluded from the writing and re-writing of urban space, though the point of departure of the visitor is clearly different from that of the resident.

of space that concerns Khatibi; rather, it is the structure of the space itself and the collision of two different forms of urban design in the Moroccan city of the late nineteenth to mid twentieth-century. De Certeau's plan for a productive reaction to urban space is focused in response not only to the city as location of power, but to the city planned by power, with the larger view of providing a critical assessment of the ways in which space and time might be mobilized for or against these same authoritarian systems of power.

As critiques of certain kinds of progress-driven modernities – the conceptual and planned for de Certeau and the colonial and planned for Khatibi – both writers work against totalizing and reductive ideas of the future, choosing instead multiplicity. When de Certeau describes “...des myriades de mouvements quasi invisibles, jouant sur la texture de plus en plus fine d'un lieu homogène, continu et propre à tous” [...myriads of almost invisible movements, playing on the more and more refined texture of a place that is even, continuous, and constitutes a proper place for all people] and asks, “Est-ce déjà le présent ou encore le futur de la grande ville?” [Is this already the present, or is still the future of the great city?]⁹⁹ he is describing both the complex integrations of a cybernetic model of urban systems and a particular kind of utopian city, one in which the experience of homogeneous and continuous shared space is only possible because of the infinite variety of movements that underlays its surface, giving it an infinite depth of detail. Placing this vision either in the future or the present calls into question the nature of the utopian vision and of our present reality. At the same time, it raises the question of how such a city might be different from the totalizing concept of planned urban space that he later describes, and why it is a city, and not some other system, that he uses as his metaphor for this kind of complex environment. With the exception of Casablanca, Khatibi's cities defy this utopian vision by always offering multiple points of entry and contact with different worlds. He separates them, in their influence and in their very texture, built of multiple individual memories, from the desert space into which his prose ventures in the second section of the novel. In so doing, he offers an alternative to de Certeau's problem of the “*propre*”, the meaning given to space, by

⁹⁹ De Certeau, *Invention*, 66, 40-41.

introducing an open *propre* in the desert, one that includes poetic meaning that might be extending to the experience of all productive intimate spaces.

Undoing the rational approach to planning and development undertaken by the French, *La mémoire tatouée* reaches for an affective geometry in which narrative and memory order everyday spaces, creating mobile images that can be reset into a poetic representation of a distinctly North African urban childhood. Gwendolyn Wright, in her comparison of Casablanca with other examples of French colonial urbanism contemporary to its development, points to what she calls the “Cartesian logic” of planning legislation designed to order the city’s growth.¹⁰⁰ Yet the city provided a constant rebuttal to the order of its plan in the chaotic growth that characterized its *bidonvilles* and that Ecochard identified when he arrived after the end of the war, keen to implement modernist ideas and re-order the untamed space. Khatibi’s descriptions of Casablanca attempt to find a way to confront both the structural control embedded in its successive urban plans and the inhuman chaos that the dynamics of the city seem to have created.

Khatibi’s understanding of not only the disordered growth of the city, seen as a disruption of the different order of the *medina* and traditional North African city, but of the unnavigability of a city whose architects favored similarity, if not total unity, of design, sees that “[...] la ville s’organise en se propageant sans raison convaincante.” [...the city organizes itself by spreading outwards without any convincing reason.]¹⁰¹ The Cartesian logic of the colonial plan is present, but it is muddled in Khatibi’s description by the consequences of the modernizing narrative it attempts to impose on the city in which it makes its intrusion, giving it the noise and confusion of the market to fill its well-planned boulevards. Furthermore, rather than continuing the modes of habitation indigenous to the Moroccan space, the Cartesian and, importantly, modern, European city rejects the history of the place in which it builds. It lacks the affective component that makes the *medina* readable in the poetic context of the novel.

¹⁰⁰ Wright, *Politics of Design*, 141.

¹⁰¹ Khatibi. *La mémoire tatouée*, 69.

Indeed, the city seems to offer him no invitation, and he goes looking for it, instead, in its past. Even there he finds only a faint after image, an echo lost and distorted in the new tall buildings and wide boulevards of the French-built city. In its description, Casablanca is “[u]ne ville en écho, qui faisait partie de la poussière si l’on en croit les survivants, un petit port qu’on dérangeait par un coup de pouce.” [...the echo of a city, which was there in the dust if you believe its survivors, a little port you could topple with a flick of your thumb]¹⁰² The echo is the *medina*, which reminds the narrator of the city’s past, when the port was only a little port. In the narrative present the original city is diminished in comparison to its surroundings and the only reminder of a more peaceful past. Seen thusly, the *medina* gains a delicacy and fragility unexpected in the context of his larger characterization of the noisy and overwhelming metropolis. A sympathetic description of the city creeps in via this echo, allowing the memory of the tiny port that preceded the modern city to become a mirror to other cities that cry out with their own voices. Yet it is only the pre-colonial version of Casablanca, the echo of a city, that allows for this sympathetic reading. Despite its brevity, the Casablanca passage in *La mémoire tatouée* reveals perhaps most tellingly the ways in which specifically colonial modernity troubles Khatibi’s postmodern text. Casablanca moves away from his movement. Where the urbanity anchored in the pre-colonial form of the *medina* in Marrakech offered medieval palaces and a lively intellectual sphere to balance its divisions and the Cartesian impositions of the new city, Casablanca refuses his advances, remaining distant, combative even, growing in opposition to everything.

Geometry and Modernity

The primary intersection between Chraïbi and Khatibi’s text, on the level of representation and to the extent that a similarity of image and of language exists between the two of them, comes in their activation of geometric images and references to reinforce the rigidity of the systems against which their writing revolts. For Chraïbi’s narrator, his early rejection of the direct and the definite sets movement and ambiguity against the fixed shapes of life in his father’s house and father’s city. “J’appelle point mort tout ce qui est défini.” [I call

¹⁰² Khatibi *La mémoire tatouée*, 69.

a standstill everything that is definite,]¹⁰³ Driss declares, and definition is not far behind. The brothers surround their father to break the fast in a perfect triangle, “Nous nous plaçâmes en triangle isocèle et la prière commença.” [We formed ourselves into an isosceles triangle and the prayer began.]¹⁰⁴ When he returns, defeated, from his period of *fugue*, it is not a wandering track that he takes but one that repeats his exit from the scene of his rebellion, “La symétrie s’établit comme je débouchais sur la place Benghazi.” [The symmetry was established when I went out into Benghazi Square.]¹⁰⁵ This geometrical precision repeats in the numerization of water, capital, and land undertaken by his father. “Quarante-deux mètres de profondeur, dit le Seigneur. J’ai récemment fait venir un géomètre. Il affirme qu’à deux kilomètres d’ici il y a de l’eau à fleur de sol. Deux et deux font quatre : elle est saumâtre et le géomètre en question a empoché 10 000 francs.” [‘Forty-two meters deep,’ said the Lord. ‘Recently, I had a surveyor come. He assured by that two kilometers from here there is water just level with the ground. Two and two make four: the water is briny, and the surveyor we’re talking about pocketed 10,000 francs.]¹⁰⁶ Rebellion against confines, against symmetry and numeration, the wild line that Driss seeks, his ultimate flight, is in the end not so far from the urban conditions that push out Khatibi’s narrator, even as Chraïbi’s novel offers a richer trove of complicated spatial representations, an intricately worked atmosphere of influence and concealed connections.

Unlike the other cities traversed as *La mémoire tatouée* moves from childhood to adulthood, cities hovering on the brink of independence, Casablanca’s affective and remembered indigenous space is dwarfed by the colonial development that surrounds it. Out of place in its new surroundings, the *medina* is not the dominant urban form of the new city. The new city overwhelms it:

Au sortir de la médina, tout se résumait en une image fanée de l’Occident, rondement dépaysée dans un style néo-mauresque. Comment se souvenir de cette ville quand tout y confluaient en explosion? De loin, les bidonvilles encerclaient la ville,

¹⁰³ Chraïbi, *Le passé simple*, 14, 1

¹⁰⁴ *ibid* 44, 19

¹⁰⁵ *ibid*, 218, 123

¹⁰⁶ *ibid* 229-230, 131

étrange forteresse mouvant ; je nomme, en tremblant, cette humanité battue en retraite. Tout bougeait dans sa géométrie, ville à tiroirs”
 [At the exit of the *medina*, everything fell into place in a wilted image of the west, quickly disoriented in a neo-Moorish style. How can you remember this city when everything here met in an explosion? From afar, the *bidonvilles* encircle the city, a strange, shifting fortress. Trembling, I name this humanity beaten down in retreat. Everything moved in its geometry, an episodic city.]¹⁰⁷

Whereas previously, in other cities described in Khatibi’s text, the *medina* has been the heart of remembered experiences, here the assault of the *neo-mauresque* city and *bindonvilles* that surround it create an environment that impedes memory. What is the *tout* that converges on the city? The passage references the two architectural extremes that define the city: its *ville nouvelle* and *bidonvilles*. Both were the sites of rapid growth, expanding to house their increasing populations of European émigrés and rural migrants. In contrast to the fixed boundaries of the *medina*, these more recently developed areas can be seen as an explosion of urban space that erupts into the surrounding countryside. This description of Casablanca continues to contradict a utopian idea of the city’s design, turning construction into explosion, shantytown into fortress, and calling attention to the misery of the urban poor by seeing them defeated and in retreat rather than encroaching on the city’s territory.

If Casablanca has a geometry, it is not the labyrinth of its *medina* but, rather, a series of concentric circles, the *medina* surrounded by the new city, which is in turn surrounded by the city’s moving fortress, the shanty towns, the *bidonvilles*, that house the city’s newest arrivals. Once again exposing the ways in which Casablanca’s population disorders the city, undermining logical patterns of growth, Khatibi’s description also takes issue with the modernist utopian ideals that made Casablanca, in particular in the early twentieth-century imagination, an icon of urban possibility. Part of the dissatisfaction evident in Khatibi’s passages on Casablanca in *La mémoire tatouée* comes from the ways in which he approaches the difference between the presence, in the old *medina*, and use, in the areas of the city built under the French, of a Moroccan style of building.

Describing the city as an occidental imitation of the orient and decrying the loss of any pre-colonial character Casablanca may have had by the minor role of the *medina* in the

¹⁰⁷ Khatibi, *La mémoire tatouée*, 70.

city's twentieth-century form, *La mémoire tatouée* calls for a nostalgic appreciation of the city's past, however insignificant that early city might have been. Still, to reduce this particular description of Casablanca to dissatisfaction with the markers of European modernity that characterize its plan would be to ignore both the place of the city in the development of the decolonized character that centers Khatibi's first novel and the role of the city in the movement towards decolonization the text describes in a different conceptual sense. Indeed, the experience of Casablanca is opposed to that of the Moroccan cities that precede it not only in the narrator's affective reaction to this new environment but also in its portrayal of the forces working on and through its populace at the time that spans the few short pages of its presence of Casablanca in the text. Oblique references to the protests and rebellion that took root in Casablanca beginning in the early 1950s, a period just prior to independence and the narrator's sojourn in the city, create a sense of political uncertainty that seems absent from the forward looking hyper-active metropolis of the narrative present.¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, whereas the other cities move with internal machinations connecting the narrator to those around him, Casablanca has its own motion, one that leaves the narrator stranded and voiceless, flying out to sea instead of up over rooftops and into the private lives of the city's inhabitants.

To properly understand the ways in which geometric metaphors complicate Khatibi's representation of Casablanca in *La mémoire tatouée*, I would argue that it is in his later writing, notably his essays on art and aesthetics, that the means of understanding the complex interweaving of form and politics is most apparent. In a 1988 essay, he reflected on both the divisions of the colonial city and the labyrinthine quality of Moroccan urban space that fills the early descriptions of the *medina* in *La mémoire tatouée*. Twenty odd years after the publication of his first major literary work, Khatibi offers a triadic structure for the city, one

¹⁰⁸ Although *La mémoire tatouée* avoids numerically dating its narrative (with the exception of 1945, the date given for Khatibi's enrollment in Quranic school by his father), the novel frequently makes mention of historical events that allow the reader to reconstitute a timeline for the sections dealing with the narrator's personal experiences. This preference for event description over strict chronology allows, like the impressionistic descriptions of the narrator's surroundings, for a personal and affective, rather than historical, treatment of remembered experience.

that divides the El Jadida of his early childhood into Muslim *medina*, Jewish *mellah* and European *ville nouvelle*. “Three communities, that is, three gazes graduated according to the principle of light and shade, in a country called, one should remember, ‘Sunset.’”¹⁰⁹ Khatibi refers here to the Arabic name for Morocco, Maghreb, west, which has become, especially in French, the term to mean the countries of the southern Mediterranean that were once part of the French empire (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia). His use of the term here is both poetic and political, allowing him to call up an image that compliments his understanding of the influences the different quarters of the colonial city have on each other (the long shadows cast by buildings at sunset) and to remind his readers that this metaphor depends on reading the country through its own names and appellations.

The original urban structure, the labyrinth, looks out from the chinks in its walls into the newly planned space that surrounds it.¹¹⁰ The interiority of these older urban structures nurtures a way of treating space that becomes a strategy for negotiating the quick changes and shortened perspectives of colonial limitations. Quoting a letter he once wrote to his friend, the Franco-Egyptian psychoanalyst Jacques Hassoun, known for his work on immigration and exile, Khatibi describes the effect of this urban geometry:

What I mean is that this so-called labyrinth is also a cultural way of treating space, of learning, how shall I put it, a psychology and strategy of walking, of meeting, of avoiding, of fighting, of fleeing, of all the displacements of the body when it is caught in a social network such as this one. One learns in these variously shaped neighborhoods a movement of nimbleness of the mind, if not a certain malice. The obstacle is not always visible: it may jump out at a street corner.¹¹¹

The nimbleness here attributed to the navigation of the *medina* and *mellah* slips easily into a way of describing the experimental prose of *La mémoire tatouée*, which rejects traditional narrative progression to organize its temporal structure around a series of short scenes and fragmented impressions. The density of the structure, which prevents the clear perspectives

¹⁰⁹ Abdelkebir Khatibi, “A Colonial Labyrinth,” *Yale French Studies* 83 no. 2 (1993):5

¹¹⁰ Khatibi in this essay is partially concerned with constructing relationships between the *medina* and the *mellah* as part of a poetic and sociological understand of Maghrebian history that is essentially pluralist. While the novels I have discussed here do not engage with the structure of Casablanca’s Jewish quarter, a key part of the historic and contemporary city, the outward gaze that Khatibi attributes to this part of the city can be applied to the larger relationship between the historic and modern.

¹¹¹ *ibid* 8

of views that are long enough to incorporate the horizon, adds different rhythm and expectation to the navigation of the labyrinth, is only apparently the antithesis of the open spaces and long sight-lines of Casablanca's colonial boulevards.

As a model for understanding or constructing the city, the labyrinth that Khatibi uses to describe the characteristics of traditional urban forms in the Maghreb has been applied elsewhere, outside both the colonial and traditional context. Describing the project for New Babylon, Mark Wigley describes the ways in which the density of the form modeled the ways in which the interiority and visual relationship to the exterior created the ultimately atmospheric definition of urbanism at the heart of Constant's project. "Every now and then, it suddenly opens to the sky or the ground beneath. Lenses mounted in windows offer magnified view of the traffic, the stars, the adjacent neighborhoods, but it is the 'artificial landscape' of the interior that dominates the attention, and changes like the weather."¹¹² What I am arguing by including Wigley's description here, is that the strictness of geometry that confronts both Khatibi, in its lack of nuance, and Chraïbi, in its concealment of hypocrisy, is a possible way of seeing *through* the city.

Ecochard, the author of the last design scheme for Casablanca under the Protectorate, began his career in the colonial administration in Syria. In 1977 he published a thin volume on his accumulated observations of the geometry that linked forms of sacred architecture around the Mediterranean. His analysis focused on the formalism that was at the heart of his approach in his own work:

Il faut remarquer aussi, dans ces églises arméniennes, que l'utilisation des schémas géométriques, non seulement n'a pas bridé les constructeurs dans leurs recherches, mais leur a donné une base solide pour asseoir leur fantaisie. [...] La géométrie intervient alors dans les contours extérieurs pour créer des formes inconnues jusque' alors, à la manière de l'écriture automatique ou bien en suivant la fantaisie des lignes d'un kaléidoscope polygonal.

[In these Armenian churches, one should also note that the geometric schemas not only directed the builders in their research, but also provided a solid base on which to rest their fancies. [...] Thus geometry intervenes in the exterior contours to create forms thus far unknown, in the manner of automatic writing or even following the fantastic lines of a polygonal kaleidoscope.]¹¹³

¹¹² Wigley, *Constant*, 13.

¹¹³ Michel Ecochard, *Filiation de monuments grecs, byzantins et islamiques: une question de géométrie*, (Paris : Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1977), 54

Where Khatibi sees the geometric forms of the carpet weavers as the symbols of a known or forgotten language, Ecochard sees the church geometry as self-generating: a mathematical as opposed to symbolic exercise. As a critic of aesthetics, Khatibi diverged from modernism's strict formalism without being willing to abandon the forms themselves. Instead, his writing on traditional arts, including calligraphy and carpet weaving, and contemporary art, as well as on poetics, reveals a deeply held belief in meaning. He attempts to reveal abstraction as continuity and prove false the formalist argument that divorces it from meaning on the grounds that it is a willful erasure of its rich non-western origins.

Discussing the historical precedent of abstraction that underlies the work of many contemporary Arab artists, Khatibi reflects on the ways in which non-figurative Arab-Islamic art has played on the autonomy of color, form, and gesture that only arise out of progressive rejections of figuration in the west. Indeed, he sees European art history as defined by a largely nineteenth-century series of rebellions against representation:

[...] alors que dans l'aire de la civilisation arabo-islamique, cette autonomie est apparentée à un système de formes, à une variation des apparences dont jouent les puissances du décoratif à travers une géométrisation absolue et sa mise en arabesque, en fantaisie labyrinthique.

[...while in the area of Arab-Islamic civilization, this autonomy belongs to a system of forms, a variation of appearances that the powers of decoration play on through total geometrization that transforms it [color] into arabesque and labyrinthine caprice.]¹¹⁴

Khatibi is drawn to the possibilities of abstraction to reveal the traces of forgotten language, image and sign. In art as well as in the geometries of view, city, and voyage, he looks for what he describes as Kandinsky's spiritual territory of formal abstraction, "...là où l'esprit voit le dessin de son âme." [...where the mind sees the trace of its soul.]¹¹⁵ As a form of continuity, abstraction brings together the historical and the personal, accessing both trace and expression. The processes of abstraction and of formal geometry that are involved in the image of the colonial city, and especially in Casablanca, provide a challenge not only to the autonomy of the decolonized subject but to Khatibi's larger artistic enterprise. The

¹¹⁴ Abdelkebir Khatibi, *L'art contemporaine arabe* (Paris: Al Manar, 2001), 109.

¹¹⁵ Ibid 111

representation of Casablanca in *La mémoire tatouée* struggles to find a way of reading geometry against itself in order to expose the soulessness of the colonial design.

For Khatibi, the intersection of possible views, texture, and atmospherics available through the abstract re-writing of the urban environment provides an alternative to the clear divisions of the Moroccan colonial city in representations of the urban environment. He confronts the attraction of formal modernism despite its presence in colonial reason by looking for its aesthetics of geometry and abstraction in the products of pre-colonial Moroccan life. Ecochard's designs for the last urban projects of colonial modernism in Casablanca can be traced to his understanding of mobile geometric forms freed from local meaning and symbolic associations. Khatibi looks instead for the forgotten significance of geometric forms in the traditional carpets of the Atlas Mountains, as well as from Fez and Marrakech, using meaning as a way to respond to the emptiness he finds in Casablanca's order:

Lorsque nous disons: le tapis est pure forme, cela ne veut pas dire insignifiance. Il y va toujours de la question du sens, mais autrement. Trois types de signes marquent les compositions du tapis: les signes codés et connus par les usagers, les signes d'un langage oublié et fragmentaire, et les signes imaginaires, inventés par les tisseuses et les tisseurs.

[Thus we say that the carpet is pure form, which is not to say that it lacks significance. The question of meaning remains, though in a different form. Three types of signs mark the composition of a carpet: signs coded by and known to their users, the signs of forgotten or fragmentary language, and imaginary signs, invented by their weavers.]¹¹⁶

The carpet is pure form, but only because its thrice-coded signs come together in such a way that the form overwhelms the viewer not privileged with the language of its weavers. It is the same for the city: the geometric ordering of streets and views that complicate perspective in the *medina* are born of a similar signification of turns, walls, doors, and barriers, of fountains and courtyards. In Casablanca, the confusion of life and the order of the colonial plan remain even in the absence of French rule. As Morocco moves into the twenty-first century, the image of this colonial city remains, along with its blind optimism for a modernist future free from the ideology that shaped it.

¹¹⁶ Abdelkebir Khatibi, "Image d'une pensée," in *Du signe à l'image: Le tapis marocain*, Abdelkebir Khatibi and Ali Amahan (Casablanca: Lak International, 1995), 159.

Open Ruins

In the decades following the end of the Protectorate, little has happened to alter the fundamental organization of Morocco's urban space. As Bahiyya Maroon has pointed out, this is in contrast to the breaks in colonial planning orchestrated by other post-independence states in Africa and the Middle East, and, as a consequence, contemporary Casablanca, in particular, is a city that continues to build along the lines laid out by its colonial architects.¹¹⁷ Additionally, Morocco has suffered the restrictions of a highly conservative monarchy under Hassan II and the consequences of limited economic growth and extreme wealth inequality that has occasionally spilled over into extremist Islamic terrorism, as in the bombings that rocked Casablanca in 2003.¹¹⁸ Dependent on tourism, especially from Europe, and on funding from international agencies like UNESCO, the country has turned to its past as a way of funding its present, at least in cities like Fez and Marrakech, where such initiatives often continue the work begun by French preservationists prior to Independence. As Katarzyna Pieprzak observes, in the absence of resource-based sources of wealth, Morocco seems to be left with few alternatives:

For now, it can only create memories of its past. As a consolation to its inhabitants, its dynastic medieval cities are invoked as substitutes for the lack of present greatness—memories to feed those who wait for their prosperity and to consume the empty spaces that invite thoughts of elsewhere.¹¹⁹

Casablanca and its memories of the colonial vision of modernity have remained largely excluded from this historical view, its deco apartments and cinemas not garnering enough support to warrant preservation. The city, still the largest in Morocco and increasingly exemplary of migration and employment patterns that connect it to the mountains and to the nations on the other side of the Sahara, is becoming, in film at least, a potent image of an

¹¹⁷ Maroon "Leisure Space," 142.

¹¹⁸ The bombings, which took place in May, were carried out by young men from the Sidi Moumen *bidonvilles*, targeted Western and Jewish businesses in the city. In total, 45 people died, including the bombers. These attacks are depicted in Mahi Binebine's 2010 novel *Les étoiles de Sidi Moumen* and in Nabil Ayouché's 2012 film *Les cheveux de Dieu*.

¹¹⁹ Katarzyna Pieprzak, "Ruins, Rumors and traces of the City of Brass: Moroccan Modernity and Memories of the Arab Global City," *Research in African Literatures* 38, no. 4 (2007):190.

alternative Moroccan present, one that does not shy away from an image of a city that represents a failed colonial dream.

Nour Eddine Lakhmari's 2008 film *Casanegra* opens in a deserted street after dark. The film's title, a play on the changing image of the city, from colonial possibility to postcolonial precarity, and which becomes its protagonists' preferred term for the city, is the intuition of a minor character. Visual plays on light and dark and night and day follow this linguistic switch. Three of Casablanca's modernist buildings loom over the film's opening shot; lit up by the streetlights, they glow against the black sky. The credits flicker over the faded facades of downtown stores with undressed mannequins in the windows, the superimposed text done up like neon signs. A stray dog makes a meal out of a pile of garbage that has been set out for the night. The final shot of the credit sequence shows a deserted intersection. The dog enters the frame and exits it again, continuing on its way. The soundtrack, a bluesy trumpet, adds a nostalgic note to the film noir mood. When the camera cuts from the stillness of the credits to two young men running towards the camera, four uniformed police officers hot in pursuit, a strong percussive beat comes in with the action. It is an abrupt change in pace, this first introduction to *Casanegra*'s two protagonists, "Karim 22 ans chomeur" and "Adil 21 ans chomeur," identified by caption in freeze frame. The end of the opening sequence comes with a return to day, to before Adil and Karim's late night flight through the city. Casablanca, the golden desolation we just saw, is back to bright white under a colorless sky, its moody shadows long gone.

Casanegra takes Casablanca's present, the faded glory of this colonial experiment, and darkens it. While the flat blue light of most of the film's scenes brings stark clarity to the conditions of daily life for its characters, the moody shadows and golden glow of its nocturnal streets color a dreamscape stranger and more variable than the restrictions of waking life. In both versions, the camera rests on scenes of urban decay in a city falling into ruin: its deco apartment buildings are missing their fixtures, its jobs are scarce and poorly paid, even its luxuries are on their way down – the film references the city's elite in images of drug-fueled decadence and in the contents of an antiques store, leftovers from the French. The two

problems the city presents to Karim and Adil – a lack of place because of their exclusion from all parts of the city except its criminal underground, and an impossibility of escape that goes along with their marginalization – create a paradox whereby it is their exclusion that traps them. Caught by the city, they depend on the very environment that is the source of their marginalization to sustain them as they hover on the brink of desperation.

In Lakhmari's film, the remnants of the control Wright describes becomes the confinement his characters experience in their repetitive wanderings through Casablanca's empty streets. Their plight reframes a colonial system of social exclusion based on ethnicity and religion as a contemporary system of exclusion based on class and economic status in a city where demarcated territory enforces order. Still, in the deep shadows of its yellow nights, Lakhmari's *Casanegra* is a city translated from light to dark, from fixed geometries to fluid movements. The film's treatment of the city, its making of a ruin from modernism, and its subversion of perspective and plan, comes as an aesthetic as much as an ideological switch. In the images of the nighttime scenes, the gaps in this version of the city's modernist dream prove large enough to let the film's protagonists through, releasing them into a different relationship with their daily constraints.

On one of the high-rises in the *ville nouvelle*, Karim and Adil come to take in the city, and it spreads out before them. In an overhead shot, we see the two men stumble out of the stairwell door and onto the roof before the film cuts to show Karim from behind. Giuliana Bruno has argued that the haptic quality of cinema, its ability to create a sensation of movement that places a spectator in a scene, is the quality that separates it from other media and frees its viewer from a static representation of the city:

Film's spectatorship is thus a *practice* of space that is dwelt in, as in the built environment. The itinerary of such a practice is similarly drawn by the visitor to a city or its resident, who goes to the highest point – a hill, a skyscraper, a tower – to project herself onto the cityscape, and who also engages the anatomy of the streets, the city's underbelly, as she traverses different urban configurations.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (New York: Verso, 2002), 62.

Character and viewer project themselves into the city, but what is the result of this projection? For Bruno, it is ownership over the urban environment, and a freedom of movement typically denied to (especially female) practitioners of urban space. As the camera pans up from the characters' feet, Casablanca fills the frame. It spreads out, boulevards radiating outwards towards the horizon, the city glowing with the golden light that fills the film's nocturnal shots. There is no end to what we see: the whole world, stretching on without even the ocean to show where it ends.

The paradox that comes with this view is inherent in its association with the relationship between perspective and plan. For Michel de Certeau, the bird's eye view is a controlling vision. He begins his famous chapter on the tactical subversion of urban space with the image of New York seen from the top of the World Trade Center in which a gridded Manhattan revealed is revealed as a unified whole. The lived metropolis, a confusing, living thing made of the people who fill its streets disappears when seen from this height. In Lakhmari's film, reading de Certeau into the rooftop scenes allows the plan to pass into the hands of those inside it when they claim this elevated position, even if their claim is only temporary. The problem with this kind of straight reading in this particular context is that de Certeau's point of view presumes visibility as well as distance. The revealed plan is always clear, hiding the city's inhabitants inside a vision that is clean, rational, and clearly structured.

The same insistence on this kind of urban space is made by Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, whose distinction between smooth and striated spaces, between nomadic and static, takes the desert as the metaphor for the first and the city, with its government, walls, streets, with its structure, as the metaphor for the second. Adil and Karim's vision would again seem to re-establish the primacy of Casablanca's striations, if only by reminding the film's viewers that this space is urban. There is no denying the plan from their elevated perspective: they seem to be looking straight down the boulevard from its source, positioning themselves not only above the city, but at its center. Far from Deleuze and Guattari's description of the smooth space of the desert, "...aucune ligne n'y sépare la terre et le ciel ; il

n'y a pas de distance intermédiaire, de perspective ni de contour, la visibilité est retreinte...”
[There is no intermediate distance, no perspective or contour; visibility is limited...], the city is at first a clear entrance into the opposite of this kind of space.¹²¹ Visibility is primary, the perspective is clear as the boulevards recede towards a vanishing point, and even the curvature of the earth is there in the far distance.

Still, Lakhmari's film does not slot the city so easily into this opposition between striation and smoothness. This is an opposition that, we should remember, is tenuous at best in the context of Deleuze and Guattari's descriptions of spaces and materials that function in terms of flows and oscillations, where the stability of striation is always illusory and even temporary. Space can be striated or smooth depending on how it behaves. It is not only the physical aspects of space that determine its behavior; it is the ways in which influence flows through it, and these aspects are not fixed, being instead functions of time. The description of the desert does not stop at its relationship to perspectival distance:

[...] il y a une topologie extraordinairement fine, qui ne repose pas sur des points ou des objets, mais sur des heccéités, sur des ensembles de relations (vents, ondulations de la neige ou du sable, chant du sable ou craquement de la glace, qualités tactiles des deux) ; c'est un espace tactile, ou plutôt 'haptique', et un espace sonore, beaucoup plus que visuel...
[... and yet there is an extraordinarily fine topology that relies not on points or objects but rather on haecceities, on sets or relations (winds, undulations of snow or sand, the song of the sand or the creaking of ice, the tactile qualities of both). It is a tactile space, or rather "haptic," a sonorous much more than a visual space.]¹²²

A relational space, the topology of the desert lies in the minutest of interactions between highly differentiated entities, much as the city reveals itself in the encounters between urban subjects who come to the foreground in narrative descriptions. Karim and Adil's movements, their haptic relationship to their environment, take them vertically through the space as well as horizontally, bringing the visual wholeness of the city seen from the top of one of its high-rises into this not purely visual spatiality.

¹²¹ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, (Paris: Minuit, 1980), 474, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 382.

¹²² Deleuze and Guattari 474, 382.

The image continues past the vanishing point of the street lines, past the focus of the camera, to a horizon where the light from the sky and the light from the city merge into an undifferentiated limitless space. Casablanca, in this first of several rooftop scenes, is both the structured environment that thwarts Karim and Adil's attempts to escape and a smooth, undifferentiated and un-mapped world that offers the possibility of adaptation. Karim and Adil's place within their version of Casablanca is never in question — they take in the entire city and possess it. Rising above the city at night, Karim and Adil look down on a labyrinth of a city into which they have no choice but to descend in the harsh light of day. For the viewer, if climbing out of Casablanca helps to establish our place in the city, returning to its streets asks us to reassess our newfound perspective.

The oneiric quality the film lends to the city in its opening shots and that separates the ascent over the city from the descent into it re-appears each time the sun sets on its characters. The cracks and empty shop windows in Lakhmari's version of the city recall a more pristine past, while the two central characters see no further backwards than their own childhoods, Karim marveling at how his disabled father endured the monotony of day after day cleaning fish. There is no before the ruin in the film, only a continuity of desperation and decay. Yet it is Casablanca's crumbling modernism that lets new possibilities into this static life, the excess and absurdity of noir fiction seeping through the cracks. Offering the ruin as a possible response to, rather than an enabler of, postmodernist nostalgia, Andreas Huyssen argues that ruins are entry points into "...the hardly nostalgic consciousness of the transitoriness of all greatness and power, the warning of imperial hubris, and the remembrance of nature in all culture."¹²³ Going further, he asks that we look at these broken bits of fallen empires as "...an architectonic cipher for the temporal and the spatial doubts that modernity always harbored about itself."¹²⁴ Huyssen's reading is particularly interesting in the case of Lakhmari's film, which focuses on the decay and ruination of a city both modernist and imperialist. While the daytime scenes illuminate Casablanca's walls, the night

¹²³ Andreas Huyssen, "Authentic Ruins: Products of Modernity," in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle (Durham: Duke, 2010), 21.

¹²⁴ Ibid 22.

city is all dark shadows and broken windows. Its French architects long gone, poverty erodes the city's modernist glories.

This encroachment and the adaptation of the city space to new uses act on the structure of the city, de-zoning its neighborhoods and turning them away from their intended uses. An ideological collapse that moves faster than physical decay, it makes a ruin of the old order, which remains only in the sign of the building, announcing its intended original use. An inhabited ruin, Casablanca presents a living cipher, an evolving argument against modernism's ability to fully structure urban life that reintroduces the organic into the city plan. What Huyssen's argument refuses to offer, however, is the possibility that the ruin and habitation might go together, breaking down at the point at which it opposes culture and nature, a modernist dichotomy that is unnecessary to the ruin's ability to reanimate the past and undermine historical forgettings. If the ruin can, in some cases, provide an alternative to the modernist opposition, then it might create habitable spaces for those excluded from cultural definitions of modernity, especially those so often embedded in colonial urbanism.

The first scenes of Lakhmari's film establish both the condition of urban decay that provides the background for his narrative and adds mood without historical context. *Casanegra's* nostalgia is for a cinematic rather than an urban past. This displacement of nostalgia embeds the spatial and temporal doubts Huyssen recognizes in an atemporal version of the city. The film's present is split between the contemporary city, and a nostalgic dreamscape that brings its dark side to life. This division is closer to what Svetlana Boym identifies as the sideways character of nostalgia, part of what she deems not the modern or the postmodern but the off-modern, an alternative vision that moves out of but remains attached to a world governed by principles of modernity.¹²⁵ This sideways movement into the "off" takes nostalgia and the ruin that produces it out of the stream of chronological time and the clearly defined spatial orientations that anchor it to the real. "The nostalgic feels stifled within the conventional confines of time and space. The ruins of twentieth-century modernity,

¹²⁵ Svetlana Boym, "Ruins of the Avant-Garde: From Tatlin's Tower to Paper Architecture," in *Ruins of Modernity*, ed. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle, (Durham: Duke, 2010), 58-85.

as seen through the contemporary prism, both undercut and stimulate the utopian imagination, constantly shifting and deterritorializing our dreamscape.”¹²⁶ The original utopian imaginary, which created the now ruined architecture, is what is undercut. What is stimulated is a new utopian vision, one in which the past gives way to the nostalgic dreamscape evoked by the ruin. Its deterritorialization opens this new utopia to reimaginings and the creation of new kinds of meaning. By allowing the ruin to move sideways, she allows it to disengage from history while retaining a reference to the past. In *Casanegra*, this reading of the ruin as a sideways exit from the constraints of modernism in the city is at odds with Huyssen’s uninhabited ruin, as the nature of the ruins of colonial modernism competes with their use in the film as a ground not for a repurposed contemporary, an aesthetic of inauthentic ruin, but as the locus for action that draws heavily on cinematic history.

Beyond its choice of sites, the play of light and dark against a series of isolated characters in *Casanegra* references the aesthetics of American noir cinema of the 1940s. In commentary that accompanies the DVD of the film, Lakhmari acknowledges the noir influences in his work, seeing the aesthetic as being both visually and narratively interesting for his audience and appropriate to the ways his film deals with aspects of life in contemporary Casablanca that are often excluded from popular media.¹²⁷ This visual vocabulary connects Lakhmari’s work to that of American filmmakers, an association that calls into question what kinds of cinematic representations are most fruitful for Moroccan directors interested in increasing their local and international audiences. It also begs the question of how contemporary representations of Casablanca frame their representations of the city and the kinds of life it engenders. Populated with characters both bizarre and completely at home among its faded boulevards, Casablanca becomes a dream city on the verge of nightmare: haunted, ruined, and abandoned.

¹²⁶ *ibid* 59

¹²⁷ *Casanegra*, directed by Nour Eddine Lakhmari (2008; Dubai: Bodega Films, 2010), DVD commentary.

The dystopian city of *Casanegra* treats Casablanca as a flexible environment, one whose spatial divides are subverted by characters whose experiences of the city bring the viewer access to a greater variety of places than she might be exposed to in her daily travels. The weight of the conflicting imaginaries of the colonial city, which Khatibi and Chraïbi's early protagonists inhabit as an environment designed to control its population and conceived as a way of opening Moroccan society to a modern age through the integration of infrastructure into a coherent aesthetic vision of an urban future, is absent from these later re-imaginings of Casablanca. The faded promise, especially of areas of the new city that have been abandoned or fallen into disrepair, suggests a present that, while not nostalgic for the past, characterizes the current conditions of life in the post-modern metropolis as precarious but not without a kind of optimism born of extremes.

What the film gradually reveals is that the ordered space of the city by day, the modernist vision of Casablanca, enforces a status quo that the nocturnal city does not. This other city, this dreamscape, lies at a remove from the clarity of the present, its noir overtones moving to another time and place, moving it "off" in Boym's terms. *Casanegra* lingers over the city's ruined surfaces, providing viewing pleasure in the richness and warmth of its nocturnal illumination. If a problem in reacting to the structure of the colonial city is that fact that we feel an obligation, despite the form of the city's buildings, to "acknowledge, as [their] architects did not, the limits of aesthetic success[.]" then the translation of the urban environment from modernist utopia to the ahistorical nostalgia of noir allows for a smoothing over of the rigidity of the structure that underlies its successes, reopening its imaginary.¹²⁸ Separating the vision of the film's days from the dream of its nights, we move outside of the history that marks this particular built environment, using the translation of the modernist form through the noir idiom of color, light and atmosphere to undermine the certainty of the Cartesian order that anchors Casablanca.

Conclusion

¹²⁸ Wright, *Politics of Design*, 139

Today, Casablanca continues the dramatic growth begun with French development to support its port, drawing new residents from Morocco's rural areas and remote Atlas mountain communities as well as from elsewhere in the Maghreb and the countries of the Sahara and western sub-Saharan. Currently a city of over three million, its size and economic importance suggest a crucial role for Casablanca in ongoing discussions of both Moroccan society after 1956 and the return of an independent monarchy and urbanity in the postcolonial Maghreb more generally. Nevertheless, the fact that its prominence is the direct result of French policy during the Protectorate makes Casablanca something of a special case. Historically and culturally outside of the ceremonial exchanges that supported the development of Morocco's royal cities (Fez, Marrakech, Rabat and Meknes) over a thousand years, Casablanca has no urban identity in traditional Moroccan society and cannot be separated from the history of French colonial power in Morocco nor from the urban experiments in modernization undertaken across the French controlled world, including the hexagon, in the early twentieth century.¹²⁹ Whether it is included in or excluded from Moroccan narrative representations of urban environments from the late Protectorate to the present, Casablanca acts as an implicit reference to French ideas about modernization in Morocco. The degree to which the presence or absence of the city stresses the connections between pre-Independence colonial history and the city's design can help us understand different possibilities for reading relationships to a particularly Moroccan modernity in both literature and film.

Writing about contemporary Johannesburg in the light of the realities of radical re-mixing, development, appropriation, and ruin that shape the post-apartheid South African capital, Achille Mbembe offers a description, that, in the nuance of its observation and of what is, ultimately, an optimistic approach to the transformative and flexible character of urban space, provides an apt post-script to the discussion of Casablanca that I have maintained over the course of this chapter:

¹²⁹ Susan Oussman has a good discussion of the divide between urban and rural Moroccan society in *Picturing Casablanca*.

It is not simply the meaning of buildings or streets that is changing. Contemporary downtown Johannesburg visually resembles other African cities in the aftermath of decolonization: a matrix of plural styles, a striated, striped city that concatenates the most formal and modern with the most informal. In some instances, these breaks signal the force of an obstacle. In other instances, they prefigure the power of a new impulse—a new intensity. In still others, inherited elements of the city are destroyed to make way for the creation of the new. All these instances belie any notion of the city as a symbolic totality. The appropriation of its different styles is not necessarily optical—as shown, for example, by the ease with which old buildings may be left to ruin as silent witnesses to the past. Mostly, the appropriation of the city space is tactile, allegorical, and onomatopoeic. Behind its disorderly convulsions and apparent formlessness, there is a recognition that the metropolis is fundamentally fragmented and kaleidoscopic—not as an art form but as a compositional process that is theatrical and marked by polyphonic dissonances.¹³⁰

The representation of Casablanca in Chraïbi and Khatibi's early work struggles against the imposition of colonial power in the planned city of Casablanca's early history. Addressing colonial modernism as well as modernization, they present an image of the city as the product of fractured spatial organizations that do not, in the end, comply with the image of the divided city idealized by the administrators of the Protectorate. An environment caught in flux as a response to successive tides of influences and inhabitants that wash over its modernist forms, these representations of Casablanca use the figures of modernism to question the clarity of the white city.

The dissonance – of form, of ruin and wealth, of the linguistic streetscape of Lakhmari's film and of the traffic that crashes through the traditional rhythms to the discomfort of Khatibi's listener – is the current that runs through this massive North African metropolis, making it impossible to see Casablanca as a cohesive, centralizing hub of activity despite the forces and influences it brings together. To see the city as striated rather than divided, to see it as a system of matrixes, or as a tessellated space, a fragmentation of possibilities, is to acknowledge the particularities of Casablanca in the Moroccan situation. It is to see, in the extensive plans that shaped its early history, an amalgam of styles and conflicting ideas still present in problems of settlement and economy. It is to question the degree to which the value of urban design in the post-colonial context continues to be its over-writing of this dissonance, and, in film certainly, the increasing presence of

¹³⁰ Achille Mbembe, "Aesthetics of Superfluity," *Public Culture* 16, no 3 (2004): 400.

contemporary cacophony and atmospheres of automobile flows that characterize its present condition. Cohen and Eleb call its colonial image that of “Une ville d’aventures, une ville ‘étrange et troublante’ où tout peut arriver, mais aussi un lieu d’invention et de modernité, tel est le mythe collé à Casablanca pendant des décennies.” [A place of adventure, a ‘strange and unsettling city’ where anything can happen, yet also a locus of invention and modernity – such is the myth that for decades clung to Casablanca.]¹³¹ This myth, sold to prospective French tourists, frames the modern city in a context of adventure and discovery that would be equally appropriate in describing the tourist’s view of other cities in Morocco or the Maghreb. Seen from the Moroccan perspective, Casablanca is still strange and troubling, but for different reasons. The city reworks the ruins of this mythologized modernism. As it continues to grow in defiance of the logic of its plan, “Casablanca spreads out as though it were trying to incorporate the entire world.”¹³² As it does, its image becomes increasingly malleable, the cracks in its modernist buildings providing the outlines and traces for new representations to follow.

¹³¹ Cohen and Eleb, *Mythes et figures*, 9, 11.

¹³² Oussman, *Picturing Casablanca*, 30.

II. Montreal

The Montreal skyline bears witness to the changes that the twentieth-century brought to the island in the Saint Lawrence; the massive downtown buildings that transformed the physical city in the 1960s offer the viewer visual contact with one manifestation of transformations that reshaped Quebec society in the decades following the Second World War. Civic ambition and Québécois nationalism rose in tandem through the 60s: modernist urbanism and a politics of Francophone revolution rushed in to fill the void left by the conservative policies of former Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis.¹³³ The artists and writers at the heart of the quiet revolution that had been brewing in Quebec since the 40s sought a break with the past while the plans laid out under Montreal mayor Jean Drapeau envisioned a prosperous future for the city to accompany the promise of a more liberal society. When Expo 67 brought international attention to Montreal, the festival atmosphere of the exhibition grounds overflowed into the city, infusing the end of the decade with grand and optimistic visions. From the late 1970s through the 1980s, as prosperity declined, this dream of Montreal's potential as an economic force and the cultural capital of an emerging Québécois nation would be reconsidered and undone, particularly in literary production that spoke from the position of the outsider, looking to the past and the vagaries of memory's interaction with the present to reconfigure the city on the scale of the personal, participating in postmodernism's response to the blighted ambitions of the city.¹³⁴

Sherry Simon's detailed analysis of Montreal's linguistic landscape, which sees the city in terms of flows of people and ideas along avenues of translation, observes the

¹³³ The Duplessis era, known in Quebec as *la grande noirceur* or "the great darkness" was characterized by political and social conservatism. While change came through cultural and social movements as part of the *Revolution tranquille* or Quiet Revolution, these movements were, until the change in government of 1959, working against an establishment grounded in the restrictions of religious and class based conservatism. For a deeper look at the history of the period and its opposition, especially from literary circles, see Malcolm Reid's 1972 *The Shouting Sign Painters: A Literary and Political Account of Quebecois Revolutionary Nationalism*. For a critical history of the *grande noirceur*, see Gérard Bouchard's "L'imaginaire de la grand noirceur et de la révolution tranquille: fictions identitaires et jeux de mémoire au Québec" *Recherches sociographiques* 46, no 3 (2005) : 411-436.

¹³⁴ Works that can be considered as part of this shift include: Michel Tremblay's treatment of sexuality, Anne Hébert, Regine Robin, and Madeline Oulette-Michalska's feminist reworkings of history, Dany Laferrière's Haitian version of American identity, and Gerard Etienne's surrealism.

connection between changing sensibilities and urban forms in Montreal. “These changes transformed the self-consciousness of the city as they reshaped its infrastructure, creating new barriers between neighborhoods (in the form of autoroutes) but also burrowing new pathways underneath the city and the river.”¹³⁵ The nineteenth- and early twentieth-century city, with its neoclassical bank buildings, small roads, and linear divisions, was rewritten in a new language of on ramps and exits, highways, and metro lines. As they reached out under the surface of the island and across the river to growing suburbs, these new connections and divisions in the city linked into an expanding sense of what and where Montreal was.

In the modernist vision of Montreal in the 1960s, urbanism and politics were vectors of what their proponents saw as radical and systemic change. Yet these forces were not without their failings; a widening gap between infrastructural ambition and economic growth in the 1970s left Montreal with a plan a few sizes too large for the city it was supposed to contain. Meanwhile, the narrow view of Québécois identity that flowed through early nationalist movements ultimately excluded immigrants and First Nations from the heart of a supposedly radical politics.¹³⁶ What began to be seen as a society of exclusion would come under harsh and often ironic criticism in the years that followed the apogee of Québécois radicalism and the rise of the *Front de libération du Québec* (FLQ) through the 1970s. Yet, while scholars in architecture and geography have addressed the historical conditions of Montreal’s twentieth-century development, work on the representation of the city, especially in literary studies, has focused on social and linguistic analyses of the conditions of life in the city rather than on the interplay between the image of the city evident in reactions to its 1960s urban and architectural ambitions and Montreal literature.

¹³⁵ Sherry Simon, *Translating Montreal: Episodes in the Life of the Divided City* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006), 43.

¹³⁶ This despite a rhetoric of inclusion employed by prominent figures in the movement, including Hubert Aquin, whose writing in the 1960s sought parallels between the struggle for Francophone autonomy in the province and independence movements in French colonies in Africa. The pan-revolutionary subtext is a major feature of Aquin’s essays as well as his novels, in particular *Prochaine épisode* (1965) and *Trou de mémoire* (1968). Ultimately, as I will discuss later in this chapter, this vision was one of linguistic unity that denied the variety of experiences, Francophone, Anglophone, and Allophone, that shaped urban Quebec and Montreal in particular.

Francine Noël's Montreal fiction, with its focus on the individual and preference for these social and linguistic conditions as the defining structural elements of the city, provides a rich source of representational material as I work to integrate a general understanding of the visual aspects of Montreal's 1960s development into the modes of seeing and spatial representation in a work of narrative fiction. Her central cycle of novels, *Maryse* (1983), *Myriam Première* (1988), *La conjuration des bâtards* (1999), and *J'ai l'angoisse légère* (2008), weaves deep and intersecting urban histories and genealogies into the everyday realities her central characters. Her first novel is deeply nostalgic even as it confronts the social politics of Montreal in the early 1970s, imagining images of the city's past overlaid on the streets of its present. Multiple threads of narrative fracture a text that otherwise moves in a logical progression through eight years of life in the city. Lacking a distinct climax and distant from the sense of urban and national possibility that infected a previous generation of Montreal writers, Noël's *Maryse* breaks free of the modernist city. In her late 1980s theorization of the politics and poetics of postmodernism, Linda Hutcheon defined this development in literary form as a questioning of "the messianic faith of modernism, the faith that technical innovation and purity of form can assure social order, even if that faith disregards the social and aesthetic values of those who must inhabit those modernist buildings."¹³⁷ Noël provides multiple frames for Montreal, and her representation of the city embeds urban stories in older spaces and privileges memory as a category of spatial experience. It is Noël's focus on the personal and on the inner lives of her characters that allows the postmodern urban subject at the heart of her narratives to find herself within an environment that is otherwise confusing or alienating.

This environment, which Hutcheon describes in relation to Fredric Jameson's definition of the postmodern, is characterized by a high degree of spatial confusion and results in the disorientation of the subject, who is lost without the clear markers of

¹³⁷ Linda Hutcheon, *Politics of Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 12.

monumental modernist space.¹³⁸ The visual aspects of the narrative, the ways in which *Maryse* presents the reader with a particular way of seeing the city, confront the modernistic ideology of its emergence as a symbolic home for Quebecois nationalism in the 1960s. A selective visibility and oblique, ironic references to the politics of the era complicate the nostalgic and affective aspects of a text filled with references to its protagonist's childhood in post-war Montreal. As for the monumental modernism that could serve as a means of spatial and political tension, it remains on the borders of the narrative. Noël positions her text in the particularity of Montreal in the 1970s.

The point of view offered by the novel's protagonist Maryse O'Sullivan is that of a university student of mixed linguistic heritage. With a Francophone mother and an Anglophone father, Maryse is caught between an affinity for the politics of the Francophone city and a personal preference for the version of her absent father she constructs from childhood memories over the mother whose incessant phone calls she actively avoids. When she changes her name from Mary to the frenchified Maryse, it is in part an assertion of independent linguistic identity by a woman trying to break away from the restrictions of her working class upbringing. She provides the dominant perspective on Montreal in the novel, but not the only one: a multiplicity of primary urban subjects – two Maries, (Marie-Thérèse Grand'maison (Marité), Marie-Lyre Flouée (MLF)), and a gentle story-teller of a best friend (François Ladouceur) – and a rich cast of secondary figures – a far from perfect boyfriend (Michel Paradis), a caricature of a nationalist poet (Oubedon, his work and personage based on that of Gaston Miron), a professional muse who provides services in new age inspiration to aspiring artists of all types, mothers of both loving and prying varieties, and a triad of creatures who bring into the narrative a hint of the fantastic and earthier versions of divine

¹³⁸ Jameson defines postmodernism in terms of a loss of the clear definitions and totality of modernism. The spatial condition of the postmodern is therefore defined by confusion and the loss of the subject's power of orientation in the environment. The task of postmodern representations and representations of the postmodern therefore becomes that of find a mode of representation "in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as our social confusion." Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 54.

messengers (*le petit diable*, *le genie de la langue française*, *l'archange Gabrielle*) – helps to make *Maryse* a composite representation of urban experience, one destabilized by the possibilities of dream and memory rather than by revolutionary theories and acts.

While *Maryse* follows the trails of its characters' lives through an urban scene of left-wing politics, student life, and allusions to revolutionary and counter-cultural movements, clear images of the city that provides the social, political and physical structure for the novel's milieu are elusive. Where other novels describe in detail both the exterior appearances of the typical early twentieth-century houses of Montreal's Francophone neighborhoods and the changing image of the modernizing city, Noël in this instance provides little in the way of clear descriptions of building exteriors or of the city's defining features.¹³⁹ Foregrounding the subjective interiority and personal dramas of its characters, the novel re-imagines the city on the microscopic scale of individual experience, offering an image of Montreal as a system of intimate spaces and internal thoughts. This preference for smallness privileges experiences of the urban environment that would be overwhelmed by phenomena on the massive scale of 1960s development and universal spectacular experiences like Expo 67, the visual point of departure for late twentieth-century representations of Montreal, which I will discuss in detail later in this chapter. By examining the relationship between modernist and postmodernist impulses that connect the novel's visual imagery of Montreal, I will argue that *Maryse's* treatment of the city exposes the legacy of the nationalist vision of the 1960s and can only be fully analyzed by looking critically at the micropolitics put forth and tempered by irony in the text.

To account for the movement between the foreground and the background of the representation of the urban environment in *Maryse*, I will offer some close readings of passages of the novel, working out the details of the ground against which the characters meander along the paths of the narrative. Zooming in and out, my argument will attempt to

¹³⁹ These authors include those referenced in the exhibition publication for the 1990 CCA exhibition "The 1960s: Montreal Thinks Big," namely Jacques Ferron, Pierre Gravel and Brian Moore (Lortie 62-63). The exhibition publication provides a short but precise integration of these textual approaches to modernism and the planning and architecture of the period.

find a middle ground for a productive critical gaze. We should ask to what extent the spaces represented in work like Noël's extrapolate meaning from the structure of the city as a whole: what role does image play in this representation, and how can such an image to be defined or developed while avoiding modernist modes of visualization — the aerial, the panorama, the skyline? How does representation create an image of Montreal that avoids modernist points of view, despite their importance to the city's image creation at the time of the action of the novel and their role as markers for fading ambitions at the time of its publication?

Maryse begins in November of 1968, after the end of the protests that began in Paris in May of that year and spread across the Atlantic to Montreal, where the summer was marked with similar manifestations of youthful opposition, including a sit-in that disrupted classes at the École des Beaux Arts. It continues through the turbulent years of 1970s Montreal, ending in the summer of 1975. Between these two points, the city fell from the high of a period of growth and a successful World's Fair to an outpost for extremism, martial law (which came into temporary effect during the October Crisis of 1970), and an increasingly fraught linguistic environment. The passing of Bill 101 in 1977 restricted the use of English in public contexts and resulted in the relocation of the head offices that had anchored Montreal's commercial prominence in Canada to Toronto.¹⁴⁰ Occurring six years before the publication of *Maryse* but just over a year after the narrative's end, this shift in the city's makeup provides a retrospective context for the novel's open-ended action. Considering Montreal's fortunes at the end of the 1970s allows me to read into the text an anticipated end to the period of urban limbo and political action contained within the covers of *Maryse*. The context of the novel is, in a way, two-fold: the fading newness of the 1960s city surrounds its characters as they negotiate the aftermath of radical student politics and late adolescence in Montreal's neighborhoods, while the nostalgic references to the city of the 1950s parallel the renewal of interest in the historical city that followed the economic downturn that accompanied the changes to Quebec's language policy in the 1970s.

¹⁴⁰ See Germain and Rose's *Montréal: The Quest for a Metropolis* for a discussion of how public and private development in the 1960s shaped the city both before and after this commercial relocation.

The form of the city in *Maryse* anticipates this change in the city's approach to architecture and its urban context, which took place as Montreal moved from the massive constructions of the 1960s, which included downtown multi-use megastructures and residential development that took the form of housing blocks, to a greater appreciation for the smaller scale interactions of urban life. As Annick Germain and Demarais Rose describe it:

Overall, these superblocks [the megastructural developments that occupied large areas of downtown real-estate] embody the triumph of filled spaces over open spaces, to use Camillo Sitte's expression (Sitte, 1979). But in the 1980s there was a renewed emphasis on city streets as structural spaces. [...] The forms of the 1980s would be marked by the rediscovery of the merits of integrating architecture into its environment, an environment that modernism in part chose to ignore, and by the harmonious combination of new forms and new uses for heritage buildings.¹⁴¹

Situating its characters in the period of filled space that Germain and Rose describe, *Maryse* invites the reader to consider the ways in which memory has the capacity to fill space with narrative rather than with additions to the built environment. *Maryse* in particular holds onto the stability of her memories of the city while lending the majority of her attention to the minutiae revealed by the continuity of a lived present. The novel creates this continuity by providing ample plot in chapters that alternate between close examinations of a few days or weeks and fluid streams of events that suggest that time can pass both slowly and quickly. By stretching the relationships between time and space and by blurring the outlines of the built environment in the details and views the text represents, *Maryse* frames Montreal through close and selective viewings, reacting to politics and urban modernism with interiority and exclusion. The details of the domestic and intimate city and its familiar routes and spaces contrast with the constantly advancing present of the novel's plot. Like the reaction to modernism that Germain and Rose describe, the novel experiments with new forms, in this case the temporal structure of its narrative, describing an integration of subject and environment.

¹⁴¹ Annick Germain and Damaris Rose, *Montréal: The Quest of a Metropolis* (Toronto: Wiley and Sons, 2000), 71.

Visions of Montreal in the 1960s

For Montreal, it is the years directly preceding those depicted in *Maryse* that provided the city with its most visible moments in terms of international attention to its architecture and urban form. While the first half of the twentieth century saw little in the way of large-scale modernist architectural development in the city, the social upheaval that followed the end of the Second World War marked a gradual opening of Quebec society that paved the way for visible changes that would mark the form of Montreal in the ensuing decades. The publication of the artistic manifesto *Le refus global* in 1948 indicated the presence of an artistic community opposed to the conservative conventions of traditional Quebec society, but it would take until 1959 and the death of Conservative Quebec premier Maurice Duplessis to mark the end of the era known as the *grande noirceur* (great darkness), allowing for large-scale political and social change to take hold. In Montreal, a repositioning of urban questions at the center of this new liberal Quebec meant a greater prominence for the city in both the pragmatics of political power and in the symbolic identity of Québécois nationalism.

Of this dramatic change, the architectural historian Jean-Louis Cohen remarks, “In a city that always perceived itself as competing with stronger, more established models, this was an important narcissistic moment.”¹⁴² While restrictions on height intended to preserve the views of and from the mountain would limit the vertical scale of these projects, architects and developers found other ways to expand their structures, building massive complexes that extended below ground as well as above such as Place Ville-Marie (I.M. Pei 1962) and Place Bonaventure (Ray Affleck 1968) and creating an underground city running out below existing streets. These projects were more than simply the products of private interests; they symbolically gestured to the formation of a new Francophone city, even if it would take some time before the latter was borne out in the language of choice of the major tenants of these structures. More immediately, they fundamentally changed the look of the city, which had

¹⁴² Jean-Louis Cohen, discussion with Michael Sorkin and Pierre Lortie, in *The 60s: Montreal Thinks Big*, ed. Pierre Lortie (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2004), 159.

been stalled on its way to a modern skyscraper metropolis by the Great Depression and Second World War. The legacy of this new construction was problematic: though promoted with all the pomp that Drapeau could muster, the general impression of some of these new buildings, which included both the downtown megastructures that garnered the most attention and modernist residential high-rises that overtook historical neighborhoods in the city, was not entirely positive. Particularly in those cases where construction depended on the destruction of historic streets and neighborhoods, the developments of the 1960s continued to garner criticism in the years that followed their construction.¹⁴³

The World's Fair site of Expo 67 on the islands of Île Sainte-Hélène and Île Notre-Dame was both a microcosmic example of urban ambition and a visual compliment to the city behind it. Constructing the site was a massive undertaking, as the first island had to be expanded and the second constructed from earth left over from the building of the city's metro in order to provide the additional area needed for the event. The urban aspects of Montreal's fair were described by chief architect Edouard Fiset as a direct departure from the more "English Garden" planning of its predecessors and were an attempt to capitalize on the fair as a way of confirming the importance of the city's transformation.¹⁴⁴ The planning commission chose water as the unifying theme for the site, not surprising considering the location, and especially appropriate given the amount of attention paid to the flow of visitor traffic between different attractions. The canals established sight lines and directionality,

¹⁴³ The most public display of this critical response occurred in the lead-up to the 1976 Olympic Games. The Corridart, a series of monumental art installations along Sherbrooke Street, was intended as the cultural component of the games but was shut down by Drapeau before the opening ceremonies after it became clear that the installations, coordinated by Montreal architect Melvin Charney, directly criticized Drapeau's disregard for the historical city.

¹⁴⁴ Edouard Fiset, *Introduction d'un concept urbain dans la planification de l'exposition Expo 67/Introduction of an Urban Concept in the Planning of the Exposition Expo 67*, (pamphlet, Montreal, 1965) Though the extent to which Expo moved outside of landscape and into urban design is up for debate, it is certainly true that the discourse surrounding Expo was focused on the urban aspects of the site, especially as they applied to transportation technology and the urban focus of several of the pavilions. These saw the city as a place where human innovation and technologically-based life reached their highest potential. As a tourism exercise, Expo was also a dramatic departure from Montreal's events from the 1950s and as late as 1965. These events focused on the rural and wilderness roots of Quebecois history, drawing connections between vernacular architecture in Montreal and provincial France and featuring prominent figures from the age of the *voyageurs*. It is better seen in terms of commemorative activities around the city's port, which are roughly contemporary with the beginning of the Expo planning in the mid 60s. Tourism pamphlet, City of Montreal, 1965, Archives nationales de Québec

while the gondolas supplied for the event provided a direct reference to Venetian models in the midst of the modernist plan. Materials prepared for the committee by the planning team stress the graphic and spatial coherence of the site, its “volumetric equilibrium.”¹⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the new metro system connected Expo to the city proper, with special trains bearing the names and emblems of the different cities that made up the agglomeration themselves forming part of the display of civic progress. A variety of transportation options designed to shuttle visitors between the islands and the city and take them around Expo itself contributed to the continuity between the city and the city-like fair. A monorail and promenading transit infrastructure showed off the potential for new transportation technology. Laid out explicitly to allow visitors the opportunity to view both the site and the panorama of Montreal’s skyline from the offshore vantage point of the islands, these elements of the exhibition created a dynamic experience for its visitors.

Despite the ambitious language of Expo’s organizers, architects, and planners, the designs of the individual pavilions were not to enter into the architectural legacy of the era. The interior displays have, in many cases, garnered more commentary in the ensuing decades than the architecture of the pavilions themselves. This is especially true for the Czechoslovakian and *Labyrinth* pavilions, in which film installations in particular took advantage of technological development to translate new possibilities for the viewer’s experience into spectacular and pedagogical exhibits. These innovations in viewing strategies and audience engagement, which included experiments with viewer perspective (the placement of screens in the National Film Board of Canada’s *Labyrinth*); multi-screen imagery (*Labyrinth* and *A Place to Stand*, among others); video and motion based collage (*Citérama*); and viewer immersion (*Canada 67*) made the interior of many of the pavilions the focus of visitor experience.¹⁴⁶ This was borne out both in the long lines that accompanied these exhibits and in the continued impact of the changing approach to film as art and

¹⁴⁵ Fiset, *Introduction d’un concept urbain*

¹⁴⁶ For descriptions of some of the most important film exhibits, see the Expanded Cinema project hosted by York University. <http://www.yorku.ca/filmexpo/film.html>

medium in the 1960s.¹⁴⁷ Expo's contribution to the changing visual context of the era was distinct from the imaging of the city designed into the site, which framed the skyline on the other shore to create a feeling of urban continuity between the two environments.

Historically, the World's Fair exhibitions of the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries had offered windows into discussions of globalization and attitudes towards progress. As spectacular introductions of visual technology, the early fairs in particular are tied to the histories of electricity, urban illumination, and cinema. Tom Gunning describes them as sites that highlight the importance of visual culture in the society of commodity consumption in which even the earliest fairs participated. As a site of spectatorship and consumption, the fair:

...served as one of the great training grounds and laboratories for a new commodity-based visual culture. It raised the act of spectating to a civic duty and a technological art. These spectacles, designed to be both entertaining and educational, served several semiotic functions: they provided an image of the world wide power of capitalism; they transformed a market place into a symbolic landscape that not only celebrated but exemplified modernity; and they formed a spectacle in which commodity provided the entertainment, and the commodity form of entertainment itself was raised to a new technical perfection.¹⁴⁸

While I am less interested in the semiotic functions of the fair spectacle than in the particular relationships between Expo and the city, Gunning's observations on the visual aspects of the Chicago and St. Louis fairs and their relationship to a particular kind of semiotic system, the dissemination of information through the concept of the nineteenth century object lesson, in this context the idea of that learning was best accomplished through the appreciation of objects that could be physically handled by or otherwise interact with the student, provides a basis for understanding the visual mechanisms still at play in Montreal, almost three quarters of a century after the examples Gunning employs. In this model, textual or linguistic explanation becomes secondary to, or even eliminated from, the lesson provided by the visual perception of the object itself. As the model for museum design as well as for the instructive aspects of the pavilions that are common features of expositions of this scale, the

¹⁴⁷ For a full discussion of the relationship between the Expo exhibits and video and cinematic art in the 1960s and 1970s, see Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (London: Dutton, 1970).

¹⁴⁸ Tom Gunning, "The World as Object Lesson: Cinema Audiences, Visual Culture and the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904," *Film History* 6, no. 4 (1994): 423-424

concept of the object lesson allows seeing to dominate the educational experience. In exhibits organized according to its principles, the visual world becomes a realm of information as well as perception.

In the case of Expo 67, the site design and thematic decisions made by the organizational committee combined the vestiges of this emphasis on the visual with the tenuous politics of the Cold War era, developing a structure for an exhibition that would end up providing visitors with an introduction to the beginnings of a shift in visual culture and the beginning of the end of an earnest utopian architecture. As Erik Mattie describes it in a brief photographic history of major World's Fairs and international Exhibitions:

In the countercultural atmosphere of the late sixties, while war raged in Vietnam and Soviets and Americans faced off in the space race, the fair's administrators made a deliberate point that their event would not be a showcase for what they described as 'cold' technology. Neither were they interested in creating a simple amusement park.

Though not every nation kept to the theme – borrowed from the book *Terre des Hommes* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry – the human scale was taken as a starting point by almost all of the exhibitors. Expo's logo, designed by Julien Hébert, consisted of stylized couples with outstretched and entwined hands suggesting love and friendship. The circle formed by the couples symbolized the world. One of the new bridges to the Île Sainte-Hélène was named Concordia (union).¹⁴⁹

Montreal provided the setting and the exhibitors, as Mattie describes, took it to heart. The naming of the bridge provided a linguistic as well as physical connection between the Expo islands and the city: Montreal's motto is *in concordia salus*, "salvation through harmony."

Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome for the American Pavilion proved the most recognizable expression of the desired philosophy of the exhibition. Both defensive and unifying, the dome married countercultural ideals and strictures of construction and adaptability desirable to builders from off-the-grid communities to American military operations. The dome was a symbol of human possibility, and the "World Game" that Fuller debuted along with it was an optimistic proposition for the triumph of the universal over the defensive character of the structure, as architectural historian Felicity Scott describes it, "technology liberated from what he called the "bias" of politics and operating in a postnational territory, a space that he

¹⁴⁹ Erik Mattie, *World's Fairs* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 228-229.

claimed lacked enmity.”¹⁵⁰ Architecturally, Expo hovered between the nationalistic promotional intent of its participating bodies and the architectural overtones of visions like Fuller’s that envisioned a more open vision of technological possibility and global sociability.

Erin Hurley has placed Expo explicitly in the context of the ideological shift of the 1960s from Quebec’s image of itself as rural *pays* to urban *nation*. This change in the environmental articulation of Québécois identity Hurley places firmly within the interaction of site, narrative, and form of the Quebec pavilion at Expo. No longer a landscape of tradition and regional sensibility, the new version of Quebec would work the rhetoric of conquest and discovery into the construction of a new future pictured in the skyline of Montreal seen from the riparian islands of the exhibition:

Where Jacques Cartier discovered an untamed natural environment, the Québécois ‘discoverers’ would narrate their modern origin story from the locus of this mastered, and wholly constructed, urban environment. However, the fair’s symbolic universe, its newly constructed environment, and the narrative of national competence it enabled, also reveal the public entrenchment of associations that have substantively informed Québécois historiography and studies of Québécois cultural production ever since. These associations lace together modernity, nationality, and urbanity - each gendered male - in a teleologically ordered origin story, and pit themselves against the tissue of tradition, regionalism, and ruralism - all gendered female.¹⁵¹

The gendered divisions that Hurley highlights were especially evident in the way in which the national narrative was presented to visitors to the Quebec pavilion. Facilitated by hostesses whose job was to make the exhibit readable and the technological elements of the display – video projections, moving parts, screens, and elevators that kept groups of visitors separate as they progressed through the different levels of the building – accessible, these visits set up their young, female guides as intermediaries between the rural hospitality of the past and the technical mastery of the present.¹⁵² Outside, the walls of the pavilion reflected, during the day, the scene around them, placing Quebec at the heart of Expo’s vision of modernity. At night, when interior illumination made the same walls transparent, the structure of the exhibit was revealed. The interplay between surface, image, and structure placed the visual aspects

¹⁵⁰ Felicity D. Scott, *Architecture or Techno-Utopia: Politics After Modernism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), 202.

¹⁵¹ Erin Hurley, *National Performance: Representing Quebec from Expo 67 to Celine Dion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 37.

¹⁵² *ibid*

of the Quebec pavilion firmly on the side of the modern, urban, nation while the narrative experience remained as a final gesture to the traditional (feminine) past.

In the optimistic assessment of the countercultural magazine *Mainmise*, the city was the active agent in a process of translation: being in Montreal is enough to make the structures Quebecois, the location of reception determines the language of expression and, through translation, makes Fuller's dome mean differently by making it mean in a new place. "Si nous sommes des INFORMATEURS nous devons être aussi des TRADUCTEURS. Le dôme géodésique de Fuller est québécois quand il est traduit par notre ciel montréalais et la mécanistique christique de Jean LeMoyne est américaine quand elle est lue à San Francisco." [If we are INFORMATERS we must also be TRANSLATORS. Fuller's geodesic dome is Quebecois when it is translated by our Montreal sky and the mechanistic Christianity of Jean LeMoyne is American when it is read in San Francisco.]¹⁵³ This description suggested that the utopian ideals Fuller's dome architecture could be realized, integrated, and made to mean something in the context of Montreal's new downtown.

Still, the nature of the translation remains uncertain. Is it linguistic, the American pavilion rewritten in the local idiom by the Montreal modernism of the city's new skyline? Or does the utopian vision reign over both, suggesting that the creation of the Expo site and the arrival of its visitors provided Montreal with a vision as much as an event, a rewriting of the world's fair through its already realized ideals? The potency of translation as metaphor, even used this loosely, alludes to the degree to which language politics dominate discussions of Montreal, even those that take into account the visual character of the city. If the city translates Expo, what parts constitute the language of translation and which the message translated, converted, and reworked? *Mainmise's* focus on the idea of utopia, and their counter example of the writings of Jean LeMoyne (most likely a reference to the important liberal Catholic thinker of mid-twentieth century Quebec, which Morgan claims become

¹⁵³ "Pénélope nous parle maintenant de *Mainmise*," *Mainmise* 1 (1970), 64.

American when read in San Francisco), suggest that it is the ideology that is mobile, moving through cultural translation.¹⁵⁴

In a discussion about the legacy of Expo 67 held at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in 2005, Michael Sorkin emphasized the connection between the site and the city. “This idea of a kind of adjacent, captive utopia as a goad to the reorganization of public spaces in the ‘real’ city is remarkable. Expo 67 – pedestrian paradise, architectural zoo, pleasure garden – constantly informs what’s happening across the river in Montreal.”¹⁵⁵ The organizational aspect of the islands, however, stood in contrast to the in-fill development of the city itself, the scenic walks of the exposition grounds at odds with the contained spaces of the megastructures that, by this time, were beginning to take over large blocks of city space. The urbanism that produced Place Ville-Marie and its ilk was a strategy by which the possibility of connections between previously existing public spaces was abandoned in favor of contained interactions that were part of the buildings themselves — the plaza and observation decks of Place Ville-Marie itself, or the underground city that linked megastructures, skyscrapers, and cavernous metro stations in a continuous commercial interior. The utopian dream represented by Expo’s thematic and spatial organization and expressed so completely in the integration of Fuller’s architecture of unification to the site (like the city itself, an island), would be destabilized by the politics of succeeding years, the bright fractured multiplicity of the cinematic interiors of the Czech pavilion and the larger implications of the non-linear urban narrative of the itinerary for the Quebec pavilion are, in retrospect, better illustrations of an unstable future than the new downtown.

In 1976 architectural critic and historian Rayner Banham would use Montreal, with its downtown reconfigurations of cities within the city and the urban stylings of the Man the Producer pavilion at Expo as the prime example of the megastructural architecture of what was by then, according to Banham, the fast fading ambition of the recent past:

[...] it is helpful to be able to see Mega-Montreal of the mid-sixties as a complete historical phenomenon, inclusive enough in its ramifications to cover, among other

¹⁵⁴ “Pénélope” 65

¹⁵⁵ Lortie, *Montreal Thinks Big*, 156.

things, architectural education at McGill University; the topography of downtown; the atmosphere of optimism induced by the onset of Expo preparations; the mysterious power of the local money establishment to promote major property adventures; a bilingual culture with unexpected world linkages; the land use policy of Canadian National Railways; and stranger affairs, including the personality of Mayor Drapeau.¹⁵⁶

The optimism Banham describes infused these utopian visions, which rose up too big for the city that spawned them. This is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in the missteps of the 1976 Montreal Olympics, which, unlike Expo, failed to generate enough enthusiasm and attraction to justify the project, instead pulling the city far into debt through over spending on the venues for the event. Even before the Olympics failed in their mission, the 1970s failed to fill the cavernous interiors of the new projects in ways that would fulfill the openness of their potential.¹⁵⁷

This ultimately unstable dream of the future city was not unique to Montreal, though in this case it is conditioned by the political realities of language and nationalism in the city and in Quebec as a whole throughout the middle of the twentieth-century. In the realms of architecture and urban design that gave birth to the megastructures that defined post-war development in the city and drove the visual innovations of Expo, the ideal of an emergent society born out of design, much as the Quebec pavilion figured a new style of urban nationalism and the new Francophone universities a new model for knowledge and professionalization, was characteristic of the time. Ideals of freedom were married to ideals of open structure that mirrored the idea of social release from colonial oppression and conservative tradition that fueled national politics in Quebec. Felicity Scott illustrates the optimism around this idea of an urban future through Emilio Ambasz's vision for the transformation of the city through a re-organization of its educational institutions around universal and interdisciplinary ideas of design:

¹⁵⁶ Rainer Banham, *Megastructure: Urban Features of the Recent Past* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 105.

¹⁵⁷ Banham indicates one exception to this failure: the shopping center at Place Alexis Nihon which, with its disco, small-scale shops, and carts, partially realized the adaptive ludic potential of the megastructure's immense inner spaces. "The result has acquired the vitality and sense of 'place' that many an architect and town planner of the sixties sweated blood to achieve by design, and failed to achieve" (Banham, 126).

An open present, by contrast, would arise only when that emergence [of Ambasz's Manhattan] was coupled with the "structural transformations" that he believed could be forged through new interdisciplinary institutions – the "Univercity," [Ambasz] noted, required the Universitas – and it would arise only when design did not determine the final form but, rather, merely set forth an open structure. It was the city unfolding in duration through a process of what Bergson had called "creative evolution."¹⁵⁸

In light of the rational scientific grounding of this futurist approach, disillusioned responses to it after the political promises of the early 60s failed to be fulfilled by the end of the decade, and shifted criticism to different scales and different narratives of response. If, as Scott argues, "Fiction is not just escape from reality but can produce engaged withdrawal,"¹⁵⁹ then the small-scale fictions and historically oriented narratives that characterize Noël's novels and *Maryse* in particular are, more than intertextual mediations on politics of language and gender, careful representations of post-1960s Montreal that withdraw and retreat from architectural markers and serious appraisals of the questionable and exclusionary extremes of politics.

Context and Intertext: Critical Assessments of *Maryse*

The visual aspects of Montreal's 1960s history provide a solid historical anchor for an analysis of *Maryse*'s relationship to city image as both visual construct and subjective experience. The novel's point of view is above all retrospective, with the legacy of the 1960s image making providing a point of departure for Noël's novel. The distinction between the radicalism of the 1960s and complacency of the 1970s that Felicity Scott alludes to by asking "...whether dissent ends inevitably in melancholy, disengagement, cooption, and nostalgia," is relevant in this context for what it suggests about the particular historical position of *Maryse*.¹⁶⁰ While radicalism did not hit its height in Quebec until the rise of the FLQ in the 1970s, *Maryse* portrays a political situation that feels distant and inaccessible to its protagonist. The novel's central romance between Maryse and Michel Paradis pulls politics into its discussion of class and gender, as Maryse feels increasingly alienated by the

¹⁵⁸ Felicity D. Scott, *Architecture or Techno-Utopia: Politics After Modernism* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2010), 96.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid* 272

¹⁶⁰ *ibid* 153

left-wing discourse and upper class experience of Michel and his friends. Details early in the novel allude to something closer to the disaffection that Scott describes than to the engagement that motivates characters like Michel, who inhabits a world of political ideals where discourse becomes proof of conviction. Maryse, on the other hand, struggles to find a way into her boyfriend's world. When the novel begins, she has just switched from the École de Beaux-Arts to UQUAM, abandoning her artistic studies for a course in literature that still fails to satisfy her need to understand and express a sense of personal, as opposed to communal or national, identity. The Beaux-Arts, the site of some of the most important student protests that swept through Montreal from Paris in the spring and summer of 1968, gets passed over in the novel with no allusion to its students' activism.¹⁶¹ This type of omission, where a character's personal feelings of alienation override the crescendo of activism revealed by political history, is the foundation of the ideological ethos, or rather the absent ideology, that shapes Noël's novel and anticipates the failure of radicalism in Montreal.

Depicting the period that follows the optimistic scale of the projects of the 60s, running through the FLQ crisis and the tensest point of Quebecois nationalism and appearing in the public, published, sphere after Montreal's late-70s economic downturn and the failure of the 1980 referendum, *Maryse* stands between the problems of scale that would follow its architectural ambitions and the very different radical politics that would trouble Montreal's late twentieth-century image. These problems are anchored in the city's development in the face of an uncertain future, one without the continuity of success upon which the metropolitan plans and impressive downtown structures of the 1960s depended but in many senses more ordinary and domestic than the radical politics that sought to upend all possibilities of continuity and prediction would suggest. The novel's inclination towards non-visual and microcosmic depictions of city life and away from an all-encompassing visualization of Montreal can therefore become part of its ironic troubling of

¹⁶¹ For historical analysis of student movements in Quebec in the 1960s see Jean-Philippe Warren, *Une douce anarchie. Les années 68 au Québec*, (Montréal: Boréal, 2008).

politics as part of urban perspective and subjectivity. *Maryse* imagines the city as both historical and cinematic, the fantastic images of Expo filtered through the humor and smallness of the individual urban subject: her city, her language, and her memory.

In the larger context of Montreal literature, Noël's fiction, and *Maryse* in particular (of her works, it has earned the greatest volume of critical attention), has been linked with the writing of other Quebecois women of her generation.¹⁶² Taking as given the novel's central female perspective, critical assessments of *Maryse* have mostly neglected the book's larger implications as a testing ground for the durability of its social and political ideals and their dependence on a particular way of seeing the city. Noël called *Maryse* a love story, though it is more the story of a character's growing sense of self set against the backdrop of a series of romantic entanglements than it is a grand romance.¹⁶³ As a narrative of growing maturity, the novel balances its characters' interiority with relationships between them and their social and geographical context mediated by memory, cultural references, and exchanges with those inside and outside of their immediate social circle.

Literary critic Ginette Michaud compares *Maryse* to the work of Michel Tremblay, who produced "des romans avec des vrais personnages (entendre psychologiques), des histoires bien ficelées, des héros sympathiques, et pourquoi pas? heureux, avec lesquels le lecteur n'aura pas de mal à s'identifier," [novels with real (that is to say psychological) characters, stories that are well constructed, with sympathetic and, why not?, happy heroes with whom a reader has little trouble identifying,] and an urban geography confined by the artifice of narrative, even as it is explicitly referenced, "des lieux que l'on reconnaîtra aussi aisément

¹⁶² For a feminist reading of Noël's *Maryse*, see Lori Saint-Martin "Histoire(s) de femme(s) chez Francine Noël," *Voix et Images* 18, no 2 (1993) : 239-252, Lucie Joubert, "La lecture de *Maryse* : du portrait social à la prise de parole," *Voix et Images* 18, n 2 (1993) : 273-286, and Francesca D. Benedict, "La prise de la parole dans *Maryse* de Francine Noël," *Voix et Images* 18, n 2 (1993) : 264-272.

¹⁶³ In a 1990 interview, Noël pointed to the difference between her first and second novels, calling *Maryse* "...un récit traditionnel. Avec ce premier texte, mes visées étaient simples, je voulais construire un canevas cohérent et classique. C'est une histoire d'amour, écrite selon l'ordre chronologique, avec un personnage principal et une narration assez proche de ce personnage." "...a traditional story. With that first text, my aims were simple: I wanted to build a coherent and classic framework. It's a love story, written in chronological order, with a main character and a narrative style relatively close to that character." Robert Viau, "Montréal, Myriam, *Maryse*," *Lettres québécoises : la revue de l'actualité littéraire* 57, (1990): 17.

qu'un chat" [places that one recognizes with an easy familiarity.]¹⁶⁴ This psychological realism can be readily seen in the development of the inner lives of the main characters in *Maryse* in long passages of inner reflection on the minor dramas of everyday life: love, friendship, self doubt and professional uncertainty, questions of money, housing, and the transition out of childhood that characterize the early stages of adult life. Yet the recognizability that Michaud identifies is more difficult to pinpoint. Questions of intertext and appropriation of language create circulations of narrative within the larger text of the novel that exclude the variations of temporal pacing and the different spatial journeys undertaken by the characters.

A student's version of 1970s Montreal structures their social and artistic lives, a city of dark cafes, courses of study in *logologie* at the new university (UQAM), and send ups of well-known literary figures. Geographical markers serve to anchor the events of the novel in space; specifically, in the neighborhoods around Parc Lafontaine, the first large public park as one moves east from the traditional French/English dividing line of Boulevard Saint Laurent, and UQAM. Street names and, at one point, an exact address, allow the reader to place the characters on the map of their Montreal universe. Descriptions of their apartment interiors and of the cafés they frequent likewise serve to create the ambience of student life in the city at the beginning of the 1970s. Regardless, the meaning ascribed to these places, the recognizability that Michaud identifies, depends upon a cartographical placing that implies familiarity with the places described. *Maryse*, for all that the novel explicitly anchors its characters and action in a Montreal milieu, is largely devoid of and, indeed, at times seems to avoid, visual representations that would allow the reader, especially the reader unfamiliar with Montreal, with a clear visual description of the city in which it takes place.

Recognizability, representation, and visuality are interrelated terms in my discussion of *Maryse*. The first, as Michaud makes clear, involves a correlation between a known or recognizable image of the city and the presence of certain key details in a text. For Montreal

¹⁶⁴ Ginette Michaud, "Mille plateaux: topographie et typographie d'un quartier," *Voix et Images* 14, no. 3 (1989): 463.

these might be references to street names and intertextual citations of canonical representations of the city. They might also be more general or atmospheric – the way that people relate to their surroundings and to each other, for example, standing for a certain kind of urban sensibility. We can think of Dickens' version of London or Paul Auster's New York as representations of cities that use atmosphere to create recognizable urban environments. What is interesting is that in this case the monumental reference, Mont Royal for example, or Place Ville-Marie, plays a minor role in the text and does not seem to be part of what Michaud identifies as the novel's recognizable version of Montreal.

Noël's version of the city can be called recognizable on the basis of so few details in part because the identifiable aspects of the city are often characterized in terms of two different scales. The first is that which defines divisions on the order of neighborhood lines, a representational rather than specific image in which observations about the specificities of urban structure are less important than the demarcation of the city as territory. The second is that of the kind of personal interactions that take place inside the small spaces described in detail in *Maryse* and between people in the street, views of the city too close to include relations and frames beyond the interpersonal. The apparent middle ground of exteriors, monuments, and public buildings is largely absent. Instead, the visual city is tied to a cartographical understanding of the linguistic and class divisions between its neighborhoods and to the intersection between names and image provided by nominative references that pepper the text.

The clarity of these demarcations is most apparent along the north-south axis of Boulevard Saint Laurent and along the east-west axis of Sainte Catherine Street, the first acting as a traditional border between the city's English-speaking west and French-speaking east, the second a progression from wealthy Westmount through downtown towards the working class bars, cafés and strip clubs at its intersection with Saint Laurent. Wealthy Francophone Outremont, the *Quartier Latin* near UQAM and the *Plateau* just to the north, the mixture of English and French in the working class neighborhoods that supported the textile mills along the Lachine Canal on the island's south shore: these neighborhoods are

named and referenced in relation to the two arteries that the characters in *Maryse* ascend and descend throughout the novel. Associated with particular characters, they are urban reinforcements for relations of class between the characters. Though Noël's novel does not capitalize on earlier descriptions of the divided city, the characters are nevertheless constrained by the particular geographical assumptions of the city, ones that render its setting recognizable in terms of reference rather than image.

The divisions of the Boulevard Saint Laurent and Sainte Catherine Street act as geographical frontiers without totally restricting the movement of the characters: keeping to their neighborhood for most of the novel, their occasional excursions elsewhere, both inside and outside of the city, provide contrast to their everyday lives and prevent their world from becoming too rigidly contained. Montreal reveals itself through these names and demarcations, but the extent to which they are asked to stand in for visual portraits of urban life calls into question the relationship between recognizability and representation. The longest exploration of the street colloquially referred to as "la Main" occurs early in the novel, when Maryse and François Ladouceur head out for a daylong city excursion. They begin by walking south on Saint Laurent, towards the intersection with Sainte Catherine. "Ils prirent la rue Sherbrooke jusqu'à Saint-Laurent, puis Saint-Laurent vers le sud. Ils descendirent la côte lentement, sans se presser, regardant de tous leurs yeux; c'était une rue désolée et sordide, mais troublante." [They took Sherbrooke Street to Saint-Laurent, then Saint-Laurent towards the south. They descended the *côte* slowly, without rushing, looking intently; it was a desolate and sordid street, but unsettling.]¹⁶⁵ The street names place their route precisely, starting out at the *Luna de Papel* and descending towards Sainte Catherine Street, where the north-south axis becomes the sordid street of working-class bars, strip-clubs, and billiard halls. This much is clear from the details the text provides to describe the Saint Lawrence Pool Room, the first stop that Maryse and François make in their journey together, where *mangeurs de patates* sit around the bar drinking coke and the room is filled with the stale smells of frying oil and vinegar.

¹⁶⁵ Francine Noël, *Maryse* (Montreal: Biblio Québécoise, 1997), 165.

Visually, however, in this first introduction, the Main itself remains only generally described. The attitude of the two characters, “regardant de tous leurs yeux,” is formal and archaic and creates an emphatic stress on their eyes and the fact of seeing. Despite this, the description of the street in three adjectives creates a general impression that must be filled by the reader. Even the outside of the pool hall is left to the imagination, being a sign, a linguistic marker on the street, and only gaining any kind of visual specificity once Maryse and François cross its threshold.

As a linguistic as well as a geographical split, the bisection of the island slices through its literary representations as effectively as its cartographic ones. Noël is far from the only Montreal author to make use of the city’s linguistic and geographic divisions in her narrative of the city. These oppositions have served to condense the language politics of twentieth-century Quebec into the particular political, social, and economic situation of Montreal, as in Hugh McLennan’s city of two solitudes or to mark out and valorize the neighborhoods of a particular population, whether that is the Jewish Mile End of Mordecai Richler’s work (in English) or the Francophone post-war Plateau of Michel Tremblay (in French). The twinned thoroughfares of Sainte Catherine and Saint Laurent appear as avenues of class, language and culture: Régine Robin’s cross-town Sainte Catherine bus from western affluence through central commercial activity to eastern poverty; Gabrielle Roy’s similar downtown bright lights and cinemas; Gail Scott’s continued promenades up and down Saint Laurent in a complicated translational dance through which English takes elements of French grammar and inflection.¹⁶⁶ Sherry Simon describes the division of Saint Laurent as a border zone between linguistic territories, “The dividing line is a barrier inviting passage between the unequal halves of the city, anticipating the dramas that will ensue.”¹⁶⁷

These dramas, the struggles to claim language, power, and space that have marked Montreal’s geographical and political history in the twentieth-century send a charge of

¹⁶⁶ On translation in Scott’s work see Sherry Simon, “The Paris Arcades, the Ponte Vecchio and the Comma of Translation,” in *Gail Scott: Essays on her Work*, ed. Lianne Moyes (Toronto: Guernica, 2002), 142-207 and Gillian Lane-Mercier, “Writing-Translating (from) the In-Between: An Interview with Gail Scott,” *Studies in Canadian Literature*, 31 no 2 (2006): 173-192

¹⁶⁷ Simon, *Translating Montreal*, 4

meaning running down the boulevard, though the city's linguistic organization is, as Simon readily acknowledges, a more diverse and fragmentary cartography than this binary organization would suggest. The invitation Simon constructs through translation is a literary border-crossing that sees both space and language as inherently permeable. In *Maryse*, the linguistic divisions of the urban environment are crossed and re-crossed in the figure of the novel's protagonist, who chooses the Francophone city over the Anglophone one only to find herself constantly caught up in memories attached to childhood spaces shared with her Anglophone father.

Acting as anchors, geographical indicators provide directionality and suggest movement between points, but they provide no visual image and no visual image is provided in their stead. If the city is recognizable, it is because the names marked out are familiar, the scenes fit a certain type, and its dimensions seem to correspond with those to be found elsewhere in literature that shares this setting. According to other critics, the question of realism lies elsewhere, and criticism has anchored it in questions of class and of canon, drawing parallels between working-class Maryse and two figures that put her at the intersection of the socially and geographically defined worlds of Montreal society: Florentine Lacasse from Gabrielle Roy's 1945 novel *Bonheur d'occasion* and Eliza Doolittle from George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*.¹⁶⁸ Still, these references are just that, gestures outside of the main text that become landmarks for a reader familiar with the earlier texts. The frame they provide is visual in the same way as the geographical references create a kind of image born of language and outline: in both cases, the idea of recognizability is essential, as it allows for an image of Montreal as an urban environment seen as a collection of views (from the street, from a window, from a topographical or architectural high point) to emerge from the text in tandem with the reader's presumed familiarity with the territory.

In Anne Éline Cliche's assessment, the novel's focus on the twinned figures of Florentine and Eliza builds into the main text a sense of movement that allows the particular

¹⁶⁸ Stéphanie Nutting, "Bonheur d'occasion et Maryse: lectures croisées, lecture en ronds," *Voix et Images* 18, no. 2 (1993): 253-263.

and identifiable, in this case Montreal's language politics in relation to class as opposed to the dialogical opposition of English and French, to intersect with recognizable elements on the order of narrative. "Le paradigme du langage s'inscrit donc déjà dans une intertextualité 'itinérante' ou réitérée par la traversée d'un même récit au cours des siècles." [The language paradigm is thus already inscribed in an 'itinerant' or reiterated intertextuality by the passage of a single story through the centuries.]¹⁶⁹ The mobility of this treatment of language allows, for Cliche, a reading of Noël's text as liberating its heroine and, by extension, her city, from the rigid stasis of Montreal's linguistic and economic geography.

In *Maryse's* allusions Gabrielle Roy's *Bonheur d'occasion*, Cliche finds evidence of an itinerant mobility, one that comes from the association between Noël's Maryse and Roy's wandering heroine Florentine Lacasse. Even the character Maryse reveals a sense of kinship between herself and Roy's protagonist, "...le seul personnage avec lequel elle se sentait des affinités." [...the only character with whom she felt any affinity.]¹⁷⁰ References to Roy's novel bring with them the different way of seeing the city embedded in that earlier text. Where *Maryse* marks geography in relationship to a character's psychology, Roy uses the city's division more deterministically, offering views of Montreal to enrich the ground on which she creates her characters and allowing the city itself to come forward from the narrative. Take for example an early description of Sainte Catherine Street as seen by Florentine. Where Noël marks this artery of Montreal commerce as a line of connection between points, Roy describes:

Et soudain, elle évoqua la rue Sainte-Catherine, les vitrines des grands magasins, la foule élégante du samedi soir, les étalages des fleuristes, les restaurants avec leurs portes à tambours et leurs tables dressées presque sur le trottoir derrière les baies miroitantes, l'entrée lumineuse des théâtres, leurs allées qui s'enfoncent au-delà de la tour vitrée de la caissière, entre les reflets de hauts miroirs, de rampes lustrées, de plantes, comme en une ascension si naturelle vers l'écran où passent les plus belles images du monde: tout ce qu'elle désirait, admirait, enviait, flotta devant ses yeux.

[She could see St. Catherine Street, the department-store windows, the elegant Saturday-night crowd, the florists' displays, the restaurants with their revolving doors and tables set almost on the sidewalk behind gleaming bay windows, the brightly lit

¹⁶⁹ Anne Éline Cliche, "Paradigme, palimpseste, pastiche, parodie dans *Maryse* de Francine Noël," *Voix et Images* 12, no. 3 (1987): 431

¹⁷⁰ Noël *Maryse* 239

movie theatres, their aisles disappearing into the dark behind the cashier's glass cage amid tall, glittering mirrors, polished banisters and potted plants, rising toward the screen that brought the most beautiful visions in the world. Everything she desired, admired and envied floated before her eyes.]¹⁷¹

This passage, rich in visual detail, which sets the scene for the early chapters of Roy's text, does not touch the imagination of Noël's characters the way that Sainte Catherine Street touches the imagination of Florentine. While Roy's novel, like Noël's, is caught up with the representation of character rather than ways of visualizing the city, scenes like this one establish the ways in which the characters of *Bonheur d'occasion* see their city. While Florentine's reverie flows from the street scene to its amplification on the screen in the theater, seeing the fantasy of the movie as an extension of the glamour that surrounds her, just out of reach, desire and projection in *Maryse*, as I will show, often go the other way. This complicates the relationship between the characters and their city, making the environment somehow less productive on the grand scale of vision and dream. Desire fixates not on things or on places but on people and ideas, and the psychological searching for self and puzzling out of one's place in relation to others filters the images of the city as they come to François and Maryse. Roy's novel, which takes place during the early years of the Second World War and was published soon after, describes a city where, despite growing political fervor and changing social and cultural milieus, the predominant image of Montreal balanced the prosperity of the pre-nationalist shipping and manufacturing hub with the restrained skyline that had grown up on the island over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was also an era when Montreal was on the rise as Canada's increasingly cosmopolitan economic capital. Making Roy's novel a key intertext in *Maryse* thus situates the latter in a complicated position vis-à-vis its representation of Montreal. The association with Florentine anchors Maryse's character in the dynamics of an earlier time, one which, through her nostalgic reflections on her childhood, occupies her thoughts for much of the novel. As a response to the visual elements of the urban environment and to the ways of

¹⁷¹ Gabrielle Roy, *Bonheur d'occasion*, (Montreal: Boréal, 1993), 19, *The Tin Flute*, trans. Alan Brown (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989), 17.

seeing implicated in Montreal's evolution, these initial points of contact require an understanding of the novel's relationship to these factors of image creation.

Modernism and Representation

If street names provide points of contact between characters and the geographical space of the city, standing in, along with the intertextual references to Roy's novel, for visual descriptions of exteriors and street scenes references to monumental places retreat even further into the background of *Maryse*.¹⁷² Place Ville-Marie appears briefly in a text within the novel that is attributed to François Ladouceur, where it is imagined as part of a spring series of additions to the walls of the university by the artist Léo/Léa, whose "...assemblages de slogans de toutes les obédiences furent entrelacés de fleurs, de petits oiseaux, d'arbres fous, d'animaux fantastiques, de dictateurs ligotés et d'Indiens ayant planté leurs tentes sur la terrasse de la Place Ville-Marie, redevenue enfin un lieu habitable." [assemblages of slogans of all persuasions were looped through with flowers, little birds, wild trees, fantastic animals, trussed up dictators and Indians who had planted their tents on the terrace of Place Ville-Marie, which became at last a habitable place.]¹⁷³ The image of Pei's building appears indirectly, removed from the main text by François' narration and from the direct relationship to urban space by the fact that it is not Place Ville-Marie itself but an image in graffiti on the wall of another building that comes to François' attention. It is a background picture in a background text, its formal impact undone by bright color and wild gesture. It is, moreover, a nostalgic depiction, a throw-back to an idealized pre-urban condition. As a fantasy of a habitable world, the narrative detour in Léo/Léa's mural painting exits elsewhere, setting the

¹⁷² Maryse, notably, holds jobs both at Expo (during the summer) and the Place des Arts (as an usher during the academic year). Of the second venue, the closest the novel comes to offering an image of Maryse's working conditions is an offhand comment dismissing the quality of one of the shows: "Maryse travaillait cette fin de semaine-là. Le show de la salle Wilfrid-Pelletier, où elle distribuait des programmes, était gros, bien rodé et néanmoins très plate." [Maryse was working that weekend. The show in the Wilfrid-Pelletier theater, where she handed out programs, was big, well produced, and very flat, despite it all.] Noël, *Maryse*, 99.

¹⁷³ Noël, *Maryse*, 267. Note the similarity between the imagined re-habitation of the Pei's building and the summer 2014 installation in the Place de Spectacles, which included both a light show and an artistic interpretation of Native village, complete with teepees, more Prairie than Kananakwe.

megastructure outside of the built reality of *Maryse* while inviting in an imagined reaction and layer of characterization in its place.

Hubert Aquin has provided a more detailed description of the cavernous interior of the cruciform structure of Place Ville-Marie in a 1963 essay. He finds multidimensional nothingness in the newly completed building, an ambiguity of signification in a building that elides Mary and the crucifixion, announcing bigness and yielding low ceilings, the deadness of it all, which suggests uninhabitability more than grandiose ambition. Is *Maryse* one of the “...jeunes filles que je veux continuer de voir déambuler, voilées par leur beauté éclatante et sombre, soeurs multiples à qui je suis lié, autant de Maries que je ne veux pas voir impliquées dans cette crucifixion alcanique” [...young women that I want to continue to see strolling, veiled in their striking and somber beauty, multiple sisters to whom I’m tied, so many Maries who I do not wish to see implicated in this Alcanic crucifixion.]?¹⁷⁴ The Alcanic reference, an allusion to the mining company at the heart of the building’s existence, adds a mechanistic and elemental edge to the description that provides a counter image to Léo/Léa’s imagined reclaiming of the courtyard as a natural, pre-colonial space (not without its problems, considering the absence of questions of indigeneity elsewhere in the text). Is her sense of self open to erasure in what Aquin describes as the *néant* of the building’s implied cast change for the crucifixion? She connects to and becomes alienated by these larger, more official spaces, and by doing so creates clear limits on the types of Montreal environments that are important to the novel. Relegating the mega to the peripheral, *Maryse* makes an alliance with marginal status that is an important through line in Noël’s writing and major point of contention for literary and cultural commentary on Quebec society and nationalism in the late 20th century.

Aquin’s criticism of Place Ville-Marie pits two versions of universalism, religious and modernist, against each other, transforming Pei’s design, a monolithic example of the latter, into a symbolic expression and reinvigoration of the former. The cruciform structure, an architectural citation of Le Corbusier’s principles of urban design, borrows the essential form

¹⁷⁴ Hubert Aquin, “Essai crucimorphe,” *Liberté* 5 (1963): 325.

of the skyscrapers from the Swiss architect's early *Ville Contemporaine* to house its megastructural condensation of the city's functional parts into a singular whole.¹⁷⁵ By taking the religious associations with the building's form as indicative of an attempt to placate the local (Catholic) population, Aquin remakes Pei's building into a church and cavern of the monumental and picturesque. The writer's contradictory views on universalism, language, and nationalism, those expressed so forcefully in his 1962 essay, "La fatigue culturelle du canadien français," seep through in his descriptions of the new building in its successor.

In the earlier essay, responding to Pierre Elliott Trudeau's condemnation of Quebecois separatist nationalism, Aquin decried the apolitical alternative offered by his political interlocutor. French Canadian society, he argued, was structured around a multiplicity of (no longer relevant) ethnicities unified by a common language of cultural expression. No federalist policy, under which French would always be a minority language and therefore also a minority culture, could satisfy the needs of this population. Moreover, he condemned passivity:

Dépolitisé, le Canadien français se comporte comme le tenant d'un groupe inimportant devant la grandeur infinie de ce qui le confronte : Dieu, le désarmement mondial, l'enfer et la bombe totale, la Confédération. Cette inimportance sublime est la voie du mysticisme et crée un 'ordre' qui, tel un sacrement, frappe d'indignité ceux qui ne sont pas 'distingués' par lui.

[A depoliticized French Canadian behaves like the member of a group that seems negligible in comparison to the infinite scope of the challenges facing it: god, world disarmament, hell and the atomic bomb, Confederation. This sublime unimportance is a path to mysticism and it creates an "order" which, like a sacrament, casts a pall of disrespectability on anyone who is not "set apart" by it.]¹⁷⁶

Yet his mixing of politics and universalism elided, for the purposes of his argument, the variety of expression inherent in the society he looked to nationalism to express: variety that surpasses the binary of French and English and fractures even the articulations of these

¹⁷⁵ "La ville contemporaine" was Le Corbusier's first major exercise in urban planning. Presented in 1922, the plan became the basis of Le Corbusier's thinking and writing on urbanism, which would eventually develop into his treatise on the ideal city, *La ville radieuse*. See Francesco Passanti, "The Skyscrapers of the Ville Contemporaine," *Assemblage* 4 (1987): 52-65.

¹⁷⁶ Hubert Aquin, "Fatigue culturelle du Canada Français," in Hubert Aquin, *Blocs erratiques*, (Montreal: Typo, 1962), 88 Hubert Aquin, "The Cultural Fatigue of French Canada," in *Writing Quebec: Selected Essays by Hubert Aquin*, ed. Anthony Purdy, trans. Larry Shouldice (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1988), 35.

latter two along class lines. Aquin's linguistic politics are perhaps more in keeping with the grandiosity of modernity than his writing on Place Ville-Marie suggests.

While Aquin attacks the void at the heart of Place Ville-Marie, his understanding of cultural politics holds up cultural integration as an ideal, as long as the common language is that of the Francophone majority. His universal linguistic model becomes the generator of political action and national identity. Aquin puts forward clear and direct connections on the basis of language as the foundation of a stable future nation. His understanding of culture is direct and finite, a single point around which identity solidifies into the political organization of the nation state. While Aquin understands revolutionary struggle in terms of fracture, multiplicity, and a refusal of the elisions of modernism, religion, and place of Place-Ville Marie, his model of culture in opposition to apolitical domesticity sees language as an ideological vanishing point for cultural difference within the national frame of Quebec society.

Architect and critic Jean-Claude Marsan provides another version of this kind of inclusionary identification in an essay on the visual integration of Mont Royal into Montreal's urban design and its relationship to the constructed city on its slopes. Arguing that the mountain provides an important geographical and cultural identifier for the city, Marsan explores the way in which historical zoning restrictions on the height of buildings in the city's downtown attempt to privilege the view of the mountain. This he contrasts to Olmstead's original design for the park, which used tree height relative to the natural topography to emphasize and exaggerate differences in height and slope. In Marsan's description, the lower slopes of Montreal are a collection of independent buildings at odds with the island's topography. He characterizes a failure to take advantage of lines of sight that would connect downtown to the mountain as a failure to capitalize on the exaggerated contours of Olmstead's design for Mont Royal and the heightened visual impact they lend to Montreal's most prominent topographical feature. Where zoning regulations strive to preserve conditions presumed to be static, Olmstead's design sees the topography of the city as malleable, a workable surface that can be manipulated to effect.

More directly, the lack of consideration for this important connection between natural and built elements of the urban environment have been accounted for in various stages of planning troubles by Marsan, with one exception: he singles out the 1960s development along McGill College Avenue and Place Ville-Marie in particular as being outside examples of positive integration:

...la seule perspective formelle planifiée que l'on a réussi à développer jusqu'à maintenant : l'avenue McGill College. [...] Il manque à cette avenue un ordre et un formalisme d'ensemble qui, alignant les bâtiments, égalant les hauteurs, mariant les formes et les textures et accordant les rythmes, dirige la vue vers le point terminal de la perspective, au lieu de la distraire par des éléments hétéroclites qui ne contribuent pas ou peu au caractère de l'ensemble.
[...the only formal planned perspective that we have, up to now, succeeded in developing: McGill College Avenue. [...] This avenue lacks an order and a formalism that, by aligning the buildings, equalizing their heights, marrying their forms and textures and bringing the rhythm into accord, directs the view towards the terminal point of the perspective instead of distracting it by heteroclite elements that contribute little or nothing to the character of the ensemble.]¹⁷⁷

Marsan's preference for perspective, for classical principles of order, easily incorporates the strictness of form that characterizes Pei's design. There is appreciation for the mountain apparent in the buildings' placement and orientation, appreciation that shows an integrated understanding of views and organization accepting the building as object and framing device. The scale of the integration for which he advocates — that of view and overall urban arrangement — retains the massiveness of its central topographical focus, a heightened view on a level with the largess of Aquin's nationalism. Still, Marsan's concept of ideal integration is one that struggles between the massive sense of scale and the perspective of an individual viewer who frames the mountain with any available features of the environment. Marsan is less concerned with size than he is with the classical perspectival process of image making and how it can be used to create visual continuity and reinforce points of natural beauty and emotional significance in the city.

Noël's novel wanders up and down the faces of Montreal's topography without reaching for the dramatic ascents and romantic vistas of mountain or skyscraper. Her narrative is garden-like in its corners and diversions, a rambling rejection of the formalist

¹⁷⁷ Jean-Claude Marsan, "Le mont Royal et la ville: les liaisons visuelles," in Jean-Claude Marsan, *Montréal et son aménagement: vivre la ville*, (Montreal: Presse de l'Université du Québec, 2012), 60.

symmetry of Pei's building, of the notion that an intimate idea of urban public might form inside the cavernous commercial spaces of Place Ville-Marie. When the text presents a clear visual of an urban scene, it is more often the single pedestrian seen from the height of bedroom window in a Montreal triplex than the city as a whole, Montreal's island totality viewed from the observatories of its natural and constructed monuments. The interiority of Noël's characters neutralizes the rise and fall of topography, the expansiveness of external view, the imposing height of the new downtown buildings. The scale of the exhibition, the city condensed, is more in line with her images, though here again the force of meaning, of national and nationalist narrative, of universal experience, that fills and scripts the Expo experience, is a far cry from *Maryse's* urban sensibility.

The novel attempts to override the image of Montreal created by Expo and the discourse around cultural and commercial developments including Place Ville-Marie, the theater complex at Place des Arts, and the metro system as well as the Expo site itself. *Maryse* does, however, pick up on the non-official discursive implications of the exhibition. The thematization of ways of seeing present in the experimental film exhibits housed in the pavilions and the paths cut by walkways, canals, and the monorail, along with the reflective qualities of the Quebec pavilion created a rich and visual environment for Expo 67, one that could not be appreciated in a single view. Moreover, the organization of the site itself, which framed views of the city and of the pavilions for mobile visitors and the immersive quality of the video exhibits broke down the frontal view of traditional perspectives and frames of urban space. Returning to Hutcheon's formulation of the modern and postmodern, *Maryse's* nostalgic and ironic deviations from modernist conviction diffuse the entrance of the visual aspects of the city into the text. In so doing, they protectively reduce the scale of the urban environment, rejecting, in the process, dissonances of vision and language that directly confront Montreal's absent image, a move that pulls the city back to an earlier vision of itself despite occasional admissions of its un-imageability, its un-visibility.

Nationalism, Postmodernism, Politics, and Memory

In constructing a city focused on the intimate, Noël pushes to the margins not only large-scale buildings and spaces but also major events and the discourses that lend them their importance. Indeed, state power is the most marginal of forces in *Maryse*, best seen not through Michel Paradis and his political ambitions, but through the half-ridiculous character of Coco Ménard, and the treatment of the FLQ and the October Crisis in the novel. Coco's decision to take up radical politics fits with the ironic logic of the novel. A flighty character, a kind of political harlequin inclined to the most elaborate theories and extreme points of view, his tendencies up to the point where he makes his radical political move render Maryse's assessment of the development of Montreal's more volatile political elements logical in the context of the narrative and ironic to the reader coming to the text a decade or more after the October Crisis. "Si le FLQ c'était Coco Ménard, ça ne devait pas être très sérieux." [If the FLQ was Coco Menard, it couldn't be very serious.]¹⁷⁸ Through him, the novel encourages connections between the radical and the ridiculous that sets this kind of politics apart from the deep consideration the novel's more sympathetic and well developed characters give to their lives – François in respect to his teaching, for example, his carefully constructed casualness a humanization of his scholarly function, or Maryse in respect to her writing and intellectual development. Though these characters, too, have their absurdities: their interiority makes them human, their foibles equal parts youth and satire. Introducing the FLQ through Coco's involvement in it distances the main events of the novel from history, an effect underscored by the relegation of the main events of this political development to one of the novel's section of fluid narrative, the *chroniques floues* where quick successions of events accelerate the chronological progression of the novel, showing changes as progressive rather than associated with particular dates or clearly defined periods of time. When the events progress from letter bombs to a police state, the sequence of events in the novel that surround this particular moment in the city's history are both personal and a little strange.

¹⁷⁸ Noël, *Maryse*, 146.

On the day she hears the news of the kidnappings at the center of the crisis and of the army's arrival in Montreal, Maryse decides to leave home and cross the city to deliver the remaining kittens from her cat's most recent litter to François. Putting her cargo safely into a large piece of luggage, she sets off, and for the first time in the novel a trip on the city's new metro becomes an element of a character's cross-city journey. Its mention does two things: it establishes the depopulated state of the city – "L'autobus 51 était presque vide et le métro également." [The 51 bus was almost empty, as was the metro,]¹⁷⁹ – and it provides the geographical point in the journey where Maryse encounters the Canadian soldiers who, all at once, bring the reality of the FLQ's actions and the government's subsequent reaction out of the television. Confronted with questions about the contents of her bag, Maryse refuses to engage with the soldiers, responding to them in French and, when she realizes that they really do not understand what she's saying, insulting them. The climax of the scene comes when she gives in and hands over the bag, only to have its contents escape when the soldier in charge of the inspection opens it:

Elle était furieuse et sentait monter en elle quelque chose qui ressemblait à de la peur. Elle voulut se prouver que tout cela était une énorme farce.

— Of course, dit-elle en prenant une dernière touche, it's a bomb. I never go out without my pills and my bomb.

— Open that bag, Williams, ordonna le soldat boss.

Le dit Williams se pencha sur le sac. Maryse jeta son mégot à ses pieds pour l'éteindre avec sa sandale mauve pendant qu'avec d'innombrables précautions le soldat faisait glisser la fermeture éclair. La chatte Gaby sortit sa petite tête et miaula : c'était son premier contact avec le monde extérieur et elle fut saisie. Williams le fut autant. [She was furious and felt something like fear rising within her. She wanted to prove to herself that the whole thing was a fantastic joke. "Of course," she said, taking one last hit, "it's a bomb. I never go out without my pills and my bomb."

"Open that bag, Williams," ordered the boss soldier.

The one called Williams leaned over the bag. Maryse tossed her butt to her feet to put it out with her mauve sandal while, with infinite precaution, the soldier slid open the zipper. Gaby the cat stuck her little head out and meowed; it was her first contact with the outside world and she was stunned. So was Williams.]¹⁸⁰

In the middle of the tense scene, the kittens manage to diffuse the confrontation with their cuteness. They re-inject a normalized everyday reality into the heightened emotions of the confrontation with the soldiers, bringing things back down to a more manageable scale,

¹⁷⁹ *ibid* 149

¹⁸⁰ *ibid* 151

grounding the event when “le dit Williams” ends up on his belly in the street, trying to coax one of them out from her hiding spot beneath a car.

In terms of the way different points of view and modes of visualization can reframe urban questions, particularly when it comes to politics, *Maryse* shows resistance to the maximization of scale that defined the image of Montreal in the 60s in favor of the personal microcosm. Geographer Saskia Sassen has pointed to the ways in which the city in particular favors political action that happens on a smaller scale than that of the nation:

It becomes a place where nonformal political actors can be part of the political scene in a way that is much more difficult at the national level. Nationally, politics needs to run through existing formal systems: whether the electoral political system or the judiciary (taking state agencies to court). Nonformal political actors are rendered invisible in the space of national politics. The space of the city accommodates a broad range of political activities- squatting, demonstrations against police brutality, fighting for the rights of immigrants and the homeless, the politics of culture and identity. Much of this becomes visible on the street. Much of urban politics is concrete, enacted by people, rather than dependent on massive media technologies. Street-level politics makes possible the formation of new types of political subjects that do not have to go through the formal political system.¹⁸¹

On the occasions when Noël’s novel finds productive ways of visualizing the city, the view it takes is the view from the street. *Maryse*’s confrontation with the soldiers, however, raises the question of at what point an individual’s actions, by Sassen’s definition, engages the non-formal political action that the city engenders. Confronted with the possibility of a political standoff, a breakdown in French/English communication results not in epic or tragedy, but in comedy, in the absurd, in kittens. What the scene, and the novel as a whole, make visible are the banalities of urban life often ignored by political action. For Montreal, part of the problem of untangling this distinction lies in the ways in which seeing the city is tied up in the politics of the emergent Quebecois nation as manifested both by official political action, like that responsible for planning, development and Expo, and unofficial political action of the sort typified by radical separatist forces like the FLQ.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Saskia Sassen, “The City: Between Topographic Representation and Spatialized Power Projects,” *Art Journal* 60, no 2 (2001): 19.

¹⁸² Modeled on the Algerian revolutionary group the FLN and undertaking their most prominent terrorist actions in Montreal, the FLQ is arguably both radically nationalist and urban.

The political implications of Noël's representation of the city, as both a re-imagining of the street level politics of protest on the scale of kittens and a pair of mauve sandals, pushes past the limitations of nationalism. Reading the failures of extremist political action in Quebec into *Maryse*, I wish to emphasize the extent to which the urban conditions of Montreal, a question of where life in the city happens in the novel, center of the careful staging of scenes of heightened personal experience. These moments, like Maryse in the street, watching a soldier crawl on his belly to rescue one of her feline charges, provide counter visions not to the Montreal of the massive — figured by the competing camps of the 1960s as skyline or political message — but to the geographically delineated reflections of the characters walking through the streets, the lines of Saint Laurent and Sainte Catherine. These scenes, more discursive than visual, allow for occasional framing of urban particularities. In doing so, however, they keep close to the details of the scene, picking out parts where the frame clearly imposes limits on a larger context.

Hutcheon, examining the complex layering of *mis-en-abyme* in Aquin's fiction, describes an experience of reading and narrative form that stands in direct contradiction to the looping continuing narrative Noël's novel offers. The novel's structure becomes, in Aquin's case, a revolutionary act, "...It is, in fact, through metafictional *form* that Aquin hopes to liberate his country and his literature."¹⁸³ This formalist break lies also in opposition to the depoliticization of domesticated literature that Hutcheon ties to the stance Aquin takes in his 1968 essay "Littérature et aliénation" but which we have seen in his writing on the political and domestic in relation to nationalism. Instead, according to Hutcheon, "The frustrated and bewildered reader is not even allowed a linear plot for comfort."¹⁸⁴ What I am arguing here, in relationship to the larger urban context of *Maryse* in particular, is that the formal choices of Noël's narrative condition the scale and character of the urban environment her characters inhabit. In ironizing those attributes of writing and politics so attractive to the largely male, nationalist writers who preceded her — attributes including a reverential attitude towards

¹⁸³ Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2012), 156.

¹⁸⁴ *ibid* 158

nationalist writers, reading, language — Noël structures a novel that drags the reader through temporal accelerations and decelerations while giving ample comfort in a plot that is linear down to the most minute and banal details. As an anti-revolutionary argument, the scale of the setting, its relationship to the domesticity that accompanies the anti-domestic prose of a writer like Aquin, and his generation of writers, becomes a counter-political move.

If Aquin's urban sensibility as revealed in his architectural criticism is problematic for its relationship to universalism, then *Maryse* begins what will be for Noël a problematic distancing from the national in favor, not an anarchic overrun of the urban environment, but a reduction to a manageable sphere of the complications of Montreal's spatial and social dynamics. *Maryse* complicates its stance against the dominating presence of monumental and spectacular nationalism with oblique references to the city and selective abstractions, name-dropping streets and monuments. Rather than explicitly rejecting the 1960s city, Noël's novel uses postmodernist elements of representation to oppose modernist impulses, validating a nostalgic visual continuity between pre-war Montreal and the novel's present. In doing so, it highlights a key problem in the city's representationality, both politically and visually: a dissonance between the intimacy of the version of the city *Maryse* describes and the absence of material details that would show the characters' interaction with the larger spaces of Montreal modernism that makes it difficult to concretely imagine the city, even if it is recognizable.

The Representational Domestic

To the extent that the novel produces a Montreal spatiality, acting as a representational space in Henri Lefebvre's theorization, which considers the production of space as perceptual, conceptual and representational (lived), the animating energy of the city is located in the micro-relations of the neighborhood. I bring Lefebvre into the discussion here not without some reservation: his resistance to representation as a tautological imposition of ideology on the life and rhythms of space is well known. Still, arguing that the novel attempts to represent conditions of urban life by focusing on details that emphasize precisely these lived qualities makes Lefebvre's theorization a useful point of departure for

my discussion of *Maryse* and its relationship to a representational visuality that creates a particular image of the city. This is not least because of the close association Lefebvre makes between representational spaces and domestic spaces, those un-mythologized interiors at the heart of personal spatialities.

Lefebvre defines representational spaces as “l’espace vécu à travers les images et symboles qui l’accompagnent,” [space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols.]¹⁸⁵ The product of the imagination, representational space does not have to obey the rules that Lefebvre sees as active in rational representations of space, which he associates with the descriptive exercises of architects and planners. Representational spaces are anthropological spaces, ones in which the use and narrative of space takes precedence over its technical organization. Their association with the domestic concentrates within them an intensity of private use different from the social practice that infuses public space. Spaces passively dominated by the power structures that Lefebvre analyses through his theory of production, they are places where imagination is able to overlay the physical environment with symbolism free from the strict coherence of official myth and ideology.

As a turn away from the totalizing narratives of nation and plan that dominated the city and its literary scene in the decade preceding the action of *Maryse*, this representational shrinking filters the city through the imagination of both the novel’s author and a its characters. Here the question of representation and symbolism as Lefebvre specifically defines them in respect to space collides with its psychological manifestation. Noël’s primary characters are representations of inner life as well as outward projection that ironize the possibility that they might be taken to stand for something larger. Their names — a trinity of Maries, a Ladouceur, a Paradis — and their interactions with totally fantastic additions to their otherwise ordinary world — an archangel, a little devil, a linguistic *génie* — are both symbolic and highly individual, the minor scale of the characters’ actions contradicting the weight of their appellations. If each of these fictional Montreal residents makes the possibility

¹⁸⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l’espace*, (Paris: Economica, 2000), 49 *The Production of Space*, Donald Nicholson-Smith trans, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 39.

of a higher order ridiculous by the trivia of life's minutiae wrapped up in Noël's fluid and self-aware prose, the order of detail that renders the environment they inhabit is likewise a turn towards an alternative, ordinary, version of a representational city. Lefebvre's lived spaces of imagination in concert with the representation of spaces that are typical and familiar for the novel's Montreal setting do something that the theorist of spatial production excludes from the possibility of useful intervention into spatial conditions in the larger social space of the city: they construct frames that image the urban environment, exposing gaps in the fabric of the city in which the visual environment becomes flexible, able to be inhabited by imagination.

Maryse offers its richest visual details describing the close (representational) spaces of the apartment and the café. These intimate interiors are in part a response to the nationalist frame of the city that Erin Hurley describes as a crucial element to Montreal's relationship to modernism in the 1960s. The wholeness of the city seen from the Expo site disappears, replaced by immersion in closed spaces that have more in common with the images of the exhibition's cinematic displays. In the context of the apartment, this visual environment expands on the possibilities of Lefebvre's representational spaces to become domestic and memorial in opposition to the monumental and futurist image of modernist, national, cityscape. The repetition of everyday life and the deep nostalgia of the urban, literary, and cinematic references that populate Noël's novel are a reaction to the conditions of the city that the novel's domestic spaces exclude as much as they are observable aspects of micropolitics and narrative poetics. This memorial reading of the city is a confrontation with the legacies of modernism both institutional and radical through the close observation and fluid temporal narrative of the individual, intimate, domestic city.

In a Bachlardian poetics of space, the house often serves as a metaphor for the self. For Bachelard: "Toute grande image simple est révélatrice d'un état d'âme. La maison, plus encore que le paysage, est 'un état d'âme'. Même reproduite dans son aspect extérieur, elle dit une intimité." [All great, simple images reveal a psychic state. The house, even more than the landscape, is a 'psychic state,' and even when reproduced as it appears from the

outside, it bespeaks intimacy.]¹⁸⁶ The house is a model of intimacy that Bachelard links to its assumed interiority such that, even from the outside, the house invites the subject in. While Bachelard takes the house as a whole, in Noël's novel it is the bedroom more than the apartment that provides its protagonist with the sheltering expression of her inner life, a Woolfian room of her own. The clear Bachelardian contrast between hostile exterior and protective interior works through *Maryse* from the beginning, from its classic Montreal opening of a character coming in from the cold, in this case Maryse returning home under an early winter snow. The winter home is of particular importance, appearing at several places in the text, and contrasting comfort with environmental extremity.

This is evident in the first pages of the novel, where Maryse walks home through a late autumn snowfall from a first encounter with Michel. The first image of the character gives the reader a visualization of her youthful abandon: "Elle ne portait ni gants, ni foulard, ni chapeau, son manteau était entrouvert et, dans la rue Sherbrooke transformée par la tempête naissante, elle s'était mise à courir, légère, insensible au froid et indifférente aux gens qu'elle croisait : l'image de Michel Paradis était devant elle." [She wasn't wearing gloves, or a scarf, nor a hat, her coat was half open and she began to run along a Sherbrooke street transformed by the rising storm, lightly, insensible to the cold and indifferent to the people that she passed: the image of Michel Paradis was in front of her.]¹⁸⁷ It is a double image, the vision of Michel floating before Maryse as her image floats before the reader, the street scene receding into the background in the character's lack of awareness and in the reader's lack of access to the details that surround her. The snow and references to the other people in the street, the sense that Maryse is part of a crowd, are the only images that set the scene.

It is only when Maryse begins to think back on the events of the evening, placing Michel and his friends within the environs of *La Luna* that we get a clearer picture of the characters' environment. "L'éclairage du restaurant était rouge et l'atmosphère rendue

¹⁸⁶ Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace*, (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 2009), 77
The Poetics of Space, Maria Jolas trans, (Boston: Beacon, 1994), 72.

¹⁸⁷ Noël, *Maryse*, 21

tellement opaque par la fumée des cigarettes qu'on voyait à peine le mur au fond." [The light in the restaurant was red and the atmosphere had been made so nearly opaque by cigarette smoke that you could barely see the wall at the back.]¹⁸⁸ The attention to ambience apparent in the street scene remains, but it is enriched by details on the light and the precise quality of visibility, by notes on the arrangement of the tables and the people around them, and by the gestures of the speakers. As Maryse dances around her apartment, she bumps up against and uses objects that gradually fill the space: a record player and collection of records, the coffee table, a selection of toasters. While the streets of Montreal are filled with people, the interiors in the novel are not short on things.

Interiors in *Maryse* explore the classic image of Bachelard's house as state of mind. This image takes its fullest effect in the activities carried out in Maryse and Michel's apartment after the two begin their cohabitation, the main room being a different site from the bedroom. Whereas he spends his evenings watching the game, she retreats more and more often to the bedroom and the office, where she begins to write, first her masters thesis and, as relations between the couple begin to degrade, poetry. In the apartment, Maryse is able to gradually retreat into spaces of greater and greater interiority. Unlike the bars and cafes that the characters frequent, home is a layered space, one in which privacy is possible even in cohabitation. The world invades through the door, the telephone, the television, and Michel with his ideas of politics and his seeming lack of an inner life, but the different enclosures offered by the different rooms allow Maryse to reframe the domestic space in a way that allows her space of her own.

In modernist framings of the relationship between the urban apartment and the street, the window functions as a point of transit between the two. The bedroom is an intermediary zone between the enclosure of the self within the home and the world beyond the window. If, in literature's relationship to the commercial avenues of the modern city the

¹⁸⁸ *ibid* 22

window allows for what Christopher Prendergast has described as a *flannerie* of views,¹⁸⁹ then the relationship between the bedroom window and the quiet residential street in *Maryse* offers something distinct from this modernist way of seeing the city. In the modernist text that Prendergast describes, “What is seen through the window is the dream-machine in action, presenting the terms on which the city entices into a fantasy of comfort, luxury and gratification.”¹⁹⁰ The window here is Beaudelaire’s frame for Paris enhanced by the commodities of modern life. Windows in Noël’s novel take the dream in the opposite direction, from the comfort of the bedroom into the ordinary comings and goings of the neighborhood.

Early in the novel, Maryse hears the voice of memory in the city drifting through her open bedroom window. “Sa fenêtre était entrouverte et dans son demi-sommeil, elle entendait des voix claires d’enfants qui riaient et scandaient des comptines. Soudain, une voix se mit à chanter.” [Her window was half-open and in her doze she heard the clear voices of children laughing and chanting nursery rhymes. All of a sudden, a voice began to sing.]¹⁹¹ The song is London Bridge, and Maryse falls asleep to the refrain, “My fair lady.” The city outside is not always in opposition to the inner life of the character. Instead, especially when it comes in through the window, it seems to be an extension of Maryse’s inner thoughts and sensibilities: here, the convergence of childhood, and English rhyme, and an allusion to Pygmalion, an important intertext in the novel. The window opens not out onto the city but inward to Maryse’s dreams. It suggests a fusion of Maryse and Montreal as much as a passage between them.

In the absence of visual descriptions of monumental spaces in *Maryse*, the background against which the characters play out the scenes of the narrative does come selectively into focus, particularly in descriptions of the interiors of their apartments and of *La Luna de Papel*. The idea of habitability, that image of Place Ville-Marie idealistically re-

¹⁸⁹ Prendergast uses this idea to describe Henry James’ use of the windows of the house. See Christopher Prendergast, “Framing the City: Two Parisian Windows,” in *City Images*, ed. Mary Ann Caws (London: Routledge, 1991), 179-196.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid* 188

¹⁹¹ Noël, *Maryse*, 79.

populated by a picturesque image, is central to the novel's conception of urban space in terms that are first and foremost personal rather than intellectual or political. The linear progression of the Montreal triplex, with its rooms arranged along a single hallway from the front to back of the building, is a model for Maryse's retreat from public political engagement to personal reflection. As a lived-in place, Montreal is a composite of individuals and activities, whether represented in relation to street scenes of urban strangers filtered through the window of a restaurant or through the individual relationships that move the characters through their world. Visualizations of spaces where living happens, whether in private or public, play a part in developing this micro-social image, forcing the reader to recognize Montreal based on a pre-existing visual understanding of the city itself to convey an image of the larger urban context.

The representation of Montreal in *Maryse* uses the closeness of nostalgia and dwelling – the city of childhood – to offer an alternative to visions of totality: a city that can only be seen from the inside. Her emphasis on perception, on noticing and the particular understandings of individuals consumed with questions of self, layers and repeats elements: undifferentiated streets, scenes that seem to come equally from memory and experience, a core cast of characters whose presence animates interior spaces in recognizable ways, creating a continuity of experience without depending on designed or constructed universals. This version of Montreal, held close and minutely explored, expresses the endless corners and comforts of Bachelard's poetics, the novel offering a literary threshold on the edge of a representational world that privileges recognizability on the level of character and affect: a love story, as its author claimed.

Cinematic Window Frames

The window view is far from Noël's exclusive territory, but it does provide a limited visual relationship, one that connects the viewer inside to the street in a one-way gaze in which the scene contained by the window is not projected into the city, even as the city enters through the window. This limit to the window's ability to frame the city distances this

relationship between interior and exterior from the views and perspectives of the painterly city of the Renaissance through Haussmann's nineteenth century Parisian boulevards.¹⁹² Noël's windows confirm the particularity of the visual relationships in her version of Montreal, one that opposes interior and exterior and treats the window as a frame or screen for the fragments of drama on the street. Contained by the individual, the transfer of the scene plays on qualities of cinematic experience, cutting, interspersing, and repeating elements filtered through a viewer whose gaze is cut off from the outside world. Montreal is thus, ultimately, a subjective experience able to overlap with the memory of prior immersions and subjective technicolor imaginings.

In her reveries, Maryse runs over the history of her father's family – red-handed O'Sullivans living in the poor neighborhoods down by the Lachine Canal at the beginning of the century, afternoons drinking milkshakes with her father in a diner off Saint Laurent and her status as a charity student during her convent education. These memories surface through the connections she draws with present events, whether it is her friend François' description of going to see the film *My Fair Lady* or the voices of children carrying the words of "London Bridge" through her bedroom window at night. The linguistic subtext that links these two examples, repeating the line "my fair lady" in the title of the film and the chorus of the song, the former paralleling Maryse's transformation across class lines through the linguistic codes she adopted at school, the later recalling a romanticized bilingual childhood, creates points of reference in the novel's representation of Montreal.

In Maryse and François' Saint Laurent promenade, it is the glass walls of the restaurant where they pause that finally create a screen through which the characters' perception of the outside world, the city at large, becomes available:

Ils s'approchèrent de la vitrine et François y dessina un cercle dans la buée. En face, des hommes sortaient du cinéma Crystal, pleins de leur ration hebdomadaire de p'tites vues. Sur leur trottoir, un vieil homme passa, marchant pesamment en direction du nord, avec un sac à poignée au bout de chaque bras. Un mégot de cigarette pendait au coin de sa bouche et il avait une barbe de trois jours. Un chien jaune le suivait en boitant légèrement. Un futur cadavre, pensa François. Il dit à

¹⁹² See my discussion of Mumford's characterization of this kind of urban image making in the introduction.

Maryse qu'il voyait la mort passer, de bien le regarder, parce que cet homme-là, c'était la mort par un soir d'avant-printemps.

[They approached the glass and François drew on it a circle in the fog. Opposite, men were coming out of the Crystal Cinema full of their weekly ration of flicks. On their side of the street, an old man passed by, walking heavily northwards with a bag hanging at the end of each arm. The butt of a cigarette hung out of the corner of his mouth and three days of stubble sprouted from his chin. A yellow dog followed him, limping slightly. A corpse-to-be, thought François. He told Maryse that he saw death passing, told her to watch closely because that man was death as it looks on an evening just before the spring.]¹⁹³

There are a few things about François' observation that are striking in terms of the image of the city that gradually forms over the course of the novel and in terms of the supposed realism and accessibility of Noël's text. The first, as mentioned above, is the fact that direct observation of the street scene, the kind of contemplative looking that opens the character's point of view to the reader's perception, only occurs once the characters have crossed the threshold off of the street and are looking back at it through the window. The glass divides them from the scene as they observe it, creating a layer of mediation much as the text screens the description for the reader, wrapping the street in its particular mode of linguistic representation. Moreover, the glass is not clear but foggy, covered in the condensation formed by the temperature difference between the warmth of the interior and coldness of the exterior environments. Wiping the fog away, François chooses to look beyond the glass while allowing for a distinction in terms of climate between his location and what he is seeing. Finally, the objects of his gaze, all seen from street level, repeat aspects of his subjectivity as generally male and, in the case of the old man, resembling or capable of being associated with his father.

When Maryse in turn makes a hole in the fog and looks out, her gaze falls neither on the men leaving the theater nor on the old man (who has presumably passed by) but on two prostitutes, leaning against a car and talking and gesturing animatedly. Observing the street leads both Maryse and François into self-reflection: they feel close to the objects of their gaze. The city on the opposite side of the window from the characters exists in its interactions with the people in the street who draw their attention. Additional details, the

¹⁹³ Noël, *Maryse*, 166-167.

façades of the buildings in front of which the men pass, for instance, are not supplied, and without a clear ground behind them, the figures in the street, both the man and the women, move fluidly between the images they create in the thoughts of their observers and their existence in the city beyond the window. Saint Laurent, incompletely pictured in the text, becomes a screen on which the characters project their reflections.

Just as the novel rejects the monumental interior of the Place Ville-Marie explicitly for its *uninhabitability*, it restricts the view and the interior/urban relationship, the high lookout, to the relationship between the residential window and the street below. Domestic interiority in *Maryse*, and a domesticated narrative that satirizes the nationalist writings of those like Aquin who condemned what he perceived as the apolitics of private life, still requires a connection with urban sensibility. Nuanced by the interjection of the novel's gesture towards magical realism, these window views sit at the crux of the relationship between the intimate, the urban and the universal — between house, city, and language. It is in these scenes, finally, that the positioning of *Maryse* as a narrative and representational response to the vestiges of modernism in nation and in city in the case of Montreal become the clearest. It is in *Maryse*'s ultimately cinematic vision of her internal life that the novel's overt questions of language and intimacy fracture even the divisions that remain in Noël's prose and its possible political readings.

At the end of their Saint Laurent journey, *Maryse* and François end up in the dark recesses of the restaurant, playing pool and watching the French-fry eating customers at the long bar. Taking in the scene all at once, *Maryse* is overcome by strong visual sensations (the details of the room, the ambiance created by the dim lighting) and feels suddenly like she is no longer in a moment of her own life but, rather, caught in a scene from an old film:

Il brisa le triangle et les taches de couleur s'éparpillèrent sur le tapis.

— Comme au cinéma, dit *Maryse*. C'est comme au cinéma.

Elle avait les joues roses d'excitation.

— J'ai l'impression d'être dans une vue, dit-elle, dans une séquence de nuit qui s'étire sans fin, dans une nuit interminable, comme celles d'avant, à la piaule, t'en souviens-tu, François?

[He broke and spots of color scattered across the cloth. "Like in the movies, said *Maryse*. It's like in the movies." Her cheeks were pink with excitement. "I feel like I'm

in a film,” she said, “in a night sequence that unfolds without laughs, in an interminable night, like the ones before, at our pad, do you remember, François?”¹⁹⁴

The day takes a melancholy turn in Maryse’s description, becoming an unending night. But the affective level of the scene is anything but low. The colors of the balls spreading out across the table’s carpet, Maryse’s cheeks, flushed with excitement, these details indicate that far from bringing her down, the interminable night of their cinematic scene is bringing her response up. Where does this excitement come from, and what does it mean for the rest of the scene and the scene’s place in the novel as a whole?

The narration begins by focusing on a series of details, from the geographic specificity of the route taken to get to the bar to the visuals that surround Maryse and François once they’re inside. These details focus the reader’s eye on the qualities of the interior, placing it in the geographic context of the larger city, but separating it from the exterior by the qualities of this indoor space. The closing off from the rest of the city provides an opening towards a different form of perception, one in which the atemporality of the scene, the timelessness of the bar as a typical site in Montreal, allows it to transcend the time of the narrative and become a separate moment, one with a different relationship to the novel’s larger setting. Maryse remarks not that the scene is simply like a movie (*comme au cinéma*) but that she feels as if she is *inside* a movie, *dans une vue*, which she refers to using the Quebecois vocabulary of those earlier films, *vue*, rather than *film*. The scene, extracted from the city the characters inhabit, transports Maryse to a cinematic nostalgia that is part Montreal and part the placeless interior of the endless night of the theater and the film.

This emphasis on cinematic ways of seeing recalls the intertextual movement in *Maryse*, which passes the characters’ mental lives through the film versions of Shaw’s play, and back to the original text and raises the question of what happens to the linguistic reading of this passage when the visual images of the competing films enter the discussion. In the visual realm of cinema, linguistic problems of representation and identity meet a different

¹⁹⁴ *ibid* 181

way of seeing, and while Maryse's attraction to Eliza can be explained in terms of their similar linguistic situations, it is ultimately the image of the character that surfaces in her memory, "Elle savait seulement que la robe d'Eliza Doolittle était rose comme celle qu'elle portait elle-même le jour du restaurant..." [The only thing she knew was that Eliza Doolittle's dress was pink like the one she'd worn herself the day of the restaurant...] ¹⁹⁵ The clarity of the image as Maryse remembers it breaks down in the confusion between the 1938 film and the 1964 version, between the date when Maryse must have gone to see the film with her father and the color image that could only come later, and this ambiguity suggests that both memory and the visualization that accompanies it are indeterminate. References to film create a distortion of perspective and a departure from realism and presentism and into fantasy and memory, like language they are a (selective) re-visioning of the city as a ground on which the action of the novel takes place.

Throughout the novel, cinema acts as a second world to Maryse's life in Montreal. Associated with her memories of her projectionist father, it is a space apart, one contained in the solitary interior of memory. When the details of cinema as nostalgia become confused, that interior bleeds into the novel's everyday reality. Rather than resolving the conflict between Maryse's memory of Eliza Doolittle and the details of the films that François points out, Noël's novel adds to this confusion of invention and reality details from the experience of being "dans une vue" to the *genie de la langue française* that needles Maryse about her writing that suggest that it is the fantastic rather than the factual that is most important to the world of the characters. Montreal, as a result, becomes a city where that blurs the boundary between fantasy and reality. In the end, it is the cinematic view that creates the strongest impression in *Maryse's* representation of the city.

This surreal way of experiencing space influences the limits to Noël's version of Montreal, both geographically and metaphorically. In the first case, the island, though its bounds are never outlined in either view or movement, creates a border of influence, a visualizable haze that seems to surround it. Indeed, as Maryse returns to the city after a

¹⁹⁵ *ibid* 28

night drive north, it is not a firm image of Montreal that meets her gaze, but vague shapes obscured by the white light of dawn. In a kind of dissolve the border of the island fades from the reader's view, disappearing into Maryse's thoughts. This blankness, the erasure of the exterior world in the face of a character's inner vision, mythologizes the city as a mysterious and ghostly place. The present of Montreal, *Maryse* seems to indicate, is not the dramatic southern skyline but the vague shapes of mountain and rooftops as they come to light on a winter morning. For all that Noël's novel avoids the delineation of urban form, exposing with a wink towards comedy and self deprecation the politics of accent and inflection among Francophones of different classes and the frustrated desire for personal clarification through language that haunts Maryse through her rejection of English, *Maryse's* representation of the 1970s retreats from the previous decade's wild embrace of the future.

This dissolution of the fabric of the city, the image of the vanishing island, recalls Simon's commentary on the instability of Montreal's definition and linguistic representation: "The city fosters uncertainty. Names cannot be accurately pinned to places, and language contends with falsehood and confusion."¹⁹⁶ Yet even Simon, in her cross-city vision of translation networks that mimic urban infrastructure in their interweaving of artistic and communicative networks, their possibilities for entrances and exits from the various streams of language and thought she identifies, distinguishes between the quotidian east and the monumental western downtown: two different architectural versions of urbanism, two different experiences of city life. *Maryse*, anchored in the quotidian and rejecting the monumental, remains a novel of instability and uncertainty in its inability to integrate these architectural distinctions. Instead, the image of Montreal, the novel's approach to visibility and representation, ends in dissolve when it looks for clear edges: ambiguity instead of an end, in love as in urbanism: white night, white city, blank page, but inside the cloud an infinite number of collisions and interactions at the most molecular scale.

Conclusion

¹⁹⁶ Simon, *Translating Montreal*, xv.

The boundaries that define the optimistic city image of the 1960s get little mention in Noël's fiction. Her characters stick to previously delineated places (the Plateau, Outremont), ones whose borders don't see the effects of new buildings, and her characters travel, most often, by foot and by bicycle, while Maryse's one trip on the new metro comes halfway through the first novel and during the October Crisis, on a day when the tunnel and the streets are both deserted. Indeed, the physical structure of the city gets little notice at all, existing, as we have seen, as a series of named points, loosely cartographical but seemingly uninterested in the architectural or in the larger geography and topography of Montreal. Still, avoiding strictly defined spaces does not necessarily entail the total disappearance of the city. Rather, this aversion to lines and borders allows the urban to be refigured in terms of interactions on the novel's chosen scale. The paradox of this particular fiction of everyday Montreal lies in the tension between this novelistic view of life elaborated by art and the specificity of its setting. Montreal is present, even as it is subject to the same restrictions on the representation of its macro and historical presence as the text places on its characters, minimizing the overlap between ordinary lives and extraordinary (monumental, historic) spaces as well as events.

Noël's version of Montreal offers the chance to brush up against the monolithic without having to directly confront it: living, her characters are keenly aware, happens in the smaller spaces, like the six inches between the bottom of a car and a city street in which a kitten might hide itself. What the novel fails to account for, however, or at least to address, is the degree to which counter cultural movements intersect with the grand visions of technology and the avant-garde. From *Mainmise's* enthusiasm to Buckminster Fuller's geodesic dome, to the immersive character of the video and performance installations of many of the pavilions, the content of Expo stood at the intersection between the paternalistic and the counterculture. Noël's 80s version of the 70s struggles to establish a paradigm for translating the city into a small-scale, livable, ideal.

Conceptually and affectively, the Montreal Noël describes is an intimate space, a close city of alleyways and homes, theaters and parks. It is a domestic city animated by

friendships that overlap into familial relations, where genealogy and amicability are dependent on sympathy and a degree of choice. The series' expansiveness comes from its effort to incorporate, through the first three novels at least, the minute events that structure the lives of its vast cast of characters, making no thought or emotion too insignificant to mention, and working through the events that structure private lives with the same force as it works through those that structure major historical events, whether real, remembered or imagined. In doing so it excludes large portions of Montreal, favoring private or communal spaces over monumental ones, rejecting readings of the city not filtered through social experience and narrowing the range of that social to include a particular milieu that is privileged with bringing to the surface of the present the memories of the city's past. As such, in its concern for Montreal, Noël's fiction functions at a clear distance from the real, arguing for the necessity of mediation and the omnipresence of an urban subjectivity that functions best on the micro level.

Between its life as the American pavilion at Expo and its resurrection as the Montreal Bisosphere, an educational structure that includes the interactive exhibit "Bucky's World," for its youngest visitors, Fuller's geodesic dome suffered decades of neglect, a skeleton of a utopian dream on an overgrown patch of an artificial island. Robert Duchesney's photographs from 1984 capture this momentary occultation of the structure's combination of dream and defense.¹⁹⁷ In one image, storm clouds move in on the skeleton dome, darkness suspended just behind what was once a roof, the texture and limit of the storm visible through the curved triangulated grid of the bars, which support nothing but themselves. In another series of images, a single figure climbs over this modernist ruin, his hand reaching out to grip the metal, his body suspended high above the ground, in a world of steel and pale grey sky. It is a picture of the sphere transformed, the modernist defense against a hostile world transformed into a jungle gym, a plaything, an ecstatic toy. The skin and interior of the pavilion burned in 1976, the same year that Olympic excess crashed through the last of

¹⁹⁷ Prints from this series of photographs can be found in the archives of the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal.

Drapeau's urban ambitions. Its reimaging as the biosphere and integration into the redevelopment of the Expo site as part of Montreal's recreational facilities in the 1990s signal another shift, one that obscures the intervening years of uncertainty in Montreal.

At the heart of the image of the city and the nature of representation that make *Maryse* a novel intimately concerned with the life and fate of Montreal is this ultimate naïve earthiness. It is representation concerned with the horizontal aspects of the city, the ones hidden in images of elevation and of vertical ambitions.¹⁹⁸ As with the skeleton of Fuller's dream, the atmosphere that infused the images of the 60s was soon gone, and if, as Banham lamented, "The flash vision of an urbanism of the future is irrecoverable,"¹⁹⁹ it is hardly surprising to find so little flash and so much far-reaching recovery in Noël's opposition to the recent past. Integration of the past, renewed interest in history, open space, public as the intimate relations of individuals in shared space: these, certainly, are inherent in *Maryse*. But even beyond this, the narrative is a poetics of linguistic conflict and representation. It is Montreal as a site of surface competition, of codes that intersect in visual and linguistic realms: "Paris is the capital of a French-language culture that defines itself powerfully in terms of difference from what is foreign. [...] Montreal, on the other hand, is a city of proliferating differences, its centre already defined by competing codes."²⁰⁰ Noël avoids competition by obliterating the center, a different kind of destabilization.

The result is a representation of Montreal that goes to the opposite of the extreme that Marsan describes as a disregard for history in the city's modernist urbanism:

Quand l'activité immobilière reprend dans la vieille cité après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, l'architecture ne répond plus aux mêmes objectifs d'intégration et d'identification au milieu. Elle devient narcissique et despotique, ne rendant des comptes qu'à elle-même.

[When building activity recommenced in the old city after the Second World War, the architecture no longer responded to the same objectives of integration and

¹⁹⁸ Felicity Scott, discussing the shift from city plan to urban skyline in the late twentieth century's approach to the image of the city as a turn of attention away from horizontal (flows and organization) and towards "the vertical surface of representation." (268)

¹⁹⁹ Banham, *Megastructure*, 117.

²⁰⁰ Simon, *Translating Montreal*, 128

identification with the site. No longer accountable to anything but itself, it became despotic and narcissistic.]²⁰¹

Maryse rejects the autonomy of the narcissistic building to show Montreal as an extension of an affirmative declaration of individual subjectivity. The novel's characters define themselves through interactions on the smallest scale of the city, but in doing so they radically restrict the range of their interactions and their ability to function as points of view on an expanded sense of the urban environment. Instead of correcting the extremities of the 1960s and 1970s, *Maryse* reveals the impossibility of integrating the forms and politics of its urban setting into the microcosm of the domestic city.

²⁰¹ Jean-Claude Marsan, "Le Vieux-Montréal déclaré 'arrondissement historique' en 1964," in Jean-Claude Marsan, *Montréal et son aménagement: vivre la ville* (Montreal: Presse de l'Université du Québec, 2012), 193.

III. Marseille

In many ways a quintessential second city, Marseille occupies shifting ground in the French national imagination. At the height of the colonial era, it served as the main shipping port for traffic between the metropole and its North African colonies. The docks of La Joliette and the factories and warehouses of the Belle de Mai neighborhood, which abuts the Gare St. Charles, Marseille's primary train station, bear witness to this industrial heyday. The third largest city in France in population after Paris and Lyon, Marseille appears in journalistic and literary accounts as a point of departure for adventure in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and as a point of arrival and transit for immigrants in the twentieth.²⁰² It is, increasingly, an immigrant city, one chided in the French press as the first city of the third world, or the last city of the first. The dynamics of Marseille's population lead to complicated relationships intramuros: it was the exception to the 2005 riots that ran through French suburbs after the death of two youths who were electrocuted while hiding from police in a substation outside of Paris, being one of the few metropolitan areas where protests remained peaceful as elsewhere in the country the youth of the *banlieus* engaged in daily confrontations with heavily armed police forces and set fire to cars by night.²⁰³ Yet this peaceful reaction is not proof-positive of cultural harmony or an absence of racial violence, and the city has not escaped racially motivated crimes, nor has it remained on the outside of national anti-immigrant politics, being a consistent area for far-right voters in France's national elections.²⁰⁴ Jean-Claude Izzo, the Marseille writer whose work will anchor this final chapter, dedicated his second Fabio Montale novel, *Chourmo*, to Ibrahim Ali, who was killed

²⁰² These examples include, but are not limited to, other writers of Marseille *néo noir* including: Jean-Paul Delfino, Philippe Carrère, François Thomazeau, and Gilles del Pappas. They also include the scenes in the city that begin Alexandre Dumas' *The Count of Monté Cristo*, Walter Benjamin's short essay on Marseille, and one of the two narratives that Jean-Marie Le Clezio interweaves in *Désert*.

²⁰³ Thomas Crampton, "Behind the Furor, the last moments of two youths," *New York Times*, 11/7/2005 http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/07/international/europe/07youths.html/partner/rssnyt?_r=0, "Incidents pour la seizième nuit consécutive en France, la police en alerte," *Le Monde*, 11/12/2005, http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2005/11/12/incidents-pour-la-seizieme-nuit-consecutive-en-france-la-police-en-alerte_709528_3224.html

²⁰⁴ The relative success of the Front National in and around Marseille in the first round of the 2012 French presidential elections shows that this remains the case.

by supporters of the right-wing political party the Front National in February 1995.

Meanwhile, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, the city has sought to capitalize on its Mediterranean identity, playing a crucial role in regional development plans that would see an intensification of infrastructure all the way to Barcelona as part of the Euro-Mediterranean project. Marseille is, more than anything, a city where image is caught between universal ideas of Frenchness and the repeated fracturing of language, class, and culture. Its geography offers no resolution to these problems. The hills behind the city offer a geological border, isolation painted in the picturesque colors of the Provençal countryside, while the city faces the sea, the Mediterranean offering a multitude of images of circulation and refection against its open horizon.

Born in Marseille in 1945, Jean-Claude Izzo began his literary career as a poet and a journalist, publishing his first poetry collection in 1970 and writing for the city's communist *La Marseillaise* from 1972-1979. He built his early career on incisive critiques of the loss of the city's shipping and manufacturing economy and the treatment and social position of Marseille's large immigrant population in the face of racism on the street and the xenophobic policies campaigned for by the Le Front National. As a literary figure, he was an organizer of and contributor to collections of essays and conferences on Marseille and the Mediterranean, as well as acting as one of the co-founders of the Etonnants Voyageurs film and literary festival, an annual event in the northern city of St. Malo, which celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2014.²⁰⁵ His career as a novelist began late but it is this body of work — *Total Khéops* (1995), *Chourmo* (1996), *Les marins perdus* (1997), *Soléa* (1998), and *Le soleil des mourants* (1999) — for which he is most remembered. His death in 2000 brought an outpouring of remembrance from those with whom he had worked as well as from Marseille's supporters in cultural forums.

Fabio Montale, the hero of *Total Khéops*, *Chourmo*, and *Soléa*, is the figure at the heart of Izzo's fiction. A police detective and former enlisted soldier in the colonial army who

²⁰⁵ General information about the festival, which takes place annually in St. Malo, can be found on its website: <http://www.etonnants-voyageurs.com/>

grew up in the poor immigrant neighborhood of the *Panier*, Fabio embodies Izzo's affection for Marseille. The novels follow Fabio through a series of crimes that bring the violence of the city closer and closer to Izzo's protagonist. In *Total Khéops*, the chaos of the title envelops the city in a criminal network that claims the lives of Fabio's two oldest friends as well as Laila, a young friend, literature student, and romantic interest from the Algerian neighborhoods of the *quartiers nord*. *Chourmo* takes a retired Fabio back into the field to confront family drama and international intrigue when the assassination of an Algerian intellectual who has fled to Marseille goes awry, claiming the life of the son of Fabio's cousin. *Soléa* ends with the death of the novels' hero, as Fabio realizes that the only way to halt the mafia murders that have been following him since he and a former girlfriend began a long-running investigation into Marseille's criminal network is to sacrifice himself. For all the visual, auditory, and gustatory detail that Izzo's trilogy includes, the tragic end to the series offers an intense ambivalence: the city is saved by Fabio's actions, but it loses its hero in the process.

Izzo's work and writing wrapped the city in a sense of its history and literary importance, referencing a long tradition of literary and artistic representations of Marseille and supporting contemporary production. As an observer of recent changes to the city's form, his work falls at the beginning of a crucial and continuing historical moment, one which, over the twenty years between the publication of *Total Khéops* and Marseille's 2013 status as the European City of Culture, has begun to make increasingly visible alterations to the shape and image of France's largest Mediterranean metropolis.²⁰⁶ Envisioned as a corrective for Marseille's mounting unemployment and as a way of re-invigorating the port by connecting it to other Mediterranean cities on the European side of the sea (including Barcelona, Genoa, and Valencia), and encouraging trade routes with the countries on the African side. The plan began to take shape in the 1980s, and by the time Izzo began writing his trilogy in the mid 1990s, Marseille was beginning to award contracts for port re-

²⁰⁶ Dates and details of Izzo's biography are taken from the author's official website: <http://www.jeanclaude-izzo.com/frameset.html>

development connected with the project. Seen in the context of Marseille's emerging architectural and urban planning initiatives, Izzo's late-90s trilogy provides a model for a flexible reading of Marseille. Closely linked to organized crime and urban violence in the contemporary imagination, Marseille has, since the 1990s, been engaged with a politics of image correction. When the city won the competition to host the European City of Culture for 2013, a sudden influx of money from Paris as the EU pushed cultural components of the Euro-Mediterranean project to the forefront of construction in the city. This culminated in the festivities of 2013, when Marseille welcomed an influx of French and foreign tourists.²⁰⁷ The project has received considerable criticism since its inception for the ways in which development focused on the city's center threatens to displace the historically poor immigrant residents of these older neighborhoods of Marseille.²⁰⁸ With extensive plans for the renovation of depressed areas associated with the now departed shipping industry, the Euro-Mediterranean project is an attempt to create an architecturally exciting and identifiably Mediterranean capital out of the fabric of the existing city.

Izzo's novels, all set in Marseille, walk the reader through run-down neighborhoods and over the ground laid out in descriptions of the city from the port when Edmond Dantès wins and loses Mercedes in Alexandre Dumas' *Le comte de Monte-Cristo* to the *planète mars* of the rap group IAM, a prominent feature in local and national music scenes in the 1990s.²⁰⁹ Using the framework of the French *polar* or detective novel, his trilogy works the politics that surround the transformation of the late twentieth-century city into the genre's raw material of murder, organized crime, police corruption, and sex. His approach to changes to

²⁰⁷ This is born out nowhere more vocally than in the series of articles on the city published in the *New York Times* in the months before and during the summer high-point of the festivities. Balancing a hip grittiness, rough authenticity, and shiny and new series of cultural institutions, the *Times* encouraged its readers to visit Marseille, by all means, expressing no small amount of amazement that the streets were, in fact, safe for the shorts-wearing Euro-spending, art-seeking American tourist.

²⁰⁸ see Brigitte Bertonecello and Rachel Rodrigues-Malta, "Marseille versus Euroméditerranée / Marseille versus the Euromediterranean," *Annales de Géographie*, 112 no 632, (2003): 424-436 and Heidi Megerle, "Present-Day Development Processes in the Inner City of Marseille: Tensions between Upgrading and Marginalisation," *Die Erde* 139 no 4 (2008): 357-378.

²⁰⁹ Of the groups that emerged from Marseille's rap scene in the 1990s and 200s, IAM is probably the most well known. The title for Izzo's first novel, *Total Khéops*, comes from one of the group's songs from 1989. The initials IAM stand for *Invasion arrivée de Mars*, and Marseille is often referred to as "*la planète Mars*" in the group's songs.

the urban fabric of Marseille favors history and context; passages in the novels directly criticize the erasure of demolition and the reconfiguration of the city's neighborhoods as part of efforts to improve image and access in the oldest, and historically poor, areas of Marseille. His description of the architectural intervention of a parking garage in *Chourmo*, for example, offers an image of space that loses its context through the imposition of alien forms and functions. Izzo's concerns parallel questions about preservation and its relationship to curatorial and display oriented approaches to the city that arose after large sections of Marseille were destroyed by German dynamite in 1943, leaving post-war planners with areas of open space around the remaining buildings, space that could be repurposed according to an image of an ideal rather than rebuilt in service to the memory of what was. Izzo's image of Marseille engages with the city's archeological traces, which provide a ghostly outline of the past, seeing it as a series of gestures waiting to be filled with narrative anchored in the memory of what was.

The short *note d'auteur* that precedes the text of each of Izzo's novels announces the context and specificity of their author. First stating the fictive nature of the main narrative, he goes on to place the city in relation to the invented and the true. This formula is repeated in each of the volumes. In *Chourmo*, it becomes more vivid, the explicitness of a clarifying statement deferred in favor of an attempt to illustrate the relationship between the city in its two incarnations, the real and the fictive:

Cela dit, Marseille, elle, est bien réelle. Si réelle que, oui, vraiment, j'aimerais que l'on ne cherche pas des ressemblances avec des personnages ayant réellement existé. Même pas avec le héros. Ce que je dis de Marseille, ma ville, ce ne sont, simplement, et toujours, qu'échos et réminiscences. C'est-à-dire, ce qu'elle donne à lire entre les lignes.

[Having said that, Marseille itself is real. So real that I really wouldn't like you to look for any resemblances to people who actually lived. Even with the main character. What I have to say about Marseilles, my city, is once again nothing but a series of echoes and reminiscences. In other words, whatever you can read between the lines.]²¹⁰

The author proposes an engagement with reality taking place through the medium of the city, the primary space represented in the novels and the genesis of his narrative. Yet the

²¹⁰ Jean-Claude Izzo, *Chourmo*, in *La trilogie Fabio Montale: Total Khéops, Chourmo, Solea* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 307. *Chourmo*, trans. Howard Curtis (New York: Europa, 2006), author's note.

nature of the representation remains ambivalent: at the end of the *note*, Izzo invites us to read between the lines to find this real Marseille, the city that hides behind the echoes of memory and can only be seen when the text acts as a point of reference. As a representation of Marseille, the novels mediate the reader's relationship to the city through a form of narrative that echoes the past. Izzo's *polars* are resonant with the repetition of references to and descriptions of the city that exist elsewhere: in nineteenth-century novels and contemporary news reports and in the echo provided by physical traces of Marseille's past destructions. By the time we arrive at the *note* preceding *Soléa*, the final installment of the trilogy, these *réminiscances* and *echoes* must directly confront the present realities of a violent city:

Il convient de le redire une nouvelle fois. Ceci est un roman. Rien de ce que l'on va lire n'a existé. Mais comme il m'est impossible de rester indifférent à la lecture quotidienne des journaux, mon histoire emprunte forcément les chemins du réel. Car c'est bien là que tout se joue, dans la réalité. Et l'horreur, dans la réalité, dépasse – et de loin – toutes les fictions possibles. Quant à Marseille, ma ville, toujours à mi-distance entre la tragédie et la lumière, elle se fait, comme il se doit, l'écho de ce qui nous menace.

[It needs to be said one more time. This is a novel. Nothing of what you are about to read actually happened. But as I can't ignore what I read every day in the newspapers, it's inevitable that my story draws on real life. Because that's where everything is being decided — in real life. And in real life, the horror is greater — far greater — than anything that can possibly be invented. As for Marseilles, my city, always halfway between tragedy and light, it naturally reflects the threat hanging over us.]²¹¹

The fictive, no longer capable of elaborating on the extremity of the real, returns the echo, this time at least, as an explicitly diminished version of the situations it describes. The city, however, retains a mythical aspect, one that places it in the middle distance not only between light and tragedy, as the *note* so eloquently puts it, but between the fiction and the real, the substance of Marseille allowing for aural reflections, echoes, that resonate in the novel. What does it mean, to follow the track of the real? The notion of representation as approximation seems less in play than that of representation as substitution, the novel standing for the reality in which events “like this” take place. The issue for the city, therefore,

²¹¹ Jean-Claude Izzo, *Soléa*, in *La trilogie Fabio Montale: Total Khéops, Chourmo, Solea* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 585. *Solea*, trans. Howard Curtis (New York: Europa, 2007), author's note.

has to do with substitution as much as with description, with distance and its particular distortions more than with approximation or reflection.

Nadia Dhokar sees this subjective form of representation as that of the author. She creates a feeling of inevitability surrounding Izzo's shift from poetry and essay to *noir* fiction, describing not only his activism, but also his fascination with the *polar*.²¹² As Dhokar puts it, "Ce n'est pas Marseille qu'il faut chercher dans l'oeuvre de Jean-Claude Izzo, c'est *son* Marseille. Et le Marseille de Jean-Claude Izzo, c'est la mer avant tout." [It is not Marseille that we should look for in Jean-Claude Izzo's work, it is *his* Marseille. Izzo's Marseille is the sea most of all.]²¹³ To limit the rationale for the novels' particular vision of the city to the personal history of their author would be to dismiss the particular intersections between that vision and the late twentieth-century developments that formed it. However, Dhokar's observation about this personal quality is relevant for the interpretation that it opposes: she asserts that the fictional city is, above all, *not* a series of sociological observations about the conditions of life in Marseille. To see the city in the sea, in the Mediterranean, is to shift the perspective on the city from down in the street or up high on the top of a building to one that looks outward for arrivals and departures, taking in the fragmented, refracted images of the self and the other that come off the water, and to the kind of relationships invoked by the discourses and major architectural projects that, inaugurated thirteen years after Izzo's death, confront the distance between an ideal of clarity in the present and the past histories whose image it replaces, even as it looks for the resonating life of memory and nostalgia.

Beginning with an overview of Marseille's planning and architectural development in relation to the city's history, this chapter examines the novels' engagement with the generalities of *noir* aesthetics and the ways in which Marseille's development as a *noir* city lends a particular cast to discussions of its politics. Taking *Chourmo* as the central text for an exploration of the relationships between context and urban form in Izzo's fiction shifts my discussion to the author's treatment of the changing built environment in Marseille. Imagistic

²¹² Nadia Dhokar, "Jean-Claude Izzo: Trajectoire d'un homme," in *La trilogie Fabio Montale: Total Khéops, Chourmo, Solea* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 24.

²¹³ Dhokar, "Jean-Claude Izzo," 20.

language that describes the city in terms of abstraction emerges as a way of addressing Izzo's contribution to depictions of the repetitive urban form and its effect on the concept of the imageability of the city as discussed by Kevin Lynch. Using archeology as an alternative to architecture, and approaching the city as a space always already prepared for ruin and destruction, Izzo's work refuses the comparisons and capitalizations of official planning documents. The model for Marseille's relationship to its most common cities of comparison, Paris and Algiers, becomes one of refraction rather than reflection, and the re-visioning of the city in fiction and in its built form becomes a problem of breaks rather than of clarification. Taking into account the discussions of *noir*, history, monumentality, and political and social connections to the southern Mediterranean, I look for north-south connections and reflections in Izzo's novel that might provide a nuanced reading of the roles colonialism, cosmopolitanism and new forms of Orientalism play in the formation of Marseille's twenty-first-century image. I ask to what extent the concerns over the tension between historical past and political future that occupied Izzo are present in the events and institutions associated with Marseille's role as European City of Culture in 2013. In light of the new Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée (MuCEM), two archives, and Villa Méditerranée, is Marseille looking southwards or inwards, and what stake does the city have in relationship to a larger French and European politics in deciding its future?

Marseille's Urban History

Despite being the oldest urban center in the hexagon, there is little on the surface of present day Marseille to provide a direct and physical link to its ancient past. In the nineteenth century the archivist Louis Méry called it "ville antique sans antiquités," an "antique city without antiquities," and so it largely remains.²¹⁴ Though excavations that accompany the laying of foundations for new buildings regularly uncover the archeological remains of Massalia's urban past, these foundations are just that: the substrata to a later city, invisible ground and stones borrowed from a lost context. Despite this absence, the

²¹⁴ Méry is cited in the introduction to a 1968 pamphlet on recent archeological discoveries in the city. I will refer to it again in the discussion of *Chourmo* later in this chapter.

traces of the city's origins have been deeply mythologized, and ancient Massalia figures prominently in current imaginations of Marseille.²¹⁵ The story of a ship arriving from the ancient city of Phocaea, now part of Turkey, to found a trading port in the western Mediterranean, the romantic alliance between the captain, Protis, and Gyptis, a Gaulish princess, echoes in the names of bars, restaurants and the boats that line the marina in the old port.

The last city to fall under the direct control of Louis XIV in 1666, and a revolutionary center during the first overthrow of the French monarchy, Marseille's history is marked by an opposition to the centralized control of the early modern and modern state apparatus, even as its form has, since the seventeenth century, followed Parisian models. As Patrick de Maisonneuve remarks in a 1983 assessment of the state of the city's architecture, the fact that the city has been, for a large part of its history, dependent on its port economy for wealth and on Paris for power has created a situation in which one important possible source of distinctive urban character — an aristocratic or otherwise moneyed class interested in urban aggrandizement — has historically looked to the sea as opposed to the city itself to cultivate wealth and influence. "Du port vient peut-être aussi une certaine négligence dans la construction : le bourgeois marseillais a les yeux tournés vers la mer ou sa cassette, plus que vers les fastes aristocratiques. La grande architecture ne l'aura effleuré qu'imposée par le Roi." [From the port might also come a certain negligence in construction: the bourgeois of Marseille turn their eyes to the sea or to their coffers more than to aristocratic forts. Grand architecture would never have flourished there if it had not been imposed by the King.]²¹⁶ The "grand architecture" Maisonneuve alludes to finds its exemplary case in the defensive structures erected to protect and control the newly mastered city in the seventeenth century. The idea of transforming the banality of Marseille's urban environment into a more spectacular setting and the actualization of the power and

²¹⁵ For a discussion of the importance of the Massalia mythology to contemporary ideas of cosmopolitanism and cultural *métissage* in Marseille see Mireille Rosello, "De Massalia à la planète Mars: métissage ou 'fréquentage'," *L'esprit créateur* 41, no 4 (2001) : 24-36.

²¹⁶ Patrick de Maisonneuve, *Le bâti ancien à Marseille* (Paris-La Défense: Electricité de France, 1983), 38.

connectivity of the French state began with Louis XIV's imposition of royal order on the rebellious southern city. Applied from a distance, urban form as a symbol of royal power fails to mark the overall form of the city in any particular or dramatic way. Calling attention to the bourgeois focus on their maritime as opposed to terrestrial sources of wealth, Maisonneuve's assessment of the city's architectural history associates the monumental with a view that focuses inward, on Marseille's relationship to the French nation and an idea of urban identity manifested through image and self promotion. His view on the subject implicitly holds Paris up as a model for the development of Marseille, making the imposition of architecture a historical turning point in the city's development.

While the development of Marseille over the course of its history as a part of the French state followed the Parisian model, not all critics of the city's form display quite the level of ambivalence we can find in Maisonneuve's observations. Jean-Lucien Bonillo describes the largest shift in reactions to the urban form (prior to the twentieth-century) as the one that occurred between the pre-revolutionary plans of Jean-Pierre Bresson in 1772 and the post-revolutionary proposal by Lan in 1870.²¹⁷ It was during this period that the city filled in the territory on the south side of its port, finally encircling the horseshoe with streets and buildings. Industrial development increased, as did the size and prosperity of the shipping industry:

On passe d'une ville aisément appréhendable, familière, aux éléments proches et contigus réassociés dans une unité formelle intelligible, à une ville éclatée par fragments et aires sur lesquels se surimprime un ordre monumental ; lignes et polarités, boulevards et monuments, conjuguent les données utilitaristes avec celles de l'embellissement alors que les mégastructures du transit – ports, gares et voies ferrées – soulignent par l'autonomie de leurs tracés, l'importance grandissante des logiques territoriales et fonctionnalistes.

[We pass from an easily apprehended city where contiguous and close together elements are re-associated into an intelligible formal unity to a city burst open by fragments and areas written over by a monumental order: lines and polarities, boulevards and monuments bring together utilitarian elements with those of beautification while the megastructures of transit – ports, train stations and rail lines – underline the growing importance of territorial and functionalist logics with the autonomy of their traces.]²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Bresson's plan outlined the development of the south side of the port, laying out a proposal for a rectilinear grid of streets and city blocks. Lan's plan accounted for the increased demands on the port functions of the city following this period of rapid growth.

²¹⁸ Jean-Lucien Bonillo, *Marseille Ville Et Port* (Marseille: Parenthèses, 1991), 13.

This shift from the closely apprehended city to one better described by vistas accompanies a period of transition in the technological history of Marseille's port. The wider range of the nineteenth-century view of Marseille includes the changing conditions of infrastructure that connect it to other French and European cities. Bonillo describes the Mediterranean city stitched into a network of transit and exchange that is as important to the image of Marseille that emerged at this time as the monuments that accompanied it.

The growing importance of the southern port was a reflection of the fact that, between the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries, France's colonial presence in the Maghreb increased dramatically. Trade between the metropole and colonial cities across the Mediterranean, especially Algiers, necessitated a radical increase in north-south traffic. The megastructures Bonillo references are born of the technological advancements needed to support the scale of these new networks of power, transit, and exchange. Able to get by for centuries on the advantages of a deep natural harbor protected from the elements and not subject to the rise and fall of large tidal changes (as were northern Atlantic ports), Marseille was late to build industrial docks. When the new technology arrived, it reorganized the city's waterfront, as the area to the north of the old port was developed to accommodate the massive container ships of the new shipping economy. With the docks came factories and workers quarters, a whole series of new developments and new types of buildings that addressed the needs of a port equipped to deal with the massive influx of goods that accompanied colonial prosperity.

Bonillo's observations highlight the degree to which large-scale development in Marseille, and its attendant shifts in image and view, from vernacular and close to monumental and spectacular, can be historically tied to the relationship between the port functions of the city and the activities of the French state, particularly as an imperial entity. Marseille's importance as a point of transit keeps it in check and marks it as a second city. In the human migrations that followed France's relationship with its colonies in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco in the twentieth century, Marseille was a major point of connection between

new arrivals and the Parisian end-point of many of their journeys.²¹⁹ The relationship between what Bonillo describes as the functional and territorial logics of the city's growth affect the overall form of the city by necessitating construction on a massive scale outside of the symbolic and aesthetic functions of monuments. Landmarks that include the city's nineteenth-century cathedral Sainte-Marie Majeure, which rises above the docks at La Joliette, the Second Empire Palais de Pharo on the opposite side of the old port, or the seventeenth-century forts that frame the entrance to the harbor in what was once an assertion of France's military control of the rebellious southern port are visual points of interest, but the focus on the functional aspect of the city in the nineteenth-century meant that the organizational aspects of the city's plan directed emphasis towards elements of its infrastructure. Arrivals mean ports, train stations, ferry terminals, and the nature of these facilities changes the character of the city.

It is notable that the shift in view from near to far remains a problem for the design and organization of the streets in the oldest parts of the city in Maisonneuve's observations in the 1980s:

Nous parlions des façades de la vieille ville, acceptables dans le goulot d'une rue étroite, et brutalement aplaties au fond d'une place inopportune. L'agrandissement inaugure la figure inverse : des maisons construites dans des rues étroites, mais dont la symétrie évoque un regard frontal et éloigné que les contorsions du photographe et les distorsions du grand angle traduisent mal. Tels sont les 'trois fenêtres' à portes centrales : d'une stricte symétrie et d'une monumentalité peu accessible au regard.

[We were talking about the façades of the old city, which are acceptable in the gullet of a narrow street and brutally flattened at the end of an inopportune square. Growth ushers in the opposite figure: houses built in narrow streets but possessed of a symmetry that evokes a more distant frontal view that is badly translated by the contortions of a photographer and the distortions of a wide angle. Such are "three windows" houses with their central door: strict symmetry and monumentality little accessible to the viewer.]²²⁰

²¹⁹ For a literary account of an immigrant's journey that includes the Marseille to Paris trajectory in the late twentieth-century see Rachid Boudjedra's 1986 novel *Topographie idéale pour une agression caractérisée*. Boudjedra's novel, which takes place mostly in the Paris metro, marks Marseille as the French point of arrival for its Algerian protagonist and the last place on his ill-fated journey (the book ends with his death at the hands of angry mob) where he has a sense of direction and spatial orientation.

²²⁰ Maisonneuve, *Le bâti ancien*, 51. The three windows house, a tall structure having three street-facing rectangular windows on each level except for the ground floor, where a door takes the place of the central window, is a common architectural typology in Marseille's older residential streets.

The problem that Maissoneuve identifies is twofold. Firstly, the failure to account for context and conditions of urban organization in architectural choice in the older parts of the city creates areas that are too densely packed to be advantageous to the viewing of their architecture. Secondly, attempts to rectify these problems further disrupt the viewer's ability to take in the features of this architecture by causing new distortions of view: a badly planned square flattens a façade that was better viewed at the end of a cramped street, a desire for architectural uniformity allows for buildings whose aesthetic advantage lies in being seen from across a boulevard to be built in neighborhoods with short angles and little opportunity for framing in the style of the photographic view.

The piecemeal design of the city diminishes the monumental impact of its parts by impeding their view from the street. Maisonneuve's considerations have as much to do with Marseille's capacity for display as they do with a historical consideration of the city's formal aspects. "La ville n'est pas faite que de points de repères et de bâtiments remarquables. L'essentiel de son homogénéité, de sa cohérence, elle le tient d'une certaine monotonie." [The city is not only made of landmarks and remarkable buildings. The essential aspects of its homogeneity and coherence come from a certain monotony.]²²¹ This valorization of monotonous coherence, the repetition that still shows in the façades of Marseille's boulevards which repeat the same elements for an effect that diminishes the variety while enhancing the material harmony of its construction, which blends into the landscape in the pastels and terracotta of a typical Mediterranean town, becomes his determining feature of the city.

It is interesting to note the degree to which these discussions of Marseille's architecture focus on views taken from the city's streets as opposed to the panoramic view of the city possible from its offshore islands and maritime approach. As we shall see, this skyline view is, with the exception of the forts that guard the old port, a recent point of concern for those who consider the visual impact of the city. In these descriptions of streets and houses, the sense that the city remains, at its heart, closed to the viewer and

²²¹ Ibid, 68

inconsiderate of observation, is perhaps indicative of the competing images of harbor (welcome, arrival, protection, and peace) and port (mystery, industry, anonymity, and danger) that can be used to describe this Mediterranean city. Marseille, especially in Maisonneuve's descriptions appears to be an introverted city, one unaccustomed to display. Its dominant image becomes one that demonstrates the utility of its status as a city of commerce and transfer.

The infrastructural design focus was unbalanced by the haphazard growth of the city's older neighborhoods still present at the end of twentieth-century. As its early years brought a new generation of planners into discussions of Marseille's form, attention concentrated on the cohesiveness of a city that imagined more than transit. Gaston Castel, a prominent architect in Marseille in the years surrounding the Second World War and the man responsible for extensive pre- and post-war urban plans of the city, outlines an approach in which the future-oriented vision of modernism is not completely divorced from older aspects of the Parisian model:

Dans cet effort d'embellissement, c'est-à-dire d'urbanisme, il est nécessaire de prévoir grand. Les calculs des constructeurs sont presque toujours dépassés par le progrès. Ceux qu'on traite de mégalomanes, se révèlent exactement à l'échelle des temps nouveaux. Donc, voir large en matière de boulevard. Ne pas hésiter à leur donner quarante, soixante, et jusqu'à cent mètres de largeur comme cette avenue du Bouis, parure de la Capitale. [...] De même pour la construction. Sans adopter les méthodes et les types américains, acceptons comme règlement de voirie, dans notre cité, l'immeuble à douze étages qui, régulier et bien conçu, apportera une majestueuse ordonnance à nos avenues sans en appauvrir l'éclairement. Ayons des édifices dignes d'une grande ville moderne.

[In this effort towards embellishment, which is to say, towards urbanism, big expectations are necessary. Progress almost always surpasses the calculations of builders. Those whom we dismiss as megalomaniacs reveal themselves to be exactly on the level of new times. Thus, let us think big in this matter of boulevards and not hesitate to make them forty, sixty, even up to one hundred meters wide like Bouis avenue, necklace around the throat of the Capital [...]. The same for construction: without adopting American methods or typology, let us accept in our city, as we do highway regulation, the twelve story building that, regularized and well conceived, will bring a majestic order to our avenues without blocking the light. Let us have edifices worthy of a great modern city.]²²²

The comparison with Paris is explicit, the word "capital" capitalized for emphasis. The reference to height regulation is an interesting condition for the proposed plan: in Paris, the

²²² Gaston Castel, "Marseille et l'urbanisme," *Cahiers du Sud*, (1932) : 152-154, quoted in *Gaston Castel Architecte Marseillais* (Marseille: Édisud, 1988), 34. (exhibition catalogue)

limit on a building's height both controls density and limits the visual imposition of technological advancements on the sight-lines and profile of the city's previous, monumental, era of development. The typical Haussmann era buildings that defined the urban character of Paris in the 1850s and 1860s were limited to six stories, and even today few buildings in the capital surpass that limit.²²³ Yet Castel rejects this limit for his city, arguing that it is one way in which Marseille can surpass Paris in impact and urban image. Marseille must work to raise its ambitions, quite literally, as far as Castel's discussions of height indicate, and this can only happen if it can attack the capital's lead. Meanwhile, the rejection of specifically American typologies suggests that Castel is still looking for a French character for the city. What he proposes is that Marseille, in its new constructions, could preserve part of the Parisian example of urban form (the similarities in the organization of the street plan he suggests indicate that there are elements that appealed to the Beaux Arts-trained Castel) while exceeding Paris in terms of the ambition and modernity of urban design and technology.

In his 1933 planning documents for the city, Jacques Gréber confronted the problem of organization and historical preservation by proposing a reorganization of architecturally notable buildings to better position Marseille according to considerations similar to those expressed by Castel.²²⁴ He advocates for the image of the city and its ability to create an atmosphere that will begin to distance Marseille from the commercial and industrial functions of its port. In doing so he argues that this transition is simply a matter of a correct approach to the urban fabric, one in which the building, treated as an artifact, a discrete element, is no longer tied to the particularities of its situation or internal organization but is instead reduced to its effect on the visual aspects of the streetscape.

About the Hôtel Daviel, a prominent architectural landmark and the city's former courthouse, he proposes, "Il est facile de démonter séparément la façade intéressante et

²²³ Haussmann's Paris plan established the norms of his design as part of the city's building codes. See Donald J. Olson, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris Vienna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

²²⁴ This is the same Gréber referenced in the Montréal chapter. A French and American-trained architect, he became most well known for his garden and city designs in the early twentieth-century.

classée, et de l'appliquer sur la nouvelle structure conçue suivant les besoins des services intérieurs." [It is simple to take apart separately the interesting and categorized façade and to affix it to the new structure conceived according to the needs of its internal services.]²²⁵

While the Hôtel Daviel was never broken up into its constituent parts, it was dramatically renovated after it escaped the destruction of the Second World War. Gréber's comments about the independence of historical features of the city, even in cases of buildings like the *hôtel*, an outstanding example of eighteenth-century architecture in Marseille, indicate a cavalier attitude towards contextual signification at a key point in the development of the city's twentieth century form. Enjoying the height of its commercial success as the main entry point for France's Mediterranean empire and acknowledging a need to assert itself as an urban capital in its own right (one accompanied by the development needs that went along with a rapidly growing population), Marseille was, at the start of the Second World War, a central city in conventional intersections of beaux arts ideas of monumentality and the new scientific approaches of modernist planning and infrastructure. The war, however, would both upset the city's ambitions and, through its destruction, create ideal conditions for the implementation of the kind of curatorial preservationist approach embraced in Gréber's plan.

Under occupation by the German army from 1942 to 1944, Marseille suffered large-scale deportations. The Jewish, Roma, and southern Mediterranean residents of the city targeted by the occupying forces and their collaborators were concentrated in the *Panier*, Marseille's oldest neighborhood, located on the north side of the old port. The *Panier* itself, as well as its residents, became the target of German efforts to correct the insalubrious port city and, in April 1943, immediately following the largest deportation of the occupation, large sections of the neighborhood were systematically dynamited by the occupying forces, leaving behind little more than rubble. These destructions, along with the toppling of the *pont transbordeur*, the mechanical bridge that linked the two sides of the port in a feat of early twentieth-century engineering and featured in postcards of Marseille from the 1920s and

²²⁵ Jacques Gréber, *Ville de Marseille: Plan d'aménagement et d'extension; mémoire descriptif*, (Paris: Bibliothèque de l'institut d'urbanisme de l'université de Paris), 78.

1930s, left the post-war city with gaping holes in its historical and modern fabric. The legacy of these changes was a period of planning and reconstruction that would carry Marseille from the late 1940s into the 1970s, setting the precedents that would shape the form of its central *arrondissements* through the end of the twentieth-century.

Sheila Crane describes the period of reconstruction in Marseille as a crucial moment in France's postwar approach to preservation, one in which "destruction was put to use as an active instrument of preservation even as monuments themselves became newly mobile."²²⁶ The situation Crane describes is one in which the displacement of the residents of the neighborhoods around the old port slated for destruction was countered with the successful negotiation by city officials for the preservation of select historical structures. After the war, however, the enthusiastic clearing of rubble from the area escalated to the destruction of many of the structures that had been spared during the original period of demolition. In the post-war climate of pragmatic reconstruction and the demonumentalization of the urban space, those responsible for the ruined areas of Marseille undertook the preservation of the remaining architecturally and historically significant buildings by treating them as set pieces. As such, they could and should be selected and fragmented, pieces of façades or whole buildings able to be moved to accommodate new construction:

Both Expert's and Leconte's proposals were informed by the understanding that the surviving structures were moveable fragments that should be clearly separated from the new buildings under construction nearby in order to form a suitably nostalgic décor safely cordoned off from the present.²²⁷

The recovered and then re-covered past thus touches on an important act of forgetting in the city's history. As the city began to rebuild, uncovering, observing and recovering its archaeological past, it re-thought the placement of the remaining historical buildings, relics of the German occupation. This curatorial approach to the buildings treated the city as a museum in which structures could be positioned to best display their architectural features. Treated as parts of a display, buildings were no longer tied to their context; the old form was obscured and the people who had inhabited it pushed out.

²²⁶ Sheila Crane, "Mutable Fragments," *Future Anterior* 2, no. 1 (2005) : 1.

²²⁷ *ibid* 5

Curating the city in the post-war period, Marseille's planners based their developments on the plans of a previous generation, moving the remaining set pieces of the city after German destruction according to an idealized formal scheme. The attention of the rebuilders to the historic conditions of their damaged city was a direct descendent of the attitudes expressed in planning documents from 1933, which proposed a solution for the deplorable state of some of the buildings with interesting (fragmentary) features that would save the classifiable part from the ruin of the building. Gréber's plan was specific in its intention to neglect the wishes of "archeologists and painters," as a way of giving new life to selected elements out of context of their original placement. After the destruction of 1943, fragmentary and curatorial reconstruction was a way of addressing the loss of Marseille's historical neighborhoods through the optimistic lens of its pre-war planners. The city became a workable fabric made of interchangeable forms rather than a social context, its parts notable for their aesthetic values and connection to a visual, as opposed to memorialized, past. The kinds of remembrance embedded in the experienced version of Marseille depicted in popular literature are, therefore, in part a response to this loose treatment of history as *commodity*, a feature of the city with collective but not individual significance.

While preservation and increasing interest in the material history of Marseille's ancient past inspired redevelopment projects along its boulevards, on the fringes of the city large scale housing projects replaced the combined live-work arrangements that had ringed the port in factories and dormitories for the city's working class population in the nineteenth century. From 1947-1952, Le Corbusier's model housing project, the *unité d'habitation de Marseille* rose in the city's growing southern suburbs.²²⁸ In the decades that followed, imitations of this initial ideal of urban residential organization would shape a context and infrastructure-poor archipelago of developments along the city's western and northern fringes, abstractly conceived and under-thought domestic arrangements largely inhabited by

²²⁸ This experiment in high-density housing was the first architectural project in which Le Corbusier put into practice the theory of the house as a "machine for living" (*une machine à habiter*) in an urban context, one which sought to replicate conditions of village life in the housing complex. Also called the *Cité radieuse*, the name for this type of development, of which Marseille was the first example, also refers to Le Corbusier's 1933 treatise on urbanism *La ville radieuse*.

an influx of immigrants who arrived from the destabilized postcolonies of the Maghreb. Post-war attitudes towards Marseille, in which an ideal historicized form of the city justifies the erasure of the context of urban history, provide the background to present conditions in the city.

Mediterranean *Noir*

The version of Marseille that becomes the material of Izzo's *polar* representation is built on the legacy of erasure and loss that defines the city's architectural history, particularly following the Second World War. The connection between what is essential *noir* fiction and urban confrontations with modernism and absent history draws on what Matthew Farish describes as the post-war condition of the American city. This environment, which gave birth to the dark urban underbelly of the detective story, was defined by a city center abandoned to the ghosts of its pre-war modernist development in the expansion of the suburbs: "[Cities] become museum-like places that could not keep pace with the rapidly developing suburbs."²²⁹ Farish's minimally inhabited modern city recalls Marseille in the same period; its population devastated by deportations and war, the city's remaining historical buildings, as Crane shows, were treated as isolated exhibits in a museum of a city. To this post-war model, Izzo's fiction adds the criminal world of the 1990s mafia and the moral darkness of racism, exploitation, and extremism.

David Platten points to the strong tendency towards socially engaged critical work on the *polar*, tracing it to the origins of *noir* and detective fiction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century: "...in the evolution of the genre, the debate centers not on the city as a physical entity but on its human dimension, on the ways in which the expanding cities of the nineteenth century were seen to modulate human behavior."²³⁰ This is the point of departure for analyses of Izzo's trilogy that address the novels' representation of immigration, providing an alternative to the divided city exposed by racial tensions, perceptions of prevalent crime,

²²⁹ Matthew Farish, "Cities in Shade: Urban Geography and the Uses of Noir," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23 (2005) : 111.

²³⁰ David Platten, "'Polar-Village': The French *Roman Noir* Beyond the City Walls," *Romance Studies* 25, no. 2 (2007) : 95.

and the influence of the far right on local politics.²³¹ Nicholas Hewitt finds in Izzo's work an image of Marseille as a diasporic city *par excellence*. This image, Hewitt suggests, requires the support of representation, which must choose how to construct relationships between cultures in a region defined by the closeness of difference and prevalence of exchange around an easily traversable sea. "...if there is indeed a coherent Mediterranean culture which transcends political boundaries, and if Marseille can be perceived as its centre and capital, then the concept of a Mediterranean diaspora which has collected in Marseille becomes seriously diluted if not meaningless."²³² Izzo, in Hewitt's analysis, balances an appreciation for the difference of diaspora as part of the particularly postcolonial experience of Maghrebian immigration to France with an understanding of Marseille as possessed of a working class and decidedly Mediterranean cosmopolitanism. This plural identity is the most obvious social characteristic of Izzo's Marseille.

Susan Ireland brings this concern with the Mediterranean character of the city into a discussion of Izzo's writing as a lyrical and well-developed example of the *polar*. "The positive and negative poles of the narratives, the 'new barbarians' and those who support pluralism, are further reflected in Izzo's trademark style with its mix of lyricism and violent crime. For Izzo, this duality characterizes Marseilles itself [...] and the alternation between celebration of the city and descriptions of brutal crimes reflects the conflict of values portrayed in the trilogy."²³³ The validation of the pluralistic, communitarian city in the face of right-wing politics is a direct response to the kind of tension between development that includes the restoration and preservation of Marseille's heritage and the reality of gentrification, complicated by the city's implication in racist politics. Miriam Saward describes the city in *Total Khéops* as a response to the version of nationalism typified by the anti-immigration rhetoric of the Front National, identifying the messages of Izzo's first *polar* as

²³¹ Marseille elected its current Front National mayor, Jean-Claude Gaudin, in 1995.

²³² Nicholas Hewitt, "Departures and Homecomings: Diaspora in Jean-Claude Izzo's Marseille," *French Cultural Studies* 7, no 3 (2006) : 263.

²³³ Susan Ireland, "Representations of the Banlieues in the Contemporary Marseillais Polar," *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 8, no. 1 (2004) : 24.

“...something along the lines of, ‘I am proud to be Marseillais yet ashamed to be French.’”²³⁴

By turning from the characters who embody the social conditions described by these critics back to their surroundings and the visual aspects of *noir* fiction and *polar*, my aim is to understand how the form of the city and the commentary provided by Izzo’s use of this particular genre contribute to this primarily socially defined description of Marseille as Mediterranean and mutable, as a city defined in part by the fact that it is *not* Paris.

The fact that Ireland highlights stylistic elements in her assessment of Izzo offers evidence that the representational aspects of the novels, the way in which they render the conditions of the city, is also a key aspect of the approach of Platten, Hewitt, and Saward, despite not being the focus of their respective arguments. The style of Izzo’s prose, the lyricism and violence that Ireland underscores, are part of its clear connections to the aesthetic as well as the topical aspects of American *noir* fiction. These two opposing features in particular highlight a confrontation between descriptive representation — the scene made lyrical in prose — and action and violence: the verb-centric images of blood and blows. Overlapping into the visual realm, the style of the *polar* draws on the urban setting of its American predecessors in a marriage of urban specificity (the particular situations of memory, crime, and racism at the heart of most recent critical interest in the genre) and the immersion in a setting with particular visual qualities that make *noir* popular as a formula for both literature and film. The way in which Izzo’s fiction responds to the visual cuing of the moving image while focusing on a musical, literary, and photographic city, make this representational entry point to his version of Marseille interesting in terms of his aesthetics, as well as providing a new and fruitful avenue for cultural and theoretical investigation of the *polar* city he creates.

Focusing on the social aspects of the novels, critics draw attention to the relationships between characters as representative of conditions of life between and within different communities in Marseille. In Izzo’s *polars*, criminals are always connected to their

²³⁴ Miriam Saward, "Identity and Place in Jean-Claude Izzo's *Total Khéops*," *Australian Journal of French Studies* 49, no. 3 (2012) : 244.

victims in some way, and the networks that tie his characters to each other heighten the drama and tragedy of the novels. These factors shift as the series progresses, moving from the dangers of overlapping worlds (Fabio's friend Laila is raped and murdered by the brother of one of her friends, a low-level gangster, in *Total Khéops*), to the reverberations of a violent act (Fabio's nephew shot by his hit-man step father after he witnesses an assassination in *Chourmo*), to the dangers of attempting to expose the structures that make these radiating crimes possible (the series of murders that follow Fabio's ex-girlfriend Babette, the ramifications of her journalistic work to expose the mafia, in *Soléa*). They form an obvious entry point to examinations of the novels' role as a representative and representational work of popular literature.

Gyan Prakash describes these "dark representations of the city" acting as "forms of urban criticism."²³⁵ The *noir* city is both modern and dystopian, exaggerating the dark undercurrents of modernity: "The dystopic form functioned as a critical discourse that embraced urban modernity rather than reject it."²³⁶ In this kind of fiction, the type on which the French *polar* draws, the setting is crucial. Conventions of the genre present the creator of *noir* fiction with a series of urban types, the dark representations to which Prakash alludes. However, the specifics of the city in which a given narrative takes place provide detail on the local level that allows the formula that underlies both the plot and the setting to guide a fictional representation of a real city towards the unveiling of urban life. Modernity provides the scenes of *noir* fiction with elements it can exploit as it reveals the dark underbelly of the city.

This attitude towards modernity as both potent generator of fictions and other representations of the city, and as a probable accomplice in the city's descent into dystopia draws on Georg Simmel's early twentieth-century description of the metropolis. For Simmel, the modern city was a place where the emotional life of the small town was replaced with the mechanized, objective interactions of the money economy of urban life. If the metropolis

²³⁵ Gyan Prakash, "Introduction: Imagining the Modern City, Darkly," in *Noir Urbanisms: Dystopic Images of the Modern City*, ed. Gyan Prakash (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 2.

²³⁶ *ibid* 3

offered freedom from the social censure of community observance, it also diminished the subjectivity of its inhabitants. As overstimulation diminished the individual's capacity for reaction, the sights and sounds of the city grew dull. "They appear to the blasé person in a homogeneous, flat and grey color with no one of them worthy of being preferred to another."²³⁷ Anthony Vidler observes a similar parallel between a loss of subjectivity and a shift in spatial concepts "[...]from an ideal of 'fullness' to an increased sense of 'flattening' and distortion."²³⁸ The urban types that Prakash describes are an attempt to fill the voids left by this process of de-subjectivization. Their common features provide the basis for the textures of urban specificity in the *noir* novel while at the same time retaining the flatness that both Simmel and Vidler identify.

In Jean-Noel Blanc's description of the translation of the aesthetics of American *noir* to the *polar*, the city is always poetic, symbolic, affective. "Il ne dit pas le réel. Il n'est pas une description. Il crée des images." "[The *polar*] does not express the real. It is not a description. It creates images."²³⁹ Taking into account the connection between *noir*, *polar*, and the modern city, this process of image creation becomes less a substitution for a descriptive relationship to the real city than an attempt to represent the interactions between the social critique that runs through a reaction to urban space and the relationship between subjectivity, loss, aesthetics, and spatial dynamics that are modernism's legacy.

In the opening passage of *Total Khéops*, the narrative follows Fabio's friend Ugo as he makes his way through the streets of Marseille on the hunt for the killer of Manu, the third member of their childhood gang:

On était le 2 juin, il pleuvait. Malgré la pluie, le taxi refusa de s'engager dans les ruelles. Il le déposa devant la Montée-des-Accoules. Plus d'une centaine de marches à gravir et un dédale de rues jusqu'à la rue des Pistoles. Le sol était jonché de sacs d'ordures éventrés et il s'élevait des rues une odeur âcre, mélange de pisse, d'humidité et de moisi. Seul grand changement, la rénovation avait gagné le quartier.

²³⁷ Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Modern Life," (1903) in *The Blackwell City Reader*, ed. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 14.

²³⁸ Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 6-7.

²³⁹ Jean-Noel Blanc, *Polarville: Images de la ville dans le roman policier* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1991), 21

Des maisons avaient été démolies. Les façades des autres étaient repeintes, en ocre et rose, avec des persiennes vertes ou bleues, à l'italienne.

De la rue des Pistoles, peut-être l'une des plus étroites, il n'en restait plus que la moitié, le côté pair. L'autre avait été rasée, ainsi que les maisons de la rue Rodillat. À leur place, un parking. C'est ce qu'il vit en premier, en débouchant à l'angle de la rue du Refuge. Ici, les promoteurs semblaient avoir fait une pause. Les maisons étaient noirâtres, lépreuses, rongées par une végétation d'égout.

[It was June 2nd, and it was raining. Despite the rain, the taxi refused to turn into the back alleys. He dropped him in front of Montée-des-Accoules. More than a hundred steps to climb and a maze of streets between there and Rue des Pistoles. The ground was littered with garbage sacks spilling their contents. There was a pungent smell on the streets, a mixture of piss, dampness and mildew. The only big change was that even this neighborhood was being redeveloped. Some houses had been demolished, others had had their front repainted ocher and ink, with Italian-style green and blue shutters.

Even on Rue des Pistoles, maybe one of the narrowest streets of all, only one side, the side with even-numbered houses, was still standing. The other side had been razed to the ground, as had the houses on Rue Rodillat, and in their place was a parking lot. That was the first thing he saw when he turned the corner from Rue du Refuge. The developers seemed to have taken a breather here. The hoses were blackened and dilapidated, eaten away by sewer vegetation.]²⁴⁰

The rain is a classic *noir* trope, recalling the soaked streets of post-war Chicago, New York or San Francisco in the hard-boiled American novels of an earlier age.²⁴¹ As a description of the city, it is overwhelmingly negative: the streets are either unpleasant (narrow, filled with garbage, reeking of urine, lined by blackened, leprous houses, the skin of their façades crumbling away from neglect) or the victims of haphazard destruction, one half a street demolished, rows of houses replaced by that most banal of urban constructions, the parking garage.

The context that this initial scene provides leads into a series of traverses and turns as Ugo makes his way through the *Panier*, eventually, over the course of several days, succeeding in first finding, then killing his friend's murderer, only to be shot by the police in the midst of his attempted escape. The details these first sentences provide establish the world of the novel as that of a city in flux. While the specificity of the street names places the scene for those familiar with Marseille, the contradictions of refuse and renovation trouble

²⁴⁰ Izzo *Total Khéops*, in *La trilogie Fabio Montale: Total Khéops, Chourmo, Solea* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 51 (first page of the novel in this edition). *Total Chaos*, trans. Howard Curtis, (New York: Europa, 2005), 13.

²⁴¹ See Matthew Farish "Cities in Shade: Urban Geography and the uses of *noir*," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23 (2005) : 95-118 for an overview of *noir* aesthetics in American film and their relation to urban conditions.

the clarity of the location. With houses torn down or repainted, the reference is to a fading familiarity, somewhere between improvement and loss. This is not the work of individuals but of the developers, a collective working in favor of parking garages and against the blackened and vegetal houses of the *quartier*. In a series where the main narrative is that of an individual, the hero Fabio Montale, pitted against the collective facelessness of mafia, corruption, and extremism, the early contrast of this scene, a city filled with trash and odor but overrun with the enthusiasm of promotion and development, is a first indication of the ambivalence of Izzo's *noir*. As Fredric Jameson argues in his discussion of the importance of the details that give texture to the Los Angeles setting of Raymond Chandler's *noir* fiction, this is not an instance of documentation so much as carefully considered representation of the minute and the unfamiliar, a valorization of flora, fauna and fracture as the defining elements of the urban scene.²⁴²

Platten describes this first scene as fundamentally disorienting for the reader unfamiliar with Marseille,²⁴³ but Ugo's route includes references to specific streets and intersections that allow a reader to map his progress through the city. A feeling of disorientation comes not from the absence of references but from the speed at which they pass. The narrative follows the difficult to navigate streets of the *Panier* without pausing to show the relationships between elements, making it unclear how much distance Ugo covers. While the path is difficult to follow, the specific detail serves as a general contextualization of the scene. The sights, smells, and sounds of the neighborhood are there in the overflowing garbage, the allusions to construction and demolition and the observations of the colors of the newly painted houses. More than lyrical enrichments to the text, these observations provide the reader with an immersive sense of the environment, a multi-sensory experience of place that imbues the scene with the atmosphere of Marseille. A richness of description overwhelms the reader with familiar and unfamiliar points of reference. This sensory

²⁴² Fredric Jameson, *Archeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2005), 287

²⁴³ Platten, "'Polar-Village': The French *Roman Noir* Beyond the City Walls." *Romance Studies* 25, no. 2 (2007) : 98.

representation replaces distance, orientation, and the sense of continuity that comes from being able to follow a character.

The series proceeds through the neighborhoods of Marseille with the same mix of toponyms and sensory detail that mark this first scene. In their references to specific landmarks and points that establish cartographical orientation, the novels offer a declining number of initial references, each contributing fewer fresh terms than its predecessors.²⁴⁴ This is partially a function of familiarity with the territory: with a central character so much defined by his habits and identifying proclivities, it is not entirely surprising that the second and third volumes would fail to offer the reader an exploration of or extensive contact with the new and thus far unmentioned. Still, this lack of geographical expansion and novelistic detailing is not simply the result of repeated references. The number of proper names drops off after *Total Khéops*, as do the number of views or visual descriptions of the urban space. What replaces them is a focus on specific dynamics of the city and Fabio's gradually accruing hopelessness. In the midst of this highly detailed Marseille *noir*, the series' hero becomes more and more alone, the names of places falling off as he loses one friend after another. The city, by now familiar to the reader, empties.

Jameson ties the emergence of this kind of urban fiction to the sensibilities and abstracted realism of the postmodern, drawing on the finely detailed tactile urgency of Chandler's dark Los Angeles fictions to which I referred a page ago: "the stucco dwellings, cracked sidewalks, tarnished sunlight, and roadsters in which the curiously isolated yet typical specimens of an unimaginable Southern California social flora and fauna ride in the

²⁴⁴ An assembly of mapped locations accessible through Google maps illustrates the restrictions of the series' geography, while at the same time making an argument for the ways in which the novel's referentiality has become part of a visualizable Marseille reality anchored in the city's oldest and most exposed quarters. The map pins, each elaborated by a quotation from the text that introduces its location and calls it by name, focus attention on points rather than trajectories, currents, routes, or perspectives. They name only the most easily isolated and identifiable aspects of the text, an issue of the confluence of naming and image that I addressed previously. Here, however, a further preoccupation with perspective, framing, and viewing that runs through the three novels, reducing as the points of introduction diminish, condenses the city and offers an abstracted version of the recognizable, easily imaged and associated points of contact with the real picked out on the google map.
<https://maps.google.fr/maps/ms?msa=0&msid=207309058565291184245.0004e0987de43d7e30e08&hl=fr&ie=UTF8&t=m&ll=43.299697,5.359955&spn=0.224876,0.466232&z=11&source=embed&dg=feature>

monadic half-light of their dashboards.” These details, set deep within the overarching plot of crime, investigation, pursuit, and resolution hold, for Jameson, the heart and meaning of Chandler’s novels, stories in which the reader is ultimately distracted by “trivial puzzles and suspense in such a way that the intolerable space of Southern California can enter the eye laterally, with its intensity undiminished.”²⁴⁵ By showing Chandler inverting entertainment’s tendency towards distraction – from a distraction from reality to a distraction from the illusions we construct in its place – Jameson uses the background of Chandler’s narrative to argue for a realist (anti)capitalist subtext to a mass-market cultural product. Like Chandler, Izzo is a writer interested in urban texture, and while in the case of the Marseille author the nature of the crime is crucial to his novels’ relationship to realism and social commentary, the detailed vision of Marseille presented by the keen eye of Fabio Montale is at least as important to understanding the representational qualities of these texts. While Izzo’s characterizations may not play quite so much on the types established in his predecessor’s version of Los Angeles, the details he provides to ground his plot borrow from this type of rich setting.

Platten shows Fabio balancing interest and distance, gradually breaking away from the city he loves: “Izzo sustains a bi-focal perspective on Marseille throughout the trilogy, to the extent that the reader, like Fabio, may begin to question the very notion of the city as a kind of mystical essence to which the central character has a seemingly unbreakable attachment. Outside the world of fiction, only listed buildings tilt at permanence.”²⁴⁶ Izzo’s series and its protagonist do not remain static in their assessment of the city, nor in their relationship to it as an environment that a reader can visualize. Between the opening scene of *Total Khéops* and that of *Solea*, for instance, there is first of all a marked change of place (the final novel begins not in Marseille, but in Rome) and in sensory detail. Gone is Ugo’s traverse, gone too the fragments of visual detail, the lingering over the city’s changing face that occupies so much of the first book and anchors the plot of the second. Instead,

²⁴⁵ Jameson, *Archeologies of the Future*, 287.

²⁴⁶ Platten, “Polar Village,” 105.

Marseille becomes oppressive, odor and heat overwhelming the rest with the stench of death: “La vie puait la mort. [...] Ce n’était pas une de ces idées qui, parfois traversent l’esprit, non, je sentais vraiment la mort autour de moi. Son odeur de pourriture. [...] C’était vrai, qu’il faisait chaud. Une bonne trentaine de degrés, avec dans l’air un mélange poisseux d’humidité et de pollution. Marseille étouffait.” [Life stank of death. [...] It wasn’t just one of those vague ideas you get in your head sometimes. No, I really felt death around me. The rotten putrid smell of it. [...] The fact is, it was hot. In the upper eighties. The air was a viscous mixture of humidity and pollution. Marseilles was stifling.]²⁴⁷ At the end of the series, there is little hope of enough space to see anything. Marseille is stifling, a city suffocated by its apparent affinity for death and decay.

When architectural elements are repositioned and re-appropriated, the character of the city becomes an improvised repatterning of space without memory. In Marseille, urbanism treats the formal aspects of the historical city as set pieces in a display and they lose something of their contextual meaning. Despite the key role Marseille has played in the history, especially the colonial history, of the past two hundred years of the French state, the material and memorial evidence of this past is obscured by the disorientation of the city’s reconstruction. An ability to see the city as essentially formless, as material and atmosphere, rather than as a static image, is embedded in its twentieth-century evolution. When Izzo takes up the blurring light of dawn and evening to show the city as deformed, unformed, amalgamated to the light effects of its geographical situation and its relationship to the sea, he is working from a precedent that runs parallel to the efforts of definition and capitalization that have marked Marseille since the dawn of modern French imperialist interest in the Mediterranean region. His *noir* version of the city is deeply concerned with the interaction between the city’s image and its often invisible history.

Architectural Crime and *Chourmo*

In the French context, the *noir* city of the *polar* offers a re-assessment of the embedded and willfully forgotten urban history left as a legacy of twentieth-century state

²⁴⁷ Izzo, *Soléa*, 597, 21.

crimes, the products, in particular, of colonialism, the German occupation during the Second World War, decolonization and the Algerian war, connections that Kristen Ross has emphasized in her assessment of the genre, offering Izzo in particular as a writer engaged with the remembering of the later events.²⁴⁸ Indeed, in *Chourmo* the historical as much as the spatial describes the conditions that create the central crime: the *Panier*, in addition to being the focus of the 1943 dynamiting, was the site of the majority of German deportations during the occupation, and the killer is described by his wife as having “fait l’Algerie” (a reference to the Algerian war); the crimes of the French forces are repeated in his continued violence. In what Ross describes as the historicization of these events, the view towards history “...is not frontal, solemn commemoration; it is not a monumental or sterile face-to-face with history. It is much closer to a playful glance[,]” is embedded in the fabric of the city and, in Marseille in particular, offered as a critique to the redevelopment at work on the surface of the city.²⁴⁹ The actions of excavation and building mirror the history of the relatively recent forgettings that Ross explores, making construction and reconstruction complicit in the destruction of the past.

In *Chourmo*, the tension between historical possibility and present problems takes shape in an opposition between building and excavation that provides the subtext to the central crime. An architect, Adrien Fabre, provides information that allows a mafia hit-man to murder his house guest, Hocine Draoui, an Algerian historian seeking refugee status in France after his archeologically based arguments for a history of cultural diversity around the Mediterranean gets him in trouble with Algeria’s Islamist government. Fabre’s betrayal, Fabio discovered, is motivated by the debts the architect owes to Marseille’s criminal underworld. Providing information on his houseguest, Fabre is able to repay his creditors in

²⁴⁸ In her 2010 article “Parisian Noir,” Ross specifically references Izzo in a list of authors of historiographical *polar*: “In novels by Daeninckx, Vilar, Frédéric Fajardie, Gérard Delteil, Jean - Bernard Pouy, Jean-Claude Izzo, and Thierry Jonquet, among others, the causes of contemporary crime are to be found in the history of bourgeois society, and within that history, in the events of the recent past: the Spanish Civil War, the consequences of World War II and the extermination of the European Jews, May ’68, but above all the Algerian War and the persistence of colonial crime and its unfinished politics.” Kristin Ross, “Parisian Noir,” *New Literary History* 41 (2010) : 97.

²⁴⁹ *ibid* 101

the form of this highly profitable hit paid for by Draoui's detractors in Algeria. In the end, Fabre is as ineffective a criminal as he is a friend: he is executed by the mafia when he begins to show signs of guilt over the death of his son's friend, who had the misfortune to catch a glimpse of Draoui's murderer and was shot in turn.²⁵⁰

Fabre's most recent project, a parking garage under construction in the *Panier*, the city's oldest neighborhood and Fabio's home turf, stands as an embodiment of his criminal disloyalty. The garage, Fabio discovers, is built with dirty money and justified by right-wing politics. As it rises, it re-buries the material evidence of the cultural intersections at the heart of Draoui's work. Positioning the city's archeological past at the center of the original friendship between the architect and the historian (the two meet at a conference on the subject), as well as under the foundation of the project that first alerts Fabio to the possibility that Fabre might not be as stable as he at first appears, Izzo's narrative parallels personal relationships and the building and uncovering work of constructing the city. Personal betrayal, which adds intrigue to the crime at the heart of the thriller, takes on architectural dimensions that have resonance in Izzo's Marseille and the view the novel takes on the form of the city. The failed man is also the failed architect, at least based on Fabio's assessment of his work.

Peter Cladfield suggests that architectural sites represented as part of *noir* fiction's engagement with the modern city often become the focus for criminal activities and characters. These sites are intensifications of the hero's relationship to his surroundings and mirror his relationship to criminal activity as a general condition of his environment that produces the singular crime or series of linked crimes that structure the plot of the novel. The link between an architectural object and a violent event allows the hero to "shift from seeing the built space around him peripherally and in passing as fixed backdrop to important

²⁵⁰ In a fantastic bit of *polar* plotting, this young victim also happens to be the son of Fabio's cousin, who is married to the mafia hit man. Near the end of the novel, the cousin reveals that her son's father is not her first husband, as she had claimed, but her second husband, the boy's murderer.

events, to perceiving it as a potential object, even product, of criminal activity.”²⁵¹ For the most part, Cladfield is concerned with a particular reading of modernist architecture and its failings in the kind of contemporary city where, as David Harvey has argued, private interest has co-opted modernism’s utopian potential.²⁵² This is certainly evident in Izzo’s observations on development’s encroaching presence in Marseille’s neighborhoods, as in the opening scene in *Total Khéops* that I discussed in the previous section. However, the connection between the parking garage’s architect and the central murder in *Chourmo* adds a degree of menace to the aesthetic shift represented by the new architectural object, represented by this structure of ultimate banality. Building itself becomes a potentially criminal activity in the moment in which Fabre’s name causes the parking garage to leap out of a background of generally unsettling change to the city.

The displaced anxiety of the re-made city that Anthony Vidler has discussed in relationship to postmodern urban unease becomes the genesis of this kind of fiction of clumsily criminal architects and the buildings they produce. Vidler’s psychoanalytic approach offers a reading of the city and, in particular, of architecture’s relationship to the urban environment, through individual and ideological reactions to the gaps modernism leaves (empty space, voids, dislocations). For Vidler, urbanism in the service of modernism becomes an attempt to address a perceived absence in the form of the city, a lack of a Sartrean fullness of being, linked to the changes to the visual elements of urban space “where the perspective city proposed a delicate balance between two equally significant fullnesses of being – the city as such and its monuments – the one subsumed in the mental envelope of the other, the figure-ground city of modernism was founded on the erasure of two fullnesses of being, that is to say on what Peter Eisenman has termed ‘the presence of

²⁵¹ Peter Cladfield, “Architectural Crimes and Architectural Solutions,” in *Writing the Modern City: Literature, Architecture, Modernity*, ed. Sarah Edwards and Jonathan Charley (London: Routledge, 2012), 113. Cladfield establishes a sub-genre of recent UK detective fiction focused on this type of architectural crime: novels where architecture or, more properly, based on the examples he chooses, the large-scale developments of mass-produced suburban housing and luxurious projects built by private interest, house criminal activity from corruption to abuse and murder.

²⁵² For a full explanation of Harvey’s position with a discussion of the relationship between ownership, public space, and the aesthetics of urban design, see David Harvey, “The Right to the City,” *New Left Review* 53 (2008) : 23-40.

absence.”²⁵³ More than a formal anxiety of non-recognition, Vidler’s description of modernism addresses the particularities of absence. The monuments of the old city remain, but they retreat into a state of non-presence. The consequence that Vidler proposes, a voiding of the memory function of the city and collective understanding of its monuments, is the point at which the present anxieties and inequalities that Cladfield sees as implicated in the fictional architectural crime converge with the historical anxieties that run parallel courses through Izzo’s trilogy and through Marseille’s history of planning, destruction and reconstruction in the twentieth century: a process that continues today in the city’s re-ordering as a post-industrial cultural center.

If we are to begin unpacking the anxieties that follow modernism into Izzo’s version of architectural crime, we must do so through the particular history of Marseille’s twentieth-century evolution. The most direct criticism in the novel can be tied to the *Euroméditerranée* project, which proposes redevelopment as a way of improving the city’s tarnished image (Marseille networked into a Mediterranean of commerce and cultural circulation replacing Marseille as a hub in a different network, one based on the influence of the Italian Mafia on the city’s criminal world). Still, the relationship between the city and modernist planning, as well as the ways in which *Chourmo*’s treatment of the city’s archeological past can be read through a more recent history of post-war reconstruction. Doing so allows us new ways of understanding Izzo’s opposition of building and excavation as different relationships to urban space in Marseille.

The most recent attempt to redesign the city, the *Euroméditerranée* project is responsible for the large-scale development that is currently re-shaping the areas around Marseille’s industrial port, which has seen a drastic drop in shipping traffic since the majority of its functions were relocated up the coast to Fos in the mid-1990s. Over and over again in the novels, Fabio laments the loss of port traffic as a fundamental loss to the image of Marseille, one that cannot be remedied by replacing the economic function of the shipping

²⁵³ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in The Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), 182. See also the introduction to this project, where I discuss this quotation in the context of historical shifts in the image of the European city.

industry with new kinds of cultural and commercial production. More than a general rejection of an idea of modernist construction in the historical city, the parking garage and its association with Fabre in *Chourmo* stands for the externally dictated proposals for Marseille's future as a Euro-Mediterranean city. Izzo makes this connection explicit, proposing his fictional architect as a candidate for the largest scale development project underway in the city:

Cûc m'a confié que son cabinet avait été vivement conseillé pour l'aménagement portuaire Euroméditerranée.

Euroméditerranée devait être la « nouvelle donne » pour que Marseille revienne sur la scène internationale, par son port. J'en doutais. Un projet né à Bruxelles, dans la cervelle de quelques technocrates, ne pouvait avoir pour souci l'avenir de Marseille. Seulement de réguler l'activité portuaire. De redistribuer les cartes, en Méditerranée, entre Gênes et Barcelone. Mais, pour l'Europe, les ports de l'avenir c'était déjà Anvers et Rotterdam.

[Cûc told me his practice has been strongly tipped for the Euroméditerranée port development.]

Euroméditerranée was supposed to be the "new order" for Marseilles. A way for it to return to the international stage, through its port. I had my doubts. The Brussels technocrats who'd concocted the project were hardly likely to have the future of Marseilles at heart. They were only interested in regulating port activity. In changing the face of the Mediterranean between Genoa and Barcelona. But in Europe as a whole, the ports of the future were already Antwerp and Rotterdam.]²⁵⁴

Fabio doubts the feasibility of the project based on a perceived inseparability of the city and its function, the impossibility of seeing Marseille as anything other than a port city. The economic and aesthetic gaps in the city that the project proposes to fill by redeveloping the former industrial port, like the archeologically rich ground on which the parking garage stands, are, for Fabio, rich in history and meaning that give the visual city context.

Highlighting the lie of a shipping resurgence in Marseille in the face of the prominence of Dutch ports gives the project a doubly destructive bent in Izzo's version of the city. At least as it is presented in the novels, the Euro-Mediterranean initiative's actions in the present justify the destruction of history for the sake of an impossible future.

As the geographer Heidi Megerle points out, these changes have, from the beginning, been contested as excluding all but the wealthiest urban residents from the optimistic vision of a prosperous Mediterranean future in which Marseille becomes a node in

²⁵⁴ Izzo *Chourmo* 521-522, 204.

a chain of development running along the coast to Barcelona.²⁵⁵ In *Chourmo*, the parking garage designed by Fabre stands as a direct criticism of these so-called improvements. In the text it is compared to the rebuilding of the stock exchange, where “Les murailles de Massilia faisaient surface pour la première fois. L’immonde bunker de béton s’était quand meme imposé,” [The excavations had revealed the walls of Massilia for the first time. Even so, the ugly concrete bunker had been given the go-ahead.]²⁵⁶ Aesthetically out of step with its surroundings, Fabre’s garage will accommodate visitors to, rather than residents of, the neighborhood, an indication of displaced priorities of use and access. Its presence is an indication of the area’s projected gentrification: no longer a rough point of arrival for immigrants of limited means, it will soon be a place that attracts visitors. Seeing Fabre’s name on the garage’s worksite is the first indication Fabio has that his instincts about the architect’s involvement in the crime might be correct. He wonders: “De quoi pouvaient discuter l’architecte du parking et l’amoureux du patrimoine marseillais?” [What could the architect of the parking garage and the lover of the Marseilles heritage possibly have to talk about?]²⁵⁷ The building as an imposition on the *Panier* stands in opposition to the distant as well as the recent past.

Development and reconstruction, always married to the destruction of the pre-existing character of the city, figure in the text as attacks on fullness. Describing the work being done in his childhood neighborhood of the *Panier*, Fabio observes the extent to which the city as an administrative entity enters into battle with its historic heart:

Le Panier ressemblait à un gigantesque chantier. La rénovation battait son plein. N’importe qui pouvait acheter ici une maison pour une bouchée de pain et, en plus la retaper entièrement à coups de crédits spéciaux de la Ville. On abattait des maisons, voire des pans de rue entiers, pour créer de jolies placettes, et donner de la lumière à ce quartier qui a toujours vécu dans l’ombre de ses ruelles étroites.

[The *Panier* was like one gigantic construction site. The redevelopment was in full swing. Anybody could buy a house here for next to nothing and then get it all back again in special loans from City Hall. Houses were being demolished, even parts of

²⁵⁵ For a full description of the project and its associated activities, see the official website, which can be found at: <http://www.euromediterranee.fr/>

²⁵⁶ Izzo *Chourmo* 436, 119-120.

²⁵⁷ *ibid* 437, 120.

whole streets, to create pretty little squares, and to bring light to a neighborhood that has always been a warren of dark, narrow alleys.]²⁵⁸

The opening up associated with modern city, the clearing of ground to create points of focus, the uneasy tension between a monumental approach to preservation and the irreversible alteration of the structural form of the neighborhood (one that shows overtones of the destruction of sections of the *Panier* by the occupying German army in 1943, an event that figures large in Marseille's twentieth century history): these factors, rather than beautifying the city, expose it to the corruption of criminal organization and the essentialist ideology of right wing politics. Izzo's use of the architectural crime has implications for his treatment of the city: unable to see a way out of the present, his novels fight the invasion of architecture as a force of power.

If the parking garage is an image of gentrification and architectural banality in *Chourmo* (it is a parking garage, after all, not a residence or cultural institution), the novel's description of the low-income housing blocks of the *quartiers du nord* offers commentary on a different kind of urbanism: "Pour la plupart des Marseillais, les quartiers nord ne sont qu'une réalité abstraite." [For most people in Marseilles, the north of the city is nothing but an abstraction.]²⁵⁹ While familiar territory for the novel's hero, they are outside of a general conceptual image of the city. Their abstraction stems both from their isolation and from their formal qualities, the ways in which one building repeats its neighbor, no one worse than its copies: "Ici, rien n'est pire qu'ailleurs. Ni mieux. Du béton dans un paysage convulsé, rocheux et calcaire." [It was no worse – and no better – here than anywhere else. Mass of concrete in the middle of a twisted landscape of rock and chalk.]²⁶⁰ In their sameness, they are easily reduced to vague and essential characteristics, disassociated from reality in a way that excludes them, and their residents, from the city's developing self-image while at the same time integrating them into the landscape, the brute materials of their construction indistinguishable from the rocky ground on which they stand.

²⁵⁸ *ibid* 433, 117

²⁵⁹ *ibid* 346, 42.

²⁶⁰ *ibid* 345, 41.

Without a monumental past, Marseille's relationship to its previous forms becomes a point at which an idea of a historical foundation, the *patrimoine* associated with Draoui's archeological interest in the city, might become an avenue towards more flexible and responsive way of thinking about the urban environment. A 1968 pamphlet on excavations near the city's stock exchange (just off the main commercial thoroughfare of the Canebière) begins with an eighteenth-century text bemoaning the city's lack of visible evidence of its past glories and citing nineteenth-century history of Provence by Marseille archivist Louis Méry, the lyrical historian who called the city "ville antique sans antiquités" [antique city without antiquities].²⁶¹ The discoveries described in the pamphlet were part of a general uncovering and re-burying of the city's ancient past during the re-construction efforts that followed the destruction of large areas of Marseille by the occupying German army during the Second World War.

The process of re-burial alluded to in the pamphlet, and in *Chourmo*, characterizes Marseille as a city in which the physical evidence of its past form is secondary to the narrative that refuses reburial. In Izzo's representation, this narrative becomes a means of addressing the abstraction that places the *quartiers nord* outside of the city's image by acknowledging the extent to which Marseille as a whole lacks visually perceptible connections to the past that imbues the standardized forms of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century city with meaning. Thus the "antique city without antiquities" becomes a model for a narrative understanding of space in line with Jameson's understanding of the cognitive map, a rediscovery of place in urban conditions of postmodernity:

Disalienation in the traditional city, then, involves the practical reconquest of a sense of place and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in memory and which the individual subject can map and remap along the moments of mobile, alternative trajectories [...] Surely this is exactly what the cognitive map is called upon to do in the narrower framework of daily life in the physical city: to enable a situational representation on the part of the individual subject to that vaster and properly unrepresentable totality which is the ensemble of society's structures as a whole.²⁶²

²⁶¹ Maurice Euzennat and François Salviat, "Les Découvertes Archéologiques De La Bourse À Marseille," Pamphlet (Marseille, 1968), 1.

²⁶² Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 51

What Jameson's model offers is a framework for reading the (representational) divergences possible in the (here, narrative, but also imagistic, and, as we shall see, imageable) reconstruction of a place that accepts the unrepresentable totality of the city and yet still finds space for an individual *knowing* of the environment. Memory, in Izzo's text and in Marseille itself, is shared between individual attachment to urban space and the collectively imagined memory of the city: the myth of Massalia and its associations with a cosmopolitan Mediterranean.

As Izzo works through the abstraction that threatens emotionally charged knowledge of Marseille, he creates a series of images that break down assumptions about the inherent value of the monumental city. Instead, he proposes the layered, refracted, representations of his highly referential work as an extension of Jameson's individualized cognitive map. The framework of the novel allows Izzo to extend the situational aspects of the postmodern theorization of urban space across time and across a multiplicity of images of Marseille. As an example of the hazards of ignoring this personal, mobile, process of seeing and understanding the city, *Chourmo* offers the *brut* structure of the parking garage. The reclaiming of abstract spaces across all three parts of the trilogy becomes an illustration of the potential of nonmonumental space in the face of attempts to sanitize and totalize Marseille's city image.

Absence and Abstraction

The spatial abstraction that characterizes Izzo's description of the *quartiers nord* in *Chourmo* is not limited to his representation of that particular urban form. Rather, it enters into the novels at points where Fabio struggles to comprehend the unlivable aspects of his city, the realities of its criminal background. In *Total Khéops*, he attends the funeral of his young friend Leila, brutally raped and murdered by a friend's brother, a member of the Maghrebian community in Marseille, and two of his mafia associates, both of them Italian. The cemetery, with its divisions and alleys, its hastily built memorials and low-profile barrenness, becomes a synecdochic substitution for the larger city:

Bien sûr, j'arrivai en retard à l'enterrement de Leila. Je m'étais perdu dans le cimetière à la recherche du carré musulman. On était ici dans les nouvelles extensions, loin du vieux cimetière. J'ignorais si à Marseille on mourait plus qu'ailleurs, mais la mort s'étendait à perte de vue. Toute cette partie était sans arbre. Des allées, hâtivement goudronnées. Des contre-allées de terre battue. Des tombes en enfilades. Le cimetière respectait la géographie de la ville. Et on était là comme dans les quartiers Nord. La même désolation.

[Of course, I was late for Leila's funeral. I'd lost my way in the cemetery looking for the Muslim section. It was in the new annex, a long way from the old cemetery. I didn't know if more people died in Marseilles than anywhere else, but death extended as far as the eye could see. All this part was treeless. Paths hastily tarred. Side paths of beaten earth. Rows of graves. The cemetery followed the geography of the city. This section was like North Marseilles. The same desolation.]²⁶³

The horizon line appears in this form of the abstracted city, but here it is the dead and not the sea that stretch out into the distance. Despite the sociological mixing that Izzo's fiction argues for, the city in formal terms remains a rectilinearly divided entity. The problem of capitalization, linked both to the desire for architecturally significant monumental buildings and to a way of seeing the city that privileges their distinctiveness, their visibility, is also a problem of the space that surrounds them, the less remarkable areas of the city. These abstractable areas of visual ground then become excluded places, carved out of the city the same way that the cemetery, respecting the city's geography, marks out in its most desolate corner the unremarkable space for immigrant burials. Still, as the social texture that surrounds the images of the uniform repetitions of abstracted Marseille in Izzo's novels shows, the problem is as much one of focus as it is of image. The cemetery might present a cold and tragic scene, but it is also a familial and familiar one, laid out for the reader in Fabio's account. With nothing to stand out from the formal sameness of the city, the observer, in this case Fabio, has a choice to see or ignore divisions, deciding for himself what that kind of blankness means. Confrontation with the possibilities of the city as an abstract space becomes a hunt for a way to break down and dissolve the formal divisions that would dictate relationships between urban subjects.

Most prominent among the characteristics that become contested aspects of the city when Izzo's *polar* address the visibility of Marseille's urban environment is this question of how to deal with the formlessness of the city. Historically, Marseille is a point of departure

²⁶³ Izzo *Total Khéops* 192, 145.

and arrival, a port rather than a capital and thus a transit city. Extensive *autoroutes* feed in and out of the city and create significant problems of traffic congestion. While the city itself long predates this twentieth-century organization of flows, traffic and transit seem indifferent to the historical fabric of the city by allowing the tourists who descend on the south of France in the summer months to whiz through Marseille. It is this relationship of movement and city that creates a degree of planning anxiety in representations of Marseille that parallels Kevin Lynch's 1960 description of Jersey City in his fundamental work on image and perception in the design of the urban environment. The urban area between Newark and New York City is in a sense trapped by the organizational dominance of its neighbors, becoming:

...a fringe area of both, with little central activity of its own. Crisscrossed by railroads and elevated highways, it has the appearance of a place to pass through rather than to live in.[...] To the usual formlessness of space and heterogeneity of structure that mark the blighted area of any American city is added the complete confusion of an uncoordinated street system.²⁶⁴

While Marseille has more of a defined series of central activities than Jersey City, the loss of the majority of port functions to Fos in the 1990s has jeopardized its ability to maintain a degree of centralization. Its uncoordinated streets, the result of successive eras of urban development rather than the intersection of the two larger city plans that create confusion in Jersey City, nevertheless leave the visitor to Marseille disoriented. Returning to my discussion of Platten in the previous section, this effect is a crucial element in Izzo's fiction, which begins with a series of references that obscure the reader's ability to clearly imagine Ugo's trajectory through the city, relying on an accumulation of details to establish a generalized and impressionistic sense of Marseille.

The possible dissolution of the city's form and organization had been a key component in Gréber's 1933 argument for a greater degree of planning in the city. Compare Lynch's description of his American case to this warning from Gréber:

Contrairement à de nombreuses villes d'une importance inférieure à celle de Marseille, *nous ne considérons pas Marseille comme une ville de passage*, et, par conséquent, si la *gare de passage* de Marseille *doit exister*, elle ne doit pas être la principale. Elle doit se borner à un service secondaire pour les trains destinés à la Côte d'Azur et à l'Italie, mais elle ne correspond pas au rôle principal de Marseille en

²⁶⁴ Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), 25.

tant que *porte de la France vers la Méditerranée et l'Orient*. A ce titre, Marseille peut être comparé à New-York, porte des Etats-Unis vers l'Europe. New-York non plus n'est pas considérée comme une ville de passage, mais comme un point d'arrêt entre le voyage maritime et le voyage terrestre.

[Contrary to numerous cities of less importance than Marseille *we do not consider Marseille to be a transit city* and, consequently, if *a transit station must exist* in Marseille, it must not be the main terminal. It must serve as a secondary service for trains destined for the Côte d'Azur and Italy, but it is not part of Marseille's primary role as *France's port to the Mediterranean and to the Orient*. In this role, Marseille can be compared to New York, the United States' port to Europe. New York is not considered a transit city, either, but a stopping point between the maritime voyage and the land voyage.]²⁶⁵

Gréber suggests that the relationship between the city and its environs can be apprehended through the form and function of its train stations, the major transit points between European cities in the 1930s. He conceives of two types of stations, ones that are merely transit points and others that are points of arrival and departure (main terminals). Following his New York comparison, we can think of the difference between Penn Station, which is organized to collect and redistribute passengers who may be in the middle of a longer journey, and Grand Central Station, where the large main hall with its vaulted ceiling and elaborate decoration announces arrival in the city. Gréber's emphasis is on capitalization as an antidote to the formlessness of the transit city, but such a degree of focus on stopping and stability, on differentiation, has potential costs. As Lynch notes:

A highly differentiated system, lacking abstractness and generality, may actually reduce communication. [...] If it is desirable that an environment evoke rich, vivid images, it is also desirable that these images be communicable and adaptable to changing practical needs, and that there can develop new groupings, new meanings, new poetry. The objective might be an imageable environment which is at the same time open-ended.²⁶⁶

Gréber's reworking of the urban environment should not be excused from the possibility of foreclosed meaning that its approach introduced to the urban design in Marseille. Indeed, as the post-war documents show, the curatorial approach to preservation became the main mode of reconstruction following the German destruction of the city in 1943. The fluidity of meaning, the open-ended image that Lynch cannot forget, and that Ross shows coming though in the contextual referentiality of Izzo's text, depends, if not upon memorialization,

²⁶⁵ Gréber, *Ville de Marseille*, 37

²⁶⁶ Lynch, *Image*, 139.

upon the very passage city abstraction that the designers of Marseille fight against. Rather than an example of a form rich in visual references to a forgotten history, Marseille provides an open-ended space of reference. Image creation and the end of the desolation apparent in the abstraction Izzo associates with *quartiers nord* and the description of the cemetery exists in both the physical form of the city and in the highly textured and affectionate description in the novels. The built environment in the novels is always in a state of tension with the flexibility of formlessness as a metaphor for conditions of urban life in Marseille and the historical undercurrents that characterize French national memory of the twentieth century and, in particular, of the linked histories of the Nazi occupation and the Algerian War.²⁶⁷

Essential to Izzo's depiction of Marseille is an anti-monumentality that British photographer Victor Burgin has likewise noted in his assessment of the city, where two monuments, the *transbordeur* bridge that crossed the basin of the *Vieux Port* and Le Corbusier's *Unité d'habitation de Marseille*, or *Cité Radieuse*, define twentieth-century monumentality, each standing independently for a modernist moment in the city's evolution, although "Marseille was not to enjoy both monuments at the same time."²⁶⁸ The linear order of the Haussmann style urban plan of Marseille's streets suggests navigability, broad boulevards, and monuments. The decaying facades that the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century city present to the late twentieth-century navigator neutralize the organizing principal of this order, and the lack of monumental intrusions into the design make it an urban environment of sameness more than precision. Burgin's photographs of Marseille, which show the city of the mid 1990s juxtaposed against images of Algiers and San Francisco of the same period, inscribe the French city in a circulation of images of itself. Marseille becomes San Francisco when Hitchcock borrows the plot of *Sueurs froides* for *Vertigo*.²⁶⁹ It

²⁶⁷ Michael Rothburg's 2009 *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the age of Decolonization* provides a nuanced discussion of the ways in which Holocaust memory in France overlaps with the Algerian War and, in particular, the October 17 1961 massacre of Algerian protesters in Paris.

²⁶⁸ Victor Burgin, *Some Cities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 188.

²⁶⁹ The Boileau-Narcejac novel has a split setting: the first half of the story takes place in Paris, while the second half moves the characters to Marseille. In Hitchcock's adaptation the two cities of his source material were condensed into a single San Francisco setting.

becomes Algiers (and Algiers becomes Marseille) in the trans-Mediterranean dreams of escape and home that call to those from the Algerian city on both sides of the sea.

In the text that accompanies his photographs, Burgin evokes examples of Marseille's missing monumentality, which emerges from a specific lack of visual interest, innovation, or individuality in the city as a whole. This lack, the relationship between the city as a whole and its destroyed and displaced monumental structures of the past century, becomes the defining image of the city. Thus only the *transbordeur* and the *Cité Radieuse* are defining images for the twentieth-century city; the first destroyed and the second positioned away from the center, Marseille dissolves into a repetitive Haussmannian formlessness:

Haussmann distinguished himself by the aesthetic superiority of his brutality. He called himself *artiste démolisseur*. In effect, he was a stage designer. Haussmann's boulevards provide spectacular perspectives. The façades of the buildings are harmonious, as is all the street furniture. The breadth of the streets allows luxuriously wide pavements. Here, those Parisians who could afford it might both parade and take their turn in the audience at a pavement café. The newly perfected camera was the means by which this emergent form of participant theatre became self-conscious - at least after the lifting, in 1890, of legal restrictions on photographing on "la voie publique".²⁷⁰

In Marseille, Haussmann-style boulevards that lead from the old port out to a series of starred intersections – most notably along the rue de la République – provide the clear sight lines and militarily necessary breadth of their Parisian counterparts without the processional aspect and monumental resolution to which Burgin alludes when he speaks of the staging of streetscape. His description functions on two scales: that of the macro, the sightline, and that of the micro, the pedestrian. Only the second is possible in Marseille. There is no convergence on the kinds of large *places* (Concord, Bastille, République) that break up the uniformity of Paris' urban plan. Rather, the streets lead into each other, bordered by repeating façades. Nowhere is this more apparent than in an art installation that was part of the 2013 Capital of Culture festivities. A *trompe l'oeil* painting on the side of *Palais de la Bourse* by French Artist Pierre Delavie mirrored the Canebière, Marseille's main boulevard

²⁷⁰ Burgin, *Some Cities*, 14.

and commercial street, reflecting it back to the viewer.²⁷¹ The optical allusion provided a visual continuation, but not completion, to the existing blank wall at the street's end: Marseille, extended.

It is important to remember that Haussmann's urban design was specifically focused on the creation of thoroughfares and access points to different parts of the city. A horizontally focused scheme, in its Parisian context it has largely been characterized through its response to the use of the city in nineteenth-century revolutionary periods: wide streets to allow armies to advance (as well as citizens to circulate) and the elimination of alleys that had a detrimental effect on the city's hygiene (as well as providing back ways and hideaways), etc.²⁷² The formal qualities of the plan, its boulevards receding to single points of focus and the uniform design of the façades that lined these grand avenues, were based on principles of urban design born in the baroque plans of seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century. Outside of the capital, this style of planning reorganized systems of streets to create urban uniformity and geometric organization with a relationship to different monuments and sites of civic unrest. While Marseille had a prominent role in the rebellions that led to the 1789 revolution, the city was distant from the kind of frequent armed rebellion that stoked fear in Paris' ruling class through the nineteenth-century. Haussmannization in Marseille can be seen as a way of keeping the city in line with a Parisian image rather than responding directly to local conditions.

This kind of domination through planning, as Burgin rightly points out, a destructive attitude towards the city, was crucial in Marseille, long on the fringes of Paris' central control and forever embedded in cultural formulations of revolution in the bloody verses of the French national anthem, *La Marseillaise*. From an aesthetic perspective, twentieth-century attitudes to the city's older neighborhoods, like those put forth by Patrick de Maisonnewe in

²⁷¹ A brief description of the project can be found on the website for the Palais de la Bourse: <http://www.palaisdelabourse2013.ccmp.com/en/programme/the-canebiere-revisited/>

²⁷² Sigfried Giedon follows Haussmann's trajectory in the evolution of 19th century Paris, emphasizing the changing circulation of the city, while David Harvey provides a nuanced reading of the effect of these changes on the conception of public space in Paris. See Giedon, *Space, Time, and Architecture* 744-754, and Harvey, "The Political Economy of Public Space" in *The Politics of Public Space*, ed. Setha Low and Neil Smith, 17-34.

his more recent discussion of the city's relationship to its older buildings and neighborhoods, stressed the ideal viewing perspective of the wider, boulevard organized plan.²⁷³ Not seeing is a fundamental problem, and interruptions of view appear as obstacles to the beautification of the city through a marriage of architectural elements and appropriate viewing-oriented organization. This is never a problem in Izzo's fiction. Instead, as in the other works discussed in this dissertation, the preference seems to be for closeness, for narrow streets and close quarters that embrace the narrator/protagonist in his subjectivity.

The viewer's impression of the city comes in part from not seeing its built elements: too close to façades, movement is never formulated as approach. Fabio takes the Corniche and other popular sightseeing routes that place the driver/viewer at a significant distance from the city, jumping from the long view to the unseen but rather smelled, heard, felt, consumed, assimilated experience of the city as a series of personally differentiated elements. Ephemerality and formlessness, which exist in the lack of definition decried by planners and in the dark-light oscillations of *noir*, unsettle Fabio. He attempts to combat them with the picturesque, the nostalgic and the mythic, with Marseille seen from the sea and from the driver's seat of his R5, always in motion. "Je pris par la Corniche. Juste pour avoir la baie de Marseille plein les yeux, et la suivre ainsi qu'une guirlande de Noël. J'avais besoin de me convaincre que cela existait. De me convaincre aussi que Marseille est un destin. Le mien. Celui de tous ceux qui y habitent, qui n'en partent plus." [I went via the Corniche. Just to get an eyeful of the bay of Marseilles, strung out like a Christmas garland. I needed to convince myself that it existed. And to convince myself that Marseilles is a destiny. My destiny and the destiny of all those who live there and never leave it.]²⁷⁴ Most important to Izzo's response to development is the habit of problematizing his own

²⁷³ Maisonneuve's perspective pulls the aesthetic and the scientific together in a study that is part argument for preservation and part pragmatic assessment of the infrastructural capabilities of Marseille's older neighborhoods. While its first sections address the architectural history and prospective planning problems in the city, its final chapter is devoted to close analysis of the ways older structures have been adapted to modern electrical wiring. Published in the 1980s, the study corresponds with a period of significant demolition and rebuilding in Marseille, as eighteenth-century neighborhoods deemed too dilapidated to be restored were torn down to make way for new housing projects.

²⁷⁴ Izzo *Chourmo* 490, 168.

descriptions: is abstraction an opening or a void? Is the city best seen from a distance in the warm glow of the sun or from the closeness of the streets of the *Panier* where the walls cast shadows and the viewer is never far enough from a building to see its whole?

City of Fragments

What Izzo's version of Marseille offers is a literary approximation of the effects of a city that produces its image in the tension between the psychoanalytic gaze and what Christopher Prendergast calls a glancing relationship to the urban environment, one in which surface is allowed to overtake depth in the subject's appreciation of her surroundings:

The gaze, fixating and fetishizing, seeks to hold the objects of the urban environment in a safe relation to the subject's desires, to confer meaning and 'depth' on the appropriated visual material. The glance entails a quite different kind of attention to the life of the city; it picks up on what the gaze excludes, restores the primacy of the ever-changing surface over the illusion of depth, permits the random irruption of the real into the otherwise censored space of vision.²⁷⁵

This distinction, between gaze and glance, is first and foremost an attempt to address the subjective preference of psychoanalytic understandings of subject object relationships by replacing the depth of understanding with a surface series of glances that allows for a freer relationship to surroundings. The historical aspect of Izzo's version of Marseille, and its references to other literary and non-literary representations of the city, holds a position between the gazing and glancing that Prendergast describes. On the one hand, the city is clearly an object of focus and interest in the novels: critical assessments bear this out, as do frequent references to Marseille as an object of interest, as an entity with character, and as an image. The *noir* aesthetics of Izzo's novels privilege their urban setting to provide specific commentary on its changing nature. The involvement of memory and of Fabio's subjective gaze suggests that the kind of meaning associated with multiple personal experiences of urban space evident in Kevin Lynch's concept of the city image influences the textual representation of Marseille in Izzo's work. Like Lynch, Izzo favors an open-ended vision of the urban future, though in the case of the novels that vision is modeled on the rich narratives of Marseille's past. On the other hand, the elements of abstraction that I

²⁷⁵ Christopher Prendergast, "Framing the City: Two Parisian Windows," in *City Images*, ed. Mary Ann Caws (London: Routledge, 1991), 191.

discussed previously, combined with the moving image of history, the fixation on approach and departure, on the sea and the horizon, would seem to be more in line with Prendergast's passing glances. Depth and cohesion are continually at odds with fracture, repetition, and surface.

In *Chourmo*, the problem of a parking garage built over a section of the old city shows traces of the past in a moving imagistic version of the city, one that travels cinematically in space and time up from the excavations and through the streets, linking landmarks: "De là jusqu'à la Vieille-Charité, c'était un surprenant travelling sur près d'un millénaire." [All the area from there to the Vieille-Charité was like a cross-section through almost a thousand years of history...] ²⁷⁶ The metaphor that Izzo uses to describe the spatial and temporal relationships between the monumental past – embodied here by the Vieille-Charité, formerly the earliest hospital in the city and now an important cultural institution housing a museum, art galleries, a poetry center, and the offices and classrooms of the Marseille outpost of the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS), one of France's elite *grande école* graduate schools – is cinematic. The travelling shot of the city in history envisions the traces of the past as part of an experience of the city as film and thus as a closely related series of images seamlessly linked by movement in such a way that sight and the body come together. Giuliana Bruno has referred to the way film transforms the visual experience of the spatial into a haptic experience, one that combines touch and movement through the body's presence in space:

As a function of the skin, then, the haptic – the sense of touch – constitutes the reciprocal *contact* between us and the environment, both housing and extending communicative interface. But the haptic is also related to kinesthesia, the ability of our bodies to sense their own movement in space. ²⁷⁷

The shift, which she describes as one from sight/seeing to site/location, is both the freeing of the body to move about in space a point of contact. In Izzo's novel, archeological time

²⁷⁶ Izzo *Chourmo* 436, 119. While Curtis' translation is generally good, here he loses the film analogy by abandoning Izzo's choice of *travelling* (trans travelling shot, tracking shot, dolly shot) for the more idiomatic but less imagistic "cross-section."

²⁷⁷ Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (London: Verso, 2002), 6.

becomes spatial movement, a travelling shot, in order to become a siting rather than a seeing.

This contradiction plays out in the intertextual elements of the novels, which provide alternative literary and non-literary, historical and contemporary versions of the city. As I demonstrate in the Montreal case, intertext can add a contrasting visual reference to the representation of the city, one that causes problems for parallels of character and plot. In Izzo more so than in Noël, it is the urban image of the intertext that establishes a connection between Fabio's city and those of Alexandre Dumas, Albert Camus, Louis Brauquier and the Marseille rap groups of the 1990s (IAM and Massilia Sound System in particular). As part of the Marseille psyche of the novels' hero, these references are part of the subjective vision of the city that provides a point of departure for analysis of *noir* fiction. As historical doubles of contemporary Marseille, the references and their employ in the main text offer alternative images that challenge the official version of the city's urban environment. In doing so, they challenge the reader's perception of the city in the text and question the nature of the perspective through which the limited visual material and wealth of linguistic references that shape this version city emerge.

Among these alternate Marseilles, it is the version of the city that appears in Brauquier's poetry, where the city is always both the point of departure for maritime adventure and a complex and a dynamic home for a poet more concerned with the flows of people than the stability of monuments. A twentieth-century poet whose personal history and wanderings mirror those of both Izzo and Fabio (a member of the merchant marines, Brauquier was stationed on boats around the Mediterranean and spent time both in France's colonial holdings in Africa and further afield, in China, Australia and the South Pacific), Brauquier's lyrical accounts of travel, the sea, departure and the city are an important analogue for Fabio's subjectivity. The mix of Orientalist imagery and a deep affection for the particularities of a multilingual, working-class Marseille, so prevalent in Brauquier, provide the basis for Fabio's nostalgic perspective on his city. Tempered by the political realities of the city in the 1990s, the images of the poetry provide not a model for return but a key part

of the images and references that Izzo's fiction proposes as a localized origin or model for the city's future, rejecting the nationalist modernism of the Euromediterranean project.

The literary understanding of the city becomes, in Izzo's fiction, the basis for imaginings of the new. Rejecting the aesthetic assessments of the city's formal homogeneity and diminished perspectives that dominate planning literature from the beginning of the twentieth-century, Fabio Montale becomes an advocate for reading the development of a subjective image of Marseille, using this more personalized vision as the basis for the projects that will shape its future:

Avaient-ils lu Braquier, tous ces technocrates venus de Paris ? Et leurs paysagistes conseils ? Et Gabriel Audisio, l'avaient-ils lu ? Et Toursky ? Et Gérald Neveu ? Savaient-ils qu'ici, un peseur-juré, du nom de Jean Ballard, avait créé en 1943, la plus belle revue littéraire de ce siècle, et que Marseille, sur tous les bateaux du monde, dans tous les ports du monde, avait rayonné avec *Les Cahiers du Sud* mieux qu'avec ses échanges marchandise ?
[Had those technocrats from Paris and their landscape architects ever read Braquier? Or Gabriel Audisio? Or Toursky? Or Gérald Neveu? Did they know that in 1925, a man named Jean Ballard, who worked in a weigh-house, had created the finest literary magazine of the century, *Les Cahiers du Sud*, which did more than all the trading in goods to spread the glory of Marseilles on all the boats in all the ports in the world?]²⁷⁸

The context for this argument is the culture-generating potential of the city. While a significant number of planning exercises in Marseille, especially in the postcolonial era, propose cultural stimulation as an economic driving force for the city, one that is contrasted to the different cultural economy of imperialism that stimulated the city's growth in the nineteenth century, Izzo's argument and vision of the city has always been a conservative one when it comes to built form. Architecture is an afterthought: the city as it is appears again and again, in the novels' intertext especially, as generating a literary image of itself in which the memorial function of the monument and the focusing function of figure-ground planning in the modernist city is replaced by the continuous history of the literary monument, the novelistic and poetically imaged city.

These references to authors, sometimes appearing in the novels as names of works associated with places, sometimes as spoken quotations, remembered passages, or

²⁷⁸ Izzo, *Soléa* 656, 73.

transcriptions of clips of songs from the radio, become portals to images that hold Marseille, containing it in different frames than the one offered by the *polar*. It is not so much that a part of the city is valorized through a particular representation. Rather, the multifaceted image they create is historical and, to a certain extent, malleable. It exists outside of Izzo's work, but inside some kind of material/literary palimpsest. The references lay over the physical city to create alternate visions of its past, mimicking the ways in which the built environment itself occasionally follows the patterns of its older manifestations. Modern structures integrate bits of the walls and foundations of ancient buildings into new construction. Alternating between ideas of material and cultural loss, Izzo's text excavates the different citations of representation and architecture in Marseille. The surface of the city becomes a place where the image of representation confronts the occasional eruption of the physical past into the urban present.

In the references the text offers, the literary exchange is held up as a replacement for economics, a more productive measure of value for Marseille. It is, certainly, a passionate argument for the importance of the city as milieu, and for the difficult to quantify aspects of the urban environment. In light of the larger representation of the city, however, these references take on an alternative meaning. They become an argument for a reading as opposed to a counting of the city, an opposition of text and marketability that would seem to ignore the question of image all together. Still, in the way in which the constant mentions of literary versions of Marseille peppers Izzo's writing, text comes to stand for the remarkable and, in a sense, the monumental in the city. More than images, discrete photographic moments or ecstasies of visual detail, literature becomes the stable point of reference. It becomes a way to argue for the formlessness of the city, the diffuse and refracted light of the port that looks south, without excluding it from the tradition of French letters. For all the cinematic overtones, his representation veers away from this kind of framing and makes not a single reference to a filmic version of the city.

Part of the work of Izzo's literary representation and its intertext is to show the city as formed by, and in productive relationship to, the sea, an image that will return in the most

recent projects along the city's waterfront. Here, though, the developments leading up to the 2013 festivities remain in the narrative's future, and it is in the directionality of the outward gaze, unable to fix on anything except the imagination of beyond the horizon, that sets the stage for the fractured mythology of Marseille. Izzo's observations, critical as they are of the politics of development in Marseille in the 1990s, reveal the presence of views that place the city in the midst of a more complicated understanding of its colonial Mediterranean history and anticipate the increasing attention the city will pay towards the role this history plays in its emerging image in the years after his death. This is the importance of the references to Camus in *Soléa*, the series' third and final act. The exodus of the *pied noir* and the memory of a French Algiers hang on the horizon. Marseille becomes a city of simultaneous arrival and departure, a place from which to view the imagination of the Algerian city, itself an illusion born of the effects of light on the horizon, looking out from the other side.

In general, the qualities of the city that the novels reveal cover it in the bright light of a Mediterranean summer, an exercise in overexposure and saturation. In *Total Khéops* the fading light makes the city take on a metallic sheen, "Le ciel était gris et bas, mais chargé d'une lumière violente. La mer s'inventait un bleu métallisé. J'aimais bien quand Marseille se trouvait des couleurs de Lisbonne." [The sky was low and gray, but full of an intense light. The sea was turning a metallic blue. I liked it when Marseille clothed itself in the colors of Lisbon.]²⁷⁹ The colors here are brutal, harsh, and the association is southern but not Mediterranean. Elsewhere, in *Chourmo*, for instance, walking in the shadows of the *Panier*, Fabio observes the effects of a warmer sunset: "Les jaunes et les ores commençaient à dominer. Marseille italienne. Avec les mêmes odeurs, les memes rires, les memes éclats de voix que dans les rues de Naples, de Palerme ou de Rome." [Yellow and ocher were starting to be the dominant colors. Italian Marseilles. With the same smells, the same laughter, the same sounds of voices you'd find on the streets of Naples, Palermo, or Rome.]²⁸⁰ Here, the effect of the light is only the beginning of the sensory associations, which lift Marseille from

²⁷⁹ Izzo, *Total Khéops*, 179, 131.

²⁸⁰ Izzo, *Chourmo*, 433, 115.

its French anchor and transport it to southern Italy, where it shares its evening ambience with other ancient cities. Finally, in *Solea*, the city goes from association to dissolution in the light of dawn:

La ville, ce matin, était transparente. Rose et bleue, dans l'air immobile. Chaud déjà, mais pas encore poisseux. Marseille respirait sa lumière. [...] Bleu des toits, rose de la mer. Ou l'inverse. Jusqu'à midi. Après, le soleil écrasait tout, quelques heures. L'ombre comme la lumière. La ville devenait opaque. Blanche. C'était à ce moment que Marseille se parfumait d'anis.

[The city was transparent this morning. Pink and blue in the still air. Hot already, but not yet sticky. Marseilles was inhaling its own light. [...] The roofs were blue, the sea pink. Or vice versa. Until noon. After that, for a few hours, the sun would crush everything. The shade as well as the light. The city would turn opaque. White. And the whole of Marseilles would smell of anise.]²⁸¹

Breathing light, the city becomes a unified image, the exotic references to Lisbon and Italy transferred to the scent of anise, distinctive to Marseille. This kind of vision, illuminated so that color fills the viewer's eye, is distinctive of Izzo's macroscopic descriptions. Marseille is a total, synesthetic, atmosphere, at once itself and the embodiment of the cities brought to it by its inhabitants.

The associations between the look of the city and a larger Mediterranean culture are explicit: the city is never compared favorably to Paris or any other northern urban center. As the sun sets on the *Panier*, the city's oldest neighborhood, the houses with their sun-warmed walls and painted shutters recall Italian towns glowing on the shores of the same sea. Paris is a shadow city, a dark reflection of Marseille's light and an urban possibility to be avoided rather than sought out. In *Chourmo* the competition between the two cities, and between the external and internal views of Marseille, is explicit: "Tout ce que nous avons gagné, nous l'avons toujours gagné contre Paris." [Everything we've won, we've always won in spite of Paris.]²⁸² These are not original descriptions of Marseille. Indeed, the relationship with the Mediterranean is pre-determined to the extent of overdetermination. Where Izzo intervenes, he frames that typical view by looking out, the city to the back of the viewer.

The brightness of this city image, the buildings blurred out by an excess of sunlight that fills the eye with color, an overexposed photograph that makes a ghost of the structures

²⁸¹ Izzo, *Solea*, 651-652, 69.

²⁸² Izzo, *Chourmo*, 423.

behind the light, would seem to be at odds with an image of the *noir* city as rain drenched, dark, full of narrow alleys and badly lit doorways. However, it is not these details of the urban environment that make the *noir* city but, rather, the fact that the visual elements of the representation see the city from closer and less photogenic iterations. Thus rain and shadow are definitive images for *noir* versions of Chicago and New York, London, possibly Paris, and, more recently, the post-apocalyptic urban wasteland of old industrial centers like Detroit. In cities where rain would be out of place, the aesthetic is decidedly brighter, the discomfort of too much early sun striking the tired dilated eyes of a detective who spends his nights awake and inside: Los Angeles, for example, Mexico City, Casablanca or Marseille. It is the city revealed in all its crumbling, fragmented detail that grounds the aesthetic, not the particular climactic conditions of one geographic example.

In the text of all three novels, the association with Algiers is tied up with Marseille's identity as a port. These comparisons offer an alternative to the Parisian influence of new developments, marrying urban identity to the very movement of people and goods that earlier planners had worried would cause the city to slide away from significance and into transience. Announced as a problem in *Total Khéops*, these attempts at a gain in urban profile can only fail. As Fabio's narrative voice describes it, "Marseille était gagnée par la connerie parisienne. Elle se rêvait capitale. Capitale du Sud. Oubliant que ce qui la rendait capitale, c'est qu'elle était un port." [Parisian bullshit had reached Marseilles. The city dreamed of being a capital. The capital of the South. Forgetting that what made it a capital was the fact that it was a port.]²⁸³ The status as port is above all a Mediterranean quality that emphasizes a connection to the sea and, consequently, a maritime circulation of culture and influence. The relationship to an idealized Orient cannot be excluded from these relations, and in *Chourmo* the lost ideal is both a nostalgic echo of the past and a reflection of the decolonization process, especially the Algerian war of independence, its aftermath, and the consequences for the waves of immigrants that populate Marseille: "Le drame, aujourd'hui, c'est que Marsille ne regardait même plus l'Orient, mais le reflet de ce qu'elle devenait." [The

²⁸³ Izzo, *Total Khéops*, 131, 86.

tragedy these days was that Marseilles no longer looked toward the East, but say only the reflection of what she was becoming.]²⁸⁴ This reflection suggests an awareness of the complicated dynamics of the postcolonial French city. If in the past the thriving port of colonial era Marseille was fixed on the Algerian Orient, the reflection present in its current conditions is more than a reference to the joined histories of Marseille and Algiers. In the repetition and distortion of reflection, its optical distancing, the relationship between the two cities should be seen as having neither beginning nor end, the displacement between the two no longer meaning the same thing. If the longing of the Orientalist gaze is gone, so too is the assumed power structure of the previous era. In the late twentieth-century, Marseille can look to Algiers and Paris to Marseille, but the central term (Paris), as a point of origin, is no longer able to focus the gaze. Even the illusion of a clear, reflected, gaze is in the depths of the mirror.

The Algerian associations, hinted at in the first and second generation Algerian immigrant characters present in all the novels, become more explicit connections between two similar cities as the series progresses. In *Total Khéops*, it is the colonies in general and Algeria in particular that haunt Marseille, the violence of that history standing in the way of the present. “Nos anciennes colonies maintenant étaient ici. Capitale, Marseille. Ici comme là-bas, la vie n’existait pas. Que la mort. Et le sexe, avec violence. Pour dire sa haine de n’être rien. Que des fantômes en puissance.” [Now our former colonies were here. Capital: Marseilles. Here, like there, life didn’t matter. The only thing that mattered was death. And violent sex. It was a way to express your hatred of being nothing but a ghost waiting to fight.]²⁸⁵ The play on words with “capital” gives a darkly humorous flavor to the connection, capital of the postcolonial migrations transforming the French city, capital of crime, and capital in its colloquial usage: excellent, awesome, the greatest, the best. The connection that ties Marseille to its reflection on the other side of the sea is never, not from the first, clear, nor is it clear whether the city is reflected or reflection.

²⁸⁴ Izzo, *Chourmo*, 396, 86.

²⁸⁵ Izzo, *Total Khéops*, 279, 225.

The nature of the reciprocal relationship, which way the light goes, does not become much clearer in the subsequent novels, though the reference to Algiers as a double of Marseille, an alternative to the reflection of Paris evident in its Haussmannian streets and imitative planning literature, becomes clearer. As Fabio drives his cousin out of the city and away from her mafioso husband in *Chourmo*, his reflections only vaguely specify the neighborhood they travel through. Instead, he focuses on a point of comparison: the houses on a hill that recall colonial Algiers, their dilapidation the aftereffects of the colonial project that continues to link Marseille to the other side of the Mediterranean:

C'était ici encore un village, avec de vieilles maisons dont certaines appartenaient à l'époque coloniale. Il y en avait une, de style mauresque, que j'aimais bien. Telle qu'on en voit à El Biar, sur les hauteurs d'Alger. Elle était abandonnée, ainsi que bien d'autres. Ici, les fenêtres n'ouvraient plus, comme avant, sur de vastes parcs de verdure, sur des jardins, mais sur des barres de béton.

It was still like a village here, full of old houses, some of them from colonial times. There was one, in a Moorish style, that I liked a lot. The kind you see at El Biar, in the hills above Algiers. It was abandoned, like quite a few of them. The windows of these houses no longer looked out, as they once had, on vast grounds, on gardens, but on concrete apartment blocks.²⁸⁶

Both Algiers and Marseille, it would seem here, share a longing for a more pastoral past along with the legacy of shared planning. This image of the two cities mirroring each other is more than a literary intervention: as they grew rapidly in the late twentieth century, both Algiers and Marseille borrowed from the same ideas about residential organization to plan the vast housing developments that overtook their suburbs. They are, finally, cities woven together, both in their urban development and in the stories of their inhabitants, connections to the rural life that surrounds them teased out in Izzo's description of a house on a hill above the city. Later, the text imagines the two cities looking south, bringing the desert to the threshold of Algiers so that it mimics the sea in relationship to Marseille. Fabio comments on the closeness he feels to an Algerian friend, explaining that both of them have relationships to the port cities where they were born and to a vast expanse of open territory to the south: "Je ne connaissais pas le désert, mais je connaissais la mer. Ça me semblait être la même

²⁸⁶ Izzo, *Chourmo*, 561, 229.

chose.” [I didn’t know the desert, but I knew the sea. To me, they were the same.]²⁸⁷ Algiers is doubly, more intensely, the point of departure for the exotic maritime nomadism that characterizes Fabio’s image of Marseille.

Returning to Victor Burgin, who juxtaposes the two cities in his photographs, the links between Marseille and Algiers, as well as the importance of the more homogenous layout of the former city as the flexible ground for a history characterized by forgetting and visualized in literature, coalesce in the shared history of the two cities. As Burgin describes it:

Incapable of escaping the grip of the past, the inhabitants of Marseille and Algiers still live partly among the rubble of the terrible war for Algerian independence. Subsequent years have seen the shattering of Algiers with the rise of the murderously anti-secular Armed Islamic Group (one of at least three military organizations more or less controlled by the military leadership of the Islamic Salvation Front). France is suffering the rise of the viciously racist National Front. New graffiti on Marseille walls expresses right-wing nostalgia for old acts of terrorism.²⁸⁸

The rise of the National Front, which marked the 1990s with the election of party member Jean-Claude Gaudin to the post of mayor of Marseille, provides the political undercurrent to Izzo’s novels. Continual destruction of the social fabric by the extremities of political and social worlds, as well as through the wars visited upon both cities, builds violence into the fabric of the city. Izzo’s novels propose seeing past this to the layers of ruin that anchor a rich urban past on his side of the Mediterranean. Digging into Marseille’s past becomes a process of decapitalization as the gaps between the traces of older versions of the city become clear in their unveiling. Allowing narrative to flow in to fill the gaps in the physical history of the city creates continuities that use language and fiction to bridge the gaps between Marseille and its reflections: past, present, future; there or elsewhere. In the accumulation of possibilities that results from this constant retelling, narrative creates a prismatic, refracted image of the city’s past and future.

Cities overlap in this image, and the original vision of Marseille becomes not the merchant city of a centralized French state, but a peripheral urban area developed as part of the colonial project. As Sheila Crane has pointed out, not only is Marseille’s nineteenth- and

²⁸⁷ Izzo, *Solea*, 599, 23.

²⁸⁸ Burgin, *Some Cities*, 206

twentieth-century growth the direct result of colonial investment in the Maghreb, and Algeria in particular (the 1830 expansion of Marseille's port corresponds with the Algerian conquest), the city's development in the twentieth century repeatedly crosses paths with modernist planning in Algiers.²⁸⁹ The principles of Le Corbusier's *Unité d'habitation de Marseille* cross the sea in the first large-scale housing projects for a growing Algerian urban population, Aéro-Habitat, built in Algiers between 1950-1955 and designed by Louis Miquel, Pierre Bourlier, José Ferrer-Laloé.²⁹⁰ As Crane points out, each crossing brought changes to the model, images of an urban ideal shifting a populations in their turn confronted the political conditions of postcolonialism on both sides of the sea. The formal conditions of urban poverty in both cities, Crane points out, are quite accurately described as the "...enduring urban consequences of colonialism."²⁹¹

Conclusion

Izzo's fiction responds to 1990s attempts to stabilize the image of Marseille by proposing a mobile version of the city, one in which urban history and contemporary development play on the variable character of the port city. Nearing the end of Fabio's story, it is the city that *Solea*'s protagonist wishes would come to him, growing in his vision as he arrives from out at sea: "Où j'ai besoin que la ville vienne à moi. C'est moi qui bouge, mais c'est elle qui se rapproche. Si je le pouvais, Marseille, je n'y viendrais que par la mer." [When I need the city to come to me. I'm the one moving, but it's the city that comes closer. If I could, I'd always come to Marseilles by sea.]²⁹² This orientation recalls the sun-drenched, illuminated city of the novels' morning and evening description, in which the light, reflected off the water, breaks over the stone façades of the old city, coming out of light and sea, materializing. It is also the perspective of the first arrivals from elsewhere, of foundation resulting from discovery:

²⁸⁹ Bonillo, *Marseille: Ville et Port*, 9

²⁹⁰ Sheila Crane, "On the Edge: The Internal Frontiers of Architecture in Algiers/Marseille," *The Journal of Architecture* 16, no. 6 (2014) : 944-945.

²⁹¹ *ibid* 961.

²⁹² Izzo, *Solea*, 652, 69

Marseille se découvrait ainsi. Par la mer. Comme dut l'apercevoir le Phocéen, un matin, il y a bien des siècles. Avec le même émerveillement. Port of Massilia. Je lui connais des amants heureux, aurait pu écrire un Homère marseillais, évoquant Gyptis et Protis. Le voyageur et la princesse. Le soleil apparut, par-dérrière les collines. [...] La ville pouvait s'embraser. Blanche d'abord, puis ocre et rose. Une ville selon nos cœurs.

[At last Marseilles was revealed. From the sea. The way the Phocian must have seen it for the first time, one morning many centuries ago. With the same sense of wonder. The port of Massilia. I know its happy lovers, a Marseilles Homer might have written about Gyptis and Protis. The traveler and the princess. [...] It was time for the city to burst into flame. White at first, then ocher and pink. A city after our own hearts.]²⁹³

The light effects, mythical and changeable, call up one version of the city here, other versions elsewhere. There is no fixed definition of Marseille, and the successive re-orderings of the city bear this out. Izzo carefully guides his reader, setting up references and points of interest that make the passage feel like a voyage. Marseille in the novels is as much a curated journey as it is a politically motivated commentary on the problems of development in the late twentieth-century metropolis. The tension between his descriptions, between discovery and dissolution, speaks to the impossibility of seeing this city in clear comparisons, in reflections and points of reference. Instead, it is a physically manifested environment that shifts and moves through time, constantly refracted.

Development is not simply a corrective to social problems, nor is it an exercise in urban aesthetics, a market-driven beautification project. Mark Ingram describes cultural programs in Marseille, beginning with the conversion of a complex of warehouses in the *Friche de la Belle de Mai* into a cultural complex including theaters, art spaces, a radio station, and a rooftop bar and event space in the early 1990s and continuing in the institutional projects that accompanied the 2013 festivities, as a "... 're-enchantment' of the city....," a desire to cultivate experiences that transport Marseille's residents outside of the city's social difficulties and, in the case of the until recently depressed, under-used industrial space of the Belle de Mai neighborhood, away from feelings of isolation that accompany of the city's everyday conditions.²⁹⁴

²⁹³ Izzo, *Total Khéops*, 304, 248.

²⁹⁴ Mark Ingram, "The Artist and the City in 'Euro-Mediterranean' Marseille: Redefining State Cultural Policy in an Era of Transnational Governance," *City and Society* 21, no 2 (2009) : 274.

In the introduction to the volume accompanying the exhibition *Parlez-moi d'Alger: Marseille-Alger au miroir des memoires* (Tell me about Algiers: Marseille-Algiers in the Mirror of Memory), which ran in Marseille from November 2003 to March 2004, Florence Pizzoni, since 1993 the curator of the MuCEM, both in its current iteration and previously, when the collection existed as the Museum of Arts and Popular traditions, attempts to find an appropriate image to describe the Marseille-Algiers relationship. Seeing the two cities as outward facing, both looking across the Mediterranean rather than backwards to the territory that anchors them, she settles on a reflective description:

La mer fermée n'est comprise ni comme une limite opposant deux communautés radicalement différentes, ni comme un pont entre ses deux rives activant d'enrichissantes relations, mais plutôt comme un miroir liquide que les uns et les autres n'ont cessé de franchir, mus par l'attraction de cet autre soi-même paré de l'étrangeté d'un devenir longtemps tenu à distance. On explore les symétries et dissymétries de part et d'autre du miroir : point de vue d'Alger, point de vue de Marseille.

[The closed sea is understood neither as a limit opposing two radically different communities, nor as a bridge that activates enriching relations between its two shores, but rather as a liquid mirror that neither the one nor the other have ceased to leap over, driven by the attraction of that other self dressed in the strangeness of a future so long kept at a distance. We explore the symmetries and asymmetries on both sides of the mirror, from the point of view of Algiers, from the point of view of Marseille.]²⁹⁵

Marseille is doubly opposed, caught between Paris and Algiers in a game of reflection – or more properly, of refraction – visible in its urban form and integral to the descriptions that ground Izzo's fiction. It is also, increasingly, a city that tries to capture the radiance of two kinds of urban development: the Mediterranean and the cultural city. As these aspects become increasingly important to its development, we should ask how past and future shape vision and gaze, the formal aspects of seeing that frame the images that stand for economic prosperity, cultural appropriation, and social uncertainty in the face of a changing, multiplying, image of the city.

The most recent cultural and architectural projects in the city speak to this mobility of the ancient city, looking out from the waterfront to the other side of the sea. The MuCEM

²⁹⁵ Florence Pizzoni and Abderrahamane Moussaoui, introduction to *Parlez-Moi D'alger : Marseille-Alger Au Miroir Des Mémoires*, ed the authors (Fort Saint-Jean. Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 2003), 15. (exhibition catalogue)

(Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée/Museum of Civilizations of Europe and of the Mediterranean) and Villa Méditerranée, their first exhibitions presented as part of the activities for Marseille's status as the 2013 European City of Culture, speak to this attempt at synthesis. The institutional directive of both, one historical the other contemporary, is to offer discursive space to a continuing history of the Mediterranean region anchored in Marseille.

Like Fabio, whose meanderings take him always back to the water, leaving him looking out from the shore, both institutions are positioned in relationship to the sea, looking outwards away from Marseille. Unlike Fabio, they are static markers, stark modernist figures in black and white against the neutral stone of the city in their background. The MuCEM in particular walks this line between the static figure and the moving ocean surface. Quoting the scintillating reflections in the design of its concrete façade, especially when its nightly illumination brightens the black with flashes of blue, inside it is an open cube, the modernist geometric form par excellence. Izzo's critique of the anticipated changes to a waterfront that was once the trade hub for an entire region asks that we read it not simply as an aesthetic adjustment to the waterfront, but as a part of the visual ordering of the city present in the larger development project that seeks to "fix" Marseille in two senses – repair and stabilize – solidifying the city's ebb and flow. Of the two waterfront developments, it is the MuCEM that has been asked to stand most for the city, using Marseille to bridge the gap between Europe and Mediterranean made explicit in its name. With its show-piece façade of compressed concrete, the specialty of its architect, Rudy Ricciotti, the screen recalling his design for the Arab galleries at the Louvre, the visual reference is explicitly towards the Maghreb and the Middle East while implicitly towards the primary cultural institution of the French capital.

In both cases, the outward gaze is an explicit element of the project, even as the color difference between the new structures and the warm stone of the city behind them significantly alters the view of the city from the water. This desire to create a two-way image of the city in relation to the Mediterranean is a feature they share with both Izzo's fiction and a growing awareness of the relationship between Marseille's historical function as a port city

and its non-Parisian urban form. The relationship between Ricciotti's MuCEM and an idealized relationship with an Orientalist idea of the Mediterranean is part of the museum's stated mission, a reflected attitude towards the Maghreb and, specifically, Algiers, which has been present since the early stages of its conception.²⁹⁶ Indeed, the look is from North to South, rather than East-West or circular, a perspective that anchors in Marseille's waterfront developments the earlier colonial relationship between France and Algeria. The large black box of the MuCEM provides a monumental point of focus when the city is seen from the water while the softer tones of the stone of Marseille's historic buildings retreat into the background.

Remembering a drive with his murdered friend Leila, Fabio recalls her translations of a verse from Braquiere. Bringing her driving companion into her linguistic world, Laila recites the lines of the poem in Arabic, wanting Fabio to hear the poem in her language. While the linguistic moment is described, the excerpt appears in the French in the main text and, indeed, it is in this language that Laila originally accessed the poem, in a book given to her by Fabio. The shift is a game of perception and perspective as much as it is a play on language and translation, the intersecting currents of French and Arabic that run through the social fabric of Marseille.²⁹⁷ The reader can only image the Arabic version of the poem, the shape of the letters and the sounds of the words being absent from the textual description of the scene. Like the dissolving image of the city that Izzo's descriptions so often allude to, the Arabic version of the poem remains at a distance from the text, hidden elsewhere and outside of the reader's experience. The perspective at this point becomes explicitly that of Fabio, who cannot replay the words of a language that he does not know. At the same time, it is a memory of a separate experience, of Laila's different intonation of the familiar words, a

²⁹⁶ The clearest evidence of this is perhaps the *Avant-propos* to the exhibition publication *Parlez-moi d'Alger: Marseille-Alger au miroir des mémoires* (2003-2004), in which Michel Colardelle, then conservator general of heritage and director of the MNATP-CEF and of the MCEM (eventually MuCEM) project, makes an argument for the chosen site of the new museum that invokes Occidental/Oriental relationships.

²⁹⁷ Burgin talks about these too, about the different experiences of Marseille that are translated and translated in the different versions of Arabic and Algeria that the city's waves of immigrants have brought with them.

distancing view of the intimate Marseille of the prominent poet. Who lives in the text and who lies outside of it is, in this moment, far from certain.

In Izzo's novels, the presence of perspectives on the city that look both inwards, to the minute details of Marseille's neighborhoods, and outwards, to the sea, creates a tension between the intimacy of a city seen through a desire to re-anchor the abstract in a visual and experiential ground – showing the *quartiers nord* as both dynamic community populated by differentiated characters and integral part of the city's functional and criminally dysfunctional social networks, for example – and to construct the urban environment on receptive, flexible and distinctly anti-monumental terms. The interjection of the possibility of an outward perspective is shared by both the city and Fabio himself reinforces the grounding of the city. When he takes a seat at one of his habitual cafés in *Choumo*, Fabio's habits create a bodily connection to his environment and a visual perspective that looks elsewhere. "Je souris, et m'assis en terrasse. À ma place habituelle. Face à la mer." [I smiled and sat down on the terrace. In my usual place. Facing the sea.]²⁹⁸ Later, it is the city that has this orientation, "face à la mer". Marseille is both receptive port of arrival and stable visual point of departure for a gaze that reaches out to sea, aspects of its urban character evident its interwar planning projects and the reaction to their unfinished form seen here. The city behind the viewer is an undifferentiated space that, conceived in its totality, likewise looks out at the Mediterranean rather than offering points that a viewer looks towards. Even when the viewer is positioned offshore, it is the city as mass that de-focuses the gaze, rather than a traveling series of focal points that chart the eye's movement over a skyline or other monumental points that jump out from the warm oranges and tans of the city.

²⁹⁸ Izzo, *Chourmo*, 401, 90.

Conclusion

How do we approach the city? What image does it present to us, and how does it structure our view? The twentieth-century city confronted its inhabitants with a rapidly changing urban environment, one in which, as I have argued here, memory and subjectivity go to work on modern formalism in an attempt to know an urban environment that is difficult or, indeed, impossible to perceive as a distinct totality or navigable spatial object. For Casablanca, Montreal, and Marseille, this problem of knowledge is complicated by their secondary status, as they are constantly forced to reply to the example of external capitals, their images tied to a feeling of being *less than* even as this position yields a greater variety of flexible, under-determined spaces open to narrative reinterpretations. In the face of an environment that overloads its inhabitants with sensations as well as with extra-sensory conditions (systems of association and information), representation allows us to frame the city in such a way that the images it produces take into account its aesthetics as well as its politics and structure. As the nature of urban space changes, one way to address its relationship to the patterns of life and energetic networks that animate the built environment is by casting the city in new representational modes.

In this dissertation, I have addressed the city through its literary representations connected by their participation in a French novelistic tradition and in the Francophone legacy of decolonization. By doing so, I have been able to bring together three cities and three moments in twentieth-century urbanism. My discussion has attempted to offer a spatial and urban historical alternative to analyses of identity and place that have dominated the discussions of the novels included here and of the cities that they represent in literary studies of the past twenty-five years. My aim has been to show the ways in which historical context and twentieth-century evolutions in urban form affect the image and imaginary of these examples of second cities and their Francophone, narrative, representations.

Casablanca, Montreal, and Marseille are three versions of what we might call a Francophone city, all of them caught by different versions of center-periphery dynamics that

would seem to invite comparisons to Paris. Yet the Parisian reference, which acts as a literary and architectural standard in many studies of the urban novel, can be displaced. In the novels I have discussed, specific views or ways of seeing and perceptual moments rich in sensory detail immerse the reader in a version of the Moroccan, Québécois, or Mediterranean city where connections — to memory, dream, and distance — and systems of association overwhelm the presumption of a singular point of origin. If late twentieth-century theorizations of city image emphasize the individual re-writings and re-viewings of urban trajectories by people in the street, these novels, and the cities in which they take place, provide the basis for an argument that seeing or, rather, knowing the city, is only possible at the confluence of sensory and referential streams: spatial experiences are the product of the intermingling of image and imaginary, both multiply produced.

The personal associations and close-views of the street provide the basis for narratives structured around trajectories and pathways through the city. Additionally, however, the environment of Casablanca, Montreal, or Marseille is shaped, during the periods described in these texts, by the resonance of sounds and by the air-born streams of scent that pull perception deep inside the body of the urban subject even as an externally constructed image of the city attempts to assert the importance of the panorama: Casablanca stretching out towards the horizon, the white island of Montreal, the glowing stone of Marseille rising from the sea. This is the paradox for the writer of the city. It is difficult to form an impression of cohesive urban space or of the city as an object of the gaze, at least from the perspective of the street. The frequent absence of the panoramic vision suggests a bias in the text towards the internal characteristics of the environment, to sounds and smells as unifying sensations, leaving visual representation to depend on singular examples and geographic markers.

In the cities I have included here, the challenge has been to present the imagistic elements of their particular novelistic representations while trying to understand, often with few details to fuel the close readings that remain a key methodology in literary analysis, how the construction of the city in the novel relates to the transformation of the built environment

it describes. When urban space is increasingly visualized through the promotional and artistic lenses of visual media, what does textual representation add to discussions of the city? Are these novels responses to or rejections of the cities they include?

While the prose of the authors I have selected comes at their cities obliquely, the changes to urban form and image against which they write generate the conditions of their texts. This is accomplished both directly, by creating problems of urban design that can be seen directly, as in the case of Montreal's exaggerated scale and structure following the boom of the 1960s, and indirectly, through the discourse of colonialism, for example, that infuses Casablanca under the Protectorate, writing the city in terms of divisions and formal experimentation even as its architecture strives against the inherent conservatism of the colonial system. Early twentieth-century postcards of the Moroccan city, promotion from both city government and the heightened attention attracted by a world's fair that for a brief moment saw Montreal through the lens of Expo, the extensive promotion of Marseille in the New York Times in 2013 (the sudden appearance of the working-class city in luxurious travel spreads that complimented the drama of architectural renderings of its dramatic new museum): the texts in these preceding chapters confront this kind of image-making. The novel is observational, providing a new, often anti-imagistic, basis for speculation on the nature of urban conditions past present and future.

Attention to the novels presented here, and to the cities that they represent, has allowed me to ask questions about image, visibility, and perception in the urban environment. In the ways in which each of my examples addresses the space of the city, the discussion of image with which I began this dissertation has encountered texts that object to or reject out-right the modes of seeing described in their architecture and organization. In Casablanca, the aesthetic and administrative rhetoric of colonial modernism and modernity encounters Chraïbi's ironic and critical re-figuration of traditional patriarchy in an environment where authenticity is an intentional component of French constructions of the Moroccan city. Khatibi, meanwhile, attempts to re-write the geometric abstractions of traditional motifs in the service of a decolonized version of modernism. Their texts employ

the same language as the city itself, but put it into the service of a Moroccan subjectivity.

They begin in prose what time will accomplish in the city itself: the unmasking of the city that lies under Casablanca's colonial veneer.

By bringing together text and the built environment of the city, the language that marks the literary representation of urban space gains a corollary in discussions of the places it describes: Casablanca's geometry re-enters the texts that seem to exclude the city itself; Montreal's divisions, themselves the reflection of the linguistic borders of the divided city, regain their status as avenues when they connect the domestic interiors in *Maryse*. Noël's version of Montreal is a city known without needing to be seen, a city where the image imposed by the dramatic scale of its 1960s development becomes less important than the cinematic projections of the novel's characters. This more fluid way of seeing claims the areas of the island excluded from radical nationalism: the apartment, most of all. Similar problems of profile inhabit Izzo's Marseille, as the narrative substrata of the Mediterranean port become the basis of his novels' argument against the continuation of post-war musefication. This unseen city shatters the clear image of marketable Euro-Mediterranean dreams.

As I have worked through the representation of these three cities, I have attempted to distinguish literature from other forms of representation. This should not be taken as an argument for any kind of textual privilege; rather, it has been, for me, an important structuring element of my work, one that I have taken from the comparisons that structure visual perception in the novels that anchor my arguments. In all three cases, cinema has been an important touchstone for the representation of urban space, providing a narrative and visual mode of representation that includes the movement that is so important to the authors I have included here. Often, this productive association occurs as an alternative to other, more problematic, representational modes that surround the works in question and the cities that they represent. Literature, which in the case of the novel includes text, narrative, and characterization, is a representational medium in so far as it constitutes what Giuliana Bruno describes as "...a condition of 'betweenness' and a quality of 'becoming' as a

connective, pervasive, or enveloping substance. As an intertwining matter through which impressions are conveyed to the senses, a medium is a living environment of expression, transmission, and storage.”²⁹⁹ Bruno lends a sense of movement to the betweenness of the medium in the activity of transfer, and in intimacy in its relation to the senses. It is connective in the links it forms between the viewer/user/subject and the forms and ideas it conveys. As an environment that deals in impressions, it is not held to a standard of direct or universal transmission, and is able to express, rather than present, the matter that it stores. Modes of representation make use of various media as well as different forms.

Certain forms of representation, sometimes general, sometimes typified by their prevalence in a particular medium or mode, attract our critical gaze when the narrative of urban space provided by the novel confronts their limitations and omissions. This is not to say that the novel is somehow freed from these short-comings: far from it; the representation of subjectivity through character creates narrative frames that exclude aspects of the city and its systems in each of these works. However, reading Chraïbi, Khatibi, Noël, and Izzo in the context of the cities they describe highlights the ways in which what Bruno characterizes as a living medium of representation opposes less mobile modes. Thus *Le passé simple* and *La mémoire tatouée* embrace sensory immersion and formal abstraction even as they oppose the geometric clarity of modernism for its restrictive delineation of the colonial city and the ways in which it attempts to qualify categorical distinctions between the authentic and the modern. *Maryse* chooses the heightened reality of cinema over the heightened profile of architecture to anchor post-60s Montreal in a political and spatial milieu that leaves room for nostalgia and domesticity. The city, as her novel represents it, is animated by the heightened emotions of intimate friendships. The Fabio Montale trilogy, finally, argues for a greater degree of attention to the orienting and place-making power of Marseille’s urban textures as evidence of a city that is Mediterranean in spite of the profile-raising efforts of the *Euroméditerranée*.

²⁹⁹ Giuliana Bruno, *Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality, and Media*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 5.

On the surface, these arguments would seem to pit the novels against the architectural vision for the cities they represent. What I have used the architectural and planning history of these three cities to argue is that, when considered in the context of a changing image of the city, the textual representations I have addressed here are not so much opposed to the built environment as they are deeply engaged with the fictions it strives to create. These narratives of transitional moments in their cities' histories compete with official discourse to insert their versions of the city image into the story that will carry through to later urban developments. The novels highlight pitfalls and bad predictions and anticipate the frames that restructure the cities that emerge from the rubble of a particular era of territorial organization, whether colonial, national, or regional. This is most evident in Casablanca, where the difficulty of integrating colonial geometry and the utopian image of the imperial urban plan into a postcolonial future, is only alleviated after the city has been subject to ruin and abandon, forces that liberate its forms from the ideological structure that created them. Whether they represent Casablanca, Montreal, or Marseille, these novels demand space in the city's form and imaginary that time eventually provides – along with new problems of image, perception, and orientation in the precarious city of the postcolony.

Narrative, fiction, and narrative fictions, are not foreign to the city, nor are they outside the purview of its image quality or the part of this city image that aligns with its architectural representation. Wigley makes this clear by aligning the process of narrative creation with the profession of architecture. "Architects are not really builders. They are storytellers, fiction writers. They make us believe that huge assemblages of concrete, metal, wood, and glass can come to life and say something about us and the world. The discipline is always more about fantasies than facts."³⁰⁰ The architectural city is perhaps nowhere more obviously the site of conflicting fictions than in the novel, where it emerges as a mixture of remembered past, perceived present, and imagined futures. Perception in urban fictions is

³⁰⁰ Mark Wigley, "The Fiction of Architecture," in *Out of Site: Fictional Architectural Spaces*, ed Anne Ellegood (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art New York, 2002), 48
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only one aspect of literary representations of the city that build their fictions on the language, forms, and visions of the urban environment they imagine.

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