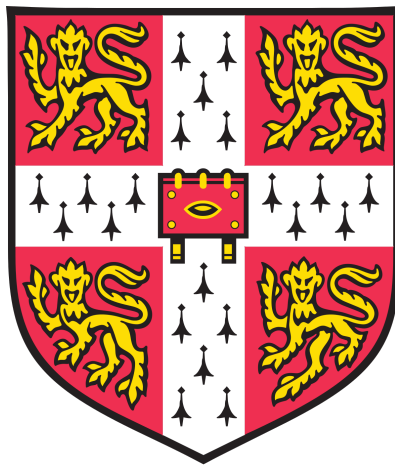


**Aesthetics in Ruins:  
Parisian Writing, Photography and Art, 1851-1892**



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*Doctor of Philosophy*

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents,  
Mihaela and Alexandru



## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. This dissertation does not exceed the prescribed word limit of 80000, excluding bibliography.

Alexandra Tranca  
March 2017

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# **Abstract**

**Ioana Alexandra Tranca**

## **Aesthetics in Ruins: Parisian Writing, Photography and Art, 1851-1892**

This project explores two main lines of inquiry concerning representations of ruins in Paris. I first identify a turning point in the evolution of the ruin leitmotif beyond Romanticism in its transfer into a new context: modern Paris. The analysis demonstrates the correlation between this leitmotif and urban environment in transformation, and their influence on aesthetics, leading to the renewal of modes of representation in literary and visual discourse. Unconventional ruins, recently created by demolition during Haussmannisation (1853-70) or war (1870-71) challenge conceptions about space (inside/outside, up/down, visible/invisible), time, and the individual in relation to the city. In view of tracing the transformation of the ruin ethos in relation to modern sensibilities towards the city and its modes of representation, a chronological approach concentrates on two main periods divided into four chapters. The first interval extends from 1848 throughout the Second Empire and the second spans the 1870-1871 conflagration and the Third Republic. An interdisciplinary and dialogic approach reveals the exchanges between different media (literature, journalism, painting, photography) aiming to convey the paradoxes of Paris's modern ruins. Moreover, close reading and comparisons of authors' and artists' depictions across media and genres nuance, correct or disprove critical appraisals, re-establishing artistic authority (e.g. photographers Charles Marville and Bruno Braquehais). The second line of inquiry posits that representations of ruins reflect on the relationship of Parisians with their city during systematisation and wartime destruction. Research reveals that individual initiatives of representing urban ruins attest to a new sensibility towards the city, preceding the Second Empire's (1853-1870) apparatus of historical and topographic documentation to preserve the appearance of spaces before intervention. Thus, during Paris's systematisation, private and artistically-minded projects become the tools of patrimonial preservation. By comparison, aesthetic approaches to ruins in 1871 mark a new appreciation of modern architecture, while engaging with war trauma.

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## Introduction

### The Ruins of Modernity and Modernity in Ruins

Encore un peu de temps, et Paris deviendra un sujet d'études aussi obscur, aussi embrouillé, aussi enveloppé d'impénétrables ténèbres que Tyr et Babylone. Il n'a pas fallu à M. Flaubert plus d'imagination pour reconstruire Carthage, à M. Mariette et à M. Fiorelli plus de patience pour exhumer pierre à pierre Memphis et Pompéïa, plus de science et de sagacité à Cuvier pour reconstituer le mastodonte à l'aide d'une seule dent du monstre, qu'il n'en faut aujourd'hui à qui veut retrouver le Paris de nos aïeux sous les ruines et les transformations innombrables qui l'ont bouleversé de fond en comble, et le faire revivre dans sa physionomie, dans ses mœurs, dans ses monuments et dans ses rues. On a si bien pris à tâche de trancher [...] les liens de la tradition, et de rompre violemment [...] cette chaîne d'or qui rattachait le présent au passé, que l'histoire de Paris [...] ne se révèle qu'au prix des plus laborieux efforts, et qu'il faut extraire patiemment, à travers des monceaux de décombres, les lambeaux mutilés de ce tableau rétrospectif qui devrait [...] éclater de lui-même au grand jour et s'afficher à chaque pas dans le Paris d'aujourd'hui. (Fournel 1865: 290-91)

The capital of modernity during the second half of the nineteenth century stands under the sign of ruin. Reflections on the life and death of cities and civilisations would echo in Parisian writing and art throughout the century, when ruins become part of the capital's urban tissue. First, during Haussmann's renovation works, half-demolished or half-erected structures, avenues outlined by dugout trenches and shelled buildings associated Paris with vestigial landscapes, fragmentary and discordant. Ruins were omnipresent, sometimes hidden behind tarpaulins and scaffolding, at other times showcased as isolated monuments. Then, in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune, other ruins inscribed on the face of Paris the stigma of external and internal conflict.

In the context of Paris's modernisation, the ubiquity of ruins in representations constitutes a significant phenomenon, conveying anxiety about the future. In *Curiosités du Vieux Paris*, Paul Lacroix compared a man's life to that of a street: both are born, baptised, grow up and age (1858: 5-6). Death is the inevitable conclusion. This realisation prompts incursions into the future, where Paris's fate is appraised retrospectively, often through the prism of archaeology, for the city is conceived of as an ancient site.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the

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<sup>1</sup> The antipodal vision imagines Paris becoming a highly ordered urban configuration from which chaos is banished and where utilitarianism cancels out the aesthetic, reduced to the vapid use of architectonic orders and models. This constitutes another form of death for Paris, through monomaniacal reproduction of the same

eighteenth century, Volney's writings offered a variation on the *sic transit gloria mundi* motif that culminated with the projection of the fall of ancient empires onto Europe: 'qui sait si un voyageur ne s'assoira un jour sur de muettes ruines, et ne pleurera pas solitaire sur la cendre des peuples et la mémoire de leur grandeur?' (1791: 12). The trope of *civilisations révolues* would recur throughout the nineteenth century, famously in Macaulay's New Zealander contemplating the ruins of St Paul's. Paris is consistently associated with ruins from the 1840s to the 1870s, from Joseph Méry's *Les Ruines de Paris* (1856), Arsène Houssaye's 'Paris futur' in *Paris et les Parisiens au XIXe siècle* (1856), and Hyppolite Mettais's *L'an 5865, ou Paris dans 4000 ans* (1865), to Tony Moilin's *Paris en l'an 2000* (1869) and Alfred Franklin's *Les Ruines de Paris en 4875* (1875). What is noteworthy is that such texts coincide with Théophile Gautier's vision in the *Préface* to *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1834), where the destruction of Paris is the result of a cataclysm, hence beyond human control. By contrast, for Volney, this fall is the work of man, undoing, or allowing to perish, mankind's achievements (see *Les Ruines*, chapter III). This is Victor Fournel's position in *Paris nouveau et Paris futur* (1865), which criticises the invasive nature of Haussmann's renovation, by contrast with previous projects of renewal and embellishment.

From 1853, Paris embarked on an unprecedented project of urban restructuring that, for the next two decades, turned the city into a giant *chantier*. The imperial plan to renovate the capital was long overdue. From the third quarter of the seventeenth century, there had been projects for extensive embellishment, restructuring, and systematisation. However, from Louis XIV's wide avenues to the relocation of cemeteries and structural reinforcement of the underground by Axel Guillemot under Louis XVI, changes occurred slowly, often driven by necessity and then limited by the constraints of the legal framework, and the financial and political capacity to implement them. One government after another dreamt of remaking Paris on a grand scale, from eighteenth-century utopic projects to Napoleon's monumental capital of avenues lined by Classical- and Egyptian-inspired architecture.<sup>2</sup> It was the particular context of the Second Empire and the collaboration between Napoleon III and his prefect

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structures – hyperbolically satirising and warning against urban monotony, often evoked in relation to Haussmann's preference for the straight line (Fournel 1865: 234-40).

<sup>2</sup> Some projects were never realised, but many were implemented by subsequent regimes or resurfaced later in the city's history. Examples include Louis XVI's plans for a *place royale* to replace La Bastille and Napoleon I's Etoile intersection, completed under successive governments. Haussmann's projects continued throughout the Third Republic (rues Beaubourg and Réaumur, boulevard Raspail and avenue de l'Opéra) and well into the twentieth century (Horne 2002; Rouleau 1997; Jordan 1995).

Hausmann that changed the game of urban transformation. Imperial support on the part of the former and efficient administration on the part of the latter provided the basis for a sustainable project for Paris's renewal. The Second Empire's plan remains the first modern project of systematisation and redesign applied to an existing city on such a scale. Cities had been designed from nothing, planned on paper and built according to an architect or ruler's vision.<sup>3</sup> Yet never before had a city so vast and complex undergone the methodical reshaping that Hausmann imposed on Paris. The magnitude of the works translated into the forceful presence of ruins, by-products of the capital's transformation process. Rubble and fragmentary structures, which signalled a state of transition, became entrenched in the urban landscape up to the end of the century.

This process of modernisation developed a problematic relationship with the past. Already, we can distinguish two stances: the same Lacroix asks rhetorically if Paris's rejuvenation would not lead to the population itself metamorphosing to regain youth and new life – he appends the coy promise to inform his readers in a hundred years (1858: 3). By comparison, for Fournel, modernisation through the violent erasure of historical layers would have two consequences: the ruination of the past would render Paris's history incomprehensible and the new city would have no identity.<sup>4</sup> The erasure of urban history would also feature among the accusations levelled at the Communards' attempt to destroy symbolic buildings and monuments.<sup>5</sup> Transposed into the realm of nascent archaeology and palaeontology, the ruination of the modern city blurs regeneration and death. Hugo's *livre de pierre* would mutate into an undecipherable, fragmented text, closer to broken Egyptian murals and scattered bone remains. Aligning Paris with the fossils of lost worlds and defunct civilisations, Fournel indulges in the same projection of the capital's future into the past. Still, he balances the pessimistic view with arguments for the necessity of urban systematisation. Significantly, the introduction and annexes, which include a chapter on the anticipated ruins, frame the mixed reactions regarding the imperial project, with anxieties and expectations converging to surmise on Paris's fate. Discourses remained ambivalent throughout the

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<sup>3</sup> See Zamolsc (Poland), created in the sixteenth century following the principles of an ideal Renaissance city; Washington, D.C. in the eighteenth century, a project commissioned by George Washington from the French architect Pierre L'Enfant and carried out by Andrew Ellicott according to a geometrical plan of wide avenues radiating from rectangles and featuring a prominent landscaping element; and Japanese Sapporo (capital of Hokkaido), a Meiji project in the 1870s which adopted the American model of a grid layout.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter I.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter IV.

decades of urban transformation. The contemporaneous concept of *le vieux Paris* sharpened the sense of rupture, indicating two cities: the old one and the new. Ruin became the middle term in the dichotomy between the old capital under demolition and the new constructions in progress.<sup>6</sup> The unfinished state of architecture and infrastructure not-yet-gone and not-yet-completed produced spatial and temporal disorientation. As the line between construction and destruction became less clear, urban death and renewal appeared as flipsides of the same coin.

At a time when Paris asserted its relationship to modernity through renovation, the centrality of the theme of urban death in contemporaneous thought suggests a paradox: modernisation is characterised by ruin. However, the perceived pernicious effects of Haussmann's urbanism coincided with the production of a prodigious body of works documenting all aspects of city life. Imminent destruction heightened the awareness of and interest in the city, leading to the cultivation of a taste for urban culture and a corpus that preserves the memory of nineteenth-century Paris. In the long run, this allowed for the constitution of specialised institutions and methodologies for the conservation of what would be defined as 'urban patrimony' (Fiori 2012: 23-51). Moreover, urban transformation is the driving force behind the renewal of modes of representation, from Baudelaire's poetry to Impressionist painting. It is the purpose of this study to investigate ruins in the urban environment as a common denominator in the relationship between Paris and modernity. Through an interdisciplinary approach to literary and visual discourses, I retrace the manifestations of ruins and their relation to modernity and the modern capital. This allows me to examine the evolution of this leitmotif beyond Classicist and Romantic conceptions and to explore the ruins' impact on forms of cultural production. Ruins, I argue, contribute to the fragmentary vision that characterises modern sensibility and play a role in the renewal of language, for example, in Parnassian, Symbolist and fantastic texts, in Impressionist painting or in the creation of new genres, such as urban landscape in photography. Furthermore, incarnating Baudelaire's fragmented and transient modernity, Paris's reconfiguration under Haussmann, the Franco-Prussian War, and the Commune presents a case in point, reflecting changing attitudes towards the city and its vestiges.

Pursuing the motif of ruins, my research examines Parisian architecture and infrastructure in flux, as they appear in various modes of representation. Unlike previous

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter I. For a defining study of this concept and its relation to the history of urban patrimony, see Fiori (2012).

studies, my work does not focus on the social aspects of Paris's transformation, nor emphasise the economic implications of Haussmannisation (Gaillard 1997). My interest lies in how representations of Paris that use the ruin motif refract the experience of disruption of the capital's historical-architectural dimension.<sup>7</sup> The Parisians' experience and its representations correlate with the development of an urban imaginary which responds to ruins. Through their practical constraints and psychological toll, short-lived vestiges sensitise the population towards the spaces they navigate and inhabit. Products of demolition, construction or conflict, they infiltrate contemporaneous discourses as recurrent tropes, adapting to and inflecting the codes and canons specific to each medium and genre. My thesis is thus articulated around two interdependent frameworks. One argument posits that the ruinous dimension of the city seeps into representations of Paris, inflecting poetic and visual languages to articulate topography. In other words, the incidence of ruins is developed into systems of spatial signification. Conversely, discourses on ruin shape the perception of contingent fragmentary structures and infrastructures resulting from systematisation or wartime destruction. The different modes of representation conveying the upheaval of Paris's layout help us understand nineteenth-century heritage movements in relation to the politics of memory by revealing the interaction between contemporaneous visual and textual media (painting, photography, literature) and new disciplines (archaeology, palaeontology). The role of ruins in shaping aesthetic and socio-political visions thus entails reconsiderations of such concepts as identity, subjectivity, community and patrimony.

To follow the transformation of what I shall term the 'ethos of ruins' in relation to the modern sensibility towards the city and its modes of representation, my chronological approach concentrates on two main periods. The first extends from 1848 through the Second Empire, and the second spans the 1870-71 conflagration and the early Third Republic. Two chapters are dedicated to each period, offering comparative close readings of media informed by the experience of ruins and experimenting with their aesthetic potential. To outline the scope of my study and working paradigm, I discuss below the key terms and limits within which I pursue my goals. Three essential concepts are addressed: ruins, modernity and representation, each defined in turn and set in relation to the other terms. As the keystone of my research, it is useful to offer an overview of the changing perceptions regarding ruins, as historic, aesthetic and semiotic objects from Classicism to the mid-nineteenth century. In

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<sup>7</sup> See the section on representation for my choice of refraction over reflection.

tracing the history of the motif, I draw attention when one of its functions or significations comes into play in nineteenth-century representations, indicating the chapter or work which discusses this aspect. The nineteenth-century section stresses significant differences in the treatment of the motif of ruins and their particular Parisian context, and highlights the relevance of my choices for the examination of ruins in modernity. I then discuss possible definitions of modernity and the relationships that can be established with the concept of ruins. Finally, I address matters related to methodology, including the manner in which I conceive of representation in connection to urban ruins.

### **The ruin leitmotif in the history of literature and visual arts**

In French literature, Ingrid Daemmrich identifies three broad developments of the ruin motif: first, 'ruins are employed to symbolise man's life and fate; second, by being linked with the eighteenth-century aesthetic of the picturesque, they are depicted as aesthetically pleasing; and third, beginning with Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1787), the motif of ruins can function as a structural component of a literary work'. Significantly though, while certain characteristics gain predominance in a particular period, all aspects remain in use throughout (1972a: 449). The same could be argued for the ruin motif in the history of visual arts. Art historian Michel Makarius charts the varying status of ruins from the fifteenth to the twentieth century. In the late fifteenth century, ruins are perceived as fragmentary repositories of knowledge, whose mysteries, however, are not readily decipherable. Makarius cites Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), which combines vestigial architecture with esoteric knowledge, indicated by an archaic language and script. As disjointed architectural elements (cornices, obelisks, friezes), the visual, fragmentary object meets the textual (hieroglyphics) to become twice encrypted. The ruin appears thus as emblem, a fragment inscribed with a symbol, part of a puzzle that, once solved, gives access to knowledge of the past. Essentially, their shattered form indicates a lost unity (2011: 19).<sup>8</sup> Also worth remarking is that, at this time, there is no clear distinction between the historical and aesthetic values of vestiges (Zucker 1961: 119). This echoes Daemmrich's argument that the different levels of meaning ascribed to ruins coexist. It is noteworthy that Fournel's

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<sup>8</sup> Suggesting a Neoplatonic undercurrent, such vestiges bear comparison to the shadows of an ideal whole: following the microcosm-macrocosm correspondence, just as the human soul bears a spark of the divine, ruins could appear as shards that recall the harmony of an originary, absolute architecture.

passage cited at the start of this Introduction seems to relate to Colonna's vision of the undecipherable language of vestigial architecture. The Renaissance approach to ruins as emblems would return, transformed, in nineteenth-century Symbolist aesthetics, which exploit precisely their potential for signification. Baudelaire's poem 'Spleen' ('J'ai plus de souvenirs...'), for example, would play on the tension between the embodied presence of the sphinx and its silence, suggesting unattainable knowledge withheld by the absence of appropriate language, now lost (see Chapter I).

With the diffusion of the Humanist ethos, the study of Classical vestiges complements philology and becomes a requisite in completing an artistic education (see Flemish and French artists working in the Italian city-states). By the mid-sixteenth century, ruins had crept into Mannerist compositions, in the developing landscape genre, and the emerging still-life and genre painting. As artists study Classical architecture sketching the remains of the Colosseum or Roman Forum, vestiges gradually change status: from props in the unfolding drama (Hieronymus Bosch's *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, 1505-06), they take centre stage as subjects. In a combination of landscape and genre painting, they become *vedute*, pushing human figures to the margins, as in Herman Posthumus's *Landscape with Roman Ruins* (1536). Posthumus constructs an imaginary space reuniting the Domus Aurea, a plethora of sculptural, pictorial and architectural fragments, and fantastical structures, framed in a manner that conveys their symbolical value, as an allegorical still-life. Among them are minuscule figures of architects with measuring instruments. The combination of real and fantastic, of an imaginary topography that amasses Classical monuments from all over Rome into a single unified space anticipates a Romantic topos, illustrated by Hubert Robert's compositions. Intriguingly, Posthumus imagined even monuments and objects which were not destroyed as ruined – for instance, the Mausoleum of Constantine's daughter, in fact preserved whole and converted into the Church of Santa Costanza. Such details and the motto from Ovid, 'TEMPVS EDAX RERVVM...', make plain the allegorical portent: time's ineluctable destruction.<sup>9</sup> The ruin appears twice ruined, inhabiting a space pieced together from fragments that do not fit.

As settings for dramatic events, Humanist ruins tend to encode meaning following a typological, allegorical paradigm, rather than a narrative one. While this vision endures,

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<sup>9</sup> *Metamorphoses*, XV: 199-236. Gautier uses the same quotation in relation to post-Commune ruins (see Chapter IV).

sixteenth-century Mannerism shifts the focus towards aesthetic appraisal and representations reflect the interest in ruins as artistic subjects in their own right, at times developing a ludic strain in the scholarly game of references. Thus, Giulio Romano's *Gigantomachia* for the Palazzo del T marries the visual and structural dimensions, weaving frescoes and architecture to produce a *trompe-l'œil* space in the process of collapsing. More than illusory architecture, the room's ruin-making decoration coexists in tension with the structurally intact space.<sup>10</sup> Antonio Pinelli posits that, while Humanism emphasised form, Mannerism foregrounds metamorphosis: it encourages instability, constant flux and ambiguity that 'inocule[nt] les germes du doute sur la réalité même des choses et sur la possibilité de les connaître' (1996: 257 in Makarius 2004: 57). This instability would take spectacular forms in Monsù Desiderio's paintings. In French literature, the principle of metamorphosis and the first manifestation of the poetry of ruins converge in Joachim Du Bellay's *Les Antiquités de Rome* (1558), which exploits ruins as a theme and structuring device. A pessimistic vision, associated with a moral dimension, plays out the theme of ruins through antithetical positions. For instance, the binomial construction–destruction articulates Rome's reversal of fortunes. A more optimistic perspective explores the 'philosophical, historical and emotional implications' of Roman vestiges: revered as relics preserving the memory of illustrious men, attesting to the majesty and glory of Rome ('Sonnet VII'), and, lastly, invoked as viable models for contemporaneous architects ('Sonnet XXVII') (Daemmrich 1972a: 449-51). Moreover, poetic images weaving 'poudre,' 'ombre,' 'ruine,' 'reliques,' 'monceaux,' 'vapeur,' and rhymes pairing 'poudreux,' 'cendreux,' 'ténébreux,' 'ombreux' suggest that the perspective on decomposition echoes a reflection on chaos and the shapelessness of matter, characteristic of Mannerist metamorphosis (Jeanneret 1997: 104).

Makarius infers an organic model for poetic creation embracing cyclical (re)production from chaos, which can be correlated with contemporaneous urban projects rising from the ruins of the past (2011: 58). For instance, decomposition as a constructive force emerges in Pirro Ligorio's plan of Rome (1544), where the city seems to grow out of the Classical ruins, even sprouting additional imaginary monuments (*Ibid.*: 68). The organic model will return in the nineteenth century, and, as we shall see, in Chapter I, which investigates discourses where the city appears as an organic entity. Baudelaire invokes the unfinished, *informe* and

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<sup>10</sup> In Romanticism, Giovanni Francesco Marini (Pommersfelden Castle) and Charles-Louis Clérisseau (Couvent de la Trinité-des-Monts, Rome) create such illusory spaces.



undefined as qualities of modern aesthetics in 'Le Peintre de la vie moderne'. His poetic language, based on suggestion and experimenting with verse form, transforms the Mannerist *non-finito*. Similarly, decomposition and continuous transformation are part of Baudelaire's aesthetics of ugliness: thus, 'Une Charogne' explores the creative and poetic potential of decomposition, even as it engages with the Renaissance motif of *memento mori*.<sup>11</sup>

The Neoclassical mood marks a change in sensibilities, taming ruins into pastoral settings and ultimately displacing them into myth, as in the idealised Arcadian landscapes of Nicolas Poussin (Makarius 2011: 78). In literature, from Agrippa D'Aubigné to Charles Drelincourt, the ruin leitmotif plays out the theme of the transience of man and his works, and the equalising power of death that spares neither the mighty nor the low (Daemmrich 1972a: 452). Concomitantly, Neoclassical timelessness opened the door to the *capricci*, in which ancient ruins feed a landscape of the imagination, developing architectural fragments into fantastical combinations. The subgenre of *capricci* exploits the potential for ruination mainly in visual arts, but also develops into a poetic form, illustrated in French literature by Marc-Antoine Girard de Saint-Amant. Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire universel* defines *caprices* as 'pièces de poésie, de musique, [...] un peu bizarres et irrégulières' (1690 I: 380). Théophile Gautier rehabilitated Saint-Amant precisely as a poet of the bizarre and grotesque, categories embraced by Baudelaire.<sup>12</sup> This definition suggests a structural use of ruin that is implicit in the *capriccio* poem, which changes the rules as it unfolds, entertaining a playful ambiguity that frustrates the reader's deciphering of hermetic images (Schorderet 2008: 122).

In art, one of the most striking painters of *capricci* is elusive Monsù Desiderio in the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>13</sup> His work is characterised by monumental classicising structures in the process of crumbling, often as a result of violent destruction, such as in *Fantastic Ruins with Saint Augustine and the Child* (1624) or *King Asa of Judah destroying the Idols* (n.d.). Complementing D'Aubigné's sombre vision, Monsù Desiderio's ruins operate on a grand scale: rich in symbolism and often associated with Biblical topics, they inspire awe

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<sup>11</sup> For Baudelaire's dialogue with Renaissance tropes and the relationship between *informe* and poetic/life form, decomposition and vitality, see Vatan (2015).

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of these exchanges, see Scholl (2007: 56-59).

<sup>13</sup> Having long puzzled art-historians, the name hides two painters (possibly, even a third): François de Nomé and Didier Barra, natives of Metz, active in Naples. Apparently, Barra, himself prolific at panoramic landscape compositions, painted the figures, while de Nomé specialised in fantastically crumbling structures and ravaged landscapes. Lacking information about the commissions, Félix Sluys, the artist's first biographer, ascribed the current titles in the twentieth century (Sary 2004).

and a higher force (Time, Fate, divine will), articulating disaster, cataclysm and inescapable annihilation. Classicising vestiges dominate a fantastical landscape, a subject unto itself, which acquires a narrative form: ruins play out the dramatic events, more eloquent than the miniature human figures.<sup>14</sup> The Lorraine artist's oneiric landscapes have been compared to Piranesi's imaginary ruins, their spatial figurations characterised as metaphysical (Brion 1961). In such spaces, ruins take on a life of their own, going beyond their origin in identifiable Classical vestiges or contemporaneous landmarks.

In the mid-eighteenth century, Piranesi's fantastical spaces in the *Carceri* series combine architectural rigour and Classical erudition with a penchant for experiments that test the limits of Euclidean space, offering a vision of modernity shaped by and through Classical ruins (Huysen 2006). Like Posthumus and Monsù Desiderio, he builds on his scholarly documentation on vestiges and study of architecture: 'Piranesi's imaginary of ruins can be adequately understood only if his archive-driven etchings of Roman ruins are read together with the fantasy-driven spaces of his architecture of incarceration' (*Ibid.*: 13). Andreas Huyssen argues that the *Carceri* share with Piranesi's imagined antiquity the exploration of space, but build on the concept of ruins to articulate a modern view. Aiming to inspire an experience of the sublime through spaces, Piranesi marshals imagination. We can read this in the sense of image-making and reverie, in both cases a gesture simultaneously critical and creative, focused on revealing the monumentality of ancient art, its essence contained within architectural remains. The resulting environments are paroxistic, haunted 'by the threatening aura of ruins, by their oppressive interlocking of past and present, nature and culture, death and life'. The 'irritating and threatening simultaneity of times and spaces, of condensed and displaced perspectives' produces an irreducibly uncanny space (Huysen 2006: 17-19). We could add that this extreme vision of spatiality makes it unlivable. This feeling resurfaces in Félix Thorigny's engravings of nineteenth-century *perceptions*, discussed in Chapter I.

During this time, travel and exposure to local and exotic vestiges spur interest in them, but with a marked shift in vision. First, a renewed interest in sixteenth-century perspectives and a strong emphasis on the visual lead to the central role of ruins in English garden

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<sup>14</sup> Flemish artists developed the landscape genre, ultimately leading to the first representations of cities in the mid-sixteenth century. Notably, Monsù Desiderio takes Metz as a subject in the guise of *Imaginary View of Jerusalem with the Deposition of Christ* (ca 1623) (Sary 1992: 498).

landscapes, now aiming to reveal the vestiges' picturesque nature.<sup>15</sup> This correlates with the melancholic contemplation and cultivation of emotion in contemporaneous literature (Zucker 1961: 123).<sup>16</sup> Here, ruins function as a medium, stimulating and allowing thoughts and feelings to find expression. This entails a development in the vocabulary of ruins, as writers appeal to 'fine arts, botany, and rudimentary psychology in order to present a detailed verbal picture of the appearance, surroundings, and mood of a specific ruin' (Daemmrich 1972a: 449). Volney's, and subsequently Lamartine's, evocations of Baalbek and Palmyra exploit this picturesque potential through the antithesis between the flat horizontal desert landscape and the isolated vertical structures (Daemmrich 1972b: 31). More importantly, in Volney's *Les Ruines*, the remains of the ancient city trigger a reflection on the fate of empires and civilisation defined by urban culture. The subtitle, 'Méditation sur les révolutions des empires,' establishes a parallel between cities and empires, through the correlation between ruin and empire. Urban projects, monuments, and the development of an iconography were all meant to assert the greatness of both empire and ruler, and preserve their memory for posterity, inscribed in materials that could withstand time.<sup>17</sup> Yet Volney posits ruin as the latent dimension of all edifices, be they concrete or symbolic expressions of power. Although his ruins become allegorical objects of reflection, they also refer to very specific sites: Palmyra and Tyre. Both were important urban centres in ancient times, spectacular and exemplary for their architecture and urban planning at the height of Roman expansion in the East, at the crossroads between trade-routes. Imperial power was measured by these cities – 'une ville opulente', 'un empire puissant' – of which only ruins remained (1791: 6).<sup>18</sup>

Found, transferred, or fabricated, vestiges invited reflections on transience, death, and

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<sup>15</sup> The taste for ruin landscapes coexists with the Neoclassical principles of balance and harmony. William Kent's architecture at Chiswick House espoused Palladian principles, while the garden landscape embraced the trend for ruins (Zucker 1961: 123-24). In France, Philippe d'Orléans's Parc Monceau epitomises artificial environments that simulated both nature and ruin, featuring fake vestiges from all cultures and times. The park returns in the story of Parisian ruins, as its relationship to ruination would be redefined by nineteenth-century transformations in this area (see *La Curée*). In literature, Jacques Delille's curious poem *Les Jardins ou L'art d'embellir les paysages*, however, clearly distinguishes between real and fake vestiges, the latter considered decorative objects devoid of symbolic value. Their newness is prohibitive to genuine sentiment: since they are not truly rooted in the past, they cannot stimulate the 'pleasurable contemplation of nature's ascendancy over an object of man's creativity' (Daemmrich 1972b: 32).

<sup>16</sup> See Goethe's *Der Triumph der Empfindsamkeit*.

<sup>17</sup> Published in 1791, before the Revolution's iconoclastic laws prescribed the dismantling, effacement or removal of images that could be associated with royalty or religion, Volney's work is premonitory.

<sup>18</sup> This counters Daemmrich's assertion that the contemplation of vestiges leads solely to meditations on the past, drawing no 'polemical conclusions' about ideas of justice or corruption (1972b: 31-34). On the contrary, the observation of this environment prompts a meditation oriented towards the future – see Volney's reflection quoted on p. 2 of this Introduction.

decay. They were used for aesthetic and symbolic purposes, as metaphors (Alexander Pope, Thomas Gray) and concrete presences (Horace Walpole). Defining the Gothic genre, Walpole's ruins function symbolically, embodying concomitantly the oppressive shadow of the past, imprisonment, and escape. The tenor is different from Piranesi, where the past freed imagination from linear space and time to construe alternative dimensions, albeit imprisoning ones. Their historical and symbolical interest is fully exploited by Gibbon's cyclical vision of ruin and revival in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776): the fate of the ancient world and subsequent renovations appear as 'exemplary and continuous into the present' (Clute, Langford 2015: para. 4). Significantly, the relationship between ruins and futurity develops at this time, emerging in James Caulfeild Charlemont's and Walpole's reflections on future ages when their own cities would lie broken, before reaching its fullest expression in Volney. In art, this is one of Hubert Robert's contributions to the aesthetic of ruins. From Classical and modern urban ruins, he came to imagine the possible remains of contemporaneous architecture, painting a view of the Louvre as it looked in 1796 and the pendant composition of the same gallery in ruins.<sup>19</sup> John Clute and David Langford emphasise the importance of the narrative gap in this double landscape: there is no account of the (future) destruction (2015: para.7).<sup>20</sup> This is one of the aspects which nineteenth-century photography explores in urban landscapes (see Chapter IV).

Moreover, eighteenth-century demolitions and disasters were the first to create ruins in Paris and Robert's innovation was to use current events that were part of urban life as artistic subjects. These include the modern ruins of the Hôtel-Dieu, which burnt down in 1772, the fire at the Opéra in 1782, demolitions (*Démolition de Saint-Jean-en-Grève*, *La démolition des maisons du Pont-Notre-Dame en 1786*, *La démolition des maisons du Pont-au-Change*,

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<sup>19</sup> Diderot's commentary of Robert's now-lost *Grande Galerie éclairée du fond* in 'Salon de 1767' foregrounds a 'poésie des ruines' which marks a major shift in the position of the spectator. He must be able to identify with the painted figure(s) and/or space, to enter the painting, whose landscape must stimulate the vibrations of his soul:

Un seul homme qui aurait erré dans ces ténèbres, les bras croisés sur la poitrine et la tête penchée m'aurait affecté davantage. L'obscurité seule, la majesté de l'édifice, [...] le retentissement sourd de l'espace m'aurai[en]t fait frémir. Je n'aurais jamais pu me défendre d'aller rêver sous cette voûte, de m'asseoir entre ces colonnes, d'entrer dans votre tableau. (1821: 371)

One figure is enough to induce the mood for reverie, while, in Robert's painting, too many detract from the experience of the sublime. Diderot's vision of ruinous environments inspiring reverence appears in the stark desert-lands of Lamartine's *Voyage en Orient* (1835), while the image of a lonely traveller in a landscape of ruins endures in iconography throughout the century, for example, in a Félix Thorigny engraving (see Chapter I).

<sup>20</sup> John Soane, architect of the Bank of England, would commission a similar project from his pupil, Joseph Michael Gandy, to imagine the new Bank as a ruinous site (1798).

1788), and the ravages of the Revolution in 1793 (Dubin 2013). In this, Robert anticipates those nineteenth-century painters of modern life. His paintings constitute a precedent for both Haussmannian ruins and those of the Commune in terms of subject-matter, and provide a basis for comparison with nineteenth-century representations. Having as references *vedute* of ancient vestiges, *capricci*, and Gothic ruins, Robert adapted these models to depict the urban phenomena of his time: Gothic aesthetics nourish representations of church demolitions; *vedute* and *capricci* influence compositions of Parisian demolitions and the Opera fire. These influences are fundamental to conceptions about architecture and ruins in relation to the city. Vestigial structures remain somehow exterior to real, living cities since Gothic ruins were associated with isolated monuments, outside of the urban fabric, while *capricci* transcend reality, weaving space and time into imaginative configurations. Both genres link broken structures to decay, to dead or dying (urban) spaces. This is important in the context of Parisian ruins, because Robert's approach sets a precedent for depicting isolated accidents or localised demolitions in the capital as ancient vestiges. Nineteenth-century Academic painting draws on this heritage to represent post-Commune ruins (see Chapter IV).

Robert's visionary ruins of the Louvre arise from his close observation of the urban context. Beyond the philosophical implications, this exercise in future ruination raises the question of 'architectural values beyond period-conditioned stylistic details' that endure in vestiges (Zucker 1961: 129). In other words, what do ruins reveal about architecture? Paul Zucker argues for the interest 'in proportions and the interrelationship of space and volume,' a 'sensitivity for space, and void, the basic architectural elements,' and concludes that 'ruins are felt as architecture if they can be conceived [...] as a specific structural configuration, as a totum divisum':

there may still exist an organic structure with an inner unity which conveys the original architectural concept, in mass and voids and in relation to the surrounding space. These values can be perceived and appreciated naturally only as a metamorphosis of the originally projected architecture. (*Ibid.*: 130)

Imagining edifices as ruins reveals the inner workings of architecture, in their organic articulations.<sup>21</sup> The organic dimension and interest in space, volume, and architecture are fundamental aspects that nineteenth-century literature, poetry and photography would draw into the very structure of representations (see Chapter I).

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<sup>21</sup> Albert Speer's *Ruinenwerttheorie* is another example.

In relation to this, Elizabeth Wanning Harries discusses eighteenth-century experiments with fragments as an aesthetic and structural practice, generating new forms of meaning that anticipate Romantic concepts of fragmentation. Artificial ruins, literary and poetic forms posit a fragmentary aesthetics, warranting the autonomy of a fragmentary work: 'while it appears to be broken off or partial, [it] is not necessarily opposed to some existing or imagined whole' (1994: 5-8). This changes the understanding of artificial ruins and, also, the heritage of the Romantics' gaze and their unfinished works.<sup>22</sup> It is useful to recall here Robert Ginsberg's distinction between Renaissance and Romantic approaches to ruins. The former observed ruins, aiming to restore unity: what was present in the vestige suggested clues about what was missing. By contrast, the latter acknowledged the absence or void at the heart of ruins and aspired to another form of unity, through ruins, between the man-made and the natural (2004: 319-27). The Romantic emphasis on aesthesis and ruinistic unity meant another step towards aesthetic autonomy, through the focus on the physical appearance and contextualisation of ruins as objects inhabiting a concrete environment. If the mediating function gives way to appreciating vestiges in their embodied state, in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre the moral and the aesthetic remain interwoven, since the 'plaisir de la ruine' is conceived of as a profound emotional experience triggered by the contemplation of 'ruines où la nature combat contre l'art des hommes' (1784: 184, 191). By contrast, nineteenth-century Romanticism transforms this antagonism into a harmonious unity between vestiges and their environment. This interdependence emerges in Chateaubriand, where vegetation adapts to the construction and the ruin harmonises with flora, fauna, and the land (Daemmrich 1972b: 32-33).

The end of the eighteenth century was marked by Napoleon's expeditions in Egypt and the excavations around Pompeii, when ruins were carefully measured and depicted in situ. As interest in archaeology rose, vestiges became the object of documentary representation. Romantic sensibilities responded to the spread of travel, the literature associated with it, and the growing awareness of historical documentation and scientific excavations of ruin sites. Concomitantly, the Revolution turned the world upside down, shattering more than its functional and symbolical power structures: monuments and artefacts alike were lost in the

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<sup>22</sup> Harries associates artificial ruins with an eighteenth-century worldview which held that man's vision and understanding were partial. Creating fragmentary works meant acknowledging both this limited perception and the existence of a 'principle that guaranteed order'. Fragments are part of a discourse on experience and adumbrate the wider context of this experience, 'a matrix that could hold it together' (1994: 35).

revolutionary storm. A power void, and the destruction and dispersal of history ensued: from the symbolical demolition of the Bastille, the sacking of ecclesiastical treasures, and the defacing of monuments to the dismembering of properties and buildings, sold off as rubble.<sup>23</sup> Amateurish preservation and restoration, associated with unbridled speculation, resulted in the random destruction or saving of objects and monuments now perceived as part of the history of the French (see Alexandre Lenoir's museographic experiment). The experience of destruction and ruination, both literal and symbolical in France, on the one hand, and the pursuit to recover and document the material vestiges of ancient history abroad, on the other, rendered more complex the use of the ruin motif.

The Revolution and its aftermath would seem to fulfil the predictions associated with *vanitas* motifs, in the fall of empires and in man's destruction of the works of man. In this context, Chateaubriand's approach to the harmony between ruins and their environment constitutes a continuation and a departure within the concept: vestiges point beyond the conflict of man against nature. The conflict has proven to be within mankind itself. Nature appears as a comforter, infusing new life into the wreckage of human achievements.<sup>24</sup> Still, while resuscitating the ruinous structures to an existence beyond the tomb, nature's erosion continues the initial destruction, perpetuating the memory of conflict. Contextualising vestiges in their environment leads to an 'expanded consciousness of and identification with the past memories they preserve' (Daemmrich 1972b: 35). Half-invasive, half-reparative, nature's reclaiming of destroyed edifices renders acute the sense of history. Following Zucker's remark that ruins reveal structure, we can argue that they also make time visible. This relationship between ruins and time transforms in the context of Haussmann's urban systematisation (see Chapters I and III).

Functioning as historical witnesses, ruins allow the past to be experienced by associating particular figures with the history of a site. According to Daemmrich, this constitutes French Romanticism's innovation regarding the ruin leitmotif. Although ruins remain media, inducing experience, I suggest that Lamartine and Hugo go beyond this.<sup>25</sup> Lamartine's evocation of Roman figures helps the poet identify with the time and people to

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<sup>23</sup> For Revolutionary iconoclasm, see Clay (1999).

<sup>24</sup> Lamartine and Hugo evoke the power of vegetation to enliven ruins, while Chateaubriand also refers to the moon, whose animation is, however, eerie (Daemmrich 1972b: 34).

<sup>25</sup> Daemmrich's examples only consolidate the vestiges' symbolic or mediating role: for Mercier, the Petit-Châtelet's demolition confirms the barbarity of the past; for Delille, the sight of an abbey stirs the imagination into associating it with Héloïse and Abélard.

which the Colosseum belongs, merging ancient and contemporary history ('La Liberté'). Meanwhile, in Hugo's denunciation of the destruction of monuments through post-Revolutionary property speculation ('La Bande noire'), the vestige connects history with present fantasy by stimulating an imagined experience of the national past, wherein the individual inserts himself, witnessing or participating in events. In both instances, the emphasis on the ruin's physical presence entwines history with the individual's perception and reaction to it. This spells a new relationship with the past, no longer studied to be understood, but to be felt, (re)lived or re-imagined. Chapter I examines how this personal experience, generated by engaging with ruins, mutates during Haussmann's systematic redesigning of Paris. Hugo's historical immersion through and amongst ruins perpetuates the Romantic image of the vestige as a structure standing apart from human habitations, usually isolated and overgrown. However, these conditions change when ruins appear in the midst of dense urban tissue and the places described are the Temple area or a Carmelite convent hidden in the Marais (see Chapter I).

Two aspects characterise the modern experience of ruins. First, their imaginative use: Hugo's recourse to history and legend turns ruins into loci that trigger (fantastic) encounters and events. Linked to this, the second development concerns the use of the ruin leitmotif as a structural device: 'imaginary ruins in artistic legends play a complex, at times indispensable, role in the structure of the tale' (Daemmrich 1972a: 449; 1972b: 36-37). We can identify these developments in Gautier's Pompeian *novella*, *Arria Marcella* (1852), for example, where a fragment – the imprint of a bosom preserved in volcanic ash – and the ruins of the ancient city drive and structure the narrative. Fascinated by the petrified imprint, the hero walks into Pompeii at night. Partially illuminated by moonlight, the incomplete vestiges appear whole. The fragment drives Octavien's desire, helping him transcend the centuries into a living Pompeii, untouched by Vesuvian fire. For Gautier and Nerval, ruins are essential in constructing the complex interaction between historical past and personal experience, instituting a fluid temporality, which brings the past into the present. The ruins' relationship with time complicates the interferences between memory and fantasy, in the form of dream or hallucination. In Nerval's *Octavie* and *Isis*, a ruined temple functions as a stage whereon the performance of an ancient cult enacts a temporal leap. The ruin as gateway into the past becomes conflated with the ruin as gateway into memory, particularly individual memory. Such temporal dynamics are central to Parisian depictions of the 1850s demolitions that



produced fresh ruins. Chapters I and III explore the amplified temporal instability and urgent tone inflecting the relationship between vestiges and individual memory, as ruins are created and disappear before the observer's eyes. Chapter II addresses the theatrical dimension of ruins in Flaubert's narrative of 1848 in *L'Éducation sentimentale*, where the city under dissolution becomes associated with a stage.

### **Nineteenth-century Paris and the peculiar ruins of modernity**

In the last pages, I emphasised the continuities in the history of the ruin motif. Its functions and significations construct a spectrum of associations that coexist, often allowing for contradictions. In art and literature, the response to ruins builds on their didactic, allegorical dimension to gradually valorise them as objects in and of themselves. The boundary between these phases is difficult to locate and remains permeable. Throughout, the symbolic level remains important, even as ruins shift function, to mediate and structure feelings, thoughts, and individual or collective experiences of the past. Significant for this study, the relation between ruin and personal experience develops after vestiges are contextualised as part of the picturesque aesthetic. The ruins' power to trigger and shape experience depends on their interaction with the environment they inhabit, in our case, Paris.

The city appears as the focus of meditations on living in and with modernity. The development of an imaginary of Parisian ruins shares with modernity the associations with rupture and fragmentation. Yet attempts to define the concept of modernity remain problematic, as hard to grasp as the modern city would prove to be. Several approaches to modernity can be distinguished. Firstly, the distinction between a material aspect, modernisation, and its spiritual expression, modernism, which constitutes an 'interfusion of [...] forces, the intimate unity of the modern self and the modern environment' (Berman 1981: 132). Second, a socio-historical approach evokes antithetical articulations: a bourgeois version, emphasising civil rights (property, speech, market freedom, and equality for the classes with financial power) and a less cohesive, socially-oriented vision (combating poverty and degradation in rural and urban environments); both are overrun by the Second Empire's compromise between 'authoritarianism [and] an uneasy respect for private property and the market, punctuated with periodic attempts to cultivate its populist base' (Harvey 2006: 85-86). Another perspective highlights modernity's duality, oscillating between a radical break with tradition, on the one hand, and often playing out the continuity and fulfilment of values

inherited from the Enlightenment, on the other: concerned with questions of 'ephemerality, contingency, fragmentation,' yet not abandoning immutable, absolute, universal concepts (Meiksins-Wood 1997:547). The first and last of these approaches to modernity are particularly relevant to the aesthetic focus of this study.

Since the city epitomises the environment in the process of modernisation, one expression of the dualist ethos of modernity is the tension between a totalising approach to the urban fabric and a fragmentary view. The first occurs in different types of discourse, from Balzac's protean and delightful monster to Haussmann's urbanistic vision of Paris as an organic whole. In fact, what set apart the type of programme Haussmann came to embody was his global, organic conception of the city (Papayanis 2004:17). The Second Empire responded to a 'serious dislocation brought about by dramatic population growth and urban industrialization,' hence, 'the planning they engendered was frequently considered urgent and always absolutely necessary for the city's health and effective functioning' (*Ibid.*:13). Haussmann envisaged modernisation as touching all levels of urban organisation, from sewers to façade decoration, and addressed all areas of Paris. Precisely this totalising vision, wherein transformation was not limited to a number of projects within designated perimeters, as it had once been, could account for the strong reactions to Haussmannian urbanism or the uneasy feeling that it would engulf the whole city:

Paris se fait beau, se nettoie et se rajeunit de jour en jour [...] Cette toilette de démolition et de badigeonnage efface une à une des traces vénérables [...] La cité des soixante-dix rois déchire ses lettres de noblesse. (Jacob 1858: 35)

The unprecedented threat of Paris's dissolution under the force of demolition constitutes a departure from earlier urban programmes. All-encompassing modernisation thus incurs a *déchirement* echoed in modernity in Baudelaire's poetics of the fragment, which celebrate snippets of scenes, glances, and subjects conventionally dismissed as un-poetic; in Parnassian aesthetics focusing on isolated objects (Gautier's 'Nostalgies d'obélisques'); and in the Impressionist decomposition of line into colour splashes. These discourses are sensitive to the mobility, transitoriness, and perpetual change which characterise the modern age and are embodied in the city. From the mud and gold flowing through the streets of Balzac's city to the houses that crumble and the boulevards that emerge under Haussmann's direction, only to be buried in the wreckage of the Commune, the urban fabric successively unravels and reinvents Paris. Within this environment, Parisian ruins establish themselves as both factual and symbolic presences that disrupt and disturb. They bear on the relationship between the

city and modernity, since demolition is not usually associated with vestiges. The latter belong with dead civilisations, their survival-in-death no longer linked to a living urban context.<sup>26</sup>

In this sense, the Larousse dictionary provides a glimpse into the nineteenth century's conception of ruins. The 1866 edition traces in the etymology of 'ruine' actions and notions correlating it with violent destruction: *frapper, détruire, arracher, creuser, fouiller*. These can refer to the 'dépérissement, destruction d'un bâtiment, d'un ouvrage de maçonnerie' or to the 'décombres, restes, débris d'un ou plusieurs édifices'. Secondary senses link ruin to negative transformations – 'ravages, état de destruction, de dégradation, de modification en mal,' 'affaiblissement' – which also apply to human beings, and from which derive the figurative senses of 'perte de la fortune', 'du bonheur', 'chute, décadence complète'. Ruins hold the secret to the 'développement des civilisations qui ont précédé la nôtre,' the causes of their rise and fall; they bear witness to the struggle of man against nature, of man against man, and of the effort to endure (1866 XIII: 1512-13). From pile-dwellings to Easter Island vestiges, the dictionary evokes the remains of civilisations across the world and the epistemological questions they raise, before concluding with its predilection for the Graeco-Roman heritage. Examples are largely drawn from Romantic and contemporaneous sources, including Chateaubriand, Hugo, Constant, and Taine: 'Les édifices modernes se taisent, les ruines parlent'; 'Pour que les ruines soient belles, il faut qu'elles soient grandioses et noircies par le temps' (Constant and Taine, respectively, in *Ibid.*). These quotations are enlightening regarding the vision of the Larousse and reveal two aspects that set the relationship of ruins and modernity at odds with each other. First, ruins are associated with the remote past: their age endows them with an eloquence that modern construction cannot have. Second, the ruins' aesthetic dimension is also tied to their age, hence, an impossible quality for modern *débris*. As the contemporaneous musings suggest, someday in the future, travellers would puzzle over the ruins of what had been modern civilisation. Only then will modernity's remains become valuable.

Yet ruins can be conceptualised as expressing the fragmentary view of modernity, since they are products of transformations brought about by modernisation (Haussmann) or revolutionary incarnations of the modern ethos (the Commune). Recent and ephemeral, such remains upset this system of values for defining vestiges: they oppose definitions that

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<sup>26</sup> In France, except in the south (Nîmes, Arles), Roman and Gothic vestiges exist extra-muros.

emphasise long duration since the ruins of demolition can appear within a day before turning into rubble and disappearing, while wartime vestiges will not survive the century. Instead, in a sense, space replaces duration: through the scale and persistence of half-demolished and half-erected structures, spread all over Paris and continuously renewed as works progress, the sheer presence of debris creates the impression of a ruinous landscape. If the spatial dimension undermines time as a defining factor in the creation of vestiges, contemporaneous discourse needs to reconsider the nature of ruins. As fragments in and of modernity, they challenge and extend the relationship of Baudelaire's concept to its eternal, transcendent dimension.

Their brief existence prompts a different appreciation of the built environment. As edifices and places that had been part of the Parisian fabric undergo this degradation and disappearance at an accelerated pace, their ephemeral remains engender a new awareness regarding the fragility and transience of urban culture. The idea of urban culture is not conceptualised at this time, but contemporaneous discourses deplore the loss of particular neighbourhoods that contributed to the multifaceted personality of Paris, from the Bohemian quartier de la Doyenné to the liminal spaces near the barriers, where a whole culture of Sunday-outings, bars and cafés catered to a cross-class clientele.<sup>27</sup> Interest in such places is distinct from the attention that demolitions directed towards pre-Revolutionary architecture in the capital (notably Renaissance and Medieval), recognising its historical and aesthetic value, and thus, continuing the Romantic movements pioneered by Hugo, Mérimée and Viollet-le-Duc to save France's heritage.<sup>28</sup> Instead, places that exhibit few or no such features are embraced for their imaginative-affective dimension: 'Adieu vos lettres de noblesse, ô rues, ruelles et culs-de-sac du Paris si puant, si pittoresque et si fantastique...!' (Jacob 1858: 15). Apprehending the importance of these environments paves the way to thinking about urbanism not in terms of isolated monuments and architecture, but as places. Opposed to the principle of circulation, promoted by Haussmannian urbanism, which emphasises space, place delineates a form of being in, belonging to, and inhabiting built space.<sup>29</sup>

Reactions to the planned systematisation did not save historically valuable monuments or picturesque places from demolition. Instead, they generated a movement that sought to

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<sup>27</sup> See Nerval, *La Bohème galante* (1861) and Delvau for the barrière des Deux-Moulins in *Paris qui s'en va et Paris qui vient* (September 1859).

<sup>28</sup> See Fiori for the case of Hôtel Colbert (2012: 34-38).

<sup>29</sup> I return to this distinction below, when discussing how it is reflected in representation.

save the memory of the urban fabric by documenting it. An important consequence of this was the creation of the myth of *le vieux Paris*. The processes around this phenomenon are addressed in Chapter I, through Baudelaire's *Tableaux parisiens*, the artistic journal *Paris qui s'en va et Paris qui vient*,<sup>30</sup> the photography of Henri Le Secq, and the engravings of Félix Thorigny for *Le Monde illustré*. Visual and literary forms reflect on the emergence of Parisian vestiges, obliquely revealing the mutations in urban consciousness and patrimonial conscience. *L'Album Berger* (1848-53) by Henri Le Secq, for instance, is the first monograph on Parisian landscapes which, significantly, takes ruins as its subject. In different media and diverse registers, writers, poets, photographers, and artists produced works that explicitly targeted the impact of the changing cityscape on all aspects of contemporaneous experience in the capital. *PQSV* epitomises the explosion of cultural products devoted to the disappearing city in the 1850s-60s. Its particular perspective combines history and journalism, and reunites authors engaging with the politics of urban change from divergent positions. Comparative readings highlight the shared concerns and diverse treatments that these media develop in relation to the ruin motif. For instance, associations between memory, space, and the city as a living organism posit the erasure of urban memory through demolition. I engage with questions of alienation, dispossession and urban death through contemporaneous discourses correlating endangered memory and ruined landscapes. Their consequences include the disruption of the urban fabric's legibility (as the architectonic heritage is jeopardised), a dysfunctional present and unstable spatiotemporal indicators (Baudelaire, *PQSV*). Concomitantly, discourses valorise the creative potential of fragments, freed from temporal limitations and signifying grids, as ancient vestiges brought to light coexist with the new ruins (Le Secq, Thorigny).<sup>31</sup>

Fragmentary topographies are disruptive even when ruination is not readily visible, a phenomenon I investigate in Chapter II. Charles Marville's photography of streets about to undergo transformation and Edouard Manet's paintings of recently transformed spaces in the 1860s attest to a subtle form of fragmentation inscribed in such representations, both in

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<sup>30</sup> Henceforth *PQSV*.

<sup>31</sup> Additionally, vestiges like the Luxor obelisk are alien to their environment. Inscribed within a modern configuration, the obelisk opens a different kind of space around itself. Gautier's 'Nostalgies d'obélisques' explores this through dialogical aesthetics between cultures and times. Different modes of displacement and fragmented vision feature in Degas's *Place de la Concorde*: the absent obelisk structures the composition through the fragmentary verticality of half-figures and half-monuments. It also imposes a symbolic structure – its ancientness is a counterpoint to the fragmented instant that constitutes the modern experience of space.

structure and content. In Marville, I examine proleptic and subtle forms of ruination, emerging through minute traces or incidental details. These complicate his construction of *le vieux Paris* as a coherent, stable entity, where hyper-detailed compositions represent the fantasy of the city still whole. By contrast, Manet's compositions foreground transience as the city's permanent condition (*Vue de L'Exposition Universelle de 1867*). Fluidity and dissolution are also central to Flaubert's depiction of Paris during the 1848 insurrections in *L'Éducation sentimentale*. I argue for an aesthetics of the fragment and ruin permeating the construction of Paris in textual and visual media, and suggest that these discourses internalise and reproduce ruin in their very strategies for articulating narrative space. In Flaubert, the ruination of Paris reflects and is reflected by that of the self through multiple, limited perspectives that shatter the possibility of narrative continuity and elide causality. As in Manet, through dislocation and impressionistic strategies, Flaubert's minute descriptions remain unassimilable, conveying an incomprehensible topography and actions.

A different perspective on modernity's ambivalent relationship with ruins denotes its quest for a stable identity, since archaeological excavations are used to inculcate the idea of national identity. Gallo-Roman vestiges brought to light more or less accidentally during the systematisation illustrate traditional ruins, their age expressive of the enduring memory and continuation of Parisian civilisation. The knowledge they confer promises stability in an environment characterised by uprootedness and mutation.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, modernity need not forsake its relationship to the past, emerging, instead, within a landscape of ruins: 'les restes des passés déchus ouvrent, dans les rues, des échappées vers un autre monde [...] des façades, des cours, des pavés, reliques d'un univers défait, viennent s'enchâsser dans le moderne' (Certeau, Giard 1994 II: 191). Beyond an irruption of the past onto the present, such remains grow around and out of tradition, finding a place within the city's new configuration. Arguably, they anchor the modern, implying a continuation and transformation of tradition, rather than a severing from it. Within such optics, the disappearance of these vestigial structures destabilises modernity. Normally, such *échappées* would be destabilising by further fragmenting urban topography. However, tessellated or reintegrated within the modern fabric,

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<sup>32</sup> Architect-turned-archaeologist Theodore Vacquer epitomises this quest for stability, knowledge, and the rationalisation of the desire for identity (Jones 2007: 160-61). Vacquer conducts excavations in Paris, ultimately founding the Parisian-archaeology section at Carnavalet. Comparably, Emile Belgrand's *L'Histoire de Paris* (1869) 'fait partie de l'entreprise de rénovation lancée par Haussmann, c'est en quelque sorte la justification idéologique [...] des grands travaux [...] Le reproche de détruire Paris est détourné par l'ostentation d'en préserver l'histoire, les vestiges les mieux enfouis' (Bernard 2001: 32).

like mosaics compressing space-time, they reveal pathways between past and present. These have a pivotal function, as vistas opening onto the past that allow city-dwellers to orient themselves, to better grasp the present.<sup>33</sup> Also, as familiar, reassuring presences, the *échappées* provide a moment of relief from the anxiety and overwhelming feeling produced by new, unfamiliar surroundings, in perpetual mutation.

Ruination on a large scale nurtures angst, inferring the degradation and transience of civilisation. The brief lifespan of humanity is no longer relieved by the idea of survival through the works left behind. Fragile and crumbling, the city's body is no more enduring than a body of flesh. The sustained impact of this sense of loss and confusion during the decades of Paris's reinvention and following wartime destruction bears on nineteenth-century visions of urban modernity. Robert Alter argues for a 'collective implementation' of a 'European faith in reason that has played itself out,' for the 'apprehension of impending historical catastrophe and the sense of cultural exhaustion'. Although referring to the modernist novel's participation 'in an apocalyptic meditation on the fate of European culture' and an 'anticipation of universal destruction,' Alter's observations are valid concerning nineteenth-century representations of Paris (2005: 101). The nemesis of ideas of progress and positivism, 'cultural exhaustion' finds expression in the ethos of ruins, which continues and transforms the Classical and Romantic symbolism of decay in the context of modernity. Ruins in the age of modernity can indicate a rupture with the past and cultural exhaustion. Henri Bergson would correlate the disappearance of the past with the dissolution of the present: what happens when the new and ancient capital are ravaged, as during the Prussian and Versaillais sieges, and the Commune? When Certeau's 'façades,' 'cours' and 'pavés' are not the vestiges of a demolished *vieux Paris*, but of modern constructions, modernity itself becomes a ruin, as in the photographs of the devastated Hôtel de Ville by Charles Marville (Chapter III) or Rue Royale by Auguste Braquehais (Chapter IV). How do such traumatising experiences affect the outlook of modernity?

The second section posits an overdetermination of the ruin leitmotif after 1871, when wartime vestiges coexist with the efforts of reconstruction and continuing systematisation during the early Third Republic. Ruins disturb spatial and temporal continuity, leading to juxtapositions and overlaps in these dimensions, between beginnings and ends, between

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<sup>33</sup> For the relationship between past, present and space, see Chapter I.

different configurations of Parisian topography. Through Zola's *La Curée* (1872), Chapter III addresses representations where wartime ruins seep into depictions of urban demolitions. Zola's Realist representations manipulate time and space to impose a symbolic frame onto Paris's transformation. From a different angle, two Marville albums on the themes of war and demolition raise questions about how photographic discourse maintains interest in the construction works in progress despite the absence of the subject's inherent picturesque qualities (*Percement de l'avenue de l'Opéra*, 1877); how photography and painterly styles interact, the photographic medium adapting compositional principles to the subject of ruinous architecture in a modern urban setting; to what extent discourses conform to sanctioned modes of representation by recourse to inherited ruin tropes (*L'Hôtel de Ville*, 1872).

In this sense, Chapter IV problematises the post-Romantic iconography of the ruin motif and urban vestiges following two interconnected strands: Paris's visible and invisible ruins of 1870-71, through a dialogue between works created in the immediate aftermath of the conflicts and retrospective depictions. Representations of post-war ruins employing Classical references in 1871 include Gautier's *Tableaux de siège* and photographs by Hippolyte Blancard, Auguste Braquehais, Andrieu, and Adolphe Braun. While previous research posits the displacement of civil-war trauma through such references (Lee 2002; Tillier 2004), I argue that texts and images use the iconography of Classical vestiges in a modern key, to inscribe contemporaneous ruins within a cultural (art) history, thereby reinserting the shattering event within history. I compare the 1870-71 immediate perspective with retrospective representations, examining the identification between human and urban collapse in *La Débâcle*, and the enduring scars of war in Impressionist painting in the 1880s.<sup>34</sup> The destruction of the capital both from within and without gives new meaning to the apocalyptic predictions recurrent in the Second Empire and reinforces the impetus to (re)construct the city's image and memory. Hence, I touch on differences between the perception and representation of war ruins and those of the 1860s systematisation, and the change in attitude towards Haussmannian urbanism and architecture after 1870. Thus, the conclusion returns to patrimonial conscience and the ethos of modernity, juxtaposing efforts to preserve the emblematic *vieux Paris* with the appreciation of modern urbanism and architecture. I refer to the myth of *le vieux Paris* in Eugène Atget's deserted landscapes, inhabited by an overabundance of objects, and the extreme visions of Paris's future destruction and

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<sup>34</sup> Also present in Manet's paintings of rue Mosnier (1878) with their echoes of Baudelairean ruin.



archaeological exploration in Alfred Franklin's *Les Ruines de Paris en 4875* (1875). Further observations bring the discussion of Paris's transformations up to the present day (La Samaritaine) from the perspective of their impact on the urban imaginary and echo in contemporary representations.

### **Representation and ruin**

I follow two main lines of inquiry concerning representations of ruins in Paris. Firstly, the investigation traces the evolution of ruins as a literary and artistic leitmotif beyond Romanticism, illuminating its transformation through the transfer into a new environment, the city. The second line of inquiry posits that representations of ruins reflect on the relationship of Parisians with their city, confronted, first, with urban systematisation (1853-70), then with wartime destruction during the external and internal conflicts of 1870-71. My research aims at a synthetic view of post-Romantic ruin leitmotifs and a decoding of the complex relationships established between the mutating topography and the modes of representing the city, which, I argue, shape the Parisians' urban imaginary and attitude to the capital. Throughout, my research challenges the assumption that texts and images evoking the experience of Parisian ruins are simply documentary or ideological illustrations, objectively relaying contemporaneous realities. Instead, it focuses on the constructed, fictional nature of representation, as a mode of conceptualising changing urban spaces and their relation to ruin. Rather than offering faithful images of the social, historical or political processes generated by Paris's transformation under Haussmann and after 1871, representations are closer to the optical phenomenon of refraction, whereby light is deflected when passing obliquely from one medium to another. In representation, writers and artists proceed similarly, filtering and deflecting elements extracted from reality to construe them into a different order, which is, above all, aesthetic. The reordering of nature into art constitutes an instance of *poiesis*, an act that continues and transforms the world. Thus, I consider literature and art as casting on the transformation of Paris and its relationship to ruin an oblique gaze, inflected by individual vision, choices of medium and style. This gaze meditates on external events, in the manner of Flaubert's *L'Education sentimentale*, which looks at once to 1848 and to the 1860s.

The decision to examine the aesthetic dimension of literary and artistic works is driven by the fact that too often their illustrative value is assumed and built upon in critical discourse

that argues for the socio-political content of representations. By emphasising the aesthetic character of representation, refracting and conceptualising experience rather than reflecting it, my project foregrounds the impact of Parisian ruins on forms of cultural production. Additionally, literary and visual discourses reflect on vestigial urbanity, hinting at mutations in urban consciousness and patrimonial conscience. Thus, the emphasis on the aesthetic does not exclude the larger implications of discourses on ruins. The gesture of representing Parisian ruins participates in the fragmentary modes characterising modern sensibilities and can be traced in the rise of photography as a new medium, of archaeology as a discipline, and the literary and artistic currents which explore the epistemological and aesthetic potential of the fragment (Symbolism, Impressionism).

Urban ruins interact with the very concept of representation, whether within the aesthetic or socio-historical sphere. First, the choice and manner of representation indicate that producing meaning is a process which distils external stimuli into discourse (noise, limited vision and circulation). Second, privileging disparate elements over a unifying view already signals a modification in the concept of representation: rather than articulating a discourse, new forms of depiction open up a dialogue (Hall 1997: 10). An often-quoted antithesis opposes Balzac's all-embracing view of Paris to Flaubert's city in the mist, emerging in disjointed images whose connection is inferred but not confirmed (Harvey 2006: 86; Alter 2005: 14). Representation constitutes a process of mediation that involves selecting and re-assembling elements by an authoritative instance that is ultimately subjective (Alter 2005: x). Moreover, Alter's distinction between objectivity in journalism and fiction is less clear-cut in nineteenth-century periodicals on the transformations of Paris, much as it is in historic accounts, both vying with literary texts for narrative and aesthetic effects. Discourses employ ruins to different ends, depending on individual attitudes to urban politics, particular aesthetic tastes or personal affinities regarding the variegated Parisian landscapes (see Gautier's position in Chapters I and IV). Text and image are intimately interconnected in recounting the experience of a modernising capital, and they are themselves shaped by this process. Photographs, poems, articles, and detachable engravings in illustrated journals act as commemorative pieces for the disappearing sites. They create a dialogue between the history of the sites – streets, buildings or cafés – and personal experience. Moreover, they exhibit a fragmentary nature, as independent pieces that, collected, make up a whole, whether a photographic album or a series of articles on Paris. In this, they function like relics,

preserving in fragmentary form the memory of their fragmentary or soon-to-be fragmentary subjects. This vestigial nature warrants ambiguity regarding the questions it raises about language, memory, and identity: are the fragments still legible, do they preserve the eloquence of the whole or do they substitute a different form of expression?

Examining the role of ruins in systems of signification reveals new angles from which to consider modes of representation. In the context of the provisional reconfiguration of Paris by ruins, modes of circulation bear on modes of perception and representation. The limited vision afforded at ground level imposes strategies of movement that take into account the space at hand, which city-dwellers actualise by discovering or creating paths of navigation: selecting a route, taking shortcuts, eschewing pre-determined trajectories (Certeau 1990: 149-50). The presence of ruins allows for unexpected manipulations of spatial experience: they present both impediments and new possibilities of circulation, and, by extension, opportunities for representation that exploit precisely circumscription of vision. For instance, this creates the impression of a whole city in ruins in Jean and Maurice's boat-journey across burning Paris in *La Débâcle* (Chapter IV). Throughout the following chapters, I aim to show how the urban fabric's fragmentation generates new strategies for translating the perception of space into representation, inflecting form and content in literary, poetic, and pictorial discourses. The perception of Paris as disintegrating changes the manner in which its image is construed, in the very choice of subjects, their pictorial treatment, or the narrative strategies deployed.

Certeau identifies spatial practice as a rhetorical discourse, signalling that both deambulation and representation imply reorganising space. He evokes two stylistic figures that are relevant in relation to ruins: the asyndeton, which omits conjunctions, adverbs and other connectors, and the synecdoche, which focuses on one part of a place, rather than the whole to which it belongs (1990: 149-53). The asyndeton fragments space, suppressing parts, exalting particular elements. This occurs in stepping from the street into a ruin: the broken structure collapses delimitations (interior-exterior, private-public), as if omitting the adverbs 'within', 'without'. Instead, its fragmentation highlights matter over form, and form over function (Ginsberg 2004: 1, 15). Consequently, texture and detail acquire new importance in the absence of form, just as structure comes to the foreground because the ruin no longer fulfils the edifice's original function. Matter and structure force new ways of thinking about the volumes that inhabit and define space. They even question the idea of volume.

Photography and the new pictorial language of Impressionism would play out such ideas with their attention to surfaces, textures, the articulation of space, and the translation of perception into representation (see Chapters II-III). Following Certeau, signifiers of spatial language suffer a *décalage*, deliberate or accidental, leading to discontinuities in the trajectory chosen and, implicitly, its representation, as in Flaubert's narrative of Parisian space during the 1848 insurrections (Chapter II).

A useful observation in this sense is Andrew Thacker's distinction between place and space, the former associated with 'being, indwelling and the concept of "sense of space," while the latter is 'socially produced, not just a spatial container and never empty, but implying history, change, becoming' (Dennis 1997: 105). Configuring a pathway through ruins upsets the balance between the interior, as place (private), and the exterior, as space (public) in, for example, Zola's and Marville's explorations of ruinous architecture during construction and demolition or following war (Chapter III). The ruin's perambulatory potential entails a reconsideration and re-appropriation of place as space, for instance in Pierre-Ambroise Richebourg's contemplative view of *Salle des pas perdus* in the Ministère de Justice in 1871 or Marville's intimate peregrination across the shelled Hôtel de Ville (Chapter III). From public buildings, open to certain categories, the ministry and town hall become public spaces accessible to all passers-by. A more radical conversion and reconfiguration of spatial possibilities features in Thorigny's illustration of the quartier Latin ruins in 1860. A lone passer-by makes his way through the debris of buildings, confronting the intimacy of the private sphere laid bare in the public space. Beyond Thorigny's Romantic treatment, the disturbing encounter with the contents of eviscerated houses under demolition is a recurrent image in contemporaneous texts, also evoked in *La Curée*, where a member of Saccard's party watches the house he had inhabited upon arriving in Paris disappear before his eyes (Chapter III).<sup>35</sup>

The short-circuiting of urban norms of circulation affects the relation between space and time. The ruin straddles the past and present, between place and space, disrupting the spatiotemporal continuum of the nineteenth-century city. The fragment cited above from Certeau and Giard showed buildings linking the past and present, as bridges to lost times and worlds. With respect to ruins, this image implies that, entering such an edifice means stepping

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<sup>35</sup> The irruption of the exterior, public space into the interior, private sphere is a leitmotif in *La Curée*.

outside of ordinary time. In fact, Certeau identified a myth-structure underlying urban circulation. Discourses on ruins that use elements belonging to a common imaginary, from Pompeii to Biblical destructions, support this view. In this regard, Certeau's other trope, synecdoche, appears to dilate one element in space so that, for instance, a wrecked building or street plays all the parts, replacing the actors, stage and action (hence, time). Again, dilation, conflation and fragmentation produce a spatial sentence made up of juxtaposed references, fitted around ellipses and absences (Certeau 1990: 153). Case studies of *L'Hôtel de Ville* by Marville (Chapter III) and the ruined streets of Saint-Cloud in 1871 (Chapter IV) offer different conceptualisations of these processes.

Temporal and spatial displacement or conflation are characteristics of heterotopia, Foucault's concept of a concrete space inhabited by the imaginary, reflecting an image of the place in the negative (1984: 46-49). Urban ruins can provide the space for alternative narratives, as in Fournel's historical work *Paris nouveau*, which projects a future vision of a hyper-regulated, uniform Paris out of the rubble of demolitions and constructions under way. Heterotopias are, however, static constructs, unlike the dynamic ruins of Parisian demolitions. Meanwhile, war ruins exhibit heterotopic traits. Photographs of post-Commune wreckage require viewers to (re)construct the narrative of destruction, investing debris with meaning. Apocalyptic and cataclysmic references, encouraged by classicising ornamentation or compositional choices can nourish connections between the Second Empire's decadence and France's providential destruction (Wilson 2007: 24-25). This implies a predestination that sets Paris on a par with ruined ancient cities, signalling the closure of its existence: a Pompeian Paris becomes a candidate for heterotopia. Still, if *La Débâcle* exploits this fateful destruction, it makes the Second Empire's ruins building blocks in the organic development towards the Third Republic. The projection into myth constitutes a parallel narrative, not the end of history. While myth relegates urban facts into an immutability that opposes the recent or ongoing ruination of Paris, Chapter IV suggests a more complex reality concerning representations around 1871. I nuance the view that this displacement participates in a discourse meant to set at a distance architectural remains that bespeak too recent a trauma

(Boime 2004).<sup>36</sup> Other critics also argue for a more ambiguous use of pictorial language and compositional techniques, as in the case of Andrieu's photography in 1871 (Luxenberg 1998).

My own research leads me to support the latter view concerning the ruin leitmotif in post-war landscapes. Projected onto the recent debris of war, the iconography of Classical vestiges inserts the former into a system of signification pertaining to the concept of ruin. This helps beholders set recent events into perspective, giving meaning to destroyed structures as part of history through a common frame of cultural references to ruins. Moreover, if Academic paintings emphasise distance in space and time, this is not least due to their exploitation of the particular architectural styles of their time, from the Napoleonic Egyptian- and Classically-inspired projects to the subsequently dominant Neoclassical style and Second-Empire eclecticism. In fact, a Meissonnier or Gautier indulging in representations employing Classical ruin tropes participates at once in a continuation of and a departure from depictions that compare modern Paris with the cultural centres of the ancient world. Paris had aspired for over half a century to the status of a new Athens. It had been compared to Rome in its ambitions and with Babylon in its decadence. The conflagrations that tore it apart brought into sharp focus precisely those superficial aspects through which Paris sought such kinship: architectural style. Depictions that foreground the stylistic elements in contemporaneous architecture, thereby bringing them closer to the vestiges of Antiquity, point beyond displacement. From Romanticism to the Second Empire, representations reflected on the modern city's ambitions to emulate its ancient predecessors, problematising the consequences of architectural pastiche in modernity. Anticipating the ruins of modern Paris, texts and images often exploited in humorous vein how architectural pastiches would confuse future archaeologists. For instance, the indiscriminate use of Graeco-Roman elements, regardless of a building's function, leads to absurd results:

Tout au centre de Paris, cette ville qui se proclame la reine du monde civilisé, dans le quartier le plus élégant et le plus peuplé, sur une large place, et bien en vue du regard des hommes, s'élève un temple grec, entouré d'une splendide colonnade. C'est le temple de Baal, c'est la Bourse. (Mirecourt 1857: 19-20)

Such images underline the degradation of aesthetic values, reduced to replicating the past, no longer attuned to the creativity that defined a French identity and ethos. Interestingly, the

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<sup>36</sup> Similarly, critical studies posited the Impressionists' complicity to obliterate the memory of the Commune by expunging the charred remains, and focusing on reconstruction and the Haussmannian vision of Paris (Boime 1997).

renewed interest in urban heritage during Haussmann's project did not extend to recent or contemporaneous architecture, perceived as gauche copies of the Classical styles. As Gautier quipped, it took the Communards' gas and fire to endow ugly modern architecture with aesthetic value. Curiously enough, it would almost seem that modernity needs this ruination. It relishes incompleteness, elevated to subjecthood; unity is no longer sought and fragmentariness makes up the creative potential of urban space. In this process of dissolution, modernity transforms fear, danger and trauma into new aesthetic codes and modes of vision. Over a decade after the Commune, the surviving ruins constitute urban landmarks, much as the Colosseum does, in Siebe Ten Cate's *Ruines des Tuileries* (Chapter IV).

The real ruination of Paris tested the fears and fantasies of destruction, and representations allowed inhabitants to contemplate them both contextually and in their own right. In *La Débâcle*, Paris is monstrously magnified as a skeletal, infernal, and half-sentient entity during the Commune fires and its space is negotiated as a dangerous apocalyptic wasteland. This post-Commune vision is anticipated, however, in a historic work from the 1860s, Emile de la Bédollière's *Le Nouveau Paris*, where antediluvian creatures inhabit the familiar décor of Haussmannian Paris. Accounts of the city in transition oscillate between 'visual precision and visionary fantastication' (Alter 2005: 78). In the manipulation of space, both as experience and representation, the city-dweller appears to exercise

a faculty of archaic vision, in which what meets the eye in the contemporary scene triggers certain primal fears and fantasies, archaic vision becoming the medium through which we are led to see the troubling meanings of the new urban reality. (*Ibid.*: 48)

Depictions of Parisian ruins reflect on experience and the collective imaginary –their insight into processes of imaging reveals historical discourse as being only a step away from fantastic reveries like Gautier's *Paris futur* (1851).

Certeau argued that allusive and fragmentary narratives, marked by lack, fit into the social practices they symbolise (1990: 154). In the context of demolition or destruction, the gaps created by collapsing or ruined buildings are re-inscribed in the city's spatial configuration through fragmentary discourses, which often remain independent of the greater narrative of the city. Photographs by Le Secq focusing on a single building illustrate this instance (see Chapter I). Lacunary views can metonymically substitute the city in panoramas of the projected Haussmannisation or Commune destruction in Manet or in Zola (see Chapters II and IV, respectively). Ruins become performative forces in urban discourses and

concomitantly, discourses suspend ruins in their narrative fabric, preventing their erosion or dispersion.

Representation also implies a critical attitude, evidenced by the numerous works of journalism and historiography that debate each space's or place's role in the urban fabric, and the consequences of their loss or transformation.<sup>37</sup> Thus, a building or street opens the space for meditation on modes of representing power or identity; on the relationship between shape and function, and on the material reflecting the symbolic. In both regular periodicals like *Le Monde illustré*, to which Félix Thorigny contributes images, and publications entirely dedicated to Paris's transformation, such as *PQSV*, journalistic practice combines historiography and fiction: authors adopt an archaeological stance to discuss what meanings would be lost to future generations of antiquarians, while engaging in dramatic re-enactments or reveries about the life of the places about to be demolished and their inhabitants. The fragmentary and somehow instantaneous nature of such *tableaux*, dictated by the urgency of the enterprise, where the subject is about to disappear or change, is common to historical guides, periodicals, photography, and graphic arts attempting to keep pace with the mutating geography, inscribing and preserving it.

Henri Le Secq and Charles Marville offer two perspectives on how photographers conceived of these processes, pre-Haussmannian and Haussmannian, respectively. While Le Secq pursues the first effects of demolitions in the 1850s, Marville takes on an official commission and develops particular visual strategies, documenting streets before Haussmann's intervention. Their work on the city also announces new aesthetic perspectives, anticipating Caillebotte's or Degas's Impressionist spaces, and Atget's *vieux Paris*. Photography's fragmentary and momentous quality is particularly resonant with the transitory state in which it captures the city, echoing Paris's modern ruins. We can read the gesture of recording a trace of these ephemeral states of urbanity as projecting the self into the position of a future consciousness, looking on modernity as the past. The photograph is a fragment capturing a fleeting moment, just as the streets and buildings under demolition are made up of debris, held together precariously, on the point of collapse. To recycle a Benjaminian image, between disappearance and remembrance, this is a moment where the past is glimpsed, in a

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<sup>37</sup>Examples include Emile de la Bédollière, *Le Nouveau Paris. Histoire de ses vingt arrondissements* (1860), Charles Virmaître, *Paris oublié, Les Curiosités de Paris* and *Paris qui s'efface* (1866), Henri de Pene, *Paris mystérieux* (1861), *Paris nouveau jugé par un flâneur* (Anonymous, 1868), Georges Grison, *Paris horrible et Paris original* (1882), Paul Bellon and Georges Price, *Paris qui passe* (1883).



flash. The disrupted fabric of the city allows for a critical view, a perception of the construct and its mechanism. The viewer can look back to understand how the city was conceived and what is at stake in its reconstruction, for instance, privileging the material and the functional over the symbolic and the natural.

Alter proposes a 'correlation between the modern city as a construct of human design and technology and the modern novel as an inventive assembly of self-conscious, sometimes iconoclastic artifices' (2005: 101). We can take this parallel further: ruins in nineteenth-century Paris constitute technological and anthropological creations, no longer resembling Romantic ruins:

Celui qui veut admirer le Paris nouveau doit donc se résigner à acheter son admiration au prix qu'elle mérite. Il est condamné au spectacle indéfiniment prolongé de la coulisse et à tout ce tripotage des machinistes que la toile de fond cache à l'Opéra. Il trébuche aux amas de décombres entassés dans tous les coins; il se heurte aux ouvriers effondrant une mesure ou un palais à coups de pioche, faisant pleuvoir les pierres, ou attelés à une corde et tirant à grands cris un pan de mur, qui s'écroule dans un tourbillon de poussière, avec un rugissement d'avalanche. Il rencontre des myriades de maisons décapitées, éventrées, coupées en deux, s'affaissant dans la cave, trahissant par les fenêtres brisées ou les murailles abattues tous les secrets de leur aménagement intérieur, zébrées de ces raies noires et sinistres que laissent derrière eux les conduits de cheminées, et qui semblent le signe de ralliement des démolisseurs, – espèces de cadavres branlants, mi-debouts, mi-couchés, résignés à l'abattoir, et dont l'aspect attriste l'âme et les yeux. (Fournel 1865: 21)

Similarly to the modern novel as assemblage and artifice, Fournel's city is a spectacle in the making, torn to pieces and not yet reassembled into a new collage. Where does one start to write about Paris? When so many texts have been pieced together and so many images assembled, any new telling is bound to reiterate, rewrite, and recycle images, unravelling certain structures, salvaging others, and building on the debris of previous imagined cities. In this respect, the process of representation is not so different from projects of urban reorganisation and systematisation, as we will see in Chapter III.

Just as texts and images reflect critically and creatively on Parisian ruins, critical discrimination is essential in recognising the nature of such discourses as fictional constructs and selective representations. For this reason, my methodology concentrates on case studies, combining close reading and comparisons across media and genres. Hence the decision to focus on particular figures, analysing where possible more than one work to convey the tenor of individual attitudes to, and experience of, ruins. Rather than de-contextualising texts and images, meanings can emerge within their intended framework, whether this is an article or

album. Compared to other discourses, this approach enriches the ruin leitmotif's semiotic polyvalence through accretion or subversion.<sup>38</sup> The interdisciplinary perspective allows me to study the interaction between contemporaneous media (literature, painting, photography) and new disciplines (archaeology, palaeontology). This highlights the interdependence of media in relation to ruins as determining and determined by the fragmentary optics of modernity.

In order to understand nineteenth-century preoccupations, I have sought concepts and theoretical paradigms that find echoes in contemporaneous thought. Hence the recourse to theories of the city as an organic entity endowed with memory (Henri Bergson), to organic memory discourses developing from the 1850s to the end of the century, and research on perception and representation (Hippolyte Taine). Nineteenth-century scopic devices and concepts (the panorama, nostalgia) illuminate the construction of dynamic topographies. Meanwhile, palimpsestic practices of overwriting different times and spaces can be observed in abstract and concrete instances of recycling urban images, whether as tropes (Biblical, antique, teleological references) or building materials (Chapter III). Representations are discussed within a frame of cultural references that would have been familiar to authors, artists, photographers, and a select audience. For instance, Marville's experiments with the impossible spatial configurations of ruined buildings echo Piranesi's absurd spaces, a reference relevant to his artistic education as illustrator and his work on urban spaces. Likewise, I compare Marville's photography anticipating demolition to portraits-in-death, a recurrent nineteenth-century practice (Rice 1997). The idea of the albums of Commune ruins as relics is based on the commemorative function of the objects and Malvina Blanchecotte's account of people collecting pieces of ruins as relics and memorabilia.

Glimpsed on the point of disappearance, Parisian ruins in the later nineteenth century constitute the backdrop of a quest for representations of recent and ancient history. Their constant presence and changing nature offer a paradigm for the fragmentary ethos of modernity. Challenging and anchoring space and time, they embody a recurrent question: 'après avoir pensé la ville au futur, se met-on à la penser au passé, comme un espace de voyage en elle-même, une profondeur de ses histoires?' (Certeau, Giard 1994: 189). Their effects are comparable to phantasmagoric devices, generating 'constant disorienting flux,' 'blurring perception and hallucination, waking and dreaming,' in a 'process of rapid perception

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<sup>38</sup> See the concept of counter-discourses (Terdiman 1989).

and free association,' whereby 'the multifaceted reality of the city impinges on the senses of the individual and unlocks underground currents in his psyche' (Alter 2005: 30). Such a mechanism could equally characterise modernity, whose perpetual mutations render it dissolute, heterogeneous and unassimilable, despite its claims for rationalisation. There can be no ordered discourse of modernity, just as Haussmann's ordered vision does not prevent insurrections. Instead, modernity can be construed as a space of dialogue defined by the ruins it creates, which, in turn, determine its contradictions. Ruins open up the space of modernity, making room for discourses looking back to the past, projecting towards the future, and attempting to capture a trace of the present. It is from such rubble that the stories of modernity emerge and this is where we shall start our examination of the metamorphoses of the aesthetics of ruins and the city.

## Chapter I

### 'Ceci tuera cela': The Rubble of Modernity and Organic Paris

Le chantier était désert.

Au milieu des décombres de la maison démolie, au travers des pierres neuves récemment taillées pour la maison à reconstruire, flambait le feu de bivouac allumé par l'invalidé, gardien du chantier et des matériaux.

[...]

Car cela se passait, il y a quelques jours à peine, au milieu du Paris moderne, à deux pas du boulevard et de la colonne Vendôme, et sur l'emplacement de cette maison où Tahan étalait ses richesses artistiques et Basset ses écrins de perles fines et de diamants.

Avait-on mis Paris à feu et à sang? Quelque horde barbare venue du Nord avait-elle conquis la reine des cités et semé sur son passage la misère et la désolation? Cette lueur rougeâtre, qui se projetait sur un amas de décombres, était-elle le feu de nuit des vainqueurs? [...] La horde barbare qui avait fait un monceau de ruines de la rue de la Paix, n'était autre qu'une troupe de maçons et de Limousins inoffensifs.

Paris était conquis par le Limousin, et la rue Turbigo passait.

Si le jour eût paru, on eût pu voir une longue brèche partant du boulevard des Capucines et se prolongeant jusqu'à la rue de Choiseul.

D'un côté, les vieilles maisons tombaient en poussière; de l'autre, s'élevaient des constructions nouvelles qui montaient peu à peu, hérissées d'échafaudages supportant une légion d'ouvriers de toute sorte.

Mais à cette heure, on eût dit un champ de bataille après l'enterrement des morts. [...] En travers de cette ville saccagée, deux hommes qui veillaient auprès d'un feu allumé avec des poutres vermoulues et des persiennes en morceaux. (Ponson du Terrail 1910 [1869]: 9-10)

This scene opens *Les Amours du Limousin*, part of *Rocamboles en prison*, set in contemporaneous Paris, in 1869, and whose plot is articulated around demolition and construction sites. By this time, metaphors of a war-torn environment, of half-demolished and half-erected buildings were part of a shared imaginary. Comparing Parisian streets with battlefields was a commonplace, as shown by an example from *Le Monde illustré*, almost a decade earlier:

Notre dessinateur nous représente ce vieux quartier latin largement entamé par nos démolitions modernes, estompé par un clair de lune qui donne à ces ruines l'aspect de la ville de Saragosse le lendemain de sa prise. C'est là du moins l'opinion du vieux soldat préposé la nuit à la garde des démolitions. «Sauf l'odeur du sang et de la poudre, nous disait-il, c'était absolument le même spectacle.» Il était de l'armée d'Espagne. (Arnaud 1860: 358)<sup>1</sup>

The figure of the ex-soldier turned *gardien du chantier* haunts both sites, his testimony, evoked in the journal excerpt, warranting the authenticity of the impression of resemblance

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<sup>1</sup> See below for a discussion of the artist referred to, Félix Thorigny, and his illustration (Fig. 1a).

between a war zone and the areas under demolition and construction. The veterans' transfer from battlefield to building site reinforces the idea of aggression perpetrated on the urban body. Moreover, the invalid in *Rocamboles*, a Crimean War veteran, epitomises the 'ruines humaines' invoked by Baudelaire, mutilated and living precariously, temporarily useful yet forgotten by a society in which they no longer fit. He is quite at home amongst the remains of old houses which no longer respond to the capital's needs and ambitions, but whose mutilated shells still provide materials that will be reemployed. Contemporaneous discourse abounds in images that depict urban systematisation in terms of martial aggression: *monceau de ruines*, *brèche*, *légion d'ouvriers*, *champ de bataille*, *ville saccagée*. However, in most texts, the fascination for this swiftly changing environment balances the morbid vision with evocations of the projected improvements:

Paris démoli est un livre tout à fait à l'ordre du jour [...] De profondes tranchées, dont plusieurs sont déjà de magnifiques rues, sillonnent la ville en tous sens; les îlots de maisons disparaissent comme par enchantement, des perspectives nouvelles s'ouvrent, des aspects inattendus se dessinent, et tel qui croyait connaître son chemin, s'égare dans des voies nées d'hier. (Gautier 1855: i)

In Gautier's preface to Edouard Fournier's *Paris démoli*, trenches give way to new streets and disappearing houses to new ways of experiencing urban space. The reconfiguration is literally trenchant, cutting through urban tissue. During this phase of constructive destruction, the disappearance of familiar places excises all points of reference, rendering navigation hazardous in an ever-shifting landscape.

There are moments in the life of a city when it begins to meditate on the fact that its existence may one day come to an end. As with living entities, its existential cycle comprises both life and death. This awareness is often attained during periods of upheaval, such as invasions, wars or natural disasters that reduce to nothing the works of men. When a whole street caved in during the 1770s, when burial grounds spilled out their inhabitants in the 1780s,<sup>1</sup> when churches and palaces were wiped out during the Revolution, a feeling of impending doom translated the anxiety regarding the end of (a) civilisation: the ruin of an empire. It is, thus, significant when this consciousness emerges in a time of prosperity, under the auspices of technological innovation and improvement of living standards.<sup>2</sup> Such is the case of Paris amidst the cycle of destruction and creation into which Haussmann's renovation plunged the city. Interestingly, urban restructuring coincides with archaeological missions.

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<sup>1</sup> See Robb (2010: 27-42).

<sup>2</sup> For the contrast between decadence and progress as the spirit of an age, see Weber (1986). Joséphin Péladan's monumental *La Décadence latine* (1892) is representative of this Zeitgeist.

However, whereas these are conducted in foreign territory, with the aim of advancing knowledge regarding ancient, Biblical or legendary civilisations, discoveries occurring in the capital, on construction or demolition sites, were often fortuitous. The ambitious project of the Second Empire provides an eloquent framework for the study of Paris's association with ancient cities, whose skeletons were being discovered.<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, the capital looked towards future improvements, working to remove slums, restore monuments and create boulevards. On the other, urban reconfiguration offered the opportunity to delve into the city's buried history, while elsewhere, archaeological missions studied its ancestors in the form of deceased civilisations. Engaged in this bilateral process, the capital lives among ruins – the debris of the present construction-demolition and of the past, local and universal. Thus, new knowledge about urban evolution parallels interrogations on the origins of the city and conjectures about its demise.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter focuses on the imaginary of ruins that develops during the first decade of systematisation. It explores how texts and images reflect on the experience of mutating spaces, employing contemporaneous paradigms on memory and the embodied city. The in-between state of construction-demolition destabilises the body and identity of Paris, and its inhabitants because the construction of the present, modern urban self involves the active destruction of the past. According to Henri Bergson, this condition impairs the cognitive processes – sensation, perception, memory, imagination – whereby an individual interacts with the environment. By the end of the nineteenth century, his theories posited the interdependence of memory and perception. Notably, he associated these processes with an organic and embodied vision of the environment. Bergson's theories are relevant to the period of Paris's transformation because his work conceptualises and synthesises research that had developed in the last fifty years.<sup>5</sup> Memory appears as an active state, influencing perception and determining the shape of the present: how we react to external stimuli depends on accumulated experience. Thus, acting in the present draws on memory, which amounts to actualising the past: 'La mémoire ne consiste pas du tout dans une régression du présent au

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<sup>3</sup> There were excavations at Thebes, Babylon, Nineveh, Nimrud, many of them conducted by French and English authorities, rivals in the race for antiquities and imperial prestige. Archaeological research intensified under the Second Empire.

<sup>4</sup> Urban works reveal Gallo-Roman architecture, Merovingian tombs, and unfinished architectural projects (Fiori 2012: 45).

<sup>5</sup> Organic memory discourses emerge against a background of ongoing debates regarding heredity, evolution and degeneration, from Lamarck (1830), Prosper Lucas (1847-1850), Bénédict Morel (1857), and Charles Darwin (1859) to Ernst Haeckel (1866), Théodule Ribot (1873), Samuel Butler (1878), and August Weismann, Zola's main reference (1885) (Otis 1994: 1-53).

passé, mais au contraire, dans un progrès du passé au présent' (1929 [1896]: 268). Conversely, perception itself 'si instantanée soit-elle, consiste donc en une incalculable multitude d'éléments remémorés, et [...] toute perception est déjà mémoire. *Nous ne percevons, pratiquement, que le passé*' (*Ibid.*: 163). The present appears as constantly past, augmenting and transforming it. Significantly, Bergson insists on the present as 'l'état de notre corps,' thus having an embodied quality; implicitly, memory and the past it materialises in the present are incarnated in the individual's state at a given moment (*Ibid.*: 269). There can be no present without the past.

### **Organic Space, Embodied Memory**

We can extend these principles to the city's space. A site's present condition and, implicitly, identity are determined by accumulated experiences that shaped and continue to shape it; by the memories whose traces it bears and which bear on the space's current existential state. A provisional distinction must be noted with regard to the relationship between memory and perception: the site cannot perceive, it can only be perceived. Yet the accumulation of perceptions engaging this space contribute to its current identity and every new perception draws on the store of memories relative to the site, actualising and transforming it. Thus, the site has a *corps de mémoire*, just like a living entity, whose organic body is ruled by memory. Memory is, therefore, essential to the life, death and identities of the city. This organic conception is borne out by nineteenth-century rhetoric which characterises Paris as a living body, from the title of Maxime Du Camp's monograph *Paris, ses organes, ses fonctions et sa vie dans la seconde moitié du XIXe siècle* to Zola's *Le Ventre de Paris*, and the recurrent images of evisceration, wounding and dismembering exploited in fiction and non-fiction which describe demolitions.

In the nineteenth century, theories on the transmission of information from generation to generation, on phenomena of degeneration, atavism, and recessive genes are transferred from the study of plant- and animal-life to the anthropological sphere, seeking to understand the development of civilisations. Organic memory concepts provide a prism through which to view discourses of modernity addressing, for instance, spiritual decadence, whose implications span moral to aesthetic dimensions. Architecture and infrastructure, which articulate urban space, constitute the external, material counterpart to the cultural specificity of a city. Read in this key, the state of Paris and its buildings can embody precisely concerns about cultural *épuisement*. In this context, the ruin leitmotif gives expression to ambivalent

positions regarding built environment. On the one hand, discourses foreground the necessity of removing what is perceived as decayed urban matter that poisons the rest of the city. On the other, authors are conscious that this physical excision means the loss of the memories embodied in such places, akin to the removal of part of the temporal lobe in brain surgery. Jules Lecomte's column *Courrier de Paris* in *Le Monde illustré* illustrates this double awareness regarding the process of ruination in relation to modernity. Although supporting demolition, he uses the same images which entwine the organic and urban bodies through the polysemy of these terms, and which convey the idea of a violent process of dismembering. Paris's rapid and radical transformation makes it difficult to recall 'ce qui existait il y a peu d'années encore sur les quartiers de la capitale si magiquement transformés'. As if to prove this, Lecomte quotes from an old issue of his own publication, *Mémoires du Temps*, to refresh his memory about the area between places du Carrousel and du Palais Royal before their *dégagement*:<sup>6</sup>

Il faut avoir vu à travers quelles cloaques s'est fait jour le décret qui, comme un boulet, est allé transpercer le cœur infect de ce qu'on appelle la Cité! Des ruelles, des impasses, des culs-de-sac qui ne connurent jamais le soleil, aujourd'hui éventrés par la pioche qui va droit son chemin, révèlent aux regards offensés de hideuses entrailles [...] Voilà une maison fendue de haut en bas; on a enlevé toute une tranche, tel faisait, selon l'Arioste, la Durandale, cette furieuse épée de Roland, qui entamait un homme par le crâne et le fendait en deux moitiés [...] On doit croire qu'à cette heure même où disparaît ce quartier de Paris, berceau et tombeau de tant de gens et de tant de faits, quelque plume spéciale recueille l'histoire de la ville [...] Un spectacle curieux est celui qu'offrent, dans les éventrements de ces vieilles demeures, les traces des habitants troublés par l'expropriation [...] (1860 : 354)

Lecomte rehearses a series of commonplaces recurrent throughout the decades of urban systematisation and into the Third Republic. Tellingly, metaphors and comparisons reinforce the idea of urban evisceration as violence committed unto a living body: 'le décret qui, comme un boulet, est allé transpercer le cœur', the house 'fendue' as if by Roland's Durandale, the *entrailles* revealed by the gutting. This rhetoric persists even in a text that condemns the decayed old neighbourhoods and endorses radical renovation. Furthermore, Lecomte acknowledges the impact of the disappearance of the historical and individual traces inscribed within the crumbling walls, the latter affecting not only the learned, but ordinary Parisians too.

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<sup>6</sup> A periodical appearing every three months from 1857. The space between the Carrousel and the Louvre features in a photograph by Henri Le Secq discussed below (Fig. 8).



Samuel Butler wrote that 'matter which can remember is living; matter which cannot remember is dead. *Life, then, is memory*' (2005 [1878]: 299-300). Urban space, perceived as endowed with memory, would, therefore, be considered living. Matter, whether stone or flesh, accumulated experiences, the memory of which determined their current condition. Through organic memory discourses, the state of the Parisian landscape can be explored from a pathological perspective, drawing attention to the necessity of the Haussmannian intervention. The pathological stance emerges in the Naturalist, Symbolist and fantastic fascination with death, decay, and dismembering. Conversely, through the same organic perspective, discourses convey the fear that defacement, mutilation and erasure jeopardise the vital faculty of Paris's memory. Without memory, neither space nor inhabitants could go on living. Since, following the same contemporaneous theories, the environment is vital to individual and collective development, such discourses problematise the fate of the inhabitants of a dying city or one rendered sterile through the impoverishment of its topographic, historical and cultural strata. In the famous 1867 *Paris-Guide* accompanying the Universal Exhibition, Louis Blanc went as far as to associate the city's past with its soul: 'les villes ont une âme, qui est leur passé; et leur beauté matérielle n'a tout son prix que lorsqu'elle laisse subsister les traces visibles de cette autre beauté qui se compose de souvenirs'.<sup>7</sup>

As a counter-argument, in the preface to *Paris démolie*, Gautier writes that a city which does not change also dies. The city adapts to its inhabitants' needs, outgrowing its old self, developing new character traits. This is what makes it alive, even if this means that man's every step 'foule la cendre de ses pères' and each new edifice 'a dans ses substructions les pierres d'un édifice démolie, et le présent [...] marche sur le passé' (1855: iii). The alternative Gautier conceives would be contrary to the cycle of life and death inherent in the urban body:

Mais pourquoi, dira-t-on, ne pas bâtir à côté? La terre est assez large. Que deviendraient alors ces monuments sans emploi, ces maisons d'un autre âge? Des nécropoles de souvenirs qui s'écrouleraient d'elles-mêmes, car les édifices vivent comme les corps, et lorsque l'âme s'en retire, ils s'affaissent et tombent. (*Ibid.*: iv)

As a living organism, Paris depends on the death of old tissue and the growth of new structures. Otherwise, the preserved fabric becomes a relic, no longer animated by the spirit or needs of its current residents. A contemporaneous example was Bruges, frozen in time, its history stopped. In 1864, Baudelaire described it as a 'Ville fantôme, ville momie, à peu près conservée. Cela sent la mort, le Moyen Age, Venise, les spectres, les tombeaux' (1976 II: 952-

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<sup>7</sup> See Chapter II for the Universal Exhibition's effects on Parisian topography.

53). Later Rodenbach would play with the same imagery in his Symbolist novel *Bruges-la-Morte* (1892). Such a city acquires a ghostly reality, of life-in-death, its streets deserted, its inhabitants leading a muted, inert existence. The movement that characterises a living city is missing here. The situation is different, though, in Gautier's and Baudelaire's Paris, each district with its colourful culture, misery and luxury never far from each other, crime and business flourishing side by side. Yet Gautier cannot imagine a redeemed existence for the decrepit buildings and dangerous streets: his nineteenth-century Parisians cannot identify with spaces from another age. Refurbishment or renovation are not envisioned as viable strategies for urban rejuvenation. Nonetheless, the text emphasises that a city is constituted of layers of accumulated history. Rather than becoming 'nécropoles de souvenirs,' spaces draw on memory to live and grow. Paris appears caught between the necrosis of its old configuration, a necropolis of memories, and a state of amnesia or soullessness induced through radical intervention.

If space and individuals function interdependently, memory is a common denominator in the development of spatial configurations and human beings. Relationships between space and the individual, memory and the individual, and memory and space are intimately entwined in Western culture.<sup>8</sup> Without spatial and architectonic markers that store and actualise past experience, and support memory, the dynamics of the present are compromised. Organic memory principles and traditional correlations between memory and space indicate an apparently paradoxical situation: space is endowed with memory, which renders it somehow alive, and memory is dependent on space, which inscribes, preserves and supports it. Bergson asserted that memory was not for storing and retrieving information, but an active force shaping the present. Similarly, for Franco Moretti, space is not a container or function, but a dynamic force, signifying, changing, accumulating, and shaping narratives (1999: 70). Following Bergson, memory is, and makes, the present; following Moretti, a given space determines the possible actions in a given present. From these two propositions, we can deduce that space is memory and present: its accumulated history influences the present by drawing on memory. Space, memory and the present are then interconnected and destabilising one endangers the entity, human or urban.

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<sup>8</sup> From Greek authors to Cicero, Caesar, and the anonymous *Ad Herennium*, the Classical tradition of oratorical practices connects memory and space: memory can be enhanced by associating words or concepts with particular spaces, placing images in a systematic spatial circuit, such as that of a house.

Shelley Rice argues that nineteenth-century discourses on Haussmannian demolitions registered a rupture between the physical and spiritual components of Paris, which entailed a dissonance between memory and experience, the two no longer corresponding to each other (1997: 145). Her gloss on Blanc's 1867 essay 'Le Vieux Paris' shows how the disappearance of monuments that harboured memories was perceived as setting loose the latter, to haunt the imaginary of city-dwellers as ghostly absences, no longer anchored by a place (*Ibid.*). Baudelaire's 1857 'Spleen' ('Quand le ciel bas et lourd') had already explored this image in the separation between the monument and its voice, here, the bells from which sounds break to haunt the skies as 'esprits errants et sans patrie' (l. 15). Thus, memory no longer aids navigation within the new topography and, conversely, the lay of the land is no longer an *aide-mémoire*. The new cityscape is doubled by an insubstantial geography that survives only in memory. The interdependence between memory and spatial experience is shattered, but there is no clear separation between the city lived and the city remembered. Instead, the memory of places-that-were haunts the spaces-that-are, the latter conceived of as having no memory of their own.<sup>9</sup> Disembodied memories and bodies without memory proclaim a state of existence beyond death.

The archaeological ethos, the organic vision, and meditations on the existential cycle of civilisation intersect in Haussmannian Paris as a work-in-progress, engendering a culture riven by ruin. This state, which causes a dysfunctional present through the disruption of memory and space, calls for new strategies of visualising and representing urban experience. The razed city raises identity issues, challenges linear and singular history, and implicitly the spatiotemporal dimension. Its consequences include the emergence of the concept of patrimony and the construction of mnemonics through photography, to replace referents that no longer exist. These become disembodied and dismembered fragments haunting urban poems, fantastic visions of displaced vestiges or ghosts, and archaeological fantasies of reliving ancient spaces in modern times. I intend to focus on each of these aspects by offering comparative readings of photographs by Henri Le Secq from *L'Album Berger* (1852-53), the drawings of Félix Thorigny in the 1850-1860s, articles by Auguste Marc-Bayeux and Théophile Gautier in *Paris qui s'en va et Paris qui vient* (1859-60),<sup>10</sup> and the Spleen poems from Baudelaire's first edition of *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1857).

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<sup>9</sup> Recall the distinction between place and space, summed up in the association of the former with being and the latter with becoming (Thacker 2003: 37).

<sup>10</sup> Henceforth *PQSV*.

The prefect's ambition to bury one city and erect another generates visions of future Paris, where its palimpsestic texture is replaced by a tabula rasa on which are then inscribed the monumental, orderly and uniform principles that would characterise Haussmann's planning. Yet before Haussmann laid out the imperial project, Gautier's article 'Paris futur' levelled out the sprawling city to rebuild it clean, luminous, and archaically colossal: 'Permettez-nous de passer sur le Paris actuel un rouleau qui écrase ses maisons et ses monuments et en fasse un plateau parfaitement uni' (1852 [1851]: 314). This urban fantasy is somehow premonitory of the process of reorganisation implemented from 1853, when Haussmann takes office. However, it also echoes the reconfiguration started under prefect Berger (1848-51), which Henri Le Secq represents in a photographic series known as *L'Album Berger*. As the urban tissue begins to disintegrate, ruins open up spaces in which images of Paris-that-was and Paris-that-could-be take shape. Both real and imaginary, these spaces are negotiated daily by passers-by and explored by visual and textual discourses which foreground ruin as the condition of the present, extending to the past and future.

### **Material and Virtual Topographies**

The project of Henri Le Secq is particularly revealing of the changing sensibilities towards Parisian patrimony. Figures like Hugo and Mérimée actively fought for the preservation of monuments and the aesthetic rehabilitation of Gothic architecture. Le Secq, however, was the first photographer to dedicate a monograph to Paris, moreover, taking ruins as his subject. Spanning 1849-1853, he began before Berger's intervention, with crumbling, derelict architecture, and built up to the demolitions of 1852-1853, which cleared the Carrousel and pierced rue de Rivoli. During this time, he became a founding member of the first photography society, La Société Héliographique (1851). Shortly afterwards, the society was commissioned by the Commission des Monuments Historiques to document national architectural sites, forming the first Mission Héliographique (Hellman 2008 2: 838, Perceval 2008 2: 1294). Le Secq's initiatives concerning urban and architectural preservation suggest the emergence of a patrimonial consciousness that recognises the value of an urban culture about to disappear. The specificity of this culture depended on the heterogeneity of the city's fabric: from palaces and *hôtels* to *cours de miracles*, cemeteries, labyrinthine streets, and airless dwellings leaning into each other.

The urgency inspired by the imminence of demolition, prefigured during the July Monarchy's nevertheless limited projects, contributed to a reconsideration of, and new

approach to, history. History was no longer characterised just by long-duration time. Time became contracted and the present was already history when, as Rice notes, 'historical events changed faster than individual lives, when cities altered their faces more than people did and fell into ruin before human bodies had time to age' (1997: 12). Photography and journalism afforded rapid inscription of these historic changes, accelerating the process of setting events at a distance. Consequently, these could be contemplated just as one would a history book, studying an image or other vestige from the past. These processes are at work in *L'Album Berger*, as well as in Alfred Cadart's *PQSV*. The periodical's title is representative of the variations on the image of the disappearing city in historical volumes, guides and typologies that exploited the picturesque and anecdotal. Moreover, complementing regular publications that kept Parisians informed of impending works and future embellishments,<sup>11</sup> the journal is symptomatic of the illustrated press flourishing under the Second Empire, which catered to the thirst for news, but also to the contemporaneous interest in history, vulgarising archaeological discoveries and research (Watelet 2000: 71).<sup>12</sup> Cadart's fortnightly publication responded to both these aspects. Addressing an audience that renegotiated Paris's shifting topography daily, it drew attention to the implications of this urban chaos, wherein, writes Alfred Delvau, 'le Paris de nos pères disparaît chaque jour, à chaque heure, pierre par pierre, moellon par moellon, brique par brique, sous le marteau brutal du Limousin' (January 1860: 4).

The journal is useful for its range of perspectives, marrying Leopold Flameng's illustrations to texts by writers, journalists, and historians with different positions regarding the politics of urban change. Alfred Delvau, journalist at *Le Figaro* and historian of Paris, evokes the spectacles of the Morgue and hopes that the new edifice will put an end to them; Arsène Houssaye, novelist and poet, rejoices that rue de la Vieille-Lanterne, which saw the death of Nerval, is no more; Théophile Gautier, often ironic regarding the Second Empire's architectural tastes, eulogises 'La Maison Antique du Prince Napoléon'. Collaborators include Champfleury, Eugène Muller, ecclesiastic and archaeologist, Charles Colligny, journalist,

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<sup>11</sup> Illustrated journals include columns such as 'Paris qui s'en va' (*Le Monde illustré*) and 'Paris qui disparaît' (*La Revue illustrée*). This bespeaks a general interest in this subject. *Le Monde illustré*, which ran from 1857 introduced a regular column on the disappearing city from 1865 (Watelet 2000: 75). However, Thorigny was already illustrating the progress of Parisian works, addressed in different columns – see Lecomte's 'Courier de Paris'. Furthermore, scientific, literary, and artistic publications also adopt such tags – see below the identical titles in the *bulletin* of the Société des Amis des Monuments parisiens.

<sup>12</sup> The boom in literary, scientific and industrial journals is due to their exemption from authorisation by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which facilitated their creation, and from the stamp-tax (*droit de timbre*), which reduced their cost (Block 1856: 1365-66).

writer, and art critic, Auguste Marc-Bayeux, writer and playwright, and Victor Fournel, writer and historian of Paris. The unique illustrator, the theme of disappearing Parisian cultures, and a tone mingling at once erudition, humour, a critical approach, and a contemplative atmosphere give unity to the publication. Furthermore, the articles seem close to the spirit of Hugo's *Guerre aux démolisseurs* (1834), animated by what Robert Lethbridge calls a 'compensatory memorialistic urge to capture an urban context and a cultural history suddenly revealed to be at a radically terminal stage' (1998:260). Oscillating between historical and architectural details, and the local colour of particular sites, authors show how these contributed to the urban tissue's specificity and authenticity, and what their disappearance would entail, beyond the promised benefits.

*PQSV* marks the appearance of a new genre that combines an 'approche topographique' with the 'histoires populaires du vieux Paris,' 'qui ont fait la valeur historique' of the sites described (Fiori 2012:74). Drawing on the memories accumulated by a place and their historical value, *PQSV* produces an emphatic and empathic history. Rather than archaeological subjects belonging to dead civilisations, the sites are animated by the accomplishments and feelings of those who inhabited or still inhabit them, and left traces of their passage, even if solely as a name associated with a building or space. Comparable to *L'Album Berger*, *PQSV* casts subjects in a historical perspective, although both media remain anchored in contemporaneity, as they strive to keep pace with urban transformations. Urban and human memories converge in the organic vision of Paris as an accumulation of strata and profiles, in opposition to the 'wholly new, soulless, uniform and homogenous Paris' (Fiori 2012:72). A *Paris multiple* is set against the sole *Paris nouveau*, for while the old city spoke with many voices, the new one speaks with none.

Both journal and album can be read in the context of the emergence of a Parisian patrimonial conscience. Several characteristics indicate that they prefigure organised forms of preservation of Parisian patrimony. Ruth Fiori traces the crystallisation of the concept of *le vieux Paris* in relation to the development of an urban *conscience patrimoniale*, which becomes an active, organised force with the foundation of the Société des Amis des Monuments parisiens (1885). Their methods included interventions for site preservation, appeals to authorities, denouncing destructions, documenting demolitions, and sensitising the public (Fiori 2012:24-25). The society's *bulletin* contains sections on 'Paris démoli', 'Paris disparu', 'Paris qui s'en va' and 'Paris qui disparaît', devoted to monuments menaced by demolition. A professed goal is to change public attitudes, 'en aiguisant les regrets,'

awakening a 'zèle' for saving monuments: 'nous en vulgariserons la connaissance, ce qui est encore un moyen de sauver de l'oubli les monuments du vieux Paris' (1885 I:1:160). However, I wish to shift the focus to the period of Haussmannian demolitions and suggest that dedicated societies and publications come in the wake of a visual and textual tradition of individual and collective projects that eventually elevated *le vieux Paris* into a patrimonial mnemonic device. The difference is that projects like that of Cadart or Le Secq, the latter pre-dating Haussmann, are private initiatives, rather than public commissions. Yet their documentary dimension signals a sensitivity towards history and its urban topographic and cultural manifestations. Proof of this is, again, Gautier's preface to *Paris démolí*, anticipating by three decades the goals of the Société des Amis des Monuments parisiens:

Notre mission [...] est de renseigner le public préoccupé de ces ruines et le passant qui les regarde s'amonceler, sur le haut prix historique de ce qui disparaît; c'est aussi d'en tenir registre, afin que ce qui tombe dans la poussière, ne se perde pas en même temps dans l'oubli; afin que l'attention éveillée sur ces choses, dans la génération qui les voit s'évanouir, soit aussi excitée d'avance chez celle qui lui succédera; afin surtout que l'avenir, qui certes ne sera pas sans admiration pour ce que ce siècle aura élevé, ne soit pas non plus sans respect, sans souvenir et sans regret pour ce qu'il aura dû renverser. (1855: lviii-lix)

Gautier recognises the necessity of preserving Paris's memory, but does not oppose demolition. Like him, contemporaries welcomed change as the only solution that would allow the diseased and dangerous city to rise, phoenix-like from this destruction, becoming a place of light and beauty, a safe and healthy environment. Still, the fact remains that, during the Second Empire's demolitions, renovations and reconstructions, Parisians inhabited a ruinous space wherein many apprehended the incipient trace of inevitable destruction (Rice 1997: 142). Arguably, *une conscience patrimoniale* emerged during the July Monarchy and forcibly crystallised through the Second Empire and the events of 1870-1871. In this period, photographic and graphic-art projects, works on the history of Paris and periodicals act as forms of preservation.

Affecting Paris at all levels – spatial, functional, symbolical, and aesthetic – the restructuration was profound, extensive, and accelerated: something as solid as a city was systematically dismembered and reassembled, its infrastructure, architecture, and meaning redefined.<sup>13</sup> If Haussmann 'demolished the histories and meanings of places that together

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<sup>13</sup> Along with myriad articles, as early as 1853 Paul de Kock pens the play *Paris neuf! Paris démolí* and Fournier publishes his first edition of *Paris démolí* (continuously reedited until the end of the century), Alfred Bonnardot 'Iconographie du vieux Paris' (1856-61), Charles Monselet the novel *Les ruines de Paris* (1857), Paul Lacroix

shaped the collective memory' (Rice 1997: 142), he also triggered counter-discourses of which Cadart's periodical is symptomatic. Epitomised by the concept of *le vieux Paris*, such discourses construct the image of urban patrimony as a receptacle of memory about to be destroyed. As a critical counterpoint, *le vieux Paris* defines itself against modernity as rupture; instead, the idea of preserving and respecting architectural, urban and historical values aligns it with a politics of continuity and marks its ethical dimension, as a strand within the 'history of values' (Fiori 2012: 10). However, it is worth noting that the concept and its variations are built on a paradox, entertaining a contradictory relationship with continuity. This is because *le vieux Paris* is a literal and metaphorical embodiment of memory, but, as a parallel mnemonic support, its building blocks come from Paris's falling buildings. It appears in the spaces opened between the states of Paris-before-Haussmann, Paris-as-work-in-progress, and Haussmann's Paris. *Le vieux Paris* rises on the ruins of Paris, built around absence, and the memory it constructs strives to fill a loss that is central to its existence. This ruinous condition, which constitutes the state of the present, affects to different degrees texts and images whose vision is thus shaped by disjointed fragments, incomplete structures, unexpected openings, abrupt transitions, and partial views.

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(P. L. Jacob) *Curiosités de l'Histoire du Vieux Paris* (1858). Already in 1854, Saint-Marc Girardin wrote in *Le Journal des débats*:

Ce n'est pas que je veuille reprocher à mes correspondants d'être des archéologues qui rendent un culte à tous les vieux cailloux. Ce sont, comme moi, de bons vieux bourgeois de Paris qui acceptent de grand cœur ce Paris tout neuf [...] mais demandent seulement que, de même que dans les travaux de terrassement on laisse des *témoins* pour estimer le travail qu'ont fait les ouvriers, on laisse aussi dans Paris démolit et reconstruit quelques vieux monuments debout qui indiquent l'ancien état des choses [...] (13 June: n.p.)

Girardin's *témoins* reference construction works, where an object ('telltale') is attached to the surface of a building to show changes or subsequent movement in its fabric (e.g. cracks). The passage suggests that Parisian topography shifts so radically that no signs will remain of its evolution. By 1860, the obliteration of the old city is a commonplace and Alfred Nettement observes in *La Semaine des familles*:

On a beaucoup parlé des embellissements de Paris; les prosateurs les ont décrits, les poètes les ont chantés, les photographes, avec leur art merveilleux, ont retracé les nouveaux quartiers qui sont sortis, tout brillants de jeunesse, des ruines de l'ancien Paris démolit par la pioche et le marteau. [...] Paris, en s'embellissant au point de vue générique, a perdu son caractère particulier, son cachet historique, sa physionomie individuelle; c'est une plus belle ville, mais ce n'est plus Paris. (1860 30: 466)

Compare the image of a city with no telltales of history in Cadart's editorial:

Ce qui faisait les délices de nos savants, de nos artistes, de nos archéologues; le Paris de Sauval et de Gilles Corroyet [...] ces vieilles rues, ces vieux quartiers qui nous donnaient une idée si juste du Paris d'il y a des siècles; [...] Eh bien, encore quelques années, et tout cela aura disparu! Une ville nouvelle aura surgi comme par enchantement: pas une ruine, un vestige, une humble inscription même, pour attester que telle ou telle chose était là! (January 1860: n.p.)

Paris's makeover erases the history inscribed within its body, rendering it anonymous.



Almost like portraits taken in death or just before, articles, photographs, and drawings fixate the last image or trace of emblematic sites in Parisian culture, whether convents or cabarets.<sup>14</sup> From this perspective, they function as harbingers of the death of an edifice or street, in a way that has been associated with Charles Marville's camera.<sup>15</sup> Such media often become textual or visual vestiges, replacing the material traces that once defined urban geography through the Hugolian image of the 'livre de pierre'. In this sense, these three manifestations in different media prefigure the principle Hugo enunciates in *Notre-Dame de Paris*: 'Ceci tuera cela. Le livre tuera l'édifice' (1867 I: 255). The apparatus of Haussmannian demolitions has recourse to archivists, who, in turn, commission photographers to constitute a corpus documenting the state of the spaces singled out for restructuration. Photographs, like written documents or material vestiges on which historians and archaeologists base their theories, record Paris's topographical evolution in time. By constituting an archival body for posterity, such endeavours echo Maxime Du Camp's opus on the functioning of contemporary society. While these gestures bespeak the importance of preserving a trace of the past and present, the fact that the stones can be sacrificed and glass negatives and paper deemed enough to ensure the perpetuation of their memory, reveals the justness of Hugo's assertion: the dying edifice is replaced by text and image.

Such texts and images are peculiar guides, since the sights and sites recorded are, or would be soon, no more. Rather, they function as instruments of conservation and means of raising awareness about the value of the sacrificed debris of history constituting the urban fabric. The historical, aesthetic or architectural value of the places thus popularised would allow city-dwellers experiencing the urgency and frantic energy of demolitions and reconstructions to perceive the historic chaos or paradox to which many such actions subjected Paris:

Où retrouver le vieux Paris? Ça et là quelque noble monument élevé par nos pères:  
Notre-Dame, la tour Saint-Jacques, Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, par exemple, mais rien  
de plus...  
Sublimes et antiques chefs-d'œuvre encadrés à la moderne! (Cadart, February  
1860: n.p.)

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<sup>14</sup> The nineteenth century witnesses a vogue for death portraits, thus, portraits of buildings and streets slated for demolition would constitute the architectonic analogues of those of human subjects.

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter II. Commissioned by the City Council Permanent Subcommittee on Historic Works in the mid-1860s to document areas before interventions transformed or erased them, and conditioned by Haussmann's calendar, Marville's appearance in a certain street often signalled its imminent demolition.

Two themes may be discerned in such inquiries: on the one hand, the partial dismembering of the edifice makes it a vestige, thus raising the question of whether or not it is still alive. Does it still fulfil a function within the urban structure? Is it rather a relic or *curiosité*, enshrined in modern Paris? Suppressing parts of an architectural complex, such as the church Saint-Jacques-de-la-Boucherie to leave only the tower (1797) or the edifices adjacent to Notre-Dame (1860-1870s) engender feelings of uprooting and *dépaysement*: 'Notre-Dame et la tour Saint-Jacques ne sont plus à leur place que l'Obélisque,' exclaims Louis Veuillot (1867: viii).<sup>16</sup> Instead of grounding identity, they become confusing structures.

### **Eloquent Strata: Illegible Present, Spoliated Past**

Consequently, the second, related theme problematises the edifices' legibility. Mutilated or deprived of context, monuments can no longer guarantee the past's decipherability. By extension, architectural legibility or eloquence complicates the issue of whether such edifices are alive in the sense of having a memory. The relationship between memory, life, and language played out in architecture appears in Baudelaire's 'Spleen' poem 'J'ai plus de souvenirs...'. Poetic images are reminiscent of the displaced and fragmentary obelisk.<sup>17</sup> The invocation and evocations address a structure that is no longer comprehensible:

- Désormais tu n'es plus, ô matière vivante!  
Qu'un granit entouré d'une vague épouvante,  
Assoupi dans le fond d'un Sahara brumeux  
Un vieux sphinx ignoré du monde insoucieux,  
Oublié sur la carte, et dont l'humeur farouche  
Ne chante qu'aux rayons du soleil qui se couche. (ll. 19-24)

The opposite of living matter is silence ('ne chante'), stillness ('assoupi'), isolation in 'un Sahara brumeux,' and oblivion ('ignoré', 'oublié'). To the living monument that was the poet's voice in the first line 'J'ai plus de souvenirs que si j'avais mille ans,' the silence of the sphinx is assimilated to that of stone without memory, which is dead. Although the sphinx is not dead yet, its memory is no longer accessible and its oblivious existence is further degraded by the ignorance of those engaging with it. This condition echoes the fate Gautier predicted of Paris's old buildings. The monument is eroded by oblivion and disuse: no longer animated by

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<sup>16</sup> Fifteenth-century half-timbered houses, the church Sainte-Geneviève-des-Ardents, and the original Hôtel-Dieu disappeared during this time, along with the cathedral's cloisters, the archbishop's palace, and adjacent barracks (Saalman 1971: 17).

<sup>17</sup> See also Gautier's poem 'Nostalgie d'obélisques'.

the spirit of those interacting with it, abandoned, forgotten, the sphinx would gradually lose its identity and forget about itself, leaving behind an empty shell.

The sphinx does sing at sunset, but the image 'le monde insoucieux' infers no one listens to it or, if they do, not knowing the sphinx's language, they cannot understand, just as the cathedral and belfry would someday become incomprehensible. In fact, the sphinx's particulars ('Sahara brumeux,' 'humeur farouche,' and sunset song) recall the latter, a recurrent landmark in Baudelaire's poetic universe: the church campanile from another 'Spleen' ('Pluviôse, irrité contre la ville entière...'), calling out in the 'faubourgs brumeux,' next to the 'voisin cimetière' (ll. 3-4). It could be the same bell as in 'La Cloche fêlée,' which calls up 'souvenirs lointains [...] / Au bruit des carillons qui chantent dans la brume' (ll. 3-4). Yet, in the latter poem, the bell is still eloquent, unlike the poet's 'âme fêlée' and 'voix affaiblie' (ll. 9-11). Transposing the title's epithet from the monument to the soul establishes a kinship between the body (*cloche, voix*) and spirit's impairment, caused by the loss of memory, which would allow the entity, human or architectonic, to become articulate. Thus, while the campanile awakened memories with its song, the poet's voice is a death rasp, its sound stilled in the closing image of the sonnet.

Incomprehensible or silent, mutilated monuments become alien fragments no longer operating at a semantic level within the city's fabric. Rather, they would acquire formal and functional roles, the former in the play between empty space and monumental volumes, the latter in facilitating circulation. This corresponds to Haussmann's politics of *dégagement* which isolated monuments in 'geometrically ordered open spaces,' favouring large perspectives and transforming 'small-scale complexity into monumental simplicity' (Saalman 1971: 17-18). Yet material complexity embodied historical layers, providing an image of the past that could be deciphered, wherein Paris's evolution was traceable:

cet ensemble étrange et merveilleusement divers d'art, de poésie et de pittoresque, qui faisait de la grande ville comme un livre de pierre, une sorte de résumé de la France, où venaient lire à la fois l'archéologue, l'artiste, le penseur; tout cela s'efface, tout cela s'en va: le vieux Paris se meurt! (Cadart, June 1860: n.p.)

The multi-layered city stimulated both the imagination and the desire for knowledge, engaging different intellectual categories, inspiring scientific and artistic approaches. The death of semantic plurality reflects on a contemporaneous sense that an existential phase of Parisian civilisation was at its end and Parisians were witnessing it helplessly. The reverse of Cadart's 'résumé de la France' is a city with new historical beginnings, founded on one vision, embodying an individual's discourse: Haussmann's or the Emperor's Paris. This was arguably

the method practised throughout history and a means of building a collective urban identity from scratch. The difference seems to be that Paris had such a strong identity that, despite previous changes, it guaranteed a sense of stability. In the face of political turmoil, the stone volumes of Paris remained largely untouched; *Paris nouveau*, however, would leave behind only fragments from these volumes.

Nonetheless, the Second Empire carried forth projects inherited from previous regimes, so that the sense of imminent change and the awareness of losing Parisian spaces predate Haussmann. The photographs Henri Le Secq created between 1849 and 1853 suggest the same consciousness as that inciting the authors of *PQSV* to undertake projects of virtual preservation of Paris's edifices and spaces through texts and images. The album chronicles Berger's projects of modernisation, which included 'eradicating the rookeries [...] between the Louvre and the Tuileries, extending the Rue de Rivoli in a straight arcaded line and clearing away the buildings that crowded the foot of important monuments such as the Tour Saint-Jacques' (Boyer 1996: 240). Rice describes the album as a 'dirge': 'filled with demolitions, with destructions, with ruins, it is an elegy to a disappearance that, in historical terms, had not yet occurred on a widespread scale' (1997: 12). Its theme suggests that the author was contemplating ruin before it happened. Le Secq takes particular cases of demolition and, by focusing solely on them, projects 'a doom-laden vision of the future' (*Ibid.*). This ruinous and morbid mood prevailing at the time suggests another contradictory facet of modernity, anxious that its fall was at hand even as the industrial and economic boom proclaimed its ascendancy. From this perspective, the ruin as fragment and the photograph as a fragmentary view provide a meditation on the passing city; however, their evidence of the accelerated collapse of a civilization remains incomplete.

The same atmosphere fills Félix Thorigny's compositions for *Le Monde illustré*. He illustrates the *dégagements*, excavations, demolitions, and *percements* of Haussmann's *Grands travaux* in the mid-1850s and 1860s. Notwithstanding the panoramic viewpoint taking in the street, his drawings frequently display a sense of proximity, due to the encroaching buildings and the debris that spills out, choking space. This contributes to the dark and heavy mood, the sense of imminent calamity evoking Gothic and Romantic overtones, for instance, with the lone wanderer in a deserted, ruinous environment in *Les Ruines du quartier Latin vues de nuit* (Fig. 1a). In retrospect, Le Secq's approach was neither as misleading nor as fatalistic as might be imputed, since it anticipated both the lengthy renovation and Paris's undoing in the conflagrations of 1870-1871. Thorigny's *Démolitions*

*des barrières de Paris. Physionomie de la place de l'Étoile* (Fig. 2) from 1860, after the annexation of the communes, shows the flow of traffic and pedestrians, among workers tearing down the *barrières*. Carriages and people would pass beneath these mutating structures after navigating the uneven terrain yawning at their side. Technological advances in construction helped raze and rebuild the capital, while war technology caused its ruin. Paradoxically, modernity appears under the sign of ruin, and the past, which a rupture would negate and efface, constantly resurfaces not only in the demolitions for urban renewal, but also in the subsequent collapse of the new edifices.

An edifice becomes a place, then a space, and when the space is gone too, it becomes an image. This process could summarise the city's spatial writing and erasure, as buildings disappear and their traces become virtual – removed to the collective memory of city-dwellers, transposed into textual and visual media. This is the idea Auguste Marc-Bayeux posits in 'Le Temple,' which opens with successive tableaux featuring a Benedictine monk, then a knight Templar, to suggest the superposition of temporal layers transforming topography:

Le Temple, à Paris, est un emplacement et non un monument. Il y a longtemps déjà que la pioche a fait son office; rien ne reste debout, ni du palais du Grand Maître, ni du dortoir des frères, ni de l'église, ni de la Tour où fut enfermé Louis XVI. Ici, comme partout, on a établi un marché; et quel marché! Sur ce sol où sonna le pas de fer des chevaliers aux éperons d'or, se trouvent une halle en laide charpente et une ignoble rotonde de pierres. (June 1860: 1)

Despite its present conversion to second-hand commerce, the place of the Temple is inscribed within the character of the Marais: its memory echoes in the street names. Yet this means that language has now become the sole referent of the Temple, since the architectural complex and context to which the names pertained have disappeared. This metamorphosis from stone to word and memory emerges in the article's alternation between the evocation of the Order's history, their fief's successive mutations, and the contemporaneous *chiffonnier*-culture flourishing on the site. The tone also oscillates between Romantic narrative, historical account, and polemic. Marc-Bayeux weaves the evocation of monks and knights with the historic rise and fall of Templar property in Paris; he debates the arguments for the Order's condemnation, and then, in lighter tones decries, in a humorous *clin-d'oeil* to the New Testament, the practices of those now using Temple's site as a market. Thus, unexpectedly, the Temple rediscovers its original Biblical correspondent, albeit in a degenerated state.

Still, the article's conclusion is a more or less veiled criticism of the speculation to which the city's reconfiguration has given rise. The irruption of this current state of affairs transforms the significance of the rag-pickers, as speculation is juxtaposed with the

*marchands d'habits* selling foul-smelling rags, a business that would make them rich:

Après tout, le vieil habit [...] c'est toujours la dépouille d'une bête écorchée par la spéculation.

Ainsi, pour résumer l'histoire de l'emplacement du Temple, il y eut un couvent, une église, une forteresse, un palais, un jardin, une prison. Il fut occupé par des chevaliers, par des moines, par des hérétiques, par des rois et par des régicides.

Aujourd'hui, il y a un marché; demain, il y aura un boulevard; et dans le marché, il y a des marchands, qui rouleront demain en voiture sur le boulevard. (June 1860: 4)

The place of the market will become the open space of the boulevard that would pierce the Marais, according to Haussmann's plans. The rubble of demolition and the debris making up the market's wares would enrich real-estate speculators and *marchands d'habits* alike. Images of the 'vaste entassement de guenilles, babel de loques, pyramide de haillons' and 'vieux uniformes, dans lesquels la gloire française a sué sang et eau' offer a tragic contrast between the misery of the soldiers who were the source of French glory and the rise of the rag-picker merchants, owners of vast domains, towers and pyramids – of rags and refuse (*Ibid.*). Blurring the line between the literal and the metaphoric, textile debris transforms into the building blocks of the merchants' fortune. Along with the building speculators, they trade in ruins and prosper on selling the decayed remnants of a heroic past: whether stones or uniforms.

The metaphor 'la dépouille d'une bête écorchée' exploits the urban imaginary of ruination, figuring a city that is ungratefully spoliated of the stone garb that bore proof of its suffering and greatness throughout the centuries. The soldiers whose uniforms are sad vestiges exploited by the rag-pickers recall the remains of the knights' fief in Paris.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, such figures are reminiscent of Baudelaire's human ruins, from the 'débauchés brisés' of 'Crépuscule du matin' to the rag-pickers of 'Le Vin des chiffonniers,' 'moulus,' 'éreintés,' and, most explicitly, 'Les Petites Vieilles' from the 1861 'Tableaux parisiens'. Baudelaire's *vieilles* provide a closer identification between organic and architectural bodies in ruin: both are 'brisés, bossus/ Ou tordus' (ll. 6-7), with 'membres discords' (l. 30). Human and architectonic ruins become interchangeable as 'Débris d'humanité pour l'éternité mûrs' (l. 72). Interestingly, the ravages of time seem to prolong their existence into a sort of immortality, a life-in-death or deathly existence. Forgotten, despised, invisible and frail, the old ladies' existence is permanently precarious. The human counterpart to ruins, they appear as an embodied 'fantôme débile' (l. 25). By comparison, for Louis Blanc, edifices would embody the memories of 'fantômes illustres' (1867: 6). The poem's climactic image reveals

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<sup>18</sup> On a related subject, see Henri Le Secq, *Ancien Couvent du Temple* (Fig. 4).

precisely the conflation between the *vieilles*, ghosts and ruins:

Ruines! ma famille! ô cerveaux congénères!  
Je vous fais chaque soir un solennel adieu!  
Où serez-vous demain [...] (ll. 77-79)

The condition of the *vieilles*, which could equally characterise decrepit Parisian *rues* and *maisons*, between physical and spiritual, neither living nor dead, short-circuits the solidity of flesh and stone in space, and temporal linearity through a suspended present: 'pour l'éternité mûrs'. Eternal senectitude is the antithesis of the perpetually new, with *nouveautés* constantly replaced by other *nouveautés*, which ultimately render the present as always past. The paradoxical consequence of this mobility is a sort of immortality frozen in the past tense: some people and objects are constantly old, while others are permanently new.

Yet this newness carries with it the accumulated debris of its discarded states, as Le Secq shows in a powerful composition featuring a building with the *enseigne* 'Magasin de nouveautés' (1850-60) (Fig. 3). Choosing a straightforward view but including the building's angle creates a dynamic effect: the edifice deploys its bulk on three axes – in width on the horizontal ground plane, in height on the vertical plane, and in depth. The image plays out the idea of volume, only to subvert tri-dimensionality. Despite dominating the composition, the edifice is assailed by rising mounds of debris in the foreground that obstruct the ground floor reserved to the store. Between the crushing building and the sea of ruinous masonry swallowing the store, the *enseigne* emerges as an ironic comment on the condition of the present: ruins are the constant novelties of modernity, its abundant commodities, proudly displayed, like Marc-Bayeux's 'dépouille d'une bête écorchée'. This image thereby anticipates Bergson's description of perception: '*Nous ne percevons, pratiquement, que le passé*' (1929 [1896]: 163).

In this light, Henri Le Secq also explores the potential of a troubling, spoliated existence by plunging the Temple district into the *illo tempore* from which would later emerge Baudelaire's 'Eponine ou Laïs,' 'Vestale enamourée' or 'Prêtresse de Thalie,' as walking ruins in the derelict present of 'Les Petites Vieilles'. The last possession of the Knights Templar's descendants was a famous *hôtel* belonging to the Grand Prior of the Order of the Knights of Malta. Le Secq made the *hôtel* his subject in *Ancien Couvent du Temple* (1853) (Fig. 4), which focuses on the remaining façade. This classically austere façade fills the frame, occupying the middle plane of the composition. Due to this positioning and the gaping windows and entryways opening onto the scene beyond, it seems placed between the past and the present: behind, the still-standing structures suggest the vastness of the palace and,

implicitly, the greatness of the past. In the foreground are the tumbled blocks and ignoble instruments of its present undoing: pickaxes, wooden planks, a ladder. The photographs in *L'Album Berger* often show a lonely edifice standing amidst fallen masonry. This compositional choice could hint at contemporaneous criticisms positing that the isolation of certain monuments would render them incoherent. The façade or building alone among ruins anticipates Haussmann's implementation of the *dégagements*. The ruins would disappear, but so would the context that could make the monument legible.

For Franco Moretti, topographical space functions as an internal catalyst, generating meaning (1999: 70). What happens then when it is destroyed? To be sure, space is a social product that implies history, change, and becoming, and whose content mutates accordingly (Thacker 2003: 13). The Temple, whose story was integral to defining the character of the Marais, is representative of the transformations affecting the relationship between inhabitants, space, and architecture. By the time Marc-Bayeux writes, the last Templar place, the *hôtel* Le Secq photographed in ruins, had disappeared. Ruined and de-contextualised, the place is no longer intelligible without external aid, becoming a troubling disruption in the urban fabric. Demolished, it becomes a spatial signifier freed from its signified. Far from the physical body of stone, the memories of a place become ghosts in exile, like Baudelaire's 'esprits errants et sans patrie' in 'Spleen' ('Quand le ciel...'). Marc-Bayeux's article 'Les Carmes Billettes' takes further the theme of the memories of lost places. His text raises questions such as: if topographical memories persist, often as names, do these still signify, and if they do, do they carry the same meaning, if the activities associated with this space have changed? The Carmelite order inhabited the last cloisters in Paris at the time (November 1860: 1). The *billetes*, which were a sort of indicator to pay an entry-fee to the convent, gave their name to the building and the street that led to it. Combining first-person reportage and anecdote with historical and architectural research, the author reflects on how obscure the term *billetes* appears. He projects an analogous difficulty onto future *chercheurs d'antiquités* who would try to decipher the meaning of the 'tourniquets de la Bourse' (Stock Exchange turnstile) when nineteenth-century culture would have become obsolete. With the disappearance of their function, the term *billetes* lost meaning but survived imprinted in the very stones of the street. Yet when the convent to which the street and function of the *billetes* made reference would be gone, the term's referent would disappear too. The *billetes* would no longer signify in relation to the place.

And the convent is indeed about to disappear, as the narrator and his companion, the



illustrator, discover when they pay an unofficial visit to the cloisters, normally closed to the public. Although the *flâneurs* do get in, assuming an air of 'complète assurance,' as 'amoureux de quelques pierres sculptées,' they are eventually confronted by 'une bonne femme' whose opinion of the medieval cloisters proves disconcerting:

Le cloître lui semblait abominable; elle ne tarissait pas en imprécations contre cette vieille mesure, et se félicitait de ce qu'une prochaine démolition devait la débarrasser de ce cauchemar de pierre. Elle réservait ses admirations pour les bâtiments neufs des écoles protestantes, qui ont pris possession de l'enceinte des Carmes. (November 1860: 1, 4)

Initially, the text adopts a jocular tone to evoke the history of the cloisters (*Ibid.*: 1-3). However, this is undermined by mordant cynicism and even hostility towards the frivolity of modern Parisians. In antithesis to the narrator's consciousness of the edifice's value stands the old 'Sémiramis luthérienne,' guardian of the Protestant temple which now shares the space of the Catholic convent. She cannot conceive that anyone would be interested in the 'vieille mesure':

— Madame, répondis-je, nous visitons ce cloître.  
— Ce?...  
Elle ne comprenait pas. (*Ibid.* : 4)

There can be no sympathy, only incomprehension and ignorance, for the past is of no interest to the old caretaker. In addition, since there are no more cloisters in the city, this lack of comprehension epitomises the disappearance of a culture. On their own, the Carmelite cloisters no longer mean anything, having lost their context: they are an alien remnant denominated in a language that is no longer spoken.

To the dignified stillness and 'parfum des siècles' of the cloisters, the lady appears in stark contrast: 'bavarde trépignant, parlant, bavant, allant, venant et déclamant'. She is the very personification of 'la vaine fièvre d'impatience qui nous possède tous aujourd'hui' (November 1860: 4). The incessant and aimless agitation seems to reproduce the frantic buzzing rhythm of the demolitions that were by now in full swing in the city. The gossip of 'cette vieille huguenote ignare' dispels even the sobriety of the Lutheran temple, with her unrequited diatribe about a lady who failed to marry in the cloisters:

détails précis sur sa toilette, son futur, les écoles, le temple; et le prix, par francs et centimes, que devaient coûter la toilette, les écoles et le temple. Il s'est agi de quatre-vingt mille francs; je ne sais à quoi s'appliquait cette somme. (*Ibid.*)

The frivolous subject, in antithesis to the environment, illustrates the empire of matter over spirit, an idea Marc-Bayeux already foregrounded in 'Le Collège de Cluny' [*sic*]: 'Le XIXe

siècle dévore le XIIIe; n'est-ce pas un symbole? De nos jours, la Matière assassine l'Esprit' (May 1860:1).<sup>19</sup> The emptiness of the caretaker's words, like the gesture of the modern workers tearing down the city's past, is suggested in the narrator's comment 'je ne sais à quoi s'appliquait cette somme'. The expenditure of energy, like that of financial resources listed by the old lady, appears meaningless, or at least not driven by any fervour deemed worthy and, hence, doomed to fail. The uncaring caretaker's discourse is as fragmented and incoherent as the remains of the city's monastic heritage: from the 'Paris disparu,' 'quelques fragments nous restent, quelques églises, quelques ogives éparses' and a sole example of cloisters 'pour peu de temps encore' (November 1860:1). The sense of fatality in this enumeration and its conclusion illustrate the acceleration of time and the 'fièvre d'impatience' of modernity. In conjunction with this acceleration, fragmentation suggests that nineteenth-century culture was missing out on something, losing itself and seemingly heading towards ruin or the end of its time.

This is the feeling pervading Thorigny's *Les ruines du quartier Latin* (1860) (Fig. 1a), where the sombre skeletons of half-crumbled buildings line the way of a solitary traveller. The contrast between the dark volumes and the luminous orb sets off the apocalyptic tenor of the composition: illuminating the edifices from the back and invading the far plane, the light seems to denote that this *flâneur* is about to reach the end of the world. No shape is glimpsed beyond the blinding brightness. Instead, looming on either side of the figure, the derelict buildings form a heavy, but ghostly presence, as if they were shadows pierced by the light or the caretaker's 'cauchemar de pierre' in Marc-Bayeux's 'Les Carmes Billettes'. Quiet and deserted except for the figure in the middle ground and two minuscule shapes lost in a cone of shadow, the scene anticipates Gustave Doré's engraving *Macaulay's New Zealander contemplating the ruins of London* (1872). Conversely, the diminutive size of the main figure, dwarfed by mammoth skeletons, may prompt a meditation on fragile and ephemeral life and the survival of stone beyond the death of the edifice.

Or is it an illustration of Man enduring more than monuments, the victor in the race against decrepitude and decay? If this were a parable of immortality, it would probably serve as a cautionary tale against it. As it is, it plays precisely on the viewer's imagination, hyperbolising daily realities, abstracting them into a Romantic meditation that reopens questions about the rise and fall of empires, life and death, beginnings and ends. Its impact is augmented though, because, on the one hand, the composition presents a paradoxically

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<sup>19</sup> Compare Fournier's similar reflection in *Paris démolie*: 'Le passé est dévoré par le présent' (1855: 2).

familiar sight, the actual condition of various areas, as attested by other contemporary representations.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, depicted in the tradition of Piranesi's etchings of Roman ruins, the image introduces a sense of distance, allowing the observer to contemplate the ruined city as if it were a retrospective event, seen through the veil of time. The implication of this assimilation of the ephemeral Parisian ruins to the Classical ones is to eternalise the ruinous state of the city, in a comparable way to Baudelaire's *vieilles* or Le Secq's *Magasin de nouveautés*.

The crepuscular mood articulates a similar portentous tension in Baudelaire's 'Crépuscule du matin,' where the final images blur the line between living and dying, dreaming and waking, the inhabitants and the city. In the hazy atmosphere, disjointed and fragmentary views are juxtaposed to create a tableau from the debris of nighttime impressions of the city and its inhabitants:

Une mer de brouillards baignait les édifices,  
Et les agonisants dans le fond des hospices  
Poussaient leur dernier râle en hoquets inégaux.  
Les débauchés rentraient, brisés par leurs travaux. (ll. 21-24)

The *brouillards* that isolated the sphinx or campanile in the 'Spleen' poems limit vision, like the shadows and ruins in Thorigny (Fig. 1a). Juxtaposed to these edifices impregnated by fog, the death rasps of the *agonisants* are almost premonitory, as if the city felt it would share the fate of the dying and of the libertines brought down 'par leurs travaux'. The ironic use of *travaux* and the metaphoric *brisés* acquire a different meaning when read in light of the poem's closing image: 'Le sombre Paris [...] Empoignait ses outils, vieillard laborieux' (ll. 27-28). *Outils* and *laborieux* become pregnant with the meanings of *travaux*, *brisures*, and the agony of half-demolished buildings, for a dark task is at hand. As in Thorigny, the light, this time announced by dawn, functions on both literal and figurative levels. First, its advance devours the darkness and dissipates the fog, while as a metaphor, daylight, associated with working hours, becomes a symbol of progress, of the labour that would remove the dark, choking mazes, and clear out the human and urban ruins. 'Vieillard laborieux,' the city would shake off the shroud of decaying fog, but it would also silence the eloquence of its nighttime voices.

The snippets of impressions in 'Crépuscule' recycle images whose meaning changes along with the viewpoint, giving us the possibility to grasp and anticipate different tableaux: a

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<sup>20</sup> See Maxime Lalanne's *Démolitions pour le percement de la Rue des Ecoles* (1865) (Fig. 1b).

gloomy Paris exhausted and agonising in the fog shifts to a gloomy Paris working itself to death in the light. This resonates with Robert Ginsberg's observation that the ruin releases an edifice from its initial function, allowing it to develop different roles and forms of unity (2004: 156). In Baudelaire, the fog at once fragments and unites disparate images of the twilight city, contributing to an atmosphere of solitude by isolating groups and individuals from each other: 'l'homme [...] las d'écrire,' 'les femmes de plaisir,' 'les pauvresses,' 'les agonisants,' and 'les débauchés'. To these many categories embodying broken humanity, daytime Paris opposes another relic, the 'vieillard laborieux'.

In his analysis of the 'the mnemonics of dispossession' at work in 'Le Cygne,' Richard Terdiman expounds on Baudelaire's particular attachment to the Carrousel area, evocative of his association with the Bohemian counterculture which had sprung up in the Doyenné neighbourhood, particularly the 'Noctambules' (1993: 115-16).<sup>21</sup> Terdiman argues that the *faubourg* between the Louvre and the Tuileries symbolised the place where 'a group of artists who had made a strategic investment in representing themselves as figuratively homeless in Paris *felt at home*' (*Ibid.*). The temporal setting of the extraordinary encounter with the swan, 'un matin, à l'heure où sous les cieux/ Froids et clairs le Travail s'éveille' (ll. 14-15) recalls the closing images in 'Crépuscule du matin,' contrasting the 'débauchés' retiring to bed after their nocturnal activities to the stirring 'vieillard laborieux'. In this light, I would like to suggest that this poem could also bear evidence of Baudelaire's affiliation with the circle of 'Noctambules' who were active in the period of its supposed composition, the 1840s (Delattre 2003: 263; Leakey 1992: 62). Predating the actual demolition of the Carrousel, 'Crépuscule du matin' evokes human exiles who had not yet lost their refuges to the urban reorganisation. However, read in the context of its publication in 1857, the poem's meanings are enriched by the overtones of contemporaneous tensions regarding urban change: the agonising city could hint at recent losses, its crepuscular mood at the uncertainty of its continuation. The fate of the dispossessed and abandoned inhabitants within the new topography would be explored in 'Le Cygne' (1859).

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<sup>21</sup> The circle numbered among its many intellectual figures, Fournier, Delvau, Privat d'Anglemont, Gautier, and Flaubert.

## Spatiotemporal Conundrums

The uncertain existence of the city and the solitude of the urban landscape, notwithstanding the figure inviting the viewer's identification and reverie, are also recurrent aspects in Thorigny's work. Such effects are produced by juxtaposing the human bustle with the silent buildings, like empty shells, partially eaten by the pickaxes. The incongruity of a living population and a dead environment subsumes the fragmentation of the social body and social space, and their divorce from each other. In this state of disjunction, the inhabitants are somehow oblivious to, or unable to assimilate, their condition: in *Démolitions pour le percement de la rue des Ecoles* (1858) (Fig. 5), the female figure on the left pauses on a building block. Behind her lies an eviscerated house, its stairways open to the elements, its platforms exposed, leading nowhere. Stairs going nowhere, a door that does not give into or out of any enclosure, an arch that does not support anything anticipate the deconstructivist 'challenge to the taken-for-granted language of built form and place [...] often using the Heideggerian tactic of writing under erasure, producing images like the ~~stair~~ which leads nowhere or the ~~door~~ which does not open' (Dovey 1999: 32). Thorigny's composition closely echoes an image described so often that it bespeaks a common experience. Gautier, Flaubert and Zola would evoke

ces maisons ouvertes avec leurs planchers suspendus sur l'abîme, leurs papiers de couleur ou à bouquets marquant encore la forme des chambres, leurs escaliers qui ne conduisent plus à rien, leurs caves mises à jour, leurs éboulements bizarres et leurs ruines violentes. (Gautier 1855: ii)<sup>22</sup>

A step away from becoming a Piranesian experience transposed onto reality, this script posits an architecture of the absurd that stops short of transgressing Euclidean space. The housewifely character in Thorigny's composition appears lost, her familiar environment replaced by volumes belying depth and surfaces proscribing direction and time. Her disorientation contrasts with the figures immediately engrossed in the mechanical tasks at hand. Some dismantle the masonry, like ants eating away at a corpse, while others recuperate or carry construction materials, like the woman in the foreground kneeling to tie a bundle of wood. Behind her, the ground slants to reveal rounded arches – perhaps corresponding to a Roman vestige, like the *Thermes* nearby. The vestiges of a distant past dug up coexist with the vestiges of the present, whose ruin is in the making: this is formally suggested as the Roman arches below ground-level are parallel with the stone pillars of the resistance structure

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<sup>22</sup> See Chapter III, exploring a similar passage in *La Curée*.

that form a sort of rectangular arch within the remains of the house above.

When the present becomes literally superimposed onto the past and the two compacted almost onto the same plane, space and time become uncertain. Edifices in different states of dismantling extend into the background, whose horizon is closed off by the dome of the Panthéon. The solid reality of Paris's configuration – streets, houses, *hôtels*, and monuments– suddenly appears undermined, crumbling; it becomes the substance of dreams. The same oneiric superimposition of architectures and times appears in *Rue des Mathurins-Saint-Jacques, actuelle rue du Sommerard* (1852) (Fig. 6), yet Le Secq offers a very different treatment of the subject. In a characteristic manner, the building fills the space, the close-up focusing on a series of structures whose architectonic details are jumbled together. The dead wall on the left, the chimneys and walls in the far plane, along with construction paraphernalia and a wooden fence, hem in the remaining wall of the Mathurin convent, conflating old and new, sacred and profane. The trilobate bay is itself part of a mosaic of architectonic details attesting to the stylistic transformation of the edifice over time, such as the half-sketched arch giving way to a rectangular window upwards, on the far right.

The negative paper print picks out the details of what was probably the old church, giving them weight, in contrast to the lighter modern elements: the fence and dead wall appear less substantial than the surviving façade. As in *Ancien Couvent du Temple*, the torn structure allows a view beyond, where other half-demolished arches and wooden planks replay the same relationship of the present devouring the past, of wood undoing stone. Yet this impression of depth is persistently undermined by the shallow surface of the photograph, which seems unable to bear the weight of so many strata. As a result, Euclidean spatial principles are more openly compromised: light and darkness work differently from reality, since this print is negative and the conflation of textures and volumes cancels out direction, time and depth, an impression reinforced by the close framing. In this light, the image's title proves misleading in relation to the content: the photograph does not show a street. Rather, it is a patchwork of architectonic textures, a sample of the street's urban fabric.

Ruins reveal the mechanisms of the building, including, here, its memorial function (Ginsberg 2004: 36). Thus, suffused with the traces of myriad changes, the fragment offers a glimpse of the overwhelming experience that would be the street's memory, but allows us to travel no further. Elements like the trilobate bay in Le Secq or the stairways in Thorigny reveal the 'presence of the humane,' according to Ginsberg: by alluding to their function, their survival elicits the viewer's empathy (*Ibid.*). In a structure menaced by death (the wooden

fence proclaims the site's condemnation), such fragments remain eloquent, and in this seems to reside their life: they remember what they were, they can still communicate with us, even if only on an emotional level and through the ghostly medium of photography. Surviving in this form, *Rue des Mathurins-Saint-Jacques* comes to resemble even more Baudelaire's *vieilles*, in a frail body of paper, forever ruinous, and ghostly.

By comparison, another Le Secq image, *Eglise Saint-Gervais-Saint-Protais* (1850-60) (Fig. 7), takes spatiotemporal distortion further. Significantly, the wider frame and viewing angle make the church the structural point of a composition embracing the surrounding area. As a consequence, the church generates around itself both spatial depth and flatness. The view takes in the northern nave, thus allowing us to observe a lateral side and the adjacent street, which is perpendicular on the street corresponding to the church's eastern apse; meanwhile the façade of the monument, turned west, would open onto a larger thoroughfare. This careful orchestration of space is subverted by the superimposition onto the northern nave of a building under demolition: its tumbled blocks encroach on the church's walls and spill into the foreground, making a mockery of the feeble planks fencing them in. Only the aedicule in the foreground seems to act as a bulwark against the chaos of ruin.

Still, while the mass of debris threatens to spread desolation, the building's skeleton stands firm. Its ruin artfully overlays the church's nave, as if it were a death-mask. At one level, the ruin's contiguous position acts like an omen of the church's demise. At another level, the superimposition of edifices and, implicitly, of spaces, creates a heterotopic space that invites us to experience the church in ruin through the crumbling body of another building. The image could play out the possible meanings of Marc-Bayeux's remark that 'la Matière assassine l'Esprit' (May 1860: 1): hollowness prevails over hallowedness; profane space supplants sacred space. In the clutter of debris, shapeless matter suffocates the work of the mind, whose expression resides in the pure Classical forms of the church, harmonising the three styles. The Dionysian dimension of the mutilated body of stone, carnal and chaotic, overwhelms Apollonian reason or the architecture of the mind. Or perhaps it is the other way around: the encroaching streets and looming church are in fact causing the gradual dissolution of the building, crying out for air. The aedicule in the foreground, whose Classical elements suggest a fountain, alludes to the possibility of a third superimposition: as the surviving vestige in a sea of ruins, it could allow homeless memories to become embodied and given voice, like Baudelaire's sphinx, at a particular moment. Conversely, maybe this structure cannot find articulation in relation to the ruin behind and will stand, before its complete

effacement, a monument silenced by its fragmentariness.

The focus on superimpositions is one manner of projecting the possible futures of a place. In this case, *Le Secq* played with strong shadow to suggest the merging of two very different architectonic entities, inferring a new form of integrity from the fusion of the ruinous building and whole church. Slipping between sacred and profane, as the sites blur their spatiotemporal and functional dimensions, the image may point to an initial state of grace in which all space was sacred. The heterotopic vision of original unity restored implies that places need a soul to be alive and thus fulfil, in diminished form, the heritage of the sacred space of an *illo tempore*. In antithesis, we can interpret the photograph of the *Eglise Saint-Gervais-Saint-Protais* as an exercise in ruination, confirming the idea that the 'ruin is always a modern concept [...] the modern displaces the ancient and marks it as irredeemably part of the past precisely by construing it as ruined' (Beasley-Murray 2010:212). The illusion of ruination which will become a theme in articles or short stories on future Paris is the flipside of dreaming of the ruins of Pompeii or Egypt restored, archaeological fantasies which Gautier explored in *Arria Marcella* and *Le Roman de la momie*, respectively.

The violent process of reversal – wood triumphing over stone, man over monument – that effaces the material memory of Paris corresponds to a diminishing of the capital's spirit according to Marc-Bayeux's comment cited above. The architecture of a particular place contributed, deliberately or not, to an externalisation of collective memory to which it gave visual and tangible form. Deprived of its architectonic embodiment, the survival of this urban memory becomes virtual – an evocation made up of words or photosensitised chemicals. Yet in the face of the unexpected fragility of such edifices, 'quatre pages in-folio, des beaux caractères et de solide papier' become the new medium of architectonic memory (Marc-Bayeux May 1860: 1). Paper proves to be stronger than stone and preserves traces no longer visible; surviving beyond the architectural ruins, it is itself a ruin, a fragment of the edifice made of a substitute material. This is the idea Marc-Bayeux expresses in 'Collège de Cluny' [*sic*], where the text immortalises the edifice's portrait in death. In this sense, like the photograph, the article spells out the Barthesian 'catastrophe' (1980: 150). Marc-Bayeux is conscious of the temporal conundrum posited by his article, as the memory of a place that no longer has a factual, external referent:

Ce Collège de Cluny ou Clugny s'émiette présentement au coin de la rue des Grès et de la rue de la Harpe; au moment où j'écris ceci, il existe encore; à l'heure où vous me lirez,



lecteur, il n'en restera plus vestige. Notre gravure est un portrait après décès. (May 1860: 1)<sup>23</sup>

In the photograph, Barthes's reader simultaneously detected the future-time of the announced death, realised that the event had occurred, and was haunted by the perpetual reiteration of this future-in-the-past with each new viewing of the image (1980: 148). This consciousness could arguably be ascribed to Le Secq, whose photographs of the *Démolition des maisons de la place du Carrousel en 1852* (Fig. 8) participate in translating an event into an object (Rice 1997: 6). Here, the demolition process is fixed in time in the image of the ruin. Again concentrating on the solitary building, as an *avant-la-lettre* parody of a favourite Haussmannian principle, the photograph appears precisely as a death portrait.

In *Ancien Couvent du Temple*, Le Secq valorised Classical-ruin topoi, blurring the temporal dimension to imagine a heterotopic space, where modern techniques could capture an event occurring in ancient times. Meanwhile, *Eglise Saint-Gervais-Saint-Protais* envisioned a possible future of ruination. Instead, *Démolition des maisons de la place du Carrousel en 1852* captures a fragile state between survival, time run out, and a mutilated body clinging to life. Forlorn in the chaos of fallen blocks, planking and barracks, the functional building bears the signs of secular reconfigurations in the walled-up great arch. The play of light and shadow outlining volumes creates contradictory effects. The dark façade gives the impression of prolonging the Palais des Tuileries, whose side enters the same cone of shadow. This connection could point to the building's shell still clinging to the living structure behind it, as if it sought refuge and protection in a relationship with the monumental, a possibility that could also apply to *Eglise Saint-Gervais-Saint-Protais*. By contrast, the light that dissolves the mass of tumbled masonry appears to devour the edifice's left side, effacing its structure, as suggested by the faint stumps marking the division of storeys. The same fate would affect the remaining buildings on the right, at the forefront of the composition, as their barricaded windows infer. Sharing the photographer's viewpoint, they appear as witnesses to the demise of one of their own and contemplate a similar end. This is the same autoreferentiality encountered in Baudelaire and Thorigny's twilight Paris, where light makes the city witness and work towards its own dissolution.

In this regard, Marc-Bayeux remarks drily 'Les ruines sont tristes, même en plein soleil,'

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<sup>23</sup> Interestingly, all of Flameng's illustrations show the places discussed in the articles still intact, as would Marville's views of streets awaiting demolition or reconfiguration. Even in this article, which evokes the experience of navigating a ruinous space, as the architectonic complex was being dismembered, the illustrator chose to depict the edifice whole.

but sadness turns to horror when those ruins lie in subterranean darkness (May 1860: 1). The death of the building could decide the fate of those who venture 'en fouillant ces débris du vieux Paris':

Tout à l'heure, j'ai risqué ma vie. Afin de pénétrer dans le vieux Collège de Cluny, j'ai bravé les démolisseurs, j'ai reçu des plâtras sur la tête; un moellon, tombant d'un sixième étage, m'a effleuré le bras droit. (*Ibid.*)

A case of early reportage that augments the directness and immediacy of the account, the article associates the dynamism of an adventure amongst the ruins (as in 'Les Carmes Billettes'), historical detail, and the subjective narrator's comments and observations. The urgent tone, warning of the place's imminent disappearance, reinforces the text's convoluted temporality. The narrator's account unfolds before us in the present, but the present of the narration and of the college will have become past by the time we read. In fact, since the disappearance predicted in the future will have occurred, contact with the text's present becomes contradictory: we read of an exploration of ruins that happens now, yet those ruins no longer exist. The historical account combined with the visit had operated a slip in time so that, for a few hours, the present had intermittently slipped into the past. Yet now both present and past are about to become a dream:

Dans quinze jours, quand je suivrai le nouveau boulevard [...] je regarderai la place bien nette, et je me dirai:  
J'ai rêvé! (*Ibid.*: 4)

First, a familiar place had turned into an unknown, dangerous territory, a 'voyage de découverte, aux mers polaires, [...] avec ses péripéties, ses dangers, et ses joies' (*Ibid.*: 1). This, in turn, becomes a ghostly, virtual space, as in visions or reveries, when no evidence is left to support the experience, other than the account itself. Alternatively, this impression of the visit to the college could represent one of the last memories this place generated before its effacement, and, thus, one of the traces it left behind on 'quatre pages in-folio'. Still, is the monument's survival on paper assured, since it is conditioned by the subjective memory of those translating the stones into texts and images? Is the photograph of *Rue des Mathurins-Saint-Jacques* a valid replacement for the street and its convent? As a constructed personal vision, it cannot have the same objective reality of the architectural artefact, yet it is as real as were the street and its convent in the experience of someone tracing the effects of urban demolition and reconfiguration. Both man and street were subjected to the temporal and spatial confusion of the city's upheaval, as Le Secq and Marc-Bayeux attest.

Counter to the demolitions that sap Paris's memories and the virtual vestiges that

preserve them, a more conventional form of ruin reverie takes an unexpected turn in Gautier's 'Intérieur de la Maison Antique du Prince Napoléon'. In 1852, Gautier published *Arria Marcella*, a *novella* in which the imprint of a bosom in volcanic ash led a young man visiting Pompeii to resuscitate the dead city and find the woman whose beauty had been hinted at by this fragment. In 1854, Prince Jérôme Napoléon, the emperor's cousin, commissioned a Pompeian Villa for his mistress, the actress Rachel. Neo-Pompeian architecture had been around since the 1840s.<sup>24</sup> Yet the Parisian example is interesting given this coincidence of transposing in reality Gautier's fantasy of life in a Pompeian house. More so since the villa was also inspired by Arrius Diomedes's house, where the petrified imprint of the breast was found (Gautier identified his heroine as the daughter of Diomedes).

In his article for *PQSV*, Gautier offers a tour of the Pompeian villa, tracing systematically the sequence of chambers, their furnishings, architectural and ornamental details. Each space is brought to life by being invested with the inherited symbols proper to its character: the first vestibule contains a Cerberus motif and the 'Cave canem' formula; the threshold bears inscribed 'Salve'; the second vestibule shelters the house deities; the atrium is structured around the *impluvium* etc. At each step, mural paintings accord their theme with the surroundings (March 1860: 1). A certain story is told in a certain place, as we recall, and the memories of Pompeii are inscribed in the modern Parisian building following the Classical association of memory and space. Yet this memory is borrowed, translated and relocated to bring to life an architectonic fantasy, employing science 'pour rendre logeable ce beau rêve d'antiquité' (*Ibid.*: 4).

*Arria Marcella* imagined a heterotopia in the restoration of Pompeii, but Prince Napoléon commissioned one to be constructed in the neo-antique palace. Foucault defined the concept of *hétérotopie* as a concrete space inhabited by the imaginary, reflecting an image of the place in the negative (1984: 46-49). In Gautier's parallel of modern Paris and ancient Pompeii, avenue Montaigne comes to echo rue de Mercure, its Roman equivalent, drawing the two spaces closer, across geographical and temporal gulfs (March 1860: 1). Gradually, spatiotemporal distance is overcome while the villa recedes from the street: 'Une grille légère entrecoupée de piliers trace la ligne de démarcation entre la voie moderne et la maison antique' (*Ibid.*). The *grille* literally frames and removes the edifice to a different dimension from that of the modern capital. Beyond this threshold, Gautier announces 'une vision d'un

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<sup>24</sup> On German territory, for instance, in Bavaria, Munich, Potsdam (Villechenon 2001: 246).

monde disparu,' but only later on, after passing into the interior vestibule, is the temporal leap activated as if

l'aiguille des siècles ait rebroussé tout d'un coup de deux mille ans sur le cadran de l'éternité, et vous vous attendez à voir un hôte en toge, parlant latin ou grec, venir au-devant de vous, et l'on cherche involontairement à se rappeler quelque tour cicéronien, quelque phrase athénienne pour ne pas rester court. (March 1860: 1)

The illusion is complete once inside the *hétérotopie* and the environment elicits authentic reactions: the place is recognisable because it triggers the visitor's memories of where every object should be in a living, inhabited Pompeian villa. Evocative of Certeau's spatial practice,<sup>25</sup> navigating this space coincides with organising discourse according to the Classical principles of spatialised memory, situating objects and images in places for subsequent retrieval of information.

Can this construct hold up the illusion of a real, living space, though? The roles appear reversed and it is the visitor, not the villa that is displaced from its time and space, as was Octavien in *Arria Marcella*, where he negotiated his new surroundings by drawing on the borrowed memories of Classical heritage. At once real and illusory, the villa's space is inhabited by the memories of Pompeian buildings and the modern constructs of antiquity, an antiquity corrected to serve contemporary taste, which requires a 'buste en bronze de Napoléon, ayant un cadran dans le socle' (March 1860: 4). Although the villa could seem a less rich heterotopia than Octavien's Pompeii, it is nonetheless authentic, in the sense that it denies its real, ancient Pompeian model. If *Arria Marcella* operated a transposition of ancient Pompeii onto the present-day ruin, Prince Napoléon's *hétérotopie* overwrote ancient Pompeii onto Parisian modernity. This constitutes an interesting variation on the theme of the contemporaneous city envisioned in a future, ruinous state. Furthermore, Gautier's article provides a counterpoint to the discourse on *le vieux Paris*. There, the falling stones were falling memories, building the collective urban memory from loss, ruins and fragmentary views, multiplying the perspectives like broken mirror shards. Equally conscious of the danger of Haussmann's urban erasure and its necessity, Gautier does not proceed to pick up the broken pieces of the dying city. His position transpires in the preface to *Paris démoli*, where he relegates the preservation of memory to erudite texts. In the spirit of the long-term view espoused by scientists and historians tracing the development of organic memory, he acknowledges the physical death of Paris's built form: 'Hélas! pour pouvoir vivre, les cités

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<sup>25</sup> See Introduction.

sont forcées souvent de balayer comme la fange des rues la poussière de leur histoire' (1855: v). However, he privileges its spiritual continuity through the encryption of its genetic memory in the frail media of text and image.

Meanwhile, his evocation of the 'hideuses masures' and 'plâtras vulgaires' (1855: ii-iii) echoes the position of the 'vieille huguenote ignare,' the Cerberus of Marc-Bayeux's cloisters in 'Les Carmes Billettes'. Gautier's discourse upholds Haussmann's perspective: degraded, dangerous, unhealthy, and mostly of no value, such buildings were suffocating Paris's architectonic landmarks. While this ideology was being diligently implemented and the aforementioned edifices systematically turned into ruins, Gautier pursued a favourite leitmotif, superposing other forms of urbanity onto the modern capital, privileging the colossal architecture of legendary antiquity or the Classical world. Just as Le Secq experimented with ruins in *Eglise Saint-Gervais-Saint-Protais* or *Ancien Couvent du Temple*, on a larger scale, Gautier projected the cataclysmic past of other cities, relocating Vesuvius onto Montmartre in *Mademoiselle de Maupin* or razing the city in 'Paris futur'. As with Le Secq, Gautier's ruinous scenarios came to pass and, in the wake of 1871, he would walk in and write about Paris's ruins, classicised by petroleum and fire.<sup>26</sup> The difference is that Gautier does not see the end of the city in such destruction and that, instead of remaining firmly grounded in the ruins, he prefers to go leaping through time and space, conceiving and apparently foreseeing outrageous calamities. This is why in *PQSV*, he illustrates the magazine's flipside title, *Paris qui vient*, and from the ruins of modernity indulges in visions of an antiquating urbanity improved by nineteenth-century or future comforts, which the creation of the *Maison pompéienne* only confirmed.

Reconstructing Paris from ruins, paper and glass recuperates and celebrates the principle of the city's multiplicity, yet this work of Baudelairean allegorising, which metamorphoses stones into images and memories, is indissociably bound to loss and mourning. Ruins are projected onto visual and textual screens which replace the external memory of the city's architecture and set at a distance its loss, so that it may be sublimated, contemplated, or analysed. Concomitantly, in their material forms, such media render the ensuing loss concrete: like the volcanic imprint of Arria Marcella's breast, the only trace of her, they become the sole surviving vestiges of urban bodies that are or would be gone shortly. Nevertheless, from ruinous edifice to ruinous text and image, Paris transforms itself further,

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<sup>26</sup> See Chapter IV.

exploring roles and donning costumes antiquated or futuristic, embracing or rejecting both. Building on Ginsberg, perhaps the ruinous dimension confers such freedom, dispensing the city from fulfilling the functions of the original organism (2004: 156). This is why, amidst its ruins, drawing on its space and memories even as they are destroyed, Paris may dream of other states and times. Ultimately, Paris remembered through visual and textual media creates a new collective imaginary of Parisian culture. Based on synchronic or diachronic temporal perspectives, exploiting the urban organisation above and below ground, conflating historic, literary, and artistic spaces, this 'imaginary' uses urban ruins as its centrifugal force: the views proliferate, overlap, interchange, remaining fragmentary and unassimilable.

## Chapter II

### Hidden Violence and Traces of Ruins

The previous chapter aimed at identifying a *conscience patrimoniale* that emerges from the 1850s onwards, across media and genres which respond to the Parisian demolitions. By the 1860s the urban systematisation is in full swing and a side effect of this rapid transformation is a ruined topography. This context illuminates the interdependence of urban experience and representation, since the disintegration of architecture and topography generate a perspectival shift, which, in turn, requires modes of representation that take into account Paris's vestigial dimension. Bergson's theories on memory and experience underlined the correlations between the body, memory and space. I now turn to study how this triad, in the context of Paris under demolition and reconstruction, internalises and reproduces the ruinous condition in narrative and visual strategies of representation. As Carlo Ginzburg and Peter Fritzsche show, a vestigial ethos characterizes nineteenth-century approaches to knowledge and cultural production (1992; 2004). Significantly, for Ginzburg, marginal, incidental data provided insight into the outlook of an event or epoch (1992: 116-18). Such details are integral to Charles Marville's photographic series on pre-Haussmannian Paris, Flaubert's city in *L'Éducation sentimentale*, and Edouard Manet's paintings of the Haussmannian city. Comparative readings will highlight a subtler form of ruin permeating these textual and visual discourses. Each offers different perspectives from which to observe the transformation of urban consciousness in the 1860s and the development of the ruin leitmotif.

The experience of the city in transition, under the sign of revolution or demolition, raises questions concerning urban ontologies and the epistemology of space, foregrounding displacement and alienation in Flaubert, and loss, remembrance and preservation in Marville. Each medium develops different strategies to translate the perception of urban space into representation through a complex relationship between fragment, trace, and impression on the one hand, and the whole, on the other. This interplay also emerges in Manet's painting. Flaubert's subjective vision has an interdependent relationship to the urban landscape, which Frédéric interiorises and onto which he projects his internal moodscapes, thus producing an exploded view of space. Conversely, driven by objective historical documentation, Marville submerges his subjective vision to construct visually coherent spaces when, all around, the city is systematically dismembered. In Marville and Manet demolition, dispersal, and

fragmentation loom in carefully composed views of Paris as yet undisturbed or already transformed by Haussmannisation. Such processes are hinted at through minute gestures and traces, or incidental details that bring to mind Barthes's *punctum* and confirm Ginzburg's paradigm of clues revealed by marginal information.

### **Paris Flaubert, Paris Marville**

In Flaubert's city, disorder, dispersal and dream, 'anomie' and alienation characterise an illegible urban space, where 'revolution is echoed and refracted' in 'a horse-race, a traffic jam, a crowded pavement' (Unwin 1996: 15-16; Parkhurst Ferguson 1997: 95, Green 2004: 99). Flaubert's unassimilable topography corresponds to the subjective vision of his hero: limited, disconnected, alienated, fractured, discontinuous, and unstable, the experience of Paris's space during revolution would shape the vision of history as 'collage,' lacking determinacy and identity, devoid of agency and focus (Prendergast 1992: 112-13). Frédéric filters for us apparently insignificant data: the Château d'Eau 'commençait à se moucheter de taches blanches.' Yet according to Ginzburg, precisely such marginalia reveal the city. Both Alison Fairlie and Christopher Prendergast seize the 'impressionistic effects' of Flaubert's urban descriptions, to which I will return (1981: 362; 1992: 115). Arguably, the peripheral attention the urban environment receives from Frédéric, the marginal details he takes in, point to known spaces which have begun to lose their identity. These traits indicate an underlying rupture between the city and its inhabitants. The discontinuities are not readily visible, but incipient destruction is hinted at, for instance, when Frédéric casually notes 'trois pavés au milieu de la voie, le commencement d'une barricade, sans doute' (316). A similar detail in Marville's *Rue Constantine* (1865) (Fig.1) could elicit the same laconic and uncertain comment: the upturned cobblestones, with a worker standing by, no doubt indicate that the street is about to be transformed, indeed here demolished.

The fracture between the known city and its alien topography during the insurrection posits a new relationship with urban space, which is comparable to that experienced during the Second Empire's systematisation. Building on Michael Wetherill's remarks that certain anachronisms in Flaubert's depiction of Paris suggest the influence of urban changes taking place in the 1860s, I read the construction of the city from the perspective of the urban context in which it was written (1993: 264-67). To nuance David Harvey's image of Flaubertian Paris as a 'dead object,' opposed to Balzac's 'sentient being' (2003: 49), it is worth recalling that Flaubert refers to a city that had changed radically since the events depicted. Thus, whereas



Balzac's city is still alive, Flaubert looks back to a Paris that is no longer there – a dead object, indeed. Nevertheless, writing in the 1860s, his representation of urban disruption in 1848 very likely resonated with his contemporaneous readership's experience of the city, during the peak of Haussmannian demolitions. From this perspective, Frédéric's detachment from the city emerges in light of the urban upheavals that disrupt urban codes and generate an indeterminate spatial configuration: interior and exterior boundaries are abolished when cut-off streets become places and buildings turn into spaces, as public venues and playgrounds for the *peuple* (see the Tuileries and Palais Royal). If, as Parkhurst Ferguson argues, Paris loses significance for the self-absorbed Frédéric, this could be because, once the codes of urbanity are suspended, *meaning* is about to be shattered, the Château d'Eau burned, the Tuileries pillaged.

Frédéric is not alone in being insensitive to the violence committed. This detachment characterizes someone who has not assimilated their experience to that of reality: his state is often one of *étourdissement* either when he is most involved or distant. In the 1867 Larousse, this term indicates 'une sorte d'ébranlement qui suspend ou trouble les fonctions des sens,' a feeling of numbness ('engourdissement') and astonishment or stupefaction 'qui ôte la réflexion, dans un trouble moral qui diminue l'intelligence ou la perception'; a feeling of abandonment or 'action de [...] se détourner, de se distraire d'une idée importune' (1068). We encountered this state in Thorigny's ravaged landscapes and in Baudelaire's poetry, most famously in 'Le Cygne'. Detachment is part of the reaction to a fracture in the relationship between characters and their environment; the corollary feelings pertain to the shock and disorientation produced by an alien situation and space. In such contexts, the psyche counters the overwhelming stimuli by blocking and numbing the effect of reality through distraction. Yet displacement does not annul the characters' interaction with the environment, and a form of symbiosis persists, just like in Thorigny's *Percement de la rue des Ecoles*: the people depend on the city they dismember, in the novel using urban furnishings to erect barricades or set fire to the Château d'Eau.

The shattering of meaning that corresponds to the dissolution of the city in Flaubert appears as a sense of uncertainty or ominous destruction in Marville's work of the same period on *le vieux Paris*.<sup>1</sup> In the context of his project, the very gesture of choosing a subject

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<sup>1</sup> The particulars of this project remain scarce: information about it comes from the correspondence Marville addressed to the administration of Paris's works department in 1873, offering to reprint the corpus of photographs destroyed when the Communards burned the archives.

marks the beginning of the end: to photograph a particular street signalled its entrance in an indeterminate phase of existence, between the shape it held at the moment when it was photographed and the transition and transformation to a different condition or its obliteration. In this regard, the photographs share the mood of *PQSV*, as portraits taken before the disappearance or demise of the subject. The time needed to take the photograph becomes an interval for reflection and the images register this fragile condition through subtle details. There is a sense of expectation, of held-breath before the wind of history which would blow to pieces the architecture and alter the face of the street. This awareness is inferred through the position of the motionless viewer, contemplating the city as it gathers momentum before launching into its ruination and ultimate transformation. Marville's photographs derive their force and fascination from the fragility which imbues their subjects: scenes of (potentially) the last moments of a certain street subvert the idea of the permanence of stone. The human form enduring beyond the old city complicates the navigation of urban space, as the usurpation of the past clashes with the anticipation of the metamorphosis; witnessing helplessly vies with participating in Paris's undoing.

Charles Marville's work has been recently reappraised, with new research uncovering details about this elusive figure, including his real name, Charles Bossu.<sup>2</sup> Sarah Kennel's essay is important for stressing the photographer's engagement with the city and re-establishing auctorial agency by showing that his project on pre-Haussmannian Paris was not part of a 'discourse of modernization in which Marville [...] presented Old Paris as insalubrious, dark, and cramped to justify [its] disembowelment'. Neither was his work intended to follow a before-during-after schema: instead, at the 1878 Universal Exhibition, images of the old streets were presented alongside those of the city after Haussmannisation, and those chronicling the projects of the Third Republic. The aim was to showcase the city's transformation and rebirth after the Prussian defeat. Therefore, as Kennel remarks, projects created under two different governments were subsequently fused into a discourse meant not to denigrate the old city, but to boost Paris's image and help restore self-esteem by foregrounding its power to reinvent itself: *Fluctuat nec mergitur* (2013: 29).

Kennel sheds light, for example, on how Marville's education and career as an illustrator shaped his approach to composition. On the one hand, early photographs in the 1850s, work alongside the Fontainebleau painters on nature studies, and urban studies of

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<sup>2</sup> See the 2013-14 retrospective exhibition *Charles Marville: Photographer of Paris* (Washington, New York, Ottawa).

'public spaces and the private corners of the city' highlight his interests, confirming the image he advertises as 'artiste-photographe'. His photography reveals a penchant for a pictorial style, the mastery of techniques, and of adapting compositions to each subject, from the attention to texture in Fontainebleau studies to focusing on particular aspects (scripts and images layering the walls as *enseignes* and posters), and capturing the character of Paris's streets, *quais*, buildings, and gardens (2013:13-15). On the other, subjects reflect his wide-ranging collaborations, which include artists, architects and museums.<sup>3</sup> Crucially, the Parisian series demonstrate a lifelong exploration of the urban landscape that precedes the official commission for which Marville is best known today, namely, documenting areas targeted for demolition or transformation in the 1860s. Marville's passion for the life of places and spaces is attested by his revisitation of subjects, in a manner that recalls the Impressionists' penchant for serialism. Thus, he enriched the Parisian corpus in the late 1870s, equally exploring old streets, soon to disappear, new Haussmannian boulevards, and ongoing transformations. For each subject, he developed a different visual strategy, in accordance with the character of the space photographed.

Therefore, rather than Haussmann's 'advance man' (Hambourg 1981:10), Marville's photography must be understood, first, as participating in contemporaneous discourses that construct and exploit *le vieux Paris* as 'a palimpsest where even the most mundane detail was charged with historical meaning' (Kennel 2013:31). Similarly to the authors of *PQSV*, Marville exemplifies a new interest in the city and Kennel is right to link his attention to detail with the historic significance of space and architecture, contemporaneously epitomised by Hugo's *livre de pierre*. We would add that this also caters to the *effet-de-réel* fascination, which is central to Flaubert's very different construction of space. Second, Marville responds to the needs of an official project, archival in scope, serving as historical documentation on the topography of the city; lastly, his Parisian compositions foreground the particular vision of an individual, working within the urban genre and adapting to the demands of documentary photography. Kennel characterises Marville as 'selective and methodical,' which we would read as efficient and economic: views taken at intersections, often from the two ends of the street, give a truer sense of space, rendering it easy to map. A significant part of the *vieux Paris* corpus documents the Île de la Cité, Les Halles, the fifth, sixth, and thirteenth *arrondissements*, corresponding to the areas most heavily targeted by restructuration

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<sup>3</sup> During this time, photographic documentation had become essential in the process of restoration of historic monuments, and Marville worked on several occasions with Viollet-le-Duc, Paul Abadie and Eugène Millet (Kennel 2013:18).

(2013: 28). Set in perspective, alongside photographs of building sites at this time, the visual mapping of *le vieux Paris* functions as a refuge which prolongs the memory of places and detracts from the growing void caused by erasure within the rest of the city. Marville's images infer an imploded vision of the ruinous city, where the façades present a fragile reality, just like the surface of the glass negative or paper print: ruin and nothingness loom beneath and behind their whole surfaces.

This chapter will first argue that Flaubert's narrative structure and style draw on optics founded on ruin and fragment, and on techniques that could be called impressionistic to represent a new, discontinuous experience of space in the novel. Focusing on the episodes depicting the 1848 revolution, I show that the interaction between characters and the urban environment is figured through dislocation and that the style responds to the incomprehensible topography and action through minute descriptions that remain unassimilable. The wreckage of the city reflects and is reflected by that of the self: fractured, alienated, and incommunicable. Frédéric experiences the revolution as spectacle and the city as its stage. As a consequence, he is shielded from the horror of bloodshed. Arguably, this dramatic mode is the only linguistic code or system of signification that would translate a world turned on its head. Conceived of as fiction, revolutionary Paris as a theatrical play or masquerade allows for conventions to be suspended or reversed, while the character remains safely detached, unaffected, and able to focus on the aesthetic dimension of the action. Nonetheless, this dramatic performance or *tableau vivant* is difficult to uphold, and the destruction and death of the revolution are soon glimpsed beneath the carefully constructed spectatorial fantasy. One implication of this instability is the city's image as a suffering entity, agent and victim of (its own) destruction; paradoxically, it also offers refuge from this destruction.

The second part of the chapter pursues this idea, arguing that Marville's photography hints at these fractures, impending or already affecting the vision of Paris, through subtle minutiae. By navigating daily an environment whose stability or security is no longer assured, one (re)lives the trauma of parting with both beloved and feared places, while no longer being able to relate to a familiar space, hence the observer's detachment. An effect of this would be the retreat into the self, often featured in Impressionist paintings through interior spaces: from apartments, balconies and windows, figures frame the new panorama, too vast and empty to take in or make sense of. Such a perspective appears in Manet's compositions, where the confusion of the ruins of the past has been swept away or remains hidden, as in *Vue de*

*L'Exposition Universelle de 1867*. By comparison Marville's photography correlates with organic discourses, in the awareness that certain places' days are numbered: this fragility humanises buildings and streets alike. Picturing them before their disappearance brings them closer to the nineteenth-century vogue for portraits in death, reinforcing this anthropomorphic dimension. Meanwhile, Flaubert's framing and distancing strategies in the scenes of revolution draw on the model of the tableau or displacement (to Fontainebleau). Limited views or displacement are associated with the feeling that characterises Frédéric, *étourdissement*: the sheer weight of history clashes with its fragility. The experience of Fontainebleau's secular survival contrasts with the disintegration of Paris's urban space and history. A similar feeling emerges in Marville's photographs of streets and buildings frozen in fragile immobility on glass negatives and crumbling in their wake. Resonating with the experiences in Manet's representations during this time, the permanent, epitomised by place, becomes temporary in Marville, while the temporary becomes permanent, immobile in Flaubert's Fontainebleau, where the cataclysmic landscape, as a reversed image of the insurrection, naturalises disorder. Through displacement to Fontainebleau, the temporary revolution and the spatial disruption it generates produce a permanent space of conflict.

### **Fragmentary Strategies I: Detail and Impression**

Comparing Flaubert's narrative technique to the photographic strategies of Marville may not be as improbable an exercise as it seems on first appearance. 'Tâchez de devenir un œil!', Flaubert famously wrote (1991: 163).<sup>4</sup> The aspiration to absorb visual data is not so far removed from the sensitised surface of the negative Marville uses to project and record his vision. However, Marville's camera dwells a long time on his scenes, seeking to capture the permanence of history written in the curve of streets and leaning buildings. Conversely, Flaubert registers the dynamic of fleeting impressions that space produces on the viewer. Counterbalanced by *effet-de-réel* details, impressions are associated with an aesthetic privileging suggestion. Indeed, Genette cites both 'ce luxe étrange de détail' and 'le vague des détails' in relation to the 'caractère hallucinatoire de ses rêveries' (1966: 225). The hallucinatory dimension of Flaubertian prose constitutes a stimulating hypersensitive and ephemeral state, conducive to artistic enlightenment. In this respect, Tomoko Hashimoto comments that 'Flaubert semble tenter de saisir une image en train de disparaître et de la fixer

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<sup>4</sup> Letter of 9/07/1861 to Mademoiselle Leroyer de Chantepie.

sur le papier par le truchement des mots' (2006: 1). To fixate the ephemeral and distil the eternal from fleeting modernity was at the heart of Baudelairean poetics. Both vague and precise, hallucinatory details participate in the construction of scopic and semiotic systems, of which the former could be linked with impressions and dream-state modes of vision, but the latter with the idea of performance or surreal spectacle.

First, to examine Flaubert's construction of urban modernity, I propose the idea of an optics founded on ruin and fragment. Despite Flaubert's rejection of the admixture of arts, his fragmentary visual strategies are close to impressionistic pictorial techniques.<sup>5</sup> In the revolutionary episodes, this characteristic emerges in images where the penchant for the pictorial is counterbalanced by precise notations on Parisian topography, for instance, in the scene representing the events of February 1848:

Par la rue Duphot, ils atteignirent les boulevards. Des lanternes vénitiennes, suspendues aux maisons, formaient des guirlandes de feux. Un fourmillement confus s'agitait en dessous; au milieu de cette ombre, par endroits, brillaient des blancheurs de baïonnettes. Un grand brouhaha s'élevait. La foule était trop compacte, le retour direct impossible; et ils entraient dans la rue Caumartin, quand, tout à coup, éclata derrière eux un bruit, pareil au craquement d'une immense pièce de soie que l'on déchire. C'était la fusillade du boulevard des Capucines.

--Ah! on casse quelques bourgeois!, dit Frédéric tranquillement, car il y a des situations où l'homme le moins cruel est si détaché des autres, qu'il verrait périr le genre humain sans un battement de cœur. (315)

Flaubert, argues Erica Wicky, treats fragments as details, making them structuring devices: detail involves perception, the selective gaze isolating part of the whole, whereas the fragment points to ruin, to a lost unity for which it yearns, nostalgically (2010: 119). These processes are at work in the boulevard des Capucines scene, where action is conveyed through impressionistic details. A subjective filter tints perception and communication with pictorial effects that suggest a spectacle and a detached observer with an eye for the aesthetic. Through this metonymic strategy, Frédéric's fragmentary perception produces a discontinuous vision of Parisian space during the insurrection. This obscures the violence of the boulevard des Capucines *fusillade*, rendering it as sensory impressions that target indeterminacy: people, postures and attributes dissolve into the anonymity of the visual 'fourmillement confus' and 'blancheurs de baïonnettes,' or the auditory 'brouhaha' and 'un bruit, pareil au craquement d'une immense pièce de soie que l'on déchire'. Foregrounding the immediate impression of

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<sup>5</sup> Isabelle Daunais, Marshall Olds, Adrienne Tooke, Bernard Vouilloux, and Gisèle Séginger have recently revisited Flaubert's relationship to painting (Séginger 2010).

objects or events postpones their decoding and creates a gap between the perceived object and its effect on the viewer. The technique recalls the Impressionists' manner of translating the transition from sensation to perception. Flaubert's syntactic and stylistic choices construe auditory, haptic, and visual impressions. Altogether abstract, these preclude and block conceptualisation: *fourmillement*, for instance, compacts the people and boulevard into a human-urban entity.

Short, telegraphic sentences subvert communication, blurring the representation of the scene, while indefinite articles and singular collective nouns emphasize the anonymity and inhumanity of both people and speech: brouhaha and *fourmillement* exemplify what Jonathan Culler calls the 'typifying singular' and 'mild quantifier,' clashing with the precise details (2006: 61). Positing a disembodied perception of violence associated with a detached observer, Flaubert's subjective representation paradoxically erases the human. Narrative style thus reproduces the discontinuities in the urban environment during revolution, and the corollary de-humanisation. The construction of space alternates between definite and indeterminate through an ambiguous perspective, employing free indirect speech, the ground-level viewpoint registering Frédéric's impressions, and an impersonal voice. The sentence structure progresses, as Culler notes, from 'a careful observer to a speaker with precise knowledge' (*Ibid.*). The textural, sensorial elements correspond to Culler's 'observer' stance, while the second perspective, of the 'speaker with precise knowledge,' is associated with topographical markers (la rue Duphot, la rue Caumartin). Significantly, the precise localisation in space enacts the revelation of violence, countering the observer's detachment and impressionistic perception with objective details and hard facts, which, tellingly, pertain to the topographic: 'C'était la fusillade du boulevard des Capucines'. In contrast to de-individualisation or de-humanisation which generate detachment, spatial indicators remain an anchoring reference-point, identifying the scene and bringing home the horror of bloodshed. The simple sentence, articulated around *fusillade* and the topographic indication 'boulevard des Capucines,' makes the appended revelation painfully incisive. Laconic and explicit, it shows that topography preserves meaning, as implied in the association between the 1848 shootings and the boulevard des Capucines, a charged *lieu de mémoire* for Flaubert's

audience.<sup>6</sup> As in an Impressionist painting, it is by taking distance that the subject of Frédéric's experience coalesces into a picture, defined by its urban setting.

Paris in turmoil produces a non-linear topography reflected and conveyed through the loss of the source of the narration: rather than an identifiable narrator to whom plot coherence can be ascribed, the multiplication of viewing angles suggests there is no stable perspective. Instead, the character's subjective vision and the instances of impersonal narrative (the detached, knowledgeable speaker) function as a shattered mirror, reflecting the violent destruction of the city and of coherent meaning from different angles. Consequently, details also shift between figurative and literal meanings. The tearing fabric becomes a tearing of bodies that actualises the earlier threat of aggression, offset as another pictorial effect: light picking out the *baïonnettes*. The glint on metal turns into the flesh-ripping of the urban and human body as the compact boulevard is pierced by these glints: this time, they are bullets. 'Recuperation is a process of making details into *signifiants* and naming their *signifiés*,' argues Culler (2006: 73). Although Flaubert is taken as a counterexample of this, in the passage quoted, this recuperation does occur, since the impressions are deciphered in the last sentence. Flaubert's visual dimension plays on the seen and the unseen, as, paradoxically, the pictorial attention to form, materiality, texture, and colour results in making the visible recede (Daunais 2010: 67; Wicky 2010: 15). The focalisation on the perception of details, visual, auditory, and haptic, generates an ambiguity, epitomised by the syntagm 'quelque chose de 'rouge,' 'blanc,' or 'mou'. The accumulation of details frames and structures the street experience into disparate scenes which posit immersion and detachment as absolute and coexisting dimensions –recalling Flaubert's 'manière absolue de voir les choses'.

Shifting viewpoints reject 'consistency' in favour of a 'composite' perception that renders uncertain the character's positioning in space and highlights the fictional quality of such a mode of vision (Culler 2006: 100; Daunais 2002: 84-85). This hybrid perspective, emerging through the juxtaposition of impressionistic and analytical views, underscores an individual perception of events and, concomitantly, operates a generalisation. The remark '- Ah! on casse quelques bourgeois!', dit Frédéric tranquillement' indicates that the character knows exactly what is going on, but does not appear affected; meanwhile his stance seems by inference to be representative of the detachment of a whole group, their displaced reactions

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<sup>6</sup> Haussmann's systematisation takes into account topographic memory, as a consequence, obliterating other revolutionary spaces, for instance, the infamous rue Transnonain.



engendered by particular 'situations'. The comment undermines the causality promised by 'car', enlightening neither on the character's nor the community's reactions: 'car il y a des situations où l'homme le moins cruel est si détaché des autres'. There is no way of making sense of such responses. Culler characterises this dissonance as 'incoherence [that] lies not in the text itself, but in the scene described: a world which refuses to be composed according to ordinary principles of significance' (2006: 111). This ambivalent treatment of the events also occurs in the second episode of the February upheavals, when Frédéric roams the streets. On the morning of February 23, we encounter a similar attitude in the

garde national, [...] quadragénaire dont la figure bonasse était ornée d'un collier de barbe blonde.

Il chargeait son arme et tirait, tout en conversant avec Frédéric, aussi tranquille au milieu de l'émeute qu'un horticulteur dans son jardin. (318)

As with Frédéric, this character is both *in medias res*, engaged in the revolution yet detached from the proceedings. As if a protective screen shields both from the reality of the bloodshed, revolution appears naturalised, a mood and mode, an attitude that people have developed and rehearsed over time, as suggested by another participant, the concierge citing his participation in the century's many insurrections (1830, 1832, 1834, 1839).

### **Spectacular Spaces<sup>7</sup>**

In Frédéric's case, the rehearsed quality finds expression in the spectacular or theatrical perception of the confrontation. Urban space is perceived as a stage, on which Frédéric stands,

pris entre deux masses profondes [...] fasciné d'ailleurs et s'amusant extrêmement. Les blessés qui tombaient, les morts étendus n'avaient pas l'air de vrais blessés, de vrais morts. Il lui semblait assister à un spectacle. (318)

The motif of the spectacle is crucial here, but not in the oft-quoted Marxist interpretation of the 1848 revolution as farce. Instead, I would like to suggest that for Frédéric, this spectatorial stance, reminiscent of the *flâneur's* through its double relation to the city (immersion-detachment), provides a framework or code for reading the events around him. Projecting the

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<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of narrative strategies for representing the past by reference to spectacular forms of entertainment, see Samuels (2004: 63-106, 200).

street as a stage and himself as spectator implies that, through its nature, the space renders the actions unreal (Sartre decried Flaubert's *irréalisation*). The unreality of the scene apprehended at ground level contradicts the earlier perception of the boulevard des Capucines, where topographic indicators inscribed the violence in a real space. Here instead, sensorial data filtered through the prism of spectacle regulates Frédéric's behaviour so that he does not recoil from the death around him, even when he steps on a dead man's hand. The chapters relating the 1848 revolution evoke throughout the carnivalesque atmosphere, which points towards the suspension of ordinary codes: space and time are released from their linearity, while the urban layout is disrupted, dismantled, and reused to sketch a different configuration—Paris as revolutionary ground. Streets are blocked, buildings burn, and the very features of urbanity reemployed to subvert it, for instance, as urban furnishings, from trees to iron grilles, are used to build barricades. This deconstructed space determines the characters' behaviour according to other codes and construes another form of legibility in the geography of Paris.

In antithesis to Balzac, Flaubert is linked to the modernist de-centralisation of Paris's role, but I would argue that city and hero maintain a complex relationship, reflecting and revealing each other. The fragmentation of the city means that to apprehend it one must borrow the viewpoints afforded by different, limited perspectives: an individual's, the crowd's, or the aerial vision belonging to the impersonal narrative voice. The grounded vision is privileged and reinforced by the deployment of bodies in space: the efficiency with which Haussmann's demolition teams brought down and re-erected buildings and streets echoes in the manner in which the rebellious population coordinates to dismember the city. From the incipient barricade on rue Saint-Honoré, 'trois pavés au milieu de la rue,' to 'on coulait du plomb, on roulait des cartouches; les arbres des boulevards, les vespasiennes, les bancs, les grilles, les becs de gaz, tout fut arraché, renversé; Paris le matin, était couvert de barricades' (316-17). This is contrasted with the government, shown failing to (re)organise and re-establish order, so that Paris's disintegration parallels the dissolution of the governing body: 'la monarchie se fondait dans une dissolution rapide' (317). This generalised dissolution creates a void in which the city appears to tear itself apart. Thus, revolutionary forces disappear in smoke beyond the barricade and 'la fusillade recommença', while the Château d'Eau fires back 'sans qu'on vît personne' and 'son perron de trois marches restait vide' (317). A first observation is that, in this void, agency seems to have been displaced. Prendergast analyses the impersonal *on* which suggests, indeed, a rupture between acts committed within the city, and on the city and its inhabitants, on the one hand, and the responsibility for those

actions, on the other.<sup>8</sup> The revolutionary context transforms Parisian space into a playground, appropriated by different groups. If this space is a stage, each one plays a role. Hence, the *garde nationale* is a natural, pursuing a hobby in this environment, while building barricades is what one does when rebelling. As a consequence of spatial and temporal indeterminacy, human lives no longer appear within a realistic framework and the revolution is exposed as a trope belonging to the realm of fiction. The perception of the revolution as a fiction allows Frédéric to enjoy it as such, which would account for his detachment and his attention to the aesthetic dimension. Although it would be an oversimplification to reduce the treatment of the revolutionary episodes to this *mise-en-scène* interpretation, it draws attention to the role of the urban setting in the events' representation.

In the enumeration of the elements uprooted, whether cobblestones or *vespasiennes*, the erasure of the human leaves the urban furnishings and buildings to stand as objects undertaking and suffering the destruction of the revolution. Impersonality and the fusion of energies, indicated by *on*, displace agency and death onto the city: 'le monument avec ses deux étages, ses deux ailes, sa fontaine au premier et sa petite porte au milieu, commençait à se moucheter de taches blanches' (317). The impressionistic image concluding the account of the fire exchange in the Château d'Eau siege suggests the same dissolution of outlines and architectural identity into abstract spots:

Le feu monta le long des pierres; l'édifice se mit à fumer partout comme une solfatare; et de larges flammes [...] s'échappaient avec un bruit strident... l'eau de la fontaine crevée se mêlait avec le sang, faisait des flaques par terre; on glissait dans la boue sur des vêtements, des shakos, des armes; Frédéric sentit sous son pied quelque chose de mou, c'était la main d'un sergent [...] (318)

The sequence of short sentences separated by semicolons juxtaposes the building, fountain, clothes, and fallen men to reflect a blurring between human and stone bodies, depicted as they crumble and flow into each other. The state of violent dissolution is epitomised by the image of the broken fountain, now associated with bleeding. The same treatment of people and architecture as matter, texture, and fabric culminates in the image of 'quelque chose de mou'. The soldier's body has become one element in a set of objects that furnish the street, losing their identity, consumed and merging together. Thus, when Frédéric steps on a human hand, the haptic image develops the idea that it belongs to these urban props: 'quelque chose de mou' refers back to slipping in the mud, the garments and objects strewn about. These are the

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<sup>8</sup> Prendergast's reading of this passage focuses on the loss of agency and purpose in Flaubert's conception of history, with the representation of the revolution articulated around emptiness and illegibility (1992: 114-15).

new furnishings of this urban scene, just like the barricades or 'les blessés qui tombaient' and 'les morts étendus,' and they shape perception and circulation within this space. Similarly, reminiscent of the synaesthetic metaphor of fabric tearing for the boulevard des Capucines fusillade, the visual and auditory 'bruit strident' of the building on fire conflates and replaces the screaming of unseen victims, entwining flesh and stone.

## **Fragmentary Strategies II: Framing**

Commenting on Flaubert's experiments with perception, Gisèle Séginger notes:

Le regard définalisé laisse flotter les choses hétéroclites qui prennent place subitement dans l'espace accueillant de la vision. Dans une sorte de suspension du temps, le réel devient *tableau* mais celui-ci n'implique pas seulement le regard. (2010: 10-11)

In light of our observations regarding the multiplication of views, this *tableau* should be understood as a dynamic frame, in which the elements change and transform incessantly. In this sense, Sylvie Triaire argues for Flaubert's strategy of 'rassembler le divers sans l'encadrer' (cited in Daunais 2010:6). As we have seen, the pictorial effects in Flaubert's writing simultaneously structure and render unassimilable the revolutionary scenes, maintaining an ambivalent fragmentation. Wicky compares the composition of certain Flaubertian scenes to the experience of contemplating a painting, where the spectator's perception oscillates between details and the whole, hence producing a fluctuation of the sense of distance. For instance, décors remain fluid and are described in a vague manner, almost always topographically, while certain elements stand out, 'hypertrophiés par rapport à l'ensemble' (2010: 112). Applying this model to Flaubert's narrative technique, Wicky argues that the possible distortions, ensuing between distances and perception, create 'un mouvement de palpitation entre le détail et l'ensemble de l'objet observé, le détail visuel introduit l'ensemble de l'image suivant un rapport métonymique qui s'apparente à celui que convoque la méthode d'induction choisie par Flaubert' (*Ibid.*: 114-15). Constructing the experience of revolution in Paris on this alternation of observation and impression posits similar principles to those exercised in painting and photography, to which I will return. We noted this alternation in the boulevard des Capucines scene, where the liminal streets framed the mass of people, while the focus dwelled on visual and auditory effects – the glint of metal or the sound of tearing silk, which act as metonymies. Moreover, the Château d'Eau scene disregards the rules of perspective, accumulating details and putting everything on the same plane. This was a criticism levelled at photography and Impressionist painting in this period, chastised for their

flat treatment of space, which we encounter, for instance, in Marville's *Passage Saint-Benoît* (1865) (Fig. 2a).

The idea of spatial indeterminacy in *L'Éducation sentimentale*, therefore needs nuancing, since, Daunais reminds us, 'toute histoire de Flaubert se conçoit à partir d'un lieu' (1993:9). This resonates with the principle of space determining action, as defined by Moretti.<sup>9</sup> In this respect, Marshall Olds argues that, in Flaubert's writings, 'le lieu organise le récit au détriment même de l'action, fonde le sens de la réalité matérielle et crée le contexte dans lequel les personnages se font comprendre' (2005:78). Following Daunais, Flaubert employs framing practices—from windows and walls to *bordures* and thresholds, which invest space with autonomy, as a stage on which the action becomes spectacle and where the successive appearance of different characters in the same place drives the plot (1993). Impressionist painters and photographers used similar devices in constructing their viewing angles. Marville's *Passage Saint-Benoît* is representative: the square and rectangle motifs configure urban space and the photograph into a geometric composition. The photograph's rectangular format is echoed by the numerous rectangles, from the opening into the next street to the superposed partial architectures, and juxtaposed windows and objects. Moreover, space is particularly visible when nothing happens, suggests Daunais: space happens in this instance, apprehended as a material presence (1993:43). This is the case both in Marville's empty streets and in the very midst of the February and June events, where the Parisian architecture and urban organisation become the actors and action.

A fluid topography raises the question of spatial legibility. Flaubert's prose accumulates details which 'suscitent des images parcellaires,' without restoring unity (Wicky 2010:119). Relieved of their epistemological value, such details encourage vagueness. Nevertheless, Paris's fragmentation and discontinuity impinge on 'the boundaries of the self and the autonomy of the individual,' even as the character, 'caught in the shower of exciting and conflicting stimuli of the urban milieu, can see them only through the distorting medium of his private preoccupations' (Alter 2005:10). Arguably, topography itself mediates experience, embodying and grounding it precisely within the space of the street, since all senses are engaged in response to the need to negotiate the unstable configuration. The archaeological approach that proposes fragments without integrating them into a totalising narrative (or vision of history) remains dependent on the space of the city. As the city breaks

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<sup>9</sup> See Chapter I.

down under the revolution, it produces a new form of reality and perception, based on visionary apparitions that refuse to be integrated within a linear, teleological account. Recall the vision of the young man in slippers carrying a gun, 'avec l'air d'un somnambule et leste comme un tigre' (316) or the barricade whose smoke-shrouded top bellows forth gesturing figures only to swallow them up again. Such dream-fragments become points of focalisation that obscure and reveal. Flaubert takes further space as the cause of action through its aesthetic treatment: by setting all objects, impressions and information on the same level, he frames them together, thus translating this surface perception into representation. Daunais calls this Flaubert's 'esthétique de la façade', which suppresses depth as the gaze absorbs all the information indiscriminately, ignoring contraries and cancelling hierarchies. Such a strategy allows Flaubert to set objects and events at a distance, an essential feature in his epistemology (1993: 340).

These practices bear comparison with how Marville constructs photographs dedicated to streets about to undergo transformation. Flaubert used alternating perspectives, from the high-angle view of the boulevard framing a sea of people to Frédéric's ground-level gaze or the wide-angle Fontainebleau landscapes. By comparison, Marville's large-format glass negatives (30 by 40 cm) allowed him to capture a record volume of data with great precision, ensuring maximum legibility in the smallest details (Reynaud 2013: 197). Meanwhile, he privileges a low perpendicular angle taking in the length of the street in one direction. This creates depth by registering the diminishing size of objects in the distance, as in *Rue Constantine* (1865).<sup>10</sup> By contrast, *Passage Saint-Benoît* (1864-67) is an enclosed place, with buildings rising on all sides and the cobblestones filling the lower ground in all directions.<sup>11</sup> The opening into another space is a leitmotif in Marville's compositions (Kennel 2013: 31). Here, it serves to strengthen the sense of spatial grounding by hinting at what lies beyond the frame of the photograph. Furthermore, the gutter in the pavement functions like a haptic and visual device, leading the gaze towards the further plane. This is where the focal point lies, centrally framed by the dark square of the narrow passageway that gives access to the street.

However, at the same time, Marville's photography brings to the fore a play on surfaces that generates an effect of flatness by placing on the same level background and

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<sup>10</sup> Uncharacteristically, Marville opts here for a high-angle shot, from a first-floor building in Rue d'Arcole (Gloaguen 2013: para. 11). This allows him to take in the street, with the long strip of cobblestones directing the gaze and the parallel rows of buildings framing the composition, as in Flaubert's boulevard des Capucines.

<sup>11</sup> Marville anticipates Eugène Atget's intimate compositions by several decades, for instance, *Porte du Dragon* (1898) (Fig. 2b).

foreground, volume and plane, vertical and horizontal, architecture and infrastructure. Again in *Passage Saint-Benoît*, the straight line in the pavement also functions like a vertical axis, subverting the horizontality of the ground plane. Moreover, in this geometric composition, Marville juxtaposes different angles of the lower half of the building on the left, superposes the higher half onto a pane of the building behind it, and includes the stacked boxes that echo the divisions of the shop-window they lean against. Like Flaubert, he exploits different textures and, here, different effects of volume too. Thus, if the doorway at the back of the tunnel would invite 'the viewer to imagine crossing the enclosure,' as Kennel argues (2013: 31), here, another building, which reproduces the square/rectangle motif closes off the view into the connecting street. This contained environment, intimate and entirely devoid of human presence, illustrates Marville's strategy of turning the city space into a stage, articulated by an empty foreground framed by buildings on all sides, yet carefully composed to promise an existence beyond the frame, and furnished with all the necessary props. The stage-like representation of urban space constitutes an innovation on Marville's part, according to Anne de Mondenard (2013: 157). As in Flaubert, this posits an immersed perspective, at ground level, like Frédéric's, and an elevated, hovering viewpoint that construes the impression of objectivity. But the spectacle's innocuous illustrative value – a representative segment of Old Paris topography, serving at once a documentary purpose and functioning as a mnemonic support – is deceiving in the same manner that Flaubert's was. That is, as a fiction.

As with Flaubert, the violence perpetrated on the urban environment is engrained structurally and hidden in the oversaturation of visual detail that invites the gaze to linger, just as the scenes of conflict absorb Frédéric. However, as already noted, the very gesture of focusing on a particular place triggers the association with demolitions to come, inferring the dissolution of this old urban order. Since these photographs are contemporaneous with the writing of *L'Éducation sentimentale*, Flaubert's reader is likely aware of the filigree inscription of ruins in these streets. While *Passage Saint-Benoît* gave no clue of the coming transformation, subtle signs register urban disintegration in *Rue Constantine*, in the overturned cobbles punctuating the length of the street, numerous shuttered windows of the right-hand-side apartments, and the fence halfway up the street restricting access to rue de la Licorne, from where rubble spills out. As ominous signs of imminent transformation, they undermine the idea of ordered space conveyed by the high angle that emphasized the long street and parallel rows of buildings framing the glistening pavement. Impending ruin is

confirmed by the intense traffic in front of the building farther back on the left, where the cart, mattress and blur of people indicate a *déménagement* in progress (Gloaguen 2013: para. 8).

In a similar composition, *Rue de Breteuil, de la rue Réaumur* (1866) (Fig. 3), upturned cobblestones as in *Rue Constantine* occupy the foreground, while the framed fragmentary *enseignes* foreground *Travail*, signalling, along with the expropriation notice, the building's imminent demolition. From a different angle, *Rue de Breteuil, de la rue Vaucanson* (1866) (Fig. 4a) shows no sign of ruin, just like *Passage Saint-Benoît*, although all of them would disappear following Haussmann's rehabilitations in the third and sixth *arrondissements*.<sup>12</sup> Yet read in conjunction with the first photograph of rue de Breteuil, the latter view reveals in the background the choir of Saint-Martin-des-Champs fenced off and plastered with posters – both clues of the coming transformation. If ruins appear incidental in Marville's images, the scale of the transformations affecting this neighbourhood when the photographs were taken is illustrated much more radically in contemporaneous engravings such as Charles Maurand's *Travaux de démolition effectués lors du percement de la rue Réaumur* (1860) (Fig. 4b).

In fact, incidental data, often textual, inscribes literally the tearing of the city's fabric: in *Rue Constantine*, through aggressive advertising of the latest gadget, '*Nouvelle invention, parapluie réductible américain de poche*,' on the corner of closed stores on the left-hand side and the notice in the foreground that the *Maison Bizouard* is moving to 15 du boulevard Beaumarchais. By 1866, a lithograph by Thorigny in *Le Monde Illustré* revealed the advanced state of the demolitions in a composition closely echoing *Percement de la Rue des Ecoles*.<sup>13</sup> Marville's series on Old Paris creates the image of the places represented as whole, obscuring the reality that many of them are already suffering the effects of change due to which they no longer preserve their integrity. Sometimes, as we have seen, views from opposite angles make this visible, although many construct the fantasy of *le vieux Paris* on the verge of disappearance but still intact.

Marville's consistency concerning format and compositional formulae, such as the point-of-view angle that simulates a human-scale gaze, multiply the discourses on *le vieux Paris*, reproducing the fantasy of unity, of a coherent entity threatened by destruction. But for this very reason, disruptions in such formulae emerge all the more glaringly. For instance, Marville prefers to articulate narrow spaces through left-slanted angles, with the focus on the

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<sup>12</sup> Passage Saint-Benoît disappears during the construction of boulevard Saint-Germain in 1869.

<sup>13</sup> Issue of 27 January 1866. This confirms Gloaguen's dating of Marville's photograph as 1865, rather than 1866, as it appears in Sarah Kennel's catalogue *Charles Marville* (2013).



right. Yet in *Rue du Marché-aux-fleurs* (1865) (Fig. 5) he shifts to the other side and we immediately notice why it would be impossible to apply the same spatial strategy: the focus falls on the left because only this side still preserves remnants of the buildings that made up the street. On the right-hand side from which the gaze is projected the wall of the new Tribunal de Commerce rises, while in the background, the newly-built Caserne de la Cité encroaches on the remainder of the street. Thus, the street's compromised integrity is revealed through the same mode of representation adopted for similar subjects, which here, however, subverts its purpose of preserving a vision of the city before the Haussmannian intervention.

Flaubert uses shifting perspectives to render the dissolution of urban space during revolution. By contrast, Marville multiplies the discourses on *le vieux Paris* using the same ground-level perspective to create a coherent image of space. In both cases, the multiplication of known *topoi* can be associated with a mimetic mode, which Prendergast defines as a mechanism for representing the movements of nature, drawing on the familiar, on re-description, to engage with the unfamiliar and unknown, and thus operate as a form of (re)cognition (1988: 21-22). Moreover, Marville's camera imitates the same gaze, contemplating consistently different streets represented according to the same pattern, but marginalia give away the construction of these familiar spaces. Flaubert borrows different gazes to render spatial fragmentation. Both engage in a performative dimension of space, one to recreate a recognisable vision of topographic integrity, the other disintegration. The only way to make sense of the latter is to relegate it to the realm of fiction, as Frédéric does, framing the revolution into a recognisable event through the topos of spectacle, and adjusting his behaviour accordingly. Through the mimetic prism, Marville's city submerges the trauma of demolition behind silent façades, while Flaubert's limited perspectives and shattered spaces reproduce the dissolution, disunity and chaos of different factions during the revolution. Yet mimetic processes expose how Paris itself subverts the possibility of preserving the whole of *le vieux Paris* even as an image, while that of uniting the whole of Paris in a common goal is likewise shown to fail, with the city tearing itself apart in Flaubert. The fragmented city thereby doubles the gaze of Paris at war with itself.

## Naturalised Ruins

The circular use of mimesis in the treatment of urban space can also be associated with the idea of modernity rejecting progressive, linear history. Instead, modernity embraces and advances through resurgences of the archaic, of which the chaos of February and June 1848 is an instance. Notably, the violent devastation of the city in June appears in dialogue with the natural disorder in the Fontainebleau landscape, hence positing the interdependence between the modern and the archaic. Displaced onto the quasi-natural landscape surrounding Fontainebleau, the upheavals in Paris, its undoing and redoing according to a different order during the insurrection, infer a parallel development of conflict in space that blurs the line between natural, human, and architectural.

Victor Brombert argues that this landscape constitutes a stylistic device which allows for the convergence of the novel's themes and character construction, developing 'de façon télescopée, une tension thématique et un commentaire sur cette tension,' which conflates a 'paysage-symbole' and a 'paysage-commentaire' (1971: 278-79). The former articulates the tension between the idyll of peace and the cataclysm of war, while the latter develops 'un double jugement moral,' exposing the socio-political turmoil, from which the characters sought refuge (*Ibid.*: 281). Brombert's reading touches on the salient features of the double discourse ingrained in Flaubert's landscape: there is no escape from revolution and history, as the political and the geological turmoil displace each other, despite belonging to 'espaces moraux, métaphysiques et temporels inconciliables' (*Ibid.*: 282). First, the trees in the forest become in turn anthropomorphic and architectural metaphors, playing out conflict as a living impulse. The inherence of destruction and violence develops through an accumulation of metaphors, juxtaposing dynamic verbs and epithets that denote intense antagonism fixed in immobility:

des chênes rugueux, énormes, qui se convulsaient, s'étiraient du sol, s'étreignaient les uns les autres, et, fermes sur leurs troncs, pareils à des torses, se lançaient avec leurs bras nus des appels de désespoir, des menaces furibondes comme un groupe de Titans immobilisés dans leur colère. (356)

Suggestive of colossal energies wasted, the dramatic poses recall Laocoon's frozen convulsions, as the alliteration in the comparison between *troncs* and *torses* gradually glides towards metaphor and the trees become bodies.<sup>14</sup> The silent body-language recalls the lack of

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<sup>14</sup> For the tree as organicist metaphor, see Kermodé (1957: 111-24). In relation to the city, its antithesis, the mechanical, is associated with a dead machine in Jules Verne's *Paris au XXe siècle*.

comprehension and incommunicability of the February days (an echo of the old man on the white horse waving in vain a truce flag). The imperfect-tense verbs of violence unfolding cancel out the perfect-tense adjective 'immobilisés,' underlining the futility of conflict.

This anthropomorphic treatment is complemented by a ruinous environment, where trees 'avaient des airs de patriarches et d'empereurs, ou, se touchant par le bout, formaient avec leurs longs fûts comme des arcs de triomphe; d'autres, semblaient des colonnes près de tomber' (356). Negating the semantic field of imperial power and representation (*patriarches*, *empereurs*, and *arcs de triomphe*, also a topographical Parisian reference), these columns seem fated to fall from the start: their crooked growth ('poussés dès le bas obliquement') counters the idea of stability and enduring memory through monuments. They bear the seed of ruin within themselves. This is particularly visible in the rocky landscape:

Un bruit de fer, des coups drus et nombreux sonnaient: c'était au flanc d'une colline, une compagnie de carriers battant les roches. Elles se multipliaient de plus en plus, et finissaient par emplir tout le paysage, cubiques comme des maisons, plates comme des dalles, s'étayant, se surplombant, se confondant, telles que les ruines méconnaissables et monstrueuses de quelque cité disparue. Mais la furie même de leur chaos fait plutôt rêver à des volcans, à des déluges, aux grands cataclysmes ignorés. (357)

As with the passage describing the shooting on boulevard des Capucines, impressions conveyed through auditory images precede their decoding (workers in the stone quarry). While the 'bruit de fer' and violence of the blows recall an earlier comparison ('un bruit, pareil au craquement d'une immense pièce de soie que l'on déchire'), this time, the context evokes work associated with construction or demolition, and, implicitly, the violent refashioning of the land. The anthropic intervention undermines the impression of a natural landscape and echoes the changing face of Paris under the revolution, and, for Flaubert's readers, the ongoing transformations in Napoleon III's capital. The passage's transition from the reference to urban civilisation to cataclysmic nature inscribes the tortured landscape in a universal penchant for conflict and entropy, which Brombert characterises as 'ubiquitous' and 'perfectly insignificant' (1971: 281). For our purposes, the two fragments alluded to merge the natural with the human and urban-architectural elements, creating a parallel development of conflict in space. Although Frédéric opines that the boulders 'étaient là depuis le commencement du monde et resteraient ainsi jusqu'à la fin,' the work around them and their multiplication create an impression of reverberation, suggesting rather the instability and transience of this configuration (357).

The Fontainebleau landscape vacillates between tranquillity and chaos, between dream

and reality. Luce Czyba notes here how Flaubert's attention to light and landscape resonates with the Barbizon School (Corot, Rousseau, Daubigny): means of seeing, implicit choices, perception and (de)limitation of what is (re)presented are construed as a montage of 'plusieurs canaux sensoriels' in a 'dimension psychique' (2010: 12). We recall that Marville's own affinities with the Barbizon painters emerge in his particular treatment of these elements in photography. Without positing any relationships of causality, Czyba supports the view that, at times 'Flaubert's vision prefigures that of the Impressionists' (*Ibid.*: 20). Construed through visual and auditory impressions, the space magnifies its effect on the viewer, suggesting an all-pervasive sense of the landscape mutating under the actions of a superhuman cast of players. The stone blocks' organisation in space recalls the heterogeneous construction of barricades and the disarray of combat, echoing the oaks' convulsions through terms belonging to the same lexical and semantic fields (*furie, chaos*). Significantly, they reappear in the 'énormes talus de pavés' forming the barricades that block boulevards des Gobelins and de l'Hôpital, rue Godefroy and rue Mouffetard (364). The stone blocks whose horizontal and vertical volumes mimicked the houses and pavement appear in inverted reflections in the cobblestones that break the street's horizontal surface, rising as mock-edifices (barricades). We encountered this verticality of the cobblestones in Marville's low-angled street views and, closer to Flaubert's image, in the photograph *Magasin de Nouveautés* by Le Secq.

The vague chaos of 'grands cataclysmes ignorés' acquires substance as Frédéric registers the details of the ravaged city on his return:

L'insurrection avait laissé dans ce quartier-là des traces formidables. Le sol des rues se trouvait, d'un bout à l'autre, inégalement bosselé. Sur les barricades en ruines, il restait des omnibus, des tuyaux de gaz, des roues de charrettes; de petites flaques noires, en de certains endroits, devaient être du sang. Les maisons étaient criblées de projectiles, et leur charpente se montrait sous les écaillures du plâtre. Des jalousies, tenant par un clou, pendaient comme des haillons. Les escaliers ayant croulé, des portes s'ouvraient sur le vide. On apercevait l'intérieur des chambres avec leurs papiers en lambeaux; des choses délicates s'y étaient conservées, quelquefois. Frédéric observa une pendule, un bâton de perroquet, des gravures. (365)

In this undoing, Paris echoes the *non-finito* effect of the stone quarry: while the rocky landscape was an *ébauche* of civilisation, the city becomes a ruin that mirrors the sketch through its incompleteness, suggested by the sculptural metaphor of the 'sol [...] inégalement bosselé'. Both have been wrought by human hand through violent means. This time, the impressionistic technique gives way to description, amounting, however, to the same effect of heterogeneity or collage: 'des omnibus, des tuyaux de gaz, des roues de charrettes'. The

enumeration parallels the image of the barricades' construction in February, but this time in the process of dismantling. The cracked fountain spewing water mingled with blood in place du Château d'Eau in February has given way to black patches of congealed blood. The *tachiste* treatment of the buildings has reverted to fragmentary, ruinous representation. However, these ruins would be strangely familiar to the readership of 1869, abundantly cited by contemporaries describing the experience of the city under redevelopment. Recall Gautier's preface to Fournier's *Paris démoli* in 1855, which evoked the 'spectacle curieux' of half-demolished buildings exposing the privacy of home to the public eye and a similar passage in Zola's *La Curée* (see Chapters I and III). The same evocation in *L'Éducation sentimentale* confirms the iconic status and impact of this image of modern ruin. Flaubert draws on this contemporaneous trope to represent the defamiliarisation of places transformed into open spaces, yet where contingent details preserve the flavour of intimacy.

Both Gautier and Flaubert evoke stairways leading nowhere, and Gautier's 'maisons ouvertes avec leurs planchers suspendus sur l'abîme' echo in Flaubert's doors opening onto emptiness. The comparison of *jalousies* with rags plays again on the anthropomorphic perception of architecture, reinforcing the disturbing feeling that the building is an injured entity, shattered by bullet wounds. Moreover, a Barthesian reader might assimilate to the *punctum* the details revealing the intimacy of home: 'une pendule, un bâton de perroquet, des gravures' become extensions of the inhabitant's personality, now discarded, surviving as ruins amid the devastation which can no longer be identified with personal spaces. They appear as uncanny relics, showing that which should not be seen, baring the inside of one's being, as objects that have acquired a talismanic value within the sanctuary space they populated – giving refuge and comfort, invested with the dreams and desires of the owner.<sup>15</sup> The surviving wallpaper is also a common trope, emblematic of the personalisation of one's space: it defines the interior 'marquant encore la forme des chambres' in Gautier and signals its destruction in Flaubert: 'l'intérieur des chambres avec leurs papiers en lambeaux'.

Flaubert's shifting viewpoints translate the dynamic of space in transformation, a trait that also distinguishes Marville's studies of 'states of transition' (Kennel 2013: 23), which capture precisely an image of space mutating and becoming. While Marville's series on *le vieux Paris* mute the scale of the ruination to subtle indications (in accordance with the nature of his project of documenting historic areas before intervention), engineering subjects, such as

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<sup>15</sup> The three items Flaubert chooses to inhabit the ruinous interior strangely anticipate the furnishings and companions of Félicité's environment in *Un Cœur simple*.

*Buttes-Chaumont, en cours d'aménagement* (1865) (Fig. 6) explore dynamics, scale, and dislocation.<sup>16</sup> The image surprises the featureless space in the process of turning into a landscape, with the bridge as the most salient anthropic mark.<sup>17</sup> Several views trace the transformation of this space into a hybrid landscape, where the manmade gains the upper hand over nature. Marville had documented the same process in another project, the *aménagement* of the Bois de Boulogne, his first official commission.

If archaic chaos and entropy resurfaced through Flaubert's construction of the Fontainebleau imagery, the Buttes-Chaumont compositions promise emergent order and life out of a forsaken, inhospitable space. The taming of the Buttes-Chaumont quarry is the pendant of Flaubert's quarry in Fontainebleau, but there the rocks, 'cubiques comme des maisons, plates comme des dalles, s'étayant, se surplombant, se confondant,' translated the violence of disaster, as 'ruines méconnaissables et monstrueuses de quelque cité disparue'. This vision of the ruin of civilisation clashes with the featureless wasteland of Marville's environment. Here, the unmistakable signs of human presence, infringing on the margins as isolated, displaced houses, or the bridge, rails and scaffolding in the centre, remain distinct from the roughness of the barren rock in *Parc des Buttes-Chaumont. Les travaux d'aménagement. Le grand rocher et le pont suspendu* (1865) (Fig. 7). Instead of an antediluvian city fossilised in stone, the rock appears displaced in the encroaching urban environment, a curious juxtaposition of bareness and roughness, not bearing in its surface the trace of human work (we know this is not the case though). The *buttes* present themselves as a more unitary entity (from the outside) than the chaos of demolition in Paris. Or rather, a telling equation presents itself in the title, which offers three fragments of sentences that encompass the whole process of the landscape's conception and creation. Yet this process is presented in reverse: first, the result (the park), then the work in progress (*aménagement*), and last, the elements around which the landscape is articulated (the rock and suspended bridge). Thus, although the photograph captures an intermediary stage, the title reveals its conception as a before-during-after image. On the one hand, the idea of *aménagement* posits the natural and the anthropic in balance, in the juxtaposition rock–bridge. On the other, the image illuminates an instance of what Kennel describes as the dislocation of bodies in space: in the

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<sup>16</sup> Marville also captures the sheer scale of the Haussmannian project during the Third Republic, with the transformations surrounding the Opéra, discussed in Chapter III.

<sup>17</sup> Compare the abstract composition *Plâtrières dites Carrières d'Amérique* (1852) by Le Secq, where the Buttes-Chaumont scenery has been compared to a lunar landscape. Unlike the documentary aim of Marville's photograph, the earlier image seems predominantly oriented towards an aesthetic study of the wasteland's irregular surface.

ravaged landscape, which gives a sense of the vast desolation and the project's ambition to convert it, humanity appears displaced. Instead, the bodies left to indicate scale and work in progress are the rock and suspended bridge, around which space is mutating, to ultimately become a place. Thus, while the city's features dissolve under the pickaxe, urbanity is slowly chiselled into the block of stone, soon to be part of a pleasure garden.

Opened on the same day as the Paris *Exposition Universelle* of 1867, the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont embodies several of its principles. The materials and technologies showcased at the Exhibition find application in the construction of the park, while its concept develops the Exhibition's theme of the marriage of art and industry (Komara 2004: 5). While the Exhibition was a temporary event that altered the face of Paris through ephemeral edifices, it gave rise to at least two instances of landscaping that perpetuate its heritage. As one of them, the park is a permanent construction that constitutes a pendant to, and antithesis of, the transient Exhibition site. Ann Komara examines the concept of an 'engineered landscape' (*Ibid.*). This plays on the dialogue between aesthetics and technology, between the inherited tradition of picturesque landscaping and the technical achievements made possible through industrial means. As Komara argues, the park's creation 'placed the debate into the public realm via [Adolphe Alphand's] interpretation of showing art (the picturesque image and experience) as built and sustained by industry (the means and materials of its production and maintenance)' (*Ibid.*: 10). The fantasy of a picturesque park within the industrial environment of the nineteenth *arrondissement* was achieved through the wide-scale use of concrete (from the structural to the decorative level), of hydraulic pumps to create waterfalls, 'steam-powered machines for earthwork, connecting to the extended and improved city-wide sewer and drainage systems,' 'cast iron gaslights and macadamized roads,' 'tree-planting machinery,' and an integrated irrigation system (*Ibid.*: 5). Marville's image shows the desolation of the hill used as cesspit, gibbet, quarry, and criminal refuge, with the mass of rock as the one defined element in a vague landscape. The completed Buttes-Chaumont project reverses this relationship: after inserting the hill within the artificial environment of the park, the rocky outcrop remains the most salient rough feature in a carefully tended landscape. An instance of the unfinished in the finished landscape, the hill renders the transitory, *non-finito* state permanent, in constant tension with the states of the archaic, emerging or preserved within the ordered urban space.

Just as the peaks of Chaumont appear outlined against the vague wasteland, in Manet's unfinished *Vue de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867* (Fig. 8a), urban space is suggestively

sketched, in the same unfinished manner as Flaubert's Paris streets in June 1848: the impression of the 'sol [...] inégalement bosselé' appears in the Paris skyline, where towers, spires and domes are unequally moulded, ranging from barely-suggested silhouettes to the almost-recognisable Dôme des Invalides. Significantly, the *tachiste* treatment identified in Flaubert's text bears precisely on the urban landscape. Because of the nature of Marville's subject, it was the site of the park in the foreground that appeared dissolute, whereas the horizon line was defined by the distant buildings signalling the presence of the city. Conversely, in Manet's painting, this relationship is reversed and the city becomes a canvas backdrop for the scene in the foreground. Thus, whereas the title implies that the subject of the painting is the Exhibition, the space that houses it and its striking architectural features are relegated to the middle- and background, and depicted as a blurry impression. The city appears unfocused, rendered through generous brushstrokes that use impasto to produce a richly-textured but fragmentary vision of the Parisian landscape.

If, thanks to technology, the Buttes-Chaumont park functions as a well-oiled machine for producing picturesque panoramas, Manet's Exhibition painting likewise explores the motif of the urban panorama. The 1867 Universal Exhibition marked the high point of the Second Empire's achievements, offering the opportunity to showcase the city's transformation and the latest architectural and urban feats. In fact, Manet's painting is directly connected with the second instance of landscaping, through which the 1867 event transformed Parisian topography. Butte Chaillot, from which the viewer of the painting and the spectators in the composition look out, was technically altered and re-designed to create the best viewing experience of the Exhibition grounds. In this sense, the particular position from which Manet composes his view is significant for revealing the processes involved in creating and viewing a (panoramic) landscape. The transformation of Butte Chaillot emblematises the framing of the city as a stage: as a raised vantage point, on the opposite bank from the Champ-de-Mars, it was chosen to show the exhibition grounds to their best advantage. However, the hill was deemed irregular and the overview it afforded lacking in coherence. Consequently, a short time before the opening of the event, it underwent a massive makeover, its height levelled and its profile rendered regular, with a layout of alleys and flower-beds (Clark 1985: 60-61). Manet's technique and compositional strategy play on the relationship between the newly finished Butte Chaillot and the unfinished cityscape, as suggestive of the constant process of reconfiguration affecting Parisian topography.

The Universal Exhibition displayed the Empire's urban transformations, of which some



were permanent, while others were ephemeral, like the radical glass-and-steel ellipsoidal structure of concentric circles that housed the exhibition itself on the Champ-de-Mars. These ephemeral structures, however, became associated with the modification of the surrounding area in a permanent manner, exemplified by the creation of the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont and Butte Chaillot. The view from Butte Chaillot thus explores questions also raised by Marville's Buttes-Chaumont landscape, where the vague topography posited a continuous transformation of the environment and the creation of panoramic views. The painting shares Flaubert's sketchy, fluid rendition of space and suggests the contemporaneous dissolution and refashioning of Paris. The ephemeral architecture of the Exhibition echoes the transitory state of the city in the process of demolition and construction, hence associating transience with the city's permanent condition. In Manet, this transience emerges in the unfinished spaces of the composition and subverts the traditional modes of panoramic representation. The view *à vol-d'oiseau* and other aerial perspectives warranted omniscience through an all-encompassing and unified vision of the space laid out, which the gaze could master, as attested in this instance by numerous contemporaneous lithographs and maps of L'Exposition Universelle.<sup>18</sup> This is no longer the case in the painting, where the city appears as an indeterminate space despite the fact that its layout echoes that of panoramic scenes. Whereas Paris functions as a reference point, the object drawing the viewer's gaze, the *butte* itself, is the only stable site, a well-defined island in a dynamic space.

This subversion operates within a discourse working with multiple perspectives. Following T.J. Clark's and Prendergast's readings, we can argue that Manet's painting represents a *mise-en-scène* of Paris as spectacle in 1867, in a double game, exhibiting Parisian spectator types and the display of the exhibition (1985; 2000). As with Marville and Flaubert, the painting reproduces the process of transforming urban landscapes into stages. Similarly to Flaubert's narrative technique, Manet constructs multiple perspectives within the painting. As in Frédéric's case, the actors of *Vue de l'Exposition* are spectators, simultaneously modelling the position of the viewer of Manet's painting, while engaged in what Clark calls a comedy of Parisian types enacting the process of looking (*Ibid.*). Indeed, the composition stages different modes of vision associated with the consumption of spectacle and panorama. First, the high-angle view from which the scene is constructed amplifies the perspective offered by the lower ground from which the groups in the painting look out at the urban landscape. The painter and viewer's privileged position, doubling that of the figures in the scene, recalls the game of

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<sup>18</sup> See Eugène Ciceri's minute rendition of the exhibition grounds and surrounding topography (Fig. 8b).

shifting, multiple gazes in Flaubert, where the ambiguous (narratorial) voice offered information that would not have been readily available to Frédéric, whose vision was limited to the street level. In Manet's groups, different figures model various modes of spectatorship, peering through binoculars or lying down in the grass and staring over the hill's brow. Meanwhile the balloon up in the sky, celebrating the French invention, promises a different vision of the city in a *clin d'oeil* towards Nadar's innovative aerial photography. The magnification and multiplication of vision, read in conjunction with the sketchy quality of the panorama, points towards the dissolution of a unified image of the city.

The Butte thus functions as a viewing platform, and, like a theatre box, allows the figures occupying it to behold the stage below and frame their views. We can relate this *mise en abîme* to what Clark identifies as the 'painted' quality of the urban panorama and the onlookers' relation to it as to a form of representation (1985: 61). Thus, the mid-ground occupied by the city plays on suggestion rather than description, with the architectural landmarks fluidly sketched and their localisation in space manipulated. Such characteristics draw attention to the factitious dimension of the skyline as a theatre décor backdrop. The painting seems to revel in revealing its very illusion, offering the viewed object – Paris or the Exhibition – as an imaginary construct. In fact, viewing becomes the subject of the painting, whereas both city and exhibition are relegated to the status of objects of the gaze. Building on Clark's observations, the fragility of the constructed panorama echoes the fragile urban configuration created for the Exhibition: from the hastily-put-together Butte Chaillot to the temporary structures adorning the skyline.

This transient condition emerges in the unfinished quality of the mid-ground, notable in the dissolution of the buildings directly in front of the couple with binoculars and umbrella: blurring the architectural and the natural, the pavilions surrounding the 'Modern Colosseum' appear as an indiscernible mass of colour, with the brownish patch as a literal result of combining the light palette reserved for architecture with the greens used for the foliage. The same goes for the Dôme des Invalides, dissolving behind smoke, or the buildings to the left, disintegrating in the light, as blue, grey and warm whites conflate the architecture and sky. Interestingly, the Pont d'Alma is strongly articulated, to the left of the composition; it was the site of Manet's personal exhibition, in a pavilion like that of Courbet (Mainardi 1987: 111). In fact, Clark underlines a strategy he calls abbreviation, whereby Manet contracts the distance between foreground and mid-ground, for instance, unconvincingly making the transition from the flower-bed to the river below and the Pont d'Alma on the left (1985: 62). Manet's

abbreviation functions similarly to Flaubert's ellipsis or juxtapositions of short phrases, images and fragments which eschew causality or remain fluid within the delimited spatial frame.

In this sense, Prendergast argues for a 'disconnectedness between viewers and city and between viewers themselves,' positing that Paris no longer stimulates the onlookers (2000: 23). This recalls Frédéric's detached perception of the spectacle of revolution and the idea of *étourdissement* as a troubling of the senses, numbing the onlooker's response and capacity to synthesise and assimilate what they see into a coherent image.<sup>19</sup> As with Flaubert's protagonist, this indifference is associated with the fragmentation of the city, which no longer makes sense or, in this case, whose configuration has not yet been invested with meaning and cannot be, due to its transitory nature. If this is a panorama, it is one made of ruins articulating urban space as a half-formed, half-dissolute scene, with recognisable architectonic and topographic features poised between the point of appearance and disappearance. Its implication is the continuous transformation of urban space that ultimately produces a fluid, ruinous cityscape. The temporary exhibition grounds displace and replace as synecdoche the process of systematisation wherein the Parisian skyline is about to be dismantled and reassembled. The 'Modern Colosseum' and its adjacent structures and Parisian landmarks (the Pont de Iéna and its statue, the Dôme des Invalides) are figured through the same fragmentary, unfinished technique. This undermines the latter monuments' permanence in space, aligning them with the ephemeral architecture of the Exhibition: currently occupying the horizon, soon to dissolve into the empty open space of the Champ-de-Mars. As with the Buttes-Chaumont and Flaubert's displaced 'ruines monstrueuses' at Fontainebleau, inscribing ruins in the heart of the city disrupts space and time, making topographic fragmentation and disorder permanent.

The displacement and occultation of urban convulsions in the landscape could be associated with Max Milner's argument concerning scopic devices. Sylvie Triaire builds on Milner's question of whether 'the scopic drive' manifests the irruption, in the 'fissures of representation,' of something other than the known thing (2010: 82). Lacan's scopic drive appears in the gap between the eye and the gaze. The selective, limited eye vies with the gaze, as organising discourse, aspiring towards mastery and fuelled by the desire of vision. The

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<sup>19</sup> The inclusion of the viewer in the painting recurs in *L'Exécution de Maximilien*, painted the same year, and anticipates the spectator at the Folies-Bergère (1881-82). For a discussion of spectatorship in Manet's different versions of *L'Exécution de Maximilien*, see Ibsen (2006: 213-26).

different techniques of vision in Manet's painting and the context of a leisurely outing are comparable with *L'Éducation sentimentale*, where the scopic drive is epitomised by the verb 's'amuser,' recurrent in Frédéric's experience of conflict as spectacle. The scopic drive generates tension, played out spatially, through plot and narrative structure: the text creates a gap between Frédéric's impressions and the subsequent deciphering of the objects and events perceived. Triaire compares this indirect manner of seeing in Flaubert to the processes of vision in paintings (2010: 83). In *L'Éducation sentimentale* we could read the indirect vision which fuels the scopic drive as conducive to a defigured representation, of which Manet's painting is also illustrative. Antithetically, in Marville's compositions of the future Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, the large spaces framed at their extremities by rows of buildings incite and invite the viewer to peruse the details of the scene, while reassuring him that this is a stage: the destruction and violence are contained. Not so with the Manet painting, where the carefully grounded Butte Chaillot, on which the viewers stand, contrasts with the city-view on the point of disintegrating in the strong light. The city is a panorama and like it, it is an ephemeral, illusory construct.

Thus, we could argue that the scopic drive is unstable. This emerges in the difficulty of maintaining the very gap between appearance and reality: the desire to see stands in tension with the drive to elide the reality aspect of what is perceived. This tension echoes in the mimetic processes discussed above, which operate as potential epistemological mechanisms, leading to either misrecognition or re-cognition. The idea of a dramatic representation provides a framework through which to filter and interpret events. Places as stages create the necessary illusion of unreality; they function as screens that project and reveal submerged psychological dimensions: fear of bestiality, entropy, cultural *épuisement*, and failure. Paris as a stage during the February events, the forest of Fontainebleau as a mirror and echo of Paris's turmoil, and Manet's Paris as panorama would correspond to Milner's phantasmagorical devices, which produce a revelation through the mediation of illusion (1983). Marville's *vieux Paris* is both stage and phantasmagorical device, hiding and revealing the processes of urban construction and deconstruction through its own recreation of Parisian spaces.

In Frédéric's fantasy of spectatorship, interaction is destabilising: collision with a shot man during the February upheavals plunges him into the midst of violence, and Rosannette's meeting with horned vipers in Fontainebleau reveals a dangerous side to their refuge. The fluidity and simultaneous perception of space can be maintained as long as Frédéric keeps his privileged position as observer, rather than participant. Technically, Flaubert's prose achieves

this by focusing on surface perceptions (details and impressions). Manet's contracted spaces are also an instance of surface treatment. By contrast, the shock of colliding with a falling body elicits Frédéric's anger and confusion, reactions appropriate to someone disturbed from watching a show or dream unfolding. Similarly, as long as they do not intervene within the scenery, the lovers experience the same delight that Frédéric derived from watching the revolution in Paris: 'Ils s'amusaient de tout' (357). Except that instead of fallen men or the cracked fountain from which blood flows with water, it is 'un écureuil sur les branches' or 'des trous pleins d'eau au milieu des pierres' (*Ibid.*): the dulled movement of falling bodies and the violence of the tainted flow have been replaced by animation and tranquil stillness. If Frédéric is an engaged spectator, Manet's figures seem more detached, to the point of denying the spectatorial stance, as the range of viewing positions reaches the extreme of non-viewing, with many turning their back on the famous view (for instance, the *amazone* and *gardes nationales*).

The experience of the capital in June complicates Frédéric's role as spectator and Paris as a stage, perhaps because, instead of contained places (Château d'Eau, boulevard des Capucines), the protagonist deals with spaces. As Frédéric crosses Paris, familiar places appear changed, becoming unfamiliar spaces, impinging on his cocooning stance: the 'Panthéon transformé en dépôt de cadavres,' the Jardin des Plantes on the right, 'une grande masse noire,' contrasted on the left by La Pitié, whose façade, 'éclairée à toutes ses fenêtres, flambait comme un incendie'; rue Saint-Victor 'toute sombre,' where the random 'cri, jeté au milieu du silence, prolongeait comme la répercussion d'une pierre tombant dans un abîme' (365). Although remaining apparently oblivious or unmoved by the violence around him, Frédéric's selective perception is counterbalanced by a plethora of topographic details which push the conflict towards him. The meticulously recorded itinerary subtly signals that Frédéric intersects all the landmarks of the revolution. There is no more question of entertainment, replaced now by growing angst, produced by the space itself: the stage is no longer well-lit and framed as in the representation of the February events. Rather, the scopic drive is nourished by the limited perspective, the impairment of the senses, and the hypersensitivity it produces:

un battement de pas lourds s'approchait. C'était une patrouille de cent hommes au moins; des chuchotements, de vagues cliquetis de fer s'échappaient de cette masse confuse; et, s'éloignant avec un balancement rythmique, elle se fondait dans l'obscurité. (365)

Working with subtle levels of perspective and figuration, Flaubert creates a synaesthetic representation, transcending here-and-now subjectivity. The material dimension overwhelms the senses even as it remains ambiguous, indeterminate: from the tactile-auditory 'battement de pas lourds' to the visual-auditory 'balancement rythmique,' the information conveyed is minimal and inconclusive. The patrol is never the subject of the passage, just another detail. Instead, the accumulation of impressions produces a disembodied figuration of something more than a military group: an unknown, dangerous force. Presenting first the immediate impression of objects or events postpones their decoding through the narrator's interpretive description. This technique implies a gap between the effect on the viewer and the source or object of this effect, as a consequence of which the reader only experiences the effect. This recalls the Impressionists' mode of translating the transition process from sensation to perception. Here though, Flaubert passes from perception to cognition, but the latter remains without consequence and cannot be integrated to produce an adequate assessment of the situation. Compare Manet's defigured depiction, which removes entirely the figures from the possibility of consuming a conventional representation of the city and Exhibition. The composition translates solely the effects of light, colour and texture on perception, without passing beyond this stage to produce an integrated vision of the Exhibition, grounded within the topography of Paris. Knowledge is, again, withheld.

Flaubert configured space by minutely registering only the sensory effects of the threat of bloodshed. Conversely, Marville overcrowds the visual field with text that conceals imminent demolition. The photographer takes up the trope of Paris as a city of signs, where every surface and stone can be deciphered and read, and integrates within this image the very idea of its destruction. In *Place Saint-André-des-Arts* (1865-68) (Fig. 9), the blind walls in the middle ground are plastered with numerous peeling advertisements that vie for the viewer's attention. The photograph draws the gaze in multiple directions, both towards the posters and towards other spaces opening, for instance, in the left corner of the street. This is due to a triangular composition that orients the gaze along a diagonal, from the lower right angle to the upper left. Alternatively, the gaze can enter the image from the lower left corner and travel to the middle ground, which offers a parallel opening. Asymmetric and de-centred (like *Rue Constantine*), the photograph plays on emptiness and crowded surfaces. The first aspect is illustrated by the vast empty space in the foreground and the dark opening of the street in the middle ground to the left. If the first feature is markedly horizontal, crowdedness, on the other

hand, occupies the vertical axis, with text invading every available surface of the buildings on both sides, following the same right-to-left diagonal line of vision.

By contrast, *Rue Saint-Jacques* (1865-68) (Fig. 10) adopts a vertical composition and a narrower framing, although spatial depth is impressively exploited here as well, first through the opening to the left and then through the far-reaching view of the street stretching in front of the viewer as far as the eye can see. *Rue Saint-Jacques* seems entirely dedicated to advertisements, almost like a page out of an illustrated newspaper, as one of the posters announces without frills: *Presse Illustrée!*. Actually, from *Le Magicien de la barrière d'Enfer – Grand roman historique inédit de Clémence Robert – Le Passe Temps* to *Cosaques à Paris*, numerous advertisements and *enseignes* have to do with the world of publishing, as borne out by a peeling *affiche* with *Papiers* written large and the *enseigne* for *Imagerie: Estampes, Papeterie. Dépôt de fabriques de Metz et d'Epinal*. And then all the products and services advertised, including the unmissable *parapluie réductible américain de poche* complement the wealth of heterogeneous wares spilling out onto the sidewalk and propped against walls. A similar abundance beckoning in *Place Saint-André-des-Arts* emphasises services and goods, from the competing *Rue Larrey Bains d'eau à 40 c* and *27 Rue M le Prince Bains de Vapeur, Bains Russes, Douches* to the *Lits et Fauteuils Mécaniques pour Malades et Blessés* or the *Entrepôt de Verrerie, Porcelaine, Cristaux, Papiers Peints*. In both photographs, competing texts, fonts, symbols, and goods obscure the smaller messages conveyed in the same code: in *Rue Saint-Jacques*, the buildings on the right side have already started to disappear, as denoted by the fence which supports an odd array of objects and behind which rises an improvised construction, seemingly assembled from recovered materials. All of these right-side edifices would disappear by 1878. Meanwhile lost among the scripts of *Place Saint-André-des-Arts*, is the notice *Déménagements*, distinguishable on one of three carts. Here too, the place's busy existence is revealed to be coming to an end.

Marville's and Flaubert's stage-like places fuelled and frustrated the illusion of distance and knowledge by recording sensorial, material details indiscriminately. This resonates with Flaubert's tenet that painting should not interpret and his own literary strategies to produce open-ended representations that blur the line between a history of sentiments and events. Similar processes occur in Manet's treatment of Paris in *L'Exposition Universelle*, where the multiple angles, modes and devices used to apprehend the same urban landscape infer the production of different views, none of which is definitive, in all of which the city remains indefinite. Shaped by contradictory forces of objectivity and subjectivity, vision is hybrid,

merging the mastery of the gaze and the spatially-limited eye. Moreover, in Flaubert, by eliding causality, the objects depicted 'rayonnent, vibrent, résonnent': 'c'est parce qu'elle n'a pas de contrainte dans les systèmes explicatifs rationnels que [la chose sans pourquoi] peut préserver tout son potentiel imaginal' (Vouilloux 2010:184-85). The undefined and indeterminate eschew overdescription, which would amount to interpreting: 'Il y eut un énorme hurlement, puis rien. Au bord du baquet, quelque chose de blanc était resté' (369). This ambiguous pictorial detail in the episode of Father Roque's murderous gesture leaves no room for ambiguity. By comparison, Manet uses the same motif of the undefined pictorial *tache* to figure Parisian topography as an indeterminate yet undeniably recognisable presence. Although the dissolute representation of the city can be ascribed to the unfinished state of Manet's Exhibition painting, this is not a singular instance in his treatment of Paris. *L'Enterrement à la Glacière* (Fig. 11), from the same year, exhibits similar characteristics: the urban landscape occupies a sketchy middle ground, while figures forming a cortège amid the dark-green foliage populate a well-defined, albeit difficult to read, foreground. Moreover, the composition offers the same horizontal format, juxtaposing different planes to create an effect of flatness, which we have encountered in Marville's *Passage Saint-Benoit* and in Flaubert's depiction of Paris in February, structured around the indiscriminate juxtaposition of fragmentary images and details.

Against a tormented sky in blue and grey tones, the silhouettes of domes, steeples and towers outline a steep, broken horizon line, reminiscent of Marville's isolated building on the fringes of the wasteland on the Buttes-Chaumont site. The break in the clouds creates a stage-like effect where dramatic lightning picks out the details of the Panthéon dome to the right and reveals the figures in the procession. As a result, the former is cast as a background décor for the latter. The architectural detail's specificity contrasts with the broken brushstrokes that texture the middle ground through indeterminate impasto patches of white, grey, ochre, and green to minimally suggest built structures and vegetation. Manet's urban view juxtaposes two instances of what Vouilloux called vibration, in the detailed outlines and vague brushstrokes. The former is tense, articulating the abrupt profile of the upper register and manipulating the buildings' position to bring them closer to the foreground, just as in *Vue de l'Exposition Universelle*, while one dark shadow brings out their unity as part of the same urban fabric. The other vibration is expansive and dissonant, made up by the light mass of colour



interspersed with dark regions, notably in the centre mid-ground.<sup>20</sup> This functions in the same manner as Flaubert's undefined 'quelque chose de'. The result is an impression of the city receding, disintegrating or already effaced: while the outline still indicates a Parisian horizon, the urban fabric is reduced to visual noise, somehow reminiscent of Flaubert's synaesthetic description. This noisy absence, however, enfolds the scene, cupping it protectively, shadowing the procession, even as its imprint remains minimal—suggestive light-colour sketches in the green landscape. The city's ambivalent presence—absence echoes in the subject of the painting, most often considered as referring to Baudelaire's funeral, although no clue in the composition confirms this.

Marville's photography attests to an inverse vision, creating ambiguity precisely through overabundance in hyper-detailed compositions. In this sense, images can be read in light of the Barthesian *punctum*, alongside Flaubert's pictorial effects and odd-detail highlights figuring the February nighttime walks through revolutionary Paris, where, despite the claims to objectivity and rigorous structure,

la ligne d'écriture laisse se détacher le *punctum* sensoriel, les grands rythmes romanesques se fragmentent, le lien, ou le liant, narratif ou discursif semble se dissoudre dans la pulvérisation des notations, un mot que le langage critique de l'époque associe souvent aux impressions. (Vouilloux 2010: 208)

The comment could equally apply to Marville, given his penchant for framing fragments – of streets, buildings, advertisements, *enseignes: le morceau, l'étude* substitute the *tableau*. Manet employs a comparable strategy, often recycling fragments from different compositions, whether through literal cut-outs or the reuse of figures in different images (Miura 2010). Perhaps we can identify this at work in the two paintings discussed, in the recurrent National Guard figure.

Whether they opt for strategies foregrounding a shattered cityscape of visual and narrative ruins, or for an *avant-la-lettre* installation, articulating a polyphonic and disjointed performance, where the space as stage opens onto the oneiric topography of *le vieux Paris*, the city of signs or a working site, the media discussed in this chapter transpose the experience of Paris perched between disappearance and appearance. In the passage from experience to representation, the city becomes, to recycle Vouilloux's phrase, 'une affaire de vision' (2010: 184). Paris is a vision both in the sense of a subjective perception of space and as an unstable apparition, whose configuration constantly shifts and dissolves. The hyper-

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<sup>20</sup> Nancy Locke identifies here the Frères Durand tannery (2000: 71).

reality or fluidity of this geography obscures and reveals by turns the abysses of violence, emptiness, erasure and alienation left behind by the gaping topography of a divided Paris.

## Chapter III

### Whose Ruins?

#### 'Plus d'un quartier va fondre': Haussmann and War

Paris *éventré*, its dark mazes surgically excised, and its body cut open by gashes that would become boulevards are emblematic images during the Second Empire. Paris burning is the symbolic image of the 1871 Commune, which prolonged and changed the nature of war on French soil, shattering the capital from within and without. Yet what happens when these images appear superimposed, following 1871, when the vestiges of war join demolition and construction sites, complicating the discourse on the ruin leitmotif? This chapter addresses literary and visual production at the beginning of the Third Republic, when Haussmannian and post-Commune ruins coexist. I discuss Zola's *La Curée* (1872) and Marville's albums *L'Hôtel de Ville* (1871) and *Percement de l'avenue de l'Opéra* (1877). Beyond the divergent forces that influence representations of post-war ruins, particularly important for this study is that such vestiges remain a topical subject throughout the following decades, indicating their relevance for the urban space and its inhabitants. Meanwhile, the ruins of Haussmannisation perpetuate themselves alongside those of the recent conflicts through ongoing demolition and construction in the 1870s.

The novel and albums constitute two forms of reflection on recent urban history, Haussmannisation and war, and can be read against each other to reveal the ruptures and continuities between imperial past and republican present. The coexistence of two types of vestige, Haussmannian and post-Commune, juxtaposes different periods, regimes, and urban configurations, giving rise to questions about erasure, preservation or reconstruction, and historical continuity. The completion and publication of *La Curée* after 1871 meant that it overlapped with the war-torn city, dealing with reconstruction and the problematic effacement or preservation of the traces of conflict.<sup>1</sup> The urban transformations it depicted would have been read in light of the aftermath of 1871, against a background comprising the fall of the Second Empire and the destruction of war.<sup>2</sup> The novel would have resonated with both the

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<sup>1</sup> *La Curée* appeared first in *feuilleton* form in *La Cloche*, from 29 September to 5 November 1871, when Louis Ulbach's publication was suspended (Mitterand 1968: 13). It was published as a novel in 1872.

<sup>2</sup> For the political undercurrent traversing the novel, see Jann Matlock (2011: 321-47).

damage of war, recorded in Marville's study *L'Hôtel de Ville* in 1871, and later with the demolition and construction in *Percement de l'avenue de l'Opéra*. Furthermore, despite the regime change, the prefect's fall from grace, and wartime devastation, the creation of new spaces following Haussmann's plans demonstrates a continuity in urban politics. I focus, thus, on aesthetic approaches to demolition and construction in times of peace by comparison to the destruction resulting from war. Do discourses, we might ask, register changing attitudes towards the fragmentary urban landscapes under different circumstances?

In both Zola and Marville, shattered spaces and eviscerated architecture reflect on the ruinous condition of the environment by exploring spatial and temporal permeability through instances of fluid time or space, and discontinuities between these dimensions. As a consequence, Paris appears to live in a temporary state, where ends and beginnings contaminate each other. Moreover, each type of vestige is associated with a particular experience, resulting in a different approach to its representation. Marville's photography illustrates the strategies for depicting the ravages of conflict through architecture, in contrast with the ruins of demolition, which convey the environment's spatiotemporal fluidity; again, note the emphases on place and space, respectively. Spatiotemporal blurring occurs in Zola's *La Curée* as well, first, in relation to the novel's context of production and publication, and second, in the manipulation of these coordinates for symbolic purposes. I consider the effects of the juxtaposition of war and demolition ruins on representations through the prism of contemporaneous concepts (nostalgia, theories of perception), scopic devices (panorama), and cultural references (Decadence).

### **Sensation, representation, impression**

The modes of perception, the construction and reading of visual and textual images attest to a sensibility towards the city that draws on a crystallised semantic field pertaining to ruins. This field exploits modern scopic modes (panoramas, Impressionist techniques) and inherited tropes (Biblical, antique, or teleological references). In photography for instance, Micheline Nilsen argues that representations of the Paris Siege and Commune rely on Academic conventions, 'promoting order and control out of the chaos' of war (2011: 70). This argument is worth developing because, if photography borrowed from painting different conventions, it also created its own set of compositional principles, adapted to the medium, while its use of painterly canons aimed at capturing the singularity of the sensory experience, thereby

transcending the normative conceptualisation of disaster in Academic painting. Additionally, photography delineated a specific exploitation of vestigial tropes in accordance with the singular nature of the subjects (modern ruins) and their context (destruction in internal and external conflict).

Photography and Zola's literary discourse share with Impressionism the attention to translating sensorial experience into representation. In this sense, Marianne Marcussen and Hilde Olrik argue that the writer and Impressionist painters follow the latest physiological, psychological, and chromatic theoretical developments, and, particularly relevant for this study, Hippolyte Taine's research on the relationship between perception and representation. According to Taine, in processing sensation into image, the cultural references of a particular semantic tradition already inflect the former (Marcussen, Olrik 1980:967-78). In *De l'intelligence* (1870), Taine summarises his theory in the metaphor of perception as an 'hallucination vraie'. Thus, while sensation translates an external fact, he argues that the very nature of vision deforms, since sensation is already part of a chain of ideas accumulated through experience (Taine 1870:280; Marcussen, Olrik 1980:967). Sensations and images are not isolated, but emerge in interdependence with the past.<sup>3</sup> Processing sensation involves first the immediate excitation of an image: a particular sensation triggers the revival (*résurrection*) of a particular image; this association based on similitude, in turn, awakens further images in a relation of contiguity. This leads Taine to conclude that optical sensation exists within a system of signs, just as words do. By analogy, sensation entertains a primary relationship with the referent based on denotation. Implicitly, when sensation is used as a signified, it activates its connotative dimension, forming the basis of representation. It can thus function similarly to metaphor and metonymy (Marcussen, Olrik 1980:975-76).

For aesthetic discourse, the implications of this theory are twofold: first, art divests itself of conventions of representation, to pursue a closer relationship with the referent, founded on sensation. Concomitantly, however, the translation of sensation into representation entails the former's integration within a symbolic system. In depictions of Parisian ruins, this relation between sensation and image means that the perception of fragmentary structures depends on cultural memory, from which also derives the vocabulary that articulates these into new images of ruins. If we think of Impressionism, the efforts to

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<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Bergson's notion of organic memory conceived of external stimuli and memory as interdependent components of present experience. For the relationship between Bergson's and Taine's writings, see Brown (1997: 276) and Peny (1996: 846).

recreate sensorial effects combine with references to other artworks, the semantic framework wherein the pictorial discourse exists (as in Manet's *Olympia*). Similarly, in 1871, to represent Parisian ruins, visual and textual discourses draw on references pertaining to calamitous urban demise, from Babylon to Pompeii: the reality of perception becomes embroiled with the art of citation. The autoreferential framework reveals a close relationship between photography and modern art in Marville's exploitation of the ruinous perspectives of the Hôtel de Ville.

Comparably, photography's concern to represent sensation in as direct a manner as possible becomes, in fact, the pursuit to depict convincingly 'what we *think* we see,' that is, an impression of sensation and perception. Thus, photography took into account the limitations of vision, including partial perception 'circumscribed by distance, atmosphere, luminance, and field of view' (Kingsley 2008: 78). In this light, the techniques and effects Impressionism borrowed from photography were often not just derived from the medium's limitations, but burgeoning conventions. For example, asymmetry, off-centre focus, deep-perspective foreshortening (see Manet's *Vue de l'Exposition Universelle en 1867*) and cropping in composition are characteristics of the photographic language of representing instantaneity (Scharf 1968). These are salient aspects in Marville's recreation of the experience of spaces under demolition in *Percement de l'avenue de l'Opéra*. Impressionist painting also conveyed spontaneity through broken brushwork, reproducing constantly mutating natural conditions and inspired by the blurriness of motion due to slow shutter speed in photography. Conversely, the impact of painting on photography is present in the technical manipulations and adaptations to create pictorial effects, as well as in borrowed codes of representation (for example, references to the Romantic ethos). Integrating experience within historical or aesthetic traditions endows it with an epic character, universalising it. I will return to this idea in the next chapter.

These practices resonate with Zola's experiments in recreating a particular environment: his Naturalism seeks to reproduce the perception and experience of bodies in space, while also exploiting conventions that inscribe each gesture within a semiotic framework. Ostentatiously accurate descriptions of space obscure Zola's 'combinaison de perception sélective et de manipulation d'ordre symbolique, qui démentent le masque du reportage impartial' (Martin 1993: 83). Reinforcing this idea, Henri Mitterand drew attention to the implicit relationship between image and symbol, particularly noticeable 'par le seul jeu des connotations lexicales, mais présents toujours derrière les mots. Le symbole naît avec la sensation, parce qu'il est dans les choses' (1968: 197). In this sense, for Taine, the image that

constitutes the basis of visual and literary representation can never be primary: it is always a 'resuscitated sensation,' implicitly, accompanied by a set of connotations (Marcussen, Olrik 1980: 973). This observation is significant for Impressionist techniques in literary representation, where impression is used 'to move aesthetic experience *from* the realm of sensuous perception, back toward that combination of [...] sense and thought always at work in the "aesthetic"' (Matz 2004: 50, original emphasis). Rather than bringing writing closer to visual sensation, impression makes 'experience conform to the structure of aesthetic imagination' (*Ibid.*). This highlights the abstract dimension of Impressionist elements in narrative—from Flaubert's stylisation of experience through a subjective filter and limited omniscience to Zola's *effet-de-réel* details enhancing the symbolic pattern of topography in *La Curée* and *La Débâcle*. While a particular semantic field imprints meanings that transcend purely descriptive spatial representation in *La Curée*, inversely, in photography, recurrent architectonic details create such a semantic register, whose references can support different discourses.

Yet what survives from the experience of sensation is 'la nuance précise de l'émotion,' thus, the feeling or impression produced (Taine 1870: 80). Building on this, although impression is recreated, it appears authentic, corresponding to a trace, hence a fragmentary, ruinous memento of lived experience, invested in a semantic system of representation. Photographic compositions or Zola's spaces would constitute, in Taine's terms, 'des simulacres, des fantômes' (*Ibid.*: 78). The first term endows visual and textual images with an object-like stance, external to the mind and eye that produced them, while the second disembodies them. Literally, we could ascribe the first term to photographs, which become simulacra of ruins, encoding the experience of such architectural structures in the urban environment. Meanwhile, the latter term, applied to Zola's spatial evocations, conjures fleeting impressions of familiar and uncanny sensations experienced by many in the generation contemporary with the author. Thus, these media recreate a shared experience through impressions.

Significantly, albums of Commune ruins appealed to a wider audience through their emphasis on the aesthetic dimension.<sup>4</sup> Here, building on Jesse Matz's observation, the aesthetic should be understood as combining sensory experience with a reflective stance. In

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<sup>4</sup> Daryl Lee argues that the focus on the aesthetic dimension of architectural remains displaced civil-war trauma (2002: 138).

this regard, the construction of images in Marville's album *L'Hôtel de Ville* illuminates the extent to which discourses used inherited tropes, such as the Classical and Romantic tradition of ruins, while their message remained conveniently ambivalent (Luxenberg 1998). It posits, moreover, photography preserving ruins and anticipating their disappearance, similarly to how Marville's Old Paris street-views function as forward-looking mementos that anticipate and precipitate demise. By comparison, Marville's album on demolition remained the domain of a specialised audience working on Paris (historians, topographers).<sup>5</sup> This does not deny the general public's engagement with Haussmannian demolitions, since these were chronicled through engravings after the same photographs by Marville and others, and published in journals, historical works, and guides.<sup>6</sup> Interest in the subject is also attested by Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames* (1883), which evokes these demolitions continuing throughout the night, employing electric lamps to complete the *percement* and levelling of Butte-des-Moulins. *Percement de l'Avenue de l'Opéra* offers a case study for exploring how photographic discourse maintains interest in the works in progress in the absence of the subject's inherent picturesque qualities.

### **Perspectives: nostalgia, panorama, palimpsest**

Ruins and their preservation, deliberate or fortuitous, are most often associated with nostalgia. In the context of representations of Parisian vestiges and their relation to this concept, it is useful to consider the investment and immersion in ruins not as a regressive practice, but one that bears directly on the future of the city and its inhabitants. In this light, we can read the concept of nostalgia not as a yearning for the past, but as a construct of origins, equally essential to identity. Nostalgia can be defined as an active creation of an image of the past whose function is to anchor identity. As an image, the origin of identity coincides, thus, with

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<sup>5</sup> Such photographic albums seem destined for public administration or specialised institutions, as the Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, which published Marville's *Percement de l'Avenue de l'Opéra* (1877) discussed here. In the Bibliothèque nationale de France catalogue, this album is the only version where the construction site is perceived from a sequence of angles, but its dating appears grossly misplaced (1862). It also includes an image of boulevard Henri IV, created in 1866. Archival work did not reveal who assembled the album (the ENPC published other albums by Marville), nor whether the dating is an archival error (Notice FRBNF38492646). However, other sources confirm the date as 1877: in the Carnavalet collections *Percement de l'avenue de l'Opéra: Butte-des-Moulins (de la rue Saint-Honoré)* and *Percement de l'avenue de l'Opéra: Chantier de la rue d'Argenteuil, près de la rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré*; the State Library of Victoria, Australia holds a copy of the latter, likewise dated 1877. Moreover, in *Avenue de l'Opéra du carrefour Saint-Augustin*, two posters in the background advertise Emile Richebourg's new *roman-feuilleton* *Andréa la Charmeuse* in the 23 January 1877 issue of *Le Petit Journal* (Gloaguen 2013: para. 5).

<sup>6</sup> *L'Illustration* published engravings after Marville's photographs on 24 February 1877.



the impression of a feeling, the trace of a sensation or perception evoked. It correlates with Taine's resurrected image, here, as a nostalgic image. Svetlana Boym conceptualises nostalgia as a reflective attitude, combining longing and critical thinking, in which 'shattered fragments of memories' do not inhibit 'compassion, judgment or critical reflection' (2001: 49-50). Building on this, Andreas Huyssen argues that this reflective stance allows us to perceive modern ruins as embodying the promise of alternative futures, while making visible the presence of decay:

Our imaginary of ruins can be read as a palimpsest of multiple historical events and representations, and the intense concern with ruins is a subset of the current privileging of memory and trauma. (2006: 8)

Although referring to twentieth-century ruins, Huyssen's observations are valid for the later nineteenth century. His question of 'the relation of the imaginary of ruins to urban preservation,' framed as 'an expression of fear or denial of ruination by time,' is equally relevant for the Haussmannian and war-torn Paris of the 1870s (see Chapter IV). Indeed, Zola's Parisian views may be said to function according to nostalgic principles, whereby, in evoking over two decades of images, he creates a palimpsest that weaves a predestined future for Paris.

In the later nineteenth century, the fascination for ruins is still nourished by the imaginary that had developed in relation to the vestiges of Antiquity. Following May 1871, the focus on Classical associations evoked by the shells of public buildings has been linked to a mode of escape from the trauma of recent events.<sup>7</sup> Yet these ruins excite different representations and attitudes in contemporaneous discourse. The present of modernity is not wholly obscured by the antique fantasy: modernity seeps into ruins, just as they inflect its narratives.<sup>8</sup> The shattered architectures are discontinuities in space, hence affecting time as well. As a consequence, they do not stand outside of time, and are thus unable to maintain for long a Classical fantasy, where the city is an antique site. One reason for this is that they are not anachronistic, but very much products of their time and constant presences throughout the mid-nineteenth century. This complicates their representations, notably when the urban landscapes in *La Curée* are created with one aim in mind (the politics behind Haussmann's transformation), yet emerge in the context of Paris's destruction, largely by its own inhabitants, during armed conflict.

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<sup>7</sup> See Lee (2002).

<sup>8</sup> See Gautier's *Tableaux de siège* (1871) in Chapter IV.

In 1869, Flaubert was finishing *L'Éducation sentimentale*, a work which looked back over two decades that had changed the values of a generation, from the political and social to the urban and aesthetic. Concomitantly, Zola was writing *La Curée* focusing on the aftermath of the coup d'état that discreetly marked the anti-climax of Flaubert's *livre sur rien*. It is noteworthy that these representations are retrospective and inflected by contemporaneous realities. The world of Flaubert was that of the Second Empire and of the trains that anachronistically took Frédéric and his mistress to Fontainebleau in June 1848. When Zola was writing, the speculation bubble of the Pereire brothers had burst and, by the time the novel appeared, the Second Empire had fallen, and the Franco-Prussian War and Commune had changed the face of Paris. Zola's portrayal of Paris eviscerated acquired a post-Haussmannian dimension following 1871, as wartime destruction fulfilled the apocalyptic comparisons of the prefect's *chantiers*. Thus, by conflating times and projects, Zola turned topographic restructuring into a system of signs codifying Second Empire politics and finances, and conceptualised a posteriori urban symbols, whose meaning had changed even as he was writing. Michael Wetherill argues, in this regard, that it is in the 'confrontation problématique des textes que la mouvance concrète de l'histoire se manifeste – surtout là où une faille majeure, 1815, 1848, démolitions de Paris, 1870, fait fi de la contiguïté chronologique':

à des degrés variables (ce qui constitue une complication de plus), les écrivains évoquent souvent un monde qui réunit les instances diverses du présent et du passé. Ainsi, des paysages urbains qui n'existent plus mêlent passé diégétique et présent de réécriture, passé documenté et conditions actuelles. (1993: 256)

Colette Wilson shows that Zola's *Le Ventre de Paris* 'depicts the relatively minor insurrection and political unrest of 1851 from the traumatised perspective of 1871' (2007: 141). *La Curée* too may echo the fires of 1871.

Nostalgia as a critical, palimpsestic practice shapes the vision of Paris in *La Curée*, where Saccard's manipulations of demolition projects parallel Zola's temporal manipulations to offer a synthetic image of the scale of disruption within the city – the upheaval is both economic and topographic. The chronology of Haussmann's interventions is modified to credit Saccard with some of the most scandalous real estate manoeuvres that graced the pages of journals throughout the two decades of systematisation. Thus, he is connected to the *percements* of avenue Joséphine (Marceau), approved for creation between 1854 and 1858, but finished after 1864; to the creation of rue de Rome, dated between 1859 and 1862, hence, coinciding with the novel's timeframe; and to the works surrounding butte Chaillot, which

however, took place in relation to the 1867 Universal Exhibition, beyond the timeline of the narrated events (see Chapter II). The synthesis achieved by imputing major speculation scandals to Saccard transforms him into a symbolic figure of Second Empire politics, caricature of the 'artiste démolisseur,' whose urbanistic policies are satirised in the image 'passer un boulevard sur le ventre d'un vieux quartier' (387).<sup>9</sup> Corresponding to major projects undertaken under Haussmann, each of Saccard's interventions is constructed according to a symbolic nucleus, outlining a new geography of Paris, rising mostly on the fringes of not-yet-annexed communes:

Rue de Rome, il fut mêlé à une étonnante histoire du trou qu'une compagnie creusa, pour transporter cinq ou six mille mètres cubes de terre et faire croire à des travaux gigantesques, et qu'on dut ensuite reboucher, en rapportant la terre de Saint-Ouen [...] Lui s'en tira la conscience nette, les poches pleines [...] À Chaillot, il aida à éventrer la butte, à la jeter dans un bas-fond, pour faire passer le boulevard qui va de l'Arc de Triomphe au pont de l'Alma. Du côté de Passy, ce fut lui qui eut l'idée de semer les déblais du Trocadéro sur le plateau, de sorte que la bonne terre se trouve aujourd'hui à deux mètres de profondeur, et que l'herbe elle-même refuse de pousser dans ces gravats. (416)

Rue de Rome is the pendant of, and parallel to, boulevard Malesherbes – epitome of the Second Empire, Saccard's fortune would be made during its construction (1854-61), which coincides with the plot's timeframe. Beyond the luxury conjured by these new spaces, the evocation of the works' magnitude is couched in negative images of holes dug up and filled in, suggesting an accumulation of pointless effort. This displacement of matter hides the vacuity of the urban upheaval, insinuating that it is a screen for unbridled swindling and speculation under imperial sanction. Thus, digging becomes a metaphor of the Second Empire's urban renewal as empty pretext, its hollowness subsequently concealed behind the homogenous façades. The play between literal and metaphorical senses becomes blurred as Saccard takes a hand in the creation of rue de Rome: the rubble removal is juxtaposed with the character filling his pockets, while holes in the budget and in the ground are patched up through external intervention that does not, however, cover the new expenses. The imagery of excavations and hollowness can also be read literally. Chaillot and Passy, part of the *seizième arrondissement* by the time the novel opens, yet not part of Paris at the time of Saccard's intervention (chapter II), were quarries, the same as Butte-Chaumont. As a consequence, galleries undermine the ground throughout, inferring the fragile foundations of the new avenue Joséphine emerging from the eviscerated butte Chaillot (Doniol 1902: 139).

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<sup>9</sup> Haussmann's auto-characterisation (1890: X).

The oscillation between *remblai* and *déblai* is a recurrent leitmotif, also foregrounded in Marville's *Percement de l'avenue de l'Opéra*, where materials from the demolition are recuperated (Fig. 1-2): Saccard 'courait des travaux de l'Arc de Triomphe à ceux du boulevard Saint-Michel, des déblais du boulevard Malesherbes aux remblais de Chaillot' (417). His presence on all the *chantiers*, where, from the rubble of demolition, he fills his pockets to finance the latest projects, suggests the contradictions of Haussmannisation as a destructive-constructive force (Parkhurst Ferguson 1997: 127). The movement reproduces prefectorial and imperial plans, earlier depicted through a metaphoric structure: 'l'intérêt que l'Empire avait à la danse des écus, à ces déblais et à ces remblais formidables' (391); for Zola, rubble equals money. Thus, impressions of the constant movement and transformation of urban matter become part of a network of economic exchange. The immobile capital (*l'immobilier*) becomes mobile, as rubble is moved from one place to another, switching from *déblai* to *remblai*. If the foundation of construction is destruction, the process also appears sterile, as suggested by the image of *gravats* at Trocadéro, where nothing grows. Aridity would take a literal meaning on Haussmann's famously treeless avenue de l'Opéra. Moreover, Trocadéro is notorious for a series of failed construction projects throughout the nineteenth century. Suddenly, a new meaning undercuts *Vue de l'Exposition Universelle de 1867*, where strong complementary colours (red and green) contrast with the non-colour of arid gravel paths: Manet's gardener strives to keep the vegetation alive.

Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson and Jann Matlock posit the association between the desolation of half-demolished buildings, 'terrains vagues,' eroded topography, and upended daily reality with a warzone (1997: 581-82; 2011: 328-30). Saccard's name also evokes notions of robbing and looting (from the Italian *saccardo*, robber, looter, or the French 'mettre à sac,' 'saccager') in accordance with the strategy of making him an emblem of Second Empire corruption. Additionally, it suggests the image of the carrion bird preying on bodies on a battlefield (Zola recurrently associates his character with a bird of prey). The sacking of Paris in times of peace changes meaning after 1871, when rubble not only continued to be recycled as *remblai* and building material, but also marketed as a memento of conflict. Moreover, in 1871-1872, despite the regime change, Haussmannian urban projects follow their course, more urgent than ever, complementing reconstruction in the wake of 1870-1871. Zola's novel is as much about the Second Empire as it is about the troubled period succeeding it.

We shall examine two episodes, the panorama from Montmartre in the second chapter and the journey through the demolitions for the creation of boulevard du Prince-Eugène in the

last chapter. The Montmartre episode correlates panoramic modes of vision with the motif of the urban body. In contemporaneous discourses, both imply a systematic analysis of the subject's component parts and their functioning, as in Maxime du Camp's monograph *Paris, ses organes, ses fonctions et sa vie* (1869-75), amounting to a metaphorical dissection or taxonomy, as writers or artists take apart and classify the characteristics of streets, neighbourhoods, and *arrondissements*.<sup>10</sup> In each case, writing the dissected city translates an aspiration to in-depth knowledge that subsumes understanding and mastery of the urban system. Domination characterises the concept of panorama in relation to space. The term originally referred to an immersive spatial and visual illusion where the eye could take in all at once, or almost so, the scene represented on a cylindrical surface. This 'round gaze' posits the centrality of the viewer and the mastery of the horizon (Comment 1999: 140-41). Through metonymy and analogy, the panorama came to signify a vast open space perceived from a high point, which, in the context of Zola's projects (*Les Rougon-Macquart*, *Le Roman expérimental*), becomes a device for distilling reality into a synthetic all-encompassing representation, in accordance with the etymology of the word (Lumbroso 1999: 17-19). Beyond the elevated perspective, made famous by Balzac's Père-Lachaise scene and re-imagined in the Montmartre episode, Olivier Lumbroso cites Zola's dynamic views, constructed following the roving eye or viewer's movement ('déroulement'). Zola's panoramas take into account compositional patterns, structuring views in *templa*, plans or alignments, and the position from which topography is perceived, simulating omniscience or the human gaze. In addition to the structural dimension, a semiotic level ascribes didactic, poetic, and symbolic functions to his panoramas (*Ibid.*: 20).

A panorama promises scopic mastery over a static space. Yet the Montmartre panorama disregards this condition by superimposing different images of Paris, mixing discourses and perspectives. Diegetically, the panorama is constructed through Saccard's roving gaze, methodically mapping the city from left to right (a *templa* layout). However, his gaze is doubled by that of Angèle. Furthermore, stylistically, several images of the city become conflated, blurring different times and states, thus, creating something closer to a diorama: Paris is illuminated in its different embodiments—picturesque, pictorial, literary, pre-Haussmannian, Haussmannian. This creates a temporally dynamic vision of space. The city

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<sup>10</sup> Urban histories and physiognomies involve both human- and street-types (see Balzac's *rues honteuses*). The latter tradition goes back to the Middle Ages – see Guillot's *Dit des Rues de Paris* in the thirteenth century or Gilles Corrozet's 1532 *La Fleur des Antiquitez de la Noble et Triumphant Ville et Cité de Paris*, both reedited in the nineteenth century.

Angèle and Saccard behold in 1853 conforms to post-Romantic and Impressionist tropes of Paris gently enveloped in bluish fog, an 'océan de maisons' and 'mer vivante et pullulante' (387) reminiscent of Baudelaire's 'Paysage', 'Rêve parisien,' or 'Moesta et errabunda' ('noir océan de l'immonde cité').<sup>11</sup> The indeterminacy of grey areas and the movement of anonymous life reinforce the image's dynamism. Personified, the slumbering giant ('géant couché') recalls Balzac's 'monstre délicieux: 'ce grand innocent de Paris' 's'alanguissait' and soon 's'endort doucement' (388). The epithets evoke pastel tones, echoing at once the peaceful rest ('doucement') and gentleness of the beast that is Paris: the weakening '-âtre' suffix in 'toits bleuâtres,' the 'gris doux et tendre,' 'brume légère' and 'poussière d'or' dissolve the outlines of the city in an Impressionist 'atmosphère colorée' à la Monet.

At a meta-narrative level, this is an instance of recycling pictorial and literary tropes, which functions similarly to Taine's *sensation ressuscitée*. That is, in order to translate what the characters sense and perceive, the gaze appeals to different forms of representation, which are then adapted to the current situation. Significantly though, the cultural references are not necessarily contemporaneous with the characters, but would likely speak eloquently to Zola's audience. This idea is supported by Wilson's argument that Zola 'depicts the city as a topographical palimpsest or archive of the past [...] filtered through collective myths and memories and subject to his own imaginative sensibility' (2007: 132). Vision is thus shaped by accumulated experience and its distinctly retrospective character identifies it with Zola's. The result is a view oscillating between Paris in the 1850s and its late-1860s transformation.

Indeed, over this collage-panorama, which articulated Parisian space by referencing literary, poetic and pictorial modes of representation, is inscribed another panorama, of Haussmannian Paris in the making, another dynamic view, created through multiple perspectives. As Lewis Kamm notes, 'the perception of space varies from one moment to the next, from one observer to the next, and we find Zola multiplying the forms of relief, modifying the angle of vision, superposing successive aspects of space' (1975: 231). In the game of multiple perspectives, Saccard's vision of Paris emerges through direct speech, in bellicose, strategic terms that mingle with bloodthirsty excitement. Secondly, his images of destruction are echoed by the narrator: from 'l'armée de pioches [...] attaquera' and 'les tronçons agoniseront dans le plâtre' to the 'entailles [...] crevant Paris d'un bout à l'autre, brisant les poutres, écrasant les moellons, laissant derrière [...] de longues et affreuses

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<sup>11</sup> For Zola's aquatic metaphors in relation to the city, see Borie (1971).

blessures de murs croulants' (388-89). Thirdly, Angèle internalises her husband's gaze and projects the violence of demolition, looking upon Paris through the tinted lens of future destruction, so that what was previously blurry and enveloped in shadow becomes ominous emptiness. Transferred onto the characters, the inherited representation is countered and transformed by two forms of visionary perception, Saccard's prophetic dream of urban spoliation and Angèle's sombre vision of murder and dismembering:

elle s'imaginait entendre, sous les ténèbres qui s'amassaient dans les creux, de lointains craquements, comme si la main de son mari eût réellement fait les entailles [...] crevant Paris d'un bout à l'autre, brisant les poutres, écrasant les moellons, laissant derrière elle de longues et affreuses blessures de murs croulants. (389)

Through the characters' gazes, the city's future spaces are retrospectively inserted within a symbolic framework, where Paris is predestined for violent destruction. This could be considered an instance of nostalgia constructing origins. The blurry areas and confused sounds of the city acquire a portentous signification as *creux* and *craquements* suggest gaping holes and the creaking of destabilised, toppling structures. The passage's rhythm reproduces this crumbling through the repetition of the harsh 'cr' sound in *creux*, *craquements*, *crevant*, *écrasant*, *croulants*. These effects evoke the auditory and visual impressions of demolition familiar to Parisians, corrupting the initial image of Paris as pictorial subject to spell the dissolution of the urban body. The accumulation of gerund verbs conveys the violent crush of bodies, while the technical or medical *entaille* associated with *crevant*, and the metaphor 'longues et affreuses blessures' reinforce the vision of Paris as a victim.

Thus, the characters' perception transforms the Balzacian, Baudelairean, and Impressionist images which play on organicity and fluidity, by overwriting another register, whose terms revolve around the semantic field of 'cut,' pointing towards violent dissolution: *coupé*, *tranchante*, *coutelas*, *trouera*, *entaille*, *haché à coups de sabre*, *coupait*, *hachaient*, *couteau vivant*, *écrasant*, *brisant*, *déchirait*. The language pertaining to surgery (on a living body) turns to butchery (on dead flesh): 'on a coupé Paris en quatre...' (389). On its own, Saccard's verbal iteration is laconic and ambiguous, an impersonal observation. However, the narrator doubles and expands this through the visual image 'de sa main étendue, ouverte et tranchante comme un coutelas, il fit signe de séparer la ville en quatre parts' (389). Saccard's gesture appropriates and re-enacts the process of urban restructuring, representing the intervention as an aggression. Symbolically, the gaze and gesture engrave Haussmann's vision by superimposing onto the current landscape a virtual topography, planned along principles of unity and directness: the panorama of Paris becomes a cartographic projection (*quatre parts*).

Following the *templa* pattern, Saccard's gaze takes in the view to the left, passing beyond the Colonne de Vendôme and Madeleine, to project the future boulevard Malesherbes and the luxury districts bordering Plaine Monceau:

Ici, plus à droite, voilà la Madeleine... Un beau quartier, où il y a beaucoup à faire... Ah! cette fois, tout va brûler! Vois-tu?... On dirait que le quartier bout dans l'alambic de quelque chimiste. (388)

The rhetorical question both identifies a particular space and envisions something as yet unseen. The image of the alchemist's *alambic* reveals the perception of the neighbourhood as devised after a formula and grown in the Haussmannian laboratory, rather than an organic development.

The idea of a formula that transforms the city recurs as Saccard underscores his prediction: 'Oui, oui, j'ai bien dit, plus d'un quartier va fondre' (388). The image can allude to the seemingly supernatural feat in which neighbourhoods were razed and erected almost overnight through the sustained efforts of numerous teams working day and night. This suggests, again, an alchemical metamorphosis, where elements dissolve, lose identity, and are distilled into a different substance with new properties. Indeed, as shown by the Chaillot transformations and Marville's photographs which foreground the recycling of demolition material (Fig. 2), the debris of the old layout serves in the construction of the new. Furthermore, the apparently magical transformation may recall the speculation manoeuvres exposed by Jules Ferry's *Les Comptes fantastiques d'Haussmann* (1869), this time suggesting an illusionist's *tour de main*, a play on surface and appearance. Zola later explored the disjunction between surface and the reality behind it in *Pot-Bouille* (1883). The insistence on fire and melting (*brûler, fondre*) is noteworthy in light of the novel's post-Commune readership, since it seems to confirm the images of demolition associated with fear of destruction and fire. Zola's instance of reflective nostalgia inscribes the predestined destruction of Paris in the urban renovation project.

In accordance with the *templa* structure, Saccard turns his gaze to the right and maps the planned intervention on the *rive droite*, where the *grande croisée* would frame the Louvre and Hôtel de Ville between large avenues. Angèle, dining on the heights of Montmartre in 1853, distinguishes the first section of rue de Rivoli (1853-54): 'Tu veux parler de la rue de Rivoli et du nouveau boulevard que l'on perce?' (389). The new thoroughfare, nameless for Angèle, would become boulevard de Sébastopol (1854-58), later connected with boulevard de Strasbourg. Saccard identifies this unfinished landscape as the 'grande croisée' (389), which



runs east to west (rue de Rivoli, completed in 1854-55 and united with rue Saint-Antoine in 1856), and north to south (the two boulevards, and later boulevard Saint-Michel, 1855-56, 1859). Beyond identifying these spaces, Saccard maps out additional cuts that transform the panorama into Haussmann's vision:

Le second réseau trouera la ville de toutes parts [...] Les tronçons agoniseront dans le plâtre. Du boulevard du Temple à la barrière du Trône, une entaille; puis de ce côté, une autre entaille, de la Madeleine à la plaine Monceau; et une troisième entaille dans ce sens, une autre dans celui-ci, une entaille là, une entaille plus loin, des entailles partout. Paris haché à coups de sabre, les veines ouvertes, nourrissant cent mille terrassiers et maçons, traversé par d'admirables voies stratégiques qui mettront les forts au cœur des vieux quartiers. (389)

Saccard's discourse insists on *entaille*, repeated almost compulsively, in rapid succession. According to the 1866 Larousse, its meanings include 'endroit évidé d'un objet, dans lequel on a incisé et enlevé une partie de la matière; blessure, incision faite sur le corps; chir. Scarification profonde, destinée à produire un dégorgement' and its derivatives *entaillé*, 'pratiqué, taillé dans la masse' (VII: 628-29). The prose registers the escalation of violence through images that incorporate *entaille* as the excision of matter (surgical and technical) and scarring of surfaces. While one sense refers to an engraving technique (etching), the secondary sense evokes both the scarring of bodies (here, the city's) and, metaphorically, a form of writing that, again, infers the erasure and re-writing of topography. The future panorama created through *entailles* excites Saccard's imagination into compulsive violence towards the city, culminating with 'Paris soûlé et assommé' (390). This portrait caricatures Haussmann's forceful promotion of urban change and impenitent vision of order, geometry, and the straight line. Additionally, read in light of the recent events, the passage would have evoked the blood and fire associated with civil war, inscribing in the past the signs of Paris's undoing.

Already in motion, the process of urban mutation appeared dimmed by the crepuscular light and fog, but Saccard's words and gestures operate an incisive shift in perspective. The cuts become visible and the virtual plan of the new Paris reconfigures the panoramic view. What he perceives is not Paris as it is, but the city shaped by future spaces. Through metonymy and metaphor, the hand as a knife encapsulates the image of Haussmann eviscerating the capital:

Sa main sèche et nerveuse coupait toujours dans le vide. Angèle avait un léger frisson, devant ce couteau vivant, ces doigts de fer qui hachaient sans pitié l'amas sans bornes des toits sombres. (389)

The relationship between living matter (organic Paris, Saccard's hand) and the instrument of death develops: the metaphors 'couteau vivant' and 'doigts de fer' hybridise Saccard into a killing machine, suggested by the mechanical quality of the cutting hand. Moreover, the epithets 'sèche et nerveuse' create a sense of cold detachment, professionalism and either obsession or dedication, whereby the portrait hovers between a surgeon's and a criminal's. Saccard's gestures, repeating the *perceptions* already undertaken, and predicting subsequent ones frame the city seen from Montmartre into a panorama of Haussmannian Paris. The spaces conjured by these gestures function similarly to Taine's 'simulacres' and 'fantômes'. For readers, they would revive the impressions and discourses associated with 'Paris éventré,' but within the novel's chronotope they correspond to premonitions. As Saccard overwrites a different panorama onto the Paris of the early 1850s, Zola constructs a view made up of absences: the projected reorganisation literally carves out chunks of the city.

These temporal distortions function more broadly in the novel, imposing a symbolic structure onto Paris's spatial transformation. In 1869, Zola conceives of Paris crumbling under Haussmann's hand as a symbol of the pernicious works of the Second Empire, itself destined for destruction. This fatalistic sense seems to reproduce a universal principle within Zola's overarching project – the cyclicity of history and the idea of destiny (as heredity) appear in the preface to *La Fortune des Rougon*: 'la chute des Bonaparte, dont j'avais besoin comme artiste, et que toujours je trouvais fatalement au bout du drame' (1871:3). From dynastic perpetuation to political edifices, in every attempt at renewal and dream of magnificence resides the germ of downfall: the creation of modern Paris seems haunted by the trope of the fall of Empires, avatar of the wheel of Fortune, going back to *Ecclesiastes* and embodied in Volney's *Les Ruines* (1791). This circular construction also structures *La Curée*, as Saccard's predictions from Montmartre find their accomplishment at the end of the novel, when he walks among the ruins of the future boulevard du Prince-Eugène. The idea of death inscribed in the project of urban renewal can be read in relation to the aesthetics of Decadence, as part of the language of modernity.<sup>12</sup>

Arguably, in a comparable manner, the strong aestheticism in representations of the

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<sup>12</sup> Second Empire parallels with the Latin Decadence echo in cultural production throughout the century from Désiré Nisard's disparaging comparison of Romantic poetry (1834) to Balzac's and Gautier's images of Paris as the new Nineveh, Babylon and Rome, Sainte-Beuve's criticism of *Salammbô*'s decadent Latin style, and Baudelaire's claim of appropriating 'la langue de la dernière décadence latine' in 'Franciscae meae Laudes' (1857). The modern ethos embraced and feared this analogy. Depravity, hypersensitivity and aestheticism marked both the decline of (French) civilisation and the superiority of its art, and translated the passions of the modern age for Baudelaire, the Goncourts, Zola, Mallarmé, and Huysmans (Stephan 1974: 13-30; Carter 1958).

ruins of civil war should be understood as a manifestation of this decadent component of the discourses of modernity. Tourism and relic collection in ruined Paris, which seemed at once to obscure and exacerbate human loss, should also be read in light of the assumed suffering and morbidity wherein coexist the will to remember and the will to exorcise this violence, characteristics of nostalgia (see Huyssen 2006: 8).<sup>13</sup> While there is an undeniable political *parti pris* in the creation of many representations, an album such as Marville's *L'Hôtel de Ville* attests to a morbid taste for decay and a symptomatic fascination for the incomprehensible spatial configuration and architecture produced by ruins. Where the former points to the decadent, the latter aspect ties in with the recent urban experience of voyeuristic spectatorship of intimate spaces exposed by demolition.

The album exhibits a concentric chiasmic structure, alternating exterior and interior, whole and ruinous structures in eighteen images. The first three present the exterior façade whole, the next three in ruins, followed by ten views of the collapsed interior and two preceding the fire. As with the Château Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the other Renaissance edifice whose renovation Marville chronicled in 1862, the photographs of destruction have a strong documentary dimension, but the lack of captions renders this secondary.<sup>14</sup> Due to this absence, discourse is construed through the parallelism of images, almost as in a musical arch form, which draws on memory, variation, and repetition. The images move at once in space and time capturing the building's exterior through wide-angle views from different points, although without creating a veritable panorama, before entering inside. Thus, the first exterior view reproduces Matthias Merian le Vieux's engraving after a drawing by Claude Chastillon, *Portrait du Magnifique Bastiment de la maison de ville de Paris* (Fig. 3), which offers indications about the landmarks, watermills, canons, and the place where the Saint-Jean bonfire was held. The celebratory holocaust on Place de Grève that also hosted executions would have acquired a different resonance following the Commune fires, and the artillery was likely to recall the defence of the barricades surrounding the building.

Meanwhile, Marville's photograph from 1865 updates the building's image to the modern age (Fig. 4). In 1871, the photographer composed the view of the crumbling ruin from

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<sup>13</sup> Images of the Commune ruins have been read in relation to social and political discourse, and to coping with post-war trauma (Tillier 2004; Wilson 2007; Boime 2007, 1997). See Chapter IV.

<sup>14</sup> During the Hôtel de Ville's reconstruction (1873-82), architects drew heavily on the work of the photographers who had stormed its ruins, as well as those of other public edifices in the wake of the fires. Moreover, the destruction led to the disappearance of the library which held temporarily Marville's photographs of Old Paris. This loss would trigger his offer to reprint the images from the glass negatives in his possession.

the same angle, presenting a diagonal view of the Renaissance façade, filling the frame (Fig. 5). In the context of his work, the gesture goes beyond ideologically charged readings of before-and-after Commune antitheses to reflect an urban aesthesis, since Marville had been consistently revisiting subjects, capturing the sites' specific atmosphere in different states of existence, as part of a contemporaneous practice (Mondenard 2013:159). Because the constraining photographic frame could not incorporate contextual information like the engraving, the album recreates the building's imprint in space through views from three sides, including a photograph of the façade from the new avenue Victoria, hence updating the surrounding urban tissue to its contemporaneous state.<sup>15</sup> Mirroring the modern and whole edifice is a modern ruinous vision, complemented by two contextual photographs showing the destroyed Hôtel de Ville from rue de Rivoli and from Pont d'Arcole.<sup>16</sup>

From this point on, the album documents the interior, now open to the elements, foregrounding the aesthetic dimension of architecture and the exploration of space, which the confined environment encouraged through unexpected apertures and limited vistas. One of the photographs (Fig. 6a) shows rows of window-frames continuously opening into other spaces. Reduced to their frames, these openings reveal the modular structure characteristic of Renaissance architecture, an aspect Marville would have been aware of through his education and work at the Château Saint-Germain-en-Laye. Yet here, Renaissance modularity complicates the ruin's status, since it allowed for the original building's extension in the nineteenth century. Is this then the vestige of a modern building or the modern ruin of the ancient town hall? Hippolyte Godde and Jean-Baptiste Lesueur enlarged the edifice between 1837 and 1846. First, they multiplied the articulation of the central module, corresponding to the Place de Grève façade (Thomson 1984: 76-77). Louis-Philippe's architects prolonged the heritage of the French Renaissance and Louis XIII, recognising in it a national style and the specificity of Marais architecture (Blanc, Duché 2013: 120). They added thus three wings in a pastiche style, with an extra level, doubling the semicircular arched windows framed by pilasters (Fig. 6b). The extra level reveals the photographer's precarious position on the upper floor of a two-storied intermediary edifice overlooking the nineteenth-century Cour du Préfet and the façade of the new office building on rue de Rivoli.

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<sup>15</sup> The image inadvertently captures a fragment of N°4, an annexe that housed Paris's archives, notably parish and marriage records, and which the Communards deliberately burnt down in May 1871.

<sup>16</sup> Auguste Braquehais's *Siège de Paris* contains an identical image, in a slightly cropped format. I have been unable to determine if Braquehais's image was introduced in Marville's album or if both photographers used the same viewpoint. Braquehais has a pendant photograph from Pont d'Arcole, showing the Hôtel de Ville just before the fire, a unique occurrence in his album, where no other images show before-and-after states.

The original Renaissance arcade with recessed pedimented windows cited the façade of François I's Château de Madrid in the Bois de Boulogne (Thomson 1984: 76-77). Now, reduced to shells in Marville's photograph, the arched openings of the Neo-Renaissance nineteenth-century buildings become direct transpositions of the château's tiers of open arcades (Fig. 7). Marville deconstructs the Neo-Renaissance style, thereby operating a series of temporal, spatial, and aesthetic displacements. Like the choronotope in fiction, in the ruin, 'history appears spatialised and built space temporalised' (Huysen 2006: 13). The tiered arcades of the nineteenth-century façade open onto the perspective of the ruin of a Renaissance castle long-since demolished; they superimpose the vision of a Bois de Boulogne royal residence onto the site of municipal power at the heart of urban tissue. They blur past and present, centre and periphery, urban and extra-urban, and different poles of political power. The imaginary ruins of the sixteenth century come to haunt the contemporary dream of historical and architectural continuity and renovation, even as they reveal the modern framework of this fantasy. For the new wings of the Hôtel de Ville employ the choice material of modern engineering: iron. Victor Calliat and Leroux de Lincy's monograph on the new Hôtel de Ville celebrated the 'détails de construction du comble en fer' of the Galerie des fêtes (Fig. 8) (1844: Pl. XXVI). Marville's composition illustrates them in the exposed skeleton whose intricate filigree, untouched by fire, contrasts with the broken masonry on the floor (Fig. 9). Another view (Fig. 10) showcases the iron frame reinforcing the floors, used in construction since the 1840s (Lemoine 1980: 47). These ruins would not be associated with longing for the past. Rather, nostalgia here constitutes a reflective pause that allows for imaginary constructs of an alternative history, even as it emphasises the cyclical dimension of construction and destruction in a critical attitude towards both past and modern expressions.

### **Space, a matter of time**

Marville's exploration of the ruin's interior complements contemporaneous discourses confining the spectatorial gaze outside, on the fringes of crumbling buildings. This is the case in the avenue de l'Opéra album or the scenes of Saccard and his party among the rubble of the eviscerated neighbourhood between rues du Temple and Ménilmontant. Close framing in Fig. 6a and Fig. 11 reveals simultaneously the interior and exterior articulation of multiple edifices. The open arcades in Fig. 6a draw attention to the inside structure of the two-storied building, while the orders of pilasters frame the decorative exterior of the office-building

façade opposite. The open structure cancels the thresholds marking inside and outside, as in Fig. 11, where sectioned flights of stairs start and end abruptly, and entryways hover over empty space on the highest levels, all juxtaposed with the preserved rhythm of the Renaissance façade. If ruins make time and space visible, the modern and ancient remains of the Hôtel de Ville deform these dimensions, experimenting with environments that eschew Euclidean three-dimensionality. In fact, the burnt-out ruins are closer to the bidimensional cross-sections in Calliat's drawings (Fig. 6b). The *mise-en-scène* foregrounds the monumental and impossible: Classical elements and *médailleurs* with sculpted figures adjoin the absurd staircases over nothingness and ladders that rise out of rubble to give access to the galleries opened up by collapsed walls.

Marville's compositions seem to transpose the real vestiges into the fantastical spaces of the *Carceri*, where 'passages, staircases, and halls seem to disperse in all directions and lack spatial closure,' while 'Roman architectural elements such as arcades of columns, broad flights of stairs, large portrait busts, tomb sculptures, and Latin inscriptions fill Piranesi's vast jails down to their distant corners' (Huysen 2006: 16-17). Moreover, as in Piranesi's *Carceri*, these elements highlight the dynamics between ruin and incompleteness. The parallels with the architect and illustrator are significant given Marville's documentary work on Paris, including as an illustrator. Just as the impossible architectures are part of Piranesi's 'archival documentation of the architectural ruins of the Roman Empire,' traversing his career, reworked, and growing organically closer to the Roman vestiges, Marville's study of the Hôtel de Ville is integral to his research and critical reflection on the life and death of urban tissue (*Ibid.*: 14). This consciousness bespeaks a modern approach, where the ruin leitmotif puts into perspective historical evolution and temporal linearity. Here, this is achieved through the superimposition of perspectives created by broken structures that disrupt present time and space to offer instead the vision of alternative paths of development in history.

If spaces refuse closure in Piranesi, in Marville, they are often circumscribed by glimpses of modern whole façades. This complicates the fantasy of urban modernity qua Renaissance ruin, rendering equally indefinable the topography they occupy. However, Marville shares with Piranesi the emphasis on multiple simultaneous perspectives: propped ladders leading into dark galleries in Fig. 12, and arches, passageways, and stairs running into emptiness in Fig. 11 and 13 draw the gaze along different trajectories. The dynamic of a place in transition articulated through dislocated perspectives recalls the narrative of Flaubert's revolutionary Paris: there is no central focus or master narrative, only voids and fragments.

These conflicting perspectives create a space that the gaze cannot encompass, which cannot be mastered. Hence the reiteration ad infinitum of visual exploration: the gaze returns unceasingly, constantly roving and perpetually frustrated. This is another manner of eschewing closure, even as it entices the viewer to remain in this place: an open prison or labyrinth that again echoes Piranesi (Huysen 2006:18). It also anticipates the incomprehensible dream-spaces explored by the Surrealists.

Marville's photography shows the Hôtel de Ville concomitantly stripped of its palimpsestic accumulation of history and synthesising it into the surviving skeleton. Moreover, photography's two-dimensionality reinforces the analogy with the sketched profile that remains after the fire. Together, fire and photography induce a regression from built edifice to virtual imprint, akin to Calliat's section drawings. As a mnemonic device, since albums are commercialised as *souvenirs*, photographs thus further deform the spatial experience of ruins. Additionally, they are literally perceived by contemporaries as relics, doubling the collecting of debris, and, thus, setting the bidimensional image on a par with an object.<sup>17</sup> Within the frame of the photograph, ruins conjure Taine's *simulacres* and *fantômes* as war relics and visions of Paris qua Renaissance ruin. They entice an alternative retrospective image of time's damages and what survives modern achievements. The nostalgia triggered by ruins activates the 'consciousness of the transitoriness of all greatness and power, the warning of imperial hubris, and the remembrance of nature in all culture' (Huysen 2006: 13). For Paris, this revelation is attuned to different speeds of time. What distinguishes Commune ruins is their suddenness: destruction appears accelerated in the shells of public edifices. By contrast, the ruins of demolition and incomplete structures of *chantiers* were a constant feature of urban life. Furthermore, visual representations of war ruins bear more on public edifices, whereas depictions of Haussmannian projects record the impact on private life, affected by expropriation, demolition, and construction. As a consequence, in *L'Hôtel de Ville* the spatial exploration emphasises the aesthetic dimension: the architectural element stands unchallenged to articulate the narrative, as an embodiment of the city's power, abstract and impersonal. Instead, the human dimension disappears, with no personal trace surviving, so that the vestige cannot be appropriated and retains its status as collective symbol.

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<sup>17</sup> See Malvina Blanchecotte: 'Les photographes qui prennent des vues de nos misères vont sûrement faire fortune. On emportera sans doute – comme souvenir – bien des petites pierres volcaniques, tout ce qu'on pourra détacher en petits cailloux noirs; mais on ne manquera pas d'acheter la série des vues' (1996 [1871]: 291).

## Spectacular spaces

In antithesis, Marville's series on the construction of avenue de l'Opéra in 1876-1877 are squarely placed in the midst of transformation, as is Zola's episode of the demolitions for boulevard du Prince-Eugène. In these cases, the ruined environment engenders a more personal affective response, hence, a human dimension, partly due to the incidental survival of traces of ordinary life. Although post-dating the Second Empire's works, Marville's photographs document the *préfet's* legacy under the Third Republic through a project carried out after Haussmann's plans, under the supervision of Alphonse Alphand, his landscape engineer and *directeur des Travaux publics* from 1871.<sup>18</sup> The album is thus comparable in terms of depicting the stakes of the project to Zola's representation of expropriations and demolitions involving rues de la Pépinière, de Rome, boulevard Malesherbes, and rue Ménilmontant.

Firstly, Marville's captions, like Zola's panorama, point to future times and spaces, while the present site shows an unrecognisable geography. The future can only be divined. The spatiotemporal indication distinguishes this album from *L'Hôtel de Ville*, stuck in an indefinite present, condensing past and future in unidentified vistas and open spaces. Shalini Le Gall cites the Opéra series as particularly representative of the photographer's relationship to change, noting the emphasis on 'rubble, building fragments and dust' (2013: 57). The images bring to the fore the overwhelming scale of demolition in the constructive endeavour. Part of Marville's urban studies, just like *L'Hôtel de Ville*, they explore, this time from outside, the shattered intimacy of a neighbourhood, rather than the monumental collapse of a historical, political and architectural landmark.

Comparable to Zola's alternation between ground-level and elevated views, Marville develops a spatial strategy, this time, employing a ground-level perspective. The sequence of photographs recalls a diorama, revealing spatial articulation progressively: each frame shows a different section of the future avenue, and, implicitly, the undoing of the Butte-des-Moulins and Butte-Saint-Roch neighbourhoods, from different angles, each at an intersection. By reference to surrounding streets and its future identifier, Marville anchors topographically a

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<sup>18</sup> The avenue's plan and creation *décret* date from 15 November 1853 and 3 May 1854, but the *percement* necessitated three phases: its two ends, the future Place du Théâtre-Français (André Malraux), and rues de l'Echelle and Molière, were started in 1864 and 1867, but the middle and longest section, between rues de l'Echelle, Molière, and Louis-le-Grand, was completed in 1876. The Opéra project occupies Marville since the 1860s, when he photographed the streets that the *percement* would affect. Furthermore, he devoted two series to it, one pertaining to the building, the other to the avenue.



space otherwise fluid and undefined at the time. Simultaneously, each caption inscribes in filigree the future topography (avenue de l'Opéra) and the angle from which it is photographed, a particular place, street or crossroads that the new construction will affect. Thus, the first image, *Avenue de l'Opéra. Chantier de la Butte du Moulin et de la rue Saint-Roch* shows a view from the south-west taken somewhere in the middle section of the projected thoroughfare.<sup>19</sup> The second, *Avenue de l'Opéra. Chantier de la Butte du Moulin à la rue Saint-Honoré*, advances further south, close to rue Saint-Honoré, thus at the beginning of the avenue. The third, *Avenue de l'Opéra du carrefour Saint-Augustin*, moves north, towards the end of the avenue, in the direction of boulevard des Capucines. The fourth photograph, *Avenue de l'Opéra. Butte du Moulin à la rue d'Argenteuil*, offers a south-east position, about one quarter into the future avenue, between rues Saint-Honoré and Saint-Roch, looking from rue d'Argenteuil. The last view is again positioned closer to the avenue's end, looking towards rue Saint-Augustin: *Avenue de l'Opéra après le carrefour Saint-Augustin*. The oscillation south-west, south, north, south-east, north-west could suggest a 360°-view in keeping with a circular panorama. Nonetheless, Marville does not stand still, allowing only his gaze and camera to move. Rather, he maps the future topography by roving up and down those streets over which the avenue would impose its layout. By superposing the coordinates and street names onto a map, such as the Andriveau-Goujon Map of 1860 (Fig. 14), the images reveal a strategic inscription in space of the avenue, section by section. The process of mapping the avenue registers the implications of demolition and construction for this neighbourhood.

*L'Illustration*, with which Marville collaborated for many years, including in the creation of its frontispiece, published engravings after his photographs, giving views from each of the streets affected by the *percement* (24 February 1877). The journal caption for the second view in the album positions Marville in rue des Orties-Saint-Honoré, looking towards rue d'Argenteuil in the direction of rue Saint-Honoré. Thus, the photographer could be gazing across the remains of a complex of buildings that harboured a convent and Corneille's house (demolished in December 1876). Ahead, the wide empty space would have been until 1876 rue l'Evêque. Photographed in 1866, rue d'Argenteuil would not disappear, but its even numbers, on the right, were expropriated that same year and levelled in 1877 as part of a 'projet complémentaire pour l'assainissement et le nivellement de la Butte-des-Moulins'. The street would be levelled to the height of the two new thoroughfares, avenue de l'Opéra and rue

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<sup>19</sup> This does not necessarily reflect the order in which Marville did the mapping, only how the images were assembled in the album.

des Pyramides, and enlarged through 'l'ouverture d'une voie nouvelle de 20 mètres de largeur, entre l'avenue de l'Opéra et la rue Saint-Honoré, en prolongement de la rue des Pyramides' (Conseil municipal de Paris in Gloaguen 2014: para. 7).

The 1860s photographs focused on place, as did *L'Hôtel de Ville*, and only accidentally did they register human presence. In antithesis, in the 1870s images, which foreground space in transformation, the deliberate inclusion of people serves several purposes. Le Gall argues that their presence suggests the mastery of space in the chaos of demolition (2013: 37). But beyond illustrating the human impact on the environment, their fragility and diminutive size contrast with the monstrous, deformed ruins over which they swarm. Moreover, posing among the debris of several streets, they distil into representation the demolitions' effect on daily urban experience. If the streets of Old Paris spoke for themselves regarding human activity, as wares, advertisements, and *enseignes* hinted at industry and prosperity or dilapidation and decay, the unfinished space of the avenue needs actual figures to confirm that this devastation is a deliberate anthropic creation and part of a constructive process. By contrast, the unwarranted consequence of architectural aggression on the Hôtel de Ville resulted in a different form of productivity: experimental spatial poiesis.

The album is important for documenting Hausmannian construction projects and their impact at the very heart of urban tissue, unlike the Buttes-Chaumont, Bois de Boulogne and other projects of public gardens, which occupied the fringes of Paris. The first image (Fig. 15) epitomises the project, allowing for topographic identification and giving a sense of the implementation of an ambitious plan within a confined area of labyrinthine streets, over a short period of time: over 37 000 square metres were expropriated, sixty-eight buildings demolished in under two years and an avenue of 698 by 30 metres created (Nord 2009: 220). It reflects what Sarah Kennel calls Marville's study of states of transition: as in the context of the Buttes-Chaumont project, the photograph conveys the process of dislocation, the scale and dynamics of construction-destruction (2013: 23). Structurally, this is conveyed through the contrast between the clutter in the foreground (mound of debris, carts) and the empty, ever-deepening depression in the middle ground, which indicates the future avenue, its absence doubling the play on emptiness and erasure. Thus, the houses that articulated the place are gone, leaving an open wound the size of a crater; this anticipates the thoroughfare as an open, efficient and empty space, replacing living and working with circulation. In a different context, the lack of a centre featured in *L'Hôtel de Ville* (Fig. 12-13), refusing a single perspectival focus through the multiplicity of openings and trajectories proposed.

Marville's particular aesthetic approach plays on perspectival lines of composition and narrative elements (Le Gall 2013). Unlike the Buttes-Chaumont photographs, where the vast spaces blurred the line between natural and anthropic wasteland, in Fig. 15, the buildings in the background confine the destruction. Yet the most striking aspect is the interaction between the people and this environment: unlike the lost figures in Thorigny's engraving *Démolitions pour le percement de la rue des Ecoles* (1858), they populate the composition, at ease amid the ruins, carefully framed, grouped harmoniously, and with eloquent gestures, as in Academic paintings.<sup>20</sup> There remains, however, a disjunction between the mundane attitude and the extraordinary nature of their surroundings: their integration contrasts with the street's disintegration. Often indicating scale through the position of bodies in space, the figures' dynamic poses constitute a counterpoint of order, giving a sense of purposeful activity within the wasteland. Nonetheless, they also reflect the chaos and strangeness of this environment, as their distribution in space doubles its disorder, somehow threading a pattern of human and architectural elements entwined: figures dot at regular intervals the tops of still-standing walls in the background; they trace the irregular slope in the middle ground, pose on rubble mounds, and the remains of masonry to the right. The human is as closely inscribed in this space as the masonry, merging with the demolition and articulating the scene, in a synecdoche of the transformation process.

This form of symbiosis between the workers and their environment somehow anchors the destabilised landscape, even as they erode it. Comparably, Zola's exhaustive use of narration and description could be read as ordering the perception and experience of demolition, aiming to frame and fixate the memory of the shifting landscape. Some of Marville's figures offer an interesting parallel with Zola's group visiting the site of the future boulevard du Prince-Eugène (Voltaire) in 1861. Saccard is here involved in the process of speculation and, through a complicated manoeuvre, is part of the jury that would evaluate the expropriation of his own land for the *percement* of a new boulevard. Making their way 'dans la trouée de démolitions que creusait le futur boulevard du Prince-Eugène' are de Mareuil, Saccard, a doctor 'qui fumait un cigare, sans se soucier le moins du monde des plâtras qu'il enjambait,' and two industrialists, 'dont l'un, fabricant d'instruments de chirurgie, avait anciennement tourné la meule dans les rues' (580-81). In the photograph, the two men in the right corner of the foreground, in fitted coats and high bowler hats, of whom one carries a

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<sup>20</sup> Similar conventions would emerge in Commune photographs. Auguste Braquehais's Vendôme Column series, for example, capture figures whose positions reference paintings and studio poses or cite Napoleon's gesture.

cane and the other raises his hat in salute, recall 'ces messieurs, avec leurs bottes bien cirées, leurs redingotes et leurs chapeaux de haute forme,' incongruous 'dans ce paysage boueux' (581). Standing behind the mound of rubble, they could evoke the interest felt by Saccard's companions:

Ils s'arrêtaient parfois en équilibre sur un plâtras roulé au fond d'une ornière, levaient le nez, s'appelaient pour se montrer un plancher béant, un tuyau de cheminée resté en l'air, une solive tombée sur un toit voisin. Ce coin de ville détruite, au sortir de la rue du Temple, leur semblait tout à fait drôle. (582)

Zola's and Marville's representations bring to the fore the relationship between inhabitants and the urban environment during systematisation, reflecting on the mixed reactions to the demolitions. A first observation is the disjunction between perception and cognition: the characters in *La Curée* behave like tourists and flâneurs, borrowing attitudes from different contexts of interaction with the city. This contamination is a consequence of the ubiquity of ruins in Paris. Reminiscent of Frédéric during the 1848 revolution, Zola's businessmen experience demolition as a spectacle ('Ce coin de ville détruite [...] leur semblait tout à fait drôle'), soaking up the urban scene through exhaustive description of the objects that draw their attention. The wares and curiosities of Parisian shops and streets have been replaced by 'un plancher béant, un tuyau de cheminée resté en l'air, une solive tombée sur un toit voisin'. Drawing each other's attention to the curious manner in which cataclysm or time had preserved for the ages some vestige or other, they would not be out of place among the ruins of Pompeii, exploring the half-crumbled villas with Gautier's heroes in *Arria Marcella* or, more recently, in the ruins of Parisian public edifices. The *plancher* would echo in Marville's study of broken floors and melted iron-frames that collate inside and outside, upwards and downwards in *L'Hôtel de Ville* (Fig. 10). Discoveries such as 'cette cuisine, là-haut; il y reste une vieille poêle pendue au-dessus du fourneau...' (582) seem impossible in this environment, extraordinary survivors spared by the devouring pickaxe. 'Je la vois parfaitement,' adds de Mareuil as if to convince himself and his audience (*Ibid.*). No doubt the astonishing detail is hard to accept and make sense of in the light of day and could easily be dismissed as a dream-image.

Nevertheless, the irreducible illogical dimension comes out through such absurd details: businessmen chasing oneiric images and wandering in plain daylight among fantastically crumbling structures. The experience of this environment as daily spectacle suggests that the space prohibits the assimilation and understanding of the violence and trauma behind these details, hence a rupture between perception and cognition; as in dreams, time appears dilated

and contracted. Instead, violence is displaced by the excitement of scrambling over the precariously shifting ground, as in a race to spot the bizarre creations of demolition, and the perverse pleasure of witnessing the last wall of a demolished house being pulled down:

Les ouvriers, lâchant, puis se roidissant brusquement, criaient: 'Ohé! hisse!'  
'Ils ne l'auront pas,' répétait le médecin.  
Puis, au bout de quelques secondes d'anxiété:  
'Il remue, il remue,' dit joyeusement un des industriels. (582)

This scene alternates between narrating the workers' actions, the perspective of the doctor's devouring gaze, and the comments of his mesmerised companions. Similarly, Frédéric had looked in fascination at the shootings in the Château d'Eau siege: 'tous les cinq, les yeux tendus, la respiration coupée, attendaient la chute avec un frémissement de jouissance' (*Ibid.*). The language used to describe this scopic avidity brings to mind the base pleasures of witnessing executions. The voyeuristic and violent undertones again dislocate the aggression committed unto the urban fabric. Decay and decadence appear entwined in the architectural execution. In fact, as during an execution, the characters' feelings may reflect a contagious exhilaration by participating in such an event:

quand le mur céda enfin, s'abattit avec un fracas épouvantable, en soulevant un nuage de plâtre, ces messieurs se regardèrent avec des sourires. Ils étaient enchantés. Leurs redingotes se couvrirent d'une poussière fine, qui leur blanchit les bras et les épaules. (*Ibid.*)

Does Zola reflect in this scene on a deeper level of the human psyche? The excitement produced by this indirect participation seems to bring out basic instincts of violence in men, rejoicing in destruction. Could this suggest the germ of the inevitable demise of all human effort, ultimately undone by human hands? Infused with irony, Zola's short sentence, 'Ils étaient enchantés,' fulfils and sums up Saccard's predictions from the heights of Montmartre. Indeed, the banal phrase acquires particular meaning by revisiting the image of the 'poussière d'or' bathing a *Mille et une nuits* Paris in the earlier scene. The enchanted golden dust, metaphor for enrichment, becomes literal through the white 'poussière fine,' here a symbol of gain for the speculators. This metamorphosis is linked to the reversal in perspective, with characters experiencing the transformation at ground level (again, like Frédéric), after Saccard had envisioned it panoramically. Moreover, the experience of Zola's jury attests to how contemporaneous discourse represented the mixed feelings of Parisians and demolition men towards ruination: from empowerment to bloodless violence, the demise of the architectonic

sharpens the joy of being alive, assures the workers' survival, and spells the enrichment of the elegant gentlemen in Marville's photographs.<sup>21</sup>

By the late 1870s, demolitions were no longer a novelty, but constituted a spectacular distraction and a veritable *mode d'habitation*, drawing *badauds*, passers-by, inhabitants of the neighbourhood, artists, journalists, and other interested parties. Besides workers, Marville's demolition grounds are teeming with elegant men in coats and high bowler hats, a shopkeeper or clerk in a waistcoat in the second image, and even a woman posing next to two workers, leaning on pieces of wood in the fourth album image (Fig. 2, 17). People inhabit the demolition grounds. Despite their detached or pragmatic attitudes, Parisians were not interacting with a petrified vestigial environment, rendered comfortingly anonymous by the passage of time. Precisely because the intimate details of individual lives are still fresh, the ruins are disturbing:

Rien n'était plus lamentable que les papiers peints de ces chambres, des carrés jaunes ou bleus qui s'en allaient en lambeaux, indiquant [...] de pauvres petits cabinets, des trous étroits, où toute une existence d'homme avait peut-être tenu. (581)

As in Flaubert and Gautier, the wallpaper in this devastated landscape constitutes an incisive modern urban emblem, transcending the Romantic ethos of harmonious decrepitude. There can be no return to nature in this incipient phase.

The broken houses bear the traces of their inhabitants, even allowing for recognition:

Comme ils avaient dépassé la rue Ménilmontant, l'un des industriels, l'ancien rémouleur, devint inquiet. Il examinait les ruines autour de lui, ne reconnaissait plus le quartier. Il disait qu'il avait demeuré par là, il y avait plus de trente ans, à son arrivée à Paris, et que ça lui ferait bien plaisir de retrouver l'endroit. Il furetait toujours du regard, lorsque la vue d'une maison que la pioche des démolisseurs avait déjà coupée en deux l'arrêta net au milieu du chemin. Il en étudia la porte, les fenêtres. Puis, montrant du doigt un coin de la démolition, tout en haut :  
'La voilà, s'écria-t-il, je la reconnais!  
–Quoi donc? demanda le médecin.  
–Ma chambre, parbleu! C'est elle!  
C'était, au cinquième, une petite chambre qui devait anciennement donner sur une cour. Une muraille ouverte la montrait toute nue, déjà entamée d'un côté, avec son papier à grands ramages jaunes, dont une large déchirure tremblait au vent. On voyait encore le creux d'une armoire, à gauche, tapissé de papier bleu. Et il y avait, à côté, le trou d'un poêle, où se trouvait un bout de tuyau. (583)

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<sup>21</sup> For the stereotype of workers as provincials, see Ponson du Terrail's evocation of Limousins in the opening quotation in Chapter I (*Les Démolitions de Paris*, 1910 [1869]: 9).

The search for and identification of the industrialist's former home is orchestrated around a chorus of narrative voices, corresponding to a subtle game of perspectives that register the character's affective state in relation to the environment, from emotive ('L'émotion prenait l'ancien ouvrier') to 'inquiet', 'très triste,' and eventually 'tout consolé' (583-84). The process of identification is analogous to how sensation proceeds as a resurrection of a series of memories of other sensations and images according to Taine: impersonal narration and, by now, generic *tableaux de ruines* create a framework for shared experience (inscribed in collective memory) by evoking two tropes: 'une promenade à travers des ruines' (584) and the common features of countless other Haussmannian ruins. In contrast, first-person narration and direct speech convey the *ancien rémouleur's* experience: his memories individualize his reaction to the ruin. This corresponds to 'la nuance précise de l'émotion' or the feelings and impressions produced by the perception of the current demolition (Taine 1870 I: 79):

Vous voyez bien l'armoire; c'est là que j'ai économisé trois cents francs, sou à sou. Et le trou du poêle, je me rappelle encore le jour où je l'ai creusé. La chambre n'avait pas de cheminée, il faisait un froid de loup [...] Voyez-vous, le lit était à droite, près de la fenêtre... Ah! ma pauvre chambre, comme ils me l'ont arrangée! (584)

Narration slips into direct speech at the moment of recognition. In this manner, the character appropriates and identifies himself with a small portion of the house cut in two. The gesture produces a further fragmentation of the ruin, isolating the room the industrialist claims as his own. Moreover, it animates this crumbling *taudis*, as the doctor calls it, through the man's experience of living among its objects and furnishings, the sense of possession reinforced by the reflexive pronouns and possessive pronouns and adjectives. The room restores a part of the ex-worker's identity through the old belongings he identifies therein and the memories attaching his youth to them. An *avant-la-lettre* Proustian instance, the chamber briefly regained makes tangible the pain of destruction registered unconsciously until this point. The moment is short-lived, as the entrepreneur is brought to realise he would no longer inhabit such a place, whereas he could own a place on the new avenue: 'il parut tout consolé' (584). Yet the episode reveals that viewers are not immune to these surrealist ruins and the dream images they conjure as a daily spectacle.

Saccard's panorama assembling impressions of metaphorical burning, melting, and cutting is transposed at ground level into literal shelled buildings, shapeless rubble, crumbling walls, and dissected carcasses. Their affective charge is fulfilled in the image of the worker-turned-businessman's room in the eviscerated house. At the same time, the room's identification exposes the uncanny dimension of urban ruins produced under the very eyes of

viewers and possibly ex-owners. The space rendered unrecognisable by erasure and mutilation, already a trope in discourses on the disappearing city when Zola evokes it, takes the guise of an unfamiliar familiar. This means that the ruined buildings cancel out all concepts of identity and possession, but allow a disturbing possibility to linger – that they might have once been the residence of one of the passers-by. This uncertainty privileges an uneasy dichotomy between disturbing intimacy, exposed in myriad details, and the landscape's strangeness. This disjunction also appeared in Marville's photography, in the clash between the casual air of people going about their business, the ravaged landscape, and the nature of their work. It would seem that in this shifting scenery there is no stable emotional point and action is the only respite from the disturbing contemplation of life in ruins. There is no such comfort in the misleadingly inanimate *L'Hôtel de Ville*, whose diverging perspectives give no rest to the gaze.

Midway between the epoch of *La Curée* and that of *Percement de l'avenue de l'Opéra* lie the ruins of the Hôtel de Ville. The content of all three discourses is very similar. Yet a different ethos imbues the 1871 images. This is partly due to the fact that the work of human hands emerges emphatically in the demolition and construction images, but it is conspicuously absent in *L'Hôtel de Ville*. Hence the two types of aesthesis based on different affective reactions engage the notion of awe and the sublime. The 1871 photographs became a site of convergence between an imagined antiquity and a calamitous event. The Pompeian scenario most often invoked reconciles sudden ruination with natural disaster. This is the key-element that differentiates the war ruins from the vestiges of peacetime: the former preserve no clue that human violence has engendered these irreducible, open spaces. Instead, Saccard and his companions' encounter with 'maisons écroulées, sur cette route tracée en pleines terres molles' echoes closely Marville's photographic documentation of demolition and construction sites, which bear the human imprint:

des pans de murs, crevés par la pioche, restaient debout; de hautes bâtisses éventrées, montrant leurs entrailles blafardes, ouvraient en l'air leurs cages d'escalier vides, leurs chambres béantes, suspendues, pareilles aux tiroirs brisés de quelque grand vilain meuble. (581)

The figurative sense of the verb 'éventrer' pertains to the semantic field of constructions: the 1866 Larousse gives the definition 'défoncer, percer d'outré en outré, ouvrir par une large entaille,' followed by the example 'éventrer une porte' (1160); likewise, the Oxford English Dictionary (1900) defines 'to gut' as 'to clear out the contents or inside of; to empty thoroughly; *esp.* to remove or destroy the internal fittings of (a building, etc.)'. Both



definitions make reference to removing the contents of the building, as in an evisceration. Literal and metaphorical, *eventré* buildings are the pendant of the *entailles* affecting the streets. Additionally, Zola exploits the polysemy of *crever*, associating the burst walls with death, an image reinforced by the organic metaphor of exposed 'entrailles blafardes'. The conflation of the architectural and organic augments the affective impact.

Readers or viewers thus experience a bloodless war field, where the violence is transferred onto the environment, which, in turn, becomes identified with the victims.<sup>22</sup> The same displacement occurs in post-Commune photography albums of urban ruins, discussed in the next chapter. The comparison with a war zone is explicit and Zola's readership would have been sensitive to its resonance with recent events: 'la trouée s'enfonçait toujours, au milieu de ces ruines, pareille à une brèche que le canon aurait ouverte' (581). Urban renewal is associated with destruction and death:

la chaussée, encore à peine indiquée, emplie de décombres, avait des bosses de terre, des flaques d'eau profondes, s'allongeait sous le ciel gris, dans la pâleur sinistre de la poussière de plâtre qui tombait, et comme bordée de filets de deuil par les rubans noirs des cheminées. (*Ibid.*)

Between the simile and description, the emerging boulevard is framed literally and metaphorically by the death of the old neighbourhood. Moreover, the mineral architectural relief and structural elements morph into human, flesh mouldings, recalling Baudelaire's 'ruines humaines,' through organic images whereby the chimney flues become 'rubans' adorning 'les murailles dénudées' and the 'gouttières à demi détachées pendaient, pareilles à des guenilles' (581).

The chimney flues become a central element in Marville's view of the avenue's construction between rues Saint-Honoré and d'Argenteuil (Fig.17). The composition integrates part of the still intact hotel on the left, thereby creating an ominous contrast with the vertical section of the building under demolition. Preserving half of the chimney flues and a stairwell, as in Zola's description, the dark snaking vents resemble a monstrous fossil-shell imprint that presages the demise of the building from which Marville projects his image. The contrast establishes a chiasmic relationship between the old street and the demolition site. The street is gloomy and narrow, whereas ahead the fallen building stands in a vast open space. The street is articulated through a perpendicular emphasised by the cobblestones, familiar

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<sup>22</sup> See Ponson du Terrail cited in Chapter I.

from the *vieux Paris* project; the space of the avenue opposes it on the horizontal, which deploys dust, rubble and soil. Marie de Thézy notes Marville's modernity in his use of light and shade to suggest the chaotic dimension of the building site, the dark mass of still-standing walls, and 'le caractère presque surréaliste des conduits de cheminée sur un mur mis à nu' (1994: 34). The mass of *informe* rubble and earth that dominates the left foreground and the exposed chimney shafts confer an unreal tenor to the scene, reinforced by the presence of people atop unstable structures.

Dark, empty and quaint, the old street proffers the last remnants of order and urbanity: it sports an *Hôtel* sign on the streetlamp and a chair outside, the latter a gesture enduring perhaps from the days of quiet existence and comfortable commerce in a closely-knit neighbourhood. Or, on the contrary, it may indicate the curiosity excited by this spectacle. A demolition notice and flotsam identify the new space ahead, while the cobbled street disappears under the dust of fraying masonry as if it had been swept away. This apposition and choice of framing are significant. Unlike the vertical views preferred when photographing cramped streets, which highlight precisely their narrowness, Marville reserves the horizontal compositions for Haussmann's *percements* and thoroughfare projects. In this case, the wide frame reveals that the street is already under demolition and the building facing the dingy hotel is a shell.

A similar juxtaposition, between the old and the new, appears in the image taken towards the end of avenue de l'Opéra (Le Gall 2013: 57) (Fig. 1). Marville positions himself at the intersection between rues Neuve-Saint-Augustin and d'Antin. The intersection's disappearance is suggested in the antithesis between the ruins in the foreground and the Haussmannian buildings in the background, including the new Opéra, faintly profiled against the horizon towards boulevard des Capucines. In the distance, rue Louis-le-Grand, photographed ten years earlier has by now been demolished (1876) to allow for the vista of the Opéra. The photographer also captured the same intersection in 1866. A comparison shows the building shell on the left in its two states: as a ruin in 1877 and as a thriving business ten years earlier, in the image taken from the rue d'Antin (Fig. 18), when N°47 proudly advertised the *enseigne Fleurs et Plumes*. The parallel illuminates how Haussmannisation transformed the residential life in the pre-avenue de l'Opéra neighbourhoods. Well into the 1870s, the Butte-des-Moulins remained a working-class neighbourhood and, although some streets were dismal and decaying in the urban labyrinth, many of those photographed by Marville and amputated by the new avenue, showed a busy,

prosperous area. Despite this, in 1870, the Corps législatif approved a petition for the completion of the avenue that described the neighbourhood as one whose 'filthy alleys dishonour the centre of Paris' (Daumard cited in Nord 2009: 220). The evisceration of the Butte corresponds to the ousting of this mixed population of tradesmen, craftsmen and workers: from the 'papiers peints de ces chambres, des carrés jaunes ou bleus qui s'en allaient en lambeaux' to the 'pauvres petits cabinets,' it was the organic relationship of the individual with their environment which it excised. The razed hill resulted in a depopulation of the neighbourhood, which was henceforth to showcase businesses (offices), luxury retailers (clothing, fine art, delicacies, antiques), financial institutions and resident nouveau-riche businessmen (Nord 2009: 221-25). Zola alludes to this phenomenon in his narrative of demolition in the area between the rues du Temple and the barrière du Trône, as the doctor and entrepreneur discuss the possibility of moving into one of the buildings on the future boulevard.

Thus, displacement, cyclical propagation and transformation affect people as well as the city. This emerges, for instance, in Zola's not-so-subtle irony of pairing men from different social backgrounds to emphasise the shared greed and mobility in partaking of the fever of demolitions and capitalising on the crumbling urban fabric. The second industrialist in Saccard's party, an 'ancien rémouleur' turned 'fabricant d'instruments de chirurgie,' epitomises the overnight process of enrichment and social mobility produced by the urban *dépiècement* and speculation. As a consequence, someone of humble condition, a knife-grinder, ends up owning a factory that produces instruments of infinitely higher subtlety and precision. A subtler relation, however, appears between the stone and flesh bodies, for the entrepreneur now indirectly carves out the city tissue by investing the profits from his medical instruments. This tangential connection is one of a series that establish a relation with the initial panorama from Montmartre, and the link between urban and flesh bodies will play out throughout this episode (Saccard directly refers to his earlier performance). Significant in this regard is the motif of recycling present in both Zola and Marville. In the latter's photography, the reuse of materials is highlighted by featuring prominently in the foreground tiles, whole masonry blocks, and wood separated into stacks (Fig.1).<sup>23</sup> This is also underscored by the stack of wood next to which a woman poses amid the rubble of demolition in rue d'Argenteuil (Fig. 2),

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<sup>23</sup> The importance of this detail is confirmed by an engraving in *L'Illustration*, which reproduces Marville's photograph with the title *Percement de l'Avenue de l'Opéra. Marché aux matériaux de démolition* (24 February 1877: 128).

recalling the female figure picking wood in Thorigny's engraving: the flotsam was indeed salvaged in different ways and demolition materials auctioned. Some of the rubble would be used as *remblais* to fill up the Champ de Mars, just as in Zola's account of the butte Chaillot works and the reemployment of demolition materials as *remblais*. Marville's foregrounding of recuperation goes beyond the conventional opposition between old and new. By emphasising the impending recycling, he reveals that the new would be built with and/or on the old.

We can compare these instances of recycling with the practices that emerge in relation to the Hôtel de Ville ruins, which, as already noted, were conceived of as relics: actual fragments were collected alongside souvenirs in the form of photographs, while architectural elements (from the Renaissance arcade) were dismembered and reassembled in a different location (Parc Monceau), before the edifice's demolition and reconstruction. More interesting, this collection and preservation of architectural relics of a disappearing past also emerges in relation to Haussmannian ruins. Near the barrière du Trône, Saccard's party encounters vestiges that are closer to traditional ruins, integrated in nature. These are the remains of recently demolished 'petites maisons' from the time of Louis XV, as the doctor reveals to his colleagues. The party takes a perverse pleasure in visiting them due to their association with tales of Regency debauchery. The spatial regression towards the countryside at the city's periphery ('ces messieurs se croyaient à la campagne,' 584) corresponds to the fantasy of temporal reversion as a result of which 'le fabricant d'instruments de chirurgie n'entendit même pas. Il était en pleine Régence' (586). The generous vegetation and temporal lapse allow for a Romantic reverie, removing the sordid traces of daily existence. Complementing the industrialist's reconstruction of his poor room, the doctor's narrative 'reconstruisait le logis' of the Comte de Savigny. The party performs all the gestures associated with visiting an ancient site, examining and admiring, with the doctor as their *cicerone*. Again, the scene calls to mind Gautier's *Arria Marcella*. At the end of their visit, just as any other careless tourist in Pompeii might, 'le médecin monta sur une cheminée, pour détacher délicatement, d'un coup de pioche, une petite tête d'Amour peinte, qu'il mit dans la poche de sa redingote' (586). The irony of delicately defacing an interior ornament only highlights the disparity between the present context of the peaceful production of ruins, which knows no precedent in modern times, and contemporaneous behaviour, which draws on inherited practices, transferring them in a gesture that seeks to appropriate and repossess the past before its disappearance.

*La Curée*, *L'Hôtel de Ville* and *Percement de l'Avenue de l'Opéra* offer three moments in time that illuminate the intersection of ruinous spaces as sites of aesthetic convergence,

where the vestigial is assumed as a *mode d'habitation*. The city becomes the open stage privileging continuous metamorphosis and foregoing closure. An inappropriable dimension, inviting excess in a decadent proliferation and recycling of decay, characterises discourses of such spaces. The aesthetic experience plays out cyclicity and recuperation – of practices, materials, relics, and images. The nostalgic mode reflects on construction and destruction as interchangeable, equally disruptive, traumatic, and inherent. Vision plays out in all its dimensions in the ruinous spaces of modernity. From foresight to supernatural revelation, it presides over Saccard's interventions: 'Il y aura un troisième réseau, continua Saccard, au bout d'un silence, comme se parlant à lui-même; celui-là est trop lointain, je le vois moins' (389). Whether as apparition, dream, contemplation, or project, Paris is the product of a collage of visionary practices. Saccard articulates his conception of speculation under the sign of fate, linking imperial glory and decadence. Wrought by its inhabitants, the rise and fall of the city, nonetheless, figures an impersonal instance of fatality. The continuous existence in a state where beginnings and ends overlap, outliving regimes and contexts, encourages the idea of predestination. Nostalgia allows for the coexistence of fatality and imagination, in the alternative scenarios opened up by vestigial images. At the same time, the ruin of the ancient and the new engenders responses which are out of joint with their context: ruin tourism and relic collection occur both on Haussmannian sites and in war-torn Paris. The lack of set rules privileges a bricolage of nostalgic practices that set in perspective the narrative of modernity as progress and bring to the surface the unrationalised, conflicting behaviour of a period of transition. Only ruins are permanent and inherent.

## Chapter IV

### **'Ce visage balaféré et marqué d'affreuses brûlures,' or Paris in 1870-1871: Burning, Destruction, and Reconstruction**

This chapter focuses on the relationship between ruins and the process of violent destruction in the context of the Commune. Responses to Haussmann's urbanism recognised its radical nature or denounced the aggressive intervention. Represented as an organic entity, Paris appeared as the victim of dismembering and mutilation. In 1870-71, the Prussian and French bombardment, and the ritualistic demolitions and fires of the Commune transformed Haussmann's systematic destruction (Fournier 2008). Yet the Prussian, Versaillais and Communard targets also reveal a systematic perpetration of violence. Hence, the need to establish if this aggression is perceived and, above all, represented, differently. Do the ruins of the Commune elicit different responses and modes of representation by comparison to discourses that address urban dismembering during the Haussmannian demolitions? Furthermore, when investigating the visions that develop in response to the latest disfiguration of Paris, it is important to distinguish between representations created in the immediate aftermath of 1870-71 and those that reflect retrospectively on events. Such driving forces behind the urban imaginary remodel the flesh of the martyred capital.

Through a dialogue between diverse media covering two decades, I follow two types of process. The first examines depictions of ruins just after the war through Gautier's articles 'Saint-Cloud' and 'Une Visite aux ruines' in *Tableaux de siège*, and contemporaneous photography. I then compare these perspectives to a second process – their representation two decades after 1871 in *La Débâcle*. Classical motifs and cataclysmic references are ubiquitous in depictions of Parisian ruins immediately after the conflagration. My analysis focuses on how different discourses employ these motifs through a parallel between Gautier and the photographers Hippolyte Blancard, Andrieu, Adolphe Braun, and Auguste Braquehais. The Classical tropes resonate with Gautier's aesthetic vision, illustrated in Chapter I by his article on the Maison pompéienne. The destruction of the capital and the ornamental details thereby thrown into relief appear as strange gifts to Gautier the Parnassian, who despised contemporaneous architecture as the embodiment of utilitarian ugliness ('Préface' to *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, 1834) and once imagined Paris levelled to the ground ('Paris futur,'

1851). Still, I argue that Gautier goes beyond indulging in the vocabulary of antiquity: his narrator stands firmly anchored in the present as he experiences the ravages of war in the Classical register. This posits the question of the role of modernity in Gautier's study of Paris in ruins.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, photography exploiting the classicising ornamentation in architecture bears the imprint of individual visions. While they responded to a taste for photographs of disasters, arguably, photographers also shaped this taste and, moreover, manipulated it to fit their aesthetic visions. It has been argued that representations of ruins are part of an officially-sanctioned discourse that serves to obscure and displace the trauma of human loss in the civil war (Lee 2002: 139). The torn and gutted buildings function as bloodless victims, metaphors substituting themselves for the human carnage. They could be adopted either by those who condemned or those who commemorated the Communard gesture of torching Paris and the further destructions it attracted when the Versaillais reconquered the capital (English 1983). This very ambivalence should generate caution when examining what seems a conventional trope.

What language, themes, motifs, and strategies are used to construct a narrative or, perhaps, as Bertrand Tillier argues, to deny a narrative of post-war Parisian spaces (2004)? Furthermore, how is this experience of shattered spaces perceived as time passes and the city labours towards regeneration, and Siebe Ten Cate and Monet paint their urban scenes? By deconstructing the strategies used to produce meaning, we can understand how such representations reflect on the events and shape a collective imaginary of Paris's topography in 1871 and in the following years. Building on Colette Wilson's study on the politics of remembrance and forgetting (2007), I approach memory and oblivion from an aesthetic, rather than political perspective. My focus is, thus, on Paris's topographic memory and obliteration as objects of aesthetic contemplation. If Wilson charts the inscription of the Commune in Zola's works during the two decades leading to *La Débâcle*, I concentrate on the latter, as the pendant novel to the undoing of Paris in *La Curée*. From the vantage-point of the 1890s, Zola's position recalls that of Flaubert, recreating the experience of 1848 in the 1860s. Zola was aware of the implications of temporal distance and advocated for its benefits. *La Débâcle* has the merit of both vividly recreating and conceptualising the conflict, a feat made possible by the maturity of Zola's style and aesthetic vision, and a critical socio-historical

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<sup>1</sup> On Gautier's modernity, see Labarthe (1999: 349-446).

perspective afforded by distance from the events.<sup>2</sup> Does this judicious tardiness inflect his vision of the ruined city?

Vestiges of war and their depictions are indissolubly linked to an ideological context of production. My examination, however, counterbalances the political dimension of ruins by focusing on the inherently aesthetic nature of their representation. This ontology is often obscured by the ideological charge with which texts and images were burdened. When discussing the artistic nature of urban representations, contemporary critics use this to highlight their role in shaping the historical imaginary of the Commune from the perspective of its moral, political and symbolical condemnation. My undertaking instead approaches their status of artworks with a different framework in mind, which is to examine their aesthetic discourse. The intention, function and uses of such representations constitute different processes, often overlapping, but not identical.<sup>3</sup> In this light, I analyse the aesthetic relationship between the ruined city and its modes of representation, which is often assumed as a starting-point for socio-political analysis, but not investigated in itself. Without abandoning critical distance, my reading emulates the tone of nineteenth-century discourse, in an empathic interpretation, aiming to understand from the inside the potential interest in ruins within an aesthetic and urban-cultural perspective.<sup>4</sup> How and why did certain subjects and compositions impose themselves on writers, photographers and artists, ultimately shaping the image of post-war Paris? The uses to which textual and visual discourses were put have obscured the initial impulses behind such creations, which were in the majority of cases not driven by a political agenda.

The city in ruins weighed heavily on daily life in Paris following *La Semaine sanglante*, triggering complex reactions to the urban landscape: mourning, condemnation, admiration, erasure, preservation, reconstruction. My endeavour inscribes itself in the line of Eric Fournier's cultural history of representations and sensibilities (2008: 15). I retrace how these reactions to the shattered urban space crystallised into aesthetic visions. Unlike Fournier's sources (correspondence, journals, and memoirs), artistic representations of ruinous urban spaces are one step further removed from their referent. That is, the manner in which

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<sup>2</sup> This is explicit in Zola's 1872 review of Georges Bibesco's war memoirs (cited in Lethbridge 2000: xiv). Maxime Du Camp offers a similar position in the preface to his 1881 edition of *Les Convulsions de Paris* (1883, I: ii).

<sup>3</sup> Donald English's study on Commune representations emphasised function, not intention (1983).

<sup>4</sup> For the concept of empathic interpretation, see Willig (2013: 43). For the artistic and aesthetic values that contributed to the majority of writers' anti-Communard stance, see Lidsky (2010: 10, 31-38, 43-44).



they conceptualise urban realities is strongly subordinated to the aesthetic principle, rather than factual inscription. Moreover, they suppose a second-degree reading of the ruins: aesthetic vision processes concomitantly the concrete experience which the presence of ruins stimulates and their figurative potential by recourse to a symbolic system of references. Artworks rising on the ruins of Paris take into account the embodied, raw experience of circulating within a space marked by the ravages of war, but also project such spaces within a larger framework of history, namely, that of art history. This is a thoroughly modern practice, in the same vein as the referencing of art history in Manet's *Olympia*. From this perspective, the ruin imaginary that develops in and around 1871 should be understood within the context of the history of literature and art. The paradoxical appreciation of beauty in decay can be construed as part of a larger project of modernity, which builds on the aesthetics of the ugly. Furthermore, bearing in mind the history of the motif itself, the use of ruins in representation foregrounds aesthetic and often philosophical connotations, preceding political engagement, and positing a potentially subversive relation to representation.<sup>5</sup>

### **Dramatis personae I: Ruins**

The ruins of Paris were an idea that haunted the Commune throughout its existence, argues Fournier, shaping what he terms 'Communard urbanism' (2008: 66). From a last resort, the idea that the city should perish rather than fall to the enemy developed into a discursive weapon and intensely-prepared military strategy to win the war and retaliate to the Versaillais bombardment of suburbs and forts (*Ibid.*: 61-62). The Commune entwined its fate with that of the capital: 'le combat ne peut se finir que par le triomphe de l'idée communale ou par la ruine de Paris' (*Déclaration du peuple français*, 19 April, in *Ibid.*: 62). This voluntarily assumed sacrifice encapsulates Communard urbanism, which sanctioned targeted destruction and, if necessary, global ruin in the name of the revolution. In extremis, from tactical, 'la ruine de Paris' became symbolical: a swansong gesture, asserting the Commune's sovereignty in the face of Versailles and its honourable death. Fournier notes the change from 'la destruction de la ville pour sauver la révolution' to 'la révolution détruisant sa ville' (2008: 63).

Urban design and architecture mediate structures of desire, identity, power, and memory (Dovey 1999: 11-12; Matsuda 1996: 6). Particularly sensitive to this, the Second

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<sup>5</sup> I am building on Kurt Buhanan's thesis on the aesthetics of destruction and the relationship of ruins to 'picturesque aestheticism' (2007: 2).

Empire erected such structures by showcasing monuments and institutions. Deeming them oppressive and corrupt, in turn, Communard urbanism rejected the authority they embodied in public space. Instead, its working principles of appropriation and purification enacted a 'résurgence du vandalisme révolutionnaire de la Convention' (Fournier 2008: 66-67).<sup>6</sup> The discourses, ritualistic demolitions, burning, and obliteration of archives point towards a rewriting of Paris's history and image. Instances of these include toponym changes (rue Sainte-Hyacinthe-Saint-Michel becomes rue Hya-Michel) and demolitions associated with regeneration and retribution (Napoléon's wars, Thiers's bombardment) (Fournier 2008: 67).<sup>7</sup> The Commune explicitly claimed the legacy of the Revolution by reference to the Commune of 1792-94 and the red flag it adopted, as if reneging and erasing the history that had accumulated in the meantime.<sup>8</sup>

Tillier argues that Parisian ruins were political 'parce qu'elles étaient issues d'une "stratégie" et d'une "politique" des incendies,' where destroying edifices was part of a 'culture de guerre,' hence acceptable (2004: 341). But contemporaries did not share this view, as attested by their condemnation of Prussian destruction, for instance, around Saint-Cloud and Argenteuil. Whereas the destruction of bridges could be justified as strategic, burning the palace and houses of Saint-Cloud was perceived as barbaric.<sup>9</sup> A culture of war implies precisely a cultural war, which targets the representational dimension of a people. Arguably, the Communards waged such a war on Paris, attacking its symbolic history, embodied in urban art and architecture. If they considered this necessary for a new beginning, most of the intelligentsia, including the writers whose works are examined here, decried the patrimonial destruction.

In the nineteenth century, the built environment, wherein memory was embodied, appeared as 'the site of pathological decline, as well as strength,' the expression of 'a civilisation profoundly rooted in a logic of extinction and nostalgia' (Matsuda 1996: 10-12).

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<sup>6</sup> Regarding the Revolution's iconoclastic practices, see Clay (1999).

<sup>7</sup> Louise Michel is explicit: 'Le renversement de la colonne de Vendôme, symbole de force brutale, affirmation du despotisme impérial, fut décidé, ce monument étant attentatoire à la fraternité des peuples' (1999 : 152). Matt Matsuda notes the choice to destroy monuments, but not books, arguing that, according to their etymology (*monere*, make remember), monuments 'guard the past, but words instruct the present and teach the future' (1996: 61-62). The monuments' embodied, visual presence enhances their impact.

<sup>8</sup> The Second Republic denounced the Revolution's excesses and disassociated itself from it by refusing its insignia –see Lamartine's discourse in *L'Illustration*, 4 March 1848.

<sup>9</sup> In Jules Verne's *Michel Strogoff* (1876), the narrator condemns the Tatars' warfare tactics of burning the cities they conquered or find abandoned. Unlike Marx, who considers fire a legitimate weapon, the narrator labels this a barbaric practice, wherein warfare in a civilised age should not indulge. In light of his own cultural experience, Verne's Tatar invasion of Siberia superposes its calamitous consequences on another example of civil war, the Commune.

Read in this key, the fate of the institutions housed in the Tuileries or Hôtel de Ville naturalises the edifices' ruins. If ruin is ineluctable, both buildings and institutions enter the pattern of history, inferring a causality and sort of predestination. Just as each institution was meant to exist and function within different regimes, the latter's demise also spells the end for the building. In this light, we can consider the Hôtel de Ville, a bourgeois institution compromised by Second Empire urban policies, then by the Commune, and the Tuileries, symbolic seat of the Empire, as fated for destruction. Nonetheless, these buildings, formerly symbols of power in their whole state, arguably continue to mediate authority as ruins. Yet this mediating function shifts the focus from the political-administrative to their historical status. In other words, now, they wield the authority of collective memory and cultural heritage, on a par with the ruins of the ancient world. Above all, through their aesthetic appreciation and representation, the historical value becomes patrimonial value.

### **Dramatis personae II: Representations**

The ethics and aesthetics of the visual consumption of ruins make them difficult subjects because through the ethical dimension, politics intersect with the aesthetic. In discussing photography in 1871, modern commentators emphasise its ideological uses, insisting on how images were instrumental to the condemnation of the Commune. Yet by so widely and forcefully diffusing depictions of destruction, they also constituted a counter-gesture to the Communards' attempt at historical erasure. The popularity of photographic albums and implicit commemorative discourse are meaningful because they work in the opposite direction, impressing on viewers the attempt to destroy Paris's history, its consequences and ultimate failure. More than mementos of the event, photographs attest to the fragility of history written in stone and ensure its anamnesis. This is a dimension that contemporary commentators fail to take into account enough, despite its important consequences in the history of patrimony. The violent condemnation of Communard actions corresponds to the shock and horror inspired by this attack on the city they had claimed to stand up for, refusing the terms of capitulation of the republican government. That the Commune turned against the city it would not surrender to a government it considered pernicious to Paris's interests is part of the same paradox which ultimately led that government to further wreak havoc on the

capital in order to save it.<sup>10</sup> Contemporaries recognised this, Fantin-Latour, for instance, pointing out the contradictions of the Commune's policies, which directly associated the ideological and the artistic: 'Comment les artistes peuvent-ils avoir l'idée de détruire les œuvres du passé pour retremper l'art?' (letter to Otto Scholderer, 15 June 1871).

Moreover, at the time of the Commune, a new language of visual representation developed outside of politics (Aghulon 1988: 304-07). There ensued a paradigm shift from the monuments and buildings as symbols of despotism, making their destruction acceptable, to their status as artworks, to be treated as such, hence valued and preserved.<sup>11</sup> This was not new in the debate on patrimonial policies, and Gautier remarked in a *tableau* from November 1870 how, in preparing for the Prussian siege, the French had cut down the trees and demolished private buildings, including factories in the *banlieue*. However, within the new 'zone militaire démolie et rasée,' remained the chapel of the Duc d'Orléans: 'Sans doute elle a obtenu grâce comme monument historique' (1871: 97). Against a background that admitted the need for sacrificing the built environment but which remained conscious of the damage and strove to minimise it, the Commune's pursuit of the destruction of heritage was seen as an attack on French history. This entailed an interesting reversal of positions: in the 1860s, the government's demolitions were characterised as acts of vandalism towards the city's past, generating a form of alienation of the inhabitants from their now-unfamiliar environment. In 1871, the barbarians were Communard Parisians attacking their city and the nation's cultural heritage. Yet Versaillais voices denied their Parisian identity, dismissing them as immigrants, foreigners or provincials.<sup>12</sup> They appeared as aliens illustrating another sense of alienation – madness – denying that monuments represented the nation's heritage, its identity, ultimately summing up Frenchness.

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<sup>10</sup> Maxime Du Camp evokes Caesar, as a metaphor for the Republican government, and Brutus, as the Commune that sabotages it, both engaging in equally condemnable acts of violence (1881: xiii). The Commune is stigmatised as a betrayal, à la Brutus. Conversely, the insurgent Parisians felt betrayed by their new government's capitulation, given the hardships endured during the Prussian siege. From both perspectives, the result is violence and a further shattering of France, now, from the inside.

<sup>11</sup> For the emergence of an official position on the memory of Paris's history, see Matsuda's reading of Communard destructions in the context of Thiers's *Projet de loi* less than a month before the toppling of the Colonne de Vendôme (25 April). The *projet* posited the Commune's threat to the nation's cultural heritage: 'The monuments erected by our fathers, witnesses to our old glories [...] They covet and have begun to pillage all the art objects which the passion of a few amateurs or the enlightened taste of governments from different eras have been able to unite in private and public collections' (cited in Matsuda 1996: 32).

<sup>12</sup> Robert Tombs confirms the provincial identity of many participants in the Commune, who were part of the workforce brought by Haussmann's great urban projects in the 1850s-60s and who never had time to settle in the old neighbourhoods targeted by restructuration, inhabiting the periphery instead. Meanwhile, those displaced continued to work in the centre (2014: 26-29). This counters a prevailing idea that the Communards operated a re-appropriation of the urban space from which they had been displaced by Paris's renovation.

The paradoxes engendered by civil war are reflected in the fact that it could not be assimilated into the popular imaginary. In this sense, Tillier argues that the event confronted writers with the impossibility of narrating it, its violence defying representation (2004: 25). This led them to model their vision after that of painters and draughtsmen, producing fragmented, partial views, reflected in the vocabulary used to describe their work: 'peindre,' 'croquer,' 'graver,' 'impressions,' 'griffonnages,' and Gautier's 'tableaux'. For Tillier, representation equals 'la restitution d'une présence,' while denying representability amounts to a negation of the Commune as an event (2004: 24-28). However, the inability to produce a coherent narrative also reinforces the necessity of temporal distance. The shock of civil war would be absorbed into the collective imaginary and allow for historical and historiographic approaches that could assess the context and mechanisms of the rupture, and see beyond the trauma. This would permit writers and artists to conceptualise the events into representations that allowed for socio-historical insight, as Zola's example attests. In 1878 and 1881, Du Camp considered *Les Convulsions de Paris* too early to provide a coherent narrative, but by 1898 Louise Michel wrote: 'La Commune à l'heure actuelle est au point pour l'histoire. Les faits, à cette distance de vingt-cinq années, se dessinent, se groupent sous leur véritable aspect' (1999: 13). For Michel, 1871 and its contradictions were on the threshold of entering history. Time tempered the violence of the rupture, reinserting it within historical continuity: because of subsequent events, it was no longer the end of history, as the Commune intended, but could be sublimated into more than its corresponding discontinuous depictions, outlining a larger picture. From a different perspective, we could correlate the choice of depicting recent events through *tableaux*, notes, and *griffonnages* with the modes of fragmentation associated with modernity and modelled in Baudelaire's *Tableaux parisiens* and Impressionist painting. Additionally, it is worth recalling in this regard that such fragmentary optics correspond to the fragmentary subject of ruins in Paris, thus, suggesting a convergence of the subject and its strategies of representation.

As part of these debates on representation, photography around 1871 remains controversial. Its paradoxes cannot be reduced to political uses by affiliating photographers with one ideology or another, as commentators from the 1970s onwards have done.<sup>13</sup> This obscures the complexity of this period, which saw a traumatic rift in the population, whose

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<sup>13</sup> Alisa Luxenberg exposes the ensuing contradictions when critics try to distinguish between photographers that support or condemn the Commune (1998: 133). This position endures in Lapostolle (1988: 68-70), Gautrand and Noël (1998), the catalogue *Bruno Braquehais* (2000), Boime's and Tillier's work on Commune iconography (1995; 2004).

own reactions were contradictory. Maintaining the distinction between pro- and anti-Communard photography is highly problematic. Rather, to a certain degree, the context creates confusion between the political nature of the gesture of destruction and the documentary and aesthetic nature of representing the objects of such destruction. Images are not necessarily politically charged when conceived. This is attested by the fact that they remain versatile, adopted by opposing cultural and ideological discourses. Photographers, as some critics acknowledge, were more likely interested in documenting the events than in supporting a political agenda (Baronnet 2011: 52). Many marketed their wares to both sides, without differentiating between audiences, including Auguste Braquehais (Luxenberg 1998: 133). He created photographs of Communard demolitions and barricades, as well as of Versaillais soldiers camped in the Tuileries, and of post-Commune ruins.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, he is probably responsible for assembling both types of images into the *Album historique des malheurs de Paris* (1871), whose title and content could be equally appealing to pro- and anti-Communard viewers.<sup>15</sup> Thus, such images would have been created with the aim of capturing historic events in mind, just as, during the Prussian siege, Parisians took pictures of, for instance, the fires of Saint-Cloud that could be glimpsed from Paris and, after the armistice, documented its ruins – as Hippolyte Blancard's views attest.

In this sense, Gautier's observations about artists working during the war support the idea that, distinct from the motivations behind the creation of wartime vestiges themselves, the original impulse for representing ruins would be documentary or aesthetic:

La pensée de l'artiste fonctionne toujours, même à son insu; au milieu de la bataille, il remarque un effet qui échappe à tout autre. [...] Il s'est développé en lui une singulière acuité de perception qui s'exerce sans qu'il le veuille. Dans la rapidité de l'action la plus vertigineuse, il ne perd jamais de vue la forme et la couleur. Sa mémoire, habituée à saisir les lignes, prend en courant le reflet ineffaçable des choses [...] L'artiste prend part à l'action, mais voit en même temps le spectacle. Cette tuerie, où il peut trouver la mort [...] est une bataille sans doute, mais c'est aussi un tableau. (1871: 213-14)

Writing during the Prussian siege, Gautier reveals an inherently aesthetic approach to registering and filtering external stimuli, a form of attunement to the aesthetic potential that has become a reflex for the artist. Almost unconsciously perceived, the visual effects remain 'réfléchis dans son œil comme dans une photographie instantanée' (*Ibid.*). Photography's

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<sup>14</sup> This counters the view of critics who try to associate Braquehais's reportage style and pro-Commune stance – see Lapostolle (1988). Similarly, Wilson perpetuates this misleading image of Braquehais's disinterest in the post-Commune ruins (2007: 184).

<sup>15</sup> The album indicates the publisher's address '11, Boulevard des Italiens,' which coincides with Braquehais's photographic studio.

association with visual arts suggests that its documentary dimension does not exclude a symbolic level.<sup>16</sup> Neither is it incompatible with the development of an aesthetic that harks back to archaeological photography. Its implications and intersections with other systems of reference in relation with urban ruins are discussed below.

It is important to note the aesthetic and documentary statuses of photography from this period. Linked to the original debate about photography as technology or art, these dimensions cannot be wholly separated, and this very duality prevents a clear categorisation of photographs into evidential documents or artistic objects. Wilson recognises this, characterising photography as 'a regulated and conventional practice [...] in its very composition [...] where everything seems to conform to implicit "canons" that dictate what is aesthetically acceptable or technically inept' (2007: 176). There are two noteworthy aspects here. First, that photographic discourse was tributary to a system of conventions of representation, which did not automatically emphasise objectivity, despite the medium's claims to scientific truth. Even Naturalist representations drew on pictorial codes in their aspiration to verisimilitude.<sup>17</sup> As a construct, Naturalist aesthetics suppose a contract between the artist and viewers, the latter conscious of perceiving an image purposefully created to inspire authenticity, without being a verifiable document. This assumes the viewers' awareness of the distinction between artistic recreation and actual events, even while engaging in the visual consumption of such imaginary reconstructions. The ontological ambivalence of photography complicated its position as a form of representation that oscillated between construing itself as documentary evidence and as artistic depiction of the events. Present-day commentators of the Commune often seem to disregard that nineteenth-century photographers valorised their medium's ambiguity to create works that partook of a sense of veridicity, but were intended to be consumed and deciphered as art, similarly to

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<sup>16</sup> He characterizes Doré's paintings during the war as 'mêlant l'allégorie à la réalité' (1871: 215).

<sup>17</sup> Painting and lithography were preferred for war-scenes representations, deemed able to recreate a life-like experience. Verisimilitude was important only in as much as it enhanced the impact on the viewer. The Crimean War, the first conflict documented photographically, is representative. Draughtsmen accompanied photographers, and their records were privileged for the capacity to render human drama. War-reports were illustrated using lithographs, sometimes based on photographic images. Photography was deficient due to its technological limitations – unable to capture movement – and prohibitive costs of reproducing such images for the press. In 1881, *L'Illustration* would be the first to reproduce photographs to accompany news (Gervais 2003: 56-85). Discussing the potential documentary value of lithographs of the Commune fires, Tillier makes a revealing observation: 'en adhérant à une esthétique naturaliste et en souscrivant au genre du paysage, les artistes entendaient témoigner – tout au moins inventèrent-ils des images en simulant le témoignage – de la réalité des incendies ou de l'idée qu'ils s'en faisaient' (2004: 332-40). The landscape genre privileges composition over faithfulness to reality, with artistic vision arranging natural and topographic elements into a coherent whole, selecting only what serves the overall idea (Clark 1949: 76).

painting and engraving.<sup>18</sup> This ambiguity was used to promote both the faithfulness of depictions and their artistic value in albums of Parisian ruins. Moreover, photography's duality made it particularly suited for conveying the ambivalence of the post-Commune public.

Linked to this, the second aspect concerns the very limitations of the medium, which could not, in most cases, record events as they were unfolding. Significantly, photographs could, however, provide before-and-after images, inviting viewers to reconstruct the narrative of destruction. This counters the view that this elliptical narrative spares the viewers' sensibility, displacing the trauma of bloodshed (Lee 2002).<sup>19</sup> Thierry Gervais points out that press-illustrations based on photographs had no qualms about populating the scenes of disaster with human figures, thereby reconstructing the action and bridging the gap between the actors and the environment they shaped (2003: 56-85). The same is true of photographic restagings (*tableaux vivants*) or paintings which reinstate the human victims in the midst of architectonic ruins: Frans Moormans's *L'Hôtel de Ville après l'incendie de 1871* (1871) shows a fallen *Fédéré* dominated by the skeleton of the city hall.

### **Action I: Paris Saint-Cloud**

Gautier's observations regarding the aesthetic impulse of artists during wartime are borne out by his *tableau*, 'Saint-Cloud,' from March 1871, when the city lay in ruins after the Prussians torched it before departing.<sup>20</sup> The *tableau* is important for two reasons. First, the eye for aesthetic detail underlines the idea that writers, artists and photographers need not have been drawn to their subjects with a political agenda in mind. What stands out is the spectacular

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<sup>18</sup> Despite admitting that photomontages were not considered 'des photographies prises sur le vif,' Lapostolle insists that photography was thereby asserting its claim to truthfulness even through the bias of manipulation (1988: 67-75). Such images were, indeed, construed with a symbolic purpose in mind and were overtly condemnatory, but their true-to-life air, itself debatable, is a characteristic of the genre of *tableaux vivants*, which include Oscar Rejlander's experiments in the 1860s, Julia Margaret Cameron's *mises-en-scène* of legendary figures, and the famous reconstructions of scenes from the American Civil War.

<sup>19</sup> Likewise, Albert Boime posits that Impressionist painting elided this trauma, promoting the Republic's conservative politics through an exuberant, restorative vision of Paris, as if the city had returned to its pre-Commune stage, extending Haussmannisation into the present (1995: 45). However, this reflects on contemporary realities, as we saw in Chapter III: Haussmann's urban politics continue into the Third Republic, when reconstruction goes hand in hand with the continuation of the Second Empire's systematisation. There is not necessarily a contradiction or pretence regarding Paris's reconstruction, since this was literal, and part of a regenerative urban politics before the fall of the Second Empire. More important is the changed attitude towards Haussmannisation and modern architecture, now embraced and valued, and for the moment, no longer contested or denounced.

<sup>20</sup> Henceforth SC.



dimension, also prominent in Zola's representation of Jean and Maurice's downriver journey during the climactic clash between Communards and Versaillais in Paris. Second, the descriptions of the château's calcinated shell and the eviscerated houses in town anticipate 'Une Visite aux Ruines' (June 1871), revealing that the crystallisation of the cataclysmic tropes relating to wartime ruins precedes the Communard destruction.<sup>21</sup> This does not belie the political dimension with which such representations are invested. However, it demonstrates that its origin is external to the depictions and inherent instead in the ideological content of the actions inflicted on Parisian landmarks, the same as at Saint-Cloud. The political nature of the action transmits its message to the representation of the object in which such an action finds expression, namely the ruined landmark. Thus, at Saint-Cloud, Gautier's tone fluctuates between aesthetic interest and moral condemnation:

La flamme a dû être guidée dans sa fureur car un élément aveugle n'arrive pas tout seul à cette perfection de ravage et de désastre. On sent là l'œuvre d'incendiaires exercés et pratiques, obéissant à une consigne d'extermination [...] tout est mutilé, pilé, émietté avec une méchanceté savante, et les maraudeurs [...] auront bientôt fait disparaître jusqu'au dernier vestige des matériaux. (SC 228-29)

The allusion to the agents of destruction is cast in a passive voice, reinforced by the evocation of the instruments of destruction rather than those wielding them: 'Ce que les obus ont commencé, l'incendie l'a achevé' (SC 227). The intent to obliterate, implying a gratuitous act of destruction, is imputed to the Prussian army, an invading enemy, to be spared no consideration. Much more inconceivable is that Frenchmen themselves, especially having witnessed these destructions, should have recourse to the same measures, turning against their own environment. Yet the same image recurs at the beginning of the *tableau* from June: 'Dans la rue Royale, l'incendie avait continué l'œuvre des boulets et des obus' (VR 313). Gautier's perambulations through ruined Saint-Cloud, and later Paris, recall those of Saccard and his jury exploring the neighbourhood under demolition. Crucially, Saint-Cloud epitomises the town completely destroyed, offering the first occasion of a comparison with Pompeii. All the elements that would recur in discourses of the Parisian ruins are set in place.

Arguably, Saint-Cloud's depictions codify the representation of the urban landscape during war. The château's classicising décor offers the context for references to ancient art and architecture, while navigating amongst the collapsed houses allows readers to re-experience the images of Parisian neighbourhoods under demolition. The same absurd spaces open out, anticipating those pictured by Marville in his album *L'Hôtel de Ville* (1871):

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<sup>21</sup> Henceforth VR.

On pénètre dans le palais par le vestibule ouvert à tous les vents, obstrué de décombres, de poutres carbonisées, de ferrailles descellées et tordues, de fragments de marbre, et l'on découvre par l'effondrement des planchers, les distributions intérieures, comme dans les coupes d'architecture [...] Quelquefois, une cheminée se tient suspendue à la paroi, sur un arrachement de plancher, et produit le plus singulier effet. (SC 227-8)

The first aspect to note is the exploration of spatial potentialities generated by ruination. Reduced to an almost bi-dimensional state of architectural drawing, Saint-Cloud's topography cancels distinctions between inside and outside, open and closed, up and down, private and public. Adolphe Braun's photograph offers a comparable experience of the abolition of oppositional pairs, alluding to the navigational experience through the streets of a dead city (Fig. 1a). The sole anchoring points in his landscape are the church spire, also evoked by Gautier, and the path winding among the ruins: 'Saint-Cloud, avec ses maisons sans toit et la blancheur morte de ses décombres, ressemblait à un grand cimetière [...] L'église, épargnée seule, veillait sur ce cadavre de ville' (SC 234). In Braun's composition, the spire and pathway create the impression of field-depth. However, the juxtaposition of surfaces cancels out interior-exterior delimitations, distinctions between planes and volumes, opening instead onto impossible spaces, which feature oneiric details: a window-frame hanging from a window that is no longer there, internal walls exposed, still bearing their patterned wallpaper; striated marks outlining stairways now gone and the fireplaces on each floor. Braun exploits an exploded environment which blurs modes of perceiving and circulating in space, an essential aspect harking back to the Haussmannian demolitions (see Chapter I). The spectator is likewise confronted with a landscape where debris prohibits navigation according to urban conventions.<sup>22</sup> The composition's modernity emerges in the play on references, which reveals the contradictions of such a space: a contemporary town in the guise of a ruin. Intertextual references could point to Marville, who established the codes for urban-landscape photography in the 1860s. Except that Marville's images preceded and anticipated destruction, while Braun uses the same conventions to depict a space more reminiscent of a Pompeian street, such as Giacomo Brogi's *Strada Stabiana* (Fig. 2).

This archaeological vision is counterbalanced by a second aspect, namely, the modernity of the ruins, which emerges in details like the patterned wallpaper that Gautier and Zola also evoke ('des papiers de tenture à fleurettes et à losanges', SC 231), or, in the case of

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<sup>22</sup> Compare Andrieu's view of Saint-Cloud, a more violent perspective on the shattered urban configuration through its close framing, which elides any path of access (Fig. 1b). With no path and rubble blocking the way, this space signals the suspension of all rules of topographic organisation: the concepts of inside and outside are cancelled, and all progress is either prohibited or must be conducted outside the norms of urban circulation.

the château, the armature and heating system exposed by the collapsed walls, which Gautier notes as well: 'on voit, comme des veines dans le corps de l'édifice, circuler les tuyaux des calorifères et des conduites d'eau rompus çà et là, ou rentrant dans l'épaisseur des murs' (*Ibid.*). The ruins' modernity is fully valorised by Hyppolite Blancard who uses the armatures to create a geometrical composition, organising space according to the rule of thirds, and juxtaposes modern means of construction with classicising ornaments (Fig. 3).<sup>23</sup> The detail of the deformed armature takes up two thirds of the frame, while the parallel interior walls exposed by fire occupy one third. The armature provides a grid, focusing the view on the group placed within the axis of the classicising arch supported by Ionic columns. The rhomboid cell of the armature parallels the triangular configuration of the group, framing the figures.

Although the group within the arch is the focal point, this is offset by the interplay between volumes, textures, and styles. Thus, the straight, bare volumes on the left are mirrored in the round arches on the right, still featuring their stucco ornamentation. The ruin, as Robert Ginsberg argued, no longer respects the original functions of structural elements in an edifice, opening up new possibilities, converting surviving elements to new uses (2004: 33-35). For this reason, although the image's subject is the *Escalier d'honneur*, the stairway is absent. Instead, a bridge of rubble spans the space between the *rez-de-chaussée* on the right and the first floor, its access guarded by the arch. In the absence of conventional paths of circulation, the bridge constitutes an ephemeral access-point, strewn with obstacles and potential danger, as the hanging armature suggests. Blancard's photograph draws the classicising structural and decorative elements into a modern configuration, not least by the emphasis on the iron grid, which limits and orients perception. The grid functions as a screen, an element that Zola conceptualises in a programmatic letter from 1864 on modern techniques of artistic vision.<sup>24</sup> Whatever documentary purposes the image may serve, it stands as a compositional achievement through its play on geometry.

The third aspect to observe, this time in Gautier, concerns the visual tropes for depicting war vestiges. Recurrent images of evisceration evoke the discourses on Haussmannian demolition, also present in Zola's contemporaneous *La Curée*:

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<sup>23</sup> This rule appears in landscape painting guides from the end of the eighteenth century – see John Thomas Smith (1797). It becomes emblematic in twentieth-century photography.

<sup>24</sup> See below p. 172.

Des maisons éventrées ont vidé leurs entrailles sur la voie publique et semblent faire effort pour rester debout, comme des soldats courageux qui ont reçu le coup mortel et ne veulent pas tomber [...] (SC 229-30)

Gautier's representation of ruined houses combines naturalistic notation and symbolical connotation, associating the gutted buildings, still stoically standing, with French resistance. The image of evisceration also precedes the description of Parisian ruins in June 1871, with a significant difference: whereas the 'soldats courageux' of Saint-Cloud retained a form of human dignity, in Paris, 'des maisons éventrées laissaient voir leur intérieur comme des cadavres ouverts' (VR 313). If the veneer of humanity dissolves, reducing Parisian buildings to amorphous, anonymous carcasses, this is because unlike their Saint-Cloud counterparts, they do not stand in for the war casualties; instead, their carcasses are the tombs of the victims of bombing and fires.

Topography is depicted through the prism of visual culture, explicit in Gautier's comparisons of streets in Saint-Cloud and Paris with Piranesi's impossible spaces. This illuminates the perception of these shattered environments as essentially aesthetic. Thus, the gutted houses in rue Royale reveal that

les planchers de tous les étages s'étaient écroulés sur les voûtes des caves. Des charpentes brûlées, des barres de fer tordues, des rampes aboutissant au vide comme les escaliers fantastiques des rêves architecturaux de Piranèse, des avalanches de moellons ou de briques, de grands pans de mur où se discernait encore la configuration des appartements avec leurs papiers de tenture, leurs cheminées et quelque reste d'ameublement respecté par un caprice des flammes [...] (VR 313-4)

The comparison to Piranesi's architecture and graphic art already appeared in the exploration of Saint-Cloud:

Des fragments d'escalier, comme dans les eaux-fortes de Piranèse, aboutissent au vide; des portes ouvrent sur le ciel; des balcons restent appliqués, d'une manière hasardeuse, à des façades démantelées trouées à jour, décrivant d'étranges arabesques, que reproduisent des photographes encapuchonnés de noir comme des nécrophores, et la tête courbée sur leur boîte. (SC 232)<sup>25</sup>

More striking though at Saint-Cloud is the reference to photographers, the very choice of a term of comparison evoking the father of photography, Nicéphore Niépce. Their necrophorous attitude again anticipates the rush to capture the ruins of Paris in June, situating tourists, photographers and the albums' public in the position of collecting and carrying with them the burden of the city's carcass. Since the buildings are associated with human victims, this recalls Gautier's remark about artists committing acts of bravery, carrying to safety fallen

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<sup>25</sup> The necrophore is a beetle which carries and buries carrion.

comrades, while still taking note of and registering the aesthetic potential of the injured body (213). On the other hand, the same beetles to which photographers are compared are necrophagous, hence the photographers' feeding off images of death. Again, in the context of the correlation between buildings and human victims, this constitutes an act of cannibalism, practiced through a form of art, from which Gautier's text is not exempt. Such cannibalism has several implications. One consequence is that this very destruction nourishes the creative energies of artists, as Gautier himself noted regarding Gustave Doré's or Puvis de Chavannes's artistic activity following their guard-duty during the Prussian siege (144). Another is the absorption of this destruction: by committing it to memory through visiting, reading about and viewing images of the sites, ravages are integrated in the community's identity. Third, within the economy of cannibalism, such nourishment has regenerative powers; transcribing this paradigm to the consumption of images of destruction means positing the potential for the city's, and implicitly France's, rebirth. The greater the destruction, the greater the rising from the ashes, Gautier seems to suggest. Necrophorous and necrophagous gestures are thus part of the natural cycle of death, decay, and rebirth of matter, an idea that resurfaces in Zola's concluding images in *La Débâcle*.

Tillier associates images with metaphors, positing an exteriorisation of facts too difficult to express into an 'objet *autre*,' the image (2004:27). This Lacanian reference suggests, again, a healing distancing from events, the sort of separation that allows for wholeness, in a similar process to that enacted by the necrophorous photographers and writer. With urban ruins, this is achieved through the material objects – photographs and texts, themselves removed from the site, but bearing within the idea of its topography – and through the temporal distance artificially and artistically cultivated in such representations by reference to the Classical or Romantic tradition of ruins. In this sense, it is useful to note that Gautier's text carries the reader from one mutilated site to another, functioning as a memorial journey, not dissimilar to a calvary, where, at each station, the pilgrim, narrator, and reader can reflect on the effects of violence, inscribe them in memory and start the healing process.<sup>26</sup> Through the visual or textual journey afforded by photographic albums and Gautier's *tableaux*, the wounded topography of Paris is concomitantly confronted and set at a distance, thereby engaging a process of exorcism and healing.

Dwelling on the consequences of war, these gestures, of burial and consumption of such

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<sup>26</sup> Pilgrimage has been linked to contested spaces, usually disputed between the pilgrims and the locals (Butigan 2003: 174). Here, however, these spaces refer to an internal conflict.

images, fuel patriotic conscience, providing the impulse for reconstruction and projected retribution against those who had sought to crush France. If Haussmann's ruins were created with a constructive goal in mind, no such redeeming scope justifies the ravage of Saint-Cloud:

Ces ruines subites n'ont pas le caractère des ruines faites à la longue par le temps et l'abandon. Les années n'y ont pas mis encore leurs douces teintes brunes; la nature n'a pas égayé de ses lierres et de ses fleurs sauvages les architectures disjointes; tout y est sec, criard, violent. Le plâtre éraillé garde sa blancheur mate, les cassures fraîches des pierres ont une crudité de ton qui blesse l'œil comme une plaie vive. C'est la différence de la mort naturelle à l'assassinat. Ces cadavres de maisons égorgées ont un aspect navrant qu'il est impossible d'oublier; elles crient vengeance par toutes les bouches de leurs plaies. (SC 231)

Radically different from the Romantic imaginary, where peril and bloodshed were distant memories, wartime ruins do not point to the past, but to a violent present: rather than skeletons, they are cadavers, the signs of death still fresh. This revelation is built up through images that associate inorganic elements with the semantic field of wounding: 'architectures disjointes,' 'plâtre éraillé,' and 'cassures fraîches des pierres'. The violent dissolution evoked by dismembering, fraying and breaking is then projected as its effect on the viewer: such sights produce themselves a trauma that oscillates between the literal and the figurative, due to the fact that it is inflicted on and through the eyes. The viewer and the object perceived become conflated in the image of the wounding and the wound: 'une crudité de ton qui blesse l'œil comme une plaie vive'. From wounding to killing, the passage culminates in the accusation of murder and the call for vengeance.

Gautier wavers between preserving ruined Saint-Cloud as a monument to war, a modern Pompeii, or rebuilding it from scratch. Either way, the site functions as a rallying point against France's common enemy. Chiefly, it becomes a reference-point against which Communard acts of destruction are weighed, intensifying their condemnation, since these were Frenchmen turning against one another and their living environment. This emerges in the use of the same language to describe destruction by Prussians and Communards. The same premeditation and means from Saint-Cloud subsequently characterise the Communards' burning of Paris. The unnamed agents in the first instance conducted their destructive work 'froidement et méthodiquement,' organised as 'incendiaires enrégimentés,' armed with 'pétrole et des torches' (SC 234). Gautier recycles the imagery of Prussian damage in the tour of ruined Paris. Does such recycling suggest this is how contemporaries perceived the subsequent *dégâts* or, conversely, did the very representations playing out the parallels between the two episodes of destruction encourage their association in the collective

imaginary?

## Action II: Paris, 1871

A related question is what representations reveal about conceptualising the experience of circulating within Paris's ruined topography. Unlike vestiges in Classical and Romantic landscapes, wartime ruins are jarring dissonances that, in rue Royale, become associated with the macabre echoes underlying the fallen masonry. In photography, Braquehais offers a view of rue Royale from the steps of La Madeleine (Fig. 4a). This is also the first monument Gautier encounters and describes during his itinerary, and corresponds to the first stop on official ruin tours.<sup>27</sup> Gautier notes that La Madeleine bore the scars of war but remained otherwise unaffected. This suggests why Braquehais turns his attention to rue Royale, where the shelling and fire had more spectacular results. Indeed, the slightly elevated point of view affords a long-distance perspective, taking in the whole street up to the faint silhouette of the obelisk and beyond, to the Bourbon Palace and the Dôme des Invalides.<sup>28</sup> This wide angle contextualises the damage, revealing a progression in the spatial disruption. The right-side row of buildings is most evocative in this regard. If the nearest ones on the corner remain standing and seem whole save for broken windows, the farther edifices were more affected by the explosions. Thus, the building in the mid-ground, appears to have had its windows blown out, losing its blinds, of which some tatters remain attached, and its chambranle is cracked. These details and the fact that it still has a roof hint that its damage is due to the shockwave, rather than a direct hit.<sup>29</sup> Last comes the mound of rubble which signals the collapse of the building and disrupts the harmony of façades.<sup>30</sup> The devastated vegetation also registers this

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<sup>27</sup> See Fournier (2008: 225).

<sup>28</sup> Rue Royale had featured a barricade against the Prussian advance as early as March and another one during the *Semaine sanglante*. In Braquehais's image, the rubble flowing onto the thoroughfare recalls the same barricade structures. Given the revolutionary legacy of the street, it is interesting to observe that Braquehais chose an angle reminiscent of Hippolyte Bayard's view of the remains of a barricade in 1848 (Fig. 4b). Bayard adopted the same elevated point on the steps of La Madeleine, but, instead of a frontal view, the slanted angle focuses precisely on the right-hand side buildings. This allows for interplay between the horizontal mass of the dismantled barricade and the verticality of façades, on the one hand, and the perpendicular buildings in the far plane, on the other.

<sup>29</sup> Andrieu's photograph (Fig. 5) confirms that the last building standing on the western side in Braquehais is not a shell: had it been gutted, it would have lost the roof first, while artillery would have shattered the façade, provoking a partial collapse (including the interior walls), and sparked fires that would have consumed the wooden floors.

<sup>30</sup> Braquehais's image hints at the clash that, as in Place Vendôme, caught in the crossfire the Communards stationed on the upper floors of these houses. Reconstructing the events in rue Royale should start from the opposite end: first, the Commune fire would have been so strong that the Versaillais used canon on the houses closer to Concorde, now entirely collapsed; the buildings further away, less damaged, suggest that the Versaillais

disruption, culminating with the trees in front of the collapsed edifice, which have lost their foliage and shrivelled. Amid the greenery of the street, Braquehais's bare trees epitomise the process of sudden and accelerated ageing and death suffered by the architecture and recorded by Gautier.

By contrast, Andrieu's plunging view and tight framing foreground the collapsed building and the detail of the bare tree, which enhances the impression of death (Fig. 5). Braquehais had included all the vegetation, from full crowns to singed foliage and withered trunks, tracing the escalation of damage. The barren trees in May and June highlighted this out-of-sync experience of a city in ruins but not dead. Instead, in Andrieu, the dead tree, ruins and rubble fill the field of vision, giving the sense of generalised disaster. If this were the sole image of rue Royale and considered representative, it would suggest that the whole street was reduced to this state. Only the buildings on each side, themselves affected to different degrees, seem to keep upright the remaining wall of the house. With three of its walls gone, this structure almost recalls a cross-sectional drawing, where only contours indicate the limits between different spaces, stairways, roofing and chimney shafts. Urban furniture (benches, Morris columns) surviving amid the chaos reinforces the sense of unreality.

The diagonal composition suggests dynamism, inviting spectators to conjecture what lies beyond the frame. However, if Braquehais's frontal view allowed the gaze to travel up the space of the street, Andrieu's composition is closed. In this sense, ruined streets, eviscerated buildings, blackened façades, and piles of rubble, often recalling the barricades, limit the field of vision, plunging Paris into a 'temps archéologique infini,' an impression heightened by the lack of human traces (Tillier 2004: 65). This observation is important, since this state of desolation had not spread to the whole of Paris. Instead, it indicates a compositional choice: photographers narrow the field of vision to focus on the affected areas.<sup>31</sup> This, Tillier argues, nurtures the illusion or fiction of a ruined Paris, 'qui naît alors dans les regards et les imaginaires' (*Ibid.*). This confirms the double gesture of photography to document the ruined state and create a work of art, by nature fictional and based on illusion. The political has not yet entered this dynamic.

Analysed from the standpoint of their aesthetic dimension, these discourses reveal their codified character. Although based on urban realities, they cannot be considered historical

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broke through the Communard lines before reaching La Madeleine. Here, they would have been in the open and likely took cover in the buildings' entrances, fighting their way up floor by floor.

<sup>31</sup> See Bosquier (2000).



documents without taking into account the artistic vision that shapes them, as shown by the parallel between Saint-Cloud and rue Royale. The visual strategies adopted support the idea that the subjects depicted were not only of historical, but also of pictorial interest. This is also true of Gautier's text, since his narrative tour is articulated around the possibilities of spatial exploration opened up by the broken topography and the access to parallel systems of equally unreal configurations (Piranesian spaces). Text and photography play out the legibility of such spaces by framing and directing the readers' and viewers' attention. In this respect, Tillier acknowledges that the aesthetic dimension in Commune representations is not arbitrary, given the primacy of images in the nineteenth century as an epistemological tool that guarantees legibility (2004: 27). Indeed, this legibility is due to the fact that the image is a partial view, which, as such, controls chaos by ordering objects and events within the composition – Gautier himself structures his text in *tableaux*, where limited, fragmentary depictions echo the shattered environment. Thus, if photographs and narratives of ruins concomitantly feed off and nurture the appetite for urban devastation, they reassure by promising to contain these disasters within their frame. Indulging in this morbid fascination for the city's calamity becomes safe. In a comparable manner, Gautier's text offers itself as the safe substitute for the Parisian itinerary, which allows readers to pursue the strange dream of a ruined Paris, when the reality, although no less spectacular, was more modest.

In fact, it was not the number of edifices destroyed which impressed most, but their scale, which was, in turn, due to their monumentality and importance (Tillier 2004: 353). The itinerary in Gautier's *tableau* is emblematic of the selection of landmarks usually found in contemporaneous guides and albums, including Braquehais's *Album historique*. Indeed, the album begins with the Ministère des Finances, which Gautier's narrator reaches after crossing rue Royale (Fig. 6). Both photograph and text dwell on the ministry, which spills its debris onto the street, with half of its loggia's arcades gone, the upper floor threatening to topple over the still-whole wing next to it, and a crumbling façade behind which the floors have collapsed. Braquehais's image finds an echo in Gautier's text, where 'la façade du ministère, en s'écrasant sur la rue de Rivoli, formait une tumultueuse carrière de blocs, comme on en voit dans le lit des torrents alpestres' (VR 315). Gautier the traveller will not miss the chance to transport an avalanche into the heart of Paris or evoke the Colosseum in the arcades opened up by the collapse of the façade: 'des perspectives, des enchevêtrements et des superpositions d'arcades qui rappelaient le Colisée de Rome' (VR 316). Again, the open building constitutes an opening onto other spaces and times.

Already, the opening image evoked the memory of the ministry in flames. Experienced from the heights of Courbevoie, the episode allowed Gautier to conjure Vesuvius spewing poisonous ash, although over Paris, it was the ashes of 'des reçus ou des quittances et autres formules administratives' that rained down (*VR* 315).<sup>32</sup> The fact remains that Vesuvius ends up in Paris as well: 'C'étaient les *lapilli* de Vésuve ouvert au milieu de la ville' (*Ibid.*). In Gautier's case, this *dépaysement* is a characteristic of his writing: whatever the space initially invoked, it will accumulate several layers that render the landscape fantastical. By contrast, Braquehais's photograph, while taking in these potentially exotic details, again contextualises them through the counterpoint provided by the whole building to the left, which exhibits the same architectonic features as its fallen sister. The sense of wonder remains though, for the ruin of the ministry reveals the harmony of its inner structure of echoing arcades that respond to those of the exterior loggia: the visible and the invisible are reunited by calamity. Braquehais, like other contemporaries, thus balances the classicising references with a sense of the modernity of their setting.

Gautier has the advantage of using colour in his visual images, thus advancing the analogy with Antiquity:

La flamme, la fumée, la combustion des produits chimiques destinés à produire l'incendie, avaient imprimé à ces décombres des tons gris, fauves, roussâtres, mordorés, rembrunis, des colorations étranges qui les vieillissaient et leur donnaient l'air de ruines antiques. (*VR* 316)<sup>33</sup>

Drawing on his education as a painter, Gautier recreates the process whereby fire accelerates and achieves the same effects as time. Later on, walking in the ruined Tuileries, the narrator would declare fire the artist of the modern age. This observation entails a revelation: as the trained eye identifies all the shades, the narrator reproduces the equally artificial process whereby an artist would recreate the effect of time on an ancient ruin. And while the narrator revels in the fragile articulation of the ruin, noting the strange detail of 'un store de soie bleue' still clinging to a crumbling wall, 'cependant les omnibus roulaient, effleurant presque les groupes de passants arrêtés et muets d'horreur devant ce lamentable spectacle' (*VR* 316). Thus, the reverie flickering between the edge of the volcano and the Parisian street comes to an end amid the rumble of an omnibus. Its loss is not deplored; rather it highlights the fact that urban life, epitomised by modern means of transport, is reconquering Parisian space. This

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<sup>32</sup> A similar image appears in Edmond de Goncourt's diary-entry from 24 May, when he watched the burning Tuileries (1870-1871 IV: 317).

<sup>33</sup> Again, see de Goncourt's similar description, this time evoking the Hôtel de Ville on 28 May (1870-1871 IV: 327-28).

counterbalances the suspended functions of the topography characteristic of a ruinous environment. It introduces an optimistic image, where Paris 'se relève à demi sur le coude, promène autour d'elle son regard raffermi et secoue son linceul de ruines' (*VR* 317). It is almost as if, just like the narrator, after indulging in the game of ruins, a must for all great civilisations, Paris, and implicitly France, is ready to rise from its ashes. Thus, on closer inspection, Gautier's strategy of *dépaysement* does not deny the present of modernity, instead using it to create a palimpsest of urban-architectural configurations that borrows from different times and cultures.

The modernity of ruins also emerges in Braquehais's and Gautier's treatment of the Tuileries palace, a favourite pictorial subject in the aftermath of the Commune due to its aesthetic potential, since the rich decoration encouraged the play on Classical references. Gautier shared with contemporaneous photographers the predilection for architecture and archaeology, two subjects notably suited to the study of structure, texture and matter, in which the Romantic and Parnassian writer revelled, and which the photographic medium was apt to capture in great detail. Their representations illustrate how contemporaneous approaches tackled the contradictions of ruins in the modern capital. References to other times and places need not be escapist, but, as Gautier's treatment of the Ministère des Finances shows, can constitute a vision that fully valorises modern expression, anchoring it in the ruined space. By comparison to the ministry, the Tuileries can also be explored inside, multiplying the spatial possibilities, as illustrated in Marville's *L'Hôtel de Ville*. Gautier and Braquehais's navigational strategy starts with the exterior, taking in the damage to the structure and ornamentation, before exploring the palace's interior.<sup>34</sup> Both treatments illuminate the interplay between inside and outside, turning destruction into a game of deconstruction. For instance, the Pavillon de l'Horloge (Fig. 7), which Gautier cites as emblematic of Delorme's style, had lost its dome, blown up by explosives placed within the main building. As a consequence, in Braquehais's photograph, the pavilion's façade returns to its Italian Mannerist origins, emphasising the architectonic styles and interaction between structure and decoration. No longer giving onto an interior, the façade evokes the backdrop of a Baroque stage design or the Mannerist background of sacred dramas (Fig. 8-9): through its windows, the sky is visible, and while statues remain in their niches, they also appear in unexpected openings (the lion in the window).

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<sup>34</sup> As in Marville, the exterior views serve to position the palace in space.

The intrusion of the exterior on the interior is also exploited through effects of chiaroscuro in *Grand vestibule, côté du jardin* (Fig. 10), where strong light softens the edges of the battered columns and highlights the rows of porticos that end at their entablature, thus enhancing the parallel with Classical ruins. However, *Grand vestibule et place du Carrousel* (Fig. 11) reinserts modernity within this antique reverie. The symmetrical composition could have prolonged the illusion of an antique setting with the Classical statue in the niche, a tutelary deity of the crumbled palace, and the vista of a Roman arch in the background. Braquehais does this in a similar composition, featuring the same nude statue to which responds a Minerva on the right side (Fig. 12). This photograph employs the compositional principle of thirds: the focal point is the nude statue in the niche, framed by the left arch, which occupies two thirds of the image. Braquehais plays the game of Classical references in a modern key, foregrounding geometry and decorative elements through the interplay of arches within arches, echoing each other and continuously opening onto other spaces: two at the forefront framing the image's space, the niches in the middle ground, the dim arcades of the door- and window-frames of the building in the far plane. By contrast, the previous image (Fig. 11) offsets the Classical tropes: while the perspective of the Louvre's pavilion through the left arch would not disrupt the sense of an antique setting, the cart in the angle of the same arch acts as a counterpoint.

This is likely the vehicle on which photographic equipment was transported, which Gautier also notes:

On voit, d'ailleurs, stationner devant chaque ruine un peu pittoresque les chariots qui servent de laboratoire aux photographes, dont les épreuves deviendront des pièces historiques d'une authenticité irrécusable; sans elles, lorsque Paris aura pansé ses plaies, qui pourrait croire à ces monstruosité d'Erostrates anonymes? (338)

Like the omnibus, the prosaic detail in Gautier's text guarantees the reality of the fantastic landscape in the heart of modern Paris. Similarly, Braquehais also included a streetlamp and the guard post in the axis of the triumphal arch, signalling by these details the unconventional nature of what appeared to be a time-eroded ruin in the centre of nineteenth-century Paris. Classical citations allowed readers, viewers, and tourists to distance themselves from their modern environment, but the ruins prohibited the complete transfer to another time and place, constantly reminding spectators of their disturbing reality. There is no justification for their occurrence within a modern urban configuration and they appear as uncanny structures, somehow comparable to a reverse image of modernity.

If the vestiges break open something akin to a gateway onto ancient times, Parisians are

not allowed to cross its threshold, but must remain anchored in their own space, peering through the cracks. Thus, just as this distance cannot be crossed, the temporal leap is not possible either. Instead, the broken building allows other times to seep into its structure, changing the manner in which the perspective on the city is constructed. Within this environment, Braquehais's viewer would behold, through an ancient portico where a veritable *lararium* lies ensconced, a space where an apparently Roman triumphal arch coexists with the French-Renaissance pavilion of the Louvre, and a time when gas lamps provide street illumination. The cracks in time and space produced by the collapse of the palace encourage ambiguity, especially since the material traces offer contradictory evidence:

Cette ruine d'un jour est complète; trois ou quatre siècles n'auraient pas mieux travaillé. Le temps, qu'on accuse toujours et qu'on appelle injustement *tempus edax rerum*, 'le temps mangeur des choses,' n'est pas, à beaucoup près, aussi habile en fait de destruction que l'homme. Sans la sauvage bestialité des barbares, presque tous les monuments de l'antiquité nous seraient parvenus. Le temps ne fait que caresser le marbre de son pouce intelligent; il achève la beauté des édifices en leur donnant sa patine. (320)

Battered and friable columns with worn-out Ionic volutes, flute mouldings broken to reveal the stone beneath, and metopes crushed by the falling masonry of the traverse framing the doorway, all suggest an interior space damaged by exposure, mutilation and time (Fig.13). Yet Braquehais's view of the stairway leading to the Pavillon de Flore holds other clues that contradict its ancientness. The mangled cabling on the ground and hanging between the columns in the foreground reveals the interventions of nineteenth-century remodelling, using ironwork.<sup>35</sup> This is significant because, again, the space's ruinous identity highlights further temporal complications. In its ruined state, the structure gives the impression of an ancient edifice, but the Pavillon was created during the French Renaissance, under Henri IV. This would mean that Parisians were apprehending a ruin of the Renaissance, an interesting concept in itself. However, this is misleading, just as the Hôtel de Ville was. In fact, this palace-wing had been entirely remodelled between 1864 and 1868 by Hector Lefuel, Napoleon III's architect, just like the Hôtel de Ville had been enlarged under Louis-Philippe.<sup>36</sup> Gautier, too, alludes to the survival of the Pavillon de Flore, including its nineteenth-century

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<sup>35</sup> The iron cable constitutes an improvised barrier, prohibiting access to a dangerous zone with a high risk of collapsing. This is confirmed by the deep crack in the entablature above the Ionic columns in the middle ground and the weakened lower segment of the column to the right; these signs indicate that the structure's resistance has been undermined by fire.

<sup>36</sup> Lefuel was commissioned to reconstruct the Pavillon de Marsan following the Commune (1874-80).

statuary by Carpeaux. Hence, what appears to be an ancient edifice is in fact a thoroughly modern ruin.

Through the temporal conundrum created within the space of the building, the aesthetic vision clashes with ethical and moral questions, as Gautier denounces the violence of the ruin and, through an oblique reference to 'la sauvage bestialité des barbares,' imputes to the Communards the devastation that signals the decline of civilisation. Going back to the idea that the Commune produced a temporal vacuum in its attempt to erase Paris's material history, the incomprehensibility of the Tuileries is symptomatic of the consequences of this disruption within the concept of linear history. Tillier argues that the prism of Classical themes of destruction constitutes an attempt to reconcile the ethical and the aesthetic by re-inscribing the Commune into the long duration of history. He cites Gautier's approach as accelerating time in reverse, all the way to Antiquity, to assimilate the vestiges of Paris to the remains of lost civilisations, thereby engaging in a fictive archaeology (2004: 348). Nevertheless, the temporal processes are more complicated because Gautier's exercise in fictive archaeology implies the projection of Paris into the future, not the past. The passage of time is accelerated forward, and describing the Cour des Comptes, the narrator reiterates the same temporal image as in the case of the Tuileries: 'il semble que depuis hier trois ou quatre siècles ont passé' (VR 327). Likewise, the narrator concludes his walk evoking the impression of an immense temporal lapse:

Il semble que deux mille ans aient passé en une nuit et que la rêverie du poète se soit réalisée lorsqu'il se représente Paris à l'état de ville morte et reconnaissable seulement à quelques débris semés sur les bords de la Seine déserte: la colonne couchée dans l'herbe, [...] Notre-Dame élevant encore au-dessus des végétations sauvages les tronçons de ses tours, l'arc de triomphe à demi écroulé, comme un pylone de Rhamsès, avec ses bas-reliefs de batailles et de victoires estompés par la mousse. (VR 333-34)

Gautier could be very well referring to his own writings, where he indulges in the reverie of Paris reduced to the state of Pompeii, in the 'Préface' to *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1834) or in 'Paris futur' (1851), where the capital is wiped out in a cataclysmic gesture and redesigned beginning with the very lay of the land. Parallels between Paris and Pompeii recur throughout his work, including in the fantastic *novella* *Arria Marcella* (1852), where the Roman town proves to be not so different from the modern capital.

Yet, he could also be referring to a whole subgenre that explored the motif of

retrospective futurity throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the temporal pattern Gautier imagines is not a rebound into the past or the future, but bears closer resemblance to a Möbius strip of time. Just as the juxtapositions, superimpositions, confluences, and cancellations of planes and volumes in the ruin reject Euclidean space, so its temporal dimension is warped. Thus, the barbarity imputed to the Communards constitutes concomitantly a temporal jump into Late Antiquity and a future projection of demise. Both dimensions (co)exist in the present time of nineteenth-century Paris and are contained within its ruinous edifices and streets. The irruption of these vestiges materialises the fears and imaginings recurrent throughout cultural history, from *Ecclesiastes* to John Martin. Gautier could suggest that the calamity of 1870-71 forces Paris into a painful exercise that tests its potential for ruination, but also its strength to rebound, for, as with most portraits of a stricken edifice, the visit ends on an optimistic note: 'Heureusement, Paris subsiste toujours,' writes the narrator as he shakes off the oneiric fancy of a Paris engulfed by vegetation (*VR* 335).

On the one hand, a once broken Paris can reinvent itself and Gautier's narrative strategies, which appeal to cultural references ranging from the art-historical and literary to the archaeological and historical, serve, indeed, to heal the city by reinserting its ruins in a context. This context is the imaginary constructed around other cases of urban destruction, legendary, historical or fictional. Thus, the Ministère des Finances is assimilated to 'Vésuve ouvert au milieu de la ville' (*VR* 315); rue de Lille 'apparaissait déserte dans sa longueur, comme une rue de Pompéi,' its silence as profound as in 'les nécropoles de Thèbes ou les puits des Pyramides' (*VR* 322-24); in the Cour des Comptes, the narrator recognises the conventions of the Gothic novel and adjusts his behaviour accordingly, wandering and haunting the labyrinth of broken spaces: 'Errer dans une ruine, c'est tout l'intérêt des romans d'Anne Radcliffe' (*VR* 328). Meanwhile, the Préfecture de Police becomes the site of 'la *delenda Carthago* de l'insurrection' (*VR* 336), while at the Hôtel de Ville, the statues on the façade become the mutilated victims of the Spanish Inquisition's *auto-da-fé* (*VR* 339-40) and the paintings, including Hubert Robert's, 'sont brûlés comme si on les eût jetés dans le cratère de l'Etna' (*VR* 346).

On the other hand, Gautier is openly condemnatory of the destruction of the artworks adorning many of these edifices, characterising Communard actions through images ranging from the infernal to the barbarian, iconoclastic and beastly. Interestingly, the Communards are

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<sup>37</sup> See Introduction.

never named as such, Gautier's metaphors constituting an explicit gesture to erase their memory: 'Il leur manquera même la triste célébrité d'Érostrate, qui brûla pour s'immortaliser le temple de Diane à Ephèse, car la mémoire humaine se refusera à garder leurs noms maudits' (*VR* 345). The absolute condemnation of the Commune for the crime of destroying art draws attention, again, to Gautier's system of references, even where moral questions are concerned. Therefore, he confesses that he should feel 'la douleur, la colère, la haine, le désir de la vengeance' in the face of the edifices transformed by fire, but experiences instead admiration and appreciation for the involuntary effects (*VR* 327). Antithetically, the loss of the artistic heritage incenses him, hence revealing that the aesthetic principle is dominant in establishing the immorality and criminality of the Commune.

Photographs of ruins become substitutes for the experience and knowledge of ruins, acting as relics, reliquaries and monuments, writes Tillier, drawing on Françoise Choay's observation in *L'allégorie du patrimoine* (2004: 361; 1999: 18). Arguably, photography also functions as an archaeological vestige, imprinting the past upon its shallow surface, or as a form of externalised memory, the sensitised photographic plate marked by the viewer's experience, bearing their *souvenir*. As fragmentary documents, the experience of the past in photographs engages to different degrees with notions of authenticity. Photographs embody and preserve the traces of disrupted and disruptive spaces, soon to vanish, and of a traumatic moment. Furthermore, despite being selective constructs of time and space, they enter the collective imaginary as verisimilar if not authentic representations of these environments. Moreover, for present-day viewers, they are material objects and the only survivors of a lost world, thus functioning themselves as ruins. Anchoring the past as authentic vestiges, visible and tactile fragments, they claim their own and the past's authenticity. Comparably, Gautier's *tableaux* fixate the experience of ruin tours in fragmentary portraits: they are, thus, mnemonic, textual vestiges, this time. And again, for present-day audiences, such narratives preserve spaces and traces that no longer survive.

Tillier dismisses the aesthetic dimension of images of post-Commune vestiges as tangential, rather than intrinsic. Instead, he qualifies the images as epistemological media, informative and manipulative, only to contradict himself in admitting that photography privileges artistic emotion and expressivity over the political or polemical dimension (2004: 351-55). Our difficulty in choosing any precedence regarding the images' message reflects their ambiguity, which itself highlights the contradictory attitudes of nineteenth-century audiences towards the material consequences of the Commune. Texts and



photographs inform and deform by their very nature, but they forge a shared language that permits the ambiguities of fascination to coexist, that is, both moral repulsion towards the gesture of destruction and aesthetic attraction for its effects. Tillier argued that the picturesque dimension was necessary to alleviate and deflect attention from the moral dilemma and guilt induced by the consumption of images of ruins (*Ibid.*).

While this may be true, the photography cited throughout this chapter is as much concerned with depicting accurate topographies as with composing artistic views that explore the contradictions and potentialities of Parisian edifices to accede to the status of ruins. The exercise seems detached enough, exhibiting curiosity rather than a sense of guilt. And in Gautier's case, what could qualify as picturesque uses of the imaginary of ruins do not obscure the moral conflict, but bypass it because a different set of principles, aesthetic in fact, dominates. Meanwhile, no trouble is spared to use references from the same stock – Classical, Biblical and historical – to expose the immorality of what is deemed a crime against the history of art and, implicitly, culture. If we accept this double gesture, we can conclude that representations re-integrate the episode of the Commune – a spatiotemporal and political rupture – into the narrative of history. Through their documentary nature, they inscribe the vestiges as part of the history of modern Paris. By their explorations of time, space, materiality, and the ruin leitmotif, they problematise the representation of the city. In art and literature, this entails a re-forging of Paris's image and of the strategies of narrative and description, in which techniques borrow from architecture, archaeology, conventions of urban depiction, and the history of visual culture.

### **Action III: Paris, post-1871**

In 1871, texts often using a mixture of memoir and journalistic writing, guides, witness accounts, and the sort of aesthetic tour epitomised by Gautier's *tableaux* shaped the language of representation of the latest Parisian ruins. Meanwhile, photography and engraving set the tone for visual representations, adopting and adapting the conventions of other media (painting) and genres (archaeological, architectural and urban), and pushing the limits of tradition to ensconce modernity at the heart of the iconography of ruins. The ruination of recent architectural remodelling and urban planning under the Second Empire had undone in certain places over a decade of projects: buildings returning to rubble appeared as the dissolution of a mirage in fairytales. Ruination also amounted to a form of regression to the state of *chantier*. Retrospectively, as if in punishment for Haussmann's destruction of Old

Paris, the new seemed not to be allowed to endure; as retribution for Paris's arrogance, the achievements of the self-proclaimed new Athens, Rome, Jerusalem, and capital of modernity went up in fire, smoke, and blood. As with Babylon or Sodom, its decadence incurred calamity.<sup>38</sup> This initial conceptualisation of the sites of destruction through inherited tropes should be compared with depictions during the early years of the Third Republic.

The decree of 1873 sanctioned urgent reconstruction policies; consequently, affected edifices were soon under scaffolding and war-devastated infrastructure underwent repair. The fate of some ruins though remained open to debate (the Cour des Comptes and Tuileries). From 1871 to 1882, the demolition or preservation of the Tuileries was a controversial subject for the factions confronting each other in the Assemblée Nationale (Iandoli 2006: 990). The Third Republic, with its symbolic discourse of material and moral regeneration, scheduled new monuments, notably the Basilique Sacre-Cœur and the Mur des Fédérés, and continued Haussmann's projects –these include systematising Paris's dense fabric, completing boulevards Saint-Germain and Henri IV, and the Opéra, and the *percement* of avenue de l'Opéra.<sup>39</sup> As Paris mended its torn fabric, some ruins either disappeared or were absorbed within the urban landscape. During this time, Impressionist painting celebrated the open spaces of Haussmannian urbanism, signalling a new appreciation of modern architecture, while, as the century drew to its end, graphic art and photography would renew and preserve the memory of the emblematic *vieux Paris*. Meanwhile, Zola's novel would come to recall precisely the shattering of France's ambitions and resurrect the experience of the capital's burning at a time when it was still working to (re)construct its identity.

In the 1870s, the political struggles of the still-uncertain Third Republic led Paris to follow Rome's example, leaving the Tuileries standing until further notice, while Hector Lefuel restored the Pavillons de Flore and de Marsan.<sup>40</sup> The former appears whole in Monet's *Jardin des Tuileries* (1876), simultaneously alluding to its destruction and regeneration, while the latter is depicted under scaffolding in Giuseppe de Nittis's *Place des Pyramides* (1875) (Fig. 14-15). If the ruin was still shocking in Ernest Meissonier's classicising composition from 1871, by 1880, when Siebe Ten Cate depicts pendant images of the Tuileries in 1871 (Fig. 16-17), the palace had become a feature of the Parisian landscape.<sup>41</sup> Similarly, de Nittis's

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<sup>38</sup> See Christiansen's *Paris Babylon* (1995), which, however, focuses on society, rather than the urban associations with the ancient city.

<sup>39</sup> The latter appears in Marville's *Percement de l'Avenue de l'Opéra* (see Chapter III).

<sup>40</sup> See note 36.

<sup>41</sup> For a reading of Meissonier's iconography, see Galoin (2010).

passers-by *affairés*, represented in a flurry of movement, ignore the incomplete structure, despite its bulk. Moreover, the warm grey tones soften the differences between the whole building in the left foreground and the opposite pavilion under repair. By comparison, Ten Cate's compositions adopt an elegiac mood, the strategies that articulate the space of the gardens and palace different from Monet's exuberant depiction. Ten Cate's *Vue des Tuileries du côté du jardin*, with its darker palette of grays and barren trees, offers a sober and sparse vision, compared to Monet's lush vegetation and sun-drenched garden landscape. Much less dynamic, the horizontal composition would indicate the preferred format for landscape painting, unlike Monet's plunging view and vertical format.

Ten Cate's work is less noisy, uncluttered, its lower registers elegantly divided by the edge of the pond. Still, disrupting the regularity of the horizontal through a playful note, the pond's curved edge draws attention to the further distortion of the ruin reflected in the water. Outlined against the sky, the central façade appears pierced by light, reinforcing the impression of flatness that recalls architectural drawings. Conversely, in its watery reflection, the façade acquires depth, as the architectonic features seem grown upside down and the light passing through empty window-frames appears distorted, resembling a colonnade highlighted by white accents. Tillier argues that Ten Cate embraces a Romantic vision (2004: 372). I would suggest, however, that, Spartan and still, the painting reworks the Romantic canon in an Impressionist key. The palace's ruin is an object perceived from the distance, no longer inviting the intimacy of traditional vestigial spaces. In this regard, the structure is closer to de Nittis's street scene, where passers-by remain indifferent to the building hidden by scaffolding plastered with advertisements.

Tillier posits that, with the passage of time, the ruins' 'sens politique et polémique a disparu ou s'est estompé au profit d'une approche poétique' (2010: para. 7). This is not necessarily the case though. Arguably, the approach to representation depends on artistic visions and intentions. Which aspect to privilege in a composition also depends on the conventions of the genre and style chosen: Meissonier harmonised his Academic painting with a historico-allegorical treatment, while Ten Cate's Impressionist compositions focus on urban scenes. Nonetheless, the latter choice does not exclude a symbolical treatment of the ruin. Thus, *Vue des Tuileries du côté du Carrousel* (Fig. 17), painted a decade after the events but referring to 1871, places the silhouette of the vestige in the far background of yet another

airy composition, inhabited by an isolated figure.<sup>42</sup> Its position corresponds with the period in which the painting was created, when the palace's shell had, indeed, become part of the urban scene. However, Ten Cate's composition remains ambiguous, as the Tuileries are starkly visible against the horizon. The black mass draws the eye, while from the rainy atmosphere that blurs forms so that they seem to drip emerge the twin plumes of smoke crowning the charred skeleton. Despite this unaccountable effect, the lone passer-by in the foreground (or huddled figures in the other version) seems oblivious to it. Are the inhabitants numbed? Has time erased the traces of violence from the ruins? Is this part of what Boime and Tillier refer to as the politics of oblivion? Both visually and symbolically, the painting pushes the ruins into the background, as if repressing their memory.

Yet contemporaneous reports recount heated debates in Parliament on the preservation or destruction of these ruins (Iandoli 2006: 990-1000). In this context, because the fate of the vestige was not certain by 1879, Lefuel projected a double row of barracks to temporarily house the central Post Office on the northern side and the Prefecture offices on the southern side. These are the source of the parallel plumes of smoke framing the central pavilion. However, they create the impression that the edifice is still smoking, thereby actualising the memory of the Commune in the urban landscape. The painting would then suggest not oblivion but, on the contrary, a statement of still open wounds that echoes in Manet's *Rue Mosnier aux drapeaux* (1878). The symbolism of destruction is still present in the 1880s mundane urban scene, animated by the blurry shapes of omnibus traffic and the forlorn figure in the centre.

Up to the end of the century, Commune vestiges and the efforts of reconstruction and demolition rendered the recent past continually present. Yet the image of Parisian ruins mutated just like the topography, reflecting different experiences of urban space. By 1891, when Zola embarked on writing *La Débâcle*, the Tuileries ruins had been demolished (1883) and Paris was riddled by anarchist plots.<sup>43</sup> From the shocking and uneasy admiration ruins elicited in 1871, they turned into unusual but guilt-free places of leisure by 1888. Moreover, in the intervening years, the context in which Zola produced his work and his vision had changed. The temporal gap was significant in the genesis of *La Débâcle*, allowing Zola to

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<sup>42</sup> Two versions of this painting exist, one featuring a sole figure, discussed here, and another, animated by passers-by circulating in the foreground, as in de Nittis's *Place des Pyramides*.

<sup>43</sup> See Zola's *Paris* (1898). In response to anarchist threats in the 1880s, three laws restricting freedom of expression were passed (1893-94), curtailing 'l'apologie du crime' and anarchist discourses (Tillier 2004: 249). Anarchists claimed the Commune as a founding moment. For the implications of this in further repressing the diffusion of pro-Commune depictions, see Tillier (2004) and Matron (1992).

capitalise on the developments in the iconography and modes of vision pertaining to urban views and applied to modern ruins. The novel registers these transformations of the imaginary of war ruins since 1871.<sup>44</sup> In 1864, Zola defined Realist art as 'l'Ecran transparent, à travers lequel on aperçoit les objets plus ou moins déformés, souffrant des changements plus ou moins sensibles dans leurs lignes et dans leur couleur' (1978: 382). Ieronim Stoichita reads the veil or screen which filters the view as a metaphor for the particular vision of the artist or writer (2015: 22). We can extend the metaphor to other media, which tint the author's view of the subject, constituting *avant-textes* to its representation. Thus, the current state of the city, the documents collected and witnesses consulted, the itineraries chosen, all mediated and inflected Zola's outlook on the events in *La Débâcle*.<sup>45</sup>

This referential level is important because it is founded on the imaginary of ruins that crystallised in the intervening years since the two wars, and the novel feeds off and transposes it in the strategies of constructing Parisian spaces during the Commune, leading to a complex temporal outlook. As in *La Curée*, through the unfolding plot runs an undercurrent of the disasters to come, materialised through proleptic images. References to the iconography and vocabulary of discourses from 1870-71 govern the novel's structure, providing a network of symbolic interconnections; this amounts to a supra-narrative or temporal master-plot of Paris's undoing. Through prolepsis, references to the language of destruction, Classical and Biblical, constitute a first *écran* that inflects representation. The rising tension and dread felt by the besieged Parisians are reflected in the paralysis of the city: 'aucune fabrique, aucune usine n'avait rouvert ses portes. Pas de commerce, pas de travail,' while 'des quartiers entiers s'étaient vidés, les boutiques closes, les façades mortes [...] les rues désertes'. Devoid of citizens and activity, Paris ceases to function like an urban form of organisation, already behaving like dead Pompeii: 'C'était Paris détruit' is the foregone conclusion (876-77). Comparably, following the Communards' disastrous *sortie* in April 1871:

le peu de raison qui restait à Maurice, après tant de secousses et de ruines, s'en allait au vent de fureur [...] La Commune lui apparaissait comme une vengeresse des hontes endurées, comme une libératrice apportant le fer qui ampute, le feu qui purifie. Cela

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<sup>44</sup> Tillier's discussion chooses to ignore this, conflating Zola's depiction of Commune ruins with representations from 1871, quoting from the former to comment on the latter's iconography (2004: 338). He also cites Georges Rouard's paintings of the Cour des Comptes in the late 1880s as an example of conformity with the depictions from 1871 (2004: 352). Nevertheless, Rouard's treatment signals a departure from the initial iconography: the vegetation associated with Romantic ruins was not there and neither was the particular outlook associated with the ruinist tradition of promenades.

<sup>45</sup> Diegetically, these media are often transposed into strategies for filtering the information available to characters, for instance, through newspapers: Henriette reads to the convalescent Jean news of the war, while Colonel de Vineuil accidentally discovers the issue that seals his fate. For more on this, see White (2015).

n'était pas très clair dans son esprit, le lettré en lui évoquait simplement des souvenirs classiques, des villes libres et triomphantes, des fédérations de riches provinces imposant leur loi au monde. (873-74)

Within the chronology of the novel, the figurative ruins and shocks felt by war-traumatised Maurice anticipate the real battery of Paris by Versaillais canon and its burning by the Communards. In the context of the audience's reception and retrospective reading, such ominous overtones cast the destruction of Paris as predestined.

Maurice projects his own *écran* of Classical history onto the desperate situation of the Commune. His musings suggest that the destruction of Paris is necessary and acceptable ('le feu qui purifie'), since the ruins of a great civilisation precede the rise of a great city-state. Maurice's Classical-history reference frame, with its successful examples, can also be read as a retrospective and reversed image of the Commune and its consequences. Retrospectively, the destruction that precedes reconstruction could evoke the experience of Haussmannisation and its ambivalent ruination (Font-Réaulx 2015: 268). Moreover, the recourse to 'souvenirs classiques' antedates Paris's association with ancient cities before the fall of the Commune, while readers would recognise the post-Commune associations of ruins with Classical imagery. These *avant-textes* suggest an instance of metalepsis, which is a 'contamination between the world of the telling and the world of the told: "any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe"' (Genette 1980: 234–35 cited in Pier 2013: par.1). This gesture directly involves the reader, who would recognise the language through which destruction was conceptualised post-event, here anticipating it: Paris's destiny appears inscribed in filigree.

As in *La Curée*, Parisian space articulated through a *personnage réflecteur* (particularly Maurice) weaves together the latter's psychological degradation with that of the environments he intersects, a technique reminiscent of *L'Assommoir*. In this gradual process of undoing, the toppling of the Colonne de Vendôme destabilises a *lieu de mémoire* that materialised and inscribed within Paris's topography the history told by Maurice's grandfather and his memory: this association triggers Maurice's guilt in response to the iconoclastic gesture (875). The monument itself was a metonymy of other times and spaces, sublimating the sites of Napoleonic victories into symbols of French bravery. His faith in the Commune is further shaken when he identifies the agents carrying out Paris's purification and defence by fire: 'l'œuvre terrible pouvait donc être mauvaise, qu'un tel homme en était l'ouvrier?' (880-81). Maurice's confusion is echoed by the street filling with smoke, implying the loss of clear vision and the hopes in the Commune going up in smoke. The deconstruction of the

character's psychology provides the means to construct the Commune's mental state through its relationship with the city, which stands under the sign of paranoia and disillusionment, alienating individuals from their environment. Thus, Maurice's commitment to 'ce rêve fou' is also due to 'un sourd mécontentement contre la Commune elle-même' (876).<sup>46</sup> This suggests a double disillusionment, with the Commune and with Napoleon I, first architect of France's ambitions after 1789 and of Paris's dream of grandeur. The failure of Paris to lead the world and its fall after it was remade by Haussmann correspond to the failure of the Napoleonic dream in its latest incarnation, the Second Empire.<sup>47</sup> The shattering of these illusions reverberates throughout the novel's third part in the juxtaposition between human and urban collapse. This is comparable to the hidden traces of architectural and human disfigurements in Manet's *La Rue Mosnier aux drapeaux* (1878) or Baudelaire's human ruins.

The progressive degradation of Maurice's mind and of urban space under the Commune culminates in his physical and psychical collapse when the conflagration of the Palais de la Légion d'Honneur lights up Paris's skyline.<sup>48</sup> In the space disrupted by barricades and fire, the Versaillais devise alternative strategies of circulation, upsetting the demarcation of boundaries (interior – exterior, public – private): in rue du Bac, 'les soldats, n'osant prendre la barricade de front, étaient en train de cheminer à travers les jardins et les maisons, trouant les murs à coups de pioche'. If Maurice's fevered mind had envisioned Paris engulfed by flames, now the reverse reaction is registered, as the fire and smoke consuming the buildings in rue du Bac also asphyxiate him (882). Just as the symbolic enflaming of the imagination turns into concrete fires, so Paris's revolutionary topography redefined by fire is marked by sudden reversals or cancellations of opposites. Meanwhile, the limited views created by obstacles (barricades, fire and smoke) recall the unexpected vistas and interrupted modes of circulation in Braun's and Andrieu's Saint-Cloud.

These aspects are played up in the climactic reunion of Jean and Maurice, constructed

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<sup>46</sup> 'Rêve fou' refers to Maurice's dark reverie of seeing Paris destroyed: 'la ville géante en cendre, plus rien que des tisons fumants sur les deux rives, la plaie guérie par le feu, une catastrophe sans nom' (875). Anticipating the conflagration, these images recall Corot's *Le Rêve. Paris incendié*, which he associated with a premonitory vision (see Tillier 2004: 96).

<sup>47</sup> The transformations that had modernised the capital are turned against their intended use, their function perverted: 'quartiers minés,' 'catacombes bourrées de poudre,' and 'monuments prêts à sauter,' 'fils électriques réunissant les fourneaux pour qu'une seule étincelle les allumât tous d'un coup,' and flammable substances 'de quoi changer les rues et les places en torrents, en mers de flammes' recall the underground tunnels reinforcing districts, the catacombs that became tourist attractions, and the new lighting system (875-76).

<sup>48</sup> Zola describes in parallel the movements of Maurice and the Versaillais army between 22 and 23 May. Maurice's movements correspond to strategic sites in the history of the ensuing street-fights (rues de l'Université, du Bac, de Lille).

around the pivotal change of perspective, from Maurice, behind his barricade, to Jean, another *personnage réflecteur*. The figurative and literal fires that threaten to unravel the fabric of Paris and the minds of the two characters become the ultimate element of destruction and illumination. As Jean unknowingly wounds Maurice, they recognise each other in a fatal moment. The oxymoron of the blinding revelation ('Les incendies les éclairaient d'une aveuglante clarté') accomplishes the psychological and physical collapse of Maurice, which is juxtaposed with the image of the surrounding houses crumbling under the flames: 'Autour d'eux, les incendies flambaient plus haut, les fenêtres vomissaient de grandes flammes rouges, tandis qu'on entendait, à l'intérieur, l'écroulement embrasé des plafonds' (884). The parallel destruction of the human and the architectonic suggests that the moral and material degradation imputed to Paris and justifying its sacrifice is fulfilled precisely by the Communards. In Zola, the agents of Commune retribution, the damage and ultimate futility of covering their retreat through fire cast a shadow over the Commune's project for community building. The conjunction of the human and the architectural suffering the mutilations of war under the sign of fire harks back to the organic image of the city, emblematised by Gautier's 'visage balaféré et marqué d'affreuses brûlures' (*VR* 310).

Zola constructs the disfiguration of Paris into a symbolic journey fully exploiting the imagery of Biblical and cataclysmic destruction. By embarking Jean and Maurice on a boat in their bid to reach the safety of rue des Orties, the narrative charts the devastation of fire and conflict onto the cityscape through an ingenious form of moving panorama. This consists of the following mechanism:

Une toile, tendue entre deux cylindres et sur laquelle sont peints des paysages pittoresques, défile devant les yeux des spectateurs, installés dans un décor de théâtre (wagons ou bateau à vapeur). (Lumbroso 1999: 25)

Immobile in the boat, while the landscape unfolds before their eyes, Jean and Maurice witness major landmarks being consumed by fire, a re-enactment of the process of ruination. Olivier Lumbroso argues for a 'topologie de "façade"' that directs the gaze to a linear reading of the landscape, thus enhancing the effect of a stage set (1999: 28). In Zola, however, he also notes the emphasis on the structuring of information, which becomes available to characters and readers in sequences. This progression underscores the unfolding of the moving panorama in time, foregrounding the idea of 'spectacles fortement narrativisés' (*Ibid.*).

Significantly though, as in Marville's photography, Zola's landscape is itself a narrative, constituting at once the stage, subject, and action:



Ni l'un ni l'autre ne parlaient plus, épouvantés de l'exécrable spectacle qui se déroulait. [...] Quand ils furent au pont de Solférino, ils virent d'un regard les deux quais en flammes.

À gauche, c'étaient les Tuileries qui brûlaient. Dès la tombée de la nuit, les communards avaient mis le feu aux deux bouts du palais, au pavillon de Flore et au pavillon de Marsan; et, rapidement, le feu gagnait le pavillon de l'Horloge, au centre, où était préparée toute une mine, des tonneaux de poudre entassés dans la salle des Maréchaux. En ce moment, les bâtiments intermédiaires jetaient, par leurs fenêtres crevées, des tourbillons de fumée rousse que traversaient de longues flammèches bleues. Les toits s'embrasaient, gercés de lézardes ardentes, s'entrouvrant, comme une terre volcanique, sous la poussée du brasier intérieur. [...] Le pavillon de Flore, allumé le premier, flambait [...] dans un ronflement formidable. Le pétrole, dont on avait enduit le parquet et les tentures, donnait aux flammes une intensité telle, qu'on voyait les fers des balcons se tordre et que les hautes cheminées monumentales éclataient, avec leurs grands soleils sculptés, d'un rouge de braise.

Puis, à droite, c'était d'abord le palais de la Légion d'Honneur [...] Ensuite, c'était le palais du Conseil d'État, [...] vomissant des flammes [...] Sur la façade du bord de l'eau, la ligne nette de l'attique se détachait en une rampe noircie, au milieu des langues rouges [...] tandis que les colonnades, les entablements, les frises, les sculptures apparaissaient avec une puissance de relief extraordinaire, dans un aveuglant reflet de fournaise. (892-93)

The boat's progress determines different perspectives through another *templa* pattern reflecting the gaze turning left and right (as in *La Curée*): the characters register a 180-degree view of both banks, distinguishing details as they come into sight. Yet Zola's description goes beyond the façades evoked by Lumbroso, providing inside information about the position of incendiary devices and singling out the monuments most affected and most represented subsequently, as we saw with Braquehais's and Gautier's examples. Moreover, if Gautier and de Goncourt dwelled on the chromatic effects of fire and petrol on the ruins, Zola's text operates *à rebours*, at once nodding to the discourses of 1871 and antedating the coloristic experience before the buildings become ruins. Similarly, the detailed evocation of classicising elements highlighted by fire recalls their privileged place in representations from 1871.

However, the very recreation of Paris burning as an immersive environment obliquely gestures to the illusion cultivated in post-Commune representations, which nourished the imaginary of a whole city in ruins. The idea of stasis adds to this impression, imprisoning characters and readers in a landscape of fire and ruin. This is underlined by the contrast between the blinding illumination of the buildings nearby and the absolute darkness beyond:

les autres quartiers lointains, [...] n'existaient plus. À droite, à gauche, la violence des incendies éblouissait, creusait au-delà un abîme noir [...] une énormité ténébreuse, un néant, comme si Paris tout entier, gagné par le feu, fût dévoré, eût déjà disparu dans une éternelle nuit. (894)

The resemblance to a mobile panorama becomes more eloquent as Zola's description seems

almost a *mise-en-scène* of Martin's *Pandaemonium* (1841) (Fig. 18). Still, whereas Martin's river of flame illuminated the buildings on the bank, Zola's burning edifices are reflected in the Seine, enhancing the impression of suspension in an infernal medium:

La barque [...] semblait portée par un fleuve de braise [...] entre les palais en flammes, ainsi que dans une rue démesurée de ville maudite, brûlant aux deux bords d'une chaussée de lave en fusion. (893)

Just as the burning houses and barricades dissolved the outlines and functions of the street, here the reflection cancels the boundaries between solid and liquid, up and down, highlighting the flatness and oneiric quality of this space. This is a far cry from Ten Cate's subdued reflection of the Tuileries. If, in the ruins of Saint-Cloud, rubble produced new paths across the collapsed street and palace, fire becomes a bridge between the river and banks ('une rue démesurée de ville maudite'), an oxymoron of solid and liquid: 'une chaussée de lave en fusion'. References to an infernal atmosphere and Maurice's delirium suggest an additional symbolic level of the journey: a descent into the underworld.

The Pompeian cataclysm and Dantean echoes of the City of Dis ('ville maudite') join the Biblical language of destruction, explicitly referencing Sodom and Gomorrah in images that evoke the Second Empire's association with decadence. Maurice's fevered vision transforms fire into a metaphor for spectacle in the guise of a ball and each symptom of the palace's collapse is correlated with the *démésure* and debauchery for which the Tuileries had become a symbol:

Il évoquait les galas de Gomorrhe et de Sodome, les musiques, les fleurs, les jouissances monstrueuses, les palais crevant de telles débauches, éclairant l'abomination des nudités d'un tel luxe de bougies, qu'ils s'étaient incendiés eux-mêmes. Soudain, il y eut un fracas épouvantable. C'était, aux Tuileries, le feu [...] qui atteignait la salle des Maréchaux [...] Une gerbe immense monta, un panache qui emplit le ciel noir, le bouquet flamboyant de l'effroyable fête.

- Bravo, la danse! cria Maurice, comme à une fin de spectacle, lorsque tout retombe aux ténèbres. (894)

This distorted vision recalls Frédéric's perspective on revolution as a spectacle, functioning here as a moral and aesthetic filter for experience. The journey across burning Paris is crafted in a 'fauve' key, through violent chiaroscuro effects that indulge in the spectacular, recapitulating the tropes of apocalyptic ruination. By comparison, Gautier's pilgrimage to the ruin sites preserved the contradictions of attraction and repulsion, and the oscillating tone of wonder, outrage, sadness, and hope in the immediate aftermath. Moreover, the writer, photographers and artists evoked the ruins' modern setting. In Zola, modernity emerges through a game of citations, as the instances of metalepsis allow previous discourses on (war)

ruins to peek through. The gesture amounts to referencing the history of the ruin leitmotif, as it had developed over the past two decades, even as Zola looks back to the Romantic period with its exuberant, spectacular rendition.

The thoughtful studies of Le Secq on disappearing landmarks and the intimate embrace of walls in narrow streets or poster-plastered intersections in Marville's photography seem subdued and contemplative, created in a minor key. These give way to a more urgent and violent representation of ruins expressed through major harmonies that evoke Mannerist caprices or Romantic scenes: fires and bombing shape landscapes that defy modernity, but remain grounded in it. The shells of public buildings whose surviving classicising elements conjure past ages and appear to have acquired the patina of time do not deceive. Instead, drawing on Carlo Ginzburg's 'conjectural paradigm,' they offer clues and details helping us see how architectonic waste can be re-inscribed into a semiotic system to render eloquent the outlook of an event (1992: 124). Arguably, writers, artists, and photographers achieved this by citing Classical vestiges and cataclysms, offset by references to the recent history of the ruin leitmotif. Their approaches problematise the relationship between literary and photographic discourses and vestiges as dislocating trauma. In fact, post-Commune ruin representations posit and resist the dissolution of identity, language and meaning into matter. Zola constructs this process *à rebours*: the dissolution of identity leads to the destruction of the city. By comparison, in visual media, in the absence of human agency, the convergence of impossible spaces and times promises multiple narrative possibilities. Old and new, the lost city is celebrated, mourned and collected. And throughout this process, people in fact continue to inhabit the living city around these ruins.

## Conclusion

### Beyond the Rubble of Paris

In this thesis, I have followed two main lines of inquiry concerning representations of ruins in Paris. The first traced the transformation of ruins as a literary and artistic leitmotif in relation to a new environment, the modern city. The second investigated how representations of ruins conceptualise the relationship between Paris and Parisians in two contexts: urban systematisation and wartime destruction. My analysis established how the unconventional nature of Parisian ruins, which were not edifices eroded by time but recent, sudden, and short-lived products of sustained demolition or conflict, spread throughout the capital rather than isolated, led to new literary and pictorial strategies and techniques for depicting these rapidly mutating environments. Since this project addresses the development of a cultural motif, the focus on the aesthetic remained central, allowing me to examine how textual and visual media construct and distort the image of urban space in ruins. Their disruptive presence was perceived and turned into an emblem of the transforming city, giving rise to epistemological, ontological, and aesthetic questions. These concern conceptual categories (civilisation, history) and the nature and interactions between time, space, and memory, all of them in relation to the individual and the urban environment.

In charting the ambivalent reactions to Second Empire urbanism, my research showed that individual projects, documenting and exploiting aesthetically the city's matrix (Le Secq, *PQSV*) precede the historical and topographic apparatus accompanying Haussmann's renovation project to record the appearance of spaces before intervention. The loss of familiar places and historically charged edifices and neighbourhoods vied with the awareness of the sordid conditions of many such environments. However, the imminence of their disappearance invested them with new value, the historical charge validating aesthetic appreciation and encouraging an aesthetic experience (*PQSV*, Thorigny). Meanwhile, poetic and visual discourses valorised the creative potential of architectonic fragments (Baudelaire, Le Secq). In turn, the perception of Haussmann's aesthetics of uniformity in infrastructure and architecture, and the Second Empire's overwrought style was transformed after the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune. The ruination of both emblematic urban presences and new spaces brought their historical importance and implicit aesthetic value to the fore, as part of

the capital's cultural heritage. The fascination with the ruins of civil architecture in photography and Gautier's writings indicates a change in the attitude towards Haussmannian spaces, initially denounced: in ruins, modern architecture previously considered vulgar and monotonous drew the appreciation of writers, photographers and artists, even leading to the organisation of tours of ruined Paris by Thomas Cook. In the context of 1871, I have argued for a complex use of the iconography of Classical vestiges in modernity. The narratives engendered by Parisian ruins address all the paradoxes of such a situation, while their inscription within a cultural framework pertaining to ruination contextualises the ravages of war as part of history. Thus, representations engage with the leitmotif's recent history (its relation to urban transformation), as well as with the cultural history of ruins; this amounts to an auto-referential dimension characteristic of modern aesthetics. In other words, the aesthetic lens and modern treatment anchor vestiges in the realities of post-war Paris, allowing for a reflection on recent traumas and their relation to history through a cultural and art-historical perspective.

Through dialogue and close examination of case studies, my interdisciplinary approach highlighted the interactions between various disciplines and arts. Literature, journalism, painting, and photography borrowed and adapted strategies of representation to render an experience that no other medium had recorded unfolding before: living in a city bestrewn by ruins.<sup>1</sup> Comparative analyses and contextualising discourses helped correct critical appraisals and re-establish artistic authority (Marville, Braquehais), by allowing meanings to emerge within their intended framework. Moreover, the focus on the aesthetic dimension illuminated the larger implications set in motion by the process of creative reflection, bearing on questions of identity, history and urban politics. The sublimation and distortion of the external world entailed by any creative act is rooted in nineteenth-century discourse. We can cite Zola's concept of the screen through which writers and artists perceive the world or Gautier's observations regarding the aesthetic reflexes conditioning artists in their movements, even in the gravest of circumstances. Significantly, the perspectives construed through such representations had broader consequences, inflecting the concepts of urban identity and contributing to the crystallisation of patrimonial politics, which valorised, for instance, the imagery of *le vieux Paris*. Writers, photographers and artists, many actively promoting the preservation of Paris's built history alongside official institutions charged with

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<sup>1</sup> See Introduction for Hubert Robert, the first to represent this experience, depicting contemporaneous ruins due to demolition, construction, and accidents in the eighteenth century.

this mission, continued to represent spaces that were disappearing or transforming. This nurtured a consciousness and appreciation of old and new spaces, valued for their historic, aesthetic and picturesque potential, ultimately leading to policies specifically aimed at protecting Paris's urban heritage (Fiori 2012: 108, 111-29).

Furthermore, we should recall that those who depicted the city in ruins inhabited this environment. The way in which they assimilated Paris's transformations into aesthetic objects at once reflected on and determined how the mutating spaces would be remembered in the collective imaginary. This means that, as a refracting lens for viewing urban change, the ruin leitmotif lends itself to the creation of cultural images of Paris, which, in turn, are brought to bear on the inhabitants' attitude towards the capital and their impact on urban policies to this day.<sup>2</sup> Thus, images of Parisian ruins draw as much on contingent conditions as on the motifs' literary and iconographic tradition, underpinned by accumulated strata of meanings. Nineteenth-century Parisians appropriated the model of Classical ruins, updating it to correspond to the needs of modern expressions of urban life. Therefore, the ruin leitmotif functioned as a lexicon, providing a common language to which readers and viewers could refer to articulate their own experience. Critics argue that nowadays, promoting cultural images reinforces the identity of a community, but in the nineteenth century, these images played a different part, often coinciding with, or helping forge, a collective cultural identity.<sup>3</sup> Representations of Paris's ruins form part of this heritage of 'image-cultural memory,' in Birgitt Mersmann's terms, articulating, on the one hand, how Parisians conceived of their capital and, on the other, how they intended their city to be perceived (2009: 108).

Imminent and radical mutation and the uncertain prospects regarding the new city prompted discourses seeking to define Parisian topography and cultures (*physiognomies*), hence an urban identity. Although conceived in the present and explicitly addressing contemporaries, who were not exempt from the danger of forgetting what their city looked like, in the long term, their message reached out to a recipient who would have no other means of understanding Paris before its systematisation. This Other is a temporally distant incarnation of Parisians or Frenchmen. Joséph Méry imagined future archaeologists travelling from an Atlas *phalanstère* to explore the remains of the capital (*Les Ruines de Paris*, 1856);

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<sup>2</sup> For another case of cultural mutation, see nineteenth-century Copenhagen, where such a sensibility towards urban culture manifests itself in architectural and urban developments, representations of these, and the experience and cultural products they generate (Steiner 2014: 5).

<sup>3</sup> For the relationships between cultural images and 'cultural memory,' see Mersmann's discussion of Wolfgang Raible's concept of 'cultural community' (2009: 108).

Alfred Franklin conceived of an exploration mission from the colony at Nouméa (*Les Ruines de Paris en 4875*, 1875).<sup>4</sup> We can correlate the gesture of defining Paris for future audiences with the emergence of cultural images: these include both *le vieux Paris* and Paris's ruins discovered by people for whom nineteenth-century culture and civilisation would be alien. In each case, the message of Paris's transformation exploits a cultural construct, a projection of how Paris could be remembered or imagined, mingling fears and aspirations.

Despite having different premises, these examples share the perspective of an urban archaeology with Eugène Atget's photography on *le vieux Paris*. Like Marville, he captured old streets and dingy buildings devoid of people, as in *Rue de la Montagne-Sainte-Genève* (1898) (Fig. 1). Stories of future archaeologists uncovering the ruins of nineteenth-century Paris problematise the legibility of sources based on artefacts: architectural remains prove to be misleading to those who would decipher their purpose in the absence of any other knowledge about Parisian culture and history. Comparably, Atget's particular attention to urban furniture, merchandise and scripts populating deserted streets posits a similar question: how would Paris and its culture be understood if all that was left were the material objects and traces of daily life? His composition seems to test out the eloquence of merchandise, *affiches*, *enseignes*, and architecture, their potential to embody, or indeed perform, modernity. The stability of centuries-old streets is juxtaposed with the ephemeral markers of modern culture – from ever-changing fashions and posters to vehicles, bespeaking constant movement, circulation, and exchange. By evacuating the inhabitants, it is as if Atget were conducting an autopsy on the material remains of nineteenth-century culture, hoping to detect therein traces of the spirit of modernity. The quiet clash between the usual noise of a peopled city and the silent objects inhabiting its streets create the impression of an unreal space, as in a dream-version of Paris or a projection of its modernity in the negative: the living, bustling capital appears as still and dead as Pompeii. Through the tension created between the image of empty streets and the audience's knowledge that those streets would be busily circulated, the photograph opens up space for the contemplation of modernity brought to a standstill.

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<sup>4</sup> Franklin's short story merits more attention as it posits a complex relationship between Paris, the city the Communards attempted to destroy, and Nouméa, the colony where they were exiled. That the future French Empire returns thence to the ruins of Paris casts an interesting vision, even more so since 1878 would be the year of a bloody uprising by natives in the colony. The French exiles' actions distinguished them and paved the way to the full amnesty in 1881. The victory of the deported Parisians over the savage natives signalled the experiment's success: the former were rehabilitated by their contact with Nature and, in this state of grace, would now help civilise the latter (Robb 2010: 163-64).

Turning realities into cultural images, of which Paris in ruins is one vision and Atget's another, remains relevant to the debate on urban development. A deserted *vieux Paris* as a reversed image of the flux of modernity can be linked to another perspective on the life and death of urban culture, namely, the awareness that transformation is vital to the city's existence. To paraphrase Gautier, a city prevented from undergoing change dies (see Chapter I). The fear of a fossilised Paris or museum-metropolis has resurfaced in contemporary debates on patrimonial policies. Designating historical areas and preserving them in a particular state and stage of their existence risks subtracting them from historical processes or falsifying history. For example, turning protected areas into commercial spaces drives out the inhabitants, leaving architecture to create an illusion of atemporality.

Conversely, the extent to which a place's disappearance impairs the character of the city is a contested topic. Nineteenth-century Parisians confronted this issue when the Communards destroyed public edifices and monuments. The Hôtel de Ville is a case in point, embodying urban policies at a particularly charged point in Paris's history. Appreciated in its original form as an epitome of French Renaissance architecture, enlarged in the nineteenth century, destroyed in 1871 and admired in its ruined state, it was swiftly rebuilt. In the post-war years, this identical reconstruction was not considered a falsification of the building's history, but a symbolical gesture towards restoring Paris's identity. Antithetically, in 1883, after a decade of debates about its fate, the Tuileries palace was razed. One of the consequences of this act was the foundation of the definitive society for the preservation of Parisian architecture, La Société des Amis des Monuments parisiens in 1884 (Fiori 2012: 24).

Patrimonial organisations have gained in power, promoting the idea that innovation should occur within a framework that respects the history, character and tradition of built environments. Still, the balance between change and preservation remains a neuralgic point in discussions of Paris's urban renewal, as demonstrated by two current projects involving prominent landmarks: Les Halles and La Samaritaine. The fate of Baltard's Les Halles in the 1970s showed that political and commercial interests often outplay patrimonial principles. Les Halles and La Samaritaine today reopen these questions. Still, Michael Allen's research on preservation paradigms posits that 'preservationists are mediators between cultural heritage and economic demands', not inhibiting the dynamics of urban and economic development and modernisation, but ensuring that these are achieved in such a way as to maintain the desirability of cities (2014: para. 1). He further argues that even when a building such as La Samaritaine is lost to demolition, what is gained is a reinforcement in preservation laws and



an 'enhanced value of developments that incorporate elements of the past and the continuity of urban character' (Allen 2014: para. 1).<sup>5</sup> This position bespeaks the sensitivity and desire to inhabit a harmonious environment, hence the importance of the aesthetic dimension of the city. It demonstrates how Haussmann's project produced a mutation in the Parisians' attitude to their city: large-scale systematisation forcefully brought into focus the application of aesthetic principles in urban planning and construction. Moreover, Haussmann's vision of uniformity and linearity came to be appreciated and desired, as proven by regulations aiming to maintain an aesthetically coherent vision of urban configuration (Loi Bonnier, 1902). Paris thus incorporated the aesthetic component in its durable urban development policies (Olsen 1986). Consequently, beauty, as harmony and order, became a principle in urbanism that present-day Parisians defend.

Responses to the intervention concerning La Samaritaine, touching the heart of the city, bear comparison with other nineteenth-century projects to document edifices before their disappearance. La Samaritaine has been an emblematic building since its beginnings as a department store (1869) with a concept rivalling that of Le Bon Marché. From the end of the nineteenth century to the 1930s, it extended to several buildings on the quai du Pont-Neuf, acquiring the Art-Nouveau and Art-Déco design that established its iconicity for the rest of the twentieth century. Currently, one of the buildings has been demolished while another is under rehabilitation, but its functions will change to those of hotel, social accommodation, and offices. This diversification of functions will close off part of the heritage buildings, limiting access into what was essentially a public place. The Fondation Louis Vuitton, its present owner, opened a dedicated space informing visitors about the project and, in a swansong gesture to the department store, invited contemporary photographers to create works focusing on La Samaritaine. The 2015 exhibition 'Ma Samaritaine' featured

Sarah Moon and Jan Henrik Engström.

Sarah Moon's Parisian views from the store's uppermost windows use these as a framing device, reminiscent of Zola's *écran*, and their cracked and stained appearance evokes fragile glass negatives. Moreover, the large-grain, high-sensitivity film confers on the images a

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<sup>5</sup> The project remains controversial, with judicial decisions revised as recently as June 2015. Approved in 2008, the plan proposed by Japanese architecture firm SANAA was contested by patrimonial associations in 2011 (La Société pour la protection des paysages et de l'esthétique de la France, SOS Paris). In 2015, the authorisation was repealed, but, in the meantime, the Rivoli façade from 1852 had been demolished. The court ruled that the project featuring a wavy, curtain-like façade in etched glass 'ne correspond pas à l'obligation d'insertion de la construction projetée dans le tissu urbain environnant' (cited in Lautréamont 2015: para. 5). By June 2015, the Council of State, the highest instance, revised the decision, authorising the continuation of the project.

rough, textured aspect, strengthening their similarity with nineteenth-century photographic techniques such as the calotype, which used a paper negative resulting in graphic effects. Filtered through nineteenth-century scopic modes by the manipulation of the medium and technique, the compositions reveal an essential aspect about the building's relationship to the surrounding urban framework: its position engenders a unique view onto the city. Each of the windows through which Sarah Moon looks out illuminates a Parisian landscape that is only visible or possible from this point (Fig. 2). Once this window-frame changes, disappears or becomes unavailable, so will the particular image and experience of the capital it afforded. The frame that outlines and reveals a specific facet of Paris's character would be lost, save for its record and transfer onto the photographic medium: 'Aujourd'hui, ces images sont déjà des documents. La transformation est en marche, qui les rend pour la plupart impossibles à refaire' (Caujolle 2015: 5). The photographic document does not stop the passage of time. Instead, it prolongs the past's existence 'in another dimension, between site and sight,' as Thomas Elsaesser argues (2009: 38). The past is here both the store as a physical presence and the image of Paris it conjures from its vantage point.

By comparison, Engström's photography plays with another nineteenth-century trope, the panorama, as he records for the last time the famous cityscape view once offered by La Samaritaine's rooftop café. His images form a sequence of panels that follow the observer's gaze turning 360 degrees on the department store's terrace. As with Zola's view from Montmartre, this is not a conventional panorama. Rather, each photograph is independent and charts an intimate journey. For instance, the views foregrounding the store's rooftop draw attention to the viewing space, focusing on the immediate texture and seriality of architectural elements (Fig. 3). The narrow frame, which gives this sense of intimacy and immediacy, is reminiscent of Gustave Caillebotte's snow-covered rooftops or Hippolyte Bayard's photography (Fig. 4-5). The subjective gaze, limited and selective, also emerges in the compositions dominated by a giant letter from La Samaritaine's *enseigne* (Fig. 3). Whether viewed independently or as part of the series, in each image, the letter would be as undecipherable as those seen through the window of Caillebotte's *Intérieur, Femme à la fenêtre* (Fig. 6). In Caillebotte, the legible becomes exclusively visible, as Stoichita argues, since the letters appear tantalisingly clear but refuse to assemble into a word, rejecting meaning (2013: 54). Likewise, in Engström's photographs, letters are no longer signs, but objects, as the giant shapes would refuse to reveal their secret without the title. They function, instead, as another filter, limiting the view of the city and adding their enigma to the

mysteries of Paris. Moreover, each letter and photograph participates in a deconstruction of Paris as well as of the iconic store. In Sarah Moon, the dark and cracked glass transposed the store's fragility and dissolution onto the Parisian cityscape. In Engström's images, the dismembering of La Samaritaine's *enseigne* anticipates that of the department store.

While it is dangerous to establish directly causal relationships between the ruins of Paris and the developments in modes of representation, the discourses examined throughout this thesis attest to how the transformation activated a more acute perception of Paris's space. The power of making and unmaking urban topography coincides with exploiting the potential of unfinished or fragmentary spaces (Baudelaire, Gautier, Manet), the ambiguity of beginnings and ends and the promise of multiple possible narratives (Flaubert, Marville). Ruined urban spaces lend themselves to fluid chronotopes (Gautier's *tableaux*, photography in 1871) or open-ended stories, as in Franklin's short story, where the reports from the explorers of Paris's ruins back to Nouméa stop abruptly. Or, on the contrary, the finished spaces develop an ambiguous relation to time, as Atget's streets borrow the stillness of deserted Pompeii. In light of Gautier's observations about cities that die when their spaces are no longer used, the absence of people introduces a note of anxiety about whether the city is alive or dead. Ruin and death seem inscribed in filigree, as the latent dimension of the still-whole streets. Concomitantly, the compositions lovingly reinterpret Marville's model, in a manner, celebrating the survival of the same city he walked. Atget's photography registers this survival, recognises the value of this topography, and records it in the face of potential disappearance. This means that the awareness of the dynamics of urban change and growth has been taken to heart: no space is taken for granted, and often Atget captures the same process of ongoing change as Marville.

Between the consciousness of the historical and affective value of architectonic heritage and of the necessity of the city's overhaul in the face of dilapidation and insufficient infrastructure, compromise juxtaposes demolition with the construction of a corpus of documents simultaneously preserving the memory of disappearing sites and recording their disappearance. A history of compromise marks the development of patrimonial conscience, alternating loss and success in preserving historic landmarks with the growing sensitivity towards conservation and the elaboration of laws and policies on urbanism. This awareness encompasses the appreciation of Haussmannian places and spaces, from Caillebotte to Proust, and the cult for *le vieux Paris* exemplified by Atget. Urban history and identity challenge

architects to innovate while respecting the character of particular landscapes and environments within the city. What part do representations play within this context? Visions of future ruins or potential destruction stress the interdependence of culture and civilisation. The latter is a material expression of the values articulated by the former. Yet the loss of either leads to incomprehensibility regarding the people who created them in Franklin's future Paris or to social dissolution in Zola's *Paris* (1898), where anarchism attacks architecture, the embodiment of cultural values. Personal experiences of navigating unstable and radically mutated spaces, the documentation apparatus established under Haussmann, the press-coverage that the systematisation elicited, and the cultural products it encouraged sensitised and maintained the inhabitants' interest over two decades. Representations take these contingencies to a different level, sublimating experiences into cultural images and the new urban sensibilities into collective psychologies, exploring fears and desires about the self-projected identity of Paris and Parisians. Depictions of Paris's dissolution develop within an iconographic and symbolical culture of ruin, which, in turn, shapes the outlook of contemporaries on events like the capital's renovation or wartime destruction. If we understand how cultural images, memory and representations constitute, and function within, a system (or image culture) that forms the urban imaginary, this knowledge can be used by anthropologists, urbanists, architects and sociologists to study the alienation of the individual from the built environment today and work towards countering it, and developing sustainable urban and social policies.

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