A Crisis of Distinction: Reading Fin-de-Siècle Anxieties through *Les types de Paris*

by

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Richard Sieburth
DEDICATION

For Rich, because he had faith — and for Hamish, just because.
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ABSTRACT

My dissertation combines micro-history, literary geography, urbanism, and the history of the French illustrated book. I work outwards from Les types de Paris, a virtually ignored and chaotically hybrid collection of essays, short stories, physiologies and poetry that I position as a latter-day rewriting of the panoramic literature of the 1840s. This iteration, I argue, has to address a city that has become unheimlich for its inhabitants. Post-Haussmann, post-1870, in the throes of an Exposition universelle: this has become a city in constant flux. The volume’s contributors — from Edmond de Goncourt, Mallarmé, and Maupassant to Mirbeau, Richepin, and Zola — collaborate with its illustrator-curator, Jean-François Raffaëlli to try to make sense of a city whose social, gender, and geographical boundaries are no longer fixed. The resultant visual-verbal ensemble reveals a bourgeois urban class ridden with the anxieties of modernity — from the increasing visibility and mobility of the working class, to a crisis of masculinity in the face of defeat, to the shifting social and geographical borders of the city in which it lives. Here, the panoramic format reflects a bourgeois desire to frame the fluid, to stay the tide of change.
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A CRISIS OF DISTINCTION: READING FIN-DE-SIÈCLE
ANXIETIES THROUGH *LES TYPES DE PARIS*

Au milieu de la grande évolution à laquelle nous assistons et qui est en
train de bouleverser de fond en comble nos idées, nos habitudes, nos
mœurs, n’est-il pas intéressant et curieux de se demander ce qu’est devenu
Paris en 1889 ? Le Paris d’autrefois, avec ses usages, ses coutumes, ses
physionomies caractéristiques du temps passé, ce vieux Paris a disparu.
Mais un Paris nouveau a surgi, aussi curieux quoique différent, possédant,
lui aussi, ses types bien marqués et tout modernes. La rue, plus large, n’est
que plus ivante, sillonnée en tous sens par une foule complexe et agitée,
ouvriers et bourgeois, provinciaux et étrangers, enfants et vieillards,
chiffonniers et grands seigneurs…

Anon., “Introduction to the bound volume of *Les types de Paris*” (2)

All attempts to institute horizons, to establish boundaries, to secure the
identity of places, can… be seen to be attempts to stabilize the meaning of
particular envelopes of space-time. They are attempts to get to grips with
the unutterable mobility and contingency of space-time. Moreover,
however common, and however understandable, they may be it is
important to recognize them as such. For such attempts at the stabilization
of meaning are constantly the site of social contest, battles over the power
to label space-time, to impose the meaning to be attributed to a space, for
however long or short a span of time.

Doreen Massey, *Space, place and gender* (5)

Paris in 1889: Post-Haussmann, post-1870 defeat, post-Commune. The year of the
Eiffel Tower, the year that General Boulanger almost brought down the Third Republic,
the year of a new law extending French nationality to second-generation immigrants, the
centenary of the Revolution. The year of the World’s Fair, one of those *expositions*
political scientist Timothy Mitchell, in an essay exploring the fascination with exhibition
in the modern West, calls the epitome of “the Western experience of order or truth” (“The World as Exhibition” 218–219).

1889 was also the year of publication of Les types de Paris, the text that lies at the center of this dissertation. Coming almost half a century after the panoramic literature craze of the 1840’s, which provided a post-revolution guide for “Parisians as interested as they were anxious about the world changing before their very eyes” (Ferguson 59), I here read Les types de Paris as an attempt to map a new historical (post-1870/71) and geographical (post-Haussmann) reality by creating a new taxonomy of an increasingly alien and alienating city. I propose that social, cultural and political change created a crisis of distinction in 1880s urban France. Distinction between “masculinity” and “femininity” and the traditionally and legally separate male and female spheres and spheres of influence, distinction between Frenchmen de souche and Frenchmen by adoption or naturalization, distinction between city dweller and vagabond, distinction, finally, between the urban and the rural. It is a crisis David Harvey calls out in Paris, Capital of Modernity:

The mixing that went on in the exterior spaces—the boulevards and the public gardens (such as the Tuileries)—was hard to control, despite the evolution of a more segregated residential ecology within the city. Policing the public space became difficult. The boundary between respectable women and women of easy virtue called for stricter surveillance, and the politics of street life—the itinerant musicians and pamphleteers—was a focus of considerable police activity. From this there
arose a sense of insecurity and vulnerability, of bourgeois anxiety, even of anomie, behind the turbulent mask of spectacle and commodification in the public spaces. (214)

I explore iterations of this crisis in 1880s Paris through Les types de Paris, reading it in the representations of social and geographical mobility and mixité I detect in its taxonomies of urban types. I suggest that for middle-class Parisians under the Third Republic, the city had become estranged, unheimlich,¹ and I argue that Les types de Paris, in both form and content, illustrates and attempts to overcome that estrangement born of crisis. The book, I suggest, serves as an effort to reestablish its white, middle-to-upper class male authors’ sense of ownership of the city of Paris. It does so by reducing the inhabitants of the city to types and, through a combination of text and image, presenting the urban body as a visible, categorizable, and understandable whole. It exemplifies the “attempts to institute horizons, to establish boundaries, to secure the identity of places” that Doreen Massey sees as “attempts to stabilize the meaning of particular envelopes of space-time… to get to grips with the unutterable mobility and

¹ I prefer the German term “unheimlich” to its usual English translation “uncanny,” precisely because it contains the notion and associations of home [das Heim / die Heimat]; if we think this spatially, we can consider the new geography of Paris to be one in which the familiar is made strange. Freud notes in The “Uncanny”: “[Thus] heimlich is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, unheimlich. Unheimlich is in some way or other a sub-species of heimlich” (226).
contingency of space-time” (5). Massey’s emphasis on security and stabilization is crucial to this project: by taking control of the representation of the troubling causes of a perceived degeneration, the authors of Les types de Paris try to regain control of what the book’s anonymous préfacier calls “la grande évolution à laquelle nous assistons et qui est en train de bouleverser de fond en comble nos idées, nos habitudes, nos mœurs” (2).²

In La production de l’espace, Henri Lefebvre argues that without a space in which to inscribe themselves, a social group or class cannot reproduce itself, cannot survive. The production of a space is, he claims, necessary to subject formation and self-identification:

Rien ni personne peut éviter l’épreuve de l’espace. Plus et mieux, un groupe : une classe ou fraction de classe, ne se constituent et ne se reconnaissent comme « sujets » qu’en engendrant (produisant) un espace. Les idées, représentations, valeurs, qui ne parviennent pas à s’inscrire dans l’espace en engendrant une morphologie appropriée se dessèchent en signes, se résolvent en récits abstraits, se changent en fantasmes.

L’investissement spatial, la production de l’espace, ce n’est pas un incident de parcours, mais une question de vie ou de mort. (478–479)

² Even in this incipit we can read a feeling of helplessness (“à laquelle nous assistons”) and of social and cultural confusion (“en train de bouleverser de fond en comble”).
In this dissertation, then, I argue that the authors and illustrator of *Les types de Paris*, estranged from the rapidly changing city in which they live, aspire to produce another city, another Paris, another space for themselves — to assure their own survival.

The dissertation combines close textual analysis with literary geography, art history and cultural history to explore the discourse of the center (of bourgeois politicians and journalists, writers and artists) on the marginal or mobile: females, foreigners, and the vagrant, as the authors work to redefine the social, cultural, and geographical borders of this space they call “Paris.” These groups are often not as discrete as my categorization might suggest, for the women portrayed in *Les types de Paris* are sometimes foreign, sometimes vagrant; the foreigners are from a wide range of social backgrounds. What these groups have in common is twofold: they have increased visibility in cultural and political discourse and they embody a social, cultural, and geographical mobility that poses a threat to the centricity of the urban, bourgeois, white male.

The various authors in *Les types de Paris* use different tactics to counter this crisis: some put the other on display, visually recreating a power dynamic between watcher and watched that heightens the difference between them. We see this in Antonin Proust’s contribution to *Les types* in Chapter Two, and Émile Zola’s in Chapter Four. Others, such as Félicien Champsaur, whose *Les chiffonniers* I look at in Chapter Three, attempt to assimilate the other to the center, thereby seeming to accept a reduction in distinction exactly while they re-establish an uneven power balance within *égalité*. Others still objectify and even commodify their *types*; for an example of this, see my discussion of Fourcaud’s “Belles filles” in Chapter One. Finally, Richepin, whose fairground poetry
I look at in my final chapter, nostalgically identifies an idealized, even atavistic type, but quickly reduce that type’s revolutionary or political potential by aestheticizing him.

Kristin Ross, in her study of urban exclusion in the mid 20th Century, indicates that Henri Lefebvre opened up the way to view “society as a city— and thus the beginning of a whole new thematics of inside and outside, of inclusion in, and exclusion from, a positively-valued modernity. Cities possess a centre and banlieues, and citizens, those on the interior, deciding who among the insiders should be expelled and whether or not to open their doors to those on the outside” (150). This is what is happening in the Paris of 1889. Les types de Paris is a taxonomy that is inclusive on the surface — the “types” of this new Paris include the working classes, children, old people, vagrants, foreigners, women — but this inclusivity is, I suggest, a way for its authors to feel like they have regained some sort of control over an actual city in which they no longer feel entirely at home, to establish a space for themselves. We see citizens on the inside, members of the middle classes armed with pens and paintbrushes and the places to publish their work, controlling the representation of populations that have traditionally been marginal but, as I will show over the course of this dissertation, are slowly taking central stage. In a way, then, the discourse produced by these authors in Les Types de Paris acts as a literary corollary to political attempts to re-assert control over increasingly visible but previously marginalized populations.

In order to establish itself, Lefebvre tell us, a class or a fragment of a class must inscribe itself and its values into a space. The production of a space (to call one’s own) is a means of identity construction and legitimation (Veschambre: 64), a guarantee of
survival over time. I would like to suggest that in Les types de Paris we bear witness to an attempt to produce a space in which the identity of its authors and intended readers can be asserted and re legitimized. The book purports to present the city of Paris, but in the act of representing that city it creates another, more fixed, more stable “book,” one in which its readers and its authors can still recognize themselves. By representing so many facets of the city’s population as types to be consumed by a bourgeois readership, it resets the balance of power in the favor of those readers.

If power and knowledge articulate the city—its buildings, the width of its streets, its neighborhoods, they also drive description in the panoramic text, which offers a way for its readers to “know” both the city and its inhabitants. In Les types de Paris, panoramic description attempts to simultaneously encode and annex urban difference in order to reinforce the centrality of the city itself. Ultimately, then, as a form of élite discourse, the discourse of those at the center, Les types de Paris is ethnocentric: as Brian Ratcliffe says of élite discourse in general, it tells us “more about the centre and its phantasms than about the realities of the margin” (“Perceptions and Realities” 232).

In the end, though — and this is the point of this dissertation’s final chapter, which deals with shifting definitions of “Paris” itself rather than with social and cultural distinction — what Les types de Paris ultimately reveals, almost despite itself, is that Paris is becoming increasingly decentered, refracting out beyond its own cartographic boundaries. In Paris, people are not what they seem. In Paris, artifice trumps authenticity. The Paris of Les types de Paris is what Benjamin would call — as he did the World Exhibition on the occasion of which it was published — a phantasmagoria (Exposé 7).
Panoramic Literature Part I: The 1840s

Ces ouvrages, souvent collectifs, auxquels participent tous les grands écrivains de l’époque, sont en général abondamment illustrés, et obéissent donc fonctionnellement et structurellement aux mêmes présupposés (faire des bilans, décliner des listes de lieux, de types, ou d’objets, parcourir méthodiquement un champ de savoir, classer, jumperposer des scènes, rendre lisible, donner à voir, récréer et instruire) que les Expositions elles-mêmes. (Hamon, *Expositions* 90)

I propose that we read *Les types de Paris* as a rewriting and reinterpretation of what Walter Benjamin called the “panoramic literature” of the 1840s. Benjamin associated this literature with the panoramas, those continuously circular exhibits depicting a city that first became popular in the late 18th century and enjoyed a significant revival in the 1880s. To the Parisian upper bourgeoisie trying to decode the new city, the panoramas fulfilled what Bernard Comment calls “a double dream of totality and possession” (39). They shrunk time and space, reducing a conglomeration of disparate parts into a totality. The viewer, looking down at all of Paris below him, had a sense that he could not only see the whole city, but that he could understand it too.³

Panoramic literature came about at another time of huge social upheaval — during the July Monarchy, when Balzac’s bankers and lawyers were rising through society’s ranks. In these tumultuous years after the July Revolution, a slew of newly industrialized processes, a succession of short-lived political systems, and an aspirant bourgeois class had rendered the urban text illegible. Instead of portraying the city through its monuments and buildings, this literature portrayed it through its people,

³ For a detailed history of the panorama, see Comment, *Le XIXe siècle*. 
performing an exhaustive categorization and encoding of social types in an attempt to render the urban palimpsest comprehensible again. This encryption also became a kind of prescription: since each entry was illustrated, text and image created a totalizing dialogue about the (mythical) city, an epistemological field that attempted to assert (and, in the future, preserve) that myth as the reality. Categorizing and typifying as they did, the writers of panoramic literature were able to reify and fix most “Parisian” types.

Several critics (Amossy 1989; Cohen 1995; Ferguson 1994; Lauster 2007; Matlock 2007; Sieburth 1984) have written in-depth accounts of this panoramic literature that emerged out of the Revolution of 1830 and the July Monarchy, and while it would be redundant to repeat the content of such comprehensive studies here, a brief survey is helpful nonetheless. In the 1840s, panoramic literature essentially took two forms: the dollar store physiologies, which sold for less than a third of the price of a book and were marketed as a mass-market paperback series of social stereotypes (Sieburth 166), and their much more luxurious counterparts: lavishly illustrated albums of city life, experiences, and characters with names such as Paris au XIXe siècle, Recueil de scènes de la vie parisienne (1838); Les Français peints par eux-mêmes (1842); La grande ville, nouveau tableau de Paris, comique, critique, et philosophique (1842-3) and Le Diable à Paris, Paris et les Parisiens (1845-6), which were inspired by such multi-volume études de moeurs of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as Mercier’s pre-revolutionary Tableau de Paris (1781–88) or the collectively authored Paris ou le Livre des Cent-et-un, published between 1831 and 1834.

Marina Lauster helpfully differentiates between the “panoramic order,” which
focuses on urban life, and the “encyclopedic” one, which takes as its subject the mores of the nation or century (21). If we accept Simmel (in *The Metropolis and Mental Life*) and Park’s (in *Human Communities*) assertion that modernity expresses itself in the city more than anywhere else, then the fact that so many of these literary panoramas focused on urban life makes sense. Christopher Prendergast, for his part, notes the panorama’s

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4 It is the legacy of the “panoramic” urban works, particularly those written by multiple authors/readers of urban surfaces, which are of interest to me here.

5 The anxieties I discuss in this dissertation can be (and were) blamed on “modernity.” The term, however, has neither a clear definition nor a defined time period, even if we narrow our definition to what was happening in France. For Simmel, modernity is fragmentary. For Zola, modernity means industrialization: factories, proletarianization and urbanization, mechanized labor, the loss of the workers’ autonomy. For Marx, it means alienation from our own interests, from our core selves.

In this dissertation, I understand modernity to be characterized by (a) mobility (social and geographical) and ambiguity that leads to a flattening out of difference; (b) a state of tension between, on the one hand, an immense and powerful yearning for some indefinable past that is dreamed as stable and secure and is opposed to the ‘decadence’ wrought by the new, and on the other, enthusiasm for the lived results of “progress”: technological innovation, scientific research, improvements in health and hygiene; (d) increased speed; (e) the power of the market, the lure of commodities, the construction of self-identity through the consumption of consumer goods — and the concerns about authenticity and identity that result.
“profound effect on the psychological and ideological forms of urban visuality, on the conditions under which the city was both perceived and fantasized” (46-7) — panoramic literature, too, alters and directs the reader’s perception of the urban.

I would caution, with Christopher Prendergast, against avoiding “too neat an assimilation of the panorama to our new-historicist paradigms of savoir-pouvoir” (47). Panoramas, particularly literary panoramas, were not panoptic in the Foucauldian sense. The people represented therein did not alter their behavior because they felt they were being watched. However, power and knowledge are certainly not absent from the equation. While Prendergast suggests, then, that the city as panorama “was essentially a matter of the pleasures of spectacle” (47), I would posit rather that while pleasure was certainly a part of the experience of reading a literary panorama, it was not the only one. Rather, the pleasure derived is in no small part a result of the psychological assurance guaranteed by the covers of the book or the pages of the newspaper supplement: these types were known, they had been assigned categories, and they were safely framed by the discourse produced by this pseudo-scientific combination of visual and verbal representation.

Panoramic literature, by directing vision towards a collection of parts presented as a whole, presented the city in the form of a carefully framed landscape to be read, understood, and consumed by the viewer/reader as a recognizable geographical and social reality. As several critics (Sieburth, Cohen, Amossy, Stiénon), following Benjamin, have pointed out, the collection and classification of types responds to a double need: to categorize the real, and to make it intelligible; “these works,” writes Patricia Ferguson,
“offered both information and assurance” (59). Categorizing and typifying as they did, they were able to reify most “Parisian” types, habits, and situations (an evening at the opera, a piano lesson, even beards and moustaches…) to create a seemingly comprehensive and unarguable urban landscape, easily digestible and comprehensible: the city as commodity.

In its fragmentary form and “heterogeneric” (Cohen 232) subject matter, the mixing of literary and artistic genres and forms, the packaging of both the one-franc volumes and particularly the more luxurious bound counterparts as desirable commodities, even the speed and regularity with which the multi-volume, mass-produced cheaper *Physiologies* appeared: this literature was a quintessential expression of the experience of modern life. In fact, its ready availability was only possible because of modernity — it could not have existed without the material technological innovations of its time. Sieburth draws the very material connection between the proliferation and popularity of these texts (the *physiologies* in particular) and technological advances in printing and paper manufacturing linked to the advent of journalism. These advances allowed for illustrated books to be mass produced quickly and at a low cost (“Same Difference” 166). In *Paris as Revolution*, Patricia Ferguson adds: “The anthologies capitalized on the expansion of the reading public, which also made the serial novel so successful a formula at about the same time, beginning in the 1830s” (59).

Nor was it modern in form alone; several contributions bear witness to new innovations and inventions: *La Grande Ville* features an article on the railroad and another on the daguerreotype; *Paris au XIXe siècle* dedicates space to the omnibus; *La
physiologie des rues de Paris an entry to the coachman, who, claims Stiénon, is

“directement associé à la fugacité et à l’évanescence, deux déclinaisons du paradigme de la vitesse” (14) and, I would add, a precursor of “le transitoire, le fugitif, le contingent” (884) with which Baudelaire would later characterize modernity.

Before we look at the second phase of panoramas and panoramic literature, which appeared in the first decade of the Third Republic, let us first take a glance at the Paris of the 1880s, and at the Exposition that both crowned the decade and celebrated the centenary of 1889.

The Paris of the 1880s

This dissertation is not a comprehensive decadal history, nor does it aspire to be. The early years of the Third Republic have been covered with consummate skill by many, amongst whom I will single out Philippe Nord, Jean-Pierre Azema, Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Reberioux, as well as by the various authors who contributed to Edward Berenson’s edited introduction to republican ideas in general, The French Republic: History, Values, Debates. Here, rather, I focus on contemporary debates around three key figures: the female, the foreigner, and the chiffonnier, and on the representational and legislative attempts made to subject them to cultural, spatial, and legal control. As I introduce each chapter with a discussion that contextualizes the type in question, showing how that particular type is and has been treated in sociocultural discourse both current and contemporary, I will not spend a great deal of time reiterating that information here.
One area that I wish to introduce here, however, is the nascent formation of a working class culture. I want to draw attention to it here because while it would be impossible to talk about the early Third Republic without talking about class, the “working class” type is not one I address in this dissertation. I chose instead to focus on the discourse around one particular kind of working person, the chiffonnier, whose geographical mobility and disregard for society at large make him a troubling kind of figure who, like the duplicitous female and the dissembling foreigner, threatens the bourgeois’ selfhood at its core.

Yet there are, in fact, a number of working class figures represented in Les types de Paris: Mallarmé’s “Types de la rue,” for example, or Jean Ajalbert’s “Terrassiers” and Rosny’s “Forgerons.” I found, however, that in trying to include these types, which are in fact markedly distinct from one another, under the general banner of “working class,” I was forcing a taxonomy of my own, one in which these diverse representations of what could loosely be called working class people did not want to fit. While concerns about class mobility underpin several of the essays I do discuss in this dissertation, then, to try to tease them out of the articles specifically about the working classes would have required a significant amount of creative editing.

The first national labor congress had occurred in Paris in 1876, the year the general election brought a Republican majority to the Chamber of Deputies, if not yet the Senate. The general belief at that congress was in corporatism, in working together with the government to have their requirements met. However, a sense of betrayal soon set in after 1879, when the Republicans won a majority in both the Chamber and the Senate.
With the granting of amnesty to former *Communards* in 1880, Gambetta’s new republic, posited as a return to “order, prosperity, peace, and national unity” (Magraw 212) had a not insignificant interest in keeping these returned insurrectionists and their fellow members of the proletariat content. Yet in the months and years after the elections, the laboring classes became increasingly abandoned or ignored by an Opportunist party they had, thanks to the Constitutional Law of 1875 guaranteeing universal male suffrage, helped bring into power. The government did not deliver on its promises of improved working and living conditions, and the situation was not helped by the economic crisis that began in 1882 and caused unemployment, particularly in the provinces, to skyrocket.  

Another rift between worker and bourgeois employer / government occurred as

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6 There are too many studies of the working classes in France to list here, but amongst the most important are Chevalier’s classic about the first half of the century, *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses*, Edouard Dolléans’ *Histoire du movement ouvrier*, Karl Marx’ *Eighteenth Brumaire* and *The Working People of Paris*, Lenard R. Berlanstein’s study of the material, cultural, and political conditions of a broad swath of working class life in a rapidly industrializing city. See also Berlanstein’s edited volume, *The Industrial Revolution and Work*; Tony Judt, *Marxism and the French Left* and the catalog of the 2011 exhibition at the Musée Carnavalet, *Le peuple de Paris au XIXe siècle*. For histories of working-class culture, see W. Scott Haine’s *World of the Paris Café* and, for a microhistorical perspective, Helen Harden Chenut’s *The Fabric of Gender*. 

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the result of industrialization, which was threatening the traditional artisan workshops on which French industry had been based. In *Les types de Paris*, for example, J.H. Rosny shows us *forgerons* in an industrial setting who are deindividuated and utterly alienated not only from one another but also from any kind of autonomy or individuality that might allow them a sense of *la vraie vie*. “Le cœur vous poignera, je pense” Rosny warns his reader, whom he has advised to visit one of these industrial forges in the early hours of the morning, “à l’arrivée des artisans, à leur marche lourde — car l’homme du fer à la jambe plutôt faible, — à leurs vêtements limailleux, mais surtout à l’engouffrement triste dans la géhenne, à la dévoration de l’individu par la caserne, à tout ce qui se dégage d’Impersonnel de ces foules du Salariat” (119). “Voyez-le,” he says, inviting the presumably bourgeois reader to spectate. “Voyez-le semblable à une termite, remplir quelque fonction déterminée, fabriquer un dixième d’outil ou un centième de machine ; voyez son humble personnalité se mouvoir à côté du marteau automatique qui monte et descend en colossale cadence, dont la grande voix de basse engloutit la faible et criarde syllabation des hommes acharnés sur des enclumes naines” (119). Unheard and unrecognizable, the industrialized *forgeron* is also uncoupled, alienated, from the result of his labor: he makes but one small part of a commodity he will never use. Industrialized and mechanized production has caused the individual worker to disappear, swallowed up the deindividuation of the factory floor.

What Rosny does not spell out is the flip side of the deindividuation he calls out in the modern factory: collectivism, or on a more basic level, or the threat of the mobilization of the mob. In France, however, neither socialism nor other forms of
collective organization really became entrenched until the 1890s. Professional trade unions were not legal in France until 1884, and as W. Scott Haine points out, despite the fact that the working classes now had the right to assemble and associate, the police carried out continued surveillance of their meetings “ready to pounce on any unfortunate who might utter somewhat too loudly any revolutionary sentiment, or speak in uncomplimentary terms of the powers that be” (227). Both factors contributed to the belief that unions “inherited neither a legitimate status nor an established working-class constituency” until much later, particularly when compared to countries such as England and Germany (Turner, Hostile participants? 37). Historians have spent considerable effort debating the possible reasons behind the “distinctive” (Cottereau), and relatively “weak” (Judt 27) and delayed French experience of organized collective action, be it in the form of syndicats or political parties. This is not to say that the stirrings the organized labor movements of the 1890s were not present. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that even if such an awareness was blossoming, it was neither syndicalist nor, at this point, extant on a national level. Alain Cottereau, for example, posits that the French working classes tended to collectivize in métier-specific groups on a smaller scale. Michelle Perrot and Haine highlight the importance of informal sites of sociability, such as dance halls and cafés, in creating a sense of shared identity and culture. Berlanstein, for his part, argues that the French working classes can be described as engaging in “hostile non-participation” (660).

Les types de Paris and the Exposition universelle de 1889
In *Les types de Paris*, as I have said, the city is presented as a readable narrative, divisible into socially distinct installments that, when read together, create a totalizing picture of the whole. The World’s Fair, which provided *Les types de Paris* with justification for its publication, was another such narrative, its architecture creating a rational and readable schema that ritualized certain social and institutional practices. And as with *Les types de Paris* and other panoramic texts, the visitor to the *expo* was also subjected to a discourse that explained, designated, and described what he or she was seeing — and how it should be seen (Hamon 17). Cultural historians of the World’s Fair and the decade that preceded it, such as Philippe Hamon and Vanessa Schwartz, have focused on its spectacularity, on a general lexicon of visual consumption that was just one part of a broader obsession with viewing — an early “société du spectacle,” to borrow a term from Guy Debord.  

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7 “À l’approche de l’Exposition universelle,” we read in the anonymous introduction to the collected volume, “au moment où de tous côtés la province et l’étranger se préparent à rendre visite à la grande cité, n’était-il pas opportun de faire connaître le Paris d’aujourd’hui, le vrai, avec ses types les plus frappants, ses dessous ignorés, ses physionomies qui lui donnent à la fois le charme et la vitalité ?” (2).  

8 In his 1989 dissertation, for example, Michael J. West highlights the role such fairs had to play in the construction of a national cultural identity for the French, one premised on mass consumption.  

For a study of the vast amount of literature produced around the world’s fairs, see Rydell. For studies of the 1889 Exposition in particular, see Levin and West.
book both represent the city as a sight to be consumed and understood through the act of looking.

On fait beaucoup d’objections contre les Expositions. La principale est qu’elles sont trop fréquentes. Comment voulez-vous, dit-on, que les arts et les industries de 1889 diffèrent des arts et des industries de 1878 ?

[…]

Eh bien, cette objection aurait pu être plausible il y a cent ans ; elle aurait été très forte il y a deux cent ans. Aujourd’hui, elle ne vaut plus rien ; le monde se renouvelle en dix ans. Le progrès, qui marchait à pas comptés, a pris depuis la Révolution des bottes de sept lieues. L’homme n’a pas beaucoup changé, mais il a tout changé autour de lui.

The Donald G. Larson Collection on International Expositions and Fairs, 1851-1940, at California State University, Fresno is an exceptionally rich collection of books, postcards, journalism, souvenirs, sketches, music and more.


Two chapters of Thorne’s edited volume, Structural Iron and Steel, look at the 1889 Exposition: J. S. Shipway’s “L’Entreprise Eiffel” and Bertrand Lemoine’s “The Galerie des Machines of the 1889 Paris world’s fair.” In terms of imagery from 1889, the National Gallery of Art hosts a splendid collection of photographs from the Photographic Archives' Gramstorff Collection. See also Caroline Mathieu’s illuminating exhibition catalogs for the National Gallery of Australia and the Musée d’Orsay.
The Republican government had high hopes for the 1889 World’s Fair, which ran from 6 May to 6 November of that year. At home, they felt it to be “patriotique et nécessaire” (Lockroy xvi): it was to be a place where the French could show off their technical prowess; an experience which would bring people together in a celebration of the very values on which the republic had been founded a century before; a way to raise morale in a time of economic depression, “relever par un coup d’éclat nos affaires devenues languissantes” (xvi). In *When the Eiffel Tower was New*, Miriam Levin suggests that politicians were also trying to help their citizens cope with the gap between the “fulfillment of aspirations for the good life” promised by technological innovation and the social divisions, “psychological stress and alienation” that accompanied industrialization by “exercising control over technological change” (12–13). The 1889 *Exposition*, hoped government officials such as Jules Ferry and Antonin Proust, would serve to reconnect alienated workers to the products they had made and to each other, giving them “a common sense that the value of human labor lay in the creation of a new material culture based on mechanical invention that would mutually benefit consumers and producers” (Levin 22).

That “common sense,” the idea of bringing the nation together, is echoed in Édouard Lockroy’s preface to Émile Monod’s two-volume exhibition catalog, *Exposition universelle de 1889*. Exhibitions, he claims, not only fulfill what he sees as a basic human need to congregate, but they do so in a peaceful, international atmosphere:

Les expositions sont vieilles comme l’humanité ; les hommes ont toujours éprouvé le besoin de se réunir dans des occasions solennelles, de comparer
les produits de leur travail, de se donner de grands rendez-vous pacifiques,
de se mêler dans des fêtes internationales où s’oublient pour un instant les
différences de races et les antipathies originelles. (Lockroy xi)

A place of peace, then, at a time when the rumblings of war were audible all over Europe. In fact, Lockroy goes so far as to say that the very act of hosting the exhibition should prove to other nations that France was too busy to wage war: “Elle devait rassurer les nations voisines sur nos intentions. Un pays qui consacre tout son temps et toutes ses forces à une œuvre pacifique ne songe pas à déclarer la guerre” (xvi). The exposition had nonetheless met with considerable opposition both at home and abroad. At home, politicians opposed to the exhibition worried about the cost (the 1878 World’s Fair had been costly and unprofitable), the health of the populace (large gatherings of men could, it was claimed, cause the outbreak of epidemics), the revelation of trade secrets through exhibition, rent inflation during and after the exhibition, and an increase in the cost of consumer products (xiv). Meanwhile, the 1889 World’s Fair, positioned as a celebration of the republican values of liberté égalité fraternité and therefore of the French Revolution, threatened the very foundation of Europe’s monarchies. Lockroy, for example, quotes a British cabinet minister who, in 1886, exclaimed that the English “n’enverrait jamais des représentants à une Exposition qui avait lieu en 1889” (xv). The Germans claimed that the very concept was out of date, the Russian czar called it “an abomination” and Spain, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Romania, Turkey, Austria, and Italy also all declined initial invitations (Jones 7). Unpopular though Gustave Eiffel’s tower
may have been, perhaps it was a wise decision not to build one of the alternative proposals, a 300-meter-tall guillotine, after all.

Panoramic Literature Part II: the 1880s

In his *avertissement* to the readers of the 1843 second volume of *La Grande Ville*, Marc Fournier writes: “Le tableau que l’on trace d’une nation, comme le portrait d’un homme, sorti de la main du peintre, demeure très peu de temps en état de ressemblance parfaite avec l’originale… D’où résulte qu’un *tableau de Paris* est un livre qui devient nécessaire une fois au moins tous les cinquante ans” (1). Jules Clarétie goes further still, in his preface to Belon’s 1888 *Paris qui passe*:

> Ah ! que c’est un curieux modèle à prendre que ce Paris ! Toujours nouveau, toujours intéressant, toujours particulier, toujours bizarre. Je ne sais qui a posé en axiome qu’on devrait refaire le *Tableau de Paris*, de Mercier, tous les dix ans. L’axiome a terriblement vieilli depuis le temps où il dut sembler un paradoxe. Ce n’est pas tous les dix ans, c’est tous les dix mois, tous les dix jours qu’on pourrait recommencer le *Tableau de Paris*.” (vi–vii)

Both panorama and panoramic literature reemerged under the Third Republic, perhaps because they provided a format for the kind of all-encompassing vision (panorama, after all, means “total view”) needed in an increasingly alien and alienating

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9 For an enjoyable if not entirely scholarly account of the drama surrounding the construction of the Eiffel Tower, see Jones (2009).
city. Vanessa Schwartz, in *Spectacular Realities*, and Bernard Comment, in *Le XIXe siècle des panoramas*, both point out this resurgence of interest. In fact, claims Schwartz, referencing the existence of no fewer than 17 panoramas in 1889, the popularity of the panoramas during their revival “well surpassed that of their earlier favor” (149).

One of the questions that I wrestle with in this dissertation is the symbiotic relationship between the resurgence in popularity of “panoramic” Paris texts in the 1880s and the sociocultural atmosphere of Paris in that same decade. Between the time of the first literary panoramas and 1889, Paris had expanded at the hands of Haussmann and then fallen at the feet of the Germans, but it had also changed in more insidious ways: trade unions were forming, women were hosting their own congresses, French citizenship was being extended… things were moving forward with a relentless pace. Despite the best efforts of many of the littérateurs of the time to capture this Paris before it disappeared, the city was moving too fast for its authors, interpreters all, to translate its change into the written word. From the 1860s on, then, but certainly after 1870, a panoramic subfield featuring the disappearing Paris appeared. Jean-Pierre Bernard’s formidable *Les deux Paris: les représentations de Paris dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle* offers an excellent overview of attempts to document this Paris qui s’en va, which included such titles as *Paris démoli, Paris qui disparaît, Paris qui s’efface, Paris oublié, Paris qui s’en va et Paris qui vient, Paris nouveau, Paris ancine, Paris qui passe, Paris vieux et neuf, Choses et gens qui passent, L’Heure qui passe, Paris perdu, Paris disparu* and *L’Agonie du vieux Paris* (177). He (quite rightly, I believe) also includes the exiled Communard Jules Valles’ *Tableau de Paris* in this list, since while Vallès wrote it in
1882–83, he had not lived in Paris since before the Commune, and had therefore not experienced life under the Republic at all.

Bernard links these many attempts to memorialize a disappearing city to the notion of decadence, defined by Daniel Pick as the notion that “the modern world… was bound up in an ambiguous biological and cultural regression, involving, amongst other things, the threat of mass politics, anarchism, the vexed question of the enfranchisement of women, and of the crowd’s potential eruption and regression at the behest of morbid, excitable leaders” (*Faces* 73). In the face of such horrors, he suggests, in the face of “nouvelle industrie, nouvelle technique, nouvelles idées, nouvelle révolution, nouveaux goûts, nouvelle mode… en abrégé tout ce qui appartient à la démocratie et à son égalité niveleuse” (Bernard 215), middle-class urban writers turned to nostalgia for comfort.

*Les types de Paris: Authors, Illustrator, Origins*

Unlike the works listed by Bernard, *Les types de Paris* did not set out to commemorate a disappearing city. Rather, its préfacier suggests that it is of the utmost contemporaneity: “À l’approche de l’Exposition universelle,” he writes, “au moment où de tous côtés la province et l’étranger se préparent à rendre visite à la grande cité, n’était-il pas opportun de faire connaître le Paris d’aujourd’hui, le vrai…?” (2). That same préfacier, however, also hopes that the album will “servira fidèlement à marquer une date précise et gaie dans l’histoire intime et familière de la grande cité” (4).

Given that the list of contributors to *Les Types de Paris*, reads like a “Who’s Who” of late realism and the rise and fall of naturalism, a reader could be forgiven for
hoping that the text would in fact live up to the promise of its preface and accurately and faithfully portray the Paris of 1889. Edmond de Goncourt and Alphonse Daudet both feature here, as do four of six authors of *Les Soirées de Médan*: Émile Zola, JK Huysmans, Guy de Maupassant, and Henry Céard. The other contributors consist of “minor” naturalists and other writers more tangentially associated with the movement, even if it was in their reaction against it: Paul Bonnetain and J.-H. Rosny, authors of the infamous *Manifeste des Cinq*; Jean Ajalbert; Gustave Geffroy; Stéphane Mallarmé; Octave Mirbeau and Jean Richepin, amongst others.

The reality effect conferred upon the text by this list of authors would have been further enhanced by the name of the volume’s illustrator and curator, Jean François Raffaëlli. A more appropriate artistic counterpart to the volume’s littérateurs would have been hard to find: after all, the journalist Gustave Geffroy had dubbed him “le peintre de la banlieue” (*La vie artistique* 353), Robert Caze had called him “le merveilleux peintre des modernités” and Jean Richepin had honored him with the title of “peintre des gueux”

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10 These figures are classified as “Les Naturalistes” in Jules Huret’s 1891 *Enquête sur l’évolution littéraire*. Ironically, Rosny (along with another *Les Types* contributor, Paul Bonnetain), both considered third generation naturalists, had been the instigator and one of the authors of the infamous “Manifeste des Cinq” written against the “boulimie de vente” and the “ignorance médicale et scientifique” of Zola, as well as against his desire to “s’embourber dans l’ordure” (Bonnetain et al. 1).
In an 1884 *Le Figaro* review entitled “Le peintre des misérables,” the newspaper’s art critic (and author of another preface to *Les Types de Paris*) Albert Wolff wrote the following:

M. Raffaëlli ne se contente pas de peindre les humbles et les déclassés de Paris à la surface ; il entre dans leur âme ; c’est l’homme qui voit juste sans se contenter de rendre seulement ce qu’il voit ; il réfléchit et il pense ; le plus souvent ses ouvrage sont, puisque le mot est à la mode, de véritables documents humains, fouillés jusque dans les entrailles du modèle… (np)

Like the Naturalists, Raffaëlli found aesthetic appeal in the impoverished parts of the urban landscape, in its marginal figures and unconventional, everyday subject matter. A true man of his time, he “went to a sociological effort to categorize his paintings of suburban figures” (Fields 105). However, his principal interest lay in what he called “caractérisme,” which was his maligned theoretical term for the artistic technique of depicting both the mental and the physical aspects of his human subjects. In an 1885 talk

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11 Interesting for this dissertation is the fact that Raffaëlli claimed that the reason contemporary artists and writers depicted the kinds of scenes for which he was famous was "à écrire ou à peindre notre tristesse, notre désespérance et notre colère,” (*Le laid...* 12) all the result, he claimed, of a nervous, agitated and exasperated state brought on by a “un sentiment de vide, de l’effroi, et l’inquiétude du lendemain beaucoup plus grand” (11). In other words, the ugly provided a way for artists to express the inexplicable fear they felt in the face of modernity.
entitled *Le laid, l’intimité, la sensation et le caractère dans l’art*, he suggested that the artist’s role was to “faire connaître esthétiquement cette classe d’individus, négligée jusqu’aujourd’hui, c’est-à-dire de mettre en lumière tous ses caractères” (7). Raffaëlli’s aesthetic interest in the social underclasses should be noted here, for we will return to it at several times over the course of this dissertation.

Professionally, Raffaëlli’s collaboration with the naturalists was long-standing and wide-ranging: he painted portraits of Edmond de Goncourt (in 1888) and Émile Zola (in 1892), as well as of Huysmans, whose *Croquis Parisiens* he illustrated (1880 Vaton edition) and Rosny aîné. In 1890, the year after the publication of *Les types de Paris*, Paul Gallimard (the father of the publisher) commissioned ten watercolors from Raffaëlli for a luxury edition of *Germinie Lacerteux*; just three copies were made, for himself, Gustave Geffroy, and Edmond de Goncourt (Sacquin 87). Unsurprisingly, then, when he needed verbal sketches\(^{12}\) to accompany his own visual ones for *Les types de Paris*, he called upon his friends and acquaintances. Often, as in the cases noted above, he had already collaborated with these writers. Others he knew through Goncourt’s infamous *Grenier*, or through the *diner de Bons Cosaques*, “une réunion de pacifiques poètes et de charmants littérateurs” (Mirbeau, *Correspondance* 482). Present at these dinners were Robert de Bonnières, Maupassant, Richepin, Bourget, Huysmans, and Mallarmé, in addition to Mirbeau and Raffaëlli himself.

\(^{12}\) I borrow the term “verbal sketch” from Marina Lauster, whose 2007 *Sketches of the Nineteenth Century: European Journalism and its Physiologies, 1830-1850* has been invaluable in helping me trace the origins of panoramic literature.
Yet despite the ties linking the artist to his literary network, and notwithstanding the huge volume of letters, journals, and journalism these writers left behind, piecing together the genesis of Les Types is a challenge. Arsène Alexandre, whose biography of Raffaëlli is otherwise quite detailed, includes several images from Les Types de Paris but does not mention the project or its genesis at all. Barbara Fields, author of the only dissertation on the artist, calls Les Types “his most ambitious project” but spends little time discussing it.13 Hardly any correspondence between the various contributors mentions it at all, and in some cases, the silence that surrounds the project is striking. While Raffaëlli features quite prominently in Edmond de Goncourt’s infamous Journal, for example, Les Types de Paris is not mentioned once. Nor does it appear in the memoirs, journals, or letters of Richepin, Ajalbert, or Rosny.14

13 Perhaps because while she admires the artwork, she denigrates the written texts, citing their “general banality” (301).

14 One place Les types is actually mentioned is in Mirbeau’s correspondence, but his opinion of the project is far from positive. In a letter to Paul Hervieu dated 20 April 1889, in which he thanks Hervieu for his positive commentary on Mirbeau’s contribution to Les types de Paris, he writes: “Si mon cocher vous a plu, c’est sans doute que les illustrations en étaient ignobles, et que vraiment, à part une jolie chose de Geffroy, la prose de ce receuil est à faire crier. Je crois qu’on ne s’est pas lâché pouru ce malheureux diable de Raffaëlli, qui d’ailleurs s’est révélé d’une intelligence rare, d’une vulgarité peu commune, et d’une gaucherie stupéfiante. Je connais peu de choses, même chez les
This much we do know: Raffaëlli was commissioned by Plon, Nourrit, et Cie to curate “pour la fin de l’année un gros et beau livre sur “Les types de Paris”” (“Letter to Hennique” August 6, 1888). In that same letter, he asks Hennique to contribute something, specifying that “J’ai donné tous mes sujets et il ne m’en reste plus que deux.” We can assume, then, that it was the artist that chose both content and contributors, and that he presumably took into account the artwork he had on hand. Indeed, many of the images in Les types de Paris were featured as part of a “Portraits types” series at Raffaëlli’s solo show on the Avénue de l’Opéra in 1884, which included, according to critic Arsène Alexandre’s account, les Terrassiers, les Buveurs d’Absinthe, and la Rentrée des Chiffonniers (Jean-François Raffaëlli 94).

In another letter to Hennique dated a few days later, Raffaëlli appears to be both exerting and relinquishing power over the content of the texts, describing his drawings even as he assures Hennique he has total liberty to do as he pleases:

Quant à ce que vous aurez à dire dans cette trop courte fantaisie, je ne suis pas en peine. —Appuyez si vous le voulez sur le côté industrieux de tous ces braves gens. —Celui que j’ai fait pour mon carreleur de souliers et, l’hiver, vitrier ; il paraît que l’”ouvrier” fait poser des carreaux l’hiver, parce qu’il fait froid et que l’été… il met du papier.

Mon marchand de mousson, quand l’été arrive, et que les riches […] s’en vont à la mer, s’en va, à lui, à petits [sic] journées à la mer

illustrateurs ordinaires, d’aussi parfaitement mauvaises. Je pense qu’en voilà un bien fini, malgré l’admiration de notre Wolff.”
aussi… et il y devient marchand de lacets pour corsets, gaude, coulisse, fil et aiguilles ! — Ces gens-là sont touchants.

Quand aux cartonniers, j’en ai comme deux, qui venaient poser la maison, ils passaient leurs temps à se demander […] âge.

Mais je ne veux pas vous faire votre article, j’y perdrais trop ! — et je m’arrête.

Bref, je compte que dans la huitaine vous m’enverrez votre personne, suivant votre aimable promesse, — orné d’une grande signature, car elle sera reproduite autographiquement. (“Letter to Hennique” 9 Aug. 1888)

Hennique agrees to cover the “Types de la rue,” but for reasons unknown this section actually ends up being written by Mallarmé. Letters from Raffaëlli to Mallarmé, which Lloyd James Austin examines quite thoroughly in Poetic Principles and Practice:

15 Quite why remains unclear; no further correspondence has been found relating to Hennique’s contribution, nor has the text itself — if text there was — been uncovered. The fact it was Mallarmé that Raffaëlli chose to replace Hennique is in itself revelatory of the sway the artist had over his editor if not his contributors: not only was Mallarmé peripheral to the circle of naturalists and journalists that constituted the bulk of the list of contributors, he was also feared by Plon himself. “J’aurai bien un peu de mal avec mon éditeur, peut-être, car il avait peur de votre nom; mais il suffit que la chose me semble délicieuse, je pense, pour qu’il arrive à penser de même.” ("Letter to Mallarmé“ undated, qtd. in Austin: 151).
Occasional Papers on Baudelaire, Mallarmé and Valéry (although without an apparent understanding that the topic was initially “given” to Hennique) further suggest that Raffaëlli was torn between a desire to control the content of “ce satané livre” ("Letter to Hennique" 6 Aug. 1888) and a desire to just get it done: the artist tells the poet that if he has anything that might fit the general “Types de la rue” theme, he will take it as it is; if not, he will send him some sketches; he also stresses that Mallarmé need not write about the engravings but rather alongside them—the poet’s verse, writes Raffaëlli, will be framed by his own artwork (Austin 145).

The painter and his artwork appear to have often preceded and dictated the text:

“Votre serviteur est attelé pour un livre fait par Raffaëlli, sur une monographie des "habitués de café"" writes Huysmans in a July 1 letter to Arij Prins (127). Raffaëlli

16 In the end, Mallarmé writes “alongside” most of Raffaëlli’s suggestions, but adds a sonnet—“La marchande aux lavandes”—and a quatrain—“La Marchande d’habits”—of his own, which Raffaëlli then presumably illustrates. The sonnet, which becomes “La Marchande d’Herbes Aromatiques”, and another verbal sonnet-sketch the poet wrote for Raffaëlli’s Le carreleur de souliers (the definitive version of which is called ‘Le Savetier’) form “Chansons Bas I et II” of the 1899 edition of Mallarmé’s Poésies, in the bibliographie of which he writes, "CHANSONS BAS I et II, commentent, avec divers quatrains, dans le recueil Les types de Paris, les illustrations du maître-peintre Raffaëlli, qui les inspira et les accepta.” I mention this not as a casual aside but because only one of these sonnets actually commented on Raffaëlli’s sketch; in the other case, the verbal preceded the visual.
assigned Hennique (and then Mallarmé) their topics too; in the case of Mallarmé, he even suggested the style in which he would like the contribution written. However, he was less bold with his more celebrated contributors. “While the younger authors submitted new material,” says Barbara Fields, “Raffaëlli appears to have been reluctant to ask the same of older masters, such as Zola and Edmond de Goncourt. Zola offered a choice of four stories, of which Raffaëlli could select the most appropriate for his album. Goncourt submitted his journal entry for February 14, 1888…” (300). Indeed, Goncourt’s contribution is an almost exact replica of his Journal entry; furthermore, its subject matter, “Une promenade sur le Boulevard Beaumarchais,” has little to do with the kind of physiologie or type Raffaëlli appears to want. More a nostalgic, peripatetic musing on rapidly changing values and the palimpsestic nature of the city street, it is in fact devoid of types altogether, with the exception of the implied flâneur, who (given that this is an excerpt from the Journal) is presumably the author himself. Zola’s “Bohémiens en Villégiature,” originally appeared in 1877 in the Russian journal Le Messager de L’Europe.

What becomes clear through reading Raffaëlli’s correspondence with Mirbeau is that this lack of nerve was probably due to the fact that the entire project hinged on the collaboration of a few key players, including Mirbeau himself.\(^{17}\)

\(^{17}\)While the identity of the other two key contributors is uncertain, the fact that Raffaëlli mentions that Goncourt and Daudet have already promised him something suggests that they might be the answer to the riddle; the inclusion of Zola in the volume, however, throws further doubt on the affair.
Mon cher ami,

Il faut que vous me rendiez un grand service: je viens de traiter avec Plon pour un très bel album illustré de fin d’année sur Les types de Paris. Pour cet album, j’ai compté que mes amis seraient assez gentils pour me faire chacun un bout de texte, et je viens vous demander quelques lignes, qui auront une grande valeur pour moi—une double valeur, puisque mon éditeur vous a placé dans les trois, faute desquels mon traité serait résiliable pour lui !... (Correspondance Rafaëlli–Mirbeau 10 June 1888 : 41)

Raffaëlli goes on to present Mirbeau with a wide choice of subjects—professeurs et sous-maîtresses, chiffonniers, petits bourgeois, forgerons et gros ouvriers, petits industriels des rues, and petits commerçants; the list does not include the Cocher de maître Mirbeau sends.

If the question of the text’s origin poses one kind of problem, another problem the text itself raises is how it should be read. Should we take it, as the preface suggests, as a collection of “études et fantaisies entièrement inédites” by “tout le haut état-major des lettres modernes” (2)? The author of the preface certainly foregrounds the volume’s littérateurs, calling them “tous les maîtres de notre littérature contemporaine.” It is only after introducing them all by name that mentions Raffaëlli, stating that the “Pour illustrer un pareil ouvrage, il faillait un artiste d’un talent bien personnel et universellement établi.” Or should we take Barbara Fields’ approach, and view Les Types de Paris as “a retrospective of Raffaëlli’s activities as an illustrator of Parisian life,” or, as she also says,
“a profusely illustrated album of light-hearted articles written by his literary friends”?
This approach would seem to be supported by the fact that the first essay, Daudet’s
“Delaunay à vingt ans,” is preceded by another preface, an introduction to Raffaëlli by
esteemed art critic Albert Wolff.¹⁸

Because I am proposing a reading of Les types de Paris that defines it as
“panoramic” literature, in this dissertation I read the book as neither illustrated literature
nor annotated artist’s retrospective, but as (to borrow Marina Lauster’s term) a visual-
verbal ensemble. From the wealth of illustrations to the large copies of the authors’
handwritten signatures that accompany each article, the book is stamped with the both
written and pictorial authority. In fact, I would suggest that it requires the presence of
both text and image to increase the vraisemblance of its types, to fix them as taxonomic
truth. I also treat it as “un gros et beau livre,” as Raffaëlli says to Hennique, and

¹⁸ The question is further complicated by the fact that the “text” actually appeared
in two different formats: first as a set of ten “livraisons,” each costing 2f50, published
fortnightly by the rather straitlaced Le Figaro from March 15, 1889, and then as the
luxury bound volume Raffaëlli mentions in his letter to Hennique. In terms of the main
content, both visual and verbal, the formats actually vary very little. The book, however,
features two prefaces, one positioning the book as a means by which its contributors can
“faire connaître le Paris d’aujourd’hui,” the other the introduction to Raffaëlli by Albert
Wolff. Given that Raffaëlli’s 1888 letter to Hennique mentions “un gros et beau livre,”
and not serialized publication in a newspaper supplement, when I talk about Les types de
Paris in this dissertation, I am talking about the book.
Furthermore as one written “pour la fin de l’année” — in other words, a livre d’êtresnes (it was, in fact, reviewed as such at the time). The book’s status as commodity, as a generously illustrated and luxuriously bound volume featuring some of the biggest names of the 1880s, cannot be denied. In fact, I will argue, this status even serves to frame the representations of types therein, thus providing a doubly secure lens through which the reader can experience and get to know these types.

Chapter Breakdown

The first chapter of this dissertation, “Beasts of Burden and All-Consuming Machines,” treats the “woman question” in 19th-century France. I begin by discussing the two feminist congresses at the 1889 World’s Fair — one official, one not — and the reaction to them in the popular press. I suggest that the very existence of two congresses is only possible because of recently passed laws pertaining to education, divorce, freedom of the press, and freedom of assembly, which opened up a space for feminism to grow. I then show how these small steps of progress towards female enfranchisement were met with a reassertion of male dominance in literary and scientific discourse, proposing that the virulence and variety of that discourse was as much the result of a crisis of masculinity as it was a rejection of female empowerment in fin-de-siècle France. After contextualizing the situation of women in 1880s France, I turn to Les types de Paris, looking at manifestations of this masculinity crisis in three different texts, two verbal (Maupassant’s “Servantes, rubans et tabliers” and Fourcaud’s “Belles filles”) and one visual, Raffaëlli’s “la belle Feyghine.” I argue that each of three typecasts women as
either natural and animal, an inferior in the evolutionary chain of being, or as the artificial and misleading agent of modernity. In so doing, these authors and artist try to reduce women to an easily categorizable and manageable “womenkind.”

Taxonomies necessarily telescope difference, but the juxtaposition of texts I examine in my second chapter, Antonin Proust’s “Paris et les étrangers” and the incongruous images of Hottentot women at the Jardin d’acclimatation with which Raffaëlli chooses to illustrate it, reduces difference to the negative of the same. This explores reactions to the influx of foreigners in Paris in the 1880s. As with the previous chapter, I first contextualize the excerpts from Les types de Paris, highlighting not only legal changes to the definition of French nationality but also contemporary attitudes to increasing numbers of foreigners looking for work in the capital. I suggest that despite the breadth of the category of “étrangers,” Les types de Paris manages to reduce a multitude of difference to just one: not French.

After querying discourses of foreign difference in Chapter Two, in Chapter Three I turn to matters domestic: the chiffonnier. I once again begin with an overview of the political debates around the profession in the 1880s, suggesting that, for the city council, ragpickers occupied an unsettling position that was neither inside nor outside of society, and neither fully a part of or wholly separate from the urban economy. I read the transcripts of the political debates around the chiffonnier, concluding that efforts are being made to annex this troubling, peripheral character to the center through the offer of a paid, regular work. I then analyze Félicien Champsaur’s “Les chiffonniers” and the images by Raffaëlli that accompany it, proposing that these, too, attempt to neutralize the
disturbing difference of this social marginal by assimilating him to the center.

Having looked at the social categories and relationships whose mobility, I claim, are causing this crisis of distinction in fin-de-siècle Paris, in my last chapter I examine a different kind of mobility: the indeterminate borders — and undetermined definition — of what is ostensibly a geographically defined and limited city. I here focus on three contributions to Les types de Paris: Alphonse Daudet’s “Tournées de province,” Émile Zola’s “Bohémiens en villégiature” and Jean Richépin’s “Types des fêtes foraines,” suggesting that while each of the authors expands the definition of “Paris” to include spaces outside of the city proper, ultimately what “Paris” actually means, what it refers to, is called into doubt.
CHAPTER ONE: BEASTS OF BURDEN AND ALL-CONSUMING MACHINES

Il se prépare, en ce moment, la plus grande, la plus considérable des révolutions qui se soient jamais accomplies en humanité; elle n’aura eu sa pareille. Cette révolution sera éminemment féconde, parce qu’elle sera pacifique. Pour qu’elle s’opère, il n’est besoin ni de barricades, ni de poudre, ni de dynamite, ni d’effusion de sang: elle se fait dans les consciences et se sanctionnera par les lois, qui lui donneront sa dernière formule.

—Maria Desraisimes (Congrès français 10)

In her president’s welcome at the Congrès français et international du droit des femmes, which took place during (but was not an official part of) the 1889 World’s Fair, Maria Desraisimes presented female emancipation as a revolution in progress. Her speech was carefully crafted to hit at the heart of Republican values and concerns, and to gain support not only from more conservative women who feared the militant bluestockings portrayed in the press, but also — vitally — from the small but enthusiastic subsection of Republican ministers who supported the fight for women’s civil and human rights.¹⁹ The

¹⁹ Karen Offen, arguing against Charles Sowerine’s claim that the Republic was “gendered male from its inception,” has written convincingly about the support of a few key republican figures in the fight for women’s rights. See “Is the “woman question” really the “man problem”?” in the volume edited by Christopher Forth, Confronting
reference to revolution, in the centennial year of the Revolution, brought to mind the document borne of that event — *La déclaration des droits de l’homme et de la révolution* — with its commitment to the “universal” nature of human rights. The nod to fertility and fecundity suggested that granting women’s rights would not (as many feared) result in women choosing to be childless, but in fact promised to improve the flailing national birthrate. The list of sacrifices *not* required by this revolution — barricades, gunpowder, dynamite, bloodshed — was not only a reference to the incredible number of lives lost in the 1870–1 war, but also a tacit assurance that this fight would bear no resemblance to that war’s dirty, domestic other — the Commune — for which the female pétroleuses were so often blamed.

The short excerpt from Desrais’ speech with which this chapter began broaches several of the issues I wish to discuss regarding the representation of women in *Les types de Paris*. Despite (or, as I will argue, because of) somewhat progressive legal changes (Sée’s law of 1880 instituting higher education for girls; the 1881 laws reinstating freedom of association and freedom of the press, which allowed feminism to


The pétroleuses were associated with the burning of Paris in the cultural imagination to such a degree that, as Bonnie G. Smith argues, it became “[o]ne of the founding myths of the Republic” (299). She suggests that the subsequent return to family values and the repression of nascent female emancipation can be read as a return to “return to family values and the gender hierarchy resting on male privilege” (299).
gain a broader audience; Nacquet’s divorce law of 1884), in the 1880s, women were still being put (back) in their place: examined, displayed, investigated, and defined. For every action that could be seen as progress in the move towards female emancipation, scientists, doctors, writers proposed ‘evidence’ for the reassertion of male authority. In the face of quasi-inevitable change, these men battened down the hatches, and, fingers in their ears, produced a torrent of anti-feminist literature. Over the course of the last third of the nineteenth century, then, women’s bodies were displayed, dissected, arrested, bought and sold — subject to an immense regulatory apparatus the object of which, as so many critics have claimed following Foucault, was to keep them in their place.

In this chapter, I suggest that the way in which the female Other is represented in Les types de Paris not only reveals “cet imaginaire masculin hanté par le désir et le plaisir féminins” (Corbin: 182) but is also indicative of the broader crisis of distinction towards which I am gesturing in this dissertation. It is an anxiety borne of the disappearing distinction between traditional gender roles, the result of a questioning of what it means

21 As we will see later in this chapter, each of these legal changes came with a caveat that still managed to maintain (temporarily at least) state control of both the female body and the life choices available to her.

22 For Foucault’s argument about biopower and its deployment, see La volonté de savoir 147–52 and 191–201.

23 But it is also a crisis of class distinction too. We will explore this question in greater depth in the next chapter, but as this chapter reveals, the intricate relationship between gender and class is often difficult to parse.
to be a man in an era when the “evidence” on which male dominance and authority, which had been accepted as a given and entrenched legally in the Napoleonic code, has begun to unravel, when women are becoming more educated and having fewer children, when the borders between masculinity and femininity start to blur. The resultant anti-feminism, as Christine Bard suggests in “Les antiféminismes de la première vague,” “reflète des peurs sociales, des crispations conservatrices, des partis pris esthétiques de l’époque, mais porte également le lourd héritage du siècle qui vient d’écouler” (41).

1889: Feminists at the Expo

Desraimes’ congress was not the only women’s event held at the 1889 World’s Fair. The official one, the Congrès international des oeuvres et institutions féminines, celebrated the role of women in society: in the fields of education, the arts, the sciences, and literature, while emphasizing their charitable activities. The unofficial Congrès français et international du droit des femmes, organized by advocates of Republican clericalism Desraismes and her long-time collaborator Léon Richer, 24 was decidedly more political in tone, focusing on (a) the historical impact of women on human development and progress; (b) the economics of women’s work and pay in different countries; (c) moral dissolution (in the form of legalized prostitution) and what might be done about it; (d) approaches to reforming legislation that condemned women to

inferiority.

Why two congresses, one might ask? Especially when the official congress was itself a landmark in women’s history, when, as the June 15 edition of La femme declared, “Ce congrès est officiel, en sorte que la France sera le premier pays qui aura patronné officiellement une manifestation en faveur des femmes” (96)? The answer, once again, is to be found in Desraismes’ opening speech, in which she tells her audience that the exposition’s management had wanted to impose both a president of its choosing and several conditions on the event. The “personnage illustre,” whom Desraismes does not name, was Jules Simon, a conservative, anti-clerical republican. While neither Desraismes nor Richer was a radical feminist — they were not demanding universal suffrage and felt that even asking unready politicians for the vote might derail other possible victories for women25 — it is unsurprising they did not want their event to appear under the aegis of a man they deemed protectionist, a man who “n’evisage pas la question de la femme comme nous l’envisageons nous-mêmes,” (“Congrès français et international” 3) a man who would go on to write La femme du vingtième siècle, a work championing the vitality of the family unit and women as homemakers and mothers, just three years later.

Nonetheless, the Organisation des droits des femmes, with its focus on the family, nonetheless, the Organisation des droits des femmes, with its focus on the family, whether

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25 In fact, they had prevented one radical feminist, Hubertine Auclert, from giving a speech demanding political rights at the 1878 Congrès because they deemed it too revolutionary (Moses: 214).
women breastfeeding their own children, and the immorality of state-supported prostitution, was designed to reassure rather than threaten contemporary politicians, for whom the family (and, by extension, the birth rate) had become of primordial concern. Perhaps it is unsurprising, then, that responses to the Congrès were mostly positive. The tables reserved for journalists were filled with (male) representatives from Rappel, La Lanterne, Matin, Temps, L’Evénement, La Justice, La République française, Radical, Mot d’Ordre, Débats, L’Estafette, La Paix, and Le Petit Journal, most of whom reported favorably on the speeches given there. The anonymous reporter published on page 2 of the June 28 edition of La Lanterne even went so far as to poke a little fun at its own readers, suggesting that “la delicate question de la femme dans la politique contemporaine” was “goûté et vivement applaudi, quelquefois même par la portion masculine de l’auditoire.”

Yet reactions to the congress were not wholly positive, even when they were presented as such. Under the headline “Le droit des femmes,” a journalist for Le matin reduced the representatives to their fashion and manners, effectively depoliticizing them entirely: “Par ce temps où sévissent les congrès, c’était un plaisir d’assister à une si gracieuse réunion, où les toilettes d’été, aux fraîches couleurs, nous reposaient de la solennité des habits noirs” (June 28 1889). The female editors at the conservative and religious La femme chose to ignore the congrès completely, granting it nary a column inch while covering the official event in full. In a similar vein, despite the presence of its contributors at Desraimes’ and Richter’s event, the Petit Journal, for its part, did not report on the event at all. Instead, the paper ran two feuilletons, “Marâtre” and “Petite
mère,” whose messages seemed distinctly and callously at odds with that of the Congrès.

Some appealed to women’s sense of their own social power: in Maupassant’s 1880 Les dimanches d’un bourgeois de Paris, for example, M. Patissôt finds himself at a “délégation d’antiques citoyennes sevrées d’époux, séchées dans le célibat,” (Chroniques 186) during whose meeting a man stands up and announces to the women present:

“Réclamer pour la femme des droits civils égaux à ceux de l’homme équivaut à réclamer la fin de votre pouvoir. L’homme a la force, que vous ne pouvez lui prendre, mais vous avez la déduction qui captive la force. De quoi plaignez-vous? Depuis que le monde existe, vous êtes les souveraines et les dominatrices…” (Chroniques 187). This is fairly typical Maupassant, but he was far from alone. In 1892’s La femme du vingtième siècle, Jules Simon, the same député who had been nominated to preside over the Congrès français et international du droit des femmes and in fact did preside over the “official” congress, would also argue that women would actually lose power should they gain access to the public sphere: “A côté de la bataille, elle était puissante, influente; mêlée à la lutte, elle ne sera rien et ne pourra rien” (63). And then there was Anatole Alès (writing as Jean Alesson), who, in an 1889 anti-feminist volume entitled Le monde est aux femmes, wrote the following: “Le degré atteint aujourd’hui par la femme est suffisamment élevé; à un degré de plus, elle tomberait dans le ridicule… Il est fort heureux pour la femme, pour sa dignité, pour son auréole sublime de mère de famille et d’institutrice, il est fort heureux que l’homme se charge de l’arrêter sur le seuil du grotesque, de la mascarade” (31).
A Crisis of Masculinity

_Femmes fatales, mauvaises mères, insensées, hystériques, kleptomanes, mangeuses d’hommes_: however they were categorized, these increasingly emancipated females were blamed for the falling birthrate, their influence blamed for male weakness, their expensive habits for male ruin. Women were at once associated with nature and with a degenerate culture. The Republican female body brought new life (to the family, to the nation) and death (via sexual disease and degeneracy). In its pregnant glory, it was the antidote to modernity, representing tradition, hearth and home; in its decorated splendor, it was the epitome of the modern, the symbol of the rampant capitalism and material abundance that indicated moral decline.

The male body, meanwhile, was progressively more weak, even effeminate, the embodiment of the metaphorical national body, which itself was seen as indulgent, immoral, lazy. If, as Christopher Forth suggests, other European nations identified France as “the embodiment of the feminizing ills of civilization” (_La Civilisation_ 90), its effeminate male citizens were, in turn, the embodiment of France. And while, in the 18th century, the genteel manners of the French had meant that upper-class foreigners would be sent to Paris to learn how to behave, by the end of the 19th century, the excesses and indulgences of the Second Empire had, it was believed, created a country to stay away from; a country doomed to defeat.

And defeated it was, in a war whose after-effects would resonate in political and cultural circles until the end of the long nineteenth century. The Franco-Prussian War was a series of humiliating and emasculating experiences for the French, from Napoleon III’s
surrender at Sedan to the four-month Prussian siege of the French capital, the German victory march through the streets of Paris and the loss of Alsace-Lorraine. As Karine Varley points out, because the fighting (and the defeat) began under the Second Empire but continued under the republican Government of National Defense, 1870-1 came to be not just the defeat of Napoleon III’s regime, but that of the nation (Under the Shadow 4).

In fact, the political culture of the Third Republic was shaped by France’s relationship with Germany, by comparison to Germany, by the ongoing threat of Germany, by a desire for revenge against Germany. Indeed, as Claude Digeon suggests in La Crise allemande de la pensée française, Germany had become the dialectical other in France’s assessment of her own power (qtd in Nye, Masculinity 78). Furthermore, this other was gendered: “[I]n the iconography and caricature that flourished during and after the war,” continues Nye, “the “German” was often represented as a brutal and physically domineering Uhlan soldier, while “France” was pictured as a provincial maid, a victim of aggression or rape” (79). It is unsurprising, then, that in its aftermath, as Nye has shown in Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France, republicans went to great lengths to construct an ideal masculinity based on virility and honor for its citizens to model. Such a masculinity could only be defined, however, in relation to its female Other, and as Maria Desraimes and her supporters indicated, women were not necessarily willing to play along.

That defeat on a global scale had been followed by another national calamity, the Paris Commune, rubbed salt into a particularly raw wound. The international identity crisis that had started at Sedan became a national one, a watershed moment where
citizens had to question what it meant to be French — or more accurately, perhaps, given the collapsing of the boundary between the domestic sphere (coded female) and the public sphere (coded male) that occurred when the pétroleuses took to the streets (Smith 299) — of what it now meant to be a French man.

The fate of the nation and its male citizens seemed inextricably intertwined. To a citizenry already beaten down by the weight of defeat, the return to an increasingly mechanized society was particularly hard. With the advent of mechanized and industrialized labor, the superior strength of men no longer held the same sway in the workplace; new bureaucratic positions, disassociated from the body, no longer required brute force or virility (Maugue 1999; 2001); what is more, the legalization of divorce threatened to take away some of a man’s power at home as well.

Women Moving Forwards, Men Holding Back

1880: Secular Secondary Education for Girls

Les mieux élevées parmi elles ne sont, à proprement parler, que des ignorantes, presque des illettrées au moment où elles s’établissent, et deviennent tout à coup des épouses, des mères et des femmes du monde.

— Camille Sée

While women were still very much second-class citizens in the 1880s (let us not forget that les françaises did not become full citoyennes until 1945), the decade saw the passing of several laws that changed their lives cosmetically at least. On 21 December
1880, the government passed the law providing secondary education for girls that had originally been proposed by Camille Sée two years earlier. \(^\text{26}\) Henceforth, young women could complete a five-year program of education in the following subjects:

> L’enseignement moral; la langue française, la lecture à haute voix et au moins une langue vivante; les littératures anciennes et modernes; la géographie et la cosmographie; l’histoire nationale et un aperçu de l’histoire générale; l’arithmétique; les éléments de la géométrie, de la chimie, de la physique et de l’histoire naturelle; l’hygiène; l’économie domestique; les travaux à l’aiguille; des notions de droit usuel; le dessin; la musique; la gymnastique.” (Sée 470–1)

The pedagogical program envisioned for these new schools reveals that while access to secondary education may have enhanced the lives of women living under the Third Republic, it fell short when it came to providing them with new opportunities: the absence of instruction in Latin and Greek, for example, as well as the absence of a sixth year of education (Frize, Frize, Faulkner 116), ensured that although women could attend a lycée, they could not sit for the baccalauréat, progress to the universities, or enter a

\(^{26}\) For a rich and detailed account of the effects of early Third Republic legislation on women, see Jean Pederson’s 2003 *Legislating the French family: feminism, theater, and republican politics*, 1870-1920. Detailed studies of the debates around and impact of the Sée laws include Coirault (1940); Mayeur (1977 and 1979); Ozouf (1982); Offen (1983); Lelièvre (1991) and Albertini (1992).
professional career. While most women did not object to this discrepancy until the feminist movement gained momentum in the 1890’s, the radical suffragette Hubertine Auclert, whose campaign for enfranchisement ran for a decade from 1881, was quick to claim the legal change to be nothing but “une loi stérile” (La Citoyenne, qtd. in Offen 1983).

This, of course, was because the 1880 law was not designed only with women but with the Republic in mind. As André Rauch suggests in Histoire du premier sexe de la Révolution à nos jours, the provision of state secondary education was less a result of a burning desire to have educated female citizens and primarily a means of wrenching women from the clutches of the Catholic church (183).

Much like the realpolitik employed by the feminist movement, then, Sée’s

27 However, as Françoise Mayeur suggests in L'enseignement secondaire des jeunes filles sous la Troisième République, the provision of this substandard education did in fact eventually open the pathway to new careers for women, especially once the religious establishments began preparing their students for the bac — state schools promptly followed suit.

28 As Karen Offen points out in “The Second Sex and the Baccalaureat,” Sée himself, along with fellow ministers Jules Ferry and Paul Bert, was actually in favor of a more progressive educational system in line with that available to boys. To the more conservative members of the government, however, the notion that women could receive an education that would provide them with access to the liberal professions was unacceptable (255).
rhetoric when presenting his bill to the government played to republican concerns and downplayed any sense of revolutionary change. He was careful to underline both the practical and moral reasons for educating young women, suggesting that far from detracting them from “leur véritable vocation, qui est d'élever leurs enfants et de tenir leurs ménages,” an education would actually make them better homemakers, more compassionate partners, and more discerning readers, who would be able to eschew the pernicious influences of “la littérature de bas étage, qui fausse le goût et pervertit les moeurs” (61). 29 He claimed that it was not for their own sake that French women needed to be raised up from deplorable intellectual poverty — although he did suggest that it would be good for them — but rather that they needed to be educated for the sake of their children, to whom they served as initial educators, and their husbands, for whom they managed the household. After such an education, argued Sée, “Elle entrerait ensuite dans une famille, parée de toutes les grâces de l'esprit et prête à remplir ses devoirs de mère, c'est-à-dire d'institutrice” (150).

Furthermore, he argued, a republican understanding of matters such as French language and history, would instill an increased sense of patriotism and national belonging in these young women (one that they would pass on to their sons, along with the knowledge itself), while a basic knowledge of economics and the law would help them be better homemakers. Finally, education in basic hygiene would be vital to any attempt to reverse population decline; the infant mortality rate in France was shamefully high.

29 On this point, see Smith (301).
1881: Freedom of Assembly and Freedom of the Press

In *French Feminism in the nineteenth century*, Claire G. Moses suggests that two laws passed within a month of each other — the *loi du 30 juin 1881 sur la liberté de réunion* and the *loi du 29 juillet 1881 sur la liberté de la presse* — directly affected the feminist movement in France (197). The first allowed women to convene in public without having to get prior approval from the relevant authorities, the second to publish their own political newspapers; both enabled feminists to represent *themselves* in the public eye (albeit to a self-selected audience) rather than be represented by male journalists, writers, and caricaturists alone.

1884: Divorce and Population Control

Karen Offen ("Is the ‘woman question’…") also draws attention to the usefulness of the law on freedom of the press to the broadcasting of feminist arguments.

Maupassant, whose entire oeuvre is marked by perspicacious contemporaneity, foresaw the utility of the law on the freedom of assembly to feminism, as is evidenced by the last chapter of *Les dimanches d’un bourgeois de Paris*, first published in *Le Gaulois* on August 18, 1880.

For a detailed study of the disintegration of the family in the late nineteenth century, following the Loi Nacquet and changes to paternity suits, see Nicholas White, *The Family in Crisis*. For a slightly longer view of this phenomenon as it is portrayed in print, with a focus on the production of a pathological discourse on gender, sexuality, and the family, see Roddey Reid, *Families in Jeopardy*. 
While it did not allow for divorce on the grounds of mutual consent, Alfred Naquet’s 1884 law did, for the first time, allow a woman to divorce her husband if he was (a) unfaithful to her or (b) physically violent towards her. That is not to say, however, that obtaining a divorce was an easy process: as Jean Pedersen points out in *Legislating the French Family*, her study of the interplay between family policy and the notion of national citizenship, the “lengthy procedures for establishing fault required both spouses, their relatives, and their supporting witnesses to appear in court eight times, with waiting periods of up to twenty days or even a year between each visit” (39). Nevertheless, according to the INSEE statistics on divorce, there were just 108 “divorces directs” (those not preceded by legal separation) in 1884, compared to 5,373 in 1889 and 7,437 in 1900; the number would continue to grow until the First World War (“Situation démographique de la France” 627).

As we can see from the Naquet quotation above, the politician and fervent supporter of women’s rights followed in the steps of Camille Sée when it came to selling his bill to the republican government. Rather than condemning marriage as a restriction on women (and divorce as her way to escape it), Naquet focused on one of the questions that most vexed republican politicians: the dwindling population. Between 1872 and 1911, the Italian and Austro-Hungarian population grew by 30%; the British population

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L’intérêt national de la France, c’est que la population s’y accroisse comme elle s’accroît en Allemagne, si nous ne voulons pas être engloutis.

—Alfred Naquet, *Le Divorce* (24)
by 43% and the German population by 58%. The French population, on the other hand, grew by just 10% — and that figure took into account the second-generation immigrants included in the census data after 1889. More worrying still, the national birthrate was also in significant decline.

Naquet’s argument was that women in happy marriages would be more likely to provide their husbands — and the nation — with children. Here, he was tapping into what Robert Nye dubs the phenomenon of “low marital fertility” (78): the problem was not that the French were not getting married, but that married French couples were not having as many babies as their European counterparts. While he may not have intended it thus, his reasoning firmly placed responsibility for national wellbeing with its women; unfortunately, this was an opinion shared, and with much less sympathy, by many other public figures.

In 1896, for example, the increasingly conservative Zola writes an opinion piece entitled “Dépopulation” for Le Figaro in which he blames, on the one hand, “le calcul éгоіste des familles limitant le nombre d’enfants, pour leur assurer la vie confortable qu’on s’imagine leur devoir” but suggests, on the other, that “dans cette limitation de la famille, il y a certainement une part de mode et de bon ton.” He gives the example of a

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33 I have taken these statistics from Robert Nye’s Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France: 78. The fifth chapter of Nye’s book provides a detailed account of the debates surrounding population and reproduction in the context of degeneration.

34 For the rate of decline, see Chapter Two of this dissertation.
woman who “rougissait de honte, comme si elle eût traversée un mauvais lieu” when she encountered another woman with a large family on the street. “Il n’y a” adds Zola bitterly, “que les animaux pour se reproduire de la sorte.” Here, then, the blame for the decline in the national birthrate is the fault of fashion, of a culture that has allowed for the kind of frenzied release of female passion evidenced in the author’s Au Bonheur des dames. The commodity fetishism inherent to late nineteenth-century urban culture had encouraged bourgeois women to become socially and patriotically irresponsible, to replace their domestic and national duties with individual desires.

Les types de Paris and the Woman Question

“Was the much-discussed ‘Woman Question’ in fact by, about, and for women?” asks Karen Offen in “Is the ‘woman question’ really a ‘man problem?’” “Or did this debate really reflect a ‘Man Problem,’ a growing problem of stabilizing fragile male identities, or bolstering the egos of men who only understood masculinity as based on domination of women, children, and underlings?” (47) In the work that follows, I argue that the politicians, writers, and scientists trying to define and portray “woman” were doing so in face of what Annelise Maugue has deemed a “crise de la masculinité.”

“L’exclusion des femmes [...] est le dernier rempart, l’ultime preuve que peut se donner le sexe masculin en état de doute du caractère ‘viril’ de ses activités” argues Maugue

35 Amongst the other scholars who have focused on the crisis of masculine identity in the late 19th century are Robert Nye (1993), André Rauch (2001), and Christopher Forth (2007).
(“Littérature antiféministe” 79). In L’identité masculine en crise, she explains just how
difficult that exclusion was becoming: “Elle est la moitié assujettie, le double inférieur,
l’autre par excellence si nécessaire à la définition de l’un, et voilà qu’elle bouge, voilà
qu’elle change: chacune de ses métamorphoses, en réduisant implacablement les
différences, souligne et amplifie la crise du masculin” (93–94).

In the sections that have preceded this one, we have looked not only at the crisis
of masculinity but also at the legal and social changes affecting women’s (and therefore
men’s) cultural, social, and legal status in the 1880’s. In Sexing the Citizen, Judith Surkis
argues that the instability born of these changes, “rather than undermining masculinity as
a regulatory political and social ideal, actually lent it its force,” since that same instability
could “motivate and justify efforts to police the boundaries of these admittedly unstable,
but nonetheless effective norms” (8–9). I argue that one such effort is the representation
of women, and that artists, scientists, and writers attempted to curb (or at least
compensate for) the crisis in their own self-identification via the representation — itself,
as we have seen, a means of control — of the female Other.

Following Christine Bard in Les anti-féminismes de la première vague, I posit that
the turn-of-the-century writing illustrated by Les types de Paris is not so much
misogynist as anti-feminist.36 Fears of degeneracy, effeminacy, and depopulation haunted
the masculine imaginary, and where better to displace such fears than onto the “Eve
nouvelle”? The anguish these concerns caused much of the male population could go a

36 Which is, after all, the socio-political implementation and expression of a more-or-less blatant misogyny.
significant way towards explaining the “nature curieuse,” as Dr. L Manouvrier put it to the Congrès français et international du droit des femmes, of the “facilité [avec laquelle] beaucoup d’hommes se laissent mettre en colère dans les discussions sur cette matière, tant le mépris du fort pour le faible, du mâle pour la femelle, est profondément enraciné dans les cervelles masculines” (47).

I explore the manifestations of this crisis through close textual analysis of three visual-verbal texts in Les types de Paris: Maupassant’s “Servantes, Rubans et Tabliers,” Fourcaud’s “Belles Filles,” and Raffaëlli’s “la belle Feyghine,” all of which typecast women in a way that echoes the bipolar attitude towards them in the culture at large. In “Les femmes sur le marché,” her feminist re-reading of Marx’s theory of commodity exchange, Luce Irigaray argues that “[l]a marchandise — la femme — est divisée en deux “corps” irréconciliables: son corps “naturel”, et son corps valeureux socialement échangeable: expression (notamment mimétique) de valeurs masculines” (176). Here, I argue that the women in Les types de Paris occupy an unsteady ground between these two diametrically opposed roles, which nevertheless both cast them as commodities. Their natural (maternal) bodies, the bodies that can help remedy the population crisis, are invaluable to the state; their adorned, exchangeable (sexual) bodies are crucial to maintaining bourgeois male pride, premised as it is on ownership and social representation.

The anxiety-producing dialectic between woman-as-nature and woman-as-consumer-culture is emphasized, in Les types de Paris, by the geographies in which they are emplaced. Each “type” has her place — the fields, the parks, the faubourg, the
theater, the suburb — but each of these places is in some way entre-deux. These characters exist on the hinterland, hover in in-between, indeterminate spaces. They have wandered from the world of “separate spheres,” come out of the home, lured into public by the seductive power of consumer goods. They express a geographical and social mobility exactly as their authors attempt to typecast and categorize them, to put them in their place. Yet at the same time, they are also trapped by representation, by the images and words that describe them, and by luxury, by the pages of this coffee-table book.

In Les types de Paris, women are presented as naturally inferior because more natural, and as voracious, mindless consumers and calculating whores. Despite the variety of female “types” portrayed here (the working classes — peasants, wet nurses, and scullery maids — are the subject of Maupassant’s piece, while Fourcaud covers a broad swath, from the beggar girl to the demi-mondaine to the duchesse), the wide social swath cast by their collection in Les types de Paris creates a discrete, essential “type” — womankind — thereby painting an image that is at once contradictory and absolutely emblematic of its time.

By the late nineteenth century, André Rauch suggests, “[d]’une société aux espaces structurés par les clivages séparant les sexes, souvent nostalgique des hiérarchies établies, on est passé a une époque aux dynamiques sociales brouillées. Entre-temps, le

37 For a more in-depth discussion of the in-between spaces that serve as the background to much of Les types de Paris, see chapter 4.

38 On separate spheres, see Nye, chapter 4.
mobilité des statuts a engendré chez tous un sentiment d’insecurité” (*Le premier sexe* 249). If panoramic literature is indeed an exercise in the production of knowledge of an increasingly hostile urban space, then the women typecast in *Les types de Paris* represent a desire to fix (or re-place) the threateningly mobile “éternel féminin.”

**Louis de Fourcaud and the Commodification of Desire**

The decline in the birthrate rigidified the response to infractions of the sexual division of labor, however moderate, and transformed the protection of the traditional model of the family… In this highly charged context, even the slightest tamperings with female identity and female activity were experienced as threats to the entire structure. (Silverman, “New Woman” 149)

Louis de Fourcaud, the prolific art critic and journalist, was not merely an anti-feminist like so many of his contemporaries; he was an outright misogynist — and a snob. In *Belles Filles*, his contribution to *Les types de Paris*, Fourcaud presents us with a vision of Parisian women that includes every social type from the beggar to the bourgeois, the dancer to the duchess. His title, of course, is somewhat ironic: over the course of his article he proposes that not only is female beauty mere affect, produced by the cumulative effect of a certain number of consumer goods, but also that all women — not just young women — are *filles* in the most euphemistic sense of the word.

However, it is not just the artificial nature of female beauty that upsets him, but the fact that this artifice allows for a *mixité* of classes, that with the help of the right
commodities, a flower seller can pass for a duchess. What is more, he claims, French men are themselves so dazzled by this inauthentic beauty, so intent on impressing these unworthy women with their elegant turns of phrase, that they are unable to tell the interloper from the genuine article.

Fourcaud begins his article with a long quote from Act I, Scene II of Marivaux’s *La Surprise de l’Amour*. As the quotation suggests, women have long held a mythological power over men (even if, from a practical and legal standpoint, they have been treated as inferior beings).

La vipère n’ôte que la vie. Femmes, vous nous ravissez notre raison, notre liberté, notre repos; vous nous ravissez à nous–mêmes et vous nous laissez vivre! Nous voilà-t-il pas des hommes en bel état après? Des pauvres fous, des hommes troublés, ivres de douleur ou de joie, toujours en convulsion, — des esclaves! Et à qui appartiennent ces esclaves? A des femmes. Et qu’est-ce que la femme? Pour la définir, il faudrait en avoir le secret. Nous pouvons aujourd’hui commencer la définition, je soutiens qu’on n’en verra le bout qu’à la fin du monde.

However, as Karen Offen reminds us in “Is the ‘woman question’ really a ‘man problem?,” while women remained in the private sphere, such power did not actually threaten masculine identity, built as it was on virility, strength, and the financial and legal

39 On the unsettling of the bourgeois opposition between *honnête femme* and *fille* in the context of a broader disruption of the hierarchy of the sexes, see Barbara Vinken’s “Temples of Delight.”
domination over the family. As we have seen, however, the various legal changes
instituted by the republican government and the increased visibility of women’s demands
to be heard, in addition to the aftereffects of 1870–1 and the extended metaphor of that
defeat — the gap between the birthrate in France and that in Germany — meant that that
identity was under threat. As Edward Berenson argues in *The Trial of Madame Caillaux*:

> The connection was reciprocal, the weakening of men vis-à-vis their women
> both explaining and being explained by the military disaster at Sedan. Men
> had lost the war abroad because they were losing the battle of the sexes at
> home, and they were losing the battle of the sexes at home because they had
> lost the war abroad. No longer was France the land of “magnificent males” to
> whom women and nations submitted. Now it was French men who found
> themselves on the bottom, in effect the overpowered women of Europe. (116)

Add to this a rampant consumer culture that empowered bourgeois women even as it
enslaved them to their desires, and the centuries-old sway of desire suddenly seemed
much more dangerous.

I would argue that Fourcaud’s decision to cite Marivaux does not only propose, as
a surface reading might suggest, that women are and always have been treacherous and
unfaithful — that, as Fourcaud claims, Marivaux was expressing “justement, une cruelle
vérité” (139) — and that therefore there is nothing particularly new about what Fourcaud
will say. Rather, taken in its historical context, the author’s article uses citational practice
to create what Judith Butler, following Foucault, would term a “regulative discourse” that
maintains a culturally created illusion of ‘femininity.’ Marivaux’s discursive production of woman, here legitimated by the fact that he “connut tout de l’éternel féminin, hors le mot qu’on n’avait pas inventé encore” is passed on from man to man, from Marivaux to Beaumarchais to Fourcaud, as a universal truth.

Yet nobody writes in a vacuum. It is impossible not to read intense anxiety in Fourcaud’s words, an anxiety due to a crisis of modernity: that of a specifically male “economically marginal intelligentsia confronted by an encroaching commercialism and

40 Gender Trouble (1990); Surveiller et punir (1975)

41 Marivaux seems to have resonated strongly with Fourcaud, since he not only cites him later in “Belles Filles” but cites that same passage in an 1893 review of “Les Arts de la femme au Palais de l’Industrie” for La Grande Dame. In fact, this later article, ostensibly a review of an exhibition of “women’s arts,” features a paragraph that rehashes the content of Belles Filles. It seems like Fourcaud is expanding on his citational practice — and in a completely different context — in order to consecrate his vision of the immoral, man-eating harpy he sees in every woman. The complete citation, from L’indigent philosophe, states: “Par ma foi! La nature a besoin qu’il y ait des femmes dans la monde, et nous aussi; mais si on les regardait bien fixement d’un certain côté, elles paraîtraient trop risibles pour avoir rien à démêler avec notre coeur; elles cesserait d’être aimables et ne seraient que nécessaires” (Oeuvres complètes 80). Fourcaud’s quotation is slightly inaccurate, and differs in both articles, but both times he uses the Marivaux to set up a claim that women rely on the fact that they are necessary to exert their tyranny on the male sex.
materialism” (Felski: 90). Women are threatening to Fourcaud because they are beginning to participate in the traditionally male arenas of spatial and sexual liberty — and because they have started to fashion themselves as they see fit. Female acts of self-creation are enabled by mass-produced luxury goods, by the department stores that sell them, by a consumer culture that encourages women to buy and, importantly, allows them to be artificial, to traverse class lines. Formerly mere commodities, exchanged between father and spouse, these women are now also consumers, the active agents — the embodiment even — of a modernity Fourcaud regrets.

As a result of their infatuation with the female sex, claims Fourcaud via Marivaux, men become “pauvres fous” or “hommes troublés;” they are “ivres de douleur ou de joie,” “toujours en convulsion.” This rhetoric of madness and incontinence, of a lack of control both physical and mental, gains new significance in the context of the late nineteenth century. Mad, disturbed, drunk, convulsing: Fourcaud, using the mouthpiece of Marivaux, expressly describes men using the language many of his contemporaries — influenced by the performative hysterics staged by Charcot at the Salpêtrière

42 The past twenty-five years have seen several impressive studies of Charcot and the Salpêtrière, amongst them Jan Goldstein, *Control and Classify: the French psychiatric profession in the nineteenth century* (particularly chapter 9); the second part of Jan Matlock’s *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France*; Janet Beizer, *Ventriloquized bodies, Narratives of Hysteria in nineteenth century France*; Mark S. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria: Disease and Its Interpretations*; Nicole Edelman, *Les Métamorphoses de l’hystérique*; Elizabeth
frequently employed to portray fin-de-siècle women. What had been a misogynistic metaphor in 1722 had become, by 1889, something much more tangible and menacing.

Hysteria conjures up the fragility of identity, lays bare the ease with which the body can reveal the hidden chaos of the mind. Displaced onto the female, it was used to argue against her emancipation, read as evidence of her inferiority and unreliability. However, as Alain Corbin points out in “La rencontre des corps,” by the 1880’s hysteria was no longer the exclusive terrain of the female (181). This fact was not unknown to the medical profession at the time, as we read in Dr. Grasset’s 100-page entry on “hystérie” in the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des Sciences médicales*: “Nous verrons en effet que l’hystérie non-seulement se rencontre chez l’homme, mais encore est beaucoup plus fréquente chez lui qu’on ne le croit généralement” (241). If, as Janet Beizer suggests, “[t]he body of the hysteric – mobile, capricious, convulsive – [was] both a metaphor and myth of an epoch: emblem of whirling chaos and cathartic channeling of it” (*Ventiloquized Bodies* 8-9), then these hysterical male bodies become the ultimate indicator of dégénérescence.

In *Belles Filles*, weak, neurotic, feminized men willingly enslave themselves to women; unable to resist the force of the *femmes fatales*, they put up no resistance, content to act only when there is a pull of the puppet strings. In one example, the (presumed

male) reader, who is addressed as “vous,” sees an attractive young woman at the theater, and is instantly nothing but a passive verbal object: “elle vous fascine de sa beauté,” writes Fourcaud, “elle vous éblouit de sa riche élégance.” And as if to dig the knife in a little deeper, Fourcaud then suggests that not only have “you” been denied status as verbal subject, you have also been dispossessed of your agency, of your control over your own possessions: “votre lorgnette se tourne d’elle-même vers cette inconnue” (130). It comes as little surprise, then, that women are usually the verbal subjects in Fourcaud’s piece: women act; things happen to men.

It should be obvious, then, that Fourcaud — like many of his contemporaries — sees a direct correlation between the activity of women and the passivity of men; for him there can be no equality of the sexes, since allowing women to become stronger necessarily entails the enfeeblement of the male. The pursuit of women, he says, causes men to lose their strength, to become the weaker sex. Women sap men of their energy; cause them to spend their strength (and their wealth) in useless pursuits: “Elle a tant de caprices de tout ordre qu’on use son activité à les satisfaire” (emphasis mine). Women — “de qui,” writes Fourcaud, “sortent toutes nos folies et la meilleure part de nos sagesses” — not only bring out the irrational side of man, they also purloin his wisdom. The effeminate men, who “s’abandonnent” to women, are “marionnettes” and “pantins” in the hands of womenkind, they are “délicat,” subject to “folie” and “damnation” — they are “esclaves.”

Fourcaud conflates defeat past and present, for while the men he portrays bring to mind a shamed and emasculated France, his women — domineering, ruthless, heartless
are efficient, destructive machines. Indeed, the rhetoric of violent domination is here located in the female: “Femmes,” writes Fourcaud, citing Marivaux, “Vous nous ravissez notre raison, notre liberté, notre repos; vous nous ravissez à nous–mêmes et vous nous laissez vivre!” What might have been light-hearted (if misogynistic) literary hyperbole at the time of Marivaux takes on a new gravity in the context of Fourcaud’s article (and the centennial context in which it is published). He continues the rhetoric of domination commenced in his citation of Marivaux: woman’s aim is to “étendre et fortifier son empire,” he writes; she “déploie” “règne,” “domine,” “nous deroute.” Cruel, Fourcaud’s women seize reason and freedom — those fundamental components of the post-revolutionary psyche — from French men; the sexual and military force behind the verb “ravir” performs an absolute inversion of usual gender roles.

One of the keys to female victory, Fourcaud seems to suggest, is in her mastery of a certain kind of science. Such an assertion sets the author apart from many of his contemporaries, who attempt to locate the female firmly in the natural. To Fourcaud, the only “natural” thing about woman is her innate art of deception — her every gesture, word, and act is performed, the product of design. In fact, he argues, this is female nature; her deception is universal, she was born this way. Her nature, then, is both an art and a science of illusion: “elle déploie un habileté consommée à nous dérouter, une science fabuleuse à se fandrelucher; elle cache sous les dehors d’une versatilité infinie une suite surprenante dans les idées. Son art naturel est de faire alterner des duretés incroyables et d’extraordinaires tendresses, des trahisons méditées et des dévouements subits” (138).

Nowhere is the ubiquity of this art and/or science more obvious than in the
Once again involving his reader (or any man, really) in this universal scenario, Foucauld describes two women. One, with whom “you” collide on the street one day, is “quelque brin de fille, peu débarbouillée, nullement peignée, qui a de grands yeux dévorants dans un visage maigre et qui traine ses haillons en vous vendant des fleurs, des allumettes ou des journaux” (132). Every noun, every adverb, every adjective of this sentence works to erase the presence of this girl, from “quelque,” “peu,” and “nullement” to “maigre” to the barely-there rags and even the barely-there body evoked by the “brin.” She is a street-seller, but what she sells is as ephemeral as her effect on the passer-by is evanescent; flowers, matches, newspapers — all turn to trash. That she is almost invisible is a reflection of how little the passerby notices her: “Vous vous heurtez, un beau soir ou un beau matin, sur le pavé de Paris, à quelque brin de fille… vous n’y prenez garde et vous passez” (132). She is everywhere and nowhere, (un)seen at any time — un beau soir ou un beau matin — and on any urban street. Forgettable, replaceable, absent.

Compare the transience of such an existence with that of the woman Fourcaud describes next. Time and place, while still not exact, have been narrowed down: “A deux ou trois ans de là, vous voici à une première de l’Opéra ou du Gymnase.” There, “dans un loge en évidence une jeune femme se prélassse.” The woman’s body is opulent, overflowing, ever-present and affecting “your” every sense. “Faisant feu de tous ses diamants, jouant de l’éventail” she goes beyond dress to accessory; in contrast to the “haillons” worn by the other, she is “emmitouflée de fourrures” — she represents pure surplus. “Elle vous fascine de sa beauté, elle vous éblouit de sa riche élégance” — the
waving of the fan, the sparkling of the diamonds, the overwhelming omnipresence of her opulence stands in stark contrast to the invisible beggar on the street. Where the other sold, she accumulates: “elle a pignon sur rue, laquais, chevaux, carrosses, courtisans, et le reste” (133). The rhetoric of excess, of untrammeled consumption, suggests that the capitalist-industrial political economy has been embodied by the demi-mondaines of Paris.  

What becomes clear is that these two women — the “sirène” and the “quelque brin de fille” — are in fact one and the same. And like Antonin Proust, whose own brand of anxiety I will analyse in Chapter Two, Fourcaud seems perturbed by his own inability  

43 The ubiquity of this “histoire devenue banale à force d’être répétée” (133) is evidenced by the remarkable similarity (is it a case of literary plagiarism?) between the description of the demi-mondaine in Fourcaud’s piece, and that of another woman, Alice Penthièvre, in Felicien Champsaur’s 1882 Dinah Samuel: “Elle se prélasse, dans une loge en évidence, aux premières, harnachée à ravir, comme une femme de race ; elle est triomphante ; elle part, après la représentation, au grand trot de son attelage ; ses photographies sont étalées aux vitrines spéciales ; elle a des diamants ; elle a des fourrures ; elle a dentelles, parfois, elle crée la mode ; elle a une cour de boulevardiens qui connaissent toutes les ficelles (…) Sans doute, Alice Penthièvre avait suivi son instinct. Peut-être aussi, elle avait prêté l’oreille aux bruits parisiens. Lui avaient-ils enseigné, — dans une symphonie en zut, — que la femme est nécessaire et que, sans s’inquiéter du surplus, il faut briller. Tout ce qui luit n’est pas or, mais l’or vient à ce qui luit” (288).
to “correctly” read the inhabitants of the fin-de-siècle city, to be able to tell the authentic from the self-made, the luxury of old money from the glint and sparkle of new. The beggar girl’s transformation is testament to the surface level on which human interaction occurs in modern Paris. In fact, says Fourcaud, the capacity for such transformation, such trickery lies at the heart of every Parisienne. “Without a certain kind of space, a certain kind of story is simply impossible,” claims Franco Moretti in Atlas of the European Novel (100). Little does it matter where Fourcaud’s streetseller came from, where she “a pris son expérience” and “a fait son apprentissage.” Who she is is irrelevant in this inauthentic city of paraître — all that is important is how she appears. “Elle a causé, elle a écouté ses connaissances et les bruits de Paris,” (134) writes Fourcaud. The city has nurtured her transformation; she is “le triomphe du Parisianisme” (133).

Of course her metamorphosis should reveal itself at the theatre. As the locus of dissemblance, of role-play, of inauthenticity, as well as the site of spectacle, both on-stage and off, the theatre is the natural home of modern urban life. Fourcaud first introduces us to his demimondaine in a “loge en évidence;” the same woman whose

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44 Defined by E. Littré as “Usage, habitude, moeurs de Parisiens” (Dictionnaire de la langue française T3 Paris: Hachette 1873–1874), by the 1880s “Parisianisme” had taken on a much more pejorative meaning.

45 Fourcaud insists that such a creature is born of 1880s Paris; like the types cast in the physiologies of the 1840s, her inextricability from the urban environment as well as the contemporaneity of her existence not only “fait vrai” but also, as Sieburth suggests (1985: 47), will have contributed to the commercial success of the publication itself.
presence went unnoticed on the street a few years ago now occupies the most visible box at the theatre — she is there to be seen, the embodiment of “an economy of desire operating on the register of the visual” (Solomon-Godeau: 113). That economy of desire is perpetuated by journalism (let us not forget that it is Balzac’s journalists who are the most mobile of his urban characters; indeed, for Franco Moretti, journalism “embodies mobility — spatial, mental, social mobility” (74), and it is journalists who “notent avec placidité que la belle mademoiselle Z… occupait telle loge, tout proche de celle où brillait la belle baronne Y.” What is more, adds Fourcaud, the journalists’ articles only serve to further the social mobility of others: “demandez à un étranger laquelle il croit être madame Y… et laquelle mademoiselle … Il risquera fort de s’y tromper” (134).

Like Zola’s *Nana* (1880), another flower seller turned demimondaine, another destroyer/consumer of men, Fourcaud’s mysterious woman is “at the heart of the cash nexus, her social and sexual identity shaped by fashion, image, and advertising, her perverse erotic desires linked to modern urban decadence” (Felski: 75). She boasts characteristics — wit, grace — that were believed to come naturally to a lady; now, however, they are little more than consumer items available to a sufficiently high bidder: “L’esprit est venu avec la fortune et la grâce avec la toilette” (133).

Of course, the woman is also a commodity, a highly desirable one, “le tourment des millionnaires qui se ruinent pour ses beaux yeux, avec plaisir” (133). In *The Flâneur, the Sandwich Man and the Whore*, Susan Buck-Morss argues that “to desire the fashionable, purchasable woman-as-thing is to desire exchange-value itself, that is, the very essence of capitalism” (31). The desirability of Fourcaud’s actress, then, stems not
from her beauty but from what “owning” her means: to possess “le tourment des millionnaires” is to possess the epitome of capitalism itself. Her body symbolizes both dominance and domination through its display of accumulated goods; the effect is enhanced by collective delusion. Like the Parisian arcade, she is a phantasmagoric landscape of consumption.

This, too, is a result of a consumer economy in which authenticity, or aura — here in the form of class distinction — has been supplanted by image. If we consider Adorno’s definition of the commodity as "a consumer item in which there is no longer anything that is supposed to remind us how it came into being,” a “magical object” that effaces the traces of its own production, we can see that Fourcaud’s women, too, are fetishized commodities, works of art (and not of nature) that tell nothing of their production. And if, as Benjamin suggests, “the property appertaining to the commodity as its fetish character attaches as well to the commodity-producing society… as it represents itself and thinks to understand itself whenever it abstracts from the fact that it produces precisely commodities” (669), then can we not argue that it is the culture of 1880’s Paris itself — inauthentic, unrooted, alienating, consumptive — that is represented by this phantasmagoric female body?

46 Adorno, ”Fragmente über Wagner” qtd in Benjamin, Arcades 669.

47 As Abigail Solomon-Godeau argues: “Pretty, fashionable, fickle, desirable, but venal, the Parisienne might well be described as an emblematic figure for the Paris being constructed through capitalism as the capital of desire” (“The Other Side of Venus” 142).
Raffaëlli, Mirbeau, and *la belle Feyghine*

Fig 1: Raffaëlli “Feyghine” *Les Types de Paris* 133
It is of course appropriate that one of the women whose portrait Raffaëlli uses to illustrate Fourcaud’s piece was also an actress, renowned for her beauty, much in demand, and known simply as “la belle Feyghine.” What could be less expected, perhaps, is that Julie Feyghine was in fact a rare example of an already wealthy woman who had emigrated to Paris “anxious to make an honest livelihood and thirsting for fame” (“Mlle Feyghine’s History,” New York Times). In a way, then, she was the antithesis of the “belles filles” represented in Louis Forcaud’s article. Although she had been one of the stars of the Comédie Française for the year and a half preceding her death, much to her disappointment, she was “what is known on the Boulevards as a succès de beauté.” Critics and public alike deemed her “quite insufficient as an artist” (Bury, Madame Barten 766) and Dumas fils – who “really thought well of her” (“Mlle Feyghine’s History”) presumed her to be a prostitute (“Quelle belle personne,” the New York Times article reports him having exclaimed in her presence, “mais quelle dommage aussi qu’elle va si gaiment à la prostitution.”)

Pierre Gaffard’s obituary in Le Figaro, “Mort de Mlle Feyghine” went as far as to suggest that it was the Parisian insistence on recognizing her beauty and denigrating her talent that actually led to her demise: “Les médecins ont attribué le coup de pistolet de Mlle Feyghine à un accès de fièvre chaude,” he wrote. “Cette explication médicale est peut-être la vraie, mais si l’on recherche les causes vraisemblables de ce drame poignant, on les trouvera dans les flatteries exagérées que Paris a prodiguées à la
beauté de cette jeune femme, comme pour lui faire sentir plus durement, un soir, le poids de son indifférence pour ses talents de comédienne.”

Paris, it seems, did not know what to do with an actress — especially a beautiful actress of questionable talent — who was not also a prostitute. They put her on stage, then ridiculed her ability; they fêted her beauty, introduced her to the demi-monde of “des métiers anonymes et des existences crapuleuses” (Mirbeau, “Mlle Feyghine”), and then called her “intensely odd, and serious in all her oddities” (“Mlle Feyghine’s History”) because she loved and was faithful to the “gommeux élégant” the Duc de Morny. She defied categorization; she contradicted the political economy of the theater; she would not stay in her place. The New York Times account of her death stresses how unlike other Parisian actresses she was: “Dishonesty was foreign to her nature, and there was no predisposition to vice,” writes the author of the New York Times article, adding — somewhat incredulously — that she inhabited a simply-furnished “little hired villa” and had a wardrobe that was “anything but sumptuous.”

Of all accounts of her difference, perhaps that of Octave Mirbeau48 is the most interesting:

Si Feyghine avait été une simple demoiselle, tourmenteuse de coeurs et

48 Mirbeau, whose interest appeared to lie primarily with indicting the duc de Morny (and his lifestyle) for Feyghine’s death, went on to write La Gomme, a play directly inspired by the Feyghine case. It was published under Felicien Champsaur’s name in 1889. For more on the “négritude” of Mirbeau, see Dorothée Pauvert-Raimbault, “Champsaur, Mirbeau et Rimbaud.”
croqueuse de fortunes, si elle avait été une de ces créatures dont on se demande de quelle chair insensible et de quel sang glacé est bâti leur corps, de quelle boue le vice a pétri leur coeur, de quelles profanations et de quelles hontes sont faites leurs amours, sa mort me laisserait absolument froid et je dirais: C’est bien, elle paye ses dettes. Mais elle était mieux que cela, cette jeune fille. Il y avait en elle quelque chose de sincère, de violent et de bon, de l’enthousiasme, de la fierté et de la tendresse, une vraie femme. La preuve c’est qu’elle est morte. Les autres vivent.

According to Mirbeau, then, a woman that defies categorization, that somehow transcends the theater’s own logic, must die. While Mirbeau had never met Feyghine, he did, he tells us, catch sight of her twice. These sightings were sufficient for him to judge her character, to claim that she had “une nature d’artiste, délicate et sensible” — to assert her superiority to other young women. While pointing out the resonances between his bitterly misogynistic put-down of the theatrical demi-monde49 in which female life becomes just another commodity to be exchanged with that of

49 As might be obvious from the level of his invective, Mirbeau had personal experience with demi-monde. Pierre Michel points out in “Le Cas Octave Mirbeau” that “il a été pendant trois ans le jouet d'une femme galante du nom de Judith Vimmer, et a retranscrit cette douloureuse expérience, qui l'a conduit, de son propre aveu, au bord du meurtre et du suicide, dans le premier roman signé de son nom, Le Calvaire ; et sa vie conjugale avec Alice Regnault s'est révélée si douloureuse qu'il a cru frôler les abîmes de la folie.”
Fourcaud almost seems moot, what is even more revealing here is that for Mirbeau, the only truth of the “vraie femme” lies in her non-existence, her death. *Les autres vivent:* those unreal women, those false tormentors, live on, the spleen to Mirbeau’s untenable *idéal*.  

Mirbeau makes use of this “obituary” to tame Feyghine, whom he describes as having “je ne sais quoi de farouche et de fauve.” By positioning her as an ideal and then insisting on the necessity of her death, he refuses her an actual existence, declares the *impossibility* of her being. It is as if he is punishing her for blurring the boundaries of what was acceptable in this “endroit banal, tout plein des caquetages et des papotages de femmes” — she did not belong there, in this geography and this society. Indeed, it was this transgression that led to her death: “Elle est morte de cela,” he writes. “Elle est morte du Cirque, elle est morte de l’Hippodrome, elle est morte du Cabinet particulier, elle est morte de la gomme, elle est morte de cette vie à outrance qui ne veut que le plaisir, et qui ne laisse pas de place aux abandonns, et aux consolations de l’amour.”

Naturally, women were not the only livers of the *vie à outrance qui ne veut que le plaisir* in fin-de-siècle Paris. In fact, the consumption habits of bourgeois males, their appetite for fine foods and wines, their “effeminate” interest in fashion and

50 Mirbeau’s curious and contradictory blend of misogyny and feminism, which led him to say, on the one hand, that woman “n’est qu’un sexe, et rien de plus” or that she was the “matrice de la mort” and on the other hand call for her right to not only divorce, work, education but also abortion is explored in Pierre Michel’s “Le Cas Octave Mirbeau.”
appearance were deemed by many to be the clear signs of a doomed nation (Forth 2007: 89). The very eloquence for which elegant Parisian men were so well known — what Fourcaud terms the “tour délicat que nous donnons à nos galanteries” — meant, for him, that they spent all their time “discuter sur toute chose au lieu d’agir.” This lack of action is in itself feminizing, since woman have so long been confined to the domestic sphere, unable to move, unable to act. Furthermore, while the all-consuming, all-artificial “belles filles” here undoubtedly bear the brunt of the blame for the blurred mess that is Parisian society, it is the weakness of men — and their weakness for women — that Fourcaud seems to blame, almost despite himself, for the crumbling of traditional social structure. While the men have been talking, it seems the women have been acting out new roles, taking control of both their destinies and their identities, being very active agents of change.

In the next chapter, which looks at representations of the foreigner in Les types de Paris, we will see Antonin Proust express a fear of the influence of an increasing number of non-natives in the country, a concern he puts down to the xenophilia or “rastaquouèrisme” of his countrymen. In “Belles Filles,” Fourcaud suggests that the danger comes not from foreigners, but from a blurring of genders and classes alike. A lack of social and gender distinction enables an intermingling of different spaces. Social mobility finds its mirror in the perambulations of the city’s men as they travel from one urban hôtel to another, from a duchess to a whore, to fulfill both their duties and their fantasies. “On les verra le même soir, par exemple,” writes Fourcaud, “au faubourg Saint-Germain, chez une douairière; au faubourg Saint-Honoré, chez un ambassadeur; à
l’avenue de Villiers, chez un peintre, et, au boulevard Malesherbes, chez une belle fille à
la mode.” Toponyms that once meant something become empty signifiers; each quartier
may still attract a particular kind of inhabitant, but its visitors do not relegate themselves
to its boundaries, instead moving across the city with such speed that they muddy up
formerly stable social divisions. The bourgeois male, caught up in the forward thrust of
turn-of-the century locomotion fueled by desire — for money, for power, for women, for
objects, for women-as-objects-as-symbols-of-power — transgresses the traditional social
geography of Paris and in so doing, renders futile the categories on which urban culture
had been based.

With the disappearance of social boundaries, claims the nostalgic Fourcaud,
go the boundaries between elegance and ostentation, good and bad taste. “Et ce n’est pas
ma faute, après tout si le rapprochement se fait tout seul entre les filles et les duchesses,”
he writes, seemingly unaware that he has just performed this “rapprochement” in his own
text. “En ces étrangété s’accuse le scepticisme d’un siècle où l’on passe son temps à
discuter sur toute chose au lieu d’agir et où, à force de se raffiner, on perd le sentiment de
la mesure et la notion du dégoût” (136). No longer is this the carefully demarcated urban
class system of the pre-revolutionary city. In Fourcaud’s Paris, everything is surface-
deep. “Entrez dans son salon et dans le salon d’une duchesse. Quel étonnement! Ici et là,
c’est la même société en hommes, les mêmes gentlemen,51 les mêmes financiers, les
mêmes artistes” (135). Capital and Beauty come together in the salon, just as they do in

51 Fourcaud’s use of the English term is interesting here, as it suggests another
layer of ostentation, of artifice.
the theatre; they are swappable shop window displays.

The interchangeability of the beggar girl, the demi-mondaine and the duchess — as well as that of their visitors and their décor — produces an image of a city in which carefully manufactured self-representation can replace any kind of authentic identity. Any difference, any distinction between them is buried deep down, inaccessible to the stereotypical Parisian male who, like Fourcaud’s reader, is so blinded by desire for the commodity that is demimondaine that he cannot recognize the street seller underneath.

As in Balzac’s literature, here “the magnetism of desire ‘orients’ the city” (Moretti 95), but what is much more obvious here than in Balzac is the defiant appropriation or consumption of the place of another social class — to such a degree that the original is no longer distinguishable from the copy. And like the department stores of which the salon is an echo, the boundaries between classes here begin to melt. “Peu de différence dans l’aspect des divers hôtels: la livrée change, le goût de l’ameublement est plus ou moins pur, mais le caractère de l’assistance est presque semblable, et le “comme il faut” convenu règne également, aux nuances près, chez Nana et chez l’ambassadrice” (135). The trope of interchangeability and fluidity in Fourcauld suggest a deep-rooted fear of contagion, of masculinity by femininity, of the upper bourgeoisie by the

52 Fourcaud’s reference to Zola’s Nana follows his suggestion that the young demi-mondaine in his own piece “a été distinguée par un baron Hulot” (133). The conflation of literary references from the 1840s and the 1880s reveals just how prostitute-obsessed 19th-Century France was; however, the anxiety about the collapse of class and gender distinction revealed by his text is wholly contemporary.
And while Fourcaud seems to want to blame the “habilité consommée” and “science fabuleuse” of the socially-mobile woman who makes it difficult for the male of the species to tell her body from any other for this state of affairs, it is the geographically-mobile body of the *male* Parisian that contaminates one space with the odor of another as he rushes between them.

However, even geographical mobility, one of the last mainstays of male privilege in the urban environment, will soon become the realm of the female, for even though men currently “jouissent d’immunités générales” — the proximity of “jouir” and “immunité” here suggesting the circulation of sexual capital and the threat of sexual disease that goes with it — “les femmes finiront par s’assurer aussi, mais qu’elles n’ont pu conquérir encore.” It is here that Fourcaud’s women differ from their better-known literary rival, Nana, whose “spatial transgressions,” as Moretti suggests, occur not over “a homogeneous social space” but rather represent “the uneasy interaction between high society, theater, and prostitution” (90). Fourcaud, like Zola, like so many of his contemporaries, is haunted by the inevitable incursion of women into the public sphere — it as if they sense that the female emancipation through capital in *Au Bonheur des dames* is just the beginning. The certainty of the future tense, the reflexive verb, the battle (and the victory) implied in “conquérir” — if we continue to focus on ostentation rather than authenticity, on speech rather than action, Fourcaud seems to be saying, then it is not only in the immediate context of the battle of the sexes, but also, by extension, in other battles, other wars, that French men will continue to lose.

53 An echo of the fin-de-siècle fear of syphilis?
Maupassant and the Female Animal

Je dis que la nature est notre ennemie, qu’il faut toujours lutter contre la nature, car elle nous ramène sans cesse à l’animal. — Guy de Maupassant (“L’inutile beauté” 1205)

Maupassant’s war was not only with women — it was with the Republic itself. Unlike many of his contemporaries, the author of another of Les types de Paris texts about women, Servantes, rubans et tabliers, did not try to couch his particular brand of misogyny in Republican ideology, in the need to fight depopulation and degeneration. Far from it: even in his affirmed bachelorhood, Maupassant stood opposed to the state. As the Morissot of “Deux amis” proclaims, “Avec les rois on a la guerre en dehors; avec la République on a la guerre au dedans” (735).

That is not to say, however, that the renowned anti-republican wanted women in the public sphere. Consider the following quote from his 1880 chronique “La Lysistrata moderne”:

Herbert Spencer me paraît dans le vrai quand il dit qu’on ne peut exiger

54 Originally published in Le Gaulois on December 30, 1880. In his edition of Maupassant’s Chroniques, Gérard Delaisemant describes “La Lysistrata moderne” (vol 1 126–130) as “un texte qui est déjà le brillant résumé — personnel ou directement issu de Schopenhauer — des grandes tendances de Maupassant qu’il exprime ici avec violence: on ne rit plus en France car le rire s’est éteint avec l’effacement d’une aristocratie du talent et de l’intelligence; les salons sont abandonnés par les vrais causeurs, s’il en reste; la femme est le “sexus sequior, le sexe second à tous les égards, fait pour se tenir à l’écart et au second plan” (1382).
In many ways, then, Maupassant was simply another well-to-do urban male writer made anxious by the threat of empowered (or, perhaps more accurately, less disempowered) women. His complicated relationship with them is hardly news: the treacherous females, cuckolding wives, and mid-childbirth mothers in his *chroniques* and *contes* speak to the anxieties and repulsion they cause him, just as his reputation as a hypersexual lover betrays the attraction they held for him — and his need to break with them — nonetheless.\(^{55}\)

However, neither did he want them trammeled by motherhood and domesticity.

\(^{55}\) Maupassant’s take on “la question de la femme” has received a great deal of critical attention. To Charles Bernheimer, Maupassant believed “all women are whores” (309n); for Paul Ignotus, he was a “sexomaniac” (95). In addition to the abovementioned critics, see also Gaudefroy-Demombynes, Lorraine Nye. *La femme dans l'œuvre de Maupassant* (1943) and Besnard-Coursodon, Micheline. *Étude thématique et structurale de l'oeuvre de Maupassant: le piège*. The *actes du colloque du Fécamp*, published on the occasion of the centenary of the author’s death, contain several important articles, particularly those by Mary Donaldson-Evans on the author’s double entrapment of women, Marie Claire Bancquart on Maupassant and the femme nouvelle, and Uwe Dethloff on his use of women to combat patriarchy only because it was bourgeois.
As Rudolph Binion stresses in “Fiction as Social Fantasy: Europe’s Domestic Crisis of 1879–1914,” “the role of wife and mother was for Maupassant inherently inimical to love with its need for freedom” (680). In fact, one could even argue that Maupassant championed a certain kind of liberty — sexual liberty, the freedom to “vivre en femme du monde… comme toutes les femmes en ont le droit” (“L’Inutile Beauté”: 1207) — that was absolutely at odds with the Republic’s efforts to shore up the family unit and combat mid-century Malthusianism. His fiction, then, lauds divorce and extramarital affairs just as it condemns marriage as a trap, motherhood as torture, and fatherhood as anxiety-producing, bourgeois folly.56

In “Servantes, Rubans et Tabliers,” Maupassant’s contribution to Les types de Paris, the author muses on the bodies and minds of working-class women: the paysanne in the fields, the wet nurse in the well-heeled parks along the Champs Elysées, and the bobonne,57 rushing through the markets of an unnamed faubourg to purchase food for the

56 Francis Steegmuller, in his bibliography of the author, was one of the first critics to explain Maupassant’s obsession with failed marriage and doubtful paternity through his relationship with his relationship with his own parents, particularly his mother, Laure. See also Stivale, 78, 165.

57 “BOBONNE s.f. (bo-bo-ne — rad. bonne, avec répétition enfantine de la première syllable). Expression dont se servent les enfants pour désigner la domestique, la gouvernante chargée de veiller sur eux” (Grand dictionnaire 843). The expression, which became a yet more pejorative way to describe a housewife in the 20th Century, saw a significant spike in use in 1888 (when Maupassant would have written this piece); the
household she serves. The three female types, the triple geography in which they are emplaced, and the compositional triptych work together to paint an all-encompassing portrait of (working-class) Womankind. While typification is inherent to the genre of Les types de Paris, and thereby excuses Maupassant’s generalization to a certain degree, beyond this particular work, the author’s refusal to ascribe proper nouns to many of his female characters has been described as a “means by which women are distanced and rendered other” (134). In Les types de Paris the paysanne, the nourrice and the bobonne are also refused names, not only generalizing (in as much as the genre might allow), but depersonalizing and objectifying as well.

Maupassant, then, presents us with two classically contradictory ways to read his female characters, exactly while suggesting that all women must fit into one or other category — or sometimes both. This dyadic juxtaposition opposes her location in some antediluvian past (she is a beast of burden, fated to endure what Maupassant elsewhere calls “l’odieux supplice de la maternité” (“L’inutile beauté” 1207) to her positioning as ever-contemporary author might well have chosen the expression because of its presence in the air du temps.

58 Charles Stivale discusses Maupassant’s manipulation of onomastic elements in The Art of Rupture 134–137.

59 Lorraine Gaudefroy-Demombynes argues that, for Maupassant, “la maternité est une leurre et une faillite” (La femme 93). Indeed, a glance at 1890’s “L’inutile beauté,” in which a comte condemns his wife to a life of constant pregnancy in order to
an agent of modernity, as an accumulating and desiring machine caught up in the opportunities for socioeconomic mobility in modern consumerism. This bi-fold vision of women unfolds across the three segments of the text: in the first, rural section, woman is a hefty paysanne, barely a step removed from the cattle she tends. The second section, in the parks of the Champs Élysées, sees a kind of beast-in-finery, the dressed-up nursemaid set against a backdrop of modernity-in-action: vehicles, dresses, hats. In the third, set in the marketplace, the bobonne’s social aspirations are illustrated through her desire for things, while her attractive appearance to the quartier’s many wandering eyes make her a commodity herself.

Somewhat curiously for a book entitled Les types de Paris, Maupassant’s first section opens not in Paris but in the meadows of Normandy. Yet when we reach the second volet of his triptych, and see that it begins with a sentence almost mirroring the incipit of the first (“Le premier soleil printanier tombe tiède, vif et clair sur les grandes prairies normandes / Le premier soleil printanier tombe tiède, vif et clair sur les arbres des Champs-Elysées”) we realize that this text is echoing the mobility of modernity: the prairies are connected to the grandest street in Paris via commodity fetishism and the Champs-Elysées is but a man-made echo of a rural nature its trees and parks aim to replicate.

The narrative immediately connects the female peasant to her bovine companion: negate her attractiveness and make her ugly to other men, certainly suggests that the author saw motherhood this way.
“Elles vont, la fille devant, la bête derrière, la fille traînant, la bête trainée, l’une pressée et l’autre lente, n’ayant l’une et l’autre au fond des yeux que les reflets verts des arbres et des herbes. A quoi pensent-elles?” (34) Initially opposed to one another, “devant” and “derrière,” “traînant” and “trainée,” they soon become transposed in the author’s vision, their eyes reflecting nothing but the nature around them. What are they thinking about, asks Maupassant, as if the answer could be the same for both. As for the peasant girl, her dream is “animal et court,” she has a “pauvre coeur de brute,” and “couche sur la paille d’un grenier” (34).

And just as it is the cow’s vocation to both reproduce and produce milk, so, by extension, is it this young girl’s. In the author’s imagination, her dream can only be to “parer” her body “pour plaire au charretier qui laboure” (34) or “d’être parée, par les belles matinées des dimanches, pour passer devant les garçons, en entrant à l’église” (35). Given her association with the landscape in which she is set, of which she is the personification, Maupassant seems to suggest that even the peasant girl’s only desire is fuelled by an animalistic, unthinking purpose: to procreate, to provide more laboring hands for the land. Nature, to Maupassant, “nous ramène sans cesse à l’animal” (“L’inutile beauté” 1216). Indeed, this unschooled, placid paysanne is framed by a rich, fertile, rural landscape that seems to condemn her to what Micheline Coursdon Besnard terms woman’s “vocation bestiale” (68). “La terre sue de la verdure, s’en couvre comme d’une bave verte,” writes Maupassant (33–34), stressing the overwhelming fecundity of the earth. The sweat, the saliva, the “lourdes vaches dont les mamelles pendent ballottées entre leurs cuisses” — all these aspects of the landscape speak to the natural
secretions of a female body doomed to what Roger de Salins (in “L’inutile Beauté”) calls “se reproduire salement” (1216). “Qu’y a-t-il,” he asks, “de plus répugnant cet acte ordurier et ridicule de la reproduction des êtres?” (1216).

However, Maupassant’s anti-natalist stance was far from altruistic. The author, unlike many of his contemporaries (the later Zola, for example), saw the reproductive body not as something to be celebrated in its fecundity and regenerative possibility, but rather, as Claudine Giachetti points out in “La ‘Bosse du flanc: Maupassant et l’obstétrique,” as distasteful, even abject. A pregnant body was a less available body, one focused on something other than pleasure. Like Paul in “Mont-Oriol,” Maupassant is “de la race des amants, et non point de la race des pères” (612) — the gestating female body, then, comes to represent in all its overwhelming fullness not only the privation of pleasure, but the antithesis of a man’s freedom and leisure.

It is unsurprising, then, that the nursemaids portrayed in the second volet of Maupassant’s triptych are once again associated, via both the extended metaphor and the chiastic structure of the piece as a whole, with the animal. In Paris, however, it's not the cows who have the overflowing, pendant mammaries, but these nourrices, who “vont deux par deux, un enfant aux bras, d’un pas lourd de bêtes laitières” (36). The “lourdes

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60 Examples abound in Maupassant’s fiction: the repellant body of Christiane in “Mont-Oriol,” the pregnant prostitute in “Nuit de Noël” or the paysanne in “La Martine.” For a detailed psychoanalytic study of the anxieties produced in Maupassant by the pregnant female body, see Giacchetti.
vaches dont les mamelles pendent ballottées entre leurs cuisses” have given way to the “molles et grandes mamelles” of “les grosses femmes pleines de lait” (36).

Not only are these women likened to cattle — “elles vont deux par deux” (36) — but they infuse the urban setting with fragments of rural existence. They may well be dressed up in urban finery, but they are “presque indifférentes aux rubans de soie rouges, bleus ou roses si larges, si longs, qui trainent dans leur dos, presque indifférentes au beau bonnet, léger comme une crème sur leur tête, presque indifférentes à toute cette élégance dont les mères les ont parées” (36). They exist in a kind of entre-deux, where despite their urban location and the extravagance of their accessories, their dreams are of “des prés, sans autres idées et sans autres désirs que ceux du pays délaissé” (36). They speak with “des patois champêtres qui font rêver aux pesantes vaches brunes couchées dans les herbages” (36); and as they nurse the children in their care “le passant qui se promène croit sentir passer dans le vent une bizarre odeur de bêtes, d’étable humaine et de laitages fermentés” (36).

We could argue that in his depiction of nursing servants, Maupassant parodies one of the most natural connections in the world, that between mother and child, and twists it into a denaturalized grotesque display of bodily emanation and the workings of capital, revealing precisely what he sees as the unnatural burden that childbearing places on women.  

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61 Maupassant performs another perversion of this connection between mother and child in “L’Idylle.” In this conte, a young Italian and woman, hitherto unknown to one another, meet in a train carriage en route to France to find work. She already has a
animal feeds her young; in this case, the young belong to “pauvres petites mères maigres et pâles qui habitent ces riches hôtels le long de la vaste avenue” (36). Here, then, in the simulacrum of nature that is the urban park, the nursemaids are essentially commodities, replacement mothers picked off a production line. They are only not where they want to be — le pays — because their milk is a consumer good, sold to the highest bidder; their bodies are their means of survival. They are beasts sold to the urban market, animals in fine attire, the “flot blanc qui gonfle leurs poitrines” countering and paralleling the “flot noir, continu, roulant, de fiacres, de landaus, de victorias, et de chapeaux clairs, et d’ombrelles, et de livrées aux boutons brillants” in the nearby Bois de Boulogne.

Not that these nursemaids are completely immune to appetite: if we look again at the description of their finery, we see that they are “presque indifférentes aux rubans de soie rouges, bleus ou roses si larges, si longs, qui trainent dans leur dos, presque indifférentes au beau bonnet, léger comme une crème sur leur tête, presque indifférentes à toute cette élégance dont les mères les ont — almost, but not quite. In a way, the adjectival repetition in Maupassant’s curious text also functions as a commentary on the position as a nursemaid in Marseille, but the long journey away from her own children has made her breasts uncomfortably full of milk. He has not eaten in days and offers to “soulager” the young woman, then proceeds to nurse from her breasts. Once again, Maupassant seems to be suggesting that the aspects of human life we deem most “natural” (hunger, motherhood, etc.) in fact tie us to our animality and indenture us.
contagion of desire\(^{62}\) (for commodities, for money, for an *elsewhere*), an example of commodity culture’s far-reaching arm.

If we return to the initial scene, we see that neither the landscape nor the *paysanne* is untouched by material desire, by the incursion of the commodity: “dans son rêve animal et court,” writes Maupassant, “passe la boutique ambulante du marchand de rubans, de bonnets et de fichus, qui rôde sur les routes en tentant les paysannes” (34–35). Maupassant presents this as a geographic phenomenon, as the seller of such commodities crosses the threshold from urban to rural space. The mobile nature of the boutique is vital: the peddler wanders the roads by the fields, sowing the seeds of desire for commodities as he prowls. He brings with him ideas from Paris, notions of finery and a coming together of sexual and material desire. The image of this predatory haberdasher roaming the country lanes in search of impressionable young women whose dreams do not extend beyond “l’envie d’être parée, par les belles matinées des dimanches, pour passer devant les garçons, en entrant à l’église” cannot but remind us of Emma Bovary and the longing for love and material commodities sparked by novels and fashion magazines. In the mid-1850’s, however, Paris fashions had reached only as far as the new bourgeois classes; in the 1880’s, however, the contagion of female ruse and coquetry seeped as far as the fields, as the desire for accessories — the least practical, the most

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\(^{62}\) Maupassant’s disdain for the increasingly capitalist nature of 19th-century society has been well documented in Gérard Delaisement, *La Modernité de Maupassant* (29–44)
unnecessary of commodities — reached even the least cultivated of paysannes.\textsuperscript{63}

The third section of Maupassant’s article features another replacement mother figure, the Parisian bobonne, or nursery maid. In comparison to the sedentary, bovine nursemaids, the bobonne is defined by motion and by action: “Rue Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, la bobonne trotte. Elle est à tout faire et fait tout dans la maison…” (38). While Maupassant’s servant and peasant women here are subject to desire for what they don’t have — often, as his title suggests, in the form of accessories or ephemeral consumer goods — he here constructs the working-class bobonne, “la gorge bien serrée dans le corsage, accrochant l’œil des passants,” as an object of desire, as an accessory herself. Her activities, beside cleaning, bed-making, shoe-shining, child-washing, and obsessing over the cost of the groceries she must buy for the household, including seeing to the sexual pleasures of her wards’ father — she “en sait long sur les moeurs de monsieur, car elle fait tout, la bobonne” (38).

However, unlike the paysanne or the nourrice, this thoroughly urban servant is

\textsuperscript{63} In 1901’s \textit{Le XIXe siècle vécu par deux français}, Eugène and Louis Mouton suggest that “Fashion… is a witness, but a witness to the history of the great world only, for in every country… the poor people have fashions as little as they have a history, and their ideas, their tastes, even their lives barely change. Without doubt… public life is beginning to penetrate the poorer households, but it will take time” (qtd. in Benjamin, \textit{Arcades} 71).
most overwhelmingly defined by her desire for social mobility. While the paysanne desires accessories in order to impress men, the bobonne desires a man to help her gain access to a certain power, to become one of the “puissances” represented by madame Dubuisson, a cook. “Il est très bien, le cocher de M. Dubuisson,” she thinks of the married coachman. “Plus tard aspire à devenir à son tour une madame Dubuisson,” continues Maupassant, “à porter, majesteuse, un grand panier plein de bonnes choses qui coûtent très cher, en promenant par les rues un gros ventre qui semble très lourd” (40).

The man is almost irrelevant, an afterthought; in the world of the domestic marketplace, it is the women whose display of social status most impresses the bobonne. The patronage of these “princesses, ces maréchales du fourneau” is solicited by the market’s sellers; they are respected and feared; they “ont dans l’oeil et dans la voix un dédain de souveraines en répondant au bonjour des humbles bobonnes, ces souillons, ce déchet des gens de maison” (40). Their wages are the talk of the quartier: “On devine, on suppose, on commente ce qu’elles gagnent, les gages et la gratte” (40). In the geography of the marketplace, the bobonne’s dream of upward mobility manifests itself not in education, equal rights, or luxury, but in an improved status and the image of a full belly that proves she enjoys the expensive foodstuffs she buys — in consumption itself.

In this chapter, we have seen how discourse on the female either safely located her a few steps backwards in the evolutionary chain, akin to an animal, or as the agent of a much-maligned modernity in which money and the commodities they could buy replaced any kind of authenticity. The specter of female desire, untrammelled or unfulfilled, haunted the masculine imaginary in the form of the voracious consumer of
goods and of men. Enabled by changes to the law, she threatened male authority both in the home and, more distantly, in the public sphere. *Les types de Paris*, like so much of the literature of its time, attempts to define and confine these females, to make individual women into “womankind.” In so doing, it tries to create a discursive truth that can be used as the basis for further exclusion and greater differentiation between the sexes at a time when legal and social changes, as well as an increasingly disempowered male population, are eroding the differences bit by bit.

In the next chapter, we move from “womenkind” to “foreignkind” as we look at Antonin Proust’s essay, “Les étrangers à Paris,” and the illustrations Raffaëlli chose to accompany it. While Proust’s article meanders around a generalized xenophobia that seems rooted in an anxiety the purity of the French race in the face of massive immigration, Raffaëlli’s images expose and exhibit the triply Other bodies — they are female, foreign, and black — of Hottentotes at the *Jardin d’acclimatation*. I question the discourse on foreignness produced by the combination of text and image, which seems to suggest that any foreigner, no matter their provenance, no matter the color of their skin, can and should be cast simultaneously as inferior and a threat.
CHAPTER TWO: THE SPECTACLE OF SCIENCE — THE FOREIGNER IN FRANCE

In the last chapter, I suggested that the combination of Fourcaud and Maupassant’s texts and Raffaëlli’s illustration, when taken in the context of a crisis of masculinity and a burgeoning feminist movement, create an overarching vision of “womankind” as inhuman, either in terms of their animality or their vicious, capricious consumerist modernity. Just as it presents us with two iterations of femaleness, but nevertheless manages to safely taxonomize both, Les types de Paris also constructs two different foreign types: the Caucasian-European and the Hottentote. These come together in Antonin Proust’s Paris et les étrangers, but in a very disconnected and disconcerting way. Proust’s article wanders through various iterations of European foreignness, highlighting the untrustworthiness and general gaucherie present in them all. It also condemns Parisians for the rastquôéerisme, or obsessive admiration for things foreign. However, it is when this essay is placed next to Raffaëlli’s illustrations of

64 There are other examples of foreigners in Paris in Les types de Paris: Belgian and Italian workers in Ajalbert’s “Les Terrassiers,” for example, and the English cocher in Mirbeau’s “Cocher de maître.” However, because I wanted to focus on the incongruous pairing of text and image in “Paris et les étrangers,” these have, regrettably, been left to one side.
Hottentot women at the *Jardin d’acclimatation* that it becomes interesting from the point of view of taxonomization.

As visual corollaries to Proust’s article, and representatives of the “étrangers” in its title, Raffaëlli’s illustrations of “Hottentot” women on display are incongruous and

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65 In the late 19th century, the term “Hottentot” was something of a misnomer. Secretary-General of the Société d’Anthropologie, Paul Topinard, admits as much in a lecture he gave at the Jardin d’Acclimatation on 31 July 1888: “Je viens de conclure… que les indigènes que vous avez sous vos yeux et qui, sous le nom de Hottentots, viennent du pays des diamants dans le Griqualand, ne présentent aucune homogénéité et ont tous les traits des races croisées ou mélangées. J’en déduis, à en juger par eux, ce que beaucoup ont déjà professé et moi entre autres, qu’il n’y a pas de type hottentot réel, donc pas de race hottentote” (194). For his part, J. Deniker explains: “Quand nous disons de vrais “Hottentots”, c’est une façon de parler. Pour nous, comme pour beaucoup d’autres anthropologistes, le mot Hottentot n’est qu’une expression ethnique et désigne une peuplade, une nation formée de métis, à divers degrés, de Betchouana et d’autres peuples Nègre-Bantou, de même que de Boers-Hollandais, avec les Bochimans, habitants primitifs de toute la partie de l’Afrique qui s’étend au sud du 15e degré de latitude S” (3–4). In other words, it was a useful signifier that could bring together a variety of differences and make them the same I use the term here because of the cultural and historical weight it carried for the average citizen in 1889.
ill-fitting, unless we are to believe that any and all foreign intrusions on French national soil must be documented in the category of “foreign.” The combination of Raffaëlli’s illustrations of human exhibits and Proust’s exposition of the foreign population of Paris creates a sort of feedback loop whereby all foreigners are equally subjected to the Parisian gaze, are marked as “not like us.” By including and exposing any foreigner as a “type de Paris,” Proust and Raffaëlli create a “visual-verbal ensemble” that both recognizes the allure of the foreign body and simultaneously attempts to demystify and contain it.

**Foreigners in France**

Nul pays, en Europe, ne se trouve dans une situation semblable; nulle part ailleurs il n’y a pareille affluence d’étrangers. — Gustave Marchal

When Gustave Marchal penned "L’invasion pacifique de la France par les étrangers" for the *Revue d'histoire contemporaine* in 1890, France was experiencing both a decline in its own native population and an increase in the number of foreigners choosing to make their homes on French soil. Marchal's sense of an "invasion," though hyperbolic, is not entirely unsupported by statistical evidence. While the percentage of foreigners in the country might not seem to have grown all that significantly (from 2.65% in 1881 to 2.95% in 1891), as we saw in the previous chapter, the national birthrate declined by 11% in that same decade, and this at a time when births in England and Germany were flourishing.

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66 Proust’s commentary on non-European foreigners is limited to one line of a five-page article.
At the same time, 1889 had seen French citizenship based on blood, or *jus sanguinus*, give way to *jus soli*, or citizenship based on place of birth and residence, by means of a nationalization law that extended French citizenship to second-generation immigrants.67 Indeed, much as they had been trying to instill a sense of national belonging and patriotism in the country’s rural peasantry since the defeat of 1870,68 republicans were now also working to integrate foreigners born and raised on French soil into the Republic. The republicans extended French citizenship to this select class of immigrants because they (perhaps optimistically) believed them to bear a love of their adoptive nation — one that had been cultivated through the newly compulsory experiences of republican primary education and universal military service. In fact, that same military service was one of the reasons Mikaël Vaillant proposes for the law’s

67 The extension of nationality to this particular subset was accompanied by the establishment of another condition, this one prejudicing resident aliens. Second-generation immigrants born and raised on French soil would henceforth be considered French, but resident aliens, even those actively seeking naturalization but born on foreign or colonized soil, now enjoyed fewer legal rights than they had since the Revolution. This latter category had to wait twenty years — ten to become naturalized and another ten to be granted citizenship — before they could enjoy the full benefits of being French. Patrick Weil describes this process as “un double mouvement de nationalisation et de déclassement des étrangers”

existence: it “touche non seulement aux droits, mais aux devoirs — service militaire, impôt, solidarité nationale — attachés à la condition de citoyen français” (Race et culture 279). The precise reasons behind the extension of citizenship to second-generation immigrants may be unclear, but most scholars agree that the following factors played a significant role: the combination of a rapidly declining population (especially when compared to Germany’s rapidly expanding one) and the need to increase available manpower in the occurrence of a war (therefore hopefully avoiding another humiliating national defeat). Rogers Brubaker, however, argues convincingly for political rather than the military/demographic reasons behind the law’s adoption: it was hoped that it would put an end to both the unjust discrepancy that allowed foreign residents to remain safe in France while Frenchmen fulfilled their lengthy military service and to the development of ethnic enclaves, of potentially troublesome or subversive “different nations within the French nation” (Brubaker 86)

The latter concern was not, it seems, the exclusive paranoia of the government: for his part, Marchal claims that “en temps de guerre la présence sur certains points de territoire de groupes nombreux d’étrangers turbulents, et dont la turbulence serait encore augmentée par le ralentissement qui se produirait nécessairement alors dans les travaux qui les font vivre, pourrait constituait un réel danger” (597). In an article published in the same year as Marchal’s, demographic expert Gustave Lagneau warned explicitly that the presence of so many foreign immigrants on French soil did not bode well for the nation’s decreasing population: “N’oublions pas qu’il y a quinze cent ans, l’empire romain, en partie dépeuplé, quoique très civilisé, fut impuissant à résister aux invasions de nombreux
immigrants, qui le démembrèrent et l’anéanti rent” (qtd in Cambor 115) 1889 law was designed to increase a sense of “Frenchness” in these new citizens, thereby reducing the possibility that they might side with the enemy in the occurrence of war. Marchal’s article might be entitled “L’invasion pacifique de la France par les étrangers,” but the threat of a non-peaceful invasion and the specter of another German attack were very much part of the national conscious, as the rise to power of the warmongering General Boulanger attests.  

Marchal was writing at a time of national economic depression, when the French

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69 See also Louis Bertand’s 1907 novel L’invasion, which deals with immigrant life in Marseilles. Kathleen Cambor argues that Bertrand’s view of the Italians as colonizers of the French Mediterranean coast “has to do not with any fundamental change in attitude about the immigrants themselves but rather with Bertrand’s own mistrust of the ability of French national identity to remain intact, particularly on a coastal frontier overrun with foreign elements” (108). I would posit that French attitudes in Paris (as exemplified by Marchal and Proust) also belie a fear of an increasingly fractured Frenchness, and that the cosmopolitan city can also be viewed as a frontier overrun with foreign elements.

70 Boulanger’s rapid ascension to power was partly due to his promise to avenge France for the humiliation of defeat in 1870. He became the figurehead for a kind of early national socialism that had found its figurehead that would soon erupt in the virulent anti-Semitism of the Dreyfus affair. His role in the chaotic politics of the 1880s is discussed in Chapter III.
witnessed cheap Belgian, Italian, Luxemburger and Spanish labor spill over their borders; his concern is with the threat of foreign workers taking French working-class jobs. It was not entirely unfounded: Europeans emigrated to many of France’s rapidly industrializing cities, but Paris was where most foreigners came to find work. A report\textsuperscript{71} sent to the \textit{Exposition universelle}, the \textit{Service statistique municipale de la ville de Paris} claimed that “[a]ucune ville européenne ne contient une aussi forte proportion d’étrangers que Paris” (20), and stated that there were eight foreigners for every hundred Parisians in 1889, and nine for every hundred residents of the \textit{département} of the Seine. The report puts it very clearly indeed: “Paris est véritablement colonisé par les étrangers” (22). Marchal’s resentment was shared by the domestic workers themselves: the decade saw the rise of a working-class “haine de l’étranger” that would not be paralleled until the Second World War (Noiriel 247). This hatred fuelled working-class support of General Boulanger in the January 1889 elections, and would play no small role in the popular condemnation of the Jewish captain, Alfred Dreyfus, who was falsely convicted of selling national secrets to a German military attaché in 1894.\textsuperscript{72}

\textsuperscript{71} Cartogrammes et diagrammes relatifs à la population parisienne et à la fréquence des principales maladies à Paris pendant la période 1865-1887: envoyés à l'Exposition universelle de 1889 par le service de statistique municipale de la ville de Paris.

\textsuperscript{72} Anti-Semitism was certainly not restricted to the proletariat, as the popularity of Edouard Drumont’s reprehensible tract, 1886’s \textit{La France juive}, will attest. In fact several of the contributors to \textit{Les types}, including Daudet and Goncourt, were quite
Foreigners in general became an easy target for French polemicists concerned about the downfall of France. Marchal’s article is a case in point: “Ces sans-familles” he writes of the foreign workers in France, were a “cause de corruption, de perversion de moeurs. Sur ce point l’importance est grande, je me bornerai à rappeler qu’on doit mettre à l’actif de ces nomades la naissance d’un nombre relativement élevé d’enfants naturels dont l’entretien retombe à la charge de la société française” (596). Europe’s foreigners did more than corrupt the French (particularly French women) however: the products of their corruption — bastard children — cost the state money that would be better spent elsewhere. Indeed, while Marchal concedes that the only thing to do is to assimilate these children and hopefully yoke them to the republican idea of nation, he clearly believes that such children represent a second-class kind of Frenchness.

Foreigners were not only responsible for unwanted children and concomitant expenses, however; their particular kind of criminality also cost the state money in the form of legal fees and incarceration costs. Marchal argues that foreigners were frequently criminals, an assertion that would seem to be supported by the statistics of Henri Joly, who, in the second chapter of his 1889 geography of French criminality, La France criminelle, suggests that one third of those arrested in the Seine were not born there (44). Virulent in their anti-Semitism (see Rosny details some of their diatribes in Torches et Lumignons). There has been a wealth of research around the Dreyfus affair, amongst which I will signal Ruth Harris’ recent Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century; Louis Begley’s Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters and Michael Burns’ France and the Dreyfus Affair.
Even though the Italians were denigrated for their criminal tendencies, second-generation Italian residents of the *hexagone* and even assimilable Italian residents of Algeria, along with the Spanish and the Maltese, still benefitted from the new legal reforms. “Inassimilable” populations, however, — Algerian Muslims, West Africans — did not. In fact, both Rogers Brubaker and Mikaël Vaillant see 1889 as heralding the inscription of a racial and biological understanding of Frenchness that stretched across party political lines (Vaillant 280).

**The Dissembling Foreigner in *Les types de Paris***

While Marchal was fretting about the *affluence* of foreigners in both the country and its capital, Antonin Proust was even more concerned about their *influence*. Proust was a staunch nationalist and a republican député, for whom a love of France seems to have necessitated a particularly jingoistic dislike of other European nations. His contribution to *Les types de Paris*, “Paris et les étrangers,” is a meandering commentary

73 “Although Belgians comprised the largest group of foreigners throughout the nineteenth century,” argues Rogers Brubaker, “concern focused on Italian immigrants, perceived as a more solidary—and culturally foreign—community” (*Citizenship and Nationhood* 105).

74 His presence on the roster of otherwise illustrious or at least literary names in *Les types de Paris* is striking, but if we consider that he was the commissioner of the exhibition of French art at the *Exposition*, and that Raffaëlli had five paintings in that exhibition, perhaps it makes a little more sense.
on both the Parisian penchant for anything foreign and the untrustworthiness of the foreigners of Paris. Proust seems to find unreadability to be the most unsettling characteristic of the foreigner: he does not adhere to the city’s legible social and cultural codes and is therefore difficult to predict; hence, perhaps, the need to categorize him as “foreign.” For the author, it is Paris itself, city of spectacle, that allows such posturing: “Il n’est pas jusqu’à l’incognito que l’on ne s’y crée plus aisément qu’en aucun lieu du monde.” His assertion is seconded by Joly: “Paris est le centre par excellence où tout afflue, où tout s’élabora et quelquefois se transforme, où tout transite pour être réexpédié” (47).

For both Daudet and Proust, it seems that space — in the form of distance travelled from “home” — enables inauthenticity, facilitates dissimulation. And for such traveling to take place on this scale is a phenomenon of late 19th-century modernity.

The issue of authenticity haunts Proust’s text, even when he is not necessarily discussing foreigners. For instance, while he regrets that the writers and artists of yesteryear are now reporters and journalists, he seems to feel that these latter forms are less authentic and therefore more treacherous than their earlier counterparts. “On a des moustiquaires contre les moustiques. Rien ne garantit contre le reporter qui interprète même le silence et qui, au besoin, use de la seconde vue. Quant aux reproductions instantanées, Armand Silvestre a conté des anecdotes qui montrent que la chimie peut préparer tous les papiers et saisir ainsi jusqu’aux traits les plus intimes des personnes illustres” (43). The foreign body becomes a receptacle for Proust’s fears about authenticity and deception in general.
To demonstrate just how easily an ill-intentioned foreigner can hide in the big city, Proust refers to the figure of Henri Pranzini, the notorious conman whose “inquiétante étrangeté” (Chauvaud: 227) would have been very familiar to the contemporary reader. He was, as the *New York Times* put it on the occasion of his execution, a “master of disguise.” According to the *Grand Dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle*, Henri Pranzini was “né en Égypte de parents italiens” (1735); it was this hybrid (but somewhat Italian, and thoroughly foreign) provenance, twinned with what his biographer, André Pascal, calls his “physionomie épaisse et impassible” (41) that enabled him to carry his ruses as far as he did, almost getting away with murder.

Interestingly enough, it was Pranzini’s foreignness, his inability to grasp the nuances of Parisian life, that ultimately got the better of him. He was betrayed by the *particule*: the letter he left at the scene of the crime referred to a “madame Montille,” and he was the only one of the

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Pranzini gained notoriety for the particularly violent triple murder of the *demie mondaine* madame de Montille, her maid, and the maid’s daughter on March 17, 1887. The case involved a letter written by Pranzini and signed Gustav Geissler, a packet sent to a Dr. Pranzini in Marseilles from a Dr. Foster in Paris, and a bag of jewels jettisoned into a lake. Upon his arrest — which occurred, appropriately enough, in a theater — it was discovered that despite his long-standing affair with Marie Regnault/madame de Montille, he was engaged to be married to an American woman under the name “Dr. Foster.”
demi-mondaine’s circle who ever dropped the “de” (“Execution of Pranzini”). The extent of his duplicity, his unreadability, shocked the capital, and provoked a series of attempts to decipher and thus re-establish the boundaries of the criminal.

Proust’s use of Pranzini so early in his text seems to serve a dual purpose: firstly to highlight the degree to which appearances could be deceptive in Paris — and the inherent danger of such facility — and to set up his diatribe against his fellow citizens’ weakness for anything foreign, a xenophilia that he sees as damaging national confidence and pride and that he terms “rastaquouerisme”:

Contemporaries tried to explain his behavior through his appearance “il avait des dehors de rastaquouère” (Pascal: 232-233), but of course his suddenly obvious foreignness was only recognized after the fact, in attempt to make sense of the crime.

In *Les criminels: caractères physiques et psychologiques* (1889), Dr. Armand Corre performs one such attempt, describing les malfaiteurs:

ils aiment à paraître, à appeler sur eux l’attention; mais ils ont une coquetterie de surface; ils sont généralement malpropre, même sous les vêtements du mondain (Pranzini) et, presque toujours, quand ils peuvent satisfaire leurs goûts de fashion, ils recherchent, dans le costume, le bizarre et le voyant, font étalage de couleurs disparates, de bijoux faux qui brillent beaucoup et trompent l’œil. On remarque les mêmes habitudes chez les prostituées. (227–228)

The conception of the foreigner as a rastaquouère was not an uncommon one, and in fact 1889 represented a significant peak in its usage, as we can see in Fig 1. The
laisser piper par l’étranger,” he writes, “cette tendance à croire qu’il n’y que les dentistes américaines, les masseurs hollandais et les clowns de Londres, est une faiblesse essentiellement parisienne” (44).

Foreign Pieces of Work

As commissaire of the world’s fair, Proust tried to counter what he perceived to be the rastaquouérisme of his contemporaries by promoting the French fine arts in a centennial retrospective. The occasion, he thought, was “splendide pour montrer aux étrangers tout ce qu’avait produit, en fait d’œuvres d’art, la génie français depuis un siècle” (Javel, “L’Exposition universelle” 2). Indeed, given that he was both commissaire and a republican député, there is a certain official, even propagandistic tenor to the opinions he puts forth in “Paris et les étrangers.”

word comes from the Spanish “rastracueros,” which meant both a despicable person and a fur/hide wholesaler. The Trésor de la langue française indicates that in French, the term initially designated a person of dubious South American or Mediterranean origin, poor taste, and ostentatious wealth “prob. dû au fait que beaucoup de Sud-américains à l’élégance tapageuse qui séjournaient à Paris à la fin du XIXe s. devaient leur fortune récente au commerce des cuirs et peaux” (“Rastaquouère”). Quickly, however, it came to mean any kind of despicable or suspicious-looking foreigner, and “rastaquouérisme” a kind of misguided, vulgar exoticism.
However, while his deep-rooted ethnic discrimination casts an unpleasant shadow on his celebration of French achievement, it is, for the most part sublimated into the fine arts. His is a rhetoric of victimization at the hands of a powerful enemy, in which French hoteliers and jewelers “s’y laiss[ent] prendre” and the work of the French *primitifs* has been “sacrific[é]” while Italian painters take over the Louvre and the “charlatanisme” of Greek Revival “ne s’est pas contenté de *semer* dans la Ville les monuments horribles, il a déteint sur toutes les manifestations de l’art.” While Proust may be writing about art, the rhetoric of weakness and occupation on the one hand and strength and virility on the other taps into the broader concerns about French masculinity discussed in Chapter One. Indeed, the fact that he *is* writing about art once again suggests anxiety about deceptive appearance, about an enemy that might be hiding in plain sight. That enemy may be anywhere, Proust seems to suggest, concealed in the finest artwork or most handsome conman. If there were any doubt, the warning with which he ends this section: “Prenons garde au japonisme, mes frères!” makes explicit the militant nature of his thinking. For Proust, as for Louis Bertrand after him, the cause of Parisian downfall is the populace’s lack of “le sens de l’ennemi” (11), the wariness of the stranger exemplified in the inhabitants of border zones.

Such borders are broached in Proust’s next passage, when he moves from disparaging foreign works of art (and vindicating French ones) to disparaging foreigners (and again, vindicating French ones).  

81 The facility with which the author glides from a discussion of the destructive power of foreign objets d’art to that of foreign people is in itself telling. The semantic
Le grand succès de l'Exposition universelle de 1867 a été dû aux exhibitions d'étrangères qui, sous leurs costumes nationaux, servaient aux Parisiens des consommations de provenance souvent parisienne comme la plupart d’entre elles. De ce jour il a été entendu que rien ne valait l’aguardiente espagnol, le raki grec et le café touc-touc. La grande mode a été pour tout bon citoyen de Paris, se piquant de quelque élégance, de se faire admettre dans ce que l’on appelle les colonies étrangères, et les Parisiennes ont eu fort à faire pour ramener les égarés.

Coming immediately after Proust’s reminder of foreign occupation and war, this section of his essay suggests that over-valuing the foreign leads to a loss of self on both a national and personal level. Once again, appearances are deceptive: most of the “étrangères” were in fact born in France, but because they were visibly “foreign,” placed in national garb and put on display, they became fetishized as exotic females.

Furthermore, Proust argues, the power of attraction to the racial Other has such force that “les Parisiennes” (by which he must mean white Parisian women) had to deploy a lot of effort to ensure their menfolk did not abscond. Here, the blame for the falling birthrate proximity of the body to the commodity connects them in the readers’ mind, suggesting not only that the French are equally as attracted to both manifestations of alterity but that by connecting them in his text, Proust is enacting an objectification of these doubly-Other étrangères, dehumanizing and commodifying foreigners in one fell swoop.
we discussed in Chapter One is placed squarely on the doubly Other body of the (falsely non-Parisian), non-Caucasian female. It doesn’t matter that these women are not really étrangères, then — as long as they appear to be, their seductive appeal remains the same. The women at the 1867 World’s Fair are empty signifiers; they point not to exotic temptresses but to Parisians of foreign appearance. Like Pranzini, whose “physionomie épaisse et impassible” enabled him to commit all manner of treachery, the blurred identities of these women make them impossible to read.

The ultimate blurred identity is, of course, that of the métisse, and the ultimate result of jus solis is miscegenation. We have already seen Marchal’s commentary on the bastard children of interethnic relations and their cost to the French state. For Proust, however, a proud nationalist and a staunch republican, what is of concern is less an economic cost than an ontological one: a threat to what it means to be French. His attempt here to reassert boundaries between the foreigner and the Frenchman belies a fear that the two are becoming indistinguishable. Once the foreigner has been assimilated, once the Other is one of us, once one cannot tell the difference between “us” and “them” — this is space of anxiety for Proust. “J’aime dans les étrangers comme dans mes compatriotes qu’ils restent eux-mêmes,” he writes. “Et je suis prêt à admirer ceux qui viennent enchâsser leurs mœurs dans le charme de la vie parisienne, lorsqu’ils conservent à ces mœurs le caractère qui leur est propre.”
Human, all too Human: The Spectacle of Science

As we have seen in Proust, one of the means by which a bourgeois Parisian could attempt to decode and then recode the foreign into something acceptable, something that respected imposed limits, was by representing it, by making the Other his own. Such taxonomic schema could include writing, drawing or photographing — indeed, a wealth of daily and weekly newspapers and journals made it easy for these representations to be disseminated, and to such a point that they became the truth of the foreign. It could also take the form of putting actual foreigners on display and then classifying them, representing them in numbers and figures. This was the case for the for the colonial natives in their villages at the Exposition universelle, who, while they were not caged and were able, to some extent, to freely interact with the French, were still being described and decoded, analyzed and reinscribed.82

Lynn E. Palermo points out in “Identities under Construction: Representing the Colonies at the Paris Exposition universelle of 1889” that by the year of the World’s Fair, France owned colonies whose surface area was ten times that of the metropole, making the country the second-most global colonial power after England (286). Representatives of these came to form the 400 colonial subjects put on display at the 1889 World’s Fair,

82 For studies of human zoos, and the display of humans at expositions in the 19th and 20th centuries in general, see Garrigues and the two volumes edited by Bancel and Blanchard.
displayed not only for the sake of edification or entertainment but also to visually represent French authority over its colonies and reestablish confidence in the nation’s military prowess — a confidence that, as we saw in the previous chapter, had been seriously lacking since the Franco-Prussian war. In an August 2000 article in *Le monde diplomatique*, Pascal Blanchard writes of the World’s Fair: “Qu’il soit peuple « étrange » venu de tous les coins du monde ou indigène de l’Empire, il constitue, pour la grande majorité des métropolitains, le premier contact avec l’altérité.” Whether this contact was made through the mediated physical space of the World’s Fair or the physical media space of the newspaper, it was carefully regulated so as to provide a certain idea of Otherness, against which the republican citizen could assert himself.83

Another place Proust and Raffaëlli’s contemporaries could experience Otherness was in the Jardin d’acclimatation. “Les étrangers que M. Hagenbeck de Hambourg envoie périodiquement au Jardin d’acclimatation sont bien plus attirants,” writes Proust, than the Pranzinis or false étrangères of the world, who hide or use their étrangété to dissemble and seduce. The foreigners sent to the Jardin d’Acclimatation are presumed without volition, without power; they can be measured and assessed and categorized. They are safe, or at least less threatening than foreign travelers and settlers who are free to move,

83 In *Spectacular Realities*, Vanessa Schwartz argues that exhibitions, like other forms of popular entertainment such as the wax museum, the panorama, and the morgue, allowed for a new kind of crowd – *le peuple* – to have access to culture, to have the right to look, often alongside the members of other, higher classes. The Third Republic made use of such forms of mass entertainment to educate its citizens, or direct their gaze.
interbreed, even become French. Proust’s use of the word “attirant” is telling, for it reveals the extent to which he believes the foreigner to exist as an object of desire, even while he is clear about his own repulsion. More attractive, then, are foreigners that really look foreign, who are clearly Other — and who, unlike the Parisiennes masquerading as exotic beauties at the World’s Fair — are geographically located not in a place of entertainment (the Exposition) but in one of science (the Jardin d’acclimatation). Unlike Pranzini, these foreigners bear no signs of Parisiennété, either visually (in terms of their race, their dress) or spatially (in terms of their location and their freedom to roam).

Emplaced amidst the exotic animals at the zoo, these foreigners in Paris — for Proust at least — perform a reassuring Otherness that reinforces western superiority while highlighting the need for and cultural value of the French colonial mission civilatrice.84

In Les types de Paris, Raffaëlli chooses to illustrate Proust’s article not with

84 Scholars often cite parliamentary disapproval of Jules Ferry’s expansionist agenda in 1885 as proof that the French people needed convincing of the value and integrity of colonialism; hence the notion of the mission civilatrice. However, in chapters three and four of An Empire for the Masses: The French Popular Image of Africa, 1870–1900, William H. Schneider suggests that a better idea of popular opinion on the matter might be garnered from mass-market newspapers such as the Petit Journal and the Petit Parisien which provided the populace with much of its news and information. For a look at the mission civilatrice as the triumph of the human (progress) over nature (backwardness) during a time period just after our own, see Alice L. Conklin, A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895–1930.
dressed up *Parisiennes*, or foreign artworks, or even rastaquouères, but with *Hottentot* women in the Jardin d’acclimatation. As the visual component of the Raffaëlli-Proust visual-verbal ensemble, then, Raffaëlli’s illustrations seem out of place. In this next section, I suggest that the juxtaposition of text and image both recognizes the allure of the foreign body and simultaneously attempts to demystify and contain it, as it works to include and define *any* foreigner as a “type de Paris.”

The effect is increased by another Raffaëlli sketch, “Un bouquet d’étrangères” (*Fig. 2.*), also presented as a corollary to Proust’s article. The bodies of five women in “national” garb, from a buttoned-up English governess to an African village girl, are gathered together to represent a generalized alterity. That these bodies are all female is no coincidence: Proust’s article may be entitled “Paris et les étrangers,” and the author may focus on the dangers of both male and female bodies, but for Raffaëlli, in whose illustrations female bodies outnumber their male counterparts by a ratio of 5:1, the power of the foreign body to simultaneously attract and repel is firmly located in the female. The title of his sketch alone — the *bouquet* of foreign women — suggests both the appeal of the foreign female body and the need to denaturalize and commodify it, to defuse its destructive power into an object cut off from nature, denied life.

Nowhere had that power been so evident than in Parisian reactions to the Saartjie Baartman, the original “Hottentot Venus” who had taken England and France by storm in the early 1800’s. However, popular interest in the racial other had not faded by the late 1880s, as we can see from a quick glance at the Ngram below; rather, it had been kindled

85 For a detailed study of the “Hottentot” see Fauvelle-Aymar, *L’invention*.  
112
by the exhibition of a troupe of Hottentots at the Folies-Bergère in 1887 and another at the Jardin d’Acclimatation in 1888, and by French colonial incursions into Africa. It would continue into the 20th Century too, with the arrival of Josephine Baker on the Parisian stage.

Furthermore, as we can tell from a quick glance at the Ngram below, which details reveals that while interest peaked in 1888, at the time of their display, it remained significant the following year.

Fig. 2 Frequency of the words “ståetopygie” and “hottentotes” in French literature digitized by Google and originally published between 1850 and 1900.

86 These justified by Jules Ferry’s claim that “les races supérieures ont un droit vis à vis des races inférieures… parce qu’il y a un devoir pour elles. Elles ont un devoir de civilizer les races inférieures” (Journal officiel 28 juillet 1885).

87 The Fall 2007/Spring 2008 special issue of The Scholar & Feminist Online is dedicated to studies of Josephine Baker.
Fig. 3. Rafaëlli, “Un bouquet d’étrangères” Les types de Paris 46
The N-gram also tells us something else about the Jardin’s exhibits: fascination with the hottentote is almost exactly mirrored by an interest in their steatopygia — the unusually-sized posterior the anthropologist Paul Topinard, who published an article entitled “La stéatopygie des Hottentotes au Jardin d’Acclimatation” in 1889, describes as an “étonnant caractère spécial à la race boshimane et à ses métis hottentotes” (195):

La stéatopygie se présente comme une exagération monstrueuse des fesses qui d’une part, sont plus massives, plus larges, et, qui de l’autre, semblent se redresser et pointer en haut; en réalité, elles offrent à leur partie supérieure, allant de la concavité des lombes au point culminant des fesses, un plan presque horizontal sur lequel tiendrait à l’aise, d’une façon très stable, un gros objet, par exemple un volume grand in-8° posé à plat.

Topinard’s description of the woman’s buttocks as a “monstrous” exaggeration dehumanizes her certainly, turns her into a freak, but he then goes a step further and turns her from an object of study into a object pur: a bookshelf. Esther, the woman — or at least Esther’s behind — becomes an item of furniture in the French anthropologist’s study, part of his collection, emblematic of his expertise. She also becomes an emblem of Raffaëlli’s talent, according to the critic Henry Laujol, who sees in his depiction of Esther the transformation of the profane into the sacred. In a Revue bleue review of Les types de Paris, Henry Laujol claims Raffaëlli, the painter of the poor and the monstrous, triumphs in his depiction of the Hottentot — indeed, his comment seems to suggest, he gives this monster, the supposed “missing link” between monkey and man, the status of the noble Aphrodite Kallipygos: “Ce peintre des petites gens et des monstres, he writes, “triomphe
dans l'effroyable Hottentote callipyge…” (639). By invoking the fear produced by the
“beautiful buttocks” (the beauty being an ironic epithet, as was “Vénus” for Saartjie
Baartman) Laujol’s comment gets to the heart of the abject relationship of the French to
the female Other called out by Rae Beth Gordon in her study of Darwin’s influence on
French fin-de-siècle culture (Dances 68). The horror of the buttocks, then, is
accompanied by a desire for the buttocks.

Of course, these women subjected to the anthropologist’s gaze were immediately
associated with Saartjie Baartman, the original “Vénus hottentote” that so intrigued
France and England in the first decades of the 19th century. Like her latter-day sisters,
Baartman was met with abjection, both greatly desired and feared for her ability to
enflame desire — and the object of this desire was, more often than not, her steatopygia.
In Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French,
T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting notes that Georges Cuvier’s postmortem of Saartjie
Bartmaan’s body is “tempered with eroticism,” (24) inflected with libidinal longing.
“Extrait d’observation faites sur le cadavre d’une femme connue à Paris et à Londres
sous le nom de Vénus Hottentote” certainly lingers longingly on Baartman’s individual
features: “Ses épaules, son dos, le haut de sa poitrine avoient de la grâce,” writes Cuvi
er.
“La saillie de son ventre n’était point excessives. Ses bras un peu grêles, étoient très-bien
faits, et sa main charmante. Son pied étoit aussi fort joli…” (263). As Sharpley-Whiting
points out, after his enflamed gaze has traveled the length of Bartmaan’s body, Cuvier
“violently readjusts his optic receiver and pen” (25). Disgusted by his own seduction, he
writes: “Ce que notre Boshimanne avait de plus rebutant, c’étoit la physionomie” (264).
Cuvier may have been attracted by her body and repelled by her face, but it was her buttocks that invoked a combination of desire and horror: “nullement musculeuse,” this “masse de consistances” is described as “élastique” and “tremblante” — “elle vibroit en quelque sorte à tous les mouvemens que faisoit cette femme” (265). A vibrant, quivering, threatening mass that Cuvier can only control by likening to the monstrous, to the animal: “Elles offrent une ressemblance frappante avec celles qui surviennent aux femelles des mandrills, des papions, etc., et qui prennent à certaines époques de leur vie un accroissement vraiment monstrueux” (265). Indeed, while Cuvier may not explicitly claim that the body of Saartjie Bartmaan represents the missing link in the great chain of being between monkey and man (Magubane 38), he certainly attempts to represent this object of his abject desire as such. Abjection, after all, lies the crossroads of phobia, obsession, and perversion (Kristeva 45).

The texts of Cuvier in the early half of the 19th century and of Topinard and his colleague, Joseph Deniker, near its end perform a textual exhibition of the Hottentot body that, because it analyses and hypothesizes, is perhaps more invasive than their physical display at the Jardin des Plantes or the Jardin d’Acclimatation. These anthropologists are

88 “Ses mouvemens avoient quelque chose de brusque et de capricieux qui rappeloit ceux du singe. Elle avoit surtout une manière de faire saillir ses lèvres tout-à-fait pareille à ce que nous avons observé dans l’orang-outang” (263). “Notre Boschimanne a le museau plus saillant encore que le nègre, la face plus élargie que le calmouque, et les os du nez plus plats que l’un et que l’autre. A ce dernier égard, surtout, je n’ai jamais vu de tête humaine plus semblable aux singes que la sienne” (265).
the operators of a representative machine that invents, produces and disseminates a radical, predetermined Other, and as such frames both the expectations and the reaction of Parisian visitors to the *Jardin*. While the Hottentots of the 1880’s are no longer presented as close cousins of the simian, they are portrayed to be monstrous, their bodies deformed, their minds backward. At the same time, the anthropologists make use of this Other to display their own scientific prowess and sexual and racial superiority. As Pascal Blanchard points out in *Exhibitions: L’invention du sauvage*:

> Lorsqu’elles sont montrées, les choses étranges ou nouvelles peuvent susciter à la fois de l’émotion, de l’admiration, de l’inquiétude ou du dégoût. Cette relation à l’exhibition comporte des degrés divers: l’artiste qui se met en scène pour valoriser ses prouesses; le corps qui s’exhíbe dans une perspective érotique, comme dans le cas de la danse; le vaincu ou l’exclu qui est montré pour symboliser la domination, la défaite ou un châtiment à venir. Lorsque cette exhibition devient l’expression d’une mise à distance de tout un peuple (ou d’une race “exotique”), le reflet d’une identité ou d’une difformité, voire la fusion des deux, alors commence le processus de construction d’une altérité

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89 Topinard’s 1887 article for *La Nature* explicitly states this: “En somme, si l’on balance le pour et le contre, on arrive à ceci: c’est que ces Boshimans n’ont nullement les traits d’infériorité physique qu’on leur attribue généralement. C’est une race spéciale, singulières, paradoxale, et voilà tout. Ils ont des traits contradictoires qui permettent de les considérer comme un passage des races nègres aux races jaunes…” (“Les Boshimans” 124).
Fig. 4. *Esther* (Deniker, “Les Hottentotes”) Fig. 5. *Maria* (Deniker, “Les Hottentotes”)

*Exhibiting* the female Other, whether textually or physically, becomes a way of framing her for consumption, thereby reducing the threat of her otherness.\(^9^0\) In the texts of

\(^{90}\) Consider, here, the influence of Cesare Lombroso’s criminal anthropology in the construction and containment of a dangerous female Other. For Gilman (1988), this
Topinard and Deniker, published some fifty years after that of Cuvier, the addition of photographs provides an extra framing device, the photographs combining with the “scientific” discourse to produce another kind of visual-verbal ensemble, one to mirror that of Raffaëlli and Proust. The originals of these photographs, from the collection of amateur anthropologist Prince Roland Bonaparte, were themselves displayed at the 1889 World’s Fair, under the title “Hottentots. Types ethniques.” As such, they formed an exhibition of an exhibition within an exhibition, creating a narrative of representation in which the exceptional character of the foreign body becomes saturated with signification; enveloped in and opposed to a discourse of physical “normality” that denotes the (physical, mental, racial) superiority of the occidental spectators.

91 Prince Ronald Bonaparte’s photographs were taken at a place of public exhibition (the Folies-Bergère), and then displayed as a discrete exhibition of photography within the broader exhibition of the Exposition universelle.
Fig. 6. “Profils superposés de la saillie de femmes hottentotes / de la même saillie chez les Bochimans et les Achantis” (Deniker, “Les Hottentotes”)

The third page of Deniker’s article features a reproduction of one of Bonaparte’s photographs. It is of Esther, a profile shot portraying the full extent of her steatopygia. A
second photograph, a full-body shot of Maria, illustrates “l’aspect ridé de la peau, sa
duréité et son élasticité sous pression” (15). Finally, a comparative visualization (created,
no less, from the photographs of Bonaparte — armchair anthropology at its finest)
quantifies and relativizes the steatopygic *hottentote* body, gaining mastery over the
mounds of quivering flesh with hard science. Although the height, weight, head size,
cranial index, physiognomy, trunk, breasts and nipples of the Hottentot men and women
all are measured, calculated and compared over the course of the first two thirds of
Deniker’s “Les Hottentots au Jardin d’Acclimatation,” it is only the steatopygia of the
women that is represented visually, as if to reinforce its monstrous nature, to reduce these
people to a single body part.

Topinard’s article reproduces just one photograph, a rear view of Lisbeth that
denies her a face, or any existence beyond her “polysarcie monstrueuse” (5). 92

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92 Exactly half of Bonaparte’s collection of Hottentot photographs were of men;
not one of these images, either profile or full-body shot, was chosen by either
anthropologist.
Fig. 7. Topinard, “Lisbeth” (“La stéatopygie”)
Fig. 8. Raffaëlli, “Mistress Robert Daxon née Elisabeth Mirtrel” (*Les Types* 42)
Unlike Bonaparte’s “scientific” images, whose depictions of naked bodies in identical poses against a neutral background fulfilled the criteria for anthropological photography expounded by his mentor Paul Broca, Raffaëlli’s depiction of Lisbeth “contextualizes” her by placing her next to the hut she “lived” in as part of the ethnographic display. She is shown once again in profile, to better highlight the steatopygia and pendulous breasts that dehumanize her and set her apart from her Parisian spectators. This mise à distance is replicated page’s layout: while most of the illustrative artwork in Les types de Paris fades amorphously around the text, the drawing of Lisbeth is set apart from it, provided with a decorative frame as if to confine her radically Other, black, female, colossal body. Her difference is framed and put on display as that of a type, and that reduction to type (see the caption, “Mistress Robert Daxon née Elisabeth Mirtrel, hottentote”) diffuses its threat, while her status as work of art permits an otherwise unmentionable desire.

Still more unmentionable is the desire for what is noticeably hidden in Raffaëlli’s sketch: the Hottentot genitals. Indeed, Sander Gilman notes that while “female sexuality is linked to the image of the buttocks, and the quintessential buttocks are those of the hottentot,” the buttocks were also a displacement for an intense fascination with female genitalia (210). Oversized buttocks may have been the most visible and socially acceptable object of fascination for the French and English visitors that flocked to see Baartman and her late-century counterparts on display, and the most accessible to the scientists who looked to their bodies for some kind of truth about their own superiority,

93 Hence, perhaps, the invention of the bustle in 1869.
but this obsession often, in fact, stood in for a desire for their elongated labia, or *tabliers*.

The Hottentot women refused to allow French anthropologists to examine their genitalia and wore loincloths to protect their own modesty. By depicting Lisbeth wearing such a garment, then, Raffaëlli is probably accurately depicting the Hottentot women he would have seen at the Jardin d’Acclimatation. He is also, however, hinting at the “secret” nature of her sex, enflaming desire by representing presence with absence.

Contemporary readers, well versed in the unique qualities of the *Hottentote*, would have seen the buttocks and immediately thought of that other body part for which she was famous, would have seen the loin cloth and been aware of the mystery of what lay beneath.

For his part, Cuvier uses the presence of the *tablier* as a literary device to titillate his reader and justify his own interest (in the name of science, naturally). From the incipit, then, he acknowledges its place in popular and anthropological lore: “Il n’est rien de plus célèbre en histoire naturelle que le tablier des Hottentottes,” (159) he writes, but he then involves his reader in a kind of textual foreplay, meticulously lingering on each of Baartman’s other body parts before finally, six pages later, focusing on “cet appendice extraordinaire” (265). Cuvier called Saartjie Baartman’s *tablier* the “particularité la plus remarquable de son organisation,” (265) and her refusal to let him see — never mind

94 Cuvier would later employ the tablier as an explanation for what he saw as heightened sexual appetites in African women.
examine — her nether regions can only have heightened and frustrated his desire. Because “elle tint son tablier soigneusement caché, soit entre ses cuisses, soit plus profondément” (265), Cuvier could not fully examine (and therefore gain mastery over) her body until she was dead.

Such an expression of willful subjectivity on the part of objects of study who were barely considered human can only have infuriated the scientist, and Cuvier’s extensive postmortem investigation of Bartmaan’s labia and subsequent narrativization of the experience can be read as an attempt to regain control over this unruly Other. As Blanchard and Boetsch suggest: “Le regard morbide pour son corps déformé, sa bestialité supposée, la croyance en un appétit sexuel hors du commun, entretenait une fascination chez les hommes. En même temps, par son étrangeté, ce corps féminin les rassurait sur leur supériorité et participait fortement à la construction d’un regard racial” (105). In a final expression of his mastery over both his subject and his desire, then, Cuvier presented Baartman’s preserved, dissected genitals to the Academy: “J’ai l’honneur de présenter à l’Académie les organes génitaux de cette femme préparés, de manière à ne laisser aucun doute sur la nature de son tablier” (266).

Joseph Deniker expresses such regret at being unable to perform a full examination of the female body that we would be forgiven for believing that, like Cuvier, his interest is motivated as much by desire as by science: “Malgré tout notre désir et nos nombreuses démarches, nous n’avons pu examiner les organes génitaux chez les femmes. Nous le regrettons vivement, car c’est un des sujets les plus intéressant de l’étude des Hottentotes” (19). The language of desire, failed seduction, and regret suggests
something less appropriate for scientific inquiry than the world of the exhibition-as-entertainment. Not that the two were so far apart, as the “human zoos” at the *Exposition universelles* so clearly illustrate. Indeed, they enjoyed a reciprocal relationship, as Blanchard and Boetsch suggest: “[O]n assiste à un double croisement où le monde du spectacle “fournit” du spécimen au monde des savants, et en retour celui-ci “valide” ces exhibitions dites “savantes” qui serviront à mieux tromper le public” (101). The fact that the foreign Others that were displayed on the stage of the *Folies-Bergère*, alongside “les clowns, les acrobats, les gymnasts, les dompteurs et les lutteurs, aussi bien que les danseuses et les mimes,” (Darzens 141) were also displayed and dissected by the anthropologists at the *Jardin d’Acclimatation* provided scientific justification for spectacle-as-entertainment while it assured public interest (and therefore revenue) for spectacle-as-science.95

When we view Raffaëlli’s images of these racially Other women alongside Proust’s article about untrustworthy foreigners, the lack of connection, of conversation between the two is striking. But if we then consider them both in the context of *Les types de Paris*, as examples of a singular type that, by default, contains within it a multitude of individuals (or, in this case, of individual Othernesses), a discourse begins to emerge. This discourse is less about the intricacies and quirks of the “foreigner” than it is about

95 Such practices of legitimation and authentication date back as far as 1829, when Chang and Eng, the original “Siamese” twins (they were Chinese), were exhibited before Harvard University doctors before being displayed before the general public (Grosz: 62).
anyone who is not French. The emphasis, in other words, is on affirming the French citizen against the non-native, no matter where they are from. In our discussion of the “women problem,” we saw that it was, in large part, a discussion centered not on the woman but on the white, middle-class, Republican man. Here, too, we see that same pattern emerge.

This chapter, then, has been an exploration of how a combination of visual and verbal taxonomy helped reduce the overwhelming range of peoples and populations to which new forms of transportation and a new colonial order now gave the French access (what Kathleen Cambor terms “extreme foreignness” (115)) to something visible and measureable. The next investigates how that same combination can be used to reduce the threat of another kind of ‘foreign’ population — the marginal and marginalized poor. Here, I argue that Félicien Champsaur and Raffaëlli’s representation of the geographically mobile and Republican-agnostic chiffonnier can be read in tandem with contemporary regulations governing the chiffonnier’s work as an attempt to reduce his peripheral, indefinable difference and annex him to the center.
CHAPTER THREE: TAMING THE PERIPHERAL: THE CHIFFONNIERS OF PARIS

In the previous chapter, I proposed that the curious juxtaposition of Raffaëlli and Proust’s representations of foreigners in Paris come together to create a sociologically inaccurate but psychologically useful type that is not so much foreign as not-French. This, I suggested, was a tactic employed, not just by the artist and author but by elite Parisian culture at large, to reduce the difference of the foreigner into a singular non-native type against which the reader (of *Les types de Paris*) or visitor (to the World’s Fair, or the Jardin d’acclimatation) could reassert his own identity. In this chapter, I look at another tactic whose aim is to reduce difference: assimilation. The type in question is one that featured in almost every one of the century’s panoramic texts: the ragpicker. I do this first by examining the legal and cultural discourse around the chiffonnier in the 1880s, then, after a brief foray into representations of this type in the art and literature of the nineteenth century, I look at the way in which he is portrayed in Raffaëlli’s art and in Félicien Champsaur’s “Les chiffonniers.”

As we will see in the next and final chapter of this dissertation, Haussmann, in his redesigning of the city, attempted to shift its poorest classes towards the periphery — or, as Dominique Kalifa puts it in his article on criminal topographies in nineteenth-century Paris, “the most unstable and violent elements of the lower classes to the edges” (188).\(^\text{96}\)

\(^{96}\) In fact, the chiffonniers, to some degree at least, remained embedded in the city’s topography as we shall see in our discussion of Champsaur later in this chapter.

130
The ragpicker was one such element, but the very nature of the ragpicker’s work and the unconventional nature of his lifestyle meant that his marginality, or peripherality, was not just limited to his physical location on the margins or in the cités. In *Paris and the Nineteenth Century*, Christopher Prendergast calls out the “problem of representation” posed by the *chiffonniers* and evidenced by the fact that Frégier, for example, did not know whether to place the ragpicker in the dangerous or working classes (85). Even Marx, notes Prendergast, exiles the ragpicker to the category of the “the whole amorphous, disintegrated mass the French call *la bohème*” (*Marx Eighteenth Brumaire* qtd. in Prendergast 86),97 thereby situating him on the “ragged edge of the categorical system Marx uses to describe modern society” (86). Indeed, just as the chiffonniers were at once inside the city and out of it, they were also both an integral part of the urban economy98 and peripheral to wage work, beholden to new laws regulating the times at

97 Or, as the 2002 translation renders it, “the whole amorphous, jumbled mass of flotsam and jetsam that the French term bohemian” (63) — and which Marx deems the *lumpenproletariat*. Prendergast sees the ragpicker’s inclusion in the *lumpenproletariat* as “a characteristic nineteenth-century obsession with a proper order of things” (86).

98 The chiffonnier’s economic integration comes in the form of his participation in a system of exchange that sees him turn the excess of an emergent social class into intermediate goods (bones, chiffons) that will then be sold on to enable further production.
which they could work and yet free of the factory schedule that dictated the work day of industrial workers. As Marnin Young suggests in a provocative article about the decidedly anachronistic temporality of Raffaëlli’s paintings of déclassés, ragpickers existed both without and within the city’s regulatory apparatus: unlike the peasant, he writes, “the ragpicker was wholly integrated into the economic and geographic life of the city” and yet “he was both wholly within and standing outside modernity’s increasingly industrialized restructuring of the general conditions of everyday life” (235).

“Sale comme un Chiffonnier”

L’histoire des chiffonniers est un long martyrologe. Si l’on voulait réunir toutes les ordonnances royales ou prévôtales, les ordonnances de police et les ordonnances municipales qui ont été édictées contre les chiffonniers, on pourrait former un énorme volume dans lequel à chaque page on trouverait les anomalies les plus choquantes et l’arbitraire le plus absolu. Toutes les autorités semblent s’être liguées contre ce pauvre diable si peu importun et si utile. (Paulian 5)

As Louis Paulian suggests, the story of the chiffonniers and the law was a long and complicated one. Joseph Barberet mentions an ordonnance from as early as 1701 “contre les chiffonniers qui infectent l’air par les immondice de leur profession” (60), while Alain Faure discusses the passing of a law requiring all ragpickers register at the prefecture in 1828. Once done, they were given metal badges engraved with not only their names and registration numbers but also their nicknames and physical characteristics (Faure 79). That same year, the prefect of Paris shared a circular with his officers that went some way towards explaining the motivations behind that law:

Au sein de la capitale vit une classe nombreuse d’individus dont la
misère semble être le partage, les chiffonniers, espèce de population nomade qui s’est beaucoup accrue dans ces derniers temps, étrangers à toutes habitudes sociales, n’obéissant à aucune règle, ne connaissant aucun frein, accoutumés à une indépendance presque sauvage, incessamment errant sur toute la surface de Paris et des communes qui l’environnent… sans domicile fixe, quelquefois même sans asile, isolés, en quelques sorte, de la grande famille, marchant armés d’un instrument qui, innocent dans sa destination peut, entre des mains perverses, devenir l’instrument du crime.” (Qtd. in Ratcliffe 205)

This law remained roughly in place until its expiration in 1872. In 1870, however, laws were enacted to forbid the disposal of household waste on public roads; these were renewed in 1871 (l’arrêté du 14 juin) and 1875 (l’arrêté du 4 juin). From 1870 onwards, Parisian residents were legally required to throw their domestic waste into the garbage trucks as they passed by or into receptacles provided by their landlord at 5:30am each morning. However, the legal proscription was far from observed or enforced, and force of habit trumped adherence to the law in one third of Parisian homes.99

But on January 15, 1884, Paris’s ragpickers endured the most effective blow to their profession to date: the implementation of prefect Eugène Poubelle’s November 24, 99 Where the 1870 law was effective — and here the official sources differ from Faure’s account (99) — was in the creation of a new class of chiffonnier, the placier.
1883 decree. That law, which regulated the “enlèvement des ordures ménagères,” stated that disposing of trash or other household waste onto the street was absolutely forbidden at any time. It also stipulated that landlords provide common *poubelles*, as they not-so-affectionately came to be known, into which their tenants should place their rubbish in the early hours of the morning, before the garbage collectors passed. The bill went on to decree that these same *poubelles* had to be brought back inside within 15 minutes of the passing of the refuse collectors and postulated that chiffonniers were not to “vider les récipients sur la voie publique ou de faire tomber à l’extérieur une partie quelconque de leur contenu, pour y chercher ce qui peut convenir à leur industrie” (Loi du 24 nov 3).

The combination of these three articles was enough to ruffle the feathers of many a chiffonnier, since — despite protestations to the contrary — they seemed designed expressly to put them out of work. To understand why, a brief discussion of the two main types of chiffonnier involved is in order. Here, I lean heavily on the speeches of M. Aniel, M. Potin, and M. François dit Bijou, members of the delegation of chiffonniers who spoke before the *commission des quarante-quatre*, a parliamentary commission charged with studying the cause of the industrial and commercial crisis. The better off were the *placiers*, members of a sub-profession that was somewhere between fifteen and thirty years old, depending who you asked. These *placiers* had made note of certain streets or neighborhoods where they had consistent good fortune, then made an effort to befriend the *concierges* of the buildings in that area. As they gained their trust, they were guaranteed first access to household waste no matter the time of day, even inside the apartments. The concierge, “qui a une certaine tendance à la paresse, qui aime bien rester
couché jusqu’à neuf heures,” (Barberet 76) was delighted to leave the unpleasant task of taking out the trash to someone else.

Those immediately concerned by the bill, however, had no such mutually beneficial relationships. In fact, the mutually beneficial arrangement between placier and concierge harmed the livelihood of these others, the *coureurs*, since the most valuable scraps were always taken first. The *coureurs* were the poorest of the ragpickers, the ones who made their living going through the discarded trash of all kinds of Parisians all over the city in search of bones, haberdashery, fabric — anything that could be sold on to a *maître-chiffonnier* who would, in turn, then sell it on to specialized factories and workshops. The new law obviously favored the *placiers*, who could go through the *poubelles* at their leisure rather than in the few minutes it was outside before the arrival of the collection vehicles; by the time a *coureur* had the right to access the contents of the bin, anything of value was gone. The short timeframe between the putting out of *poubelles* and their collection meant that any chiffonnier without exclusive access privileges to private homes — anyone but the sédentaires, or placiers — had significant difficulty gleaning anything worthwhile. What is more, as one of the chiffonniers who testified before the city council pointed out, the law was being strictly enforced and “les inspecteurs ont commencé à faire la chasse aux chiffonniers, ont menacé des femmes et essayé d’intimider tout le monde: ce sont des faits” (Barberet 72).

Jean-Charles Adolphe Alphand, the *directeur de Travaux de Paris*, and the members of the city council who supported Poubelle’s law argued that it was little more than an enforcement of the 1870 *arrêté*. However, the maître-chiffonnier M. Potin, who
spoke for the delegation of ragpickers brought before the *commission des quarante-quatre*, claimed that the people who worked for him — the *coureurs* — used to earn two francs a day and now, since the implementation of the new law, were lucky if they made half that (Barberet 71). Furthermore, he added, he was now buying just one-third the amount of chiffon that he had before Poubelle’s law was enacted, and employing just 50% of the chiffonniers he had the year before.

Estimates of the number of people affected by Poubelle’s 1883 law vary — often by tens of thousands. In *L’invention des déchets urbains*, Sabine Barles illustrates the discrepancies in a table showing the “Effectif des chiffonniers, Paris, XIXe siècle,” which features estimates of the ragpicker population in 1884 from no fewer than five sources. These range from 7,050 (préfecture de la Seine) to between 12,000 and 15,000 (préfecture de la police) to 200,000 (chambre syndicale des chiffonniers)\(^\text{100}\). 73,000 people in the Paris alone had been surviving on the proceeds of their chiffonnage; the new law, it claimed, would force them into abject poverty. The chiffonnier called to speak before the general assembly guessed at 35,000. In his report to the *conseil municipal*, Alphand counted 4,000 *placiers*, who had special relationships with the *concierges* of certain homes and therefore gained advance access to their household’s waste; 2,000 *coureurs* who scavenged from whatever the *placiers* had left behind once the *poubelles* had been placed for collection, and 1,000 *biffins* or *chineurs*, predecessors

\(^{100}\) While the latter number includes women and children, which the other estimates do not, the same ragpickers’ union still claims the number of chefs de famille to be 40,000, or 25,000 more than the highest ‘official’ estimate.
to the people that sell an inexorable array of random goods on the outskirts of today’s marchés aux puces. That, as Barles claims, “la profession ne semble pas bien définie” seems evident indeed (58). Whatever the number, it was obvious that the city realized that its new laws might bring, as maître-chiffonnier M. Potin claimed, a new wave of unemployed vagabonds to the city streets.

Both Poubelle and Alphand tried to argue that they were concerned with “la situation des 2,000 rouleurs.” When Alphand addressed the issue before the city council, he announced that he had not only been investigating the possibility of transforming these rouleur positions into those of placier to fill the some 25,000 homes without an assigned chiffonnier, but also that he had offered 1,200 of these same workers a salary in return for operating the new garbage vehicles. His argument was premised on concern, but many — including the chiffonniers themselves — took it to signify a desire to exercise some degree of control over these nomadic, irregular, nocturnal types.

Negative reactions to Alphand’s suggestion are best exemplified by the words of one of the coureurs to whom such a position was offered: “Nous travaillons LIBREMENT et nous ne voulons pas être esclaves; il y a assez de vieillards pour faire ce métier-là” (Barberet 73). When pressed to speak to the fact that such employment would remove the infamous “liberté absolue” of the chiffonniers, Alphand tellingly insists on the impossibility of such liberty within contemporary society. “La loi ne

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101 He expresses a similar desire to regularize the position of the children working as rouleurs, stating that “si la loi était strictement appliquée,” such juveniles would be placed in the city’s schools (212).
diminue-t-elle pas la liberté absolue de chacun dans l’intérêt de la société?” he asks, adding that “Le sauvage lui-même n’en jouit pas: le lion et le tigre sont là pour le lui faire sentir” (212).

This independence from the ‘normal’ work time implied by wage work was mirrored by voluntary separation from the rest of Parisian society. Account after account focuses on the exclusivity of the ragpicker, his discreteness not just from a dominant bourgeois morality and culture, but also from society, even working class society, itself. The chiffonnier had always stuck to his own: in Victor Fournel’s 1965 Paris nouveau et Paris futur, for example, we read: “Les chiffonniers sont dédaigneux à l’égard du bourgeois; il ne frayent qu’entre eux; ils forment une société à part qui a des moeurs à elle, un langage à elle, un quartier à elle…” (327). The message underlying much of Alphand’s speech seemed to be that the longer such individualism remained unchecked, the more likely it would be that chiffonniers would fall prey to that great antisocial phantom: crime. What the republic wanted to avoid, above all, was an increase in the number of wandering poor on the city streets. Vagrancy was a criminal act in the 1880s. The chiffonnier — who may not have had a fixed address, an officially recognized métier, or any provable income — was at risk of being mistaken for a vagabond (Vernier 168).

In his article “Le poète et l’anarchiste: du côté de la pauvreté errante à la fin du

Sabine Barles (1995) stresses that the sheer variety of jobs included in the ‘industrie du chiffon’ section of the census made the category a catch-all from which, presumably, it would be as easy to be excluded (55).
XIXe siècle,” Jean-François Wagniart argues that vagabonds became a focus of Republican regulation in the 1880s because they represented a kind of non-working lawlessness that was antithetical to nation- and citizen-building. It was not only bourgeois ideology that they threatened, however — it was the organization and classification of the working classes too. Marx, who was in many ways the ne plus ultra of 19th-century taxonomists, ranks the vagabond alongside criminals and prostitutes in the lumpenproletariat (Capital I 797), his own category of undesirables and potential troublemakers.

Because vagabondage was a crime, vagabonds were repeat offenders. These “vagabonds” were the “bad” kind of poor, the kind who would commit petty crimes and — worse still — then commit them again103 (this in comparison to what Jean-François Wagniart deems “une pauvreté acceptable car sédentarisée, controllée et assistée par les organisations philanthropiques” (Wagniart)). And in the eyes of the criminologists of the 1880s, any repeat offence, even petty theft or vagabondage, indicated “un degré de dangerosité de l’individu et son insensibilité à l’amendement classique” (Sanchez 6). In fact, on 27 May 1885, the government passed a law whose aim was to permanently exclude such populations from French society, expelling repeat offenders to Guyane or New Caledonia and thereby sanitizing the “social body” of their contaminating

103 See Kalusynski (1999, 2008) and Schnapper for a discussion of the Third Republic’s obsession with recidivism.
influence. The rouleurs and chineurs, being unregulated and much more geographically mobile than their placier counterparts, were unknown outliers and therefore potential disturbers of the status quo.

The placiers, on the other hand, held police-issued medallions permitting them to carry out their work and had ties to certain households that limited their geographical errancy. These placiers were the acceptable face of chiffonnage: they did not work at night, but rather came to the existing model, they claimed, had “moralisé le chiffonnage en créant le chiffonnier du quartier” — without it, the twelve to fifteen thousand placiers who would be out of work “pourraient devenir embarrassants” (Barberet 67). Alphand tried hard to convince both the council and the public that the new law in fact aided chiffonnage by forcing it to align itself with the times: the new chiffonnier, he argued, was pretty, efficient, even female — almost an emblem of Paris itself. Now, she (the

104 While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to go into the details of the relegation law (loi du 27 mai 1885), an excellent survey of it, its genesis, and its implications can be found in Sanchez (2005).

105 M. Le Dr Bouchardat, speaking in 1884 before the city council on behalf of the sous-commission du chiffonnage, even claimed that when the government had been considering a proposal to build waste depots just meters from the fortifications and outlawing waste disposal on the street in 1975, Paris’ police had actually come down against the measure.
example he provides is that of a “femme… jeune et jolie”) simply overturns the trashcan, 
rummages through it, places what she can use in her basket and returns the rest to the 
receptacle. The whole operation takes “pas plus d’une minute” — “le chiffonnage, tout 
en étant plus complet, est devenu plus rapide et plus propre.” (212; 9 Feb).

“Plus propre” — the association of chiffonniers with dirt and disease was as old 
as the attempts to regulate their way of life. Barberet, for example, points out an 
ordonnance from June 1701 “contre les chiffonniers qui infectent l’air par les 
immondices de leur profession” (59). Indeed, the few chiffonniers still 
lived inside the 
city walls in the 1880s, it was in one of the few remaining cités or campements inhabited 
by “d’individus exerçant mille petites industries urbaines (chiffonniers, marchands de 
peau de lapins, etc.), toutes plus insalubres les unes que les autres” (Rapport Général Sur 
Les Travaux Du Conseil De Salubrité De 1887 À 188980) — areas that saw unparalleled 
numbers of infant deaths from cholera. This led to what Barberet called the “préjugé 
absurde” (63) that chiffon was actually responsible for the transmission of that disease. 
Absurd it might have been, but it was widespread enough that exportation of French rags 
was actually halted for six months during the cholera outbreak.106

106 A. Michel, Président de la Chambre syndicale des négotiants en chiffons de 
laine de Paris, indicated, in a 13 April, 1885 letter to the Petit Journal, that the union had 
had to “faire quelques démarches auprès de nos ministres, dans le but de solliciter des 
puissances étrangères et principalement de l’Angleterre, la réouverture des frontières à 
nos produits.”
While such concerns centered on the deleterious nature of the shantytowns inhabited by chiffonniers — more of which we will see in our discussion of Champsaur’s contribution to *Les types de Paris* — and, indeed, the very chiffon that provided them with the means to exist, the prefect’s poubelle law had been aimed more at reducing the insalubrity of the living conditions of a more ‘regularized’ population. The two, however, are not as disparate as they might seem. In an impassioned defense of the decree given before the city council on February 8, 1884, M. Vauthier called the previous system of garbage collection “tout à fait barbare, incommode,” highlighting its anachronism “dans notre siècle de progrès, après tout ce qui a été fait pour l’hygiène” (213). And in the *Revue d’hygiène et de police sanitaire*, the journal’s editor-in-chief E Vallin called out the “bénéfice hygiénque” (91) of the new poubelle law, in that it could at least ensure that “la chambre unique ou l’appartement a moins de chance d’être infecte” (91).

In the same article, however, Vallin makes it clear that he does not believe that hygiene, despite claims to the contrary, can have been the prefect’s primary concern. Where Poubelle and his supporters might have claimed that keeping household waste from the streets until just before the garbage trucks passed reduced its disease-spreading potential, Dr. Vallin suggests that if hygiene were really a primary concern, then surely it would make more sense to place the poubelles — covered receptacles, after all — out the night before the garbage trucks would pass through to collect them, thereby reducing the risk of disease spreading inside poorly ventilated apartment buildings. After all, he argued, “Ces amas fétides gênaient pendant une ou deux minutes les promeneurs nocturnes qui passaient à leur voisinage, mais ils étaient plus incommodes que nuisibles,
parce que le vent disséminait et diluait rapidement les miasmes; au contraire, ils auraient véritablement empoisonnée les êtres humains obligés de passer la nuit dans le logement étroit et mal ventilé où ces immondices auraient été gardés jusqu’au lendemain” (90).

The fact of the matter was that by designating the old habit of discarding of waste directly on to the street as medievally unsanitary, Poubelle and his fellow councilmen could ensure that the streets remained cleaner, more attractive, and more appealing to a particular subset of contributors to the urban economy: wealthy tourists, particularly the kind that spent significant sums of money at night, and in the capital’s many entertainment venues. In the Friday, February 8 1884 session of the conseil municipal, Alphand professed to as much when he asked the room, “Voulez-vous que les personnes qui se promènent le soir courent le risque de se blesser en marchant sur des débris de verre? N’oubliez pas que la vie ne s’arrête pas avec la nuit. C’est un des attrats que notre Ville aux étrangers riches que personne ici ne songe à éloigner, et il faut leur rendre le séjour de la capitale aussi agréable la nuit que le jour” (212). The priorities implied by his speech — the importance of rich visitors to the economy, the expectation that Paris appear “agréable” at all times, the primacy of the health of wealthy bodies over poor ones — were not invisible to members of the medical profession such as Vallin, who perspicaciously argued:

Nous l’avons déjà dit plusieurs fois, il vaut mieux salir la rue que la maison; mais les villes ont leur coquetterie, elles veulent “qu’on lave son linge sale en famille”; on fait la toilette des rues, dût la propreté des maisons en souffrir. Nous reconnaissions d’ailleurs que dans une grande ville de luxe comme Paris, où un grand nombre d’habitants vivent
au dehors et fréquentent la voie publique jusqu’à une heure avancée de la nuit, il était nécessaire d’empêcher le dépôt sur la rue, à toute heure de la soirée, des ordures ménagères; la mesure avait sa raison d’être, mais l’hygiène n’était pas en cause. (90)

It certainly does seem antithetical to the basic laws of hygiene to allow household waste to pile up inside living quarters rather than putting it out on the street. And the doctor certainly has a point when he facetiously mentions the “need” for a “grande ville de luxe” like Paris to appear sanitary (even when it wasn’t). As I have suggested, however, another reason for the law was to stop the city’s chiffonniers from rummaging through the city’s waste; it was time, it seemed, to rein in a profession whose hours and duties were so at odds with the modern city.

**Representing the Chiffonnier**

Il se complaît dans sa vie nomade, dans ses promenades sans fin, dans son indépendance de lazarone. Il regarde avec un profond mépris les esclaves qui s'enferment du matin au soir dans un atelier, derrière un établi. Que d'autres, mécaniques vivantes, règlent l'emploi de leur temps sur la marche des horloges, lui, le Chiffonnier philosophe, travaille quand il veut, se repose quand il veut, sans souvenirs de la veille, sans soucis du lendemain. (Émile de la Bédollière, *Les Industriels* 170)

While the last section looked at how the chiffonnier was represented in the political discourse of the 1880s, this one serves as a glimpse at literary and artistic representations of the *type* over the course of the Nineteenth Century. The secondary literature on the chiffonnier is fairly extensive, so I will dwell but briefly on the history  

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107 For a contemporary history of the profession, see volume 4 of Jules Barberet’s 1886 *Monographie professionelle*, which was enormously helpful to me while I
of representations of this type, whose popularity reveals several different representative forces at work: nostalgia, the market, and a kind of reification that served to both fix and neutralize the potential threat of these figures who were at once central to the city and its economy and geographically, socially, and morally outside of it.

The history of the chiffonniers, like that of any people who do not have access to a means of self-representation, can only ever be a history of histoires, of histories or stories told by those at the center, those in power, about those on the margins. That of the chiffonniers comes to us through their representation in the arts and in official political discourse, in which we witness the attitudes of the more privileged upper and bourgeois classes to the chiffonniers — or, as we will see, to what they believed the chiffonniers to represent. Such depictions tell us more about the authors than their subject matter — or,

researched this chapter; for a contemporary ethnography, Louis Paulian’s *La hotte du chiffonnier* (1885). Olivier Vernier has written about Paulian’s rare “sympathie réelle et constante envers le monde des mendiants” (170) in “Le Paris qui mendie de Louis Paulian.” Studies over the last thirty five years include Alain Faure’s “Classe Malpropre, Classe Dangereuse”; J. Hueretier’s “La peste des chiffonniers”; Dietmar Rieger’s “Ce qu’on voit dans les rues de Paris: marginalités sociales et regards bourgeois”; Barrie M. Ratcliffe’s “Perceptions and Realities on the Urban Margin: The Rag Pickers of Paris in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century;” and, more recently still, Sabine Barles’ *L’invention des déchets urbains: France 1790–1970* and “Les chiffonniers, agents de la propreté et de la prospérité parisiennes au XIXe siècle.”
as Barrie Ratcliffe succinctly puts it, “more about the centre, about its interface with the marginalized, than about the margin itself” (226).

Félicien Champsaur was far from the first writer to take on the subject and subjects of chiffonnage. Depictions of the chiffonnier in the mid-nineteenth century ranged from Jean Baudelaire’s 1851 “Du vin et du haschisch” and 1857 “Le vin des chiffonniers,” Lautréamont’s 1868–69 Le Chant de Maldoror to Ferdinand Dugué’s 1866 *La fille des chiffonniers*, Félix Pyat’s hugely successful *Le Chiffonnier de Paris* (1869) and Octave Feuillet’s 1867 *M. de Camors*. These works — particularly those published in the last years of the Second Empire — portrayed a sympathetically human ragpicker who served as a contrast to the mercantile values of the social climbers, dandies, and lions operating at the time of Napoleon III. The words of Lautréamont exemplify this tendency: "Voyez ce chiffonnier qui passe, courbé sur sa lanterne pâlotte ; il y a en lui plus de cœur que dans tous ses pareils de l’omnibus”(75)

Foreshadowing this literary output is the journalistic work of the *physiologies*. Even as early as 1932, with the publication of the fourth volume of *Le diable boiteux à Paris, ou le livre des cent-et-un*, Jules Janin is portraying the chiffonnier as a kind of timeless, omniscient god, sorting through the city’s detritus: “Le chiffonnier est inexorable comme le destin. Il attend ; mais quand le jour du croc est venu, rien ne peut retenir son bras, tout un monde a passé dans sa hotte… La hotte du chiffonnier c’est la grande voirie où viennent se rendre toutes les immondices du corps social” (95).

Janin may well have noted that the chiffonnier “est un être à part, qui mérite son histoire à part,” but it was not until the panoramic literature boom of the 1840s that the
chiffonnier had become a *type* all to himself. In fact, Patrice Higonnet notes a preponderance of “elaborate typologies of ragpickers” (Higonnet 222) in the panoramic literature of the 1840s and 50s. And as Catherine Nesci has argued in *Les flaneurs et la flaneuse*, a dandified (and therefore depoliticized) chiffonnier came, in the 1840s, to stand for the typologist himself, gathering a hodgepodge of random material from the city’s streets. The frontispiece to *Le Diable à Paris*, in the most explicit example, depicts its demon author carrying a chiffonnier’s *hotte* filled with a collection of sketches, standing looking down on a city map (83–85).

But while the authors of *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* and its ilk might well have understood themselves to be figuratively sorting through the urban fabric in a way that mirrored the literal sorting of the chiffonnier, they were certainly not equating themselves with the poverty, insalubrity, and moral degradation with which they endowed the chiffonniers. In fact, they treated these same characteristics with a combination of fascination and horror, as is evidenced by Louis Berthaud’s description in *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*: “Voici des types monstreux, d’ignobles figures, d’abominable moeurs: la forme, le fond, le dessus, le dessous, tout est pourri chez les chiffonniers” (341).

After 1848, however, the tone of such representations began to change. It was no longer only the typologists of Paris who saw a link between their work and chiffonnage, it was also the artists. In “Du vin et du haschisch,” Baudelaire writes: “Tout ce que la grande cité a rejeté, tout ce qu’elle a perdu, tout ce qu’elle a dédaigné, tout ce qu’elle a
brisé, il le catalogue, il le collectionne” (381). However, this time the parallel was drawn not only in terms of the sorting through of waste, but also in the combination of exclusion, independence, and indigence the chiffonnier represented and with which the artist could identify. With Baudelaire, then, comes the rag-and-bone man as stand-in for the artist in an era that cared only for money, “butant et se cognant contre les murs comme un poète” (106).

In the panoramic literature of the Second Empire, too, abjection had given way to a kind of empathetic admiration. In his section on “Les infiniment petits de l’industrie parisienne: balayeurs, chiffonniers” in 1958’s _Ce qu’on voit dans les rues de Paris_, for example, Victor Fournel compares the ragpicker to the street sweeper and comes down in favor of the former, claiming that his profession has “quelque chose de plus original, qui sourit à une imagination vagabonde, quelque chose aussi de plus indépendent, qui semble mieux d’accord avec la dignité d’un homme libre” (326).

It was doubtless this almost romantic portrayal of the chiffonnier, rather than any

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108 The analogy between poetic, particularly Baudelairian, composition and the chiffonnier’s work would be drawn out by Benjamin in “The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,” where he explains Baudelaire’s “extended metaphor for the poetic method”: “[t]he poets find the refuse of society on their streets and derive their heroic subject from this very refuse” (108).

109 He claims that while the street sweepers would classify themselves above the chiffonniers and the chiffonniers do the same in reverse, he is more inclined to believe the chiffonniers (326).
genuine empathy for the actual human beings, that caused ragpickers to become a topic of frequent debate both in the Conseil Municipal de Paris and in the city’s newspapers and cafés in the months following Poubelle’s decree. In fact, public opinion (which, according to the Editor-in-Chief of the revue d’hygiène et de police sanitaire E. Vallin, was not only “impressionnable” but which formed with a facility “sans s’occuper de savoir si elle est bien renseignée” (89)) swayed political discourse to such a degree that the city council, which claimed it would not normally debate such issues, spent several months discussing it and its affect on chiffonniers, claiming it to be “une question intéressant au premier chef la population parisienne” (Bulletin Municipal Officiel De La Ville De Paris 209). M. Joffrin referred to the political fallout as a “crise” (211) while M. Strauss noted the “grand émoi dans la population” after the announcement of the decree, stating that it had been “l’objet de discussions nombreuses et de polémiques passionnées, non seulement dans la presse et dans les réunions publiques, mais même au Parlement” (170).

One of the most ardent believers in the poetic dignity of the chiffonnier was none other than Raffaëlli himself. Consider this text — which merits citing in full — written to accompany his Chiffonner éreinté and intended for publication in Le jour et la

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110 Evidently all the debate had some effect, since a new decree was enacted on March 4, 1884 in which Article 7, which had stipulated that chiffonniers could not overturn or go through the common receptacles at all was replaced by an article allowing them to sort through the contents provided that they “faire le triage sur une toile et… remettre ensuite les ordures dans les récipients” (421).
nuit, the stillborn journal Degas wanted to publish with Cassatt, Pissarro, Raffaëlli, and Bracquemond in 1879:

Voici un chiffonnier…

Souvent on me dit: “Pourquoi donc faites-vous des chiffonniers? Je vais le dire.

Il faut qu’une idée, dans le domaine de l’idée, ou bien qu’un être ou qu’une chose dans la nature, nous bouleverse, nous émeuve, nous impressionne ou nous étonne; qu’elle nous arrête, nous fasse penser, vibrer enfin, rire ou pleure, pour qu’elle puisse nous inspirer de l’écrire et nous donner une somme d’amour et d’élan nécessaire au faire d’une œuvre personnelle d’art.

Je trouve, moi, autour de ces chiffonniers et de ces hères tout un monde d’idées, et je les trouve, ces gens, tout pleins d’un grand pittoresque.

Le chiffonnier, dans une sorte d’hallucination, m’apparaît et me donne tout ensemble comme une idée de liberté et comme aussi la sensation brûlante d’une grande misère: toute la liberté que nous attendons, toute la misère de nous, de notre être.

Je vois, moi, en lui, l’homme même, comme tout l’homme en son rôle devant la nature, errant, errant encore, errant et vivant de ses miettes, de la nature, et de ses miettes de lui-même, homme.

J’y vois toute notre pauvreté, notre abandon, notre sans attache.

J’y vois aussi comme l’indépendance… Ces hommes n’ont ni maîtres ni livrées. Il y a là comme un étant indépendant et sauvage que j’aime entrevoir,
dans un écart, en haine et fatigue de nos barrières, de nos ficelles et de nos licols et de nos principes perfectionnés.

Given that Poubelle’s bill was generally seen as the death knell of chiffonnage, it is perhaps unsurprising that the 1880’s saw a new wave of literary and artistic discourse on the profession.\footnote{111} In fact, as Raffaëlli’s text above suggests, by the end of the century, the chiffonnier had become perhaps the most romanticized of all nineteenth-century figures: certainly he was destitute, epitomizing “une grande misère” — but he was also free. Not for the rag-and-bone man was the carefully programmed schedule of the factory: he worked at dawn and in the gloaming, at transitional times, “outside the new bourgeois and proletarian standards of work-time discipline” (Young 253). He stood beyond the new spatial and temporal restraints imposed by the industrialized workplace, those so well captured in the Lumière brothers’ 1895 Sortie d’usine and replicated as late as Clair’s 1931 À nous la liberté and Chaplin’s 1936 Modern Times.

In the next section, I will look specifically at Félicien Champsaur’s contribution to Les Types, a short, pseudo-ethnography entitled “Les Chiffonniers” and at Raffaëlli’s accompanying artwork in an attempt to parse precisely what the interplay of literary-

\footnote{111} Amongst these, Louis Paulian’s La hotte du chiffonnier, an ethnographic study he dedicated to “Mes amis, les Chiffonniers… à vous qui m’avait fait voir et toucher du doigt ce que le chiffonnier supporte souvent de privations, de souffrances et de misère pour avoir la liberté telle qu’il la conçoit et n’obéir à aucun maître…” (np), Seurat’s 1882-3 Le Chiffonnier and Signac’s 1887 Passage du Puits-Bertin (Clichy).
artistic and official-political discourse in the 1880s can tell us not just about the chiffonniers themselves, but also (and more importantly) about the attitudes towards these marginal types held by the bourgeois at the center. I argue for a reading of Champsaur’s “Les Chiffonniers” and Rafaëlli’s illustrations as a visual-verbal corollary to some of the attempted assimilation at work in political efforts to curtail the practice of chiffonnage.

**Bringing Home the Errant: Félicien Champsaur’s Chiffonniers**

Félicien Champsaur had quite the reputation — and it wasn’t necessarily a good one. A blender of forms and styles, a *bohème* who passed his time at the *Chat noir* and contributed to *L’Hydropathe*, he was also a suspected plagiarist; *L’Hydropathe* editor Émile Goudeau is said to have exclaimed, upon seeing Champsaur enter a room, “Rentrons nos idées! voilà Champsaur!” The *New York Tribune* critic C.I.B. deemed him “by no means a philosopher or deep thinker,” but rather “a literary sybarite, somewhat of the butterfly order” (C I B np). Whatever his personal situation, Champsaur was nothing if not prolific: in the 1880s alone, he published four collections of journalism, three novels, a short story collection, a collection of poetry, a lyrical ballet, a play, and two one-act pantomimes, including 1888’s *Lulu*, about a cross-dressing clown that he would adapt as an erotic novel in 1901.

In *Les types de Paris*, however, Champsaur turns to a much less titillating subject:
the chiffonnier. Champsaur makes it clear from the start that his chiffonnier is far removed from that “vu au travers de la lorgnette du théâtre, dramatisé ou idéalisé par l’enflure boursouflé d’un style pompeusement romantique” (139). Such a ragpicker, he claims, may well be the stuff of Pyat’s theatre, but “il n’est guère le chiffonnier” (140). Champsaur may be distancing himself from one school of discourse on the chiffonnier, but he is very much aligning himself with another: that of panoramic literature. Almost fifty years before Les Types, the authors of Paris au dix-neuvième siècle had also asserted that they would be presenting the genuine chiffonnier, arguing that had they been unscrupulous types, they would have presented “un chiffonnier de fantaisie, impossible partout ailleurs que dans les rêves vaporeux de notre imagination fantastique” (67). Instead, they claim, “nous avons voulu voir, avant d’écrire.” Of course, what Naomi Schor calls the “obsession to submit the entire social body to exhaustive scrutiny and record,” the “obsessive desire to expose and inventory the real” (215) is one of the hallmarks of panoramic literature, and Champsaur is no exception.

But in Les types de Paris, Champsaur seems to be going one step further: “De tous les êtres de nuit que niche Paris moderne,” he writes, “— filles, gommeux, chiffonniers — il ne sont pas, ces derniers, les mois curieux à observer, s’ils sont, cependant, les moins connus”(139). Not content with exposing the real, Champsaur also aims to prove the unreliability of his predecessors. Those other accounts, he suggests, don’t really know their subject matter; Champsaur, on the other hand, presumably does.

Champsaur obviously saw some merit in his contribution to Les Types, for he republished it in his own collection of sketches, Masques Modernes, later that year.
He sets out to prove this in several key ways.

Firstly, he asserts his pseudo-scientific prowess by prefacing his exploration of the métier with "un peu de statistique; quelques détails": he states the number of chiffonniers in Paris (60,000), of which he claims three-quarters are *coureurs* — he likens them to the *camelot*, or peddler — and the rest *placiers*, or the equivalent of the *négotiant patenté*. His knowledge of the basic facts established, Champsaur then sets up an interesting dichotomy that seems to separate the chiffonniers not by status, as he has just suggested, but by geography: right and left bank. On the right bank, then, the chiffonnier inhabits the immediate northwestern suburbs of Paris: Clichy, Levallois, and Saint-Ouen as well as two fairly recently annexed but as yet ungentrified neighborhoods, Montmartre and the rue Damrémont. In a 1903 report on the ragpicking industry in Paris, the authors note that two-thirds of chiffonniers moved out to these extramural neighborhoods after the implementation of Poubelle’s decree in 1884. This emigration was aided by the fact that the official *dépôts de chiffons* were also being moved out of the city, from 35 in 1885-6 to 97 in 1901(22). Even by 1889, Champsaur can assert that these neighborhoods, “appartient un peu au chiffonnier” (140). There may well be hesitation

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113 As late as 1897, a *Le Gaulois* article stated that the chiffonniers had “une vraie colonie dans la plaine Clichy,” while the area around the rue Damrémont remained “un enchevêtrement de baraques misérable enfouies dans les lilas, les buissons et les herbes folles, hantés de chiffonniers, d’apaches, de vagabond, de marginaux et d’artistes de tous poils” until the construction of the Avenue Junot in 1910.
in that “appartient un peu,” but the “petites baraques” (141) do actually belong to these chiffonniers. To call them houses would be to exaggerate; they are strange, hodge-podge homes created of others’ castoffs, “des cahutes faites de débris de toutes sortes, comme des nids d’oiseaux,” as Armand Villetta would describe them ten years after Champsaur. Our author’s 1889 description reads like a catalogue of the kind of debris Villetta means: “constructions et mélanges rudimentaires de plâtras, de lattes, de planches, de morceaux de tapis, de vieilles descentes de lit, de tringles de fer, de cercles de tonneaux, défait et allongés, de détritus” (140).

Here, Champsaur is employing a typically panoramic narrative method: presenting himself as a tourist or traveler, depicting the terrain or subject matter to be discovered as decidedly Other, and offering the reader a safe way to experience that from his or her own home. In The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White claim that bourgeois textual representations of the nineteenth-century urban slum bring the inhabitants of those slums “into the bourgeois study and drawing room, to be read as objects of horror, contempt, pity, and fascination” — they make “the grotesque visible whilst keeping it at an untouchable distance” (137). Consider again how Champsaur begins his piece by saying that the chiffonniers are not “les moins curieux à observer, s’ils sont, cependant, les moins connus” (139). By asserting his ethnographic interest and socio-scientific method, he assures his reader that should she choose to read his portrayal of the unknown territory of chiffonnage, its secrets will no longer be silent, invisible; its denizens no longer unknown. Once he has cast the Otherness of the
chiffonnier within the context of the language, class, and culture of the center, his hitherto unknown, liminal, and therefore anxiety-producing subject matter can be deciphered, recast in a different light, and, as we shall see, perhaps neutralized.

First, though, let us look at how Champsaur describes the chiffonnier and his habitat, for he paints a picture of a character whose interstitial, neither-this-nor-that status is reflected in his *milieu*. In the author’s description of the ragpickers’ homes, for example, he confers an unsettling, almost uncanny quality unto the seemingly random repurposing of things built for other purposes by this “caricature macabre de propriétaire” (140). Commodities designed for the interior, such as rugs and carpet fragments, are placed alongside broken barrel hoops to create a shelter that is both interior and exterior at once: “mélanges rudimentaires de plâtres, de lattes, de planches, de morceaux de tapis, de vieilles descentes de lit, de tringles de fer, de cercles de tonneaux, défaits et allongés, de détritus” (140). The chaos suggested by such a residence is mirrored by the morally confused life that goes on inside it, in “une seule chambre… pêle-mêle, filles et garçons, vivent, dormant ou aiment, en un grouillement.” Then, in what seems like a parody of urban life, there is a wine seller and a dram shop “parmi les huttes,” where the smell of absinthe — of escape — blends with the rudest reminder of everyday life, the stench of human waste. Even nature seems confused here: the wind enters these shanties, while the land around them appears shunned by country and city alike, dotted sporadically with but a few stunted plants, “les terrains vagues et sales d’une herbe maigre, fleurie ça et là de chardons et de pissenlits” (140).

The confusion on the right bank, however, seems harmless when compared to the
chiffonniers’ residences on the left bank of the Seine. These are the infamous urban
*cités*, la cité Doré and la cité Jeanne d’Arc,\(^{114}\) as well as the Butte-aux-Cailles, a *lieu de mémoire*, to borrow a term from Pierre Nora, still rich with the collective memory of the
Commune. In a short paragraph, Champsaur manages to address three of the principal
bourgeois fears surrounding marginal characters and spaces: crime, disease, and violence.
Here, Champsaur suggests, in the “atmosphère brutale de truanderie modernisée” of these
inner-city chiffonniers’ haunts, the “tortueuses ruelles” and “étroites impasses” “abritent”
the ragpicker, as if he were a criminal in need of protection from the law. Disease-ridden
“chien étiques,” “rodent” these narrow alleys, their hungry, searching bodies a
displacement of the chiffonniers’ own. And in the cité Doré, it is not just the chiffonnier’s
legendary *crochet* that serves as a weapon — these ragpickers have actual weapons too,
and they are used at the slightest provocation. “Une carte mal abattue, un regard de fille,
— ça se comprend, — et les couteaux au clair” (141).

The cité Doré is what Dominique Kalifa, in “Crime Scenes: Criminal Topography
and the Social Imaginary in Nineteenth-Century Paris,” would deem a “crime scene” —
one of those parts of the urban landscape that becomes synonymous with the fear of
crime but also, in its very topography, its twisted alleys and dark *ruelles*, helps explain
that crime. Kalifa argues that such scenes were important factors in the “social

\(^{114}\) See RW.ERROR - Unable to find reference:doc:5321c924638a9196355f1b0b

The section “communautés chiffonnières” (13–16) looks at the conditions of these *cités*
and discourse concerning insalubrity and immorality that surrounded them.
appropriation of space” (175) in that they served “as an active force of cohesion and solidarity” (176). The frequency with which this particular space recurs in panoramic texts suggests repeated attempts to appropriate this “faubourg impossible, plus loin que le Japon, plus inconnu que l’intérieur de l’Afrique” (Privat d'Anglemont 173).

The third aspect of the vraisemblance of Champsaur’s text over those he denigrates is the net effect of the ‘visual-verbal ensemble’ created by his words and Raffaëlli’s sketches. The chiffonniers were the types for which the author was most celebrated, and his images add something akin to an expert’s stamp of authenticity to the text. Raffaëlli returned again and again to the chiffonniers throughout his career: two of the four works he submitted to the Salon officiel featured ragpickers: Chiffonnier and La Rentrée des chiffonniers (Cannon 49). When he held his first solo exhibition in March 1884, the catalogue listed, under the subheading “Portrait-types de gens du bas peuple,” the following works: Chiffonnier allumant sa pipe (1884); Chiffonnier et chien; Chiffonnier assis sur sa hotte, Chiffonnier racommodant sa hotte, and Chiffonnier; the “Scènes des moeurs” section featured Deux chiffonniers rentrant and La rentrée des chiffonniers; the “Caractères de la banlieue” included Chiffonnier au bord des carriers, Chiffonnier éreinté, eau forte and a Tête de Chiffonnier (Raffaëlli 7–17). He would continue to depict ragpickers into the twentieth century, and two of the earlier of these “late” paintings — La butte des chiffonniers — also known as Le terrain vague — and
Chez le père Lenglumé, marchand de chiffons — are reproduced in Les types de Paris. ¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Other mid-century artists depicted the ragpicker: Bonvin in 1853; Rousseau in 1859; Manet circa 1865–70. In photography, Nègre captured a young ragpicker in 1850, but the most iconic images are those of Atget.
Fig 9. Raffaëlli, *Le Terrain vague* (1889)
Raffaëlli’s chiffonniers are always of the extramural, right bank sort. It is hard to see their faces; often they are little more than figures hunched over the pile of debris they have just overturned on the ground, or buckling under the weight of their hotte. As in *Le Terrain Vague* above (also known as *La Butte des chiffonniers* and reprinted in *Les types de Paris*), Raffaëlli sets his ragpickers against a backdrop of *terrain vague*, patched with stunted, yellow, sickly grass and broken fences, populated by painfully skinny horses, cats, dogs — even chickens. It contains, as TJ Clark would put it, the visual representation of “all the epithets applied to the banlieue—sad, grey, desolate, ruined, even the vague of terrain vague — [that] had been used too often” (27). In these paintings, the sky is wide open, bleak and grey. In *La rentrée des chiffonniers* (from which the two dog portraits illustrating this section were taken) a far-off factory chimney churns smoke into the air.\(^{116}\)

In *Chez le père Lenglumé—marchand de chiffons*, the presence of a chiffonnier’s wagon alerts us to the fact that we are probably dealing with a placier and not a coureur. We can make out two or three figures inside the patchwork hut, while outside the male

\(^{116}\) The smokestack, symbol of the inevitability of encroaching industrialization, had been a hallmark of the impressionist painting of the 1870s. See Manet’s *Argenteuil* (1874), of course, but also Pissarro’s *L’Usine, Saint-Ouen l’Aumône* (1873), Guillaumin’s 1873 *Soleil couchant à Ivry*, and Monet’s 1874 *Le Pont de Péage à Argenteuil* and 1877 *Argenteuil, la berge en fleurs*. For an excellent discussion of the role of such symbols, see Clark (166–200).
chiffonnier sits, resting on his *hotte*, surrounded by the day’s bounty. We can make out the discarded fashions of a much wealthier man — a top hat, some lamps — and behind that again, a pile of *chiffons* that reaches more than halfway up the wall. A half-filled wine jug rests within arm’s reach, testimony perhaps to the type’s much-touted proclivity for alcoholism, which, as Susanna Barrows suggests, had become “a code word for working class irrationality” in the years following the Commune. Raffaëlli’s sketches and Champsaur’s text work remarkably well together here, for they create a consistent and somewhat picturesque discourse on one chiffonnier type while either ignoring the other, even less desirable kind altogether (Raffaëlli) or limiting the description of him to one paragraph (Champsaur).

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117 Champsaur also makes reference to the chiffonnier’s alleged alcoholism, mentioning “un vieux” who hasn’t eaten for fifteen years but “vit en absorbant quotidiennement huit litres de vin, — sans compter les gouttes” (142).
Fig 10. Raffaëlli, “Chez le père Lenglumé, marchand de chiffons” (Les Types 143)
Having established his authority on his subject matter, though, Champsaur then does something quite curious. He performs a kind of rehabilitation of these same right bank chiffonniers, and he does so by removing them from acceptable combinations of human bodies. They are “lavés, peignés” — a model for reformist health their ‘natural’ habitat. Now, then, we have the chiffonnier at leisure — and in the same location to which many of the lower working classes flocked on the weekend: the fortifications.

What had been a “grouillement” of bodies in a confused and filthy environment becomes, on a Sunday, “des couples,” morally and safety officers — and what is more, “les gars sont en blouse… les femmes, en robe simplette…” They are dressed not only according to their gender, but also in the recognizable uniform of the more “acceptable” working classes, the wage earners.

The fortifications were considered a crime scene par excellence in the 1880s, prowled by the kind of ruthless types suggested by Aristide Bruant’s “À Saint-Ouen”: “C’est à côté des fortifs, on n’y voit pas de gens comifs” (qtd. in Kalifa 183). The area’s bad reputation, however, was closely linked to the nocturnal activities that went on there, whereas it was also well known as a working class leisure space during the day.

Nevertheless, the fact that Champsaur places his cleaned-up chiffonniers in this culturally significant spot would have doubtless suggested to the contemporary reader that behind the shirts and combed hair there still lay the potential for even these redeemable ragpickers to become criminal. Here in the in-between zone of the fortifications, the chiffonniers of the right bank could go either way.

“You can never be too careful,” Champsaur seems to be saying, “But look! See
how like us they could be?” In fact, he moves from using the third person pronoun “ils” — “Ils se rassemblent, se reconnaissent, échangent des bonjours, des bécots” — to the more inclusive “on” — “On boit, on mange, on joue… On s’amuse franchement” (141). One way to deal with the kind of threat posed by these kind of potentially violent economically and geographically mobile figures was, as we saw in our discussion of the political conversations around Poubelle’s decree, to attempt to sedentarize and regularize them, to assimilate them to the rest of society. Its literary equivalent would be to include them in an album of the city’s types, to make them appear to belong to the city — to give the readers of Les types de Paris the impression that such figures could be contained. In his description of chiffonniers at leisure, Champsaur has, in a way, annexed the more salvageable ragpickers to the city in a move that could be seen to mirror the city council’s offer to provide out-of-work chiffonniers with regular, paid employment as street sweepers and garbage collectors.

Marin Young posits that the spate of works exploring the industrial banlieue and the zone “signal the existence of a market for such picturesque misery in the early 1880s” (250). But to render the miserable picturesque is to make it, well, less miserable: it

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118 In a similar vein, although he is more concerned with the producers of this literature than its readers, Richard Griffiths stresses the “middle-class fascination with low-life haunts” "The Chateau-Rouge and the Pere Lunette: Insights into the 'slumming' culture of late nineteenth-century France." French Cultural Studies 24.1 (2013)4 Print. in an article about nineteenth-century literary slumming, by which he means the habit of ostensibly bourgeois writers such as Huysmans and Bonnetain of frequenting ‘dangerous’
becomes something to look at, to admire, rather than something with which to empathize. In fact, we could argue that the discourse on chiffonniers created by the combination of Champsaur’s writing and Raffaëlli’s paintings not only makes the chiffonnier less empathetic, it estheticizes and commodifies him. *Les chiffonniers* brings together ethnographic authority, professional reputation, and appropriation of another way of life to create a discourse that reduces independent, mobile, and socially discrete figures into an unthreatening and ultimately assimiliable version of themselves. The collectable chiffonnier, the curated and edited *type*, is also the neutralized and sedentarized chiffonnier. His inauspicious, interstitial mobility — both physical and sociocultural — is brought into the album of “Frenchness” through a process of forced inclusion and then sold as an object to be consumed by a bourgeois readership.

This dissertation’s final chapter also deals with mobility, specifically the shifting identity of “Paris” at the end of the 19th Century. I look at three different texts in *Les types de Paris*, Jean Richepin’s “Types des fêtes foraines,” Zola’s “Bohèmes en villégiature” and Daudet’s “Tournées de Province.” In each of these texts, the meaning of Paris and what it means to be from Paris changes; ultimately, I argue, the “Paris” they claim to reference starts to lose its meaning, seeps outside its borders, becomes impossible to define.

locales such as the Père-Lunette and then reporting back with bravado at their next literary salon.
CHAPTER 4: RE-PLACING “PARIS” — THE NEW CARTOGRAPHY

The identities of place are always unfixed, contested and multiple. And the particularity of any place is, in these terms, constructed not by placing boundaries around it and defining its identity through counterposition to the other which lies beyond, but precisely (in part) through the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections to that 'beyond'. Places viewed this way are open and porous. … (Massey 5)

History tells us that on January 1, 1860, Paris went from being a city of twelve arrondissements to a city of twenty. The surface area of the capital doubled – from 3300 to 7000 hectares – and the population followed suit, growing from 1 to 1.7 million overnight. Reality, though, is never as neat as the history books, and the newly rewritten boundaries of the city proved themselves to be increasingly fluid. The Paris depicted and dissected in the panoramic literature of the mid-1840s would have been spatially and socially unrecognizable to the younger contributors to Les types de Paris in 1889; in the almost half-century that separated the two eras, the work of capital and construction necessitated a redrawing of its map. When the city moved, literature moved with it: Balzac’s inner city morphed into the naturalists’ banlieue, via the outer boulevards, the fortifications, and the zone. In an increasingly industrialized and centralized society, city encroaches on country and vice versa; with the birth of a new leisure class, Paris blends into province. The definition of where the city ends and the country begins is muddied by developments in transportation, while the quest for work and leisure draws travelers to the city just as it facilitates the urbanite’s exploration beyond the official urban boundary.

In Chapter Three, I argued that Champsaur and Raffaëlli’s discourse on chiffonniers, like the political discourse on ragpickers in 1880s France, tried to annex
those disturbingly interstitial and marginal *types* to the center, to reduce their difference.

In this chapter, I look at another kind of annexation, at representations of the urban and urban types in *Les types de Paris* that are not actually part of the cartographically defined city. I argue that geographic upheaval should be considered alongside its sociocultural corollaries in the list of anxiety-producing facets of middle-class life in fin-de-siècle Paris. Mobility, fluidity, a *va-et-vient* between the rural and the urban, these came to characterize a city that stretched not just to newly incorporated outer boulevards and faubourgs, but the fortifications, the zone, and the day trip destinations along the Seine — even while it was still cartographically and architecturally defined by its walls.

I focus on three contributions to *Les types de Paris* in which the definition of “Paris” is in flux: Émile Zola’s “Bohémiens en villégiature,” Jean Richepin’s “Types des fêtes foraines,” and Alphonse Daudet’s “Tournées de province.” In each of these texts, Paris seems boundaried but borderless, and in each of them the lack of a border, of a clearly demarcated end to the city and start to *elsewhere*, exemplifies another crisis of distinction.119

In *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre argues that “The dominant form of space, that of the centres of wealth and power, endeavors to mould the spaces it

119 Henri Mitterand’s argument about the novel holds equally true here: “L’espace roman-esque n’est pas un donné immédiat, un référent géographique auto-suffisant, mais une forme-sens construite, semiotisée pour les besoins de la fiction, modelée par la vision, les objectifs narratifs, l’héritage intertextuel du romancier” (18). Narrated place is a carefully constructed text.
dominates (i.e., peripheral spaces), and it seeks, often by violent means, to reduce the obstacles and resistance it encounters there” (49). In *Les types de Paris*, the attempted reduction of the difference of peripheral spaces (i.e. their incorporation and absorption into the now-fluid geography that is “Paris”) is a logical, spatial continuation of its reduction of people to type, of the “system of differences whose primary purpose would seem to lie in the reduction of alterity” (Sieburth 176) Benjamin detected in the *Physiologies*. I want to suggest, however, that these efforts to reduce the difference of and on the periphery ultimately fail, because the “center” they try to assert is no longer locatable. Ultimately, then, what *Les types de Paris* ends up suggesting is the absence of a center in the face of mobility, modernity, change.

**The Changing Geography of Paris**

With few exceptions, the panoramic texts of the 1840s comprehended the city in a strictly geographical sense, as existing within the confines of the city walls. Here is Paul de Kock in the introduction to 1843’s *La Grande Ville*: “Nous trouvons que la grande ville offre assez de choses à voir, à observer, sans qu’il soit besoin de sortir de son enceinte.” In 1843, the city limits were obviously marked by the *mur des fermiers généraux* and the tax gates, or *barrières*, that punctuated it. “D’ailleurs,” continues Kock, “Versailles n’est plus Paris ; la ville finit à la barrière ; nous n’irons donc pas extra-muros” (5). Here, of course, Kock justifies his text’s departure from the genre’s eighteenth-century master, Mercier’s *Tableau de Paris* (which inevitably, given that it
was written and published prior to the Revolution, saw Versailles and Paris as two sides of the same coin) on the basis of historical difference and cartographic and fiscal “truth” — if the legal and fiscal responsibilities and power of the city end at its gates, then it is only natural that attempts at its representation do the same.  

If we were to use the terminology of the philosopher Edward S. Casey, we could perhaps think of Kock and his contemporaries’ representations of 1840’s Paris as representations of a “site” rather than a “place.” Sites, Casey writes in “Do places have edges?” are “spaces that are strictly delimited, determined in advance by overriding considerations ranging from issues of exact location and cartographic accuracy to the character of infinite space” (70). Whether or not the 1840s city actually ended at the tax gates, then, what is important is that its chroniclers deemed it to end there. In a way, to view and represent “Paris” as a predetermined site with a border falls wholly within the logic of the panoramic project itself.

Casey contrasts site to place, which, he writes in The Fate of Place, his comprehensive philosophical history of the concept, “brings with it the very elements sheared off in the planiformity of site: identity, character, nuance, history” (xiii). “Places are not static entities, mere sectors of pre-established spaces,” he adds, again contrasting

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120 Of course, by taking the definition of “Paris” very literally, Kock is also granting himself permission to draw his own limits, to stop.
them to sites – indeed, “place itself has no definitive edge, no set limit” (70). It is this limitless notion of place, its capacity for liminality, that is of particular interest to me here. While, says Casey, “the edges of sites are considered borders – that is, strictly determined and demarcated edges… the edges of place are boundaried. This means they exhibit a porosity and vagueness that allows them to be at once ever-changing and yet stable enough to serve as identifiable edges of places” (71). It is my contention that in

122 Here, Casey is arguing against the geographers Yi-Fu Tuan and Tim Cresswell, for whom it is place that is “static” (Cresswell 10) or “pause” (Tuan 6) and space as that which allows movement. Exploring the myriad definitions of space and place, which vary hugely and sometimes even oppose one another, even within geography, is far beyond the scope of this dissertation. The classic discussion on the matter is Gregory and Urry (1985). For an excellent recent overview of the debates in the field, see John Agnew’s chapter on “Space and Place” in the SAGE Handbook of Geographical Knowledge.

123 While I find Casey’s distinction between bordered sites and boundaried places to be particularly useful, I am less generally convinced by his phenomenological and politically neutral idea of place as a kind of being-in-the-world. I view place, or at least the meaning ascribed to place, as socially constructed, the result of human forces and social processes, and in this I follow David Harvey (1996: 210–248). To allow for the constructed nature of places is to allow for their destruction and/or reconstruction, to accept their essential mobility over time. In this formulation, the authors of Les types de Paris, for whom the borderless nature of the place known as “Paris” is one of the reasons
Les types de Paris, a new Paris emerges, a Paris with boundaries instead of borders, a city whose limits are mutable and which, despite the best efforts of the volume’s authors, cannot be defined.

The first changes to the city’s geography were contemporaneous with the publication of early panoramic literature; their effect, however, would not be felt for several years. Even before Haussmann had become prefect of the Seine, the inner-city quartiers of Arcis and Lombards, home to many of the garnis in which nomadic workers crammed two or three to a room, had been slated for demolition. Rambuteau, who was it has become unheimlich, try to counter the socially constructed, boundaried place with a spectacularly constructed bordered site.

Indeed, for all Haussmann claimed his urban vision to be entirely original, a number of scholars have pointed out that many of the moves he made were in fact a continuation of policies implemented before he came into office. See David Jordan, Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann; Sharon Marcus, Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London and “Haussmannization as Anti-Modernity: The Apartment House in Parisian Urban Discourse, 1850-1880”; La Modernité avant Haussmann: Formes de l'espace urbaine à Paris 1801-1853, ed. Karen Bowie; David Harvey, Paris, Capital of Modernity; Nicholas Papayanis, Planning Paris Before Haussmann; Nicholas Green, The Spectacle of Nature. In his dissertation on Haussmann’s legacy, The Fragility of Modernity: Infrastructure and Everyday Life in Paris, 1870–1914, Peter S. Soppelsa argues that many of the
prefect at the time, proposed their destruction for moral reasons — they were believed to be dens of iniquity, of loose morals and looser women — but, as Pinol and Garden suggest, “l’objectif était avant tout politique” (25): contemporary social observers believed these quartiers to have housed many of the insurgents during the 1830 and 1848 revolutions, for they were the site of barricades both times. Their dark, winding streets, which had been memorialized in Eugène Sue’s Les Mystères de Paris, were dangerously close to the Hôtel de Ville and the Assemblée nationale.

Internal defense systems found their external mirror in the Enceinte de Thiers, a continuous wall of fortifications built some distance from the actual city (and tax) limits, still demarcated by the Mur des fermiers généraux, between 1841 and 1846. Between the tax line and the zone non-aedificandi, “a no-man’s land beyond the civilized pale, marked by mud, squalor, and shantytowns” (Jordan 285) that stretched 250 meters from the fortifications, lay what became known as the “petite banlieue.” Villages such as Belleville, Charonne, Bercy, Grenelle, Passy, les Batignolles, Montmartre, la Chapelle became part of this hybrid zone, whose inhabitants “furent exemptées de l’octroi et de l’impositions sans pourtant jouir des avantages accordés aux Parisiens” (Chadych & Leborgne 153).

But the line diving city and suburb ran deeper than the octroi alone: “More rural than urban,” writes David P. Jordan of the petite banlieue, which he claims was “sharply properties we associate with the process of “Haussmannization” also actually occurred after he had left office, under the Third Republic (33).
separated physically, psychologically, and socially from Paris by the tax barrier, poor and largely unurbanized, beyond the reach of even the rudimentary sanitary provisions of pre-Haussmann Paris” (285). Nevertheless, pioneering industrialists eager to escape city taxes built their factories between the Mur des fermiers généraux and the new fortifications, in what has now become the sixteenth arrondissement, or along the Canal Saint–Martin, and the reduced cost of living beyond the city walls meant that the population of the petite banlieue tripled between 1840 and 1856, when it constituted one quarter of the population of “Grand Paris” (Pinol & Garden: 27).

However, the 1860 annexation of these neighborhoods meant the end of their tax-exempt status. Skyrocketing prices caused many of the area’s denizens to set up temporary abodes in the new “zone,” an 800-foot wide plot of land that separated the city walls from the banlieue proper. Situated just beyond the fortifications, the “zone non-aedificandi” was designed primarily to improve the army’s chances of sighting approaching enemies; construction, therefore, was formally prohibited there. Nevertheless, in the years of the Third Republic, as James Cannon suggests in his dissertation on the literary depictions of the zone, “it was best known for its sprawling shantytowns and their more conspicuous minorities of ragpickers, gypsies and carnival performers” (127) — examples of which we have seen in our discussion of Champsaur, and will revisit in this chapter, when he look at Richepin’s Types des fêtes foraines.

The fluid nature of “Paris” in Les types de Paris is in a way a geographical mirror of the social categories in flux that fuelled what this dissertation terms a “crisis of distinction” in fin-de-siècle France. As such, they too pose a certain threat, hint at a city
that no longer feels knowable, that does not feel like at home. Indeed, the sense of
dislocation evidenced by the writers of *Les types de Paris* suggests a bewildered, uneasy
anxiety. These authors’ representations of a mobile Paris — and their inclusion in a
volume that claims to “faire connaître le nouveau Paris, le vrai” — can be seen as a
variety of tactics employed in an attempt to fix a city on the move, and once again make
“Paris” feel like home.

Later in this chapter, I will argue that Richepin and Daudet’s contributions to *Les
types de Paris* both call the notion of a Paris that can feel like “home,” a Paris that is
actually visible, into question. This is not so much the case in Zola, who is instead
concerned with ridiculing the bohemians who head to the country in search of “une
partie de campagne” and then try to impose their urban habits on that countryside. I
argue, though, that for all his ironizing, Zola is actually mirroring the behavior of his
characters, trying to claim his ownership of turf — the city — that may no longer feel
like his own.

**Slumming on the Edge: Zola’s “Bohèmes en villégiature”**

Pour rien au monde le vrai Parisien ne voudrait d’une maison de campagne
d’où il n’entendrait pas le sifflet de la locomotive. En vous montrant son
jardin, il vous dit avec orgueil: “Le chemin de fer passe à deux pas ; j’entends
tous les trains. Son rêve serait qu’on pût bâtir les villes à la campagne, ou
transporter la campagne à Paris. (Fournel, *Paris nouveau* 92)

“Les voies ferrées,” claimed Maxime du Camp in 1870, “ont imprimé un
mouvement aux habitudes de vie sédentaires des Parisiens” (qtd in Csergo 38). As Julia Csergo suggests, by the third part of the nineteenth century, the leisure spaces surrounding Paris were themselves part of “une imagerie devenue mythique” (3–4) represented via “un nouveau langage du paysage qui incorpore les termes du voyage et les pratiques sociales: le train dans la campagne, les routes, les canaux, les ponts, mais aussi la silhouette des Parisiens qui s’abandonnent aux joies champêtres” (24).

Zola’s contribution to Les types de Paris, “Bohèmes en villégiature,” is both part of a new lexicon and an ironic commentary on what he, in a July 25, 1881 article for Le Figaro, named “un goût immodéré” (Aux champs) for the semi-suburban countryside, or what Patricia Higgonnet deems the “playground” of the petite bourgeoisie (307). Not that people from the upper echelons of society did not also travel to Argenteuil and the resort towns that surrounded it, but the railway had enabled the petit bourgeois to travel outside the city too. The trains gave the aspiring bourgeois access to a semblance of nature, to those “landscapes arranged for urban use” that TJ Clark explores in The Painting of Modern Life (147–204). The text was originally entitled “Le Parisien en villégiature” and

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125 This article provides an excellent overview of the importance of the railway to the leisure habits of Parisians in the second half of the 19th century.

126 For a portrayal of Paris on a Sunday when all the city dwellers were leaving for the suburbs, see Roger Marx’s contribution to Les Types de Paris, “Dimanches de Paris” (91–96).
published in the *Messager de L’Europe* in November 1877. While it may not provide us with a picture of Paris that is unique to 1889, it does demonstrate the enduring appeal of periurban leisure spaces in the 19th Century — and not just on the part of the petite bourgeoisie. Consider the obsession with Fontainebleau so masterfully critiqued by Jean Borie in *Une forêt pour les dimanches* and ironized in Flaubert’s *L’Éducation sentimentale* and the Goncourts’ *Manette Salomon*. Consider, too, the Argenteuil of Monet and Manet’s paintings, explored in detail by TJ Clark in the third chapter of *The Painting of Modern Life*.

The “bohemian” group (who would almost certainly be called *bobos* today) at whom Zola pokes fun consists of two painters, a sculptor, a journalist, a poet, two women (professions, if any, unknown), and another artist, an unwelcome hanger on named Planchet. The place of villégiature is Gloton, “un désert quinze lieues de Paris” (19) and a

127 The slippage from the singular to the plural, and from the general to the specific is potentially interesting, but probably has more to do with the place and form of publication than anything else. Zola’s piece for the *Messager de l’Europe* was discrete, one piece of literary journalism amongst others, but not designed as part of a larger study of Parisian mores à la *Les types de Paris*. “Le Parisien,” then, signified middle-class and artistic, a sort of global Parisian that excluded the working classes as well as the bankers, stock brokers, and politicians that constituted the urban elite. The format of *Les types de Paris* has no space for such a “Parisian,” since all its *types* are ostensibly just that. Here, then, Zola has to be more specific.
popular destination for daytrippers and holidaymakers alike. The “farce” (for Zola subtitles the story thus) consists of one of the women, egged on by the others, pretending to fall in love with the unwelcome party, leading him on, telling him she’ll run away back to Paris with him — and then actually doing so.

Of course, the other “farce” of this story is a spatial one: the “farce” of a leisure-oriented, commodified half-nature populated by the petite bourgeoisie. As more people traveled to these popular playgrounds, they became less and less rural and more and more Parisian, with regattas, dance halls, sidewalk cafés — even art exhibitions. Not that this always mattered, for it was still possible to find some kind of nature, even if that nature was tinged with irony and other Parisians. In a way, the cultural annexing of these areas to Paris is simply an extension of Haussmann’s annexation of the former faubourgs to the city in 1860. In fact, Alain Faure notes that the act of populating suburban space by working class Parisians was often referred to as “l’émigration parisienne” and that space itself “la colonie parisienne” ("De l'urbain à l'urbain" 155).

In “Bohèmes en villégiature,” Zola, too, employs an extended metaphor of territorial occupation, of war, to describe the relationship of his urban bohemians to the

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129 Absent from Zola’s view are the smokestacks and other signs of industrialization that were a reality in even these wealthy suburbs and whose verisimilitude in art Clark skillfully deciphers in The Painting of Modern Life.

130 As TJ Clark says, Parisians still wanted to experience the difference between the city and these leisure spaces, and the very act of travelling to somewhere provided a sufficient foil to the city to make living in it both bearable and desirable (199).
landscape they temporarily inhabit. The young bohemians bring Paris with them in the form of their behavior, their ideas, their dress. They shock the locals, whom they leave “stupéfaits” by their lack of modesty: “Il y a aussi des dames, des dames qui ne se gênent pas et qui retirent tranquillement leur chemise derrière un tronc d’arbre pour prendre un bain en pleine Seine” (20). Their “théories, des discussions furibondes qui durent jusqu’à minuit” keep the “paysans tremblants” from sleep; in fact, they terrify them (29). This is both a spatial and a cultural invasion. Cultural in that the debates and conversations Zola’s urbanites have about art prevent the locals from sleeping, hold them hostage to their fear. And then spatial in that the Parisians literally storm the countryside: “Il y a le petit village que la bande a pris d’assaut,” Zola tells us, adding that “les paysans stupéfaits voient depuis le moi de mai des messieurs étranges envahir le pays” (19). Zola’s bohemians not only invade this place, they occupy it. They talk loudly, bringing the trappings of the Parisian salon with them to the islands they “conquer.” They “gesticulent, se battent avec les arbres, conquièrent les iles où il parlent si fort, qu’ils mettent en fuite des vols de corbeaux” (19). Their movements across space become a conquest of sorts; an example of what Alain Faure has called “cette sorte de colonisation insidieuse des campagnes par la Ville” (“La ville et sa banlieue” 19). Yet, Zola seems to

131 An article Zola wrote in 1881 for Le Figaro, entitled “Aux Champs,” also suggests an invasion of sorts: “To the Fields!” Zola is well aware of the role that artists have played in the creation of the Parisian playground, as his comments in “Aux Champs” make clear (he blames everyone from Rousseau to the Impressionists), but he does not extend his analysis to include the part played by himself and his contemporaries.
be asking us, what are they conquering really? An army of crows and trees? Some islets in the Seine?

Clark deftly describes the message of irony such as Zola’s in *The Painting of Modern Life*: it was “that these people knew nothing but Paris, and took Paris with them wherever they went; that that was the key to their vulgarity—and because they were vulgar, they could never be bourgeois” (155). But Zola’s ironic detachment from his characters’ paltry attempts at domination is at once dismissive and defensive. Zola and his fellow commentators on urban life are asserting their own difference from these hoardes, but in reality, these petits bourgeois are simply emulating the behavior of the wealthier bourgeois a decade before. In an 1868 article for *L’Événement Illustré*, for example, Zola wrote of Claude Monet: “Comme un vrai Parisien, il emmène Paris à la campagne, il ne peut peindre un paysage sans y mettre des messieurs et des dames en toilette. La nature paraît perdre de son intérêt pour lui, dès qu'elle ne porte pas l'empreinte de nos mœurs.” Jean Borie, in *Une fôret pour les dimanches*, talks in a similar way about the Barbizon of the 1860s, calling it a “vrai et faux village, échantillon quelconque de ruralité française et colonie bohème” (287).

The values expressed by Zola’s bohemian characters are those of aspiring littérateurs, not ones of his own wealth and lofty discernment. Consider the following scene, which highlights both the nature of the farce and the preposterousness of the characters: Louise, the double-crossing dame, arranges a parody of an adulterous meeting with the unfortunate Planchet on one of the Seine’s islets. She brings him to the extremity of the island, and then agrees to sit right by the water's edge. When the others turn up (as
arranged, of course), Planchet has nowhere to hide but in the water, under a lily pad. He has to fully submerge himself in the fluid, give in to the river, and then remained buried, waiting between life and death: "Enfoncez-vous davantage, murmure Louise. Encore, encore, jusqu'au cou... Là, maintenant, mettez des feuilles de nenufar sur votre tête. Et ne bouger plus." (24). The anaphrodisiac lily both quells the anxious Planchet’s libido and ostensibly saves his life, but he is left looking ridiculous. Yet the fact that Louise chooses him over the pompous partner, and then abandons said partner by hopping on a train (but of course) back to Paris, speaks to the contempt in which Zola holds not only these characters, but the kind of people they represent as well.

If, as Clark suggests, the bourgeoisie was threatened by the claim of the “nouvelles couches sociales” to leisure, because it was “their way of claiming to be part of the bourgeoisie” (155), then I would suggest we read Zola’s ironical stance towards his bohemians as defensive, since they are ostensibly invading his turf — both culturally and geographically. Clark sees the ironic commentators of the 1870s in this way too, suggesting their anxiety about shifting social borders finds a voice in their commentary on the leisure habits of these pretenders. What better way for Zola to assert his own cultural superiority than to turn their villégiature into a farce, and then to include that farce in a collection of Parisian types? By narrativizing the “farce” of the petit bourgeoisie and the half-nature in which their drama unfolds and then sending it to Raffaëlli for Les types de Paris, Zola frames what is essentially an acerbic piece of writing with the pseudo-sociological authority of the type.
On the Edge of the City: Jean Richepin’s “Types des fêtes foraines”

Notre siècle est, dit-on, le siècle de la science et du positivisme. Est-ce que pour cela qu’on voit cette renaissance du merveilleux, cette poussée des foules vers tous les endroits où l’on promet des miracles?

— Marie-François Goron (L’amour à Paris 284)

If, in 1914, l’abbé Louis Bethlehem included most of the contributors to Les types de Paris in his list of “romans à proscire en vertu de la morale chrétienne,” he singled out Jean Richepin for “ses préférences envers les êtres anormaux ou dépravés, les saltimbanques, les bohémiens” (125). In fact, when Richepin published La chanson des gueux in 1876, he was promptly fined, stripped of his civil rights, and imprisoned for a month, and all for offending public morals. In a volume of Les contemporains published the same year as Les types de Paris, Jules Lemaître crowned this “beau saltimbanque” and “chantre des gueux” “un vrai roi de Bohème” (315–316). In fact, this poet, playwright, and novelist not only preferred to write about “êtres anormaux ou dépravés,” he also presented himself as such. The more abhorrent to the state, it seems, the better.

He claimed Gypsy heritage at a time when, as Jean-François Wagniant points out, “[m]ême Français, les tsiganes sont perçus comme étrangers et comme les plus dangereux et les plus vicieux des vagabonds, accusés de tous les maux par une presse haineuse et xénophobe” (2). More specifically, he styled himself a Turanian, a member of a race his biographer Howard Sutton describes as “wild, indisciplined nomads who live
amid dangers and hardships and acknowledge no laws” (117) — these traits, of course, were exactly what made them attractive to Richepin. He was an admirer of those who lived the kinds of unrooted, migrant existence the government, with its “stratégie de fixation des populations” tried hard to repress (Wagniart).

Literary anarchists, argues Jean-François Wagniart, saw the sedentary life as the apotheosis of bourgeois existence (5) and, identifying with the errant poor, rose up against it. Take, for example, this extract from “Les Nomades” from Richepin’s 1884 collection of poetry, *Les Blasphèmes*:

Oui, je suis leur bâtard! Leur sang bout dans mes veines,

Leur sang qui m’a donné cet esprit mécréant.

Cet amour du grand air et des courses lointaines,

L’horreur de l’Idéal et la soif du Néant.

In the last of the “Types des fêtes foraines” that made up his contribution to *Les types de Paris*, Richepin calls the “Bohémiens,” with “leur pas si léger toujours prêt pour s’enfuir” his people, his friends:

Vous lirez dans ces yeux de loups, jaunes et gris,

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133 Wagniart is the primary authority on vagabondage in the nineteenth century. See both “Le poète et l’anarchiste: du côté du pauvrété errante à la fin du XIXe siècle” and *Le Vagabond à la fin du XIXe siècle*. I return to both sources in my section of chiffonniers.
L’amour du changement, l’horreur du sédentaire,
Et la soif de nouveau qui par tout la terre
Fait rôder à jamais ces éternels proscrits (72)

But Richepin was a complicated character. He may well have led a nomadic life for several years,\textsuperscript{134} but he always returned to an increasingly mainstream Parisian existence. In fact, the wisdom he imparts to his reader in the final stanza of this last Forains poem could also be a message to himself: “Et vous serez jaloux de leurs maisons en toile, / Sans racines, sans murs, sans âtre et sans verrou” (72). For while Richpin certainly had a “high, flaunting disdain for the accepted bourgeoisie,” (Wedek: 482) but he was also an “élève de l’École normale, fort en grec, fort en vers latins, fort en thème, fort en tout, à peu près aussi muni de diplômes qu’il se puisse” (Lemaître: 316). In his work, he adopted one identity while eschewing the other, “en n’employant que des mots aussi familiers et particuliers que possible.” But, as Lemaître explains, “ces mots, il semble qu’il les cherche et les accumule avec trop de peine à la fois et de satisfaction; et l’impression directe des choses s’évanouit dans ce labeur de grammarien” (320). Zola, perhaps feeling some competition for the role of portrayer of the people, was of a similar opinion: “On sent que les détails canailles, chez M. Richepin, ne sont pas vécus, qu’il les a plaqués là pour faire de l’effet” (\textit{Documents littéraires}: 148). A decade after the publication of \textit{La chanson des gueux}, claims Jerrold Siegel, “Richepin’s voice grew

\textsuperscript{134} Uncorroborated rumors have him joining a street carnival, wrestling with a strong man, traveling with gypsies, and working as a stevedore at the Bordeaux dockyard (Sutton 52).
calmer, even dreamy and almost mystical in the manner of the Symbolists. His new book, *The Sea*, contained some verses that recalled the cynicism of his earlier work, but also some sentimental scenes of parting, nights under the stars, and even the quiet musings of retired sailors” (275).

I dwell on Richepin’s life because I want to suggest that we can see his desire to depict ‘outsiders’ living on the peripheries of society, his adoption of argot and errancy, his self-claimed Gypsy heritage, his self-identification with the down-and-outs of Parisian society, as the expression of a particularly conflicted modern sensibility that was disgusted by the artifice and consumerism of its time while also, perhaps despite itself, willing to employ that artifice to achieve personal success. As his work became less confrontational and reactionary, so did his views. In 1909, the same year he became a much-admired lecturer at the Université des Annales, Maurice Barrès welcomed him into the “citadel of conservatism” (Sutton: 76) that was the Académie Française, thus ratifying his acceptance into and of the mainstream. Indeed, Richepin committed fully to his new role, serving as a frequent spokesman for the Academy and working assiduously on its dictionary (ibid: 78). Even more surprising is that he signed a manifesto entitled “Pour la culture française” in the Mercure de France on June 16, 1911 whose tone conveyed more than a hint of proto-fascism and whose signatories included Barrès and

In his book on Bohemia, Siegel suggests that Richepin’s affectation of an outsider lifestyle was as much “self-conscious, careerist posing” as it was the “spontaneity” of his youth (278).
Bazin.\textsuperscript{136}

Torn as he was between \textit{bohémien} and \textit{normalien}, it comes as little surprise that Richepin was attracted to “fou paysage” (66) of the fête foraine, itself a fluid site\textsuperscript{137} in both a spatial sense (it was located in the terrain vague between city and country) and a temporal one (the fairground was by nature nomadic, a traveling show).\textsuperscript{138} From its mixture of high and low culture, the everyday and the sublime, the prosaic and the poetic, to the wide swath of social classes that, at least until the late nineteenth century, made up

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{136} After expressing how important it was that French schoolboys learn Greek and Latin, since they are the languages from which French evolved, the manifesto continued: “Au surplus, ce n’est là qu’un épisode dans ce grand mouvement de reviviscence nationale, qu’on sent frémir de toutes parts dans notre jeunesse et qui révèlent ces voeux, ces désirs, ces espérances: sauvegarde, par la protection de nos églises, de l’idéalisme ou de l’art religieux; maintien, par le souhait d’une autorité forte, de notre dignité nationale; quêt de l’héroïsme et de la gloire, développé par le triomphe de récentes inventions françaises” (Qtd. in Sutton 80).
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{137} The etymology of “forain” already speaks to an extraordinary mobility: from “qui est dehors, à l’extérieur” and “étranger” in the 12\textsuperscript{th} Century to “de foires” in the 19\textsuperscript{th}.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{138} If, as Jean-François Wagniart suggests, “[s]ous la IIIe République, la marginalité se construit à travers le paradigme du mauvais pauvre incarné par la pauvreté errante,” (31) then it is easy to see why Richepin would be attracted to not just the gueux, but the wandering poor, the worst of the worst.
\end{quote}
its audience, and the strange half-human creatures it put on display, the fairground occupied an uncertain, in-between territory. It also provided an alternative to the scientific positivism that regulated notions of the mystic and mysterious, a kind of quasi-religious experience that allowed room for unsubstantiated belief in a time when scientific explanation was king.

For the spectators, Richepin suggests, part of the fairground’s appeal lay in not only in the escape from mundanity it offered — what Mallarmé calls “le caractère frérial d’exception à la misère quotidienne qu’un pré, quand l’institue le mot mystérieux de fête, tient des souliers nombreux y piétinant” (29), but also in the reassuring, normalizing function it fulfilled for many of its visitors. In the fourth of his Forains poems, he calls attention to the uncertain but decidedly Other identities of fairground performers — the bearded ladies and elephant men — to reveal the inner monstrosity of the gawking crowd who “pour deux sous vient y bénir son sort / Car le plus laid se voit des formes triomphales / Devant ces stropiats et ces hydrocéphales.” In the space of the fairground, then, the down-and-out, the ugly, the unemployed, the alcoholic — so many types demonized and pathologized by the government and the medical profession for their failure to contribute to the good of the nation — could see themselves as the “normal” ones. How could one not, when the “human specimens” on show included:

…l’avorton dont la caboche semble une outre;

L’éléphantiasique avec sa jambe en poutre;

Le centaure, crétin au mufle de jumard;

L’enfant ayant pour des bras des pinces de homard.
It did not matter that these mystical, unbelievable creatures were mythical ones, that they were not “real” freaks. The fairground entertainers and producers were content to exploit the audience’s desire to see the abhorrent, to negate their own “aberrations” in the face of obvious physical deformity, as long as their “deux sous” continued to make money: “Quelque monstre enfin, vrai, faux; car on les imite; Puisqu’une infirmité fait bouillir la marmite” (69).
Fig 11: Rafaëlli, “Mlle Prudence” (Les types de Paris 70)
One of Raffaëlli’s sketches that accompanies Richepin’s poems features an old woman of harmless appearance whose portrait is captioned “Mlle Prudence, Somnambule” (*sic*) lit dans l’avenir et dans les coeurs” (70; Fig. 10). A mobile subject *par excellence*, the somnambule inhabited a space between the living and the dead, between wakefulness and sleep, between present and past. Scientists believed some sleepwalkers to be subject to hyperesthesia, which property they had “depuis longtemps exploitée au profit du surnaturel” (Yung 518). “Magnetized” sleepers (as they were known) made ‘natural’ clairvoyants and mediums, since they could claim their extraordinary sensitivity made them receptive to spirits and messages from the other world.

In Raffaëlli’s sketch, she is depicted in color and ‘framed’ by black lines, given a certain importance when set against the black-and-white background scene (entitled “Trois heures — la fête bat son plein”) of strongmen, tightrope walkers, and gaping crowds. In a curious mise-en-abîme, her name is writ large in this background scene, dominating the upper-right corner on a sign placed over the wagon that presumably serves as her entresort: “Prudence somnanbule” (*sic*). By foregrounding her in color while also representing her textually in the background, Raffaëlli could be said to be demystifying “les supercheries dont elle avait usé et abusé pendant sa carrière” (Yung 520), unveiling the mystery behind the entresort.

In fact, I would suggest that Raffaëlli’s focus on Mlle Prudence works with Richepin’s poetry to create an overall impression of a world that has not only been lost, but that now only exists in a watered-down, demystified form. For example, Mlle
Prudence could seem at first glance to be a curious choice of focus, given that the original “Mlle Prudence” had been quite a phenomenon around about the time of the original physiologies in the 1840s, but was long gone by the time of Les types de Paris. Yet her renown lived on: in 1872 Pierre Véron had published a play entitled “Messieurs du Tréteau,” which featured a clairvoyant named “Mademoiselle Prudence – somnambule de Paris” who claimed to read “passé, présent, avenir” (173) and in 1897, when the former chef de la Sûreté Marie-François Goron published his memoirs, he claimed that “vous voyez toujours à la foire de Neuilly et à celle du Trône, bonnes d’enfants et soldats faire queue à la porte de la baraque de mademoiselle Prudence ou de mademoiselle Aglaé Mystère” (285). Furthermore, it seems apparent that by the 1880s, “Mlle Prudence” had become the prestigious nom de plume of many a fairground facilitator of communication between the present and the future, the alive and the dead. Nevertheless, the foregrounding of a medium — be she the original or an imitator — is interesting when considered under the lens of the strange push-and-pull between past and future that so often makes Les types de Paris an exercise in nostalgia. Richepin and Raffaëlli’s contribution here, then, becomes a way of revealing the artifice of the materialist modern city. Much in the manner of the tragedian’s joker who speaks more truth than any other character in the play, here the trickery and deception — the constructedness — of the fairground serve to show us what is actually happening.

Richepin was certainly not the only nineteenth-century poet to be drawn to the strange space and characters of the fairground: Baudelaire’s “Le vieux saltimbanque”
and Mallarmé’s “La déclaration foraine”\textsuperscript{139} come to mind. Both later poets are drawn to the interstitiality inherent to the “forain,” perhaps seeing in it the site of a potential true expression of an authentic, hybrid, mobile modern self.\textsuperscript{140} For Richepin, it is the extraordinary alterity of the fairground that is its appeal; for Mallarmé, whose “La déclaration foraine,”\textsuperscript{141} precedes the writing of Les types de Paris by just one year, it is its ordinariness in “je ne sais quel rendez-vous suburbain.” In fact, Mallarmé’s complicated relationship with the ordinary\textsuperscript{142} has, by the time he writes his penultimate prose poem, somewhat crystallized in a belief in the importance of making poetry accessible to the people, of providing access to its beauty, to its solace and security, to all humankind.\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{139} Insightful readings of Mallarmé’s poem include those by Roger Pearson (in Mallarmé and Circumstance); Barbara Johnson (in Critical Difference); Marian Zwerlig Sugano (in The Poetics of the Occasion).

\textsuperscript{140} Indeed, Mallarmé’s poem, which is in fact two poems, a prose poem and a sonnet, itself occupies a curious interstitial space.

\textsuperscript{141} In “L’art et la mode” on August 12, 1887. He would revise it slightly before its later publication, first in La Jeune Belgique in 1890 and then in 1891’s Pages and 1897’s Divigations.

\textsuperscript{142} Cf. Hélène Stafford’s chapter “Vocabulary: Les aptes mots” in Mallarmé and the Poetics of Everyday Life (107–150).

\textsuperscript{143} Roger Pearson provides the following helpful reading of “La déclaration foraine” in Mallarmé and Circumstance: The Translation of Silence: “[O]ne might ‘translate’ Mallarmé’s allegory as follows: the field is the domain of contingent existence
Unlike Baudelaire, for whom the isolated and exiled figure of the saltimbanque stands for the marginalized poet, who can still create marvels amidst the squalor of his situation, or Mallarmé, who seems to see the poet as a circus hawker required to perform in order that his poetry be bought/heard/deemed sufficiently valuable by the public, Richepin’s attraction to the fairground’s characters is, more than the “forme singulière d’identification,” that, in the words of Jean Starobinski, causes modern artists to see “le bouffon, le saltimbanque et le clown” as hyperbolic reflections of both artists and their art (8), an identification with mobility, with freedom, and with the in-between. To represent it is a strategy that speaks at once to his sense of not belonging in the city and the culture of the Third Republic and his exclusion from the true community of Tziganes.

The periphery, rather than simply being the locus of ‘outsiderdom’ for Richepin, was more a site of ‘entre-deux’ where he could both stake himself as the Other of contemporary society and also claim representation of that Other, grafting his carefully and quotidian language; the field as fairground is the domain of a phenomenal and linguistic reality transformed by the poetic act (‘quand l’institue le mot mystérieux de fête’) into somewhere perceivable as being susceptible of a ‘ritual’ or ‘ceremonial’ patterning; the empty booth is the space created by humankind's inarticulate need for reassurance within the dubiety of circumstance and which requires to be filled by this poetic act, this clarifying ‘déclaration’” (113).

144 In this he is following Flaubert, who wrote in a letter dated 8 August 1846, “Le fond de ma nature est, quoi qu’on dise, le saltimbanque” (qtd. in Starobinski 8).
carved Greco-Roman poetry onto the language of a people he claimed as his own. That he molded the language of these ‘Others’ into carefully formed alexandrines and sonnets, could, of course, be seen as the imposition of a dominant, written culture on a marginal, oral one, thereby mirroring the spatial power dynamics to which Lefebvre refers. And yet, while this representation is an appropriation of another’s space as his own, I would argue that, in *Les types de Paris* at least, it is less a colonization than a sort of paternalistic attempt to preserve the disintegrity of a space whose very interstitiality resonated with Richepin’s own. While Richepin certainly did try to present “his” fête foraine, it was not solely a means by which he could publicly identify with himself as an outsider, as a rebel. It also allowed him to represent an ‘outside’ and outsiders with whom he felt an affinity, and this in a way that he found appropriate. To write for the sake of posterity, one might say.

For it is somewhat anachronistic, this fairground to which he serves as our guide in 1889. By the late nineteenth century, intramural spaces such as café concerts and music halls had begun to replicate and even replace many of the attractions of the fête foraine. Music halls, as Jerrold Siegel points out in Modernity and Bourgeois Life, “extended the mix of genres to include circus acts, side-show staples (dwarfs, “ugliest,” fattest, or thinnest people, etc.) and troops of ‘girls’” (473) while café concerts did much the same, if for a more bourgeois crowd.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{145} A detailed reading of the “univers perméable” of the late-century fairground can be found in Evaghêlina Stead’s *Le monstre, le singe, et le foetus*. Stead argues that the adoption of fairground attractions inside the city walls was mirrored by an
Yet while the fairground and the fairground-esque entertainment in the city itself may have shared much in terms of their content, there were still significant differences between them, not the least of which being the social class of the audiences they attracted. Up until the final decades of the 19th Century, the fête foraine had been a site where social classes intermingled; in an 1880 article — where Richepin nonetheless warns that his subject matter is disappearing as he speaks — he describes “des groupes de spectateurs à la mine admiration, toujours les mêmes sur toutes les toiles; un ouvrier, un bourgeois, une dame levant les mains au ciel, et un maréchal de France sabré par son grand cordon cramoisi.”

The same could be said for the music halls, which “[d]espite their connections with popular forms of entertainment… were far from being strictly lower-class locales” (474). By the end of that same decade, however, as Jerrold Siegel increasingly common representation of the proletarian fairground crowd — rather than its exhibits — as monstrous. This, she claims, is evidence of an increasingly blurred line between fairground and town, spectacle and spectator; a re-positioning of what constituted “entertainment” (159–161) and a “place of entertainment”. While her analysis does ignore the crucial question of the spectators’ social class highlighted by Siegel, its focus on “la foire comme un univers perméable, en osmose avec la ville et les lieux de plaisir” spurred much of the research that is represented here.

146 The article, which precedes Richepin’s Forains by at least eight years, shares much of the same vocabulary and ideas, from the unlikely color of the flowers to the naive crowd and the assortment of dogs looking for fleas.
suggests, the price of entry to café-concerts such as the Eldorado, the Folies Bergères, or
the Reine Blanche, where street performers vied for stage time with actors and musicians,
made them the exclusive domain of the bourgeois, since workers could not have afforded
their pleasures (475).

In Les types de Paris, then, Richepin is writing to commemorate a quasi-
mythical time-space that has been adopted and co-opted by capital and the capital. Not
that the fairground was ever really not about money: Baudelaire drew attention to its
mercenary mechanics in the late 1850’s, highlighting the frenzy of emotional spending
amidst the “lumière, poussière, cris, joie, tumulte.” Richepin himself stresses the need to
“faire bouillir la marmite” — in the second of his Forains, he plays on various forms of
the verb “tourner” and the noun “tourniquet” to emphasize the rapid rotations of the
turnstile as visitors pay their entrance fee as well as the dizzying effect of the
entertainment on display. In the third, he suggests that the crowd can disintegrate the
“being,” the identity, of the strongmen (who flex their muscles as if to silently proclaim,
“Voilà ce que nous sommes,”) by beating them in a wrestling match for money (“des
sommes”):

— Ho! ho! ho! Dieu seul peut les vaincre, non les hommes!

Ainsi, ranque, rugit le dab dans l’entonnoir

Du porte-voix. Les gars sont sur le promenoir,

Rablés, cambrés, muets. — Voilà ce que nous sommes.

Disent-ils au public sans parler. Et des sommes
Sont promises à qui dégotera le noir.

— *Attends! Moi, je te vas passer au laminoir!*

C’est un gamin. On veut l’empêcher. — *Tu m’assommes*

However, the centrality of money to the fairground system was in some way offset by the peripheral and temporary geography of the fairground itself: the fairground was beyond both the city’s walls and its taxation system. Furthermore, the transient existence of the *forains* meant that any money made did not necessarily circulate back into the city’s economy. By the late 1880s, as Siegel suggests, the fairground had been integrated into the money-machine that was *fin-de-siècle* Paris, pulled into that “center of wealth and power” identified by Lefebvre. Richepin himself identified the beginnings of this pull inwards as early as 1880, when he pointed out that the *loges* had replaced the *baraques* and the *chemin de fer* had killed the *roulotte*: “Mais regardez bien,” he warned his readers. “Étudiez les types, les moeurs de ce monde, et vous vous apercevrez qu’il commence à ne plus être, comme autrefois, un monde à part.”

In spatial terms, this itinerant world was also in the process being immobilized, relocated to the sedentary entertainment venues of what had become bourgeois bohemian Paris rather than being tolerated in the nebulous, interstitial, and temporary space between city and country. The prescient Richepin drew attention to this, too, bemoaning “la civilisation des saltimbanques.” He blames a M. Sari, “qui a introduit dans les amusements parisiens l’exhibition des acrobates, des hercules, des dompteurs, des monstres. La mode a suivi ce mouvement d’anglomanie, et les skatings, les cafés-concerts rendent aujourd’hui sédentaires tous ces errants.” He continues: “Car, il n’y a
pas à dire non, les saltimbanques n’ont plus longtemps à vivre, j’entends les vrais, j’entends ces espèces de Tsiganes qui ont pour leur patrie leur roulotte, et que le progrès civilise peu à peu et banalise, eux aussi!”

Richepin, then, laments the way the modern city or “progress” was usurping or “civilizing” the once-marginal space of the fair. Indeed, the memorialization of the mid-century fairground — the commemoration of a vaguely defined past when metropolis and suburb, center of power and bohemian terrain vague were clearly distinct — was motivation for the poems he submitted to Raffaëlli for Les types de Paris. But I would also suggest that a close reading of those poems also reveals something we will also see in Daudet’s contribution to the volume: a concern for or critique of the lack of authenticity intra-muros, doubt about the existence a “real” Paris. The artists, writers, and politicians who took it upon themselves to represent the modern metropolis in volumes such as Les types de Paris may have attempted to collaboratively paint a comprehensive and comprehensible picture by reducing individuals to types, but in fact they often end up signaling a chaotic disconnect between signifier and signified.

The waning distinction between extra- and intramural spectacle allows the evidently inauthentic spectacle of one to suggest the spectacular fakery of being presented as the “real” in the other. “Ranpanpan des marteaux et bziallement des scies!” begins the first of his Forains poems; the onomatopoeia ensures we hear as well as see

147 The fête foraine, which would soon no longer exist in opposition or contrast to the city, was undergoing a crisis of distinction that in many ways echoed Richepin’s own, as the former rebel morphed into the académicien.
the construction in progress. But it is not just the constructed nature of the fairground that is at stake here: “La ville en toile rend son mobile rideau,” (65) continues the poet — and that curtain opens onto the workings of capital and politics in that other, brick-and-mortar city just inside the walls. The “univers perméable” (Stead 161) of the fairground, its spectacular logic, has permeated the city, and the suspension of belief that was once the exclusive territory of the fête foraine is not only co-opted by exclusive inner-city entertainment venues but also by other forms of representation, such as the “educational” exhibits which, when brought into conversation with the “univers perméable, en osmose avec la ville” (Stead 161) of the fairground, suddenly seem to lose their own claims to represent “reality.”

Here on the outskirts, the carnivalesque world presented both at the fairground and through the rose-tinted glasses of a bottle of wine allow the worker to feel like royalty:

C’est ici le jardin des impossibles fleurs,
Bleu criard, vermillon pétardant, vert qui grince.
Mais le peuple, allumé par le litre, est bon prince;
Il y saura cueillir le bouquet des couleurs.

These included relatively innocuous popular “spectacular realities” such as the wax museums, morgue, boulevards, and panoramas that Vanessa Schwartz details in her book of the same name, but also spectacularized forms of government and science such as the Exposition universelle, the ethnographic displays at the Jardin d’acclimatation and the Salpêtrière performances of Dr. Charcot.
The “jardin des impossibles fleurs,” however, can only be an allusion to Huysmans’ Des Esseintes — a suburban refugee of an entirely different kind. Perhaps, Rosny is saying, the taste for self-deception extends beyond class and city limits alike.

**Daudet and the Anxiety of Authenticity**

In Richepin, I argued, we saw the expression of an anxiety about authenticity in the modern city. The poet voices his concern through the interstitially monstrous bodies of the characters he describes as well as the inerstitial location of the fairground. What becomes apparent, I suggest, is that this inbetween, peripheral space ends up being disarmingly similar to the urban center.

Like Richepin, Alphonse Daudet explores interstitial and inauthentic identities in relation to the city’s cultural and geographical boundaries. The third-rate actor-characters in Daudet’s contribution to *Les types de Paris* are “types” from Paris, but to the uninitiated provincials who believe them to be the epitome of theatrical success, they not only represent the city, they embody it, or at least its myth. As the first of all the essays in Raffaëlli’s album, “Tournées de Province” occupies a privileged position, setting the tone for the works to follow. It is a curious choice, because “Tournées de Province” is a consideration of areas outside the capital. This urban collection, in other words, opens with the absence of the urban — or rather, with its presence defined not geographically
(by the city walls) but culturally (in the traveling bodies of the actors).\footnote{Compare this to 1843’s Paris au XIXe siècle, which ends with a scene of the world coming to Paris.}

Here, the fact that the actors are no longer in Paris is of little importance. In fact, in the tacit, mutual self-delusion of both actor and country cousin, as long as the body of the actor can stand in for Paris then the (social, cultural, geographical) distance between provincial town and metropolis becomes irrelevant. This much is evidenced in their billing; in the provinces, third-rate chorus members become first-class stars: “Tel petit nom aperçu à la Gymnase, à la Porte-Saint-Martin, prend ici toute la vedette de l’affiche” (5). To be central — to be the star of the show — it is enough to be from Paris, the cultural and geographical center of France.\footnote{Of course, the far reach of Parisian mythos is not unique to the late nineteenth century: consider Emma Bovary’s fetishization of the capital’s fashions, her increased attraction to Léon when he returns from the city. Here, however, we have moved from things to people; the Parisian actors, by virtue of their Parisianness, become just another commodity to be displayed and sold.}

In a way, the traveling body of the third-rate actor serves as a kind of propaganda machine for both his profession and his place of provenance. He brings with him an aura of the big city, sparks desire, encourages dream: “Il est rare encore que leur présence dans la ville n’y fasse pas naître quelque vocation dramatique” (4). Indeed, Daudet’s
subtitle, “Delaunay à vingt ans,” indicates just how ambitious such vocations might be. One of the century’s most successful actors, a leading member of the Comédie française who debuted on the Odéon’s stage at the age of twenty, Delaunay was “l’un des deux sujets indispensables de toute comédie on de toute reprise importante au Théâtre-Français” (Vapereau 560). In this economy of desire, provincial dwellers dream of making it big in the big city: aspiring actors, directors, stage managers, all hope they are or have found the next big thing.

The actors’ identity is fluid by nature, but here it is his Parisianness, not his skill, that gets him the part. As Alain Faure’s neologism suggests, “Parisennété,” or “un apprentissage des modes de vie parisiens” is itself a role to be played on the urban stage. What is interesting here is the mobile status of the signifier “Parisennété”: in the city, it is a means of survival; beyond the walls, it becomes a bestower of status. The further the Parisian gets from the city, however, the more slippery that signifier becomes, until it finally divests itself of meaning, becomes empty, signifies nothing but myth. In order to benefit from the mythical city’s status-enhancing power, however, Daudet’s actors must traverse space, must move away from the referent itself.

Embodied geographies are nothing new. People have always in some way represented or been seen to personify their hometowns, cities, nations when they travel abroad. With regards to fin-de-siècle Paris, however, two factors come together to extend and complicate this notion. The first, as I have suggested, is the increasingly mythical status of the city itself — to be from “Paris” is to be from the Capital of the 19th century, as Walter Benjamin famously noted. The second is the rapid expansion of the railway
(from 560 km of track in 1841 to 25,000 km in 1875) that enabled more people to travel further faster, connecting provincial town to metropole both geographically and in terms of social and cultural mores.¹⁵¹ In *The Railway Journey*, Wolfgang Schivelbush cites economist and Saint-Simonian Constantin Pecqueur, who in 1839 argued that an extensive railway system in France would perform a “condensation magique de ses quatre-vingt-six départements dans un territoire aussi resserré que l’Ile-de-France” (28). However, it took the implementation of the law of June 11, 1842, which provided long-term contracts and state aid in the form of land purchase, to kickstart an industry that was lagging far behind its European and American counterparts; indeed, before this law was passed, “l’espace parisien est peu affecté par la révolution ferroviaire” (Pinol and Garden, *Atlas* 22). Nonetheless, once construction had begun, as historical geographers Robert Schwartz, Ian Gregory, and Thomas Thévenin have recently suggested, “steady advance in railway construction was the rule... the pace of expansion picked up and sustained itself from the 1850s to the early 1880s, with a noticeable break during the Franco-Prussian War” (*Spatial History* 59). The passing of the Plan Freycinet, which nationalized the railway system through the creation of the Compagnie des Chemins de Fer de L’État, provided for the construction of a further 181 lines between 1879 and 1914.

¹⁵¹ France had just 560 km of railway track in 1841, compared to 25,000 km in 1875. For an in-depth discussion of the development of the French railway system, see Caron.
“Nos Parisiens,” writes Daudet, “vont de ville en ville, enguirlandés de voyantes réclames” (3–4). They travel frequently and extensively, provincial railroad stations serving as the locus of their first audition, the initial stage upon which they perform their roles as Parisians: “leur sortie de la gare est un événement.” Raffaëlli’s illustration highlights both the theatricality and importance of this ‘event’ (Fig.1). The actors stands on the sidewalk as if on a stage, his arms wide open, as if to say “Me voilà!” The sidewalk is raised like a stage, and he stands at its center. On one side, a man rushes to take his suitcase; on the other, another, hat off in respect, presses to shake his hand. A group of two women and a man cannot help but stare, while a coachman waits to take him on to whatever pressing appointment awaits him. Finally, posters for theatrical performances, replete with lists of names and photographs of actors, serve as both backdrop and indicator of this character’s profession.

By insisting on the theatricality of the scene of arrival, Daudet and Raffaëlli also draw attention to the artificiality of the circumstances it represents. The Parisian actor might well be the star, but as Daudet points out, this is less due to an excess of talent than to a lack of competition: “que d’étoiles de second ordre passent rapidement de première grandeur sur des scènes où les comparaisons sont absents ou favorables” (5). The traveling actor is on an ego trip, but it is one based on a fallacy. The fact that he can be (or play) someone “abroad” he could never be at home suggests that, for Daudet, when the actor travels beyond the city walls, he warps the self-regulating truth or order of the urban: “Il y trouve toutes les satisfactions d’amour-propre. D’abord celle de créer des rôles qu’il envie et auxquels Paris lui défend bien de toucher.”
Fig.12 “Leur sortie de la gare est un événement”
Schivelbusch, following Benjamin and Marx, sees the railroad as responsible for depriving products and hitherto isolated regions of their “traditional spatial-temporal presence,” their “aura” (41), of turning them into commodities. Here, however, the distance from the metropole afforded by the railroad, coupled with the stamp of approval that comes with being “Parisian,” has granted these actors sufficient cultural capital to commodify themselves.

At first glance, then, Paris (as it appears on a map) would appear to the guarantee of authenticity for Daudet. In the city, the distinction between the genuine article — the actor of quality — and the second- or third-rate imposter is assured through the proliferation of acceptable standards of cultural taste and artistic judgment in the media and at salons such as the Goncourt’s grenier. Outside of the city, there is no such discernment. However, by positioning the traveling body of the actor, who already boasts an inherently mobile identity, as representative of a “type de Paris,” Daudet seems to 152

152 Here, we might consider Pierre Bourdieu’s argument that the dominant classes are responsible for the social construction of taste and culture: we could read the provincial petits-bourgeois as attempting to recreate that culture outside of the metropolis, but, because they do not have the cultural capital of the urban taste makers, they continually miss the mark. They can aspire to cultural influence, but since they have not had the long-term investment in cultural practice that Bourdieu sees as central to the class habitus (Kauppi 12), when compared to the elite and upper class tastemakers of Paris, they do not have cultural capital required to discern between the real thing and its imitation.
to suggest, consciously or not, that in fin-de-siècle Paris, there is actually no original, only a multiplicity of roles.

All three essays in this chapter hint at what I am calling the mobile identity of Paris itself in 1889, although it is much more evident in Richepin and Daudet than it is in Zola. Nevertheless, while I argued that Zola’s essay sees him assert his ownership of urban space, imprint his silhouette on the landscape of Paris, I also suggest that he only feels the need to do this because he feels his ownership of that space, even that space itself, is threatened — that there are new pretenders to the keys to the city. In Richepin and Daudet, I posit that we can read a concern about authenticity, about the stability of the referent that “Paris” has been, in their depictions of spaces and identities that are interstitial and mobile. In other words, the city itself is no longer the stuff of myth, but of phantasmagoria: “Myths are hand; phantasmagorias are soft,” writes Patrice Higgonnet. “In myth, a presumed past is extended into a collective present which it simultaneously explains and complicates. In phantasmagoria, by contrast, an artificial present is excused by a distortion of current reality that is justified by simplification and embellishment of the past” (Paris 113).
CONCLUSION

A trop vouloir "exposer" – la photographie nous le rappelle justement en ses propres termes –, on risque de ne plus rien "révéler". Et un "soupçon" se laisse parfois déceler, même chez les plus ardents zélateurs du monde-magasin et de la pensée-exposition: Soupçon quant à la possibilité d’exercer sa mémoire dans le monde urbain moderne, quant à la possibilité d’écrire sur le monde moderne, quant à la possibilité même du monde moderne de produire des monuments, des signes, des symboles et des œuvres dotés d’un sens. (Hamon, *Expositions* 123)

In this dissertation, I have looked at three very specific examples of what I term a “crisis of distinction” for the bourgeois male in fin-de-siècle France. This crisis was born of what Valérie Stiénon has called “un important brassage humain, qui nécessite la redéfinition des codes sociaux” (15): the flattening of social, cultural, and even geographical differences, a *nivellage*. Not that we are talking about equality; rather, it is the moving closer of things that have been polar opposites, a certain mobility that perturbs and threatens the centrality, the importance of the urban male elite. This mobility is called out by the préfacier of *Les types de Paris*: “la rue, plus large, n’en est que plus vivante, sillonnée en tous sens par une foule complexe et agitée, ouvriers et bourgeois, provinciaux et étrangers, enfants et veillards, chiffonniers et grands seigneurs” (2). The “crisis of distinction” of this dissertation’s title, then, is the result of this “foule complexe et agitée,” this mass of people of different nationalities, genders and social class existing side-by-side in the streets of modern Paris.

I focused on the ways in which three “types,” three components of that crowd, are portrayed in both *Les types de Paris* and in the contemporary sociocultural discourse of
which it was a part. Because I view the crisis of distinction as reactionary, I looked to legal changes made in the first decade of the Republican government’s tenure that had the potential to alter the status of these people. But because reactions to these changes often played out in public, rather than political forums, I also looked to scientific discourse, literature, and art to see how women, foreigners, and ragpickers were being represented in the face of such alterations. I chose to concentrate on these three figures because I felt that they best embodied the kind of troubling mobility that I see as being at the center of the crisis of distinction. It is not necessarily because they are different that women are threatening, for example, but because improved legal status or a greater degree of socioeconomic independence might make them more similar, might move them from the position of easily identifiable other to something much more difficult to categorize.

In fact, the authors and illustrator of *Les types de Paris* employ a range of tactics to enable them to better categorize their subject matter, thereby gaining representational control of these mobile personalities and shifting geographies and regaining a sense of control over their own environment. The first is to include them in *Les types de Paris* itself. Because panoramic literature packages differences as taxonomies and then displays them for visual consumption, the representation of women, foreigners, and ragpickers in a volume of panoramic literature can already be seen as an attempt to curtail any incursions they might be making into the bourgeois male sphere.

The aim of these writers and illustrator is to make “Paris” knowable to both their readers and themselves. The contributors of *Les types de Paris*, faced with a city they do not recognize, then, create one that they do. To write that city is to establish its borders
and inscribe its values; it is what Christopher Prendergast calls “the middle-class desire to keep not only the city but also the order of its representations as ‘clean’ as possible” (86). It is a way of imposing one’s vision of a world on that world.

And yet imposing things, forcing them on people, pushing square pegs into round holes doesn’t always work. In my last chapter, I argued that modernity brought with it an expansion of Paris that was not only literal, in the form of Haussmann’s renovations and annexations, but also figurative: Paris was wherever Parisians en masse chose to be. Any attempt to depict and decrypt the urban landscape now had to take on the increased social and geographical mobility not only of the metropolitan body but also of the city itself. I suggested that these efforts to reduce the difference of and on the periphery ultimately fail, because the “center” they try to assert is no longer locatable. Rather, the “le vrai Paris” that Les types de Paris’ anonymous préfacier promises us, what Les types de Paris ends up suggesting is the absence of a definable Paris in the face of mobility, modernity, change.

Next Steps

Reading Les types de Paris in the context of the cultural shifts occurring at the time of its publication proved an incredibly rewarding experience, but one that was daunting in its immensity and that I ultimately had to restrain. The breadth and variety of the sociohistoric changes afoot simply made for too large a project, one impossible to align with the close readings and microhistories I aspired to write in this dissertation. Not to be outdone by the context in which it was written, Les types de Paris also proved a
impossibly large text. Like the city Raffaëlli and his contemporaries tried to read (and rewrite), *Les types de Paris* is itself the source of an overabundance of riches, of representation, of choice.

A continuation of the project, then, might productively engage with the increasing attention paid to children and education, reading Paul Bonnetain’s “Les enfants” alongside contemporary commentary on Jules Ferry’s 1884 laws. It would investigate the stirrings of working class political organization and solidarity in the portrayal of forms of sociability such singing together, as described by Gustave Geffroy in “La rue qui chante.” It would allow for a more in-depth study of nostalgia, of the search for a mythical old Paris in the streets of the new: the longed-for antique stores on the Boulevard Beaumarchais, for example, in the dreamworld Paris of Edmond de Goncourt, the social solitude of the rundown left bank cafés of JK Huysmans’ “Les habitués de café,” and the prehistoric, demiurgic *forgeron* of JH Rosny’s “Les ouvriers: forgerons.” It would be an immense undertaking, but it would be a rewarding one.
Fig. 12  Raffaëlli, “Table des matières” (Les types de Paris 161)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jean Richepin</td>
<td>Types des fêtes foraines</td>
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<td>Henry Géard</td>
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<td>Octave Mirbeau</td>
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<td>Paul Bourget</td>
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<td>Stéphane Mallarme</td>
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<td>Robert de Bonnières</td>
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<td>J. H. Rosny</td>
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<td>J. Ajalbert</td>
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<td>L. de Fourcaud</td>
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<td>Félicien Champsaure</td>
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<td>Les Habitués de café</td>
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<td>Louis Mullem</td>
<td>Le petit peuple des maisons de retraite</td>
<td>157</td>
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