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The Discovery of the Street: Urbanism, Gentrification, and Cultural Change in Early Nineteenth-Century Paris

by

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Abstract

During the Restoration and the July Monarchy (1815-1848) Paris' streets underwent significant urban renovation. The eighteenth-century street was transformed from a filthy and dangerous open sewer dominated by carriages into an agreeable paved promenade equipped with sidewalks, trees, benches and boutiques. These pedestrian spaces generated new cultural practices in urban environments such as strolling ('flânerie'), window-shopping, and outdoor night-life and gave rise to novel forms of casual, bourgeois sociability. Unlike city planning which took place during the second Empire under the Baron Haussmann, early nineteenth-century urban design was a decentralized process that allowed citizens to dictate the shape of the capital. As a result, many of its consequences were both unintended and unforeseen. Contemporary observers agreed that the result of such efforts was the gentrification ('embourgeoisement') of the inner city and the displacement of its working-class population to the exterior of Paris.

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Introduction

The Creation of a New Urban Space

The dense medieval centre of Paris is a delight to walk through. Its abundance of picturesque side-streets, specialized boutiques and historical patrimony has made it the most sought-out destination in the city by locals and tourists alike.[1] Two centuries ago, however, the old city centre was one of the least attractive parts of the capital. Crowded with the tenements of the lower classes and long ignored by municipal authorities, it was so repellent that those who could afford to simply stopped living there. In 1842, Eugène Sue's *Les mystères de Paris* described the rue aux Fèves on the Île de la Cité in a now-famous passage:

> On the night in question, the wind howled fiercely in the dark and dirty back streets of this gloomy neighbourhood; the pale and flickering light of the lamps which swung to and fro in the wind were dimly reflected in the stream of black water which flowed abundantly among the filthy paving stones.
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> The murk-coloured houses were lighted within by the occasional window, their worm-eaten casements containing only a few panes of glass. Dark and stinking alleys led to staircases still more black and foul, and so perpendicular that they

[1] The Cathedral of Notre-Dame was the most visited site in Paris during 2009. "Le Top 10 des musées et monuments les plus visités à Paris," *Actualités Paris Evous*, October 14, 2009, http://www.evous.fr/Le-Top-10-des-musees-et-monuments,1111303.html; See also: Eric Fischer, *Locals and Tourists #4 (GTWA #3): Paris*, June 5, 2010, http://www.flickr.com/photos/walkingsf/4671584999/.

> could hardly be ascended even with the help of a cord fixed to the dank and humid walls by holdfasts of iron.[2]

Sue was not only describing the reality of insalubrious urban living conditions among the poor (confirmed by the reports of social reformers such as Victor Considerant and Adolphe-Jérôme Blanqui) but also constructing a myth of the capital that expressed both the anxiety and fascination of his middle class readership toward the medieval city.

That dreadful vision of a medieval slum is generally considered to have been purged from memory by the Baron Haussmann a decade later, whose demolition of entire city blocks and piercing of immense new roads, particularly in the decrepit city centre, brushed away the undesirable elements of the ancient capital, replacing them with a gleaming, modern metropolis. Baudelaire famously accused Haussmann of the destruction of medieval Paris in "The Swan," crafting an image that endures today:

> old Paris is no more (the shape of a city
> changes more quickly, alas! than the heart of man);[3]

Yet the renewal, revitalization, or 'cleaning-up' (*assainissement*) of Paris' city centre was not a sudden, mid-century phenomenon. It was the consequence of a protracted urban development – begun long before Haussmann's arrival – which modified the physical features of Paris' built environments, changing the way they were both perceived and used. One such environment was the city street, which early nineteenth-century Parisi-

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[2] Eugène Sue, *Les mystères de Paris, Tome I*, The Project Gutenberg EBook. (Project Gutenberg, 2007), http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/18921.
[3] Charles Baudelaire, *Les fleurs du mal*, The Project Gutenberg EBook. (Project Gutenberg, 2004), http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6099.

an urbanists[4] painstakingly laboured to transform from a dangerous and filthy cloaca into a site of ambulatory pleasure. Employing novel urban ideas and technologies, they created new pedestrian spaces which extended from the margins of the city centre deep into its core. The rise of a new kind of pedestrian street, particularly favourable to the lifestyles of the leisurely stroller, the window shopper, and the night owl contributed to the disappearance of many of the undesirable qualities of the slum-like inner city, gradually rendering it more accessible and attractive for the middle and upper classes who surrounded it.

This is the story of small-scale changes to the public thoroughfare whose consequences were overshadowed by the dramatic arrival of Haussmann's Paris. Though they do not appear on maps, they are at the heart of the way the city was experienced by its inhabitants. The material changes that contributed to the creation of new pedestrian spaces – in particular, the introduction of sidewalks – are well-known to historians but their significance for the city has not been analyzed. Yet they deserve close examination because their insertion into the urban fabric was the outcome of a form of urbanism quite different from that which came before or after. In contrast to the monumental embellishment of Paris carried out for the glory of kings during the ancien régime, their construction was guided by a new ethos of public utility in the service of the bourgeois citizen. However, unlike the large-scale, centrally-planned works for which Haussmann is famous, they were undertaken fitfully, often at the initiative of private enterprise or the citizen himself, and built haphazardly throughout the city without any overarching plan to guide them. They also differed philosophically from Haussmann's œuvre; while

[4] 'Urbanism' acquired its present-day meaning of "the ensemble of arts and sciences concerning the organization of urban spaces" around 1900, making 'urbanists' an anachronism in this context. Early nineteenth-century urban thinkers did not assume a professional, technocratic identity such as 'city planner' or 'urban designer,' but it is clear from their writings that thought of themselves as custodians of urban space and the public infrastructure it contained.

the Baron's projects were mainly attempts to solve large-scale structural problems by imposing a 'rational' order on the city's layout and infrastructure from above, the creation of pedestrian spaces was a ground-level phenomenon driven from below and was principally meant to change the way Parisians experienced their city by creating safer, cleaner, and more diverting spaces for those who ventured out into its streets.

Unlike much of what followed, this new kind of urbanism had a distinctly human scale and contributed greatly to making the capital more 'liveable.' The creation of pedestrian spaces led to the emergence of strolling, or *flânerie*, as an agreeable pastime and both changed the way streets were used by Parisians and described by writers. Boutiques and cafés sprang up on either side of the road, enticing consumers with their dazzling storefronts, while the presence of so many people in the street gave birth to people-watching and even permitted chance encounters with strangers. For the first time, the street became a desirable place to linger rather than merely an obstacle to be crossed in order to arrive elsewhere. Thus, the role of sidewalks in transforming the city street into a sanctuary for those on foot permitted its evolution from a largely ignored space to a site of social encounter, visual spectacle and material consumption.

This thesis has several overlapping goals. The first is to closely examine the creation of Paris' sidewalk network, whose development was a sterling example of the uniquely decentralized and small-scale nature of early nineteenth-century urbanism. The second is to chart the changes in cultural practice that arose in these new pedestrian spaces and to demonstrate the ways in which the street became a distinctly bourgeois environment as a result. Thirdly, it will show how the geographic distribution of urban change in Paris contributed to the marginalization of its working-class citizens and their eventual displacement away from the city centre. Its fourth – and overarching

– goal is to dispute a long-standing historiographical tradition which adopts 'haussmanization' as the standard according to which changes to nineteenth-century Paris are viewed and judged. Prior attempts to evaluate the prefects who preceded Haussmann have obscured the nature of their accomplishments, either by dismissing them as unimportant or by conflating them with what came later. This thesis will reiterate what was distinctive about early nineteenth-century urban design and show how its study is relevant to the concerns of modern-day city planning.

Historiography

It is impossible to discuss nineteenth-century Paris without mentioning the Baron Haussmann. This is not a historical fact, but rather an observation about the immeasurably large space he occupies in the contemporary imagination. Of the three most influential nineteenth-century prefects of the Seine, responsible for the administration and improvement of Paris and its environs – Gilbert Joseph Gaspard, comte de Chabrol de Volvic (1812-1830), Claude-Philibert Barthelot, comte de Rambuteau (1833-1848), and Georges Eugène Haussmann (1853-1870) – only this latter indelibly linked his name to the modern city, a feat of branding that began with the publication of his memoirs in 1890[5] and which has continued ever since. For at least as long, urban historians of Paris have been in thrall to Haussmann and – whether for or against – limited themselves to writing commentaries of his labours, a trend showing no signs of abate-

[5] David Van Zanten, "Mais quand Haussmann est-il devenu moderne ?," in Karen Bowie, ed., *La modernité avant Haussmann : formes de l'espace urbain à Paris, 1801-1853* (Paris: Recherches, 2001), 153.

ment over a century later.[6] Quantitative analysis of books published since 1800 illustrates the dramatic scale of his importance in print compared to his predecessors, which has only been exaggerated with the passing of time (fig. 1).[7] Naturally, the reputations of Paris' prior planners, as well as its pre-Haussmannian development, have suffered as a consequence.

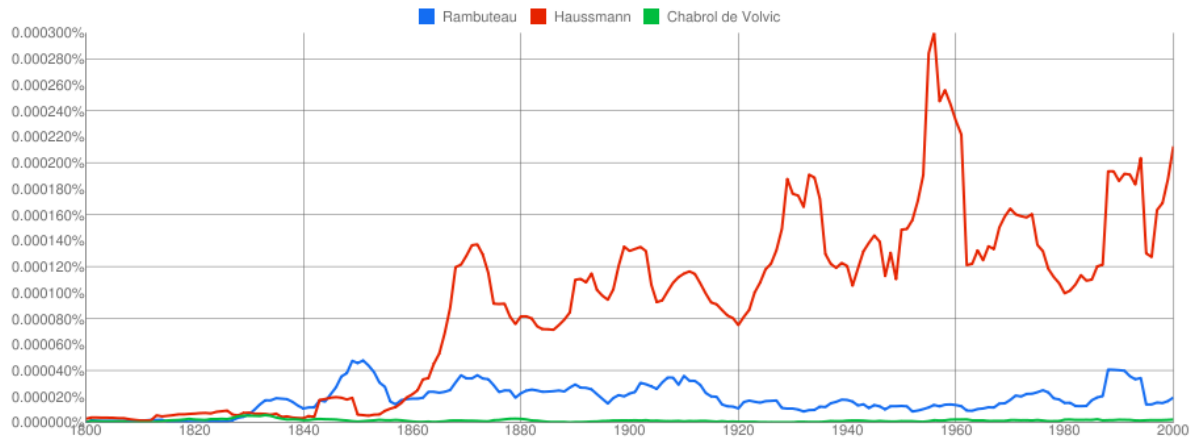

Figure 1 – The relative frequency of the names of the three prefects of the Seine in print since 1800

[6] C.f. the works of Françoise Choay, Jeanne Gaillard, David Pinkney, David Jordan, Howard Saalman, George Valance, and Michel Carmona. A biography of either Chabrol or Rambuteau has yet to be written.

[7] This analysis is possible thanks to the Google Ngram Viewer. See: Jean-Baptiste Michel et al., "Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books," *Science* (2010), http://www.sciencemag.org/content/early/2010/12/15/science.1199644.abstract; For an explanation of the Google Ngram project, see: Patricia Cohen, "In 500 Billion Words, a New Window on Culture," *The New York Times*, December 16, 2010, sec. Books, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/17/books/17words.html?_r=1; For a criticism of its database errors and the need to take into account the distortion it can introduce into analyses, see: Geoffrey Nunberg, "Google's Book Search: A Disaster for Scholars," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 31, 2009, sec. The Chronicle Review, http://chronicle.com/article/Googles-Book-Search-A/48245/?sid=wc&utm_source=wc&utm_medium=en; and Geoffrey Nunberg, "Counting on Google Books," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 16, 2010, sec. The Chronicle Review, http://chronicle.com/article/Counting-on-Google-Books/125735/ For this reason, I have avoided running tests for the years prior to 1800, when I have noticed the greatest number of false positives. I have also refrained from comparing words whose meaning changed over time. ; "Google Ngram Viewer: Rambuteau, Haussmann, Chabrol de Volvic, 1800-2000," 2010, http://ngrams.googlelabs.com/graph?content=Rambuteau%2CHaussmann%2CChabrol+de+Volvic&year_start=1800&year_end=2000&corpus=7&smoothing=3 This analysis is based on a sample of French writings, which I've chosen because it better highlights the popularity of the prefects both during their mandates as well as the commemorations of their deaths. The English-language corpus gives largely the same results.

André Morizet's classic 1932 text on Paris' prefects and the city's transition to modernity is typical of this asymmetrical treatment: "The first half of the nineteenth century modified nothing essential in the Paris familiar to the Revolution . . . Some monuments were erected, but on the whole, the city stayed the same."[8] Fifty years later, Bernard Rouleau repeated this formula almost word for word: "The Paris of 1830 is hardly different from that of 1790. That of 1860 is already today's Paris"[9] while in 1995, David P. Jordan wrote in his landmark biography of Haussmann that "Paris at midcentury . . . would have been perfectly familiar to Voltaire."[10] These assessments were made in spite of the many descriptions by Hugo, Michelet, Dufey and others of the old Paris' physical transformation prior to the second Empire, an urban program so extensive that it earned king Louis-Philippe the nickname '*le Roi Bâtisseur*' (alongside Henri IV and Philippe Auguste).[11] During the Restoration and July Monarchy, hundreds of roads were built, enlarged, or aligned, a vast program of public works to bring water, lighting, and waste disposal to the city was undertaken, and many of Paris' most distinctive sites and monuments, including the Arc de Triomphe, the July Column, and the Place de la Concorde were completed.

Insisting that Paris remained unchanged until the 1850s while dozens of contemporary accounts speak to a wave of urban improvements in the early nineteenth

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[8] André Morizet, *Du vieux Paris au Paris moderne : Haussmann et ses prédécesseurs* (Paris: Hachette, 1932), 13.
[9] Bernard Rouleau, *Le tracé des rues de Paris* (Paris: Presses du CNRS, 1988), 103.
[10] David Jordan, *Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 115.
[11] "On bâtit de toutes parts ; maisons et bastions sortent de terre. La ville s'agrandit en même temps qu'elle se fortifie. Le dernier recensement constate qu'il y a ici, à cette heure, 40 000 appartements vacants. En ce printemps de 1843, Paris pourrait, sans déplacer un seul de ses habitants, recevoir et loger la ville de Lyon toute entière." Victor Hugo, *Choses vues : 1830-1846* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 250; "Qui pourrait maintenant reconnaître Paris dans les écrits d'ailleurs estimés de Saint-Foix, de Piganiol de la Force et de Mercier lui-même ? Ils ont été vrais pour leur temps, ils ne le sont plus pour le nôtre. Tout est changé à Paris, jusqu'à l'air qu'on y respire." Pierre-Joseph-Spiridion Dufey, *Mémorial parisien, ou Paris tel qu'il fut, tel qu'il est* (Paris: Dalibon, 1821), 2-3.

century presents an intractable paradox. Attempts to resolve this contradiction have varied in their absurdity. Some historians, like Donald J. Olsen, have simply chosen to ignore pre-Haussmannian urbanism by hardly discussing it at all.[12] Others, like Morizet, have downplayed its importance to the point of insignificance, writing that Rambuteau managed Paris like his farm in the Bourgogne, his only accomplishments of any note being improvements to the boulevards and the quays.[13] One writer has even proposed a metaphysical solution to the problem created by images of a 'building frenzy' that emerged from early nineteenth century writings, suggesting that concepts of time differed between the pre- and post-Haussmannian eras, causing writers of the period to overestimate the speed and scale with which public works were undertaken.[14]

In these devaluations, many historians have merely echoed Chabrol's and particularly Rambuteau's contemporary critics. In the first half of the nineteenth century, a discourse of modern city planning distinct from questions of purely artistic embellishment began to take form, addressing issues of order, hygiene and public utility in urban space.[15] As the century progressed and Paris groaned beneath the twin burdens of rapid demographic growth (its population doubled between 1811 and 1851[16]) and a devastating outbreak of cholera in 1832, its prefects were accused of doing too little to 'save' the city and failing to operate from a rational, master plan (*plan d'ensemble*) which would enable them to do so. Other complaints concerned the inefficient circulation of vehicles

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[12] Donald J. Olsen, *The City as a Work of Art: London, Paris, Vienna* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1986).
[13] Morizet, *Du vieux Paris au Paris moderne*, 109. Morizet is significantly kinder to Chabrol, whom he credits with inaugurating a modern era thanks to street lighting and public transportation.
[14] Françoise Paul-Lévy, *La Ville en Croix : de la révolution de 1848 à la rénovation haussmannienne...* (Paris: Librarie des Méridiens, 1984), 49.
[15] Nicholas Papayanis, *Planning Paris before Haussmann* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 248.
[16] It leaped from 622,636 to 996,067 within the city, while the Parisian agglomeration grew from 630,439 to 1,247,566 inhabitants. Georges Dupeux, *Atlas historique de l'urbanisation de la France : 1811-1975* (Paris: ed. du C.N.R.S., 1981).

(carriages and carts), inadequate infrastructure, the dilapidated and disease-ridden central neighbourhoods overrun by the poor, and the flight of the upper classes to the suburbs. Jacques-Séraphin Lanquetin, city counsellor and Rambuteau's greatest rival, published an incisive report in 1840 describing the gross disparity between the right and left banks, the inability of the Halles' medieval streets to handle commercial traffic, and warned of the creation of a 'second Paris' as the bourgeoisie abandoned the insalubrious city centre for the north-western suburbs.[17] The inaugural issue of the *Gazette Municipale de la ville de Paris et du département de la Seine*, a monthly journal discussing Paris' municipal administration, reminded its readership of "the wrongness of the direction of the current administration" and dedicated its flagship article to the insufficiency of piecemeal work being done around the city, declaring that "there can be no serious, stable municipal plan which will have the support of all before a master plan is adopted and adhered to."[18]

Yet a small number of scholars have attempted to rehabilitate the reputations of Paris' early prefects and re-evaluate the nature and extent of their accomplishments. Owing to the nature of their discredit, doing so required challenging the long-held belief that neither Chabrol nor Rambuteau had a master plan for the city, allowing it stagnate while offering patchwork solutions to structural problems. Unfortunately, this approach has had the effect of distorting their achievements by judging them according to standards established by Haussmann and his partisans. Rather than study the intrinsic qualities of early nineteenth-century urbanism, historians have attempted to insert Chabrol and Rambuteau into an existing narrative about the modernization of Paris

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[17] Jacques Lanquetin, "Question du déplacement de Paris" (Préfecture de la Seine, Commission des Halles, Documents à étudier, no. 4, April 1840), APP DA 379.
[18] "Edilité - Plans de Paris - Alignement," No. 1er, Avril 1843. Joseph Havard de Charolles, ed., *Gazette municipale de la ville de Paris et du département de la Seine* (Paris, 1843), 14.

and portray them as precursors of second Empire urbanism. In other words, the attempt to shift focus away from Haussmann has resulted in simply attributing his deeds to those who preceded him, a change in perspective that does not re-examine the nature of nineteenth-century urbanism so much as shift it backwards in time.

The first such attempt was made in 1969 with the publication of Pierre Lavedan's study of the so-called 'displacement of Paris', an important political issue during the 1840s.[19] At the time, the north-westward drift of the city's affluent classes elicited so much dismay that the municipal council of Paris established a commission to understand the phenomenon and solicit suggestions for reversing the trend. Lanquetin was a prominent member and was one of several who proposed large-scale urban reform plans touching on multiple social ills in the city, in particular the problems associated with the quartier des Halles and the flow of traffic throughout Paris.[20] Rambuteau was involved in these discussions and in response proposed in 1848 a 5-year plan for 80 million francs' worth of improvements to the city including a complete renovation of the Halles and numerous measures to better Paris' sanitation and traffic difficulties.[21] Due to the collapse of the July Monarchy these plans would never bear fruit, but they indicated a willingness to engage with Paris' fundamental problems on a city-wide scale. Lavedan also proposed a novel thesis: that "a good part, perhaps the best, of Haussmann's work is the realization of ideas formulated by an entire body of urban and so-

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[19] Pierre Lavedan, *La question du déplacement de Paris et du transfert des Halles au Conseil municipal sous la Monarchie de Juillet* (Paris: Ville de Paris, 1969), 9-12.
[20] Pierre Lavedan, *Nouvelle Histoire de Paris : Histoire de l'Urbanisme à Paris* (Paris: Hachette, 1993), 398-410.
[21] Claude-Philibert Barthelot Rambuteau, *Mémoires du Comte de Rambuteau, publiés par son petit-fils, avec une introduction et des notes par M. Georges Lequin* (Paris: C. Lévy, 1905), 293.

cial research performed during the July Monarchy,"[22] an idea he repeated two years later in his history of Parisian urbanism.[23]

In 1975 Bernard Rouleau contributed to this interpretation in a survey of the development of Paris' roadways. He identified 1830 as a turning point in Parisian urbanism which marked both the passage from a medieval to a modern city and the moment when the era of individual initiatives would begin, little by little, to give way to central planning. Noting that the post-1830 period was defined by a new *état d'esprit* characterized by a "clearer and more efficient organization of the Paris road system" which was manifested in the widespread establishment of sidewalks, sewers, public transportation and lighting, he argued that Rambuteau and Haussmann each had the goal of giving Paris a new road network on the scale of the entire city.[24] The essential difference between the two was that during Rambuteau's mandate, local piercings in the urban fabric predominated over works done on a global scale later on, but they otherwise shared a similar mentality.

The concept of continuity between régimes, rather than a decisive break between the modern second Empire and its obsolete antecedents, was reiterated by François Loyer in his immense *Paris XIXe siècle : l'immeuble et la rue* (1987), a sophisticated architectural and urban study of the capital which eschewed theory for practice and focused on diverse pre-Haussmannian developments ranging from the decline of neoclassicism as an architectural style, to piercings of new roads and passages in the old neighbourhoods of Paris, and changes in the subdivision of lots and the kinds of constructions undertaken. For Loyer, Paris between empires was characterized by the rise

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[22] Lavedan, *La question du déplacement de Paris et du transfert des Halles au Conseil municipal sous la Monarchie de Juillet*, 9.
[23] Lavedan, *Nouvelle Histoire de Paris*, 361.
[24] Rouleau, *Le tracé des rues de Paris*, 104-106.

of two new typologies: the bourgeois building and the boulevard, which together "inaugurated the urban form of the future" and announced the city's preparation for the "great upheaval" of the middle of the century.[25]

Anglo-American scholarship was abruptly propelled towards a re-evaluation of the early nineteenth century's importance to the city by the apparition of an English-language translation of Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project* in 1999.[26] In this project – for it was never completed and what remains is merely a collection of research notes – Benjamin had identified early nineteenth-century Paris as the birthplace of modernity, epitomized by the urban form of the boutique-lined, covered *passage* that became popular in the 1820s and 30s. Its architecture, emphasis on material consumption, and essentially bourgeois character spoke to him of a new way of experiencing urban space, one that at once exemplified the post-industrial social order of consumer capitalism and the Baudelairean idea of a new man, the *flâneur*. While too fragmentary to constitute a coherent argument about the emergence of modernity, the Arcades Project prompted much debate and reflection in diverse academic fields about society and culture in early nineteenth-century France.

Three significant works about Paris emerged from this watershed. In 2001, Karen Bowie assembled a large number of international scholars for a colloquium on 'forms of urban space in Paris 1801-1853' with the theme "Modernity before Haussmann," the proceedings of which were later published as a collection of short essays. Its writings touch on a number of topics, loosely organized around two questions: to what extent can historians speak of Haussmannization before Haussmann? and; to what ex-

[25] Francois Loyer, *Paris XIXe siecle : L'immeuble et la rue* (Paris: Hazan, 1987), 66-7.
[26] Walter Benajmin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA and London, U.K.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999) A French translation was published in 1997, while the original German version appeared for the first time in 1982.

tent can historians speak of a 'new Paris' during this period?[27] Her goal was to affirm that the pre-Haussmannian administration did have a master plan for the city[28] – an opinion long held by French scholars – though another essay in the collection argues precisely the opposite,[29] demonstrating the difficulty of evaluating such a work as a whole. Yet as Christopher Mead pointed out in his review of the book, its unifying principle is that Haussmann remains omnipresent as the standard by which modernity is judged. The decision to bracket Paris between 1800 and 1853 indicates that Haussmann's appointment marks the transition between one history of the city and another. In order to advance our understanding, "it is time to stop believing that 'haussmannism' accurately describes the transformation of Paris in the nineteenth century."[30]

Nicholas Papayanis, who contributed an essay on "the emergence of modern urbanism in Paris" to Bowie's collection, followed it in 2004 with a book entitled *Planning Paris before Haussmann*, an intellectual history that charts the emergence of modern city planning. Based on a substantial body of published writings, he argues that by the early nineteenth century a number of thinkers had begun to conceive of the city as an organic unit requiring a comprehensive vision to be properly run, the rational improvement of which would in turn elevate the moral and physical conditions of its inhabitants. This change in thinking was modern insofar as it combined the enlightenment vision of human perfection through reason with the police function of controlling state and society, lending itself to the "establishment of hegemonic order throughout

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[27] Karen Bowie, "Introduction," in Bowie, *La modernité avant Haussmann : formes de l'espace urbain à Paris, 1801-1853*, 18.
[28] Ibid., 25.
[29] Douglas Klahr, "Le développement des rues parisiennes pendant la monarchie de Juillet," in Ibid., 217-230.
[30] Christopher Mead, "Review: La modernité avant Haussmann: Formes de l'espace urbain à Paris 1801-1853," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 61, no. 1 (March 1, 2002): 108; Mead was also one of the earliest American scholars to recognize the historical antecedents of Haussmann's accomplishments. See: Christopher Mead, "Urban Contingency and the Problem of Representation in Second Empire Paris," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 54, no. 2 (June 1995): 135.

the city."[31] However, Papayanis' study gives but cursory attention to what was happening in Paris at the time, revealing little about the tangible effects of this new urbanism on the city during the first half of the century. His view of its influence is nevertheless implied in places. At the end of the chapter on 'functionalist planners', he concludes: "As we can see from all the above, by 1853, the year Haussmann and Napoleon III began their preparations for the rebuilding of Paris, there was in place an extensive archive of proposals and plans for the reform of the capital."[32] Planning preceded Haussmann; execution followed.

Hazel Hahn's recently published study of the rise of consumer culture in early nineteenth century Paris is a final, notable contribution to this historiographical shift in recent years.[33] She firmly grounds her topic, the commercialization of bourgeois society, in the development of specific Parisian locales, notably the *passages* and the *grands boulevards*. These new and unique urban sites devoted to shopping and leisure became the centres of the modern retail trade (with advertising not far behind) while giving rise to new modes of urban sociability. Because she argues that consumer culture was established earlier than scholars have commonly believed – during the July Monarchy rather than from mid-century onward – her work catalogues the many urban transformations prior to 1853 that allowed it to take root. However, Hahn does not interest herself with the processes of urbanism; as a result, in her account entire neighbourhoods spring up *ex nihilo* as part of the march of progress rather than as contingent products of the will of planners, architects, and builders – though to be fair hers is a cultural history and urbanism is not her principal subject. Furthermore, her descriptions of street life are

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[31] Papayanis, *Planning Paris before Haussmann*, 249.
[32] Ibid., 127 Moreover, it is curious that Papayanis' intellectual history limits itself to the case of France when, as he recognizes, urbanism in England was well in advance of developments on the continent.
[33] Haejeong Hazel Hahn, *Scenes of Parisian Modernity: Culture and Consumption in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

largely based on the accounts of foreign (English, American, and German) observers of French culture and should be treated with the same caution as any tourist's account of Paris. Nonetheless, her view that much of what constitutes the so-called modernity of the second Empire, such as café culture, "preceded [Haussmannian] urban changes and needs to placed in the broader context of the evolutions of both the urban fabric and the urban imaginary,"[34] is insightful and will serve as a guiding principle for this thesis.

Patterns of Inquiry

Contrary to what it hoped, recent scholarship has not substantially modified long-held views about Paris' urban development. The enormousness of Haussmann's legacy to the present continues to cast its shadow over the gaze of historians. This shows most clearly in the rehabilitation of the once-derided Rambuteau who has been recast in the role of harbinger and herald. Though deserved recognition of his life's work has finally been granted, his significance in the grand narrative of Paris' history is now as midwife to the transformations wrought by Haussmann. Likewise, Papayanis depicts Chabrol as a modern urban thinker but hardly at all as an active prefect of the Seine; even when the plans contained in his theoretical writings were realized during his time in office, they are not discussed.[35] In a paradoxical reversal, therefore, Paris' early prefects have increased in importance only by being reduced to handmaidens of their successor, who remains the true agent of change. Instead of evaluating their accomplishments in the context of their particular historical milieu, urban historians have

[34] Ibid., 62.
[35] Notably in the case of sidewalks. Papaynis likewise hardly mentions Rambuteau at all. Papayanis, *Planning Paris before Haussmann*, 65, 78-82.

fallen into the pernicious habit of "dividing the world into the friends and enemies of progress."[36]

In the case of French historiography, this point of view arises principally from the tendency to view Paris from 15,000 feet, evaluating first and foremost its physical form while ground-level changes in the use of built space are given less attention. Bernard Rouleau's map of modifications to the Paris landscape between 1833 and 1848 is typical in its depiction of a barely touched urban maze, which suggests through the proportions of changed to unchanged terrain that little was achieved (fig. 2).[37]

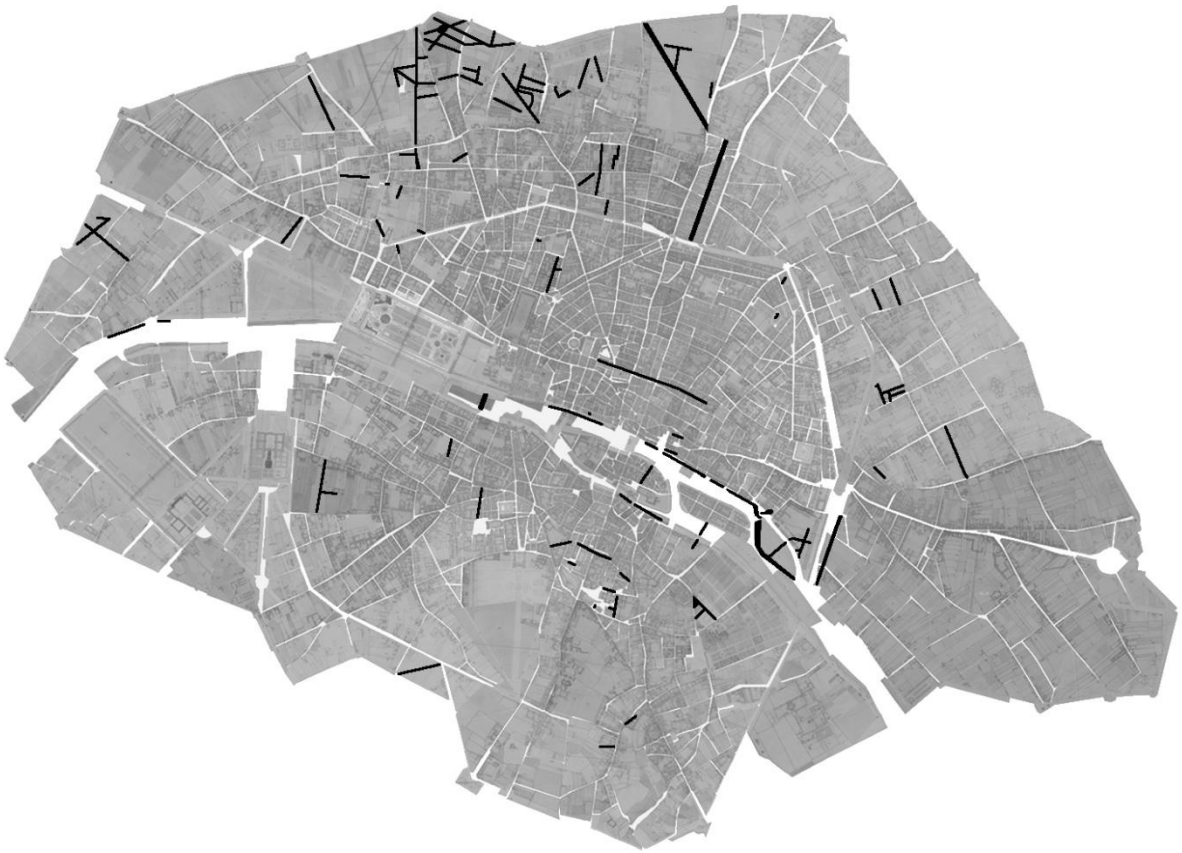

Figure 2 – Road construction under Rambuteau, 1833-1848

[36] Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1965), 6.
[37] Map adapted from Rouleau, *Le tracé des rues de Paris*, 92-93.

If form predominates over other considerations, it is largely because early nineteenth-century ideas about 'disengaging' the insalubrious city centre and facilitating circulation – questions to which urbanism had been reduced by the 1840s[38] – are viewed by modern historians as badly-needed solutions to an urban crisis so grave that it was in large part responsible for the revolution of 1848.[39] Mid-century Paris is frequently described as "sick, unhealthy, and imbalanced," a city that grew too quickly without adapting either to the new functions of an industrial age or the needs of a too-numerous population.[40] Thus, studies of Paris' early development acquire a teleological bent as they focus on the solutions to a number of perceived problems and converge at the point when these increasingly critical issues were finally confronted head-on by Haussmann, which is unsurprisingly not far from the version of events he offered in his memoirs.[41] Parisian urbanism in the first half of the nineteenth century has thus become 'haussmannized' by scholars.

English-language historians have often arrived at the same conclusions as their French counterparts, though by a different path: the use of 'modernity' as an interpretive lens through which to view urban change. Modernity has been variously defined, first by Baudelaire and Gauthier in the 1850s and 1860s to describe certain avant-garde artistic sensibilities, but it has since been appropriated by academics to refer to one of two different but related social developments in the urban context. The first signifies

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[38] Papayanis, *Planning Paris before Haussmann*, 103.
[39] Bernard Marchand, *Paris, histoire d'une ville (XIXe-XXe siècle)* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993), 69.
[40] Lavedan, *Nouvelle Histoire de Paris*, 389, 411.
[41] "I felt, from then on, firmly in the saddle to go to the conquest of old Paris, accompanied by an army filled with confidence in its new leader and whose assistance... would permit me to undertake the disemboweling of the neighbourhoods of this inner city with its tangled streets, almost impracticable for vehicles; of heaped-up lodgings, sordid and unhealthy, which were for the most part hearths of misery and malady and the cause of shame for a great country like France." Georges Eugène Haussmann, *Mémoires* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2000), 589.

the rational, unified functioning of the city through the application of the utilitarian philosophy and science of the Enlightenment, as well as the changes brought about by industrialization.[42] Since this movement was epitomized by the urban planning implemented by Haussmann, itself a response to the 'urban crisis', research in this vein coincides with that performed by French scholars. The second, drawing heavily on the theories of Charles Baudelaire, Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin, refers to the fleeting sensory experiences and encounters of urban life and their pleasurable and disorienting intellectual and aesthetic effects.[43] However, these are generally associated with the physical changes wrought by Haussmann. In both cases, only that which is either modern itself, or else gives rise to modernity, is studied and written about, while all else is considered as a sort of accident or else not particularly relevant. Thus, David Jordan writes that Rambuteau was unable to focus on "important" works, but was instead forced by Paris' municipal council to "scatter funds over many neighbourhoods on petty projects."[44]

Assimilating the early-nineteenth century into a Haussmannian tale of progress is not only logically problematic (it is bizarre to speak of 'haussmannization' before Haussmann), but it obscures what was unique about the period. To focus exclusively on solutions to structural problems is to privilege the discourse of 'urban crisis' that emerged during this time period, effectively dismissing urban projects which were not responses to supposedly impending crises as "unimportant" and "petty." The introduction of sidewalks was a response to inconveniences – disagreeable, though not calami-

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[42] Marcel Roncayolo, "La Modernité ? Approche des Conceptions de la Ville et de Paris capitale. . . avant Baudelaire," in Bowie, *La modernité avant Haussmann : formes de l'espace urbain à Paris, 1801-1853*, 31.
[43] Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. Jonathan Mayne, 2nd ed. (London: Phaidon, 1995), 1-41; Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *The Blackwell City Reader*, ed. Gary Bridge and Sophie Watson (London: Blackwell, 2002), 1-19.
[44] Jordan, *Transforming Paris*, 103.

tous – of being on foot in eighteenth-century Paris, and was thus aimed towards satisfying a growing desire for safe and clean walking spaces rather than preventing city-wide catastrophe. Viewing Paris through the lens of a looming crisis has the additional disadvantage of artificially shifting our attention forward in time, placing far greater emphasis on urban developments which took place during the July Monarchy than on those of the Restoration. Yet Chabrol, prefect first under Napoleon and later under Louis XVIII and Charles X, played a critical role in the urban renewal intended to make the city a more pleasant place to live.

It is not clear, moreover, that the concept of modernity (as traditionally conceived) is helpful for thinking about pedestrian spaces. Certainly, if modernity is considered to be the imposed creation of a rational, ordered, and unified space, it has little place in the discussion of what was a decentralized, makeshift process of urbanism. The definitions of modernity proposed by Baudelaire, Benjamin, and Simmel come closer to describing the cultural consequences of changes to Paris streets, but historians using them have repeatedly insisted that their emergence coincides with the late nineteenth century, failing to consider that pre-Haussmannian urbanism is essential to the story of cultural change they relate and tending to focus instead on factors such as industrialization and economic growth to explain new urban phenomena.[45] The inadequacy of such an approach is summed up by Michel Ragon, who writes that, "without urbanism, architecture is but an object; without architecture, urbanism is but sociology."[46] Divorced from the environmental context which gave birth to him, the *flâneur* becomes an ab-

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[45] Victoria de Grazia, "Changing Consumption Regimes," in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical perspective*, ed. Victoria de Grazia and Ellen Furlough (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Vanessa R. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Gregory Shaya, "The Flâneur, the Badaud, and the Making of a Mass Public in France, circa 1860–1910," *The American Historical Review* 109, no. 1 (February 2004).
[46] Michel Ragon, *Histoire de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme modernes : Idéologies et pionniers 1800-1910*, vol. 1 (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 10.

straction (reduced to a mere symbol or metaphor for modernist man) whose nature is obscured by his removal from his proper place and time. His prominence likewise effaces other walkers from the streets of Paris, consolidating all outdoor urban activity into a single category and glossing over the diversity of urban culture.

Modernity is a dangerous concept to employ when discussing urban change because it implies progress towards a goal whereas cities are contested spaces which different groups struggle to control.[47] The uniqueness of nineteenth-century pedestrian space lies in the participatory nature of the system that created it and in the diminished role of a central planner working towards an overarching objective. Not only was the deployment of sidewalks and street lanterns not directly controlled by the state and its agents, but much of what made pedestrian environments so attractive was unforeseen. The cultural usage of modernity is equally risky in this regard. Burdened by its close association with both Baudelaire and 'haussmannization,"[48] its conclusions cannot simply be displaced and applied to a period thirty years earlier as if the early and late nineteenth centuries were essentially identical.

In a sense, these observations can be seen as a return to the very old accusation that Chabrol and Rambuteau lacked a master plan for the city. Rather than levelling it as an indictment of their relevance, however, I see it at as an opportunity to shift the debate away from questions of success or failure and to reappraise the uniqueness of pre-Haussmannian urbanism. Chabrol and Rambuteau were not the ineffectual prefects many have made them out to be – their work on pedestrian spaces in particular sparked

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[47] Victoria Thompson, "Telling "Spatial Stories": Urban Space and Bourgeois Identity in Early Nineteenth-Century Paris," *The Journal of Modern History* 75, no. 3 (September 2003): 523-556; Victoria Thompson, "Urban Renovation, Moral Regeneration: Domesticating the Halles in Second-Empire Paris," *French Historical Studies* 20, no. 1 (January 1, 1997): 87-109.

[48] Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Verso, 1987), 132, 150.

important cultural transformations in the use of built space – but neither were they merely the thwarted prophets of second Empire urbanism.

An Alternative Vision of the City

What is presented in the pages that follow is therefore not a revisionist history. I will not deny the tremendous influence Haussmann's seventeen years in office had on Paris, nor argue that his thinking did not owe much to the intellectual debates that occurred prior to his nomination as prefect. Likewise, it cannot be denied that a significant part of Paris' early nineteenth-century population lived in squalid misery, their housing and sanitation needs inadequately met by the capital's rudimentary infrastructure.[49] My goal, instead, is to discuss aspects of Parisian urbanism that have been neglected because they could not be neatly integrated into the narrative of modernism's rise to prominence and its response to a number of pressing social problems. Between the insouciant, laissez-faire attitude of the ancien régime kings and Napoleon III's wholesale transmogrification of the city (both descriptions are caricatures) lies an entire field of urban activity whose particularities have yet to be examined in detail. That they ought to be is both a matter of fleshing out the historical record and of participating in the changes that have marked twenty-first century urban theory.

Modernist urbanism is a surprising choice of topic by historians, if only because it carries so little clout among today's architects and urban planners. Its avatars, principally Le Corbusier but also the 'master builder' Robert Moses – both of whom Papaya-

[49] Ragon, *Idéologies et pionniers 1800-1910*, 1:28-56; Marchand, *Paris, histoire d'une ville (XIXe-XXe siècle)*, 24-34.

nis considers spiritual heirs to Haussmann[50] – are now figures of disrepute. This disenchantment began with the publication of Camillo Sitte's *City Planning According to Artistic Principles* in 1889, which criticized the modern metropolis' abstract regularity and preference for wide boulevards, unfavourably contrasting them with the aesthetic harmony and proportionality of medieval urban cities.[51] Sitte's text was so popular that it went through five editions in thirty years, testifying to a growing disaffection with the totalizing impulse of the modernist urban planner. However, the most important critiques of modernism would not be made until the middle of the twentieth century. In Europe, Aldo Rossi's *Architecture and the City* (1966) was the first historical work to challenge modernist ideas about the transformation of cities,[52] while across the Atlantic Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) sounded the tocsin of war against the city planner.[53] Lacking academic credentials, Jacobs relied on simple observation of her own neighbourhood of Greenwich Village in New York City to both revalorize the residential street as a dynamic site of urban life and condemn ill-considered urban renewal projects that destroyed or displaced entire neighbourhoods. Having today attained mainstream popularity (four books have been written about her in the last five years alone,)[54] her ideas have increasingly found acceptance by urbanists

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[50] Papayanis, *Planning Paris before Haussmann*, 252.
[51] Camillo Sitte, *L'art de bâtir les villes : l'urbanisme selon ses fondements artistiques*, trans. Daniel Wieczorec (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 97-111. Although Baudelaire and Hugo were among the first to condemn Haussmann's transformations of the capital, they did not offer a systematic, intellectual critique of the prefect's work beyond a lament for the disappearance of "Old Paris." Other French intellectuals, such as Félix Lazare, likewise attacked Haussmann's planning in the 1850s and 60s but did not have a significant influence on subsequent urbanism. Of course, this does not take into consideration the thousands of voices, belonging generally to the poor, which cried out in protest of Haussmann's actions.
[52] Aldo Rossi, *L'architecture de la ville*, trans. Françoise Brun (Gollion, Suisse: Infolio, 2001), 174.
[53] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961), 3.
[54] Roberta Brandes Gratz, *The Battle for Gotham: New York in the Shadow of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs* (New York: Nation Books, 2010); Anthony Flint, *Wrestling with Moses : How Jane Jacobs Took on New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 2009); Stephen A. Goldsmith and Lynne Elizabeth, eds., *What We See: Advancing the Observations of Jane Jacobs*, 1st ed. (New Village Press, 2010); Alice Alexiou, *Jane Jacobs : Urban Visionary* (New Brunswick N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006).

advocating a return to small-scale, walkable communities (in part fuelled by growing environmental concerns about sustainability), while prominent public figures such as New York City transportation commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan and urban studies theorist and populariser Richard Florida have assumed her mantle.[55]

A history of the small-scale changes to Paris' urban environments is therefore badly needed. In the last thirty years many social historians of Paris have reduced the scope of their inquiries to the small-scale. Some have written about specific groups such as prostitutes or single mothers, others about particular Paris neighbourhoods, while others still have focused on certain public establishments such as the café or the *guinguette*.[56] Yet while the city is the backdrop for these scenes of everyday life, the interactions between the built environment and the group being analyzed rarely emerges as a preoccupation in studies of the nineteenth century.[57] The street is therefore a logical point of departure for a study of the urbanism particular to the inter-empire period, all the more so since modern urbanism made the disappearance of the traditional street the symbol of the change it proposed.[58] Jacobs considered attempts to eliminate traditional city streets and the "downgrading and minimizing their social and their economic

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[55] Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life* (New York: Basic Books, 2004); Janette Sadik-Khan, "Think of a City and What Comes to Mind? Its Streets," in Goldsmith and Elizabeth, *What We See*, 256-289.

[56] Haim Burstin, *Le Faubourg Saint-Marcel à l'époque révolutionnaire : structure économique et composition sociale* (Paris: Société des études robespierristes, 1983); Alain Corbin, *Les filles de noce : misère sexuelle et prostitution, 19e et 20e siècles* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1978); Rachel Ginnis Fuchs, *Poor and Pregnant in Paris: Strategies for Survival in the Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1992); W. Scott Haine, *The World of the Paris Cafe : Sociability Among the French Working Class, 1789-1914* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Henry-Melchior de Langle, *Le petit monde des cafés et débits parisiens au XIXe siècle : évolution de la sociabilité citadine* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990).

[57] Two notable exceptions concerning the eighteenth century are: Arlette Farge, *Vivre dans la rue à Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992); David Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris: 1740-1790* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[58] Le Corbusier famously suggested eliminating streets altogether, separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic into two different planes with elevated highways above extended green spaces.

part in city life" to be "the most mischievous and destructive idea in orthodox city planning."[59]

However, the city street thusly considered is a fairly recent invention. Prior to the nineteenth century the typical Paris street was shockingly rustic: part dirt path and part public sewer, it was an often unkempt trail of mud and offal almost entirely neglected by civic authorities. Streets were feebly lit at night (and often, not at all), while pedestrian and vehicular traffic comingled indifferently in the dangerously narrow concourses of the medieval city centre. Populated by an entire civilization of enterprising gutter-snipes (the lantern-carrier, the rag-picker, the crier, the mud-remover, and so on), congested with the workshops of local industries, and filled with animals and their waste, it was a place avoided by all who could do so. Yet under the supervision of Chabrol and Rambuteau, the city street would slowly and fitfully begin to assume the form it has today: a sanitized, paved, streetlamp- and store-lined public space equipped with public transportation for rapid movement and sidewalks for strolling, the pastime most closely associated with Paris after love.

This thesis concerns a small part of that vast transformation: the development of the sidewalk and its role in creating pedestrian spaces in Paris. I offer it as a case study of the public's evolving use of the built environment and as an example of the contribution of small-scale urbanism to the renewal of the city centre. The rehabilitation of city streets was the result of numerous urban developments – the introduction of gas lighting, concrete sewers, waste removal, road paving, laws concerning safety and hygiene, and so forth – and where relevant I have mentioned their influence in shaping pedestrian behaviour and attitudes toward the street. The sidewalk nevertheless remains the

[59] Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 87-88.

most important of these new technologies and distinguishes itself from the rest by constituting a social place rather than a mere utilitarian object. The makeshift process which led to their creation was unique in Parisian history and influenced the form of the social change they occasioned. Pedestrian spaces which resulted from their construction were distinctly bourgeois in character, and were appropriated by both the writings and the physical presence of the middle and upper classes. Throughout this paper I have suggested that the influence of the physical environment on cultural practice should be analysed in terms of possibilities for action which were exploited in many different ways. In so doing, I have tried to avoid the fallacy of physical determinism that often permeates urban planning texts, as well as sentimentality towards an idealized version of street life.

Though the first sidewalks in Paris date from the seventeenth century, concerted efforts to establish them on a city-wide scale were not taken until the 1820s. This study therefore examines the period between the fall of the Napoleonic Empire and the birth of the second Republic (1815-1848).

I have divided this thesis into two sections. The first is an administrative history which recounts in detail the story of how the sidewalk came into being. This includes both its birth as an idea and its creation as a physical object. The former is found in a modest body of writings about urban improvements penned by engineering specialists and early urban theorists, as well as by the prefect Chabrol. The latter is a largely technical tale involving city planners, private companies, concerned citizens, and the police, and will be told with the help of archival documents and first-hand accounts of the city. In addition to approaching the subject from the ostensibly scientific angle of the city planner – as a solution to a problem – I will investigate the point of view of the city-

dweller, which was to see early urbanism as a series of replies to social demands. This method, suggested by François Caron to study networks (transportation, utilities, waste disposal, etc.) in large cities, argues that the goal of any technical system is to satisfy the needs of the final consumer, in this case the citizen, whose desires, needs, and tastes determine the shape of the productive apparatus.[60] These yearnings were roughly three-fold during the early nineteenth century: what may be termed 'hygienism' (the desire for bourgeois concepts of salubrity), the search for domestic comfort and new sources of leisure, and the wish for faster and safer means of circulation. Meeting these aspirations was the goal of entrepreneurs before anyone else and in the face of changing patterns of consumption created by these new objects, municipal authorities were obliged to put into place networks permitting their use. Thus, the administration was naturally drawn towards 'modernity' by satisfying the collective wants of the citizenry.

The second section is a cultural analysis of the new Parisian street. It examines the substantial body of panoramic literature written during the early nineteenth century for evidence of an emergent discourse by the middle classes that I call the 'discovery of the street.' For the first time in Parisian history, large numbers of writers produced texts describing scenes of pedestrian street life heretofore unheard of. Depictions of the Paris street from this period, in contrast to earlier accounts, are filled with positive images of the new and exciting possibilities for diversion and leisure offered by a nascent urban environment. To analyze them, I will use a model proposed by Eric Charmes to study the 'return to the street' characteristic of post-1960s urbanism.[61] According to Charmes, the power of the street not only derives from the resources that it brings to the life of a

[60] François Caron, ed., *Paris et ses réseaux : naissance d'un mode de vie urbain, XIXe-XXe siècle* (Paris: Hôtel d'Angoulême-Lamoignon, 1990), 11-13.
[61] Éric Charmes, *La rue, village ou décor ?* (Grâne: Créaphis, 2006), 5-49.

neighbourhood, but also the image that it presents. The revalorization of the street as a desirable urban site consequently has a moral component: it is accompanied by a re-evaluation of the attractiveness of working-class parts of the city and the recognition that the street is a particularly propitious place for sociability and neighbourhood life. It is therefore linked to the search for urban conviviality and an exploration of the 'other.' As we shall see, writings about Paris at the time not only documented the creation of new social spaces for the middle classes, but also the gradual penetration into working-class parts of the city by the well-off.

This dual approach is indispensible because the study of urban culture is meaningless without an understanding of the environments in which it is incubated. In particular, awareness of the geographic distribution of urban renewal is necessary for understanding how its advent affected different social groups who were unevenly spread throughout the city. As urban improvements clustered in the bourgeois neighbourhoods of Paris, ideas about what constituted the ideal city began to favour the needs and desires of the bourgeoisie over those of the poor. The gradual expansion of new urban infrastructure and its attendant cultural practices into working-class parts of the city displaced both their inhabitants and the industries they relied on, altering their historical character and gentrifying them. Such transformations are impossible to detect if Paris is treated as a monolithic city or spoken about in the abstract; the emphasis laid on place in the administrative section is therefore a necessary step for establishing the topography of cultural change.

Urbanism in Action

The Eighteenth-Century Paris Street

In order to understand the extent of the urban landscape's transformation during the early nineteenth century, we must cast our gaze backwards to the eighteenth. Writings about Paris dating from pre-Revolutionary France are not as readily found as in the period that followed; the nineteenth-century bloom of panoramic literature describing the makeup of the city and its inhabitants was a reaction both to changes in the city and ways of writing about it. The genre of urban literature – distinguished by an author's willingness to investigate the city from ground level and report back on its daily rhythms and the lives of even its lowliest inhabitants – was pioneered by Louis-Sébastien Mercier not long before the end of the ancien régime. *Le Tableau de Paris*, published in several volumes between 1781 and 1788, began by rejecting the prevailing idiom of describing Paris by listing its churches, monuments and curiosities, and instead proposed to recount "the moral physiognomy of this gigantic capital," gleaned from research performed "among all classes of citizens," even those "the furthest removed from swollen opulence."[62]

Since Mercier operated on foot, he was well-positioned to observe the physical conditions of the Paris roadway. Foremost among his concerns was danger to the pedestrian. In a place where paths reserved for carriages and people were not yet defined, the risk of being crushed under hoof or wheel was acute:

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[62] Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. 1, Nouvelle éd. originale, corrigée et augmentée. (Paris: INALF, 1961), III; "There is no better writer to consult," Robert Darnton writes, "if one wants to get some idea of how Paris looked, sounded, smelled, and felt on the eve of the Revolution." Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 118.

> As soon as you find yourself in Paris' streets, you become well aware that the common man does not make the laws there: there are no conveniences for pedestrians, no sidewalks. The common people seem a body apart from the other estates; the rich and the powerful with their equipages have the barbarous right to crush or mutilate them in the streets. A hundred victims expire under the wheels of carriages every year.[63]

Forty years later Paris streets remained essentially unchanged for those on foot. An American visitor to Paris, Franklin Didier, described his first experience of the capital in 1817:

> No sidewalks; shoddy paving stones. The pedestrian has nothing to defend him against the impetuousness of horses, the clumsiness of a driver, or the fall of a carriage axle. Cabriolets and hansoms menace him perpetually. As much dexterity as attention is required to safeguard oneself from their rapid approach. How greatly, in those moments, does a sidewalk seem practical, and how fervently do you bless your good fortune when chance offers you one! But except for the *Palais-Royal*, the *Tuileries*, *rue des Colonnes*, *rue de Rivoli* and *Place des Vosges*, there are no sidewalks here.[64]

As early urban theorists pointed out, this risk weighed disproportionately on certain citizens: the blind, the deaf, the infirm, the elderly, and children, groups to whom the street was effectively a forbidden zone. Even a tacit division of the street into walking and driving spaces was impossible, since carriage-owners profited from its formlessness

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[63] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, 1:54.
[64] Franklin J. Didier, *Lettres d'un voyageur américain, ou Observations morales, politiques et littéraires sur l'état de la France... en 1815, 1816, 1817 et 1818*, trans. Philarète Chasles (Paris: Pillet aîné, 1823), 42-43.

to occupy it at every point. In 1811, when the project of Parisian sidewalks was first discussed by the administration, an engineer for the Service des Ponts et Chaussées pointed out the total domination of the street by vehicles: "It is without a doubt a very serious inconvenience for people on foot that carriages occupy a large part of the road, and when parked block the way alongside its houses; likewise that bourgeois coaches do the same either near shows, before the doors of shops, or around busy public buildings."[65]

Thus forced into the middle of the street and into danger, pedestrians were confronted with another challenge: keeping clean. Until the introduction of sewage and paving, the majority of Paris' roads were *chaussées fendues*, or slightly concave streets meant to collect water in a makeshift gutter that ran down their middle. Many were unpaved and regularly watered by both natural precipitation and the emptied chamber pots of thousands of Parisian tenants, transforming them into vile swamps. The rue de la Planche-Mibray, which disappeared during the piercing of the boulevard Sébastopol, was so named for the planks that were frequently placed to cross the mud (*bray*, ancient rendering of *boue*) in its centre.[66] Mercier presents a revolting picture of the scene:

> A wide stream sometimes cuts the road in two in such as a way as to impede all access between one side of the street and the other. At the least rainfall, makeshift bridges must be laid across it.[67]
>
> Manure abounds in the capital thanks to the large number of horses it contains.[68]

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[65] "Sur les trottoirs," AP VONC 1295. This is a problem that has only recently been solved in Paris by the installation of metal posts along the edge of sidewalks to prevent cars from parking on them.
[66] Marchand, *Paris, histoire d'une ville (XIXe-XXe siècle)*, 25; Gilles Ménage et al., *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue françoise*, vol. 1 (Paris: Briasson, 1750), 244.
[67] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, 1:120.
[68] Ibid., 1:303.

> The affluent have filthy straw thrown before and around their garage doors when they are ill to muffle the sound of coaches. This abusive privilege transforms the street into a dreadful sewer if it rains and obliges one hundred thousand men a day to walk in black and stinking liquid manure which comes up to the knee. This practice makes carriages more dangerous, for you can no longer hear them.[69]

Though filled with the stylistic flourishes of the litterateur and tinged with democratic indignation at the insouciance of the aristocracy, Mercier's account is largely borne out by his contemporaries and those who later described the city. A tract published in 1826 decried the filth of the city's streets in terms which had hardly changed two generations later:

> Garbage and filth of all kinds are thrown daily by more than two hundred thousand households into the street... Horses, cars, and pedestrians, passing and passing again over this refuse, crush it, grind it, and transform it into a black mud.[...] Immense pools of dirty water spread out over the streets and intersections, blocking the way for pedestrians.[70]

In a city where it rains, on average, 111 days out of the year,[71] the streets could be practically inaccessible to pedestrians nearly a third of the time and presented few attractions during the rest. It is hardly surprising that the covered arcades of the Palais-Royal, embodying an 'introverted' model of urbanism, where élites could go without exposing

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[69] Ibid., 1:94.
[70] Alphonse Lescot, *De la salubrité de la ville de Paris* (Paris: Mme Huzard, 1826), 8-10.
[71] Météo France, "Prévisions météo de Météo-France - Climat en France," 2010, http://climat.meteofrance.com/chgt_climat2/climat_france.

themselves to the vagaries of the outdoors,[72] remained the centre of Parisian leisure well into the 1820s.

Paris' streets clearly constituted an inhospitable environment for pedestrians. Aside from their material inconveniences, they were generally viewed with suspicion if not outright antipathy, the result of which was that Parisians stayed at home or rented a coach rather than venture out into them. The repeated emphasis placed on filth, insalubrity, and mud is particularly remarkable and may be at least partly explained by the theories of Mary Douglas about the relationship between purity and danger. In her view, dirt does not exist as an absolute quality; rather, its perception implies the recognition of "matter out of place" and therefore the contravention of a set of ordered relations.[73] Complaints about dirtiness were a metaphorical way of criticizing the street's social organization. Mistrust of the street by middle class authors was linked to wariness about what occurred and might be encountered there; the street was a public space that hardly conformed to bourgeois ideals of hygiene, comfort, and safety. Leeriness toward the city's open spaces was particularly pronounced after sundown and going out at night in Paris was seen as a herculean task until the 1830s and 1840s.[74] Restif de la Bretonne, the most influential chronicler of the Parisian night, felt obliged to justify his presence out of doors after dark in *Les Nuits de Paris* (1788) by claiming he acted as a 'useful spy' reporting on the city's vices.[75] Later accounts would not require such rationales. Instead, they would radically change tenor, presenting the street as a market-

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[72] Simone Delattre, *Les douze heures noires : La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2000), 151.
[73] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1979), 2, 35, 40.
[74] Delattre, *Les douze heures noires : La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle*, 68.
[75] Restif de la Bretonne, "Les nuits de Paris," in Michel Delon and Daniel Baruch, eds., *Paris le jour, Paris la nuit* (Paris: R. Laffont, 1990), 620.

place of sights and the night as a kaleidoscope of pleasures, but not before the city itself changed.

The Paris Promenade

Although French sidewalks ostensibly had their origins in paths along the edges of quays meant for horse-drawn transportation (hence their name, *trottoir*, from *trotter*, 'to trot'),[76] England provided their true inspiration. In matters concerning city streets, every French urban thinker of the nineteenth century saw London as manifestly superiority to Paris and held it up as a model to emulate.[77] "Why do we not have sidewalks," lamented Mercier, "as they do in London?"[78] The Westminster Paving act of 1762 and the two London paving acts of 1766 and 1768 gave the English capital sidewalks nearly sixty years before its continental analogue and it remains unclear why France lagged so far behind in this respect.

Two tracts from the turn of the century presented the case for sidewalks to the French people. The first was a short pamphlet published anonymously in 1784 entitled *Projet sur l'établissement de trottoirs*, calling for the need to protect people from carriages in the street, but also suggesting an array of benefits which would result from their city-wide construction.[79] The author began by making the inevitable comparison to London, whose citizens were faced with the same risks of being run over as Parisians,

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[76] André Guillerme, "Le pavé de Paris," in Caron, *Paris et ses réseaux*, 67.
[77] For an elaborate example, see: Humblet Chanoine, *Tableau problématique de Londres et de Paris mis en parallèle, consistant en quatre dissertations* (London: Imprimerie de Shury, 1812).
[78] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, 1:121.
[79] *Projet sur l'établissement de trottoirs pour la sûreté des rues de Paris et l'embellissement de la ville* (s.l.: aux dépens de l'auteur, 1784).

but were protected by an elaborate network of sidewalks. The democratic sentiments espoused by Mercier re-appeared in his arguments: "Out of a hundred individuals in Paris," he noted, "there are two that have coaches and ninety-eight that go on foot," among them a long list of middle-class professionals such as doctors, tailors, and hairdressers who were obliged to hire a coach just to go about their daily business. Establishing sidewalks would allow these people to save money and be more efficient, promoting commerce. Furthermore, the author asserted that walking regularly was essential to good physical health and assured his readership that several doctors had sworn in his presence that English children were healthier than their French counterparts. Sidewalks would not only embellish the city, but also make it cleaner, since the muds of Paris were largely spread about by carriages passing from one side of the street to another. Such beautification would attract greater numbers of provincials to the capital and multiply its inhabitants, increasing the wealth of the city.

Objections to the implementation of sidewalks were pre-emptively addressed by the author, who refuted claims that Paris' streets were too narrow to accommodate them. Not only had he personally measured "all the streets of Paris" and concluded that each could be given a sidewalk if they were treated differently according to their width, but he explained that their very narrowness was the reason why they were so desperately needed: "if each street were twenty metres wide, it could fit eight coaches at a time and still let pedestrians pass." In any case, sidewalks would increase the number of people going on foot, reducing the number of carriages in the street and precluding the possibility of traffic jams.

Since no improvements were made to the urban landscape as a result, an abbot named Arthur Dillon was prompted to publish an even longer manual nineteen years

later repeating some of the arguments made by his precursor in favour of sidewalks while adding others.[80] Confronted by the English example, Dillon found it difficult to explain why sidewalks did not exist in France and lambasted what he perceived as administrative apathy. He thought it a particularly French error to consider sidewalks as a luxury; this might be the case in a small village, he wrote, but in a large city they were a necessity, if only to reduce the well-established dangers posed to pedestrians. In contrast to the chaos and insecurity of Paris' streets, London's sidewalks were a social space where men could relax their vigilance and enjoy the city while strolling. He particularly underscored the irony that Paris' dozens of public parks were marooned like islands in the sea, inaccessible without a horse and carriage, making them wonderful for élites but immaterial to the people. Like the author of the *Projet*, he believed that walking was the best way of keeping fit and he, too, proposed a classification of streets according to their width which would determine the number and kind of sidewalks they should receive (on one side or both, elevated or flush with the pavement).

Dillon's reasoning was also creative in ways that surpassed previous writings about the street. He was especially fixated on their dirtiness, and while he made the prosaic observation that walking through them stained one's clothing (as well as the staircases of homes one entered), he went further in explicitly associating uncleanliness of the body with the corruption of morals. Whereas in London, he wrote, even the meanest person could go about without worrying about filth, the dirtiness of Paris' poor street-dwellers turned them against those whom they believed despised them for their

[80] Arthur Dillon, *Utilité, possibilité, facilité de construire des trottoirs dans les rues de Paris* (Paris: Desenne, 1802).

squalor, explaining why so many were on the point of sedition.[81] "All travellers have remarked that cleanliness and civilization have always gone hand-in-hand among the savages," the abbot opined, becoming one of the first thinkers to establish a link between the built environment and behaviour.[82] By improving the condition of cities' physical habitats he hoped to introduce a revolution in social relations between different classes, removing a chief obstacle to the streets' visitation by the well-to-do. It is therefore unsurprising that he attributed a policing function to sidewalks, which would make the streets easier to patrol, above all at night.

Dillon was impressively prescient about the steps required to implement sidewalks and the benefits they could offer the citizenry. Above all, he considered their advantages for commerce to be one of the best arguments in their favour. At the time, storefront windows were so plastered with mud that it was impossible to see the wares they displayed and the lack of sidewalks discouraged valuable foot traffic from passing in front of boutiques, making window shopping the exception rather than the norm. Naturally, he was convinced that shopkeepers and theatre-owners would gladly pay the city to establish sidewalks in front of their businesses – which eventually occurred – thus correctly anticipating the transformation of retail shopping that would soon take place on the boulevards and in the city's luxury districts. Dillon accurately predicted the way in which the state would introduce sidewalks to the capital twenty years later: through laws fixing the width of roads, requiring sidewalks before all new buildings,

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[81] Douglas' argument about purity and cleanliness are especially pertinent in the abbot's case. It is worth noting that one of the French words for mud, *fange*, can also mean a moral stain or degradation and is heavily associated with an inferior social condition (one speaks of being born in or lifted from *la fange*).
[82] As retrograde as Dillon's opinion might appear, it bears strong similarities to Claude Levi-Strauss' observation that Christian missionaries were only able to convert the Bororo once they had removed them from their traditional villages and displaced them to European-style towns. In the opinion of Paul-Lévy, "Modifying the habitat of a group is to modify its values, to modify its social being, and to render it permeable, malleable or subject to the values of those who are able to propose or impose the structure and norms of the new habitat." Paul-Lévy, *La Ville en Croix*, 27-30.

and forbidding citizens from depositing their waste in the street. He additionally foresaw the construction of a model sidewalk to convince Parisians of their utility, the shift from concave to convex roads (to eliminate their central gutters), the division between elevated and flush sidewalks, and their eventual spread throughout the capital beginning with the main roads and extending to the rest in order of their importance.

If these calls to action were heard they went unheeded for many years, notwithstanding the piecemeal construction of a few dozen metres of footway on private initiative.[83] In 1803 the first prefect of the Seine, Nicolas Frochot, invited the mayors of each arrondissement to solicit the opinion of property-owners on whether sidewalks should be built; the majority saw more inconveniences than advantages, perhaps because it was proposed that they pay for them, and the idea was not pursued during his mandate.[84] The first concrete municipal project for the construction of sidewalks dates from 1811 and was proposed not by the prefect, but by a man named Delabord, the master of petitions for the service des Ponts et Chaussées. In a letter addressed to his chief engineer, M. Bertin, he spoke of a project he had conceived for the establishment of sidewalks in the principal roads of Paris and requested that a map indicating the streets that should receive them be drawn.[85] It was his hope that twenty percent of Paris' paved surfaces, representing between 100,000 and 130,000 square metres of surface area, could be covered in a continuous line representing the 'trunk' of the city's many 'branches.' He reminded his engineer that the tracing must cover the roads which communicate

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[83] The first modern, stone sidewalk in Paris was built in 1781 in the rue d'Angoulême and was financed entirely by the comte Gaudi. "Premier trottoir," 3 floréal an III, AP D15S1 15. La rue de la Paix received sidewalks in 1814, though likewise on private initiative. "Trottoirs rue de la Paix," Ibid.
[84] Nicolas Goulet, *Observations sur les embellissemens de Paris et sur les monumens qui s'y construisent* (Paris: Leblanc, 1808), 165-166.
[85] Letter from Delabord to Bertin, 24 September 1811, AP VONC 1295

with the most frequented neighbourhoods, and asked that different colours be used to distinguish elevated from non-elevated sidewalks.

In addition to location, questions about when and where tests could be performed, how best to finance these experiments, the authorization required to obtain work permits, and whether ministerial approval was needed to charge sidewalks to property-owners figured prominently in Delabord's reflections.[86] Clearly invested in the undertaking, he submitted these queries to Bertin and impatiently awaited a reply during the following months.[87] It is unlikely that Delabord ever received his map. While some preliminary studies were performed on the possible form and projected costs of sidewalks (fig. 3),[88] an extensive report – possibly Bertin's, though it bears no signature – quickly put an end to all discussion of the project.[89]

[86] Letter from Delabord to unknown, 25 March 1811, Ibid,
[87] Letter from Delabord to unknown, 11 October 1811, Ibid.
[88] "Année 1811, Profil d'un trottoir pour une rue de 10 à 12 mètres de largeur," Ibid.
[89] "Sur les trottoirs," Ibid.

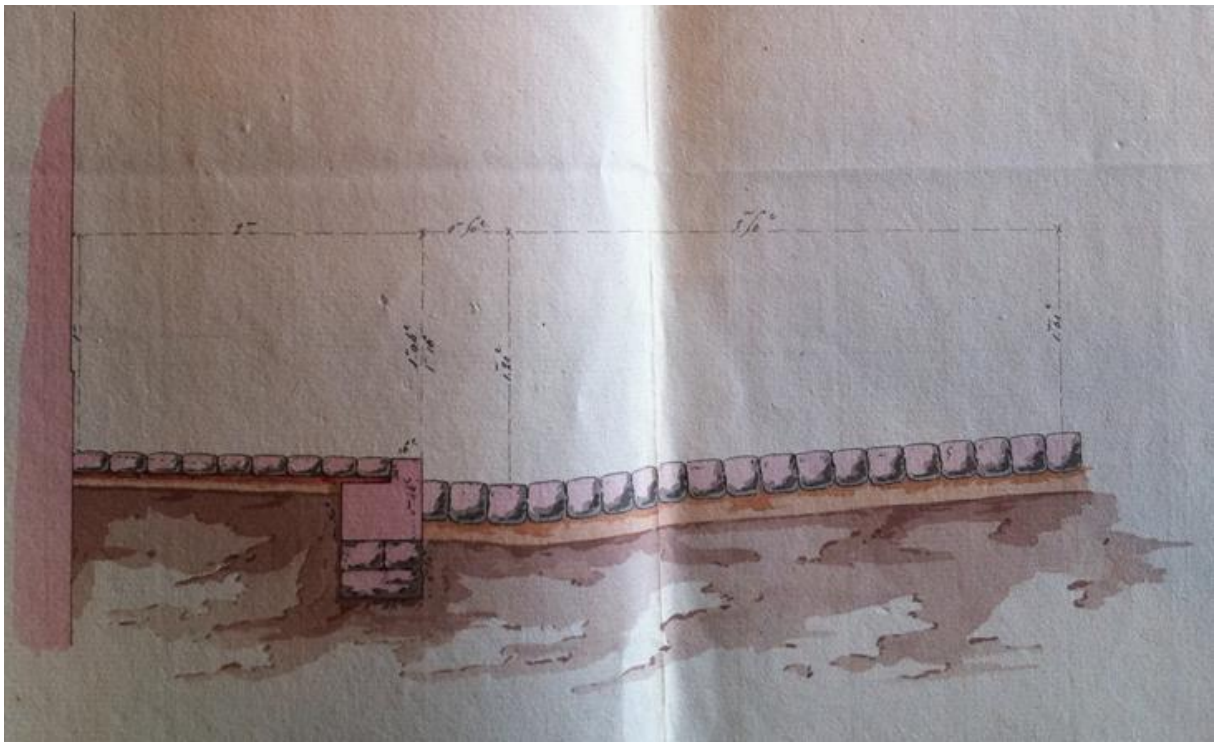

Figure 3 – Early drawing of a proposed sidewalk design, 1811

The report began by estimating the total number of roads in Paris at 1,147. Of these, only 108 were at least ten metres wide and were exclusively found in the neighbourhoods of the Marais, St-Honoré, St-Germain, and St-Marcel. In the engineer's opinion, elevated sidewalks could not be built in streets less than ten metres across without impeding two-way traffic but the alternative, sidewalks flush with the pavement, seemed pointless since he conjectured that carriages would simply drive on them, negating their usefulness to pedestrians. That being the case, a continuous network of sidewalks throughout city would be impossible to achieve. While the report acknowledged the inconveniences of the street for pedestrians, it expressed concern that any reduction to the size of the roadway would lead to insoluble traffic congestion and even greater danger for those on foot in the area. The author even suggested that walking on sidewalks was itself a risky activity; their flagstones would be slippery and elevated borders could

trip pedestrians. Furthermore, for several years the city had been laying water conduits alongside the street and the engineer voiced his worry that sidewalks would both interfere with their functioning and complicate their repair. Lastly, he cited the difficulty of obtaining the required building materials and estimated the price of a metre of sidewalk at a grossly prohibitive 44 francs[90] (the actual cost was later found to be between 8 and 9 francs, and dropped to as little as 1.5 francs/m²).[91] In his opinion, while it was doubtless true that sidewalks were seen as useful by pedestrians, they were ill-suited to a city like Paris.

Delabord must have been sufficiently discouraged by his engineer to drop the question, notwithstanding the fallacies his arguments contained (pointed out a generation earlier by Dillon and the anonymous pamphleteer). The French administration had nothing more to do with sidewalks until 1822 when Chabrol de Volvic, who had been appointed prefect of the Seine ten years earlier, adopted the cause. In his memoirs, Chabrol wrote that he had been inspired to do so by a trip to London that same year during which he studied "the system of water distribution, sewers, and sidewalks in this capital to see what could be usefully imitated for the cleanliness and hygiene of Paris."[92] Even before then, however, he had been convinced of their utility and was hard at work tackling prejudices against their construction.[93] However, there existed two other im-

[90] See also "Sous-détail pour un mètre courant de trottoir de 2m de largeur, bordé en pierre de taille en roche dûre, 8 April 1811," which estimated the cost at 40.10 francs per m², Ibid.
[91] "Trottoirs, Rapport de M. Chabrol au Conseil Municipal, 27 août 1823 en lui présentant le projet de budget de 1824," AP D15S1 15 ; Letter from unknown to Chabrol, 31 March 1828, AP VONC 1295
[92] Gilbert-Joseph-Gaspard de Chabrol de Volvic, *Souvenirs inédits de M. le comte Chabrol de Volvic*, ed. Michel Fleury (Paris: Commission des travaux historiques, Ville de Paris, 2002), 57.
[93] Ibid., 52-53.

portant antecedents to his project that he did not cite as influences but which would have been impossible to ignore: the boulevard and the arcade.

In 1670 Louis XIV demolished the medieval ramparts that surrounded the city and converted them into promenades which were named boulevards.[94] At thirty metres across these thoroughfares were wider than anything Paris had seen before and permitted carriages to pass one another with ease. Most importantly, however, they were lined by a double row of trees on each side that began approximately four metres from the neighbouring buildings. This simple division of the street into distinct zones created a kind of proto-sidewalk on which pedestrians could walk without fear of being run over. For this reason, they quickly became Parisians' favourite place to stroll outdoors when the weather was pleasant.

Chabrol's second source of inspiration, the covered *passage*, flourished in Paris at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Over twenty-five were built between 1811 and 1839, most during the 1820s.[95] Usually constructed on church land expropriated during the Revolution, particularly in the financial district around the bourse, they were created by private entrepreneurs who saw a means of profiting from the dangers posed to pedestrians by the street. By offering clean, attractive, and safe spaces for those on foot, they could lure pedestrians towards the boutiques, cafés and theatres which lined them.[96] If weather was inclement, passers-through would linger in front of elaborate storefront displays meant to entice shoppers to enter the shop. Key to their success, however, was their illumination at night (in 1817 the *Passage des panoramas* became

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[94] This name comes from 'boulevart' (literally 'green ball') which designated the grass-covered hillocks on the other side of the ditches which surrounded the wall.
[95] Hahn, *Scenes of Parisian Modernity*, 32. The original covered passageway in Paris was the galérie de bois, built in 1786 across the courtyard of the Palais-Royal to link its two principal arcades.
[96] Luc Passion, "Marcher dans Paris au XIXe siècle," in Caron, *Paris et ses réseaux*, 33.

the first place in Paris to be lit by gas) which created an 'outdoor interior' brighter than most Paris homes.[97] In short, the arcade was the ideal microcosm of a pedestrian city. Just as importantly, its status as a fashionable destination suggested a powerful demand among affluent members of the public for new forms of urban organization.

Faced with these two models of successful pedestrian spaces, Chabrol set to creating his own. Doing so required convincing the sceptical municipal council, in charge of voting financing for public works, of the endeavour's necessity. So it was that every year beginning in 1818, Chabrol presented a report to the council explaining the need to give Parisians places to walk. He attempted to shame the city into building them, appealing to patriotic sentiment by contrasting Paris' grand monuments to the disgraceful environments in which they stood and which made them inaccessible to shocked visitors whose own capital cities had long ago been endowed with sidewalk systems.[98] He appealed to its frugality, pointing out that property-owners had already indicated a willingness to help fund a project that could potentially double the value of their holdings and that construction would create employment among the working class.[99] Most of all, he impressed upon the council its responsibility to ensure that "the active population is able to go from one point to another with less fatigue, sheltered from the danger of being struck by vehicles."[100] Concern for the needs and wants of the citizenry permeated Chabrol's reports throughout his career. His entreaties, however, had no effect for several more years, indicating that active resistance (likely as a result of thrift) rather than

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[97] Delattre, *Les douze heures noires : La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle*, 94.
[98] "Extrait d'un mémoire présenté par le comte de Chabrol, Conseiller d'état, Préfet du département de la Seine, au conseil général de ce département concernant l'execution du projet d'alignement des rues de la ville de Paris, n.d., XII - Projet relatif à l'établissement des trottoirs dans les quartiers principaux," AP D15S1 15.
[99] "Elargissement des rues ; trottoirs - Rapport de M. Chabrol, au Conseil Municipal 6 nov 1818 en présentant le projet de budget de 1819," AP D15S1 15.
[100] "Trottoirs, Rapport de M. Chabrol au Conseil Municipal, 24 août 1822, en lui présentant le projet de budget de 1823," AP D15S1 15.

apathy was the reason for Paris' dearth of walking spaces. In 1821, the prefect changed strategy and proposed to build a model sidewalk in the rue des Coquilles using several different materials in order to best gauge the cost-effectiveness and durability of each.[101] This limited experiment was sanctioned and proved to be decisive.

By the early 1820s, Chabrol was no longer alone in wanting sidewalks for the capital and had received several proposals from the new chief engineer of the *Ponts et Chaussées*, Boistard, on how to best accomplish the task, some of which he forwarded to the director-general of the engineering corps.[102] Boistard's plans included not only the integrated waterspouts for which Paris is still famous today, but also conduits for hydrogen gas which was at this time being studied as a means to light the city. In August of 1822, Chabrol considered the tests performed on the rue des Coquilles to be so satisfactory that in his opinion they would doubtless quell all arguments which had until then been made against the possibility of a general system of sidewalks in Paris. Profiting from the occasion, he moved quickly to accomplish his goal of "placing sidewalks in the principal streets, such that a man on foot, starting from anywhere, should be able to go to the furthest neighbourhoods while always finding in the aforementioned streets a clean and flat surface and the means of arriving at his destination by an uninterrupted path of sidewalks."[103]

He wrote the engineers of each arrondissement ordering them to prepare, as rapidly as possible, a plan indicating each of the streets that should receive sidewalks, "keeping in mind the neighbourhood and the needs of circulation," and asked for ele-

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[101] "Trottoirs, rapport de M. Chabrol, 10 février 1821, en présentant le projet de budget de 1822," AP D15S1 15. Destroyed during the construction of the rue de Rivoli, this ancient street was at the intersection of the present-day rue du Temple and the place de l'Hôtel de Ville.
[102] "Réponse à une note de M. Boistard, du 15 Janvier 1823," by unknown, 17 January 1823 ; Letter by Chabrol to unknown, 14 February 1823, AP VONC 1295.
[103] Letter from Chabrol to unknown, 22 August 1822, AP VONC 1295

vated sidewalks in streets wider than 10 metres and footpaths level with the ground in the rest.[104] In his opinion, the majority of construction would encompass the neighbourhoods of the right bank, though some of the larger streets of the faubourg St-Germain should be included as well, indicating a decided partiality for the wealthy sections of the city and somewhat straining the definition of a 'general system.' Unlike the 1811 plan, Chabrol's sidewalks were to be approximately 1.5 metres wide and built of large flagstones cut from inexpensive volcanic rock quarried in the Auvergne rather than of paving stones in order to ensure a regular and even walking surface that was also resistant to wear and easy to clean.[105] Their elevated borders would be built of Norman granite, impervious to the shocks of wayward carriage wheels. Roads adjoining sidewalks would be repaved to be slightly convex, diverting water from the middle of the road toward two gutters that ran alongside the granite borders (and eventually into sewers which Chabrol was also building at the time).[106]

On December 12th 1822, eleven years after Delabord had made the request, a map of Paris' proposed sidewalks was finally drawn up by Boistard (fig. 4).[107] Elevated footpaths were indicated in red, those flush with the street in blue. As Chabrol had predicted, the vast majority of proposed routes were concentrated in the affluent north-western corner of the city; much of the centre (today's first and third through sixth *arrondissements*) was hardly touched. Rather than cynically interpreting this allocation as proof of disregard for the poor, it must be viewed in light of the proposal Chabrol crafted to make his project palatable to the municipal council. Instead of having the city

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[104] Letter from Chabrol to unknown, cc. to the engineers of each arrondissement with an invitation to follow the model for the establishment of sidewalks included, AP VONC 1295
[105] "État indicatif..." AP VONC 1295
[106] Letter from the Secretary General of the Prefecture de Police [illegbile], to M. Devilliers, chief engineer of the Pavé de Paris, 2 August 1828, AP VONC 1295
[107] "Affaires générales, 1822. Projet d'établissement des trottoirs dans les rues de Paris en 1822," AP VONC 1295

simply pay for sidewalk construction, he proposed that it offer a subsidy of one third to one half of the cost – according to the importance of the street – to any property-owner who took it upon himself to have a sidewalk placed in front of his building, with an aim to encouraging all owners in a single street to build an unbroken line. The city would organize construction centrally and assume responsibility for sidewalks' upkeep once built. In his memoirs Chabrol presented this as a shrewd victory ("with a hundred thousand francs, we accomplished work worth three hundred thousand")[108] but given the difficulty he had in acquiring support for his project well into the late 1820s, it was likely just an expedient and proved a constraint that caused significant problems for his successor. Naturally, districts with the greatest concentration of wealthy homeowners and luxury boutiques were given preference by such a scheme. In subsequent writings, the prefect made it clear that he envisaged covering the entire city with a grid of connected sidewalks, and eventually hoped to build them along all 351 kilometres (90 *lieues*) of Paris' streets.[109]

[108] Chabrol de Volvic, *Souvenirs inédits*, 72.
[109] "Trottoirs, Rapport de M. Chabrol au Conseil Municipal, 13 août 1827, en présentant le projet de budget de 1828," AP D15S1 15.

Figure 4 – Project for the establishment of sidewalks in Paris, 1822

On Chabrol's map the centre was nevertheless entirely surrounded and several important roads including the rues Montmartre, St-Denis, du Temple, du Vieille du Temple, du Roule, and de St-Antoine, as well as the quays running from the Louvre to the Hôtel de Ville penetrated into the heart of Paris, each a vein for conveying Parisians from the outer arrondissements to the inner city. The monuments and important sites there, such as the Palais de Justice, the Cathedral of Nôtre-Dame, the place du Châtelet and the Marché des Innocents were also projected to receive sidewalks, despite the fact that these last two were reputed to be among the most insalubrious sections of the

city.[110] These channels and islets, once developed and elaborated, would play an important role in the mounting encroachment of the middle and upper classes upon the medieval interior.

The dream of a universal sidewalk system was not realized in Chabrol's lifetime. Although his enthusiasm was unflagging (he reminded the council of their importance at every annual budget meeting until the end of his career), it was not until 1827 that he received any direct funding for their encouragement, a meagre 10,000 francs. Progress before then had been slow – in 1822 Paris had only 267 metres of sidewalks; five years later their length had increased to a paltry seven kilometres – and Chabrol was obliged to build a second test sidewalk at Châtelet in 1825 to definitively convince the city of the feasibility of his proposal.

The year 1828, however, was a decisive turning point for the venture. Chabrol had put his ten thousand francs to good use, increasing the number of sidewalks by 38% in a single year,[111] and was rewarded for this assiduity with a tenfold increase in funding by the municipal council.[112] In October, engineers were writing him to express surprise at the increase in the number of requests for sidewalks they had received and asked if they could print thousands of necessary forms in advance to prevent adminis-

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[110] "[Châtelet] is the foulest-smelling place in the entire world. There are found sombre archways and the obstructions of a dirty marketplace; next, there is a place where rotten corpses are placed, discovered either floating in the river or else assassinated somewhere in the city. Add a prison, a butcher shop, and an abattoir: all this comprises a single pestilent city block. . . Carriages are obliged to make a detour via a narrow road which contains a stinking sewer, opposite which is the rue Pied-de-Bœuf, that leads to fetid alleyways bathed in the blood of livestock, half rancid and half draining into the river. . . The stench is so asphyxiating that you are obliged to hold your breath and hurry through." Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. 5, Nouvelle éd. originale, corrigée et augmentée. (Paris: INALF, 1961), 101-102; Maxime Du Camp's description of the Halles' transformation in the 1850s gives an idea of its prior state: "the criss-cross passages, dirty, unhealthy, by which one arrived with difficulty on the square, have given way to large passageways, airy and commodious; those cabarets which, at midnight, opened their doors to the entire vagabond population of the big city. . . have been uprooted and moved outside the limits of Paris." Maxime Du Camp, *Paris, ses organes, ses fonctions et sa vie, dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris: Hachette, 1874), 153.

[111] "Exercise 1827," AP VONC 1295.

[112] Letter from Chabrol to unknown, 17 January 1828, AP VONC 1295.

trative backlog.[113] An ironically encouraging sign of progress was the volume of complaints received by the prefect of police that year about road obstructions due to sidewalk construction, which prompted him to publish a decree specifying rules regulating work sites.[114] By the end of the year, Chabrol was ebullient; he had used his 100,000 francs to place sidewalks along the near-entirety of the rues de Richelieu and St-Honoré and approvingly noted both their quick construction in main streets and their spread to secondary roads.[115]

Attitudes among public officials towards the improvement of the street began to change at this time as well. By early 1829, the once-recalcitrant municipal council had pronounced itself in favour of sidewalks and asked Chabrol to request that the city's ministers and heads of administration install them in front of all government buildings.[116] His annual funding soared and remained substantial thereafter (fig. 5),[117] leading to a corresponding increase in construction (fig. 6).[118]

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[113] Letter from unknown to Chabrol, 4 October 1828, AP VONC 1295.
[114] Letter from Letter from the Secretary General of the Prefecture de Police [illegbile], to M. Devilliers, 29 July 1828; Prefectoral decree of 1 August 1828, AP VONC 1295.
[115] "Trottoirs, Rapport de M. Chabrol au Conseil Municipal, septembre 1828 en lui présentant le budget de 1829," AP D15S1 15.
[116] Letter from Chabrol to unknown, 27 March 1829, AP VONC 1295.
[117] This graph was created with statistics listed in: "Trottoirs, extraits d'un rapport présenté par le Préfet au conseil municipal, 27 décembre 1834," AP D15S1 15. See table 3 in the appendix for the raw data.
[118] This graph was created with statistics compiled from two documents: "Trottoirs & dallages, tableau indiquant les quantités executés jusqu'au 31 décembre 1829, dans l'étendue de Paris, 26 février 1830, signed Vinceller"; "Trottoirs... 27 décembre 1834," AP D15S1 15.

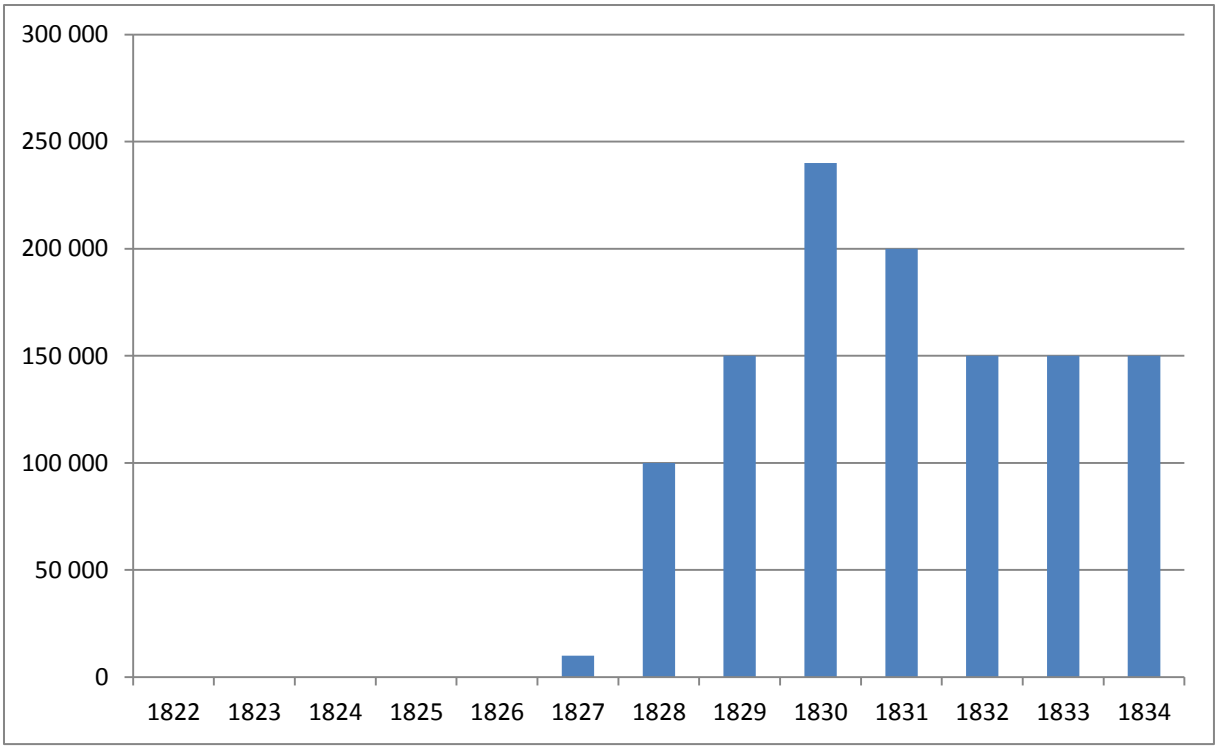

Figure 5 – Muncipal funding for sidewalks in francs, 1822-1834

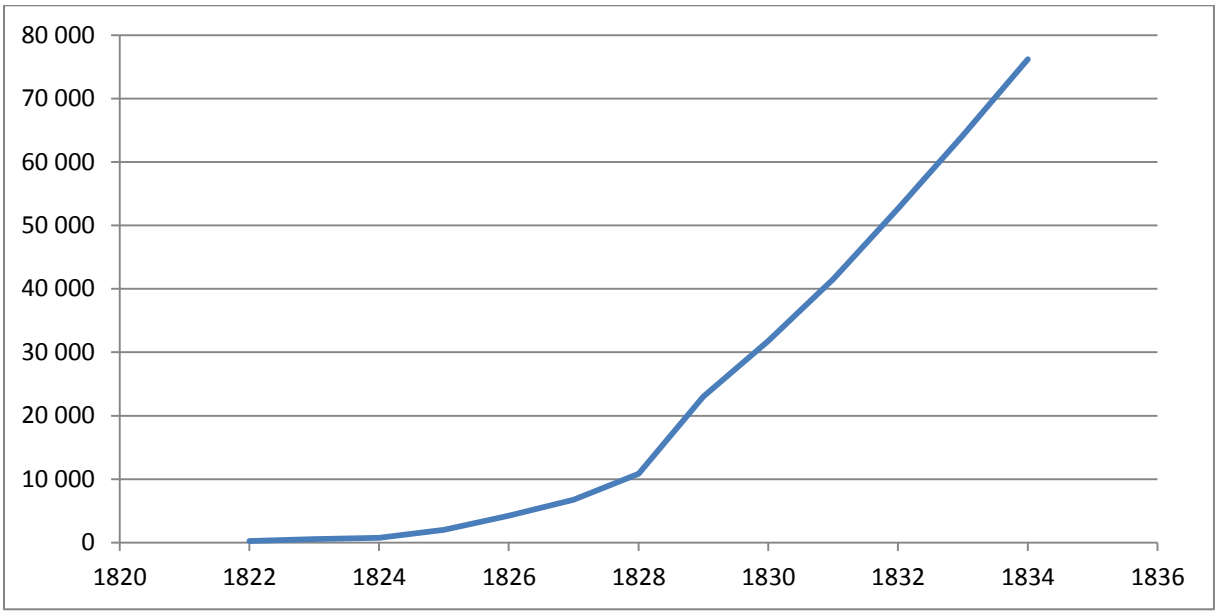

Figure 6 – Total length of sidewalks in metres, 1822-1834

We must take care, however, not to assume that the long-awaited realization of sidewalk construction was the simple consequence of increased political and financial backing; the success of Chabrol's plan required broad support among Parisian property-owners, who in turn were responding to a number of social and economic pressures, including demand from below. Building more attractive spaces drew pedestrian traffic to stores, restaurants and cafés, encouraging their proliferation and increasing the desirability of those built areas, which in turn drove rents (and profits) up. Chabrol's enterprise put urbanism into the hands of a cross-section of the citizenry who created, little by little, the kinds of urban spaces their clientele demanded. Paris' modern sidewalk network was not the organized product of a master plan, but rather the makeshift outcome of a process controlled by the end user, the bourgeois citizen. The novelty of this development cannot be overemphasized. Chabrol had created a mechanism that allowed property-owning citizens to decide what kind of neighbourhood they wanted to see develop around their buildings. Their collective choices determined how the city would be spatially organized for pedestrians for the next twenty years, the consequences of which would be felt long after.

The shift in outlook towards sidewalk construction was faithfully reported by the press, which observed in 1829 that "nothing is more remarkable than the eagerness of property-owners to profit from the subsidy offered by the city for the construction of sidewalks (at their cost, it should be noted)."[119] Their zeal must be understood as part of a larger transformation in the way sidewalks were viewed by the public. Prior to the second half of the 1820s, not a single Parisian newspaper had published an article about their utility or possible construction; they became an important issue practically

[119] 7 June 1829, *Journal des débats politiques et littéraires* (Paris, n.d.).

overnight. The *Journal des débats*, the most-read newspaper of the Restoration and the July Monarchy, led the way with several editorials by a writer identified only as 'D.' who made urbanism his cause célèbre for the next several years. In 1826, he published a long article on the need for promenades, sidewalks, and street-sweepers in the capital. In it he repeated the many arguments made by Mercier and Dillon about safety and cleanliness, but he presented them as a reporter chronicling the demands of the populace whose fiscal contributions to the city were not being allocated as they wished:

> A man in possession of his tax receipt, having been splashed from head to foot by a carriage, and who for lack of a sidewalk is nearly crushed by another one alongside a boutique, can be pardoned several sharp words directed at the authority in charge of preventing such accidents. Each day while crossing the city, we encounter people whose impatience provokes similar discourses. . . "Can you believe," he said to the passers-by who were watching him wipe his face, "I just left the office of the tax collector who lives here; I live right over there, and have only to cross the gutter to arrive but you can see how that ended. It's dreadful! We should complain!" *He's right, it's dreadful! We should complain*, repeated those on foot, leaving the group they had formed around the man; *it's dreadful, we should complain!*[120]

D. not only portrayed the desire for sidewalks as a widespread phenomenon, but as a legitimate expectation of all bourgeois taxpayers.[121] He raised the spectre of Paris' wealthy finding the city so disagreeable that they might leave it altogether, foreshadowing official concerns about the westward drift of the city that emerged in the 1840s,

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[120] D., "Des Promenades, des Trottoirs et des Balayeurs," Variétés, 1 November 1826, Ibid.
[121] In 1846, two-thirds of Paris' population were not taxed; the city paid each of their four francs per year to the state, recognizing they were too poor to do so themselves. Marchand, *Paris, histoire d'une ville (XIXe-XXe siècle)*, 28.

though he implied that sufficient urban improvements could prevent this from happening. His line of argument was clearly designed to appeal to the self-interest of an affluent audience and to the fears of the government which claimed to represent them.

Another important contribution to the change in mentality was civic pride. As improvements to the roadway became more common, Parisians were able to leave behind their long-held sense of inferiority to Londoners. As early as 1828, D. was counselling his readers not to fret over unfair comparisons between in the two capitals. He reminded them that if London's streets were improved much earlier than their own, it was only because the Great Fire of 1666 had laid waste to the old city, facilitating the task. Paris was spared this disaster so it was normal that improvements had taken place progressively and therefore less quickly than abroad. "It is well to profit by a tragedy when possible; however, it would be too much to wish for a blaze in order to walk in wider streets a few years ahead of schedule."[122] English superiority was thus reduced from a virtue to a historical accident whose benefits were steadily – and with less agony -- being acquired in France. In an article from 1829, the *Journal de Paris* quoted an English author who had mocked the city by claiming the shapeliness of Parisian women's legs could be explained by the lack of sidewalks which forced them to walk everywhere on tip-toe.[123] By then, however, the journalist was able to point to the significant progress made in the capital, though he hoped – with a wink – that its women would still walk on tip-toe upon the newly-constructed sidewalks.[124] A significant achievement of Chabrol's urban program was to allow Parisians to feel good about their city's outdoor envi-

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[122] D., "Monuments en construction à Paris, Le Pont Louis XVI – Le Pont de la Grève – Le Pont de l'Archevêché," Feuilleton du Journal des débats, 10 August 1828, *Journal des débats*.
[123] This urban legend was quite popular among the English and was repeated again in *Impressions and Observations of a Young Person During a Residence in Paris*, published in 1844. See: *The Metropolitan magazine*, vol. 40 (London: Saunders and Otley, 1844), 118.
[124] "Trottoirs et largeur des rues (Premier article)," extrait du *Journal de Paris* du 1er septembre 1829, in AP D15S1 15

ronments in a way unknown to Mercier and his contemporaries, perpetuating demand for greater improvements.

The *Trois Glorieuses* of 1830 ended the reign of the Bourbon kings in France forever and with it Chabrol's career. Regardless, as the graphs above show, the short careers of the following three prefects of the Seine – Alexandre de Laborde, Odilon Barrot, and Pierre-Marie Taillepied de Bondy – did not prevent sidewalks from being built at the rate of 10 kilometres each year (though funding did decrease slightly). In other words, political upheaval and administrative flux did not affect this small-scale urban project. It had acquired sufficient inertia by means of government subsidies to continue without the impulsion of a central planner and indeed, Rambuteau's role in their construction was far smaller than Chabrol's had been. In his memoirs, Rambuteau described the city upon his arrival in 1833 as still sorely lacking in pedestrian infrastructure, writing that "above all, I tried to improve the streets which had great need of it. As soon as it rained, the majority were transformed into rivers which had to be crossed using wooden planks. No sidewalks, no gutters; we received showers from the roofs of houses."[125] This assessment certainly held true for many parts of the city, but it must be tempered with the knowledge that he claimed to have inherited only sixteen kilometres of sidewalks, nearly five times fewer than was actually the case. Nevertheless, it was clear that Paris was far from having the city-wide network of pedestrian walkways that Chabrol and many others had envisioned.[126]

[125] Rambuteau, *Mémoires*, 375.
[126] If all Paris streets were to eventually receive sidewalks along both sides, the total length of constructions would be close to 700 kilometres, ten times the number that existed in 1834.

Although no statistics on walking exist from this period,[127] an 1836 report by the city's chief engineer on state of sidewalks gives an idea of their widespread use. While the granite borders of sidewalks built since 1822 had held up well, their igneous flagstones wore down quite quickly, becoming uneven and potholed in high-traffic areas. It became necessary to repair and even completely rebuild a number sidewalks built in the early 1820s. "Experience has shown," he wrote, "that in the most highly-frequented streets, which is to say, in three quarters of the streets of Paris, flagstones built of volcanic rock cannot last more than ten to twelve years."[128] It is unclear whether he was referring to all Paris streets or just those with sidewalks (approximately a third of city streets had them at the time), but his report nevertheless shows that the sidewalk was a popular invention. While this fact certainly indicated the release of a pent-up demand, it was also a consequence of their increasing availability. Jan Gehl has shown that while so-called necessary activities such as going to work or school are largely unaffected by the urban environment, the frequency of optional activities (which are primarily recreational) and social activities (which depend on the presence of others) are highly correlated to the quality of outdoor spaces.[129] Otherwise stated, sidewalks were creating pedestrians even as pedestrians created sidewalks, a positive feedback loop that encouraged their further construction.

Unsurprisingly, it was during the 1830s that the public finally began to recognize and comment on their usefulness. The press, which had always championed their introduction, was obviously the first to do so but non-professionals soon followed suit.

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[127] The prefecture of police only began keeping statistics on vehicular and pedestrian circulation in the early twentieth century. Passion, "Marcher dans Paris au XIXe siècle," in Caron, *Paris et ses réseaux*, 35.
[128] "Rapport sur l'état actuel des trottoirs et sur leur amélioration," 4 August 1836, by chief engineer Partiot, AP VONC 1323
[129] Jan Gehl, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*, Fifth Edition. (Skive: Arkitektens Forlag, 2001), 11-16.

To celebrate the occasion of the baptism of the Queen's son in 1838, an anonymous pamphleteer published a short historical summary of all the improvements made to Paris since her reign began which included praise for "sidewalks which offer pedestrians a safe and easy means of walking" alongside mentions of beautiful new monuments and the restoration of the Château de Versailles.[130] By 1835 even the notoriously chauvinistic English writer Fanny Trollope, who often disparagingly compared Paris to London, was obliged to admit the immense progress that had been made in recent years:

> Among the many recent improvements in Paris which evidently owe their origin to England... [is the] the frequent blessing of a *trottoir*. In a few years... there can be no doubt that it will be almost as easy to walk in Paris as in London. [...] those who knew Paris a dozen years ago, when one had to hop from stone to stone in the fond hope of escaping wet shoes in the Dogdays – tormented too during the whole of this anxious process with the terror of being run over by carts, nacres, concous, cabs, and wheelbarrows; –whoever remembers what it was to walk in Paris then, will bless with an humble and grateful spirit the dear little pavement which... borders most of the principal streets of Paris now.[131]

D., still writing for the *Journal des débats*, praised the administration for its efforts to date and urged it to go even further in its efforts to encourage urban hygiene, proposing that public toilets be installed in the street, an idea which Rambuteau put into practice in 1834, eventually constructing 478 throughout the city.[132] Though mocked by members of the opposition who called them "Rambuteau's columns" in memory of the em-

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[130] J. C., *Petite notice historique, dédiée à Marie-Amélie, reine des Français : à l'occasion du baptême du comte de Paris* (Paris: Imprimerie de Stahl, 1838), 7.
[131] Frances Trollope, *Paris and the Parisians in 1835* (London: Richard Bentley, 1836), 347-348.
[132] Gérard Bertolini, *Le marché des ordures: économie et gestion des déchets ménagers* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1990), 168.

peror Vespasian who had introduced public urinals to Rome, they discouraged scenes like those described by Mercier in the 1780s: "The worst thing about [carriage entrances] is that every passer-by urinates in front of them. When coming home you encounter a pisser beneath your staircase who stares at you without troubling himself."[133]

An article by D. written in 1832 contains a wealth of information about the physical transformation that was at work in the street during this period. Though he was far from disinterested in the work being done, doubts about his reliability are mitigated by his constant insistence that the city had not gone far enough, in which case he is unlikely to have exaggerated the extent of progress. He contentedly noted that sidewalks successfully isolated dirt and filth from the fronts of houses, but in his opinion this only rendered it even more necessary than before for both the police and individuals to ensure the cleanliness of buildings. Whereas the abbot Dillon believed that the sidewalk's cleanliness was next to godliness, D.'s conviction was that it begat good civic habits:

> ...to introduce among the inhabitants of a large capital customs of cleanliness [...] we must successively take away both the means and the habit of being dirty. This is what the establishment of sidewalks has already accomplished concerning street-sweeping, and is what it can further accomplish to eradicate certain shocking behaviours [urination] in public.[134]

The administration found itself in agreement and by 1836, the prefecture of police had made daily cleaning of the sidewalk by building-owners compulsory and ordered that all dirty waters be discharged into the gutters that ran beneath the flagstones rather

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[133] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, 1:96.
[134] D., "Assainissement de Paris. Egouts. – Trottoirs. – Hôtel-Dieu.," 24 July 1832, in *Journal des débats*.

than thrown into the street.[135] Even by D.'s time, social pressures introduced by urban renewal were changing urban culture in certain parts of the city. "The cleanliness of sidewalks," he wrote, "leads to that of storefronts, and this second kind of cleanliness, which in many neighbourhoods has transformed itself into elegance, already renders entire streets inaccessible to the dumping of all sorts of refuse." The luxury of the city's chic shopping districts depended on their ability to present an attractive image to potential customers, a responsibility their residents took seriously.

A last, notable change to the street occurred before D.'s watchful gaze. Eighteenth-century Paris was filled with animals – not only horses, but also livestock raised in the pastures which encircled the city and which were led into it to be butchered in abattoirs located near its centre. Mercier deplored this practice, complaining that "blood flows in the streets, congealing beneath one's feet and reddening one's shoes."[136] Although slaughterhouses were moved to the city limits by Napoleon in 1811, the capital still abounded with animals fifty years later, in particular stray dogs. The problem had become so severe that several times each year the police organised mass slaughters to attempt to reduce their numbers.[137] Not only was the poison used to kill them wildly expensive (between ten and twelve thousand francs were spent during each culling), but it had no effect on the number of dogs in the road.[138] Yet small-scale urbanism was beginning to change this situation:

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[135] Préfecture de la Seine, *Recueil administratif du département de la Seine*, vol. 1 (Paris: Imprimerie de la Préfecture de Police, 1836), 273-277.
[136] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, 1:123.
[137] "Abattage des animaux," in A. Baudrimont, *Dictionnaire de l'industrie manufacturière, commerciale et agricole: ABA-CHI* (Brussels: Meline, Cans et Cie., 1837), 2.
[138] "Abatage des animaux (hygiène public)," in A. de Saint-Priest, ed., *Encyclopédie du dix-neuvième siècle* (Paris: E. Duverger, 1838), 16.

> For two years now, the number of stray dogs has singularly diminished in the neighbourhoods of Paris where roads are equipped with sidewalks. The recesses formed by walls and barriers where they once found trash no longer offer either refuge or food to these animals. They avoid all the streets with sidewalks where cleanliness is better assured and where the incessant walking of pedestrians has made their position unbearable.[139]

If the dogs could not be killed, they were at least being displaced to the margins of bourgeois society, a movement which spared night-time strollers the sight of rag-pickers beating them to death with canes to sell the carcasses to a knacker's yard.

The benefits of sidewalks were numerous and tangible, but they were not without their critics. The reproach most frequently made was that they were too narrow in many parts of the city. A journalist writing for the *Revue de Paris* in 1834 claimed that those arriving from two different directions on narrow footpaths often "clashed, like the two goats in the fable" and averred that he had even seen duels result from the ensuing arguments.[140] While the administration defended itself for this imperfection by pointing to the necessity of allowing enough space in the road for two carriages to pass one another (the one-way street had not yet been invented), most commenters saw it as a problem with walkers. Many believed that – as in London – foot traffic should follow the same rules as vehicular traffic and that pedestrians should always be obliged to stay on their right.[141] Few could be encouraged to do so, as hugging the wall was the surest way

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[139] D., "Assainissement de Paris. Egouts. – Trottoirs. – Hôtel-Dieu.," 24 July 1832, in *Journal des débats*.
[140] "Journal d'un flandrin, ou ce qu'on peut apprendre sur le pavé de Paris," in Louis Véron, Charles Rabou, and Amédée Pichot, eds., *Revue de Paris* (Paris, 1834), 166; Modern-day researchers have recently articulated the concept of "pedestrian rage" to explain antagonistic behaviour on city sidewalks. See: Shirley S. Wang, "Get Out of My Way, You Jerk!," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 15, 2011, sec. In the Lab, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703786804576138261177599114.html.
[141] Pierre Nicolas Berryer, *Derniers voeux d'un vieil électeur de 1789 pour l'avenir de la France et de la civilisation* (Paris: Dentu, 1841), 53.

of avoiding any errant vehicles or mud; Paul de Kock observed with amusement the dance of etiquette that occurred when two pedestrians encountered one another against a building, each insisting to offer the way to the other until one finally ceded.[142] Problems could likewise result when it rained as gentlemen's umbrellas banged into one another in close quarters, their ribs catching in the ribbons of women's hats. A second complaint was that shopkeepers took advantage of the space offered by sidewalks to illegally establish makeshift displays in front of their boutiques, further reducing their width and forcing pedestrians into the road when they crossed one another.[143] But although there were calls for improvement, not a single wish to see sidewalks disappear was expressed, a fact the prefecture explained rather pragmatically: "The pedestrian prefers to find [a narrow sidewalk], even if he must walk slowly, than to advance rapidly but dangerously in the midst of carriages which so often crash against the foundations of houses in roads without sidewalks."[144] The contentiousness that had so long delayed the construction of sidewalks in France was by the 1830s a thing of the past.

Sidewalks could not be found everywhere in the city and their uneven distribution was critical in shaping the social change they provoked. While the haphazard nature of their construction meant that no systematic records of their placement were kept[145] – obliging any historian seeking to determine their exact location to piece together the network, not merely one road a time, but one building at a time – some documents hint at the shape of their city-wide distribution. In late 1841, Rambuteau wrote

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[142] Paul de Kock, *La grande ville : nouveau tableau de Paris, comique, critique et philosophique*, vol. 2 (Paris: Bureau central des publications nouvelles, 1842), 51-52.
[143] Michel Masson, "Le Boutiquier," in *Nouveau tableau de Paris au XIXe siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris: Mme C. Béchet, 1834), 229.
[144] Préfecture de la Seine, *Recueil administratif du département de la Seine*, 1:276.
[145] Each section of sidewalk received its own form on which its vital statistics (length, material, location, etc.) were recorded. At the end of every year, these were listed in a table, but no attempt to provide a global picture was made.

to one of his engineers, informing him that the municipal council had drawn the administration's attention to gaps in the sidewalk system. He wished to know how to best fill those gaps and continue the construction of sidewalks; would it be possible to either modify the conditions of subsidization to favour long stretches of sidewalk or else permit less expensive kinds of sidewalks to be built to encourage their proliferation even in the least-frequented neighbourhoods?[146] The engineer's reply made it clear that economic inequality, not administrative inefficiency, was at the root of their uneven distribution.

"The system adopted for encouraging the construction of sidewalks," began his report, "has produced very good results in commercial streets of the first order, practically no results in poor neighbourhoods, and mediocre results in those in between."[147] In his opinion, it was impossible to adopt a global approach to the city; what was required instead was a division of its neighbourhoods into three classes according to their affluence, each of which would be offered different incentives and allowed to build different types of sidewalks. The engineer blamed the continual stinginess of property-owners for delayed construction in many parts of the city. As an additional inducement, the city had begun city installing waterspouts and granite borders alongside freshly-paved roads to encourage the construction of sidewalks by their residents; crafty owners therefore simply waited for their street to be paved before accepting to build a walkway, saving themselves the bulk of the expense. In areas where rents were low and retail commerce was rare, owners had the least economic incentive to develop their neighbourhoods and likely the fewest means, as well.

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[146] Letter from Rambuteau to illegible, 8 November 1841, AP VONC 1330.
[147] De Filans, "Rapport sur les questions posées par le Conseil municipal dans sa déliberation du 16 Juillet 1841...," 17 November 1841, in AP VONC 1330.

Sidewalks were therefore concentrated in the western half of Paris (fig. 7).[148] It is worth noting that property values were not highest in areas with the greatest concentration of personal wealth, but rather closer to the centre where the greatest number of new neighbourhoods and urban improvements had been constructed. The right bank's principal shopping districts were located within a triangle whose corners corresponded roughly to the Tuileries, the western boulevards, and the Halles, adjoining the wealthiest sections of the city. On the left bank, it is likely that only the faubourg Saint-Germain was completely covered with sidewalks. The main arteries that cut through the city (rues Saint-Martin, Saint-Antoine, de la Harpe, etc.) as well as all the interior boulevards likewise received them,[149] but the secondary roads between them were more or less likely to have seen substantial change in their configuration depending on their location. Working-class neighbourhoods like the faubourgs Saint-Marcel and Saint-Antoine remained, it seems, almost completely untouched. This natural outcome of entrusting their construction to the wealthiest members of society ensured that the public spaces created by sidewalks would be distinctly bourgeois in character.

[148] Figure adapted from Adeline Daumard, *La Bourgeoisie Parisienne de 1815 à 1848* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1996), 182-183.
[149] See the *Cahiers d'exercises* in AP VONC 1268, 1294, 1295, 1323, 1324, 1330, and 1333.

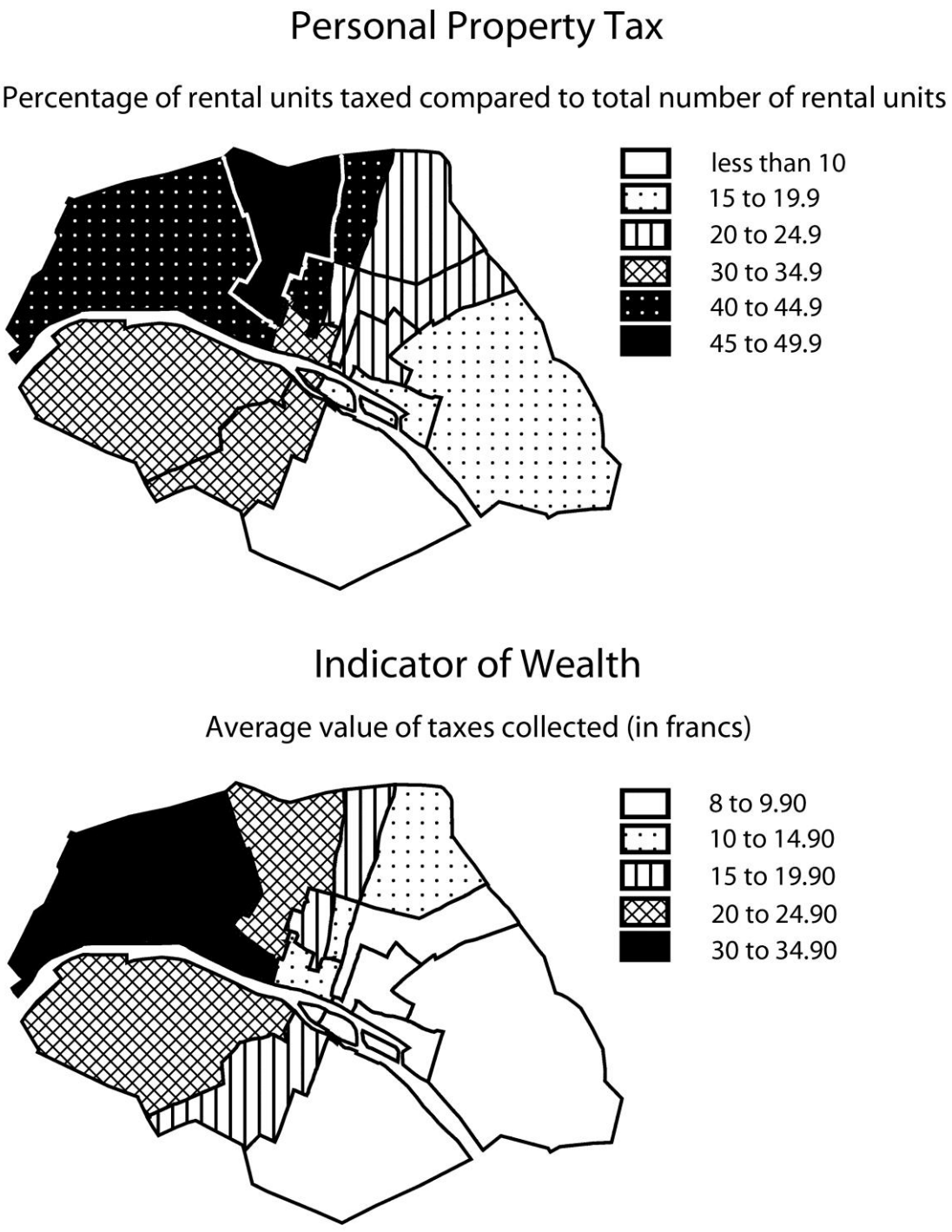

Figure 7 – Geographic distribution of wealth in Paris, 1846

The prefect refused to accept that Paris should not have a universal sidewalk system. His solution, rather than fiddling with incentives, was to press for legislation. On

June 7th 1845, he succeeded in convincing the national government to adopt a law requiring sidewalks to be placed in front of newly-constructed buildings everywhere in France.[150] According to the text of the law, "public utility demands... the establishment of sidewalks" to protect pedestrians and facilitate circulation. Its authors likewise cited the advantages sidewalks offered to property-owners, whose buildings' foundations they protected from the corrosive effects of rainwater and mud. Finally, they recognized that their construction "establishes easier and more direct relationships between the boutique, which displays and seeks to sell, and the public, which wants to see and considers buying," the first time such an association was acknowledged by the government in print. This, however, was not a means to force their construction in front of existing buildings; despite all his efforts, Rambuteau could not obtain a legislative measure making them obligatory for all property-owners before leaving office.[151] According to Charles Merruau, secretary general of the Prefecture of the Seine during the July Monarchy, his efforts were hampered by conflicts between the municipal and federal governments over expenses, a battle which the city's bourgeoisie eventually won.[152] Viewed cynically, this outcome suggests that those who paid taxes did not want their money spent on neighbourhoods they never frequented (thus ensuring they would never frequent them).

Rambuteau had nevertheless achieved much. Under his watch, all new sidewalks were built using granite slabs, making them more even and wear-resistant than their volcanic rock precursors. He also tested experimental sidewalks made of bitumen, asphalt, and concrete, the use of which greatly reduced cost and building times and which

[150] "Rapport à la chambre des députés relatif au projet de loi (adoptée le 7 juin 1845)," 1845, 1-2.
[151] Rambuteau, *Mémoires*, 376.
[152] Charles Merruau, *Souvenirs de l'hôtel de ville de Paris. 1848-1852* (Paris: Plon, 1875), 346-349.

the city later adopted. On April 15th 1846, he published a set of regulations governing their construction which insisted that they be placed along both sides of the street and included a table of dimensions for sidewalks in roads as narrow as 3.5 metres across, proof of his desire to leave no Paris street untouched.[153] In 1833 he had inherited an annual sidewalk budget of 150,000 francs which by 1847 had risen to three times that amount.[154] Over the course of fifteen years, the existing sidewalk network was greatly elaborated, increasing from 70 to nearly 200 kilometres in length.[155]

He also went further than Chabrol by embellishing pedestrian spaces. He commissioned several monumental fountains, most of which were designed by Louis Visconti, for the public squares at place Richelieu, place de la Concorde, place des Champs-Elysées, place Saint-Sulpice, and Notre-Dame. A great lover of trees, he planted thousands of them along the city's boulevards, quays, and avenues to provide shade for pedestrians (replacing those that had been torn down to form barricades during the Revolution of 1830) and created the city's first public garden on the Île de la Cité.[156] Until his arrival there was not a single public bench in all of Paris because of the practice of renting chairs, an omission he quickly corrected by placing them all over the city.[157] These trappings had the effect of transforming sidewalks from purely utilitarian conduits into delightful promenades leading to the many spectacular monuments he had built during his mandate. In his memoirs, he described his prefectural career as an attempt to divert and entertain as much as introduce improvements to public services:

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[153] "Règlement pour la construction des trottoirs dans Paris," AP D15S1 15
[154] 3 July 1847, *Journal des débats*.
[155] Rambuteau claims there were 195km of sidewalks in Paris by 1848, not including places, parks, quays, and boulevards. Figures in other sources place their total length at around 180km in 1847, a year before he left office. Rambuteau, *Mémoires*, 376.
[156] J. M. J. Bouillat, *Comte de Rambuteau, préfet de la Seine (1781-1869)*, Les Contemporains 1133 (Paris: 5, rue Bayard, 1914), 11.
[157] Lavedan, *Nouvelle Histoire de Paris*, 368.

> Parisians are like children: one must eternally occupy their minds. If one cannot give them a new war bulletin every month or a new constitution every year, it is indispensible to offer them a few construction sites and beautification projects to visit every day: it is a valve for their need of novelty, their rebellious temperament, and their discussions.[158]

The idea of the city as a mass spectacle was thus first articulated by the urbanism of the July Monarchy. Although Rambuteau clearly conceived of urban renewal as a means to discourage revolution (a task at which it failed miserably), he nevertheless contributed to the more enduring change of building liveable communities. The ways in which they were used began to rapidly transform Parisian urban culture.

[158] Rambuteau, *Mémoires*, 269.

The Liveable City

The Discovery of the Street

We saw above that sidewalks changed the way Paris was perceived in relation to London by the press, unburdening its citizens of the humiliation of their English rivals' ostensible superiority in civic matters. In fact, a great deal of literary evidence from the 1830s, 1840s, and early 1850s points to a more general shift in opinion about the value and possibilities of the city streets once they had been transformed into pedestrian spaces. Authors marvelled at the transformation the city had undergone and began to chronicle the different ways in which Parisians were increasingly interacting with their city and one another, leaving behind a rich documentary record for the historian. The importance of these writings lies not only in their descriptions of a changing city, but in the representations and evaluations of urban spaces they contained.

Authors describing the capital at this time wrote like explorers who had discovered a new country. Parisians had seemingly woken up to find that their city had transformed overnight. Beginning in the 1830s, large numbers of panoramic tableaux of Paris were published in quick succession, each purporting to better catalogue than the others the new-found phantasmagoria of a city where "everything changes, everything transforms, everything goes, everything appears and disappears."[159] The rehabilitation of streets under the supervision of Chabrol and Rambuteau contributed greatly to the idea that the metropolis was assuming an unrecognizable form. A vaudeville play from

[159] Edmond Texier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. 1 (Paris: Paulin et Le Chevalier, 1852), ii.

1839 began with its main character returning to the capital after a decade-long absence and expressing his amazement at its newness:

> *Bardin*: [...] I haven't been back for ten years and I don't know the place anymore; these new streets, these large sidewalks, and above all these carriages of all kinds which fill each neighbourhood and squash one or two people every hour. It's miraculous![160]

The idea of a rupture between an 'old' and a 'new' Paris first arose during this period, long before Haussmann began to alter the shape of the capital. One of the first uses of the term '*vieux Paris*' may even have occurred in a statistical compendium Chabrol compiled about the city in 1829 as part of a discussion about widening the inner city's medieval streets.[161] In any case, by 1832, J. T. Merle felt it timely to declare that "the old Paris is disappearing before our eyes; its monuments give way to long roads, cold and insignificant," and urged his fellow scriveners to immortalize it in writing before it completely vanished.[162] In 1837, the *Journal des desmoiselles* published an article describing the city centre which it concluded, without a trace of regret, by noting, "that is the old Paris, which the multitude of modern embellishments have ruined in the eyes of the inconsolable antiquary; that is the Paris of the middle ages which disappears more every day."[163]

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[160] Ferdinand de Villeneuve and Didier, *L'enfant de la balle : vaudeville en 2 actes* (Paris: Imprimerie de Vve Dondey-Dupré, 1839), 1.
[161] Gilbert-Joseph-Gaspard de Chabrol de Volvic, *Recherches statistiques sur la ville de Paris et le département de la Seine* (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1829), 57, 68; See also the trends presented in: "Google Ngram Viewer: vieux Paris, 1800-2000," 2010, http://ngrams.googlelabs.com/graph?content=vieux+Paris&year_start=1800&year_end=2000&corpus=7&smoothing=3.
[162] J. T. Merle, "Mademoiselle Montansier, son salon et son théâtre," in *Paris, ou, Le livre des cent-et-un*, vol. 5 (Paris: S. Schmerber, 1832), 194.
[163] *Journal des desmoiselles* (Paris: Au bureau du journal, 1837), 196.

The notion of a break between Paris' past and present must be analyzed in the context of the city's development if it is to tell us anything about why such a distinction was made. Although Chabrol and Rambuteau had encouraged the creation of new neighbourhoods such as the quartier Poissonnière and the quartier d'Europe in the city's faubourgs, perhaps contributing to the idea of a modern Paris distinct from the rest, their presence cannot explain why so many felt that the old city centre was disappearing. Likewise, the piercing of the rue Rambuteau through the medieval tissue of the quartier des Halles and the Marais did not begin until 1839 and was not completed until 1845, long after many of the remarks above had been made. Prior to then, wholesale changes to the dense city centre had never been attempted. Instead, Chabrol pursued a policy of '*alignement*': as old buildings were torn down, the new buildings that replaced them were to be constructed further away from the road in order to gradually widen and straighten it, but this process was so slow that in 1819 he calculated it would be several centuries before its goals were achieved.[164] Another possible explanation was the growing importance of romanticism as a literary genre, exemplified by successful novels like Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), which surely contributed to a sense of nostalgia for Paris' medieval past, but it was physical changes that served as concrete reminders of how different the city had become. Théodore Vacquer, an architect writing on the cusp of the city's haussmannization, suggested that, "without this cleansing to which the great city is subjected, we would perhaps not even think of the old Paris [...] though it may seem a paradox, the destruction of the old Paris revives the old Paris."[165]

[164] Even today this process remains incomplete, as in the rue de la Verrerie where twentieth-century buildings are set two or more metres back from the road than the seventeenth-century buildings which surround them.
[165] Théodore Vacquer, "Rectification et complément de la notice sur l'ancien hôpital Sainte-Catherine, rue Saint-Denis, à Paris," in *Revue archéologique*, vol. 10 (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1853), 556.

Renewal of city streets was foremost among the visible changes to the Paris landscape and dramatically altered the way they were appreciated by the public. As Vacquer had correctly observed, old Paris could only be esteemed once it was sufficiently cleaned of its "filth" to become desirable to those who had previously avoided it. Rambuteau expressed this revalorization in his memoirs while justifying his decision not to expropriate and destroy ancient sections of the city: "I did not sacrifice the old Paris to several privileged neighbourhoods. On the contrary, myself a child of the Marais... I loved to walk in the tiny rue Saint-Avoye where my father was born..."[166] The idea of an old Paris was a romanticized idealization of a city which had never really existed, but whose picturesque architecture and attractive urban features were suddenly made both visible and charming by the elimination of their insalubrious characteristics, transforming its streets from obstacles grudgingly confronted to social locations that encouraged dallying and commerce. Implicit in this judgement was the recognition that new ways of using and organizing space were transforming the old city as roads were increasingly paved and lit and sidewalks became widespread. 'New' Paris was less a place than a way of interacting with the city that depended on changes to the physical environment. An article written by D. in 1830 for the *Journal des débats* demonstrates one way in which this substitution was occurring. The age-old practice of unloading firewood in the street so that it could be sawed in front of the building whose inhabitants had bought it – particularly obnoxious in the Marais, where roads were narrow and few buildings had courtyards – was viewed by the 1830s as intolerably dangerous because it forced pedestrians off sidewalks and into the path of vehicles. D. explained why traditional behaviours could not be tolerated in a novel urban environment:

[166] Rambuteau, *Mémoires*, 375.

> The establishment of sidewalks in the streets of Paris greatly favours pedestrians, but it has diminished the space available to carriages. These two facts, combined with the ever-increasing traffic in our capital, have prompted the surveillance of the police and require that we alert the inhabitants of Paris that such a large material change demands an analogous change in the habits and customs of those who walk the streets and of those who live next to them.[167]

He instead suggested that wood instead be cut at a central depot and subsequently delivered, a change which occurred three years later.[168] The street as a site of work thus began to give way to the street as a site of circulation.

Paul de Kock explained the difference between old and new Paris in terms of what he called 'specialness' (*spécialité*), a quality that described the changes to commerce which had emerged in transformed urban environments. According to him, "vulgar commerce" could be found anywhere, but 'specialness' was limited to a sliver of western Paris on the right bank which "begins at the rue Vivienne, extends to the rue Richelieu, touches the boulevards [and] penetrates into the Chaussée d'Antin." The link between high-end shopping and the built environment was made abundantly clear: "Parisian 'specialness' can only have, must only have one element: luxury. Take away its wide sidewalks, its carriage entranceways, its balconies and its caryatids, relegate it to a muddy street beneath a gloomy awning, light it with oil, and the 'specialness' will die. Who says 'specialness' necessarily says elegance."[169] As Hazel Hahn has pointed out, new forms of bourgeois consumerism could not exist without new forms of urban organization.

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[167] D., "Trottoirs. – Déchargement et sciage du bois dans Paris," 24 February 1830, in *Journal des débats*.
[168] 6 September 1833, Ibid.
[169] Kock, *La grande ville*, 2:60.

Widespread pedestrianism was the most obvious change in conduct to emerge in these spaces. By the 1830s, descriptions of noisy crowds circulating on the sidewalks had become commonplace.[170] Their newfound presence was accompanied by a reassessment of walking and its importance to the identity of the city. In the 1840s, George Sand could write that there was "no other city [than Paris] where ambulatory reverie is more pleasant... If the poor pedestrian encounters certain tribulations due to excessive chill or heat, he must nevertheless admit that during beautiful spring and autumn days he is – if he understands his luck – a privileged mortal."[171] Such an idea would have been incomprehensible to the majority of its citizens a generation earlier, but by Sand's time it had become a daily reality. Walkers had existed before then, of course. Mercier's *Tableau* described the wandering *badaud*, an "indolent half-wit" whose gape-mouthed wonder at the sights around him resulted from the infrequency with which he left his home.[172] This unflattering caricature reappeared in later accounts as the *musard*, a clueless ambler who doesn't understand how to 'correctly' interact with the city,[173] and is a recurring trope in urban literature of the nineteenth century, but was largely displaced in the 1830s by the new, positive figure of the *flâneur*.

While the *flâneur* is often approached by historians in terms of his (highly debated) symbolic value,[174] his importance for this discussion is his role as the avatar of a new way to physically experience the city: the urban promenade as both an activity-in-itself and a kind of art form, rather than merely movement from one place to another.

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[170] M. Aumary Duval, "Une journée de flâneur sur les boulevarts du nord," in *Paris, ou Le livre des cent et un*, vol. 12 (Paris: Ladvocat, 1831), 92; Fulgence Girard, *Deux martyrs* (Paris: H. Souverain, 1835), 14.
[171] Quoted in Luc Passion, "Marcher à Paris au XIXe siècle," in Caron, *Paris et ses réseaux*, 35.
[172] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, 1:74-79.
[173] Louis Huart, *Physiologie du flâneur* (Paris: Aubert et Cie, 1841), 33.
[174] Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson, *Paris as Revolution: Writing the Nineteenth-Century City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 80-114; Christopher Prendergast, *Paris and the Nineteenth Century* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), 133-143.

His[175] presence in the street was thus highly dependent on his particular time and place. Although his description bears similarities to aspects of Rousseau's *promeneur*, the solitary walker was an ideal incompatible with the highly social environment of the city, a place his creator detested.[176] An 1831 essay in the panoramic guide to the city, *Paris, ou le livre des cent-et-un*, noted that while a *flâneur* could be born anywhere, he could live nowhere other than Paris. This dependence was reciprocal: "Representing Paris without [the *flâneur*] would be to depict the chamber of deputies without General D..., a ball without Princess B..., a conspiracy without honest people who boast of having done nothing else for sixteen years."[177] In the popular imagination, Paris was becoming a walking city and the Parisian a walker.

In 1833 Balzac became one of the first writers to analyze the act of walking in the city, considering it to be "the newest, and therefore the most curious" of all the human sciences. "Is it not extraordinary," he mused, "that since the time that man has walked, nobody has asked how he walks, if he walks, whether he can walk better, what he does while walking; in short, to analyze his walk?"[178] He resolved to place himself on the boulevard de Gand – today the boulevard des Italiens – to study the walks of all the Parisians who passed before him and compile a list of general laws derived from the observations he made.[179] Balzac cheekily claimed that he could discern "character, daily routines, and the most secret habits" from the movement of passers-by and his conclusions were largely facetious, but his experiment nonetheless announced two significant cultural developments. First, the majority of his subjects were members of the middle

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[175] In nineteenth-century panoramic literature, the *flâneur* is always male. There are no *flâneuses*.
[176] Bernard Marchand, *Les ennemis de Paris : la haine de la grande ville des Lumières à nos jours* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 23-39.
[177] *Paris, ou, Le livre des cent-et-un*, vol. 6 (Paris: L. Hauman et compagnie, 1832), 99.
[178] Honoré de Balzac, *Théorie de la démarche* (Paris: Didier, 1853), 7.
[179] Ibid., 37.

and upper classes (bankers, lawyers, politicians, *grandes desmoiselles*), indicating both their growing presence in the street and the increasing invisibility of the lower classes to writers; the street was being written as a bourgeois space and thus also as a place of leisure. Secondly, people-watching had become an accessory activity to walking, and thus itself one of the attractions of spending time in the street.

This social aspect of the street was one of the largely unintended and unforeseen consequences of the construction of sidewalks (though the insightful abbot Dillon predicted its arrival). Sociologists often divide interaction in urban areas into two types.[180] The first is characterized by mobility and anonymity and is exemplified by the Haussmannian boulevard, which features prominently in cultural histories of modernity. The second is characterized by ingrained establishment in a local area and is exemplified by the village. Yet this is not a helpful analysis as it obscures the lived sense of practices in the street. The dichotomy results in considering 'public spaces' to be the domain of the stranger whose behaviour is regulated by codes of civility, in contrast to 'community spaces' where interactions take place under a regime of familiarity and relations are assured by belonging to a certain social group. The street belongs to neither. New research has shown that there is no link between physical immobility and being anchored in a place – in other words, it is possible to have strong ties to a place without living there – demonstrating that neighbourhood streets can be sites of sociability without being community sites. The street is a place where 'familiar unknowns' can cross one another; it is not as intimate as private space, but not entirely strange either. It is both a familiar site of trust and an area where there is contact with the 'other.'

[180] The analytical model that follows is largely adapted from Charmes, *La rue, village ou décor ?*, 83-88.

The notion of 'community sociability' is the basis of David Garrioch's interpretations of bourgeois social behaviour during the eighteenth century. In his view, members of the upper classes were not particularly rooted in their communities and became more socially private as time went on; only the poor integrated their neighbourhoods into their social lives.[181] However, nineteenth-century French society has been subjected to the same historical analysis with no consideration for the way changes to the built environment influenced social conduct. Hazel Hahn incomprehensibly repeats Garrioch's views on interiorization, writing that in the nineteenth century, "the bourgeoisie continued to physically distance itself from the street and neighbourhood sociability, becoming more private in a sense – a process that had started in the eighteenth century," even as she devotes entire chapters of her book to describing their presence in the street.[182] On the contrary, the new street was characterized by an exteriorization of bourgeois social life, though one whose liminal nature between private and public lent itself to encounters characterized by spontaneity and evanescence rather than the intimacy of the dinner party or the salon.

The street's curious brand of openness was expressed in a book of travel writing published by Alfred Musset in 1842. During a visit to London, Musset and his travelling companion, Jean Walter, are rudely refused entry to the home of an Englishman from whom they hoped to receive letters of introduction and Walter begins to regret having left Paris: "'there is only one city and that city is Paris. Life there is so open, so visible, so public that everywhere, even in the street, you might think you were at home.'"[183] Walter was expressing the strangely agreeable sensation of unfocused familiarity that

[181] Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris: 1740-1790*, 56-96, 170-171.
[182] Hahn, *Scenes of Parisian Modernity*, 62.
[183] Alfred de Musset and P.-J. Stahl, *Voyage où il vous plaira* (Paris: J. Hetzel, 1843), 131-132.

existed in the street, contrasting it with a model of private sociability which existed literally behind closed doors and was not a publicly shared experience. Modernist interpretations of *flânerie*, whose practitioners are alienated figures, emphasize the facelessness of the crowd and the disorienting effects of urban life,[184] but the street was represented by contemporary authors as a considerably more congenial place.

A remarkable article by Paul Pisan entitled "The Sidewalks of Paris" which appeared in *La Sylphide* in 1855 summarized many of these changes.[185] Pisan began by considering just how greatly the sidewalk had transformed the road:

> The road is the highway. One only ventures there by accident; one only encounters others without recognizing them; one only crosses it while running, like a place full of dangers which one fears or avoids.
>
> But the sidewalk is the little path where one strolls; it is the trail carpeted with asphalt, shaded by boutiques, signs, and sometimes eaves troughs, where the stroller can walk without fear, where one approaches the other without clashing.

The sidewalk had its seasons and its hours. Winter was for mere walking while summer was for promenades. During the day, chance encounters could be had; at night, friends and lovers met for rendez-vous. Each came "searching for a fleeting moment of leisure which for businessmen was a distraction, for depressed souls the chance of hope, and for the idle above all a pleasure." To Pisan, the sidewalk was a multipurpose space whose uses were nearly endless; it could be 'tumultuous', 'commercial', 'curious',

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[184] In this they have echoed Benjamin, who conceived of the city as a hostile and confusing environment that needed to be mastered and rendered transparent by the ubiquitous flâneur who could penetrate all its secrets and render the city readable. See: Prendergast, *Paris and the Nineteenth Century*, 134; Richard Sieburth, "Une idéologie du lisible : le phénomène des Physiologies," trans. Chantal de Biasi, *Romantisme* 15, no. 47 (1985): 48.

[185] Paul Pisan, "Les trottoirs de Paris," *La Sylphide*, March 10, 1855.

'gourmand', 'jealous', or 'indiscreet', reflecting all its possible uses by pedestrians. He contrasted two furtive young lovers exchanging gifts as they passed one another on the street with a cuckold who turns to see his wife vanishing in the distance with another man, both encounters that could take place nowhere else. The sidewalk was the place "where strollers chat or relax. It is also where those happy few who have eaten well digest their meals." Those who lingered there were met by dozens of open-air artists who sang or danced outdoors, living by chance and fortune.

In short, the sidewalk was a sort of theatre where any number of social dramas could be played out. Pisan emphasized the fluidity of the social space it harboured by showing just how varied social interactions there could be. Parisians used it as a place to meet or spend time with friends, family, or colleagues, but it was also an area where new and unexpected encounters could be made. This could range from the superficial, as in the case of Balzac's friendly pedestrian "who arrives in a tumble saying, 'Ah! What weather, gentlemen!' and salutes everyone" to the more engaged sidewalk interlocutor described by Paul de Kock: "There are people who, on a fairly narrow sidewalk, divert themselves by chatting with someone that they've just met."[186] Balzac also described this profounder form of contact, though went farther in showing how relationships between recurrent passers-by and those who spent their days in the streets could be established over time, depicting "the chatty pedestrian who loves to complain and who converses with the landlady while she rests on her broom like a grenadier on his rifle."[187] The *Re-*

[186] Kock, *La grande ville*, 2:50-51.
[187] Honoré de Balzac, *Oeuvres de H. de Balzac ...* (Paris: Meline, Cans et compagnie, 1837), 188.

vue de Paris explained that the sidewalk was the place where landladies, at the break of dawn, held their salons with the other neighbourhood gossips.[188]

The famous *flâneur* may have been the most social figure in all of urban literature. This may seem paradoxical, as contemporary accounts of street life attempted to portray the *flâneur* as a 'professional' walker who held himself apart from the crowd rather than mingling with it.[189] They described those who did not live up to this ideal as undedicated amblers who fell short of the rigorousness of *flânerie* by only engaging in it by accident, or else by falsely appropriating its label. Louis Huart mocked those who called themselves *flâneurs* without knowing what the word meant and gave as an example businessmen who went out at noon with the pretext of engaging in *flânerie* but who finished by sitting on a bench with two or three friends to chat for five hours. He likewise ridiculed Parisians who considered themselves *flâneurs* when walking their dogs.[190] The writer for *Paris, ou, Le Livre des cent-et-un* made the same distinction, contrasting the professional *flâneur* with the lawyer who steps out of his office for a moment to wander past boutiques or the doctor who misses his appointment because he spends an hour debating a political issue with a painter on the Pont des Arts.[191] Historians of modernity, in dealing with the figure of the *flâneur*, have uncritically taken the categorizations of these writers at face value. Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson accordingly writes that "the primary traits of the flâneur [are] his detachment from the ordinary social world... The essential egoism of the flâneur requires [it]... The flâneur is solitary by

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[188] "Journal d'un flandrin, ou ce qu'on peut apprendre sur le pavé de Paris," in Véron, Rabou, and Pichot, *Revue de Paris*, 166.
[189] Auguste de Lacroix, "Le flâneur," in *Les français peints par eux-mêmes : encyclopédie morale du dix-neuvième siècle*, vol. 3 (Paris: L. Curmer, 1841), 66.
[190] Huart, *Physiologie du flâneur*, 16-18.
[191] *Paris, ou, Le livre des cent-et-un*, 6:98.

choice.... He walks through the city alone and at random. Companionship of any sort is undesirable."[192]

However, these judgements are undermined by the very texts that make them. For all his pretentions to aloofness and detachment, the ideal *flâneur* of urban texts was just as – if not more – engaged in the social life of the street than the crowd around him. The *flâneur*-author of the *Livre des cent-et-un* offered his readers a blow-by-blow account of a typical day in the life of a *flâneur*, a description that at each instant revealed him to be continually implicated in the lives of others. Other people all but represented his sole source of interest and he approached them not merely as a detached observer, but as a central element in their daily existence. The essay begins by encountering the *flâneur* on the street, walking among the crowd, recording everything with his gaze including "an unaccustomed face on this boulevard where he knows each inhabitant and each regular."[193] The author begged his readers, if they had a little free time, to approach the *flâneur* and enter into conversation with him, for "his smile invites you; a word, a trifle will suffice for the presentation." Following the *flâneur* offered the possibility of comprehending all the mysteries of the street: "Each passer-by has his name; each name, its anecdote," a fact he handily demonstrated by decoding the hidden meaning of signs sent between two secret lovers.[194]

When he could wriggle out of a dinner invitation, which was not often for "he is a wonderful teller of stories, he sees much, and is highly sought-after," the *flâneur* went to a restaurant – chosen at random – where he was greeted with a hero's welcome:

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[192] Ferguson, *Paris as revolution*, 84.
[193] *Paris, ou, Le livre des cent-et-un*, 6:101.
[194] Ibid., 6:102.

> The woman behind the counter smiles at him like a long-awaited friend or like an unfaithful lover whom she had lost hope of seeing, and her smile is all the more seductive for it. The waiters offer every consideration: his favourite place is prepared; the wine of his choice and the food he prefers best are assembled before him. He is hardly seated before he is engaged in intimate conversation with his neighbours."[195]

He was clearly a regular at many different establishments, known to others and an active participant in their social circles. After his meal, the *flâneur* debated whether to visit a salon or go to the theatre, and was happy to discover that the excessive length of his beard directed him towards the latter. There, rather than taking a seat, he dallied in the lobby and observed the comings and goings of others and chatted with the ushers. He immersed himself in the crowd during the entr'acte, attempting to judge the quality of the play by the reactions of the spectators, delighting in the ambiance "a little like those who enjoy a ball without dancing."[196]

It is difficult to see how this behaviour could be interpreted as anti-social. While clearly not conforming to norms of traditional, intimate sociability (attending dinner parties, participating in salons, going to the theatre with friends), the *flâneur* was a master of the new forms of casual sociability encouraged by emerging public spaces. His very existence depended on the presence of others; there could be no solitary *flâneur,* for then there would be nothing to see, no faces to recognize, and no one with whom to share the curiosities of the street.

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[195] Ibid., 6:105-106.
[196] Ibid., 6:107.

To judge by his behaviour, the *flâneur* was hardly different from any given Parisian out for a stroll, eager to take in the sights and perhaps interact with his fellow citizens; any distinction between them was a matter of degree, not of kind. A careful look at the qualities separating the *flâneur* from the *badaud* and the *musard* shows them to be arbitrary and full of contradictions. Huart, for instance, chastised tourists for insisting on seeing every monument in Paris, but equally reprimanded *musards* for not stopping to look at even the prettiest boutiques in the city; he offered no explanation for why one form of gawking was more or less 'correct' than another.[197] To insist on the differences between kinds of walkers was therefore not to point to an objective set of urban customs, but to assign value to the act of adroitly experiencing the city on foot (though what that consisted of was never clearly defined and changed from text to text). In the end, '*flâneur*' was simply a coveted social identity, a label that served to indicate that its bearer was an adept of the street and whose ambiguity permitted nearly all to lay claim to it. If it pointed to anything unequivocal, it was the rising importance of street culture as a defining element of urban living in the popular imagination. Because many Parisians wanted to be – and for all intents and purposes, were – *flâneurs*, historians' insistence on focusing exclusively on the caricatural *flâneur* of urban texts as the key to nineteenth-century Paris has reduced the heterogeneity of urban experience to a literary stereotype, implicitly endorsing certain urban discourses as authentic while ignoring others. Pisan's article showed that social practices in the street were multiple and diverse, a view buttressed by the variety of descriptions offered by other chroniclers of the street of its inhabitants, including those who wrote about *flânerie*.

[197] Huart, *Physiologie du flâneur*, 33, 39.

A recurrent theme in these texts is the importance of seeing. The appearance of so many people in the street had converted them into scenes of visual spectacle that were renewed daily, a logical extension of the theatrical metaphor that emerges from writings about street sociability. The essay in *Livre des cent-et-un* began with the Shakespearean aphorism that "the world is a vast theatre," but asked, "what good is a theatre without any spectators?" For a long time, its author continued, Parisians had hardly noticed they had neighbours in the street, but this oversight would be corrected by the arrival of the *flâneur*.[198] Paul de Kock wrote that "in Paris, sidewalks frequently provoke highly amusing scenes for the unhurried observer... But he who is in a rush leaves the sidewalk and does not have the time to see."[199] The act of writing about the street was a way of watching and observing what happened there, providing a vicarious experience for readers and inspiring their future visits to the street. There were watchers in the street, too, who were themselves observed by writers. Balzac drafted a catalogue of pedestrians outside on a rainy day which included several examples of curious onlookers:

> Is there not, first of all, the day-dreaming or philosophical pedestrian who observes with pleasure [the picturesque effects of the rainy weather], and a thousand other admirable trifles studied with relish by *flâneurs*...
>
> The wise pedestrian who studies, spells out, or reads signs and notices without finishing them;
>
> The pedestrian who makes fun of those to whom misfortune occurs in the street, who laughs at women who are splashed with mud and makes faces at those in the windows;

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[198] *Paris, ou, Le livre des cent-et-un*, 6:96.
[199] Kock, *La grande ville*, 2:50.

> The silent pedestrian who observes each intersection, each floor of each building;[200]

These individuals, for all their passivity, were not solitary beings. Jan Gehl explains that freely interpreted, social activity takes place every time two people are together in the same space. "To see and hear each other, to meet, is in itself a form of contact, a social activity. The actual meeting, merely being present, is furthermore the seed for other, more comprehensive forms of social activity."[201] All of Paris' pedestrians depended on one another to create a leisurely space that offered visual attractions available nowhere else.

Seeing and being seen were forms of visual communication between pedestrians. The presence of large numbers of people on sidewalks meant that pedestrians tended naturally to blend in with the crowd and become anonymous, a feature which discomfited many members of society. Signs of social status that had been important during the eighteenth century, such as the division between those with carriages and those on foot, disappeared on the more democratic sidewalk but were hastily replaced by other displays meant to indicate one's inclusion in a certain group. According to Anthony Sutcliffe, the wealthy in the street at this time adopted "an aggressive style of dress which, though it might attract the occasional mendicant, would prompt a deferential response in almost everyone else."[202] The 1820s and 1830s were also the golden age of dandies, fashionable bourgeois exhibitionists who put themselves on display each day

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[200] Balzac, *Oeuvres de H. de Balzac ...*, 188.
[201] Gehl, *Life Between Buildings: Using Public Space*, 17-31.
[202] François Bédarida and Anthony Sutcliffe, "The Street in the Structure and Life of the City: "Reflections on Nineteenth-Century London and Paris"," *Journal of Urban History* 6, no. 4 (August 1980): 388.

with their avant-garde clothing and hairstyles.[203] Few, however, were as flamboyant as Paris' bohemians, a smattering of mostly left-bank intellectuals and writers whose outré habits and customs were meant to subvert and contest what they perceived as staid bourgeois conventionality. This rejection of middle class norms was particularly evident in their clothing. Victor Hugo described their disruptive arrival at the Comédie Française on the opening night of *Hernani* in 1830:

> ...the numerous pedestrians of the rue Richelieu saw a growing band of wild and bizarre characters, bearded, long-haired, dressed in every fashion except the reigning one, in pea jackets, Spanish cloaks, waistcoats à la Robespierre, in Henri III bonnets, carrying on their heads and backs articles of clothing from every century and clime, and this in the midst of Paris and in broad daylight. The bourgeois were stopped short in their path, stupefied and indignant. M. Théophile Gautier was a particular insult to their eyes, in a scarlet satin waistcoat and thick long hair cascading down his back.[204]

Gérard de Nerval, who could often be seen walking his pet lobster, Thibault, at the end of a blue ribbon from his home in Montmartre to the gardens of the Palais-Royal, represented the apotheosis of such visual self-expression.[205] The sidewalk was a place where existing identities were re-asserted visually but also a forum where new ones could easily be created, tested, and even exchanged.

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[203] Édouard Monnais, "Promenades extérieurs et banlieue," in *Nouveau tableau de Paris au XIXe siècle*, 2:147-168.
[204] Adèle Hugo and Victor Hugo, *Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie avec oeuvres inédites de Victor Hugo, entre autres un drame en trois actes*, vol. 2 (Bruxelles & Leipzig: A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven et cie, 1865), 268.
[205] This story, long thought to be aprocryphal, has since been confirmed by de Nerval's private correspondence. See: Scott Horton, "Nerval: A Man and His Lobster," *Harper's Magazine*, October 12, 2008, http://www.harpers.org/archive/2008/10/hbc-90003665.

Organized forms of human activity were special displays offered by outdoor spaces, in particular the typically French sport of *pétanque* or *boules*. Because of its association with superior social status, the sport was forbidden to common people from the seventeenth century until the Revolution.[206] By the early nineteenth century, however, it had spread throughout France and was a common sight in Paris' streets. In *Ferragus* (1833), Balzac described matches that took place in the faubourg Saint-Marcel, an area which had been conquered by sportsmen. The lure of the game was so great that "a man who had only a few days before moved into this deserted neighbourhood assiduously participated in matches of *boules*."[207] In *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* (1841), another panoramic tableau of the city, B. Durand penned an essay describing the player of *boules*, but also included descriptions of the crowds that accompanied these matches: "Have you ever noticed, under the cool shade of the Champs-Elysées, in the midst of the solitude of the Observatory or at the barrière du Trône, two parallel lines of spectators which wind over the plain, which spread out and crowd together, which disappear and reform incessantly...?" (fig. 8).[208] This roadside tradition, which has since been largely displaced to the Jardin du Luxembourg, still survives today on the boulevard Richard Lenoir, where passers-by may watch and even participate in matches with other strangers, passionate or merely curious about the game.

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[206] Marco Foyot, Alain Dupuy, and Louis Almas, *Pétanque - Technique, Tactique, Entraînement* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1984), 16.
[207] Honoré de Balzac, *Ferragus*, vol. 9 (Paris: Furne, 1833), 109.
[208] B. Durand, "Le joueur de boules," in *Les français peints par eux-mêmes : encyclopédie morale du dix-neuvième siècle*, vol. 2 (Paris: L. Curmer, 1841), 289.

Figure 8 – A match of *boules* on the Champs-Elysées, 1841

People were not the only objects of study in the street; the architectural forms of the city provided ample material for appreciative observation. One of Chabrol's great worries was that Paris' many celebrated sites were not only marooned by the lack of sidewalks, but disgraced by their ignoble surroundings. In addition to rendering existing landmarks accessible, Rambuteau and Louis-Philippe made monumentalism a defining feature of the July Monarchy's urban program, completing public edifices that had been left unfinished by previous regimes and initiating dozens of others that are indelibly associated with the capital. The construction of new neighbourhoods in the wealthy, western parts of the city offered pedestrians examples of scintillating residential architecture, typified by the bourgeois apartment building. In 1845, the English architectural review *The Builder* remarked that "there seems... an energetic *system* at work, to make Paris the metropolis of architecture and modern art"[209] and two years later that "whole quarters are rising above the ground... The gay capital of fashion, taste,

[209] "The Embellishments of Paris," *The Builder* 3 (December 20, 1845): 607.

and elegance seems to be rebuilding."[210] While the Haussmannian building is often credited with giving Paris its visual coherence,[211] the uniform regularity of streets' paving stones, unbroken stretches of sidewalks, and especially the ornate, cast-iron streetlamps that dotted them were the first urban objects to provide the city with a sense of aesthetic unity.[212] These features linked disparate parts of the city together into an integrated public space, a process that was as much mental as physical.

Some of the most striking visual displays of Paris streets were presented by commercial establishments, whose presence in outdoor life began to grow in importance during the early nineteenth century. Bernard Rouleau has rightly insisted on the critical role played by Parisian stores in public spaces, writing that "retail commerce, and in general all activities which depend on the public passage, contribute more than any other element to create the urban structure and the life of the street, and consequently the character of a neighbourhood."[213] In the seventeenth-century, however, the store was little more than a warehouse with a sign hanging outside to announce the product being sold. This began to change in the century that followed as shopkeepers learned to better serve customers who had acquired the habit of visiting shops regularly to see what novelties were on offer and of using them as meeting-places, provoking an aesthetic revolution of the interior of boutiques.[214] In 1726, Daniel Defoe was astonished by new shops' "painting and gilding, fine shelves, shutters, boxes, glass-doors,

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[210] *The Builder*, September 11, 1847, 430.
[211] David P. Jordan, "Haussmann and Haussmannisation: The Legacy for Paris," *French Historical Studies* 27, no. 1 (Winter 2004): 87-113.
[212] For examples of new gas lamps' designs, see: Daniel Bontemps, *Lanternes d'éclairage public, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles ; Potences d'enseignes et de lanternes du XVIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Ministère de la culture et de la communication : Direction du Patrimoine, 1986).
[213] Rouleau, *Le tracé des rues de Paris*, 115.
[214] Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *La nuit désenchantée : à propos de l'histoire de l'éclairage artificiel au 19e siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), 116.

sashes, and the like."[215] By the early nineteenth century this visual transformation had migrated from the interior to the exterior of the retail boutique as anonymous passers-by became more likely to become potential clients and newly-laid sidewalks allowed them the safety and leisure to dally in front of shops, offering the perfect opportunity to present one's wares. Stores opened themselves up to the street, replacing walls with windows behind which were displayed their newest offerings. By 1834 the word *vitrine*, which had until then merely meant 'glass,' had acquired its present-day sense of the glass-covered storefront of a commercial space.[216]

This transformative element of the street was already well-established by the late 1820s, when Auguste Luchet condemned boutiques for using flamboyant displays to attract pedestrians, a vanity he blamed for undermining traditional commercial relations.[217] In an 1835 essay on boutique owners, Michel Masson wrote that "[the shopkeeper] does not disdain the invention of sidewalks...the crowd, flowing by the sides of the road, more than ever takes notice of his store. One can linger at length before his door without risking being run over, and sometimes it takes nothing more than a second look at the goods on display to turn a passer-by who had no plans to buy anything into a customer."[218] Pisan made the mildly sardonic claim that the commercial aspect of the sidewalk inflamed appetites, turning pedestrians into gourmands. He imagined poor wretches tearing themselves away from the "splendid odours" of storefront ba-

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[215] Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (London: The Bible and Crown, 1726), 312-313.
[216] Alain Rey, *Le Robert : Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (Paris: Dictionnaires le Robert, 2000), 4096.
[217] Auguste Luchet, "Les magasins de Paris," in *Paris, ou Le livre des cent-et-un*, vol. 15 (Paris: Ladvocat, 1831), 243.
[218] Michel Masson, "Le Boutiquier," in *Nouveau tableau de Paris au XIXe siècle*, 2:229.

zaars (presumably bakeries and pastry shops) like modern-day versions of Tantalus, unable or unwilling to spend any money.[219]

It was nevertheless possible to appreciate these exhibitions without making any purchases thanks to the novel activity of *lèche-vitrine* – literally, 'window-licking' – whose enthusiasm the anaemic English translation 'window-shopping' fails to capture (fig. 9). Huart encouraged his readers to walk on the wide sidewalks of the rue de la Paix and the arcades of the rue Castiglione, "a highly agreeable promenade so long as you enjoy the most sumptuous stores; look to the right and to the left, and everywhere you will see the luxury of the boutiques shining back at you; the mirrors, the marbles, and the bronzes formerly reserved for palaces today adorn stores of every kind."[220] He lamented the fate of haute-bourgeoise families who promenaded the entire length of the boulevards on Sundays because that was the only day of the week that the boutiques were closed, leaving them nothing to look at but a wall of shutters.[221] Fanny Trollope believed that Paris was "a city where everything intended to meet the eye is converted into graceful ornament; where the shops and coffee-houses have the air of fairy palaces."[222] She especially appreciated the number and arrangement of flowers exposed for sale which were such that "you only need to shut your eyes in order to fancy yourself in a delicious flower-garden; and even on opening them again, if the delusion vanishes, you have something almost as pretty in its place."[223] One of Pisan's pedestrians with little interest in shopping subverted the intention of the store window by using it to peer at what was beyond the display and "admire the charms of a shop counter Venus,"

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[219] Pisan, "Les trottoirs de Paris."
[220] Huart, *Physiologie du flâneur*, 102.
[221] Ibid., 21 Today, only Parisian businesses that are in government-designed 'tourist zones' are allowed to open on Sundays, illustrating the importance of commerce for those who spend all their time in the street.
[222] Trollope, *Paris and the Parisians in 1835*, 112.
[223] Ibid., 6.

a use which harkened to the social aspect of the street. Thanks to this transparency, customers and vendors themselves were put on display for passers-by to watch, blurring the distinction between street and store.

Figure 9 – Pedestrians admiring lithographs in the storefront display of Aubert & Cie, 1841

A small number of writers felt that by the 1830s the streets had become too commercial and that the right of pedestrian passage was being sacrificed to the interests of trade. Physically, this took the form of a growing encroachment of the sidewalk by shopkeepers who, not content with displaying their goods behind a window, set up stalls in front of their boutiques to render the encounter between pedestrian and merchandise unavoidable. The *Revue de Paris* fulminated against this practice:

> I was speaking of sidewalks: what a glorious conquest of the road, but for whose profit? Pedestrians'? No, but perhaps shopkeepers'. For the former, sidewalks only shrink the public passage while they enlarge the boutique of the latter. How can one circulate freely on these flagstones encumbered by the stalls of the grocer, the fruit-seller and the retailer...?[224]

Although this custom was illegal it was quite common, and the police seemingly had great difficulty in containing it, up to and including the twentieth century.[225] The sidewalk was also used for commercial ends by indigents who were not easily constrained by the law, offering mud-cleaning and shoe-shining services, or selling baubles and trinkets spread on carpets. By 1841 the practice had swelled to such proportions that among the death-bed wishes of a former elector of 1789 was the hope that sidewalks would be better policed to forbid this practice, as it was in London.[226] It is difficult to gauge the effect sidewalks had on sales, but it is clear that commerce was booming during this period. The commercial directory of 1848 boasted in its introduction that while Parisian professions only occupied 140 pages in the 1838 directory, that number had grown to 190 by 1840 and stood at 343 in 1848.[227]

Unfortunately for those who shared these opinions, the tendency of businesses to dominate the sidewalk only increased with the passage of time. The practice was perfected by cafés who set out tables and chairs on sidewalk *terrasses* throughout the city;

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[224] "Journal d'un flandrin, ou ce qu'on peut apprendre sur le pavé de Paris," in Véron, Rabou, and Pichot, *Revue de Paris*, 166.
[225] Eugène Hénard, *Études sur les transformations de Paris* (Paris: Librairies-imprimeries réunies, 1903), 247ff. Forms of this practice still exist today in front of the BHV, the Galeries Lafayette, and along rue Barbès. A trip to any of Paris' major tourist sites (the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, Montmartre) is invariably accompanied by an encounter with groups of predominantly West African trinket salesmen hawking keychains and scarves.
[226] Berryer, *Derniers voeux d'un vieil électeur de 1789 pour l'avenir de la France et de la civilisation*, 53.
[227] "Introduction," Annuaire générale du commerce pour l'année 1848, AP 2 mi 3 .19 (1848 – microfilm 1 of 2).

already during the Restoration period there were between three and four thousand cafés in Paris.[228] Julien Lemer wrote in 1861 that "for twenty-five years, I have seen chairs installed in front of the Café de Paris which are occupied between 8 and 11 o'clock by women who are almost always elegant, often pretty, sometimes honest, and the flower of Parisian dandyism."[229] These were supplemented in 1840 by the implantation of the *café-concert* along the newly-urbanized Champs-Elysées, an establishment where coming and going was frequent and which acted as a kind of rest stop during sidewalk promenades.[230]

The construction of sidewalks was accompanied by the introduction of gas lighting, a vastly superior replacement to the feeble oil lanterns that had lit the city until the 1820s. Together, these urban technologies rendered outdoor spaces practicable at night, granting access to a world of nocturnal pleasures never before experienced. Between 1820 and 1860, the placement of gas conduits operated according to the will of companies rather than that of the government; far from lighting all of Paris, gas streetlamps appeared where they could be the most profitable—in the centre and the west of the city, following the distribution of boutiques and cafés.[231] By the 1830s night-life was in full swing and had become one of the essential elements distinguishing Paris from the provinces, as well as the bourgeois sections of the city from working-class neighbourhoods. In 1830 Eugène-François Vidocq advised those who sought to move into an animated neighbourhood of the capital to choose an apartment that did not face onto

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[228] Hahn, *Scenes of Parisian Modernity*, 46.
[229] Julien Lemer, *Paris au gaz* (Paris: Dentu, 1861), 12-16.
[230] Concetta Condemi, *Les cafés-concerts : histoire d'un divertissement : 1849-1914* (Paris: Quai Voltaire, 1992), 35.
[231] See the *Tableau de l'éclairage des rues de Paris* published by the prefecture of police for the years 1817 to 1852 in APP DA 121 and AN F/3(II)/seine/37. A complete list of streets lit by year can be found in Adolphe Trébuchet, *Recherches sur l'éclairage publié de Paris, Extrait des "Annales d'hygiène publique et de médecine légale"* (Paris: J.-B. Baillière, 1843), 51-60.

the road lest the noise be too disruptive to sleep at night.[232] Legal closing hours had been progressively lengthening the evening since the seventeenth century (table 1) and in the 1820s police found that they had so much trouble getting people out of bars and cafés at night that a special "permission de minuit" was extended to businesses known for having a calm, undisruptive clientele, though in practice many stayed open until 2 o'clock in the morning or even later.[233] In the 1830s, the prefect of police Henri Gisquet was shocked to find that "people raged against me as if I'd wanted to return to the time when the provosts of Paris would sound the curfew at 8 o'clock and arrest anyone encountered in the street after the signal had been given" whenever he attempted to send night-time carousers home.[234]

Date of decree	Summer	Winter
December 1666	9pm	6pm
19 January 1760	10pm	8pm
26 July 1777	11pm	10pm
3 October 1815	10pm	10pm
3 April 1819	11pm	11pm

Table 1 - Legal closing hours from the Ancien Régime to the Restoration

The new Parisian night closely mirrored the Parisian day. Its sites of pleasure were still located between the Tuileries, the interior boulevards, and the Halles and its diversions still included people-watching, visiting cafés and restaurants, and gazing at boutique windows. Its difference resided essentially in the festival atmosphere that reigned due to so much illumination. Duval wrote of the wonder it inspired in those who had never seen it before:

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[232] Quoted in Delattre, *Les douze heures noires : La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle*, 133.
[233] Débits de boissons, APP DB 173 and 174
[234] Henri Gisquet, *Memoires de M. Gisquet, ancien préfet de police*, vol. 4 (Paris: Marchant, 1840), 221.

> Already the flaming gas shined from all sides. The streetlamps which lit the principal road, the numberless lights placed on the stands of ambulatory merchants which occupied, on both sides, the walkways of the boulevards; all of this produced a vital and brilliant illumination which extended far into the distance, as far as the eye could see. Alopex would have believed it was a public festival that day if I had not told him that every day, at the same time, this spectacle renewed itself.[235]

Night-life also provoked a change in eating habits and eating times; the after-theatre *souper* permitted many to escape the confines of bourgeois intimacy in favour of a more unfocused sociability consonant with street life.[236] 'True' night owls, who stayed out long after midnight, were the sorts of citizens who distinguished themselves from the masses and its rhythms by cultivating eccentricity and desynchronizing their internal clocks, much the same way that flamboyant dress served to distinguish one during the day.[237]

Beginning in the 1850s, this group began to participate in the peculiar practice of slumming (*encanaillement*) in working-class parts of the city. Following the paths created by sidewalks and streetlamps, nights would begin at the Palais Royal, move to the boulevards, and finish at the Halles where bars (*débits de boissons*) stayed open all night by exceptional decree to respond to the needs of the market gardeners and labourers who worked all night to prepare the marketplace for the following morning. Henry de Pene described the glamour this pastime quickly acquired in cynical terms:

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[235] Duval, "Une journée de flâneur sur les boulevarts du nord," in *Paris, ou Le livre des cent et un*, 12:92.
[236] Delattre, *Les douze heures noires : La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle*, 159.
[237] Ibid., 121, 123.

> Dinners at the Halles are both ignoble and dreary but several imaginative writers have described these areas in flattering terms. Curious people who, relying on their descriptions, go to see for themselves are sure to recount upon their return the point at which at they were mystified. [...] So do dupes beget dupes and there are always a few people of good breeding falsely led towards these villainous hangouts.[238]

By the 1860s, the practice had become so widespread that Alfred Delvau remarked that "these cabarets, open all night for the use of our brave country-dwellers... have never been frequented by anyone other than a crowd of city-dwellers."[239] The state took notice of this absurdity and abolished their special permission to stay open all night in 1859. Exteriorization of bourgeois social life thus began to directly infringe on the lifestyles of the lower classes whose members traditionally had recourse to the street in order to escape their dismal dwellings.[240] Encroachments such as these grew in intensity over the course the nineteenth century as the bourgeoisie steadily dominated ever-larger swathes of the city, displacing their former occupants towards the margins of society.

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[238] Henry de Pene, *Paris aventureux* (Paris: Dentu, 1860), 30-32.
[239] Alfred Delvau, *Histoire anecdotique des cafés et cabarets de Paris* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1862), 173.
[240] Delattre, *Les douze heures noires : La nuit à Paris au XIXe siècle*, 125.

The Forgotten Many

The depictions of Parisian street life above are so seductive that they could only be fantastically idyllic. It is tempting to forget that such descriptions encompassed only a geographical sliver of the city and its inhabitants, but virtually absent from these tableaux are Paris' poorer neighbourhoods and less fortunate citizens. Bernard Marchand estimates that only 50,000 Parisians (5 per cent of the population) made up what might be called a 'leisure class' by the middle of the century, leaving nearly a million people with hardly any presence in the urban imagination.[241] Most writers assiduously avoided all areas beyond the western parts of the city (with the exception of the arc traced by the interior boulevards) either because of prejudice against the popular classes or simply because those parts of the city were poorly-developed and offered none of the comforts and delights they sought to describe. Lemer wrote that the rue Montmartre was the barrier that divided the "beautiful neighbourhoods of the bourgeoisie and the *flâneur*" from the Paris of the working classes and *petits-commerçants*.[242] For many, Paris in this period became mentally circumscribed within a miniscule sphere of privilege; a foreigner who knew nothing of the city would have almost no notion of the existence of working-class slums from reading panoramic guides to the capital. On the rare occasion when the poor made an appearance in descriptions of the 'new Paris,' as in an 1831 essay by Aumary Duval, their presence inevitably destroyed the ambiance of gaiety and leisure that reigned in urban spaces:

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[241] Marchand, *Paris, histoire d'une ville (XIXe-XXe siècle)*, 28.
[242] Lemer, *Paris au gaz*, 31.

> [Alopex] was pained to find, at nearly every step [along the boulevards], in the middle of the thrumming crowd that circulated on the sidewalks, men, women, and children in filthy rags who implored public pity, who begged for bread; other indigents, bereft of their limbs or who displayed hideous scars; blind men who, kneeling on the straw, an old hat placed before them, sang love songs in a false and broken voice or played airs on squealing antique violins. Oh! How greatly do they wound, how greatly do they dampen the sentiment of joy and voluptuousness in the street... M. de Belleyme [the Prefect of Police], you promised us you would forever rid the capital of these hordes of pariahs, so inconvenient and so disgusting, who swarm over our public places and encumber our promenades.[243]

It is clear from this account that the poor were present in newly-created outdoor spaces, but this presence was rarely mentioned in urban texts. Paul de Kock used their appearance on sidewalks as an occasion to joke about how unwelcome they had become. "There are privileged beings," he wrote, "for whom there is always space on the sidewalk, and to whom elegant men and women rush to cede even the side next to the houses: coalmen and bricklayers." (fig. 10).[244] The accompanying illustration, in which two bourgeois strollers recoil from a worker approaching them, revived the fear of dirt and filth associated with the eighteenth-century street, along with their attendant connotations of transgression of an established social order. The coalman was out of place in the new urban environments of Paris, a fact vibrantly illustrated by his dark colora-

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[243] Aumary Duval, "Une journée de flâneur sur les boulevarts du nord," in *Paris, ou Le livre des cent et un*, 12:92-93.
[244] Paul de Kock, *La grande ville : nouveau tableau de Paris, comique, critique et philosophique*, vol. 1 (Paris: Bureau central des publications nouvelles, 1842), 52.

tion in contrast to the whiteness of his neighbours, shading that implied moral impurity in addition to physical uncleanliness.

Figure 10 – Bourgeois strollers repelled by the presence of a coalman, 1842

In a sense, the renewal of city streets was also a process of mentally displacing human misery to the fringes of public consciousness. Urban cleansing went hand-in-hand with a psychological purge of Paris' insalubrious inhabitants whose lifestyles could and did not conform to the bourgeois urban lifestyle. But mental removal could not but be accompanied by physical displacement. As city streets and neighbourhoods shed their insalubrious and repellent characteristics they increasingly appealed to members of the middle and upper classes. In areas where paving, sidewalks, street-lights, sewers, and boutiques had been established, both commercial and residential rents rose, changing the character of these neighbourhoods and forcing their poorer

inhabitants away while attracting a different class of tenant. Urban renewal was a leading contributor to a process of *embourgeoisement* or gentrification in the city centre.

Ruth Glass, who invented the concept of gentrification in 1963, defined it as "the process by which central neighbourhoods, once working-class, are profoundly transformed by the arrival of new residents belonging to the middle and upper classes."[245] This theory was initially formulated to describe the way some members of the middle class in post-war England and America chose to trade suburban living for the convenience of being downtown, even at the cost of inhabiting a run-down neighbourhood. Yet this pattern does not quite describe Paris, a city which for over a century and a half has relegated its poor to the suburbs beyond the city limits and reserved the ideally-placed centre for the affluent. While many of the same transformations ultimately took place, they were well in advance of developments elsewhere in the world. As early as the 1830s, the vertical separation that characterized spatial relations between the rich and poor in Paris began to give way to horizontal segregation, as the wealthy took over the centre and the poor moved outwards towards the periphery.

In recent years, most urban theorists have agreed on the necessity of a dual approach to explaining gentrification that takes into account both economic and cultural factors. On the one hand, certain areas and buildings lend themselves to being gentrified due to economic imbalances between their land-value and the incomes of their inhabitants, also known as the rent-gap theory. On the other, the creation of new urban lifestyles by capitalist consumer culture has presented inner-city living as an enticing alternative to dreary suburban life. Chris Hamnet argues that there are four requirements for gentrification to occur on a significant scale: a supply of suitable areas for

[245] Yankel Fijalkow and Edmond Préteceille, "Introduction. Gentrification : discours et politiques urbaines (France, Royaume-Uni, Canada)," *Sociétés contemporaines*, no. 63 (2006): 5.

gentrification, a supply of potential gentrifiers, the existence of attractive central and inner city environments, and a cultural preference for inner city residence.[246] The urban renewal that took place under Chabrol and Rambuteau handily fulfilled Hamnet's latter two conditions, while the enormous disparities of wealth between the rich and poor parts of the city fulfilled the others, making gentrification an ever likelier outcome of civic improvements.

At the same time that Jacques Lanquetin was insisting that the city's affluent citizens were fleeing the city, another member of the commission des Halles, Louis Marie, made the opposite observation. In his view, the city's poor were being chased from the centre by increasingly unaffordable rents, and were beginning to settle in the periphery:

> ...because of the transformation of the old Paris, the piercing of new roads, the widening of narrow streets, the cost of land, the expansion of commerce and industry, houses full of apartments, vast stores and workshops daily replacing ancient hovels... the poor, working-class population finds itself increasingly driven towards the extremities of Paris, the inevitable result of which is that the centre is destined to be inhabited exclusively by the well-off.
>
> For the same reasons, the number of inhabitants in the centre will only diminish over time and will be reduced, before fifty years have elapsed, to 150,000 people while the population outside the central zone will only increase.[247]

Population statistics collected at the beginning of the century support Marie's thesis of concentric growth (table 2).[248] Rents were least expensive in the eastern half of the city

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[246] Chris Hamnett, "The Blind Men and the Elephant: The Explanation of Gentrification," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 16, no. 2, New Series (1991): 186.
[247] Louis Marie, *De la Décentralisation des Halles de Paris* (Paris: E. Thunot, 1850), 7.
[248] Table adapted from Marchand, *Paris, histoire d'une ville (XIXe-XXe siècle)*, 54.

and especially on its fringes, places where the poor congregated far from the gleaming urbanization that was creating a new Paris.

15 *quartiers* in	1817	1831	1841
The centre	171,446	171.232	187, 960
The first *couronne*	256,680	253,159	287,218
The second *couronne*	285,820	345,895	436,855

Table 2 – The centrifugal drift of Paris' population (in number of inhabitants)

Few writers at the time seem to have noticed this trend and statistical data about the relationship between property values and urban infrastructure has yet to be compiled. Nevertheless, evidence for gentrification is present in many places. We saw above that D. had proposed urban renewal as a means of preventing the city's bourgeois from leaving the city centre. Balzac, another watchful observer of the street, noticed this process in action in impoverished parts of the capital:

> Speculation, which tends to change the face of this corner of Paris [la Petite Pologne – today part of the 8th *arrondissement*]... will doubtless modify the population, for the trowel is more civilizing in Paris than might be suspected! By building beautiful and elegant houses with caretakers, adorning them with sidewalks and installing boutiques, speculation removes – thanks to the cost of living – all vagabonds, households without goods, and bad renters. Thusly do neighbourhoods get rid of their sinister populations and those hovels where the police dare not enter except when the judiciary orders them to do so.[249]

[249] Honoré de Balzac, *Oeuvres complètes de M. de Balzac*, vol. 17 (Paris: Furne, 1842), 366.

Although Rambuteau never made an explicit connection between urban renewal and gentrification, a clear demonstration of it appears in his writings. To him it was clear that the population was leaving Paris for the suburbs; he noted that the three *arrondissements* of the left bank were filled with empty land while the communes surrounding them – Ivry, Montrouge and Vaugirard – were flourishing. In his memoirs he claimed this as the reason why he refused to approve the municipal council's repeated demands to annex the communes, defending their importance for the poor who could not afford high taxes and rents.[250] Yet just six pages later he wrote that during his career he had sought to pierce roads which created beautiful places whose newly-built facades would command high prices.[251] This bizarre mix of paternal benevolence towards the poor and blithe pursuit of urban policies which discriminated against them illustrates the obliviousness with which early nineteenth-century city planners were creating a capital inimical to the presence of the lower classes.

Proximity to work was the most important factor keeping the city's working class population in the centre, but even this important anchor began to come loose during the July Monarchy. For decades, the use of the place de Grève (in front of the Hôtel de Ville) as a hiring site for casual labourers made it essential to be as close as possible to the centre of the city. Living nearby could mean the difference between a 14- and a 16-hour workday and desperation among workers led to the acceptance of cramped, insalubrious housing conditions.[252] However, rising rents and new laws restricting work sites and noise pollution also forced industries to leave the centre of Paris and set up shop far from the city, as in the case of the capital's shawl-weaving works which moved

[250] Rambuteau, *Mémoires*, 369.
[251] Ibid., 375.
[252] See, for example: Dossiers d'assises, carton I, affaire Samson, AP D2U8.

its operations to Gentilly in 1847. Their employees followed, creating immense workers' villages in the areas surrounding the city and freeing their old apartments for demolition or renovation.[253]

In addition to lacking the means to resist these changes, the poor had no counter-discourse with which to oppose bourgeois representations of the city which excluded them. Virtually no written records of how they perceived and experienced outdoor areas at this time or how they responded to pre-Haussmannian urban changes were published. The disproportionately large number of insurrections during this period (attempts to overthrow the government were made in 1827, 1830, 1832, 1834, 1839, 1848 and 1852) suggests an acute unhappiness about their living conditions, but interrogations of revolutionaries carried out by the police in their aftermath dwelled on questions of Republican ideology rather than the material reasons for working-class discontent.[254] Their actions during these insurrectionary movements nevertheless pointed to a rejection of the new Paris where they were no longer welcome and whose encroachment on their traditional neighbourhoods was literally expelling them from urban life.

The building of barricades that accompanied each attempted revolution, a near-useless military tactic,[255] was nevertheless charged with symbolic significance. Their placement throughout the city corresponded not to areas which represented the greatest strategic advantage for combat, but to the traditional working-class neighbourhoods of the medieval city centre. They clustered in pockets around Beaubourg, the faubourg Saint-Antoine, and the montagne Saint-Geneviève, a distribution which remained con-

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[253] Passion, "Marcher dans Paris au XIXe siècle," in Caron, *Paris et ses réseaux*, 42.
[254] See AN CC 585-596, 723-725, 756; AN C 934; AN F 9 682, 684, 686, 1072, 1181.
[255] Auguste Blanqui, *Instructions pour une prise d'armes*, Cosaques (Grenoble: Éd. Cent pages, 2003).

stant over time. In spite of all of Haussmann's changes to the city, the barricades of 1871 were erected in almost exactly the same locations as in 1848.[256] Revolutionaries were consciously revisiting the urban sites that gentrification had steadily forced them to abandon and reclaiming them as their own. The construction of the barricades was also a literal deconstruction of the city, the working-class pendant to the paving of city streets which had turned them into bourgeois social spaces. In this inversion of the urban order, insurrectionaries involved their fellow citizens in the unmaking of the city by forcing pedestrians to lift three or four paving stones each and add them to the barricade before letting them pass.[257] These acts were accompanied by lantern-smashing, a deed which both facilitated combat against the forces of order and represented a symbolic rejection of the system of control their policing function exerted over the city.[258]

Socialist thinkers, who might have represented the working-class point of view towards early nineteenth-century urbanism in writing, scarcely commented on the changes that were transforming city streets. Their lack of criticism may be partly explained by efforts Chabrol and Rambuteau made to alleviate many of the sources of working-class misery, such as the construction of fountains to distribute clean water and new hospitals which received patients without money, which prevented them from being viewed as enemies of the poor and targeted for recrimination. In any case neither had the intention of building a city for the bourgeoisie to the exclusion of the less fortunate. Many of the infrastructural improvements which contributed to that outcome, such as paving and the introduction of sewers, were intended to make working-class neighbourhoods safer and healthier; their cultural consequences were unforeseen and

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[256] Marchand, *Paris, histoire d'une ville (XIXe-XXe siècle)*, 90.
[257] Testimonies of Jean Baptiste Dupont and Victor Alexandre Bousselin, 28 April 1834, AN CC 586.
[258] Sophie Mosser, "Éclairage urbain : enjeux et instruments d'action" (Paris: Université Paris 8 - Vincennes-St-Denis, 2003), 28.

the advent of gentrification, which was very little discussed at this period, may have gone completely unperceived by many.

Furthermore, French socialists were seemingly more concerned with their visions of the ideal workers' city than engaging in debates about sidewalks and street lighting. Like Haussmann and other modernist planners, most were guided by the belief that only large-scale 'rational' and 'scientific' solutions to urban problems imposed from above could eliminate the problems associated with urban living.[259] The comte de Saint-Simon and Etienne Cabet believed that the creation of a technocratic industrial society based on the regimentation of the worker into a labouring army run by savant elites and the uniformization of habitations could eradicate material inequality. Charles Fourier, while professing the same evangelical industrialism as his contemporaries, eschewed urban centralization for a city model based on the commune, the *phalanstère*. A military metaphor is very present in such socialist critiques; these thinkers imagined massive, barracks-like dwellings for the poor with shared kitchens, common areas, and work sites next to their residences as the ideal form of urban organization.[260]

It is unlikely that these visions of workers' cities represented the desires of most working-class citizens, though they do speak to dissatisfaction with bourgeois urban policies that did nothing to attenuate poverty and social inequality. However, nothing indicates that the poor were opposed in principle to having safer, cleaner, and healthier neighbourhoods. It was the social and economic consequences that followed in their wake that caused them the most problems, as they gave rise to both forms of leisure in which they could not participate and re-evaluations of the city that excluded them both

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[259] For a detailed analysis of socialist ideas about city planning, see: Papayanis, *Planning Paris before Haussmann*, 128-246.
[260] Ragon, *Idéologies et pionniers 1800-1910*, 1:70.

mentally and physically. Proudhon's idea that moral progress was not the natural consequence of economic progress probably comes closest to describing working-class attitudes towards the development of the city at this time, but the lack of records makes it difficult to gauge their opinions.

Conclusion

When Haussmann wrote his memoirs, he justified all that he had done to change the city by reminding Parisians of its primeval state before his arrival. As an example, he offered the route he took to school every day from his home in the quartier de la Chaussée d'Antin to the law faculty near the Sorbonne:

> I arrived, after many detours, at the rue Montmartre and the point Saint-Eustache; I crossed the grid of les Halles which were uncovered at that time, then the rues des Lavandières, Saint-Honoré, and Saint-Denis; the place du Châtelet was rather shabby at the time. I crossed the old Pont-au-Change and walked alongside the old Palais de Justice, keeping to my left the vile heap of houses of ill repute which until recently dishonoured the Île de la Cité and which I had the joy of demolishing later. Continuing my path across the pont Saint-Michel, I had to cross the wretched little place where all the waters of the rues de la Harpe, de la Huchette, Saint-André des Arts, and de l'Hirondelle flowed as if into a swamp... Finally, I confronted the twists and turns of the rue de la Harpe to climb the montagne Sainte-Geneviève.[261]

But Haussmann's vision of the past encouraged a certain kind of forgetfulness. Born in 1809, he went to law school at the end of the 1820s and had left Paris for the provinces by 1830. In the twenty-three years that elapsed before his return, the city had been entirely remade and his anecdote rendered not merely irrelevant but absurd as the path he described passed directly through the neighbourhoods which had benefitted most from

[261] Haussmann, *Mémoires*, 104.

urban renewal under Chabrol and Rambuteau. Roads had been paved, sidewalks laid, trees, benches, and streetlamps planted and installed alongside the streets; the roads and walkways were swept daily and all waters flowed into gutters hidden beneath the sidewalks instead of collecting in filthy puddles that were churned into mud. Commerce had transformed the streets from mere channels for communication to galleries of visual delights, dotted with elaborate storefront displays meant to catch the eye of passers-by.

His remembrances also contain a second elision, more subtle than the first. Haussmann deliberately emphasized the number of streets he walked through to get to school and highlighted their sinuous contours to illustrate just how meandering and irrational his route had been. The passage uses the language of an explorer beset by hardships during an expedition ("after many detours..."; "I confronted..."; "I had to cross..."); the act of walking is presented as an excruciating means of arriving at his destination. This version of pedestrianism, meant to convince Parisians that he experienced first-hand the reasons for which the city needed his help, omits the enormous cultural transformation which occurred before his appointment as prefect. The student on foot did not go away, but by the 1830s the same path would be walked by *flâneurs*, delighting in its picturesque medieval streets, novelties displayed in boutique windows, and one another.

Historical memory is short and thanks in part to his revisionism Haussmann's work has been confounded with that of his predecessors, an accomplishment that has obscured the uniqueness of the early nineteenth century's contributions to the city's evolving character. This situation is all the more unfortunate as the philosophical and practical approaches towards the street differed immensely between the two periods.

The second Empire established the reign of the straight line in Parisian urbanism and announced the moment when the city would be built for vehicles, not people; circulation, not residence.[262] Haussmann and Napoleon III chose the boulevard as the organizing principle of their refashioned capital; many of their other improvements – even the trees and squares they implanted throughout the city – were simply accessories to this feature.[263]

Haussmann had many detractors besides the members of the working class whose inner-city housing he demolished and the intelligentsia who lamented the destruction of Paris' old neighbourhoods. His newly-minted urban spaces were particularly targeted for recrimination and unfavourably compared to those that already existed, many of which survived Haussmann's razing. Louis Lazare (a partisan of haussmannization) explained matter-of-factly in 1857 that the interior boulevards remained the favourite destination for Parisians and tourists alike because "this promenade does not have a cold beauty, stuffy and rule-bound; it is not a street with two parallel sides, two perfectly symmetrical lines, and a monotonous majesty."[264] He could have been describing any of Haussmann's distinctive piercings throughout the city, from the boulevard de Sébastopol (1854) to the avenue de l'Opéra (1876). All were too immense to correspond to the scale of human interaction with the urban environment, creating yawning vistas that stretched endlessly into the distance. Most importantly, they failed to create a sense of place, discouraging the presence of pedestrians. Urbanists have long

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[262] Here I draw a distinction between theory and practice. Haussmann's work was certainly influenced by the urban discourses of the early nineteenth century, as well as the piecemeal efforts made by Chabrol and Rambuteau to solve the growing problem of vehicular traffic in the city centre. Nevertheless, their efforts in this regard were so overwhelmingly dwarfed by what followed that the 1850s remain the moment when widespread progress towards such a vision of the city was first made.
[263] Ragon, *Idéologies et pionniers 1800-1910*, 1:122.
[264] Quoted in Haejeong Hazel Hahn, "Du flâneur au consommateur : spectacle et consommation sur les Grands Boulevards, 1840-1914," *Romantisme* 36, no. 134 (2006): 72.

been aware that proportion – the ratio of both street width and length to the height of enclosing buildings – is critical for good street design, something Haussmann's roads, built exclusively for vehicles, lacked entirely. According to Cliff Moughtin, "for a street to function as a place or exterior room in the city it must possess similar qualities of enclosure as the public square."[265] It comes as no surprise that today the Haussmannian boulevards are largely deserted[266] while the dense medieval centre and tiny urban villages of Montmartre and Belleville overflow with human activity.

It would nevertheless be incorrect to attribute the success of these urban spaces to the intentions of the prefects who preceded Haussmann. Both Chabrol and Rambuteau certainly aimed to develop a cleaner, safer, and more agreeable city, goals they did much to achieve. Many of the significant cultural changes to city streets that have been described in this thesis, however, were both unexpected and unplanned. Neither urban planner intended urban improvements to cluster in the middle- and upper-class areas of the city, creating a homogeneous urban space segregated from poorer neighbourhoods of Paris. Nor did they anticipate the rise of commerce and sociability that accompanied new urban technologies, each of which contributed to transform sidewalks from mere conduits into destinations in their own right. The budding gentrification of the city centre, which would later be disguised by the radical demolitions of the second Empire, was hardly noticed at all. These transformations were assisted by both the picturesque layout and dense, mixed-use land development of Paris' medieval centre, features whose benefits were invisible until the advent of urban renewal. The great triumph of pedestrian spaces in early-nineteenth century Paris must be seen as an organic process

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[265] Cliff Moughtin, *Urban Design: Street and Square*, Third Edition. (Oxford: Architectural Press, 2003), 135.
[266] The sole exception is the boulevard Saint-Germain.

of exaptation rather than the outcome of central planning. Paris' early prefects acted as unwitting facilitators, creating the conditions for consumer demand to determine the shape and layout of the city's urban improvements.

Rethinking Modernity

I have made no attempt to articulate a comprehensive theory of modernity to replace those that are frequently – and insofar as the early nineteenth-century is concerned, erroneously – used by historians. Nevertheless, I have tried to show the ways in which the changes that took place in early nineteenth-century Paris created both a lifestyle and especially an image of the capital that endures in the present day, particularly in the dense inner city. If the idea of Paris as a picturesque walking and shopping city still retains so much force it is because many of the areas described by the panoramic literature of the period have survived intact, their urban dynamic fundamentally unchanged; the eighth arrondissement and the quartier Saint-Germain, for example, are still the seats of Parisian commercial luxury where twenty-first century guidebooks exhort tourists to spend the day in *flânerie* admiring their gilded boutiques. The transformations produced in the early decades of the nineteenth century have also spread to Paris' other central neighbourhoods, endowing them with many of the same characteristics and turning their once-exclusive 'specialness' into a city-wide phenomenon.

In recent years the city has aggressively pursued an urban program that overwhelmingly favours pedestrianism as the ideal way of experiencing the capital. Every Sunday the Marais (a designated 'tourist zone' where businesses are allowed to stay

open all weekend) is blocked to vehicular traffic and becomes a hive of human activity, particularly on the boutique-lined rue des Francs-Bourgeois. Mayor Bertrand Delanoë has organized 'Paris Plages' every summer since 2002, a four-week-long event during which the quays of the Seine's right bank and the bassin de la Villette are closed to traffic and transformed into urban beaches complete with sand, umbrellas, cafés and mobile libraries.[267] In 2010, the city launched a project called "Berges de Seine" which aims to make many of those changes permanent, the ultimate goal of which is to convert the quays of the left bank into pedestrian promenades.[268] These ventures were born of the recognition of the unique character acquired by Paris at the beginning of the nineteenth century that made it such a desirable destination, especially for tourists whose mass arrival in the capital followed the changes wrought under the supervision of Chabrol and Rambuteau.[269]

The history of small-scale urban development has a more general significance for the practice of urbanism in the twenty-first century. Thanks to the anti-modernist influence of Jane Jacobs, the kinds of urban neighbourhoods coveted today share much in common with the neighbourhoods created in Paris during the early nineteenth century: walkability, mixed-use zoning, density, ground-level retail, and an ineffable sense of place.[270] Many of their advocates consciously look to history for inspiration. But these two urban environments also share a common ideology: that local, small-scale change is preferable to central planning and that the final consumer – the urban citizen – should

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[267] Mairie de Paris, "Paris Plages," 2010, http://www.paris-plages.fr/.
[268] Paris.fr, "Berges de Seine," 2010, http://bergesdeseine.paris.fr/.
[269] Martin Anderson, "Tourism and the Development of the Modern British Passport, 1814–1858," *The Journal of British Studies* 49, no. 2 (April 2010): 263-264; See also the descriptions tourists made of Paris at this time in: Hahn, *Scenes of Parisian Modernity*, 33-52.
[270] These elements are particularly prominent in the ideas of New Urbanists who advocate a return to many principles of pre-automobile city planning, see: Congress for the New Urbanism, "Charter of the New Urbanism," 1996, http://www.cnu.org/charter.

be involved in the decision-making process that determines how the city ought to be built. According to Nathan Glazer, who was Jacobs' editor in the 1960s, her political ideal was "anarchistic—people making their own decisions, with less or no guidance or control from above, will make a better city." This idea has acquired much currency in recent years. Witold Rybczynski, an advocate of 'makeshift metropolises,' believes that "while planners and architects propose concepts... the public ultimately decides what it likes and dislikes. Instead of one big idea, the city is formed by many little ideas."[271] Andrejs Skaburskis has formulated the same argument in free market terms: "In the long run, it is the demand-side pressures that forge the shape of cities."[272]

But these seemingly anodyne statements conceal the important issue of who controls the urban decision-making process. The Jacobsian 'better city' has wide appeal but the supply of neighbourhoods which meet its criteria is limited, driving prices upwards and pushing out low-income residents. Unsurprisingly, Jacobs' prescriptions for the ideal neighbourhood have recently been criticized for leading to gentrification and for valuing a bourgeois-bohemian lifestyle over the needs of the lower classes.[273] The 'new urbanism,' driven by the lifestyle choices of the modern-day consumer class, is just as antithetical to the presence of the working class as early nineteenth century urban design once was. It may be no guiltier of this sin than modernist planning, much of which amounted to social engineering meant to displace the poor and clean up areas they inhabited,[274] but it is harder to resist by virtue of its decentralization and claim to represent popular opinion. However, such claims rely on discourses about the ideal urban

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[271] Witold Rybczynski, *Makeshift Metropolis: Ideas About Cities* (New York: Scribner, 2010), 80.
[272] Andrejs Skaburskis, "New Urbanism and Sprawl," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 25, no. 3 (Spring 2006): 233.
[273] Benjamin Schwartz, "Gentrification and Its Discontents," *The Atlantic*, June 2010, http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/05/gentrification-and-its-discontents/8092/.
[274] Papayanis, *Planning Paris before Haussmann*, 252.

lifestyle which are never objective appraisals but rather containers for the values of politically or economically dominant groups. Although the recent shift away from modernist planning has prevented the construction of nightmarish projects like Pruitt-Igoe, history shows that unchecked, small-scale urbanism can engender the same fundamental inequalities.

Paris' least wealthy citizens, today living in the suburbs beyond the city limits, are also least likely to benefit from changes to the city centre. In fact, the near absence of metro service outside the *boulevard périphérique* means that they may even stand to lose from policies meant to restrict driving in parts of the city. Their de facto exclusion from considerations about the future of the capital forces should give us pause and force us to ask a fundamental question as we continue to advance towards a future in which city planning is controlled by citizens who will once again redefine the urban experience: for whom are cities being built?

Appendix

	Sidewalks constructed per year (in metres)		Total length of sidewalks in Paris (in metres)
Year	Length	Surface	
1822	276.65	454.3	267.65
1823	290.45	635.21	558.1
1824	208.4	340.94	776.5
1825	1,247.7	2,207.14	2,014.2
1826	2,237.3	4507.24	4,251.5
1827	2,481.89	3,669.03	6,733.39
1828	4,109.66		10,843.05
1829	12,178.66		23,021.7
1830	8,742		31,763.7
1831	9,761		41,524.7
1832	11,100		52,624.7
1833	11,564		64,188.7
1834	12,000		76,188.7

Table 3 – Total length of sidewalks in metres, 1822-1834

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AP – Archives de la Ville de Paris

APP – Archives de la Préfecture de Police

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