

Université de Montréal

Modernizing Mount Royal Park: Montréal's Jungle in the 1950s

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Résumé

Durant les années 1950, les autorités municipales, sous la pression du département de la police, ont demandé le déboisement d'une section du parc du Mont-Royal. Cette section, communément appelée la « Jungle » et principalement composée de broussailles, de buissons et d'arbres, était fréquentée par une clientèle considérée comme indésirable. Cette dernière comprenait, essentiellement, des alcooliques, des voyous, des pervers, et, surtout, des homosexuels. Leur éradication s'est alors déployée selon un plan en trois étapes qui avait pour objectif de simplifier les techniques de surveillance utilisées par le département de la police. D'abord, une augmentation de l'éclairage, puis, le déboisement de la « Jungle », et, finalement, la construction d'une route, aujourd'hui connue sous le nom de Camillien-Houde. Le parc devenait ainsi plus accessible et plus sécuritaire. Les coupes, que l'on a appelées les « coupes de la moralité », ont eu un effet considérable sur l'environnement et la composition écologique du parc, donnant, entre autres, aux Montréalais, l'impression que le parc était devenu chauve (ce qui lui conféra d'ailleurs le surnom de Mont Chauve).

Les transformations du parc du Mont-Royal n'étaient cependant pas limitées à sa Jungle. En fait, des modifications furent aussi mises en application dans d'autres sections considérées comme sous-développées. La métamorphose du parc et de sa « Jungle » était un acte de développement caractéristique de l'ère moderniste de la planification du Montréal d'après-guerre. La re-planification du parc du Mont-Royal témoigne ainsi d'une volonté sans bornes des autorités d'instaurer la moralité et la modernité dans la ville, volonté qui aura pour conséquence d'altérer la composition écologique du parc. C'est ce qui sera à l'origine d'une campagne nommée « Save-the-Mountain Movement », qui a cherché à empêcher la modernisation de l'espace et milité pour la réhabilitation du parc en tant que boisé paisible.

Mots Clés :

Parc du Mont-Royal, Mont Chauve, Jungle, voie Camillien-Houde, Montréal, Histoire Urbaine, Modernité, Moralité, Homosexualité, Histoire Environnementale

Abstract

During the 1950s, the municipal authorities, under pressure from the Police Department, called for the clearing of a section of Mount Royal Park—the so-called “Jungle” (composed mainly of undergrowth, bushes, and trees)—where a community of undesirable Park patrons had established themselves. This cohort of undesirables was understood as being composed mainly of alcoholics, thugs, perverts and most importantly homosexuals. Their eradication was undertaken through a threefold plan which would simplify the techniques of surveillance used by the Police Department; this would be achieved through (1) increased lighting, (2) clearing the Jungle, (3) construction of a roadway, now known as the Camillien-Houde roadway, thus making the Park more accessible and safe. The cuts, known as the *Morality Cuts*, had a lasting effect on the environmental and ecological composition of the Park, with the immediate repercussion of “balding” the Park, thereby giving it the nickname of Mount Baldy.

Yet Mount Royal Park’s transformation was not limited to its Jungle. In fact, the transformation was undertaken in a number of the Park’s sections which were deemed undeveloped. The development Mount Royal Park and of its Jungle were therefore acts of development, under the umbrella of Montréal’s modernist postwar planning. Indeed, the re-planning of Mount Royal Park testifies to the unbounded will of the authorities to instill morality and modernity within the city, going to lengths that ultimately altered the ecological composition of the Park. This would in the end lead to an all out campaign named the Save-the-Mountain Movement, which sought to end the modernist encroachment of this space and rehabilitate the Park as a wooded and tranquil environment.

Key words:

Mount Royal Park, Mount Baldy, Jungle, Camillien-Houde Roadway, Montréal, Urban History, Modernity, Morality, Homosexuality, Environmental History

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Abbreviations

<i>AVM</i>	<i>Archives Ville de Montréal</i>
<i>AUM</i>	<i>Archives Université de Montréal</i>
<i>BAnQ</i>	<i>Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec</i>
<i>CCAA</i>	<i>Canadian Centre for Architecture Archives</i>
<i>CAL</i>	<i>Civic Action League</i>
<i>CMP</i>	<i>Comité de moralité publique</i>
<i>FAB</i>	<i>Fonds André Bouchard</i>
<i>FCE</i>	<i>Fonds Comité exécutif</i>
<i>FPDM</i>	<i>Fonds Pierre Des Marais</i>
<i>FSG</i>	<i>Fonds Service du greffe</i>
<i>FSP</i>	<i>Fonds Service des Parcs</i>
<i>HSF</i>	<i>Hazen Sise fonds</i>
<i>MCC</i>	<i>Montreal Citizens' Committee</i>
<i>MPPA</i>	<i>Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association</i>
<i>MTC</i>	<i>Montreal Transportation Corporation</i>
<i>MUA</i>	<i>McGill University Archives</i>
<i>SAI</i>	<i>Service des affaires institutionnelles</i>

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Introduction

Mount Royal has never, and never was intended to be, a formal, urban park designed for intensive use, where many park structures are appropriate and a promenade of great crowds is always part of the fun. On the contrary, it was conceived in 1877[sic] by Olmsted, as a so-called “natural” wooded landscape, subtly modified for human use... a ‘romantic’ park, if you like... Such a park is intended for the tranquil enjoyment of nature.¹

—Hazen Sise, Landscape Architect, 1961



Figure 1: *Situated in Montréal’s downtown core, Mount Royal (in the background) has loomed as an important urban park since 1876. This photograph illustrates at once the proximity of the Park to modern facilities as well as its bare natural foliage during the 1960s. Archives Ville de Montréal (hereafter AVM), Fonds Service des affaires institutionnelles (hereafter SAI), 1962, VM 94, AD009-021.*

¹ McGill University Archives (hereafter MUA), Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association (hereafter MPPA), Hazen Sise, “The Future of Mount Royal” (address at the 70th Annual Meeting of the Province of Quebec Association of Architects, Lac Beauport, Québec, January 27, 1961). MG 2079 C1, File 39.

In 1961 Montréal architect Hazen Sise delivered a passionate address at the 70th Annual Meeting of the Province of Québec Association of Architects in Lac Beauport, entitled “The Future of Mount Royal.” During his address Sise evoked romantic Victorian ideals and nostalgia for Mount Royal Park’s ‘natural’ characteristics in face of rapid urban changes occurring at the time. Sise, renowned for his mid-20th century work—notably Mount Royal Park’s Beaver Lake Pavilion (1958), made these comments in an era of high modernity when profound changes in the urban planning and architectural landscape of Montréal were received with ambivalence.² His 1961 address was in fact an appeal to his fellow architects to reflect on what he considered as the true nature of Mount Royal Park and the fact that this very nature had been jeopardized by the developments of the 1950s. In Sise’s opinion, the Park was no longer the romantic sanctuary within the bustling urban centre of Montréal; it no longer had this mythical dimension, characterized by concepts of late 19th century park aesthetics.

According to Sise, the state of the Park in the early 1960s was “in a sadly run-down condition.”³ This condition was the result of the developments that had taken place within the Park’s landscape during the 1950s. Deforestation had taken a particular heavy toll on the ecology of the Park, to the extent that it gained the moniker of Mount Baldy. But how had it come to be described as such and what could a crowd of architects gain from such a lecture? For Sise the key issue was the lack of an established master plan guiding the remodelling of this public space, coupled with a lack of civic engagement throughout these transformations. But was this the only issue at hand? Were there no other considerations? Indeed, it is important to consider that Sise’s critique was formed by his landscapist and planning vision of things. This vision saw the trees of the Park not as equal to the environment but rather as an architectural design part of the landscape produced by landscapist Frederick Law Olmsted. Mount Royal’s landscape was therefore part of a cultural product that ought not to be manipulated for functional or recreational purposes. The notion that the Park had lost its

² Indeed, during this time high modernist ideals swept across disciplines including urban planning, design, and architecture. It is described as a strong scientific and technical progress seeking to further production, satisfaction and needs, while mastering social order and nature (physical and human). James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

³ MUA, MPPA, Sise, “The Future of Mount Royal.” MG 2079 C1, File 39.

appeal was in fact an idealized and cultural view of the 19th century park as a static architectural object.

However the Park was no static object and Mount Royal had changed since the 19th century. The condition of the Park at that moment in time had been altered from a near static forest canopy from the mid-19th century and was now fragmented and degraded by a lack of horticultural attention. In fact, the same year as Sise's plea, Jean-Joseph Dumont, Montréal's superintendent of the Parks Department's Forestry Division, published a report in which he also decried the state of the park: "La forêt du Mont-Royal, si on peut encore, étant donné son état déplorable, lui donner le nom de forêt, est la résultante, au moment considéré, de l'action combinée, réciproque et évolutive de facteurs variables se rattachant aux trois éléments: 1) le milieu physique 2) le groupement végétal 3) les actions biotiques diverses."⁴ According to him, and building upon Sise's vision, Mount Royal Park's decrepit ecological state could also be analyzed through the natural circumstances and topographical nature of the Park, both reinforced by outside forces that were symbolic of this modernist time period. For Dumont the plan was now to reconceive the Park into an ornamental park. Such a renewed vision came not in opposition to Olmsted's original vision, but rather sought to build upon the existing design and botanical base. As Dumont grudgingly stated after initiating plans to intervene, "Ne perdons jamais de vue que le Mont-Royal sera un jour un parc d'ornement. Depuis longtemps, il a cessé d'être une forêt pour devenir un mont chauve."⁵ However, to argue that modernity was the only factor leading to the Park's dilapidated state is only partly telling. The Park was also neglected in the way it had been maintained prior to the 1950s.⁶

In reality, Mount Royal Park was in a so-called "balding" and run-down condition because of critical modernist developments which demonstrated the mutability of the park: the deforestation campaign led by Montréal's authorities in order to preserve the Park's 'morality' and the creation of a trans-mountain roadway, now known as the Camillien-Houde Roadway, permitting 'modern' circulation and accessibility on the Mountain (on which the Park is

⁴ Archives de l'Université de Montréal (hereafter AUM), Fonds André Bouchard (hereafter FAB), J.J. Dumont, *Rapport relatif à l'état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal, Rédigé à la demande de son honneur maître Jean Drapeau maire de Montréal* (Montréal: c. 1961), 2-3. P 173, 900.354, D8.1.9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁶ Tellingly, the city's Parks Department was officially inaugurated in 1953.

inscribed). Further, to explain Mount Royal's metamorphosis it is important to consider the fast urban developments experienced in Montréal at that time; this fast and encroaching metamorphosis (occurring throughout the city) would be clearly demonstrated in the Cedar Avenue issue when developers attempted to build a housing complex on the Mountain in the late 1950s. These developments were seen as acts helping to modernize Mount Royal Park's space. Yet this would also bring environmental degradation. Indeed, as the authorities conceived of their plans to instill morality and modernize the Park, they neglected the state of the nature. Therefore, modernity was used as a tool, to the detriment of the environment. This thesis seeks to explain the reasoning behind the modernist development of this space, the contentions, and the evolution of the Park beginning in the early 1950s and ending a decade later when the Park's transformations ended.

I. Historiography

Before diving into the process of Mount Royal's transformation, it is necessary to firstly explore the historiography and the historiographical context within which this thesis wishes to establish itself. The topics discussed in this thesis are numerous, yet congruent to one another and vital to contextualize the mid-20th century schemes occurring within this given space. Indeed, as a study of Mount Royal states, the methodological approach is problematic and must be undertaken in an ecosystematic technique, meaning the intrinsic relationship between humans and their physical environment.⁷ A historiographical overview will therefore be provided in a threefold fashion: first Mount Royal Park, secondly the place of modern and moral ideologies within Montréal's landscape, and thirdly an insight into how these topics amalgamate to give an environmental history of the space.

Mount Royal, a predominant topographical feature of Montreal, is a 233-meter high mountain that progressively transformed into a usable space. Its unique character on the island of Montreal and the proportions of its salient relief, which rises abruptly from the plain, has led to the appellation of a "mountain" because of the contrast it provides with the surrounding

⁷ Claire Poitras and Joanne Burgess, *Étude de caractérisation de l'arrondissement historique et naturel du Mont-Royal*, ed. Suzel Brunel (Québec: Commission des biens culturels du Québec, 2005), 13.

plain.⁸ Before the creation of the Park or even Montréal itself, the Mountain was geographically and geologically present, as Pierre Monette demonstrated in his environmental and pre-colonial *géopoétique* of Mount Royal.⁹

In the second half of the 19th century the Mountain was configured into a 493.7 acre park by American landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, who envisioned Mount Royal as a leisurely park where one could be enchanted by nature and witness the city's landscape unfold while walking up in its romantic sinuous pathways;¹⁰ this design was presented as a solution to ills of rapid North American urbanization and aimed to make the city more livable. The history of Mount Royal Park can therefore be contextualized within the same late 19th century urban park conception occurring throughout North America.¹¹ These parks function as a “memory infrastructure” upon urban dwellers, acting as representations of urban narrations, legacies, or greatness—forms of high culture; they are as well part of the everyday landscape experienced by the citizen.¹² Urban parks are at once, romantic symbols of endurance of place over person and of the strength of nature thereby giving definition to the city's identity. A number of works have been produced concerning distinctive aspects of Mount Royal, focusing on the inception of its park, analyzing its design and architectural features.¹³ This design is seen as revealing the English character of Mount Royal Park's patrons as it is anchored in Anglo-Saxon Victorian ideals.¹⁴ Over time, the evolution of this design and planning have been the subject of Peter Jacobs's research, who maintained that the Park was a site reflective

⁸ Indeed as Hazen Sise states, “As topography, we proudly call it “the mountain”... When the surrounding terrain is flat, it makes good human sense to make mountains out of mole-hills.” MUA, MPPA, Sise, “The Future of Mount Royal.” MG 2079 C1, File 39.

⁹ Pierre Monette, *Onon:ta': une histoire naturelle du mont Royal* (Montréal: Boréal, 2012).

¹⁰ Nancy Pollock-Ellwand, “Rickson Outhet: Bringing the Olmsted Legacy to Canada: A Romantic View of Nature in the Metropolis and the Hinterland,” *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue D'études Canadiennes* 44, no. 1 (2010): 137–183.

¹¹ According to Galen Cranz such parks were built to improve their cities, derived from an anti-urban ideal that dwelt on traditional ideologies wishing to escape to the country. Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), 3-5; Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

¹² Randall Mason, *The Once and Future New York: Historic Preservation and the Modern City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 31-34.

¹³ See Janice Seline, “Frederick Law Olmsted's Mount Royal Park, Montreal: Design and Context.” (M.A. Thesis (Fine Arts), Concordia University, 1983); A.L. Murray, “Frederick Law Olmsted and the Design of Mount Royal Park, Montreal,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural* vol. 26, no. 3 (1967): 163–171.

¹⁴ Bernard Debarbieux, “The Mountain in the City: Social Uses and Transformations of a Natural Landform in Urban Space,” *Cultural Geographies* (1998): 413.

of the social, political, and economic life of Montréal and has cautioned Montréalers to preserve and maintain what he considers their most precious natural park.¹⁵

Indeed, if parks had not been meant as spaces of social contention during their creation, park life in the 19th century, including life in Mount Royal Park, was hedged around both written and unwritten regulations where, in theory, the poor had access to the parks on terms dictated by the rich, because of their prime locations. As Richard Dennis writes in *Cities in Modernity*, although public parks were intended for all people, the ‘normal’ patrons would have felt uncomfortable if poor people turned up.¹⁶ Moreover it is important to consider the environmental histories that urban parks offer; as Stéphane Castonguay states, multiple facets, different social rapports, and inequalities exist in a society through claims and representations of these ‘natural’ objects.¹⁷ These are noticeable in the planting, buildings, statues, and the activities permitted within the parks—at once concerning park designers and reformers.¹⁸

However, more than simply a work of landscape, Mount Royal Park occupies a privileged place in the mentality of Montréalers. It is a place where the multiplicities of Montréal’s histories intersect, and where collective memories of place in the imagination affect language, culture, and common morals occurs.¹⁹ In fact Mount Royal Park can be seen as a microcosm of the city at different levels while mirroring Montréal’s cultural duality, being simultaneously inspired by English and North American heritages. Apart from the cultural duality inherent in its conception, Mount Royal Park also echoed and enhanced the city’s social divisions. This is best revealed in Sarah Schimdt’s thesis, where she demonstrates that Mount Royal Park was constructed as a lieu of escapism for Montréal’s elite population a

¹⁵ Peter Jacobs and Oswald Foisy, *Les quatre saisons du Mont-Royal* (Montréal: Méridien, 2000), 36; Peter Jacobs, “Quelques principes à l’image du paysage du mont Royal,” *Trames: Revue de l’aménagement* Vol. 2, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 19-25; “The Magic Mountain: An Urban Landscape for the Next Millennium,” in *Grass, Greystones, and Glass Towers: Montreal Urban Issues and Architecture*, edited by Bryan Demchinsky, 53-60 (Montréal: Véhicule Press), 1989.

¹⁶ Richard Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840-1930* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 114.

¹⁷ Stéphane Castonguay, “Penser l’histoire environnementale du Québec. Société, territoire et écologie.” *Globe: Revue internationale d’études québécoises* vol. 9, no. 1 (2006), 14.

¹⁸ Hazel Conway, *People’s Parks: The Design and Development of Victorian Parks in Britain* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3.

¹⁹ Alan Gordon, *Making Public Pasts: The Contested Terrain of Montréal’s Public Memories, 1891-1930* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 97-101.

domestic enclave for privileged Anglo-Saxon families “inscribed with a specific ethnicity (Anglo-Saxon), class (bourgeois), gender (virtuous woman), and sexuality (respectable heterosexuality),” in post-Conquest Montréal.²⁰

Mount Royal has historically been seen as an established sign of a narrative of White, Christian superiority interweaving religious and racial discourses into a specific interpretation of Montréal’s past allowing a transcending of ethno-cultural fragmentations among Montreal’s citizens.²¹ Though Mount Royal Park was from the onset a publicly owned space, it has been regarded and treated as the private preserve of a subset of the population who effectively monopolised its use. As such, it may be useful to think of Mount Royal Park, since its inception, as a “constantly shifting articulation of social relations through time”²² rather than an invariable public space. The Mountain also served for more than leisure and aesthetics purposes; it was the city’s water tower²³ as well as a place where a number of public and private institutions established themselves.²⁴

Further developing a theoretical understanding of Mount Royal’s space, Claude Marois and Bernard Debarbieux argue that the Mountain and its amenities have been objects of simultaneous reflections of two orders and two levels of reality; one that is localized and particular to Montréal’s territoriality, and another anchored in a global or Western conception of topographic forms (mountain structure – top/down).²⁵ This topographical feature also forged its identity as a frontier – a term scarcely elusive to Canadian identity.²⁶ The

²⁰ Sarah Schmidt, “Domesticating Parks and Mastering Playgrounds: Sexuality, Power and Place in Montreal, 1870-1930,” (M.A. Thesis (History), McGill University, 1996), 59-60.

²¹ Nadine Klopfer, “Upon the Hill: Negotiating Public Space in Early 20th Century Montreal,” *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien*, vol. 55 (2009): 97.

²² Doreen Massey, “Places and Their Pasts,” *History Workshop Journal* 39, no. 1 (1995): 188.

²³ Ross argues that the creation of the reservoirs in 1938 redefined the landscapes of water supply and reflected a shift in the relationship between the city and its water. Susan M. Ross, “Hidden Water in the Landscape: The Covered Reservoirs of Mount Royal,” in *Metropolitan Natures: Environmental Histories of Montreal*, eds. Stéphane Castonguay and Michèle Dagenais, 115-132 (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011).

²⁴ Of notable importance are two universities – McGill University and Université de Montréal, two cemeteries – Notre Dame des Neiges and Mount Royal Cemetery, Saint-Joseph Oratory, Royal Victoria and Montreal General Hospitals; see Brian J. Young and Geoffrey James, *Respectable Burial: Montreal’s Mount Royal Cemetery* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2003).

²⁵ Bernard Debarbieux and Claude Marois, “Le mont Royal. Forme naturelle, paysages et territorialités urbaines,” *Cahiers de géographie du Québec* vol. 41, no. 113 (1997): 173.

²⁶ For more on the notion of Canadian frontierism within urban settings see J. M. S. Careless, *Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities, and Identities in Canada Before 1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989).

frontierism of this space derives from the difficulty in accessing sections of the Mountain and from the dichotomy of its bushy, wooded, underbrush forest in proximity to the developed urban centre of Montréal. This “undeveloped” landscape helped to perpetuate the spatial Otherness of an area of Mount Royal Park colloquially known as the Jungle. The Jungle’s frontierism was at once an important aspect in constructing the rhetoric of the Park as a *visibly* undeveloped urban amenity and the subsequent need to modernize it.²⁷ These developmental needs therefore yield to questions of space practice; essentially, how political, social, and urban processes coalesce with one another and how urban landscapes can be (re)created in relation to these processes.

Therefore, to understand the crux of the developments that occurred on the Mountain during the 1950s we must understand the concepts inherent to the era (1950-1960). The developments occurring within Mount Royal Park should accordingly be examined under the political scope of *moralizing* public space in concert with *modernizing* it. The power of municipal governance in the transformation of the symbolic and material definition of Montréal’s urbanity was completely overhauled during this time period, leading to a renewed philosophy of spatial arrangement which did not hesitate to clear the city’s past.²⁸ Such a conception of spatial arrangement exemplifies the modernist doctrine that fostered urban planning during this time period—Mount Royal Park being no exception to this planning.

This postwar modernist approach has been the object of research of a number of studies. Modernization theory, sometimes called development doctrine, is described as an ubiquitous ideology and discourse of ideas and strategies that seek the advancement of societies in relation to normative policies; historicizing modernization therefore allows us to notice the expanding divergence of social and political arrangements and explore ways to understand competing modernities.²⁹ Montréal, being no exception to this framework, sought to evolve its urban self. While Gilles Sénécal argues the importance to keep in sight

²⁷ As Cullather states, development experts during the mid-century recognized the connection between “sight, technology, and the modern state.” Nick Cullather, “Miracles of Modernization: The Green Revolution and the Apotheosis of Technology,” *Diplomatic History* vol. 28, no. 2 (April 2004): 230.

²⁸ Catherine Charlebois and Paul-André Linteau eds, *Quartiers disparus: Red Light, Faubourg à M'lasse et Goose Village* (Montréal: Les Éditions Cardinal Inc., 2014), 41.

²⁹ Nick Cullather, “Modernization Theory,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, ed. Michael J. Hogan and Thomas G. Paterson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 213.

Montréal's historical will to be urban, a corollary to the will to be modern,³⁰ Jean-Claude Marsan's canonical work on the history of Montréal states that this will to be modern was fostered in a quick and dynamic evolution based in the city's adaptability and society.³¹ Yet, modernist schemes were often rooted in flawed design, thereby revealing the perverse effect that these could have on the natural environment and human condition.³²

The notion of the Park as a getaway from urbanization was therefore not impervious to such postwar modernizing schemes and reached a crossroad during the 1950s, as the authorities wondered how the Park could be integrated into the modern urban fabric. While questions pertaining to the concept of the Park as a Victorian space were still present in urban planning debates, the preoccupation for its modern development was steered towards controlling what was happening in it, rather than pre-emptively preserving its geo-physical setting. Therefore debates arose between municipal authorities, civil servants, and civil society as to the type of urban park Mont Royal ought to become.

Though Nathalie Zinger's urbanist interpretation of Mount Royal did in fact state that transformations occurring within this landscape were due to "un étouffement physique du mont Royal dû en grande partie au développement urbain montréalais,"³³ she nevertheless did not historicize this period nor emit the reasons behind the urban development of Mount Royal. As urban historian Michèle Dagenais states, it is rather by examining the authorities' conception of space and its planning that researchers can understand the changes that occur within them.³⁴ The 1950s demonstrate that concepts related to social interaction and public space were central issues to the era, and especially for Mont Royal; it is by considering these

³⁰ Gilles Sénécal, "Les récits du déclin et de la relance de Montréal face aux défis de l'aménagement urbain," *Cahiers de géographie du Québec*, vol. 41, no. 114 (1997), 383.

³¹ Jean-Claude Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution: Historical Analysis of the Development of Montreal's Architecture and Urban Environment* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981).

³² Scott masterfully illustrates this concept and demonstrates this condition through the state's gradual control over its environment and subjects. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

³³ Moreover she states that, "le mont Royal a été à tour de rôle une arrière-scène rurale pour la ville, un lieu de prestige avec ses institutions et ses résidences bourgeoises, un lieu complètement encerclé par un développement urbain et finalement un obstacle à surmonter." Nathalie Zinger, "Le mont Royal, paysage et phénomène (de 1850 à 1990)," (M.Sc.A. Thesis (Urban Planning), Université de Montréal, 1990), 67-68.

³⁴ Michèle Dagenais, "Inscrire le pouvoir municipal dans l'espace urbain: la formation du réseau des parcs à Montréal et Toronto, 1880-1940," *The Canadian Geographer / Géographe Canadien*. 46, no. 4 (2002): 348.

interactions during the postwar period, a period of great urban transformations, that the redevelopment of Mount Royal Park can truly be understood.

Though modernity fostered rapid urban changes upon Montréal's landscape it cannot be disassociated from the complementary, politically driven, notion of morality for Mount Royal Park's (re)development. Indeed, though (im)morality had been an issue that predated the Second World War, and can be traced back to the urban reform movement,³⁵ the height of Montréal's morality period would also occur during the postwar period. During this period fascination with public morality was widespread throughout North America. This transnational vision of an endemic moral problem also spoke to Montréal's modernist will. As Akira Iriye writes, "Modern states and societies, whatever their languages, religions, or histories, seemed to share certain global outlooks;"³⁶ such modernist outlooks share, according to him, "limits of a common culture." Therefore, if Montréal wished to be modern, it needed to be moral; if it wished to be moral it needed to emulate neighbouring moralist policies.

Building upon the crisis that had been occurring in the 1940s, when Canadian police forces invented new technologies of surveillance and discipline such as sports programs to curb juvenile delinquency,³⁷ the 1950s marked a desire to clean up the city, both physically and morally, as evidenced by the creation of the Public Morality Committee on March 19, 1950. During the 1940s and 1950s the city was largely preoccupied with cleaning and clearing all immoral behaviour, most notably gambling, prostitution, political corruption, and sexual deviance. As Mathieu Lapointe states, this obsession was primarily concerning morality in public: "La moralité publique, c'est d'abord la *moralité en public*, que violent par exemple la prostitution, le jeu et le pari commercialisés, les spectacles « indécents » ou autres mœurs « dissolues » dans les espaces publics. L'immoralité publique impliquerait à la fois violation de l'espace public et danger pour les mœurs."³⁸ However, while most of the studies pertaining

³⁵ Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).

³⁶ Akira Iriye, "Culture and International History," in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 255.

³⁷ Tamara Myers, "Morality Squads, Curfews, and the Sports Solution" (paper presented at the Youth Symposium, University of British Columbia, April 2, 2008).

³⁸ Mathieu Lapointe, *Nettoyer Montréal: les campagnes de moralité publique, 1940-1954* (Québec: Septentrion, 2014), 16; for gambling see Suzanne Morton, *At Odds: Gambling and Canadians, 1919-1969* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003); for indecent shows see Viviane Namaste, *C'était du spectacle! L'histoire des*

to Montréal's obsession with a morally pure society have focused on public places related to private spaces—in other words the neighbourhoods where immoral actors may live, they have yet to shed light on immorality in a predominant public space, the urban park.³⁹

It is therefore important to consider not only how humans influence these spaces, but moreover how the environment of Mount Royal Park influenced human action. These concepts, epitomized by social, cultural, and technological changes, characterize the history and highlight the (trans)formations of the urban environments through “elements specific to its location.”⁴⁰ Though this postwar period did indeed foster modernist constructions and rapid development of automobile use, it did not mutually exclude the search for nature; rather, at times it attempted to reconcile both environment and urbanization.⁴¹ As Historian Sean Kheraj details of Vancouver's Stanley Park, its creators “shared the common modernist belief that engineering and scientific intervention could produce an aesthetically satisfactory landscape, one that was grounded in a romantic and static vision of nature.”⁴² Thus, the process towards a modernist urban landscape was not one wishing to eliminate nature from sight but rather demonstrated a new relationship that man could entertain with this environment using modern technology. Therefore, using Mount Royal Park as an object to study, this thesis wishes to examine the (re)creation of this environment and the competing visions that lead to the schemes of urban developments.

artistes transsexuelles à Montréal 1955-1985 (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); for prostitution see Danielle Lacasse, *La prostitution féminine à Montréal, 1945-1970* (Montréal: Boréal, 1994).

³⁹ While a number of works touch upon the subject, only a few dive into the notion of immorality in the urban park and its confines. For homosexual immorality in urban parks see Bart Sarsh “Disgusting” Noises, and “Dangerous” Spaces: Tabloids, Sexualities, and Discourses of Perversion, Toronto, 1950-1965,” (M.A. Thesis (Criminology), University of Toronto, 2005). For the case of immigrant populations in urban parks see Gerald D. Suttles, *The Social Order of the Slum: Ethnicity and Territory in the Inner City* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968).

⁴⁰ Michèle Dagenais and Stéphane Castonguay, “Introduction,” in *Metropolitan Natures: Environmental Histories of Montreal* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 7.

⁴¹ Michèle Dagenais, “Par monts et par vaux: la quête de la nature,” in *Territoires. Le Québec: habitat, ressources et imaginaires*, ed. Marie-Charlotte De Koninck, 55-62 (Québec: Multimondes et Musée de la civilisation, 2007).

⁴² Sean Kheraj, *Inventing Stanley Park: An Environmental History* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2013), 93.

II. Problematic

The problematic that is raised in this thesis highlights the spatial, landscape and urban conception of Mount Royal Park, and its geographical location in Montréal, during the 1950s and 1960s. Essentially, what generated the mid-century development of Mount Royal Park, under what doctrines was this conceived, and what environmental impacts did these cause on the ecological composition of this space?

In an article on spatial history, Doreen Massey states that places are always constructed out of articulations of social relations which are not only internal to that locale but which link them to elsewhere. In her words, “the local is always already a product in part of ‘global’ forces, where global in this context refers not necessarily to the planetary scale, but to the geographical beyond, the world beyond the place itself.”⁴³ This thesis argues that the changes that took place in Mount Royal Park during the 1950s fit such a paradigm of spatial modernization. Montréal’s approach to modernity was an ambivalent one; some of its aspects were welcomed while others generated suspicion. The urban planning processes conceived by the authorities for the (re)development of Mount Royal reflected this conflicting attitude. On the one hand the landscape of Mount Royal Park was shaped by the refractory approach of Montréal’s authorities towards one particular aspect of modernity: its association with immorality. Indeed, Mount Royal Park had become a gathering space for the city’s ‘undesirable’ population – what newspapers called alcoholics, homosexuals, perverts.⁴⁴ The best solution found by the authorities to drive them away from the Park was to clear the bushland of the Jungle to facilitate proactive policing – a process known as the “Morality Cuts”. On the other hand the authorities in charge of the Park also embraced the coming of modernity in the form of rapid post World-War II urban transformation and increased demand for infrastructure. This was exemplified by the construction of the Camillien-Houde Roadway and further schemes seen as encroaching on parkland. Whether they chose to act in accordance

⁴³ Massey, “Places and Their Pasts,” 183; Harry Hiller has similarly argued that urbanization in Canada makes little sense without a historical and global perspective. Harry Hiller, *Urban Canada: Sociological Perspectives* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2005), 10.

⁴⁴ Several police arrests on grounds of immorality and dangerous crimes had taken place in this area. “Jungle Raids Stepped Up,” *The Montreal Herald*, August 26, 1954.

or against the tenets of modernization, the Park's governance manifestly did not consider the impacts that these events would have on the Park's ecology.

As such, the plan of action conceived by the authorities was symbolic of the perception of power relations that they imposed, reproduced, and reinforced on the social space and illuminate key themes in Montréal's history. Mount Royal Park, a key site of public urban space, in fact, details the coming together of different actors and influences. The production of this space during the postwar era, its visibility up against the dialectical relationship between public demand and governing command,⁴⁵ and the environmental repercussions are what ultimately drive this thesis. By taking into account the transformation of Mount Royal Park and examining issues related to its inclusion in Montreal's urban fabric, light will be shed on how the aesthetics of urban landscapes and settings are forged and etched in accordance to power relations.

III. Methodology

*A whole history needs to be written of spaces – which would at the same time be the history of powers – from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitats.*⁴⁶

—Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*

In order to elucidate the significance of Mount Royal's modernist development, I intend to examine them from three different angles over a period ranging from roughly 1950 to 1965. First, by establishing the political atmosphere during the 1950s, secondly by magnifying the major acts of transformation, the Morality Cuts and construction of the Camillien-Houde Roadway—what the authorities stated were “developments,” and thirdly by looking at the Park's ecological rehabilitation after the completion of these developments.

As urbanist Jonathan Cha argues in a historical analysis of Mount Royal Park, commissioned by Montréal's *Direction des grands parcs et du verdissement*, the interrelated schemes of territorial management during the 1950s were ill-adapted to the fragile needs of the

⁴⁵ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991), 116.

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 149.

Mountain and expressed a hidden agenda that wished to modernize the Park's facilities.⁴⁷ The authorities' will to modernize this space was not hidden, but rather expressed in a variety of ways; most notably in their articulations and conceptions of the city during the postwar period. Indeed, it is imperative to consider the Park as a part of the city during this period and therefore emblematic of global, encompassing issues. Furthermore, I argue that such schemes expressed another important agenda for the authorities, whose increasing determination was to police the morality of its population. This determination would make the Mountain a place where surveillance was omnipotent.

Both these agendas should not be seen as independent variables but instead as part of an, at first, unofficial, and rather *ad hoc* plan for Mount Royal. Beginning in the early 1950s the Park became associated with insalubrity, due to its ecological degradation and attracting undesirable characters. In fact, when the authorities realized that something had to be done to counter immorality in Mount Royal Park they chose to hire a landscape architecture firm from New York, Clarke and Rapuano. This firm had the mandate to develop the Park in accordance with the needs elaborated by the governing body. Though natural aspects were part of the plan, a preponderant attention was accorded to the need to modernize the Park's facilities. This reflected the mandate of the newly created Parks Department (1953) which emphasized the importance of modern park equipment for the wellbeing of children, their most important clients. This planning would be part of what Marsan states is the perpetual dichotomy between the adaptation to the basic circumstances of the environment and the prevalence of "culture" in the history of Montréal.⁴⁸

The Morality Cuts, set by the City Council in August 1954, targeted a section of the Park that served as a popular cruising spot for homosexual men in Montréal since the late nineteenth century, essentially blurring the lines between private and public space.⁴⁹ This

⁴⁷ Jonathan Cha, *Étude et analyse historique du patrimoine paysager du secteur des « Glades » (clairière) dans le parc du Mont-Royal (version préliminaire)*, (Montréal: Direction des grands parcs et du verdissement, 2010), 133.

⁴⁸ Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution*, 377-378.

⁴⁹ It should be noted that the interest of this thesis is not to analyze public space usage by homosexuals—in comparable fashion to studies conducted by Higgins, Kinsman, or Leznoff—but rather to study a space, Mount Royal Park, which was at the confluence of many urban issues, including homosexual public encounters.

community along with ‘other undesirables’⁵⁰ unwillingly became agents in the transformation of the Park. Yet, the Cuts were only formally carried out in 1957 when the firm had finalized its *Programme for the development of Mount Royal Park*,⁵¹ which strongly recommended that the *entire* Mountain Park be subject to a development; though the Park was a developed and designed space, it was nevertheless perceived as needing to be redeveloped and modernized.⁵² Newspapers, police officers, and City Council were unanimous about the need to “improve” the Mountain Park by removing these ‘undesirables’ regardless of the solution.⁵³ “Sexual perverts” in public spaces were seen as *contre-nature*, violating at once “human” nature as well as the physical nature. In removing the protective coverage of the bushes and trees, the city’s police and Morality Squad would be seated as an omnipresent voyeur in a public space turned into a prison-like trap.⁵⁴ The governing body’s thought process was that if they cleared the Jungle then immoral behaviour would be eradicated from the Park. Nevertheless, within twenty years, their solution to eliminate homosexual activity from Mount Royal Park had failed.⁵⁵ Rather, this solution had the unintended and devastating consequence of intensifying windthrow (uprooted trees due to wind), water runoff, and soil erosion thereby “balding” the Mountain.

The case of the Morality Cuts can be interpreted by understanding the notion of moral purity endemic at the time. To understand the Morality Cuts it is important to highlight the ambiguous relationship between city, night, and crime as a basis for immoral behaviour.

⁵⁰ The newspapers also characterized such individuals as being perverts, alcoholics, maniacs, thugs, sexual-deviants, etc.—in a sense, all that was perceived as immoral.

⁵¹ The extent of this *Programme* shall be discussed in-depth later on. A full version of the agreements between the firm and the city are available in the annex.

⁵² Whereas the authorities articulated this scheme as one that developed of the Park, it is important to view this space as already developed, for it had been a work of architecture since the late 19th century, conceived by Law Olmsted. Therefore, I have opted to use “(re)development” as a form of reconciling both the fact that it was already developed yet not seen as being developed.

⁵³ Newspaper articles and editorials converged with the governance’s vision that action should be taken in the Jungle. A number of newspaper articles document the violence and immorality that occurred within this territory notably noting “Recent police arrests of men on grounds of immorality took place for the most part in that section...” “Police Step Up Raids On Mountain Jungle,” *The Montreal Herald*, August 5, 1954.

⁵⁴ Gregory Pablo Rodríguez-Arbolay Jr., “Connecting Fragments: Solidarity and Fragmentation in Montréal’s Gay and Lesbian Communities, 1960-1977,” (M.A. Thesis (Women’s History), Sarah Lawrence College, 2009), 28.

⁵⁵ Luther A. Allen, “L’aventure sexuelle clandestine : le cas du mont Royal,” in *Sortir de l’ombre: Histoires des communautés lesbienne et gaie de Montréal*, ed. Irène Demczuk, and Frank W. Remiggi (Montréal : VLB, 1998): 81-101.

Whereas historically urban lighting had multiplied the variety of urban activities and their spatial extensions, this very mechanism would be used to suppress unsolicited nightly activities in Mount Royal Park. The Cuts and the re-imagination of the urban landscape were processes, which at their core, attempted to domesticate *nature*, *men*, and *night*, another form of modernity within itself. As Luc Gwiazdzinski argues, nature and night are both synonym to liberty, transgression, immorality, and a contestation of authority, and remain an “espace-temps peu investi par l’activité humaine, un monde intérieur à explorer, une dernière « frontière »” which men crave to domesticate.⁵⁶

The second event that transformed the Park was one of allowing vehicles to traverse and even use parking lots on the Mountain through the construction of a roadway. Though talks and plans of such a road were discussed as early as 1945, work only began in the summer of 1957, to be finalized and opened to the public in July 1958. This roadway – now named Voie Camillien-Houde, was thought to help moralize the Park through means of modernity; it was thought that if the Mountain were more accessible to the public then it would deter immoral characters from frequenting its space. Yet, the decision to build a roadway was seen by the public as encroaching on the conception of the 19th century landscape of Mount Royal Park—thereby introducing new levels of noise, pollution, and speed in what had formerly been a serene landscape. Indeed, many editorials were sent to the city’s newspapers during the planning of this road and certain civic groups, such as the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association (MPPA) strongly denounced the perverseness of a road within the Park. Perceiving the Park as a natural sanctuary, the public and newspapers felt compelled to protect it from further transformation—an outcry that simply did not occur during the Morality Cuts. In an interview given to *The Montreal Star*, mayor Jean Drapeau stated, “The Mountain, in the dead centre of the city, should not be an impediment to traffic... I respect – even if I do not share it – the opinion of those who believe that Mount Royal, for esthetic[sic] or other reasons, should be preserved as a secluded spot.”⁵⁷ Ideas pertaining to modernity were conflicting with concerns aimed at protecting the cultural vocation of this public space. Notions of rupture and

⁵⁶ As Gwiazdzinski writes, “Le goût de la nuit est aussi un goût des autres, de l’Autre, de la rencontre et de l’inconnu.” Luc Gwiazdzinski, *La nuit, dernière frontière de la ville* (La Tour-d’Aigues: Éditions de l’Aube, 2005), 18-20.

⁵⁷ “Of Highways Over Mountain: Two Roads Seen Sorely Needed,” *The Montreal Star*, January 10, 1955.

continuity in urban architecture and natural environment were expressed in the debate surrounding the Camillien-Houde Roadway which brought to the forefront issues related to the value accorded to the natural environment and of public space. The development of a roadway on Mount Royal, and the public's reaction associated with it, illustrates the ambivalence of Montréal's society. Whereas the population did not condone nor express grievances regarding the Morality Cuts, building a road was considered as *overdeveloping* the Park. Indeed, while the former sought to restore tranquility in the Park, the latter was seen as a breach of tranquility.

Nevertheless, Mount Royal Park's postwar development did not conclude with the realization of these two transformations. Indeed in 1958 the city facilitated the selling of a parcel of land to real-estate developers high on the Mountain, on the site of the old Children's Memorial Hospital on Cedar Avenue.⁵⁸ The sell-off of this land should be seen as part of the city's plan to further develop the downtown core and rejuvenate its urban design. However, this venture was considered as going too far—by civil servants, notably Parks Director Claude Robillard and Forestry Superintendent Jean-Joseph Dumont, and private interest groups under the Save-the-Mountain movement—due to the fact that it was perceived as cashing-out on public space and privatizing an important site of public access and gathering. This episode, known as the Cedar Avenue issue, would set in motion a defining movement for the preservation of the Park through a united civic demand to (1) end encroachments and developments and (2) ecologically rehabilitate the Park.

This thesis is therefore guided by sets of questions pertaining to the transformation of Mount Royal Park's environment. Essentially, what visions led the authorities to conceive plans to transform the landscape of Mount Royal Park during the postwar period, and how did the public react to these? What effect did these interventions have on the ecology of the Park? And could efforts of rehabilitation enable the restoration of the natural landscape? By considering Mount Royal Park's transformation and examining questions related to its inscription into Montréal's urban territoriality and space, light will be shed on how aesthetics

⁵⁸ Peter Hoos, "Cedar Avenue Issue: 'Save-the-mountain' Movement Prepares For All-out Battle," *The Montreal Star*, January 13, 1960.

of urban landscapes are forged and (re)developed to the will of the political authorities.

IV. Sources

This research is supported by sources from a variety of vantage points, which range primarily from 1953 to 1963. First, in order to answer my sets of questions related to the municipal government's decisional processes I have examined the city of Montréal's archives (AVM). These documents reveal the importance accorded by the authorities to doctrines of morality and modernity. The most notable collections are the Fonds Comité exécutif (1953-1958), Fonds Pierre Des Marais (co-founder of the Civic Action League and Chairman of Montréal's Executive Committee 1954-1957), Fonds Service des parcs (established in 1953), and Fonds Claude Robillard (Director of the Parks Department 1953-1961). These archival collections demonstrate the progress of the governing body in their decision-making process.

The Montreal Star, *The Montreal Herald*, *The Montreal Gazette*, *La Presse*, and *Le Devoir* – all prominent Montréal newspapers of the era, give other perspectives and further detail on issues discussed and conceived at city hall. Moreover, these have at times been instrumental in the furthering of municipal government's rhetoric—most notably *The Montreal Herald* in the sensationalization of Mount Royal Park's Jungle, or critical against it—most notably *The Montreal Star* and *La Presse* in the call to end the Mountain's encroachment in the late 1950s. To understand the importance related to civic mobilization and the stance of civic actors on these issues I used numerous institutional collections; the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association (MPPA) Archives,⁵⁹ Fonds Hazen Sise (landscape architect), Fonds Van Ginkel Associates (member of the Montreal Citizens' Committee), and documentation written by the superintendent of the Forestry Division Jean-Joseph Dumont situated in the Université de Montréal's archives.

This thesis is divided into four sections. The first chapter analyzes the political processes that led to the transformation and reconception of Mount Royal Park's space during

⁵⁹ The association began as a women's protest movement, and the breadth of its activities and longevity are noteworthy. Jeanne M. Wolfe and Grace Strachan, "Practical Idealism: Women in Urban Reform, Julia Drummond and the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association," in *Life Spaces: Gender, Household, Employment*, eds. Caroline Andrew and Beth Moore Milroy (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988): 65-80.

the first half of the 1950s. The second chapter looks at the Morality Cuts and the discourse used to engender them. The third chapter looks at the issue of constructing a roadway within the Park. And finally, the fourth chapter looks at the rehabilitation of the Park's ecology during the late 1950s and early 1960s. As stated by Stephen Bocking in a journal of urban history, urban parks are not simply 'natural' artifices – they are also embedded with diverse political and social implications and meanings.⁶⁰ By examining these sources I will demonstrate that the history of the Mount Royal Park in the 1950s and 1960s results from the dynamic interplay of political, cultural, and environmental processes. I am interested in how historical processes are not only subject to political, cultural, and social movements, but moreover, how nature itself can be an equation that influences these histories.

⁶⁰ Stephen Bocking, "The Nature of Cities: Perspectives in Canadian Urban Environmental History," *Urban History Review* vol. 34, no. 1 (2005): 3.

Chapter 1. Mount Royal's Spatiality: Politics of Pre-Development

In order to understand the schematic transformations of Mount Royal Park during the 1950s it is necessary to examine the political context, as well as the way parks were perceived spatially, socioculturally, and symbolically, in Montréal's postwar period. Congruent postwar urban transformations of the built environment were fostered by (1) governance of the territory based in a commanding municipal authority and (2) an understanding of this territory through a moralist worldview. Unsurprisingly, these authorities transcribed their vision of normative behaviour in Montréal's public spaces. This chapter therefore seeks to understand how these ideals eventually played out within the confines of Mount Royal Park. It argues that Mount Royal Park was by no means immune to ideals of urban reformers and was indeed subject to 'global' politics and the socio-ideological context of postwar Montréal society. Concretely, standards pertaining to morality and modernity were set in motion in Mount Royal Park through increased surveillance and policing of the Park, and attempts at persecuting visitors deemed undesirable (*Others*) within the normative frame established at that time.

The synchronized introduction of postwar morality and modernity introduced questions pertaining to the intricate relationship concerning the management of the environment, natural or designed, and the "safety" of traditional social mores within Montréal. Indeed, as the social mores of Montréal were being violated through 'immoral' actions, the authorities began to associate acts deemed immoral with the spaces in which they occurred. Mount Royal Park would in particular be linked to (homo)sexual activities, which in return made it seem as though it was in a degenerative state. This led authorities to the realization that Mount Royal Park was becoming unwholesome due to (1) increased frequentation of the Park causing the "sacred landscape" to be vandalized and (2) the undesirable character of these new and non-traditional visitors. These facts introduce the study of relationships between an environment (the Mountain) and urban practices (morality, policing, and governance). Though parks are indeed natural spaces, with their trees, lawns, flowers, and water, they are also, and perhaps above all, cultural spaces in the way they express a number

of values and respond to myriad ideals.¹ Therefore, acknowledging that spaces such as the Park were produced through sexual encounters generally tended to undermine the ideal of the space being “clean”, “safe”, and above all, “moral,” a perversion to the rational, pure, and artistic thoughts of the planner or urban reformer.² Yet, as this urban society was being modernized, Mount Royal Park remained to an extent the romantic production that Olmsted had created—what Jacobs argues is an emblem of Victorian design.³

In this urban context, Mount Royal Park represented what citizens viewed as lungs to an expanding city, whose open spaces were increasing. From the year 1943 to 1954 the number of open spaces in Montréal increased from 120 to 241, and their area almost doubled since the beginning of the 20th century, attaining nearly 3,000 acres.⁴ This increase in open spaces also led the authorities to conceive of renewed urban programs for parks, including a department dedicated to managing parks, which in return accorded value towards the parks’ functionality in terms of recreational usage for youths. Therefore, in order to understand how Mount Royal Park was developed and influenced by the city in which it lies, this chapter will approach this historical process through political decisions and spatial planning to detail the eventual morphological transformation occurring in the 1950s.⁵

1.1 Parks in the 20th Century

The concept of the Victorian park developed out of changing economic and social factors and a legislative framework that increasingly gave local authorities powers to confront some of the major urban-related problems.⁶ Indeed, the North American urban environment

¹ Michèle Dagenais, “The Urbanization of Nature: Water Networks and Green Spaces in Montreal,” in *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, Alan Andrew MacEachern and William J. Turkel eds, (Toronto: Nelson Education, 2009), 224.

² Sarsh, “Disgusting” Noises, and “Dangerous” Spaces,” 37.

³ Jacobs, “Quelques principes à l’image du paysage du mont Royal,” 21.

⁴ This was achieved through the City Planning Department, created in 1941, as well as the Public Works Department, which administered the parks and playgrounds at that time. Canadian Centre for Architecture Archives (hereafter CCAA), Hazen Sise fonds (hereafter HSF), *Montréal Master Plan: Open Spaces* published by the City Planning Department of the City of Montréal, 1955. AP 112.D2, ARCH193478.

⁵ Such a way of conceptualizing the spatial, inherently implies an overview of what Doreen Massey calls the “existence in the lived world of a simultaneous multiplicity of spaces: cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox or antagonism”; Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 3.

⁶ Conway, *People’s Parks*, 6-7.

during the early 20th century was said by early urban reformers, to be full of temptations and evil influences; they believed that human nature was weak and impressionable, vulnerable to destructive forces. Moreover, it was argued that the very structure of cities, and the planning of their neighbourhoods, enhanced the issues highlighted by progressive politics: most notably, social fragmentation, hierarchization, and territoriality.⁷ Altogether this was thought to create disaggregated interests and classes within cities.

To curb these urban issues, early urban reformers opted for subtle and complex processes to influence behaviour and mould character through a transformed, consciously planned, urban environment.⁸ Early urban reformers grew out of positive-environmentalist initiatives of the 1890s, whose efforts aimed to funnel moral principles through tenement reforms, park and playground developments, and ultimately in the city-planning movement. This approach to urban planning was thought to create the kind of city where objectionable patterns of behaviour would gradually wither away through urban design. Park administrators, playground supervisors, and city planners in North America implicitly assumed that technical appropriation of a specialized field, such as urban architecture, civil engineering, or city planning, was sufficient to exercise clout over a city's citizenry.⁹

Public spaces, for example parks, fitted into this moralist conceptualization of urban landscape. Such a vision grew out of the Victorian era, where the prevailing attitude towards urban park amenities expressed what Marsan states was an antidote to the aggressive building trends and as a kind of health service.¹⁰ Accordingly, these large urban parks constituted not only romantic and picturesque green oases, but also functioned as a soothing place of rest and leisure. Yet, as Dagenais states in *Faire et fuir la ville*, the design of public spaces such as city parks, also testified the will to regulate behaviours within sets of ideals defended by municipal authorities.¹¹ Reformers who lobbied in favour of park development in the early 20th century believed that the ordained landscape, achieved through the construction of aesthetically

⁷ See "The Self-Owned City" for further discussion on global urban reform. Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

⁸ Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America*, 221.

⁹ *Ibid*, 278.

¹⁰ Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution*, 297.

¹¹ Michèle Dagenais, *Faire et fuir la ville: espaces publics de culture et de loisirs à Montréal et Toronto aux XIXe et XXe siècles* (Québec: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2006), 142.

pleasing spaces would somehow foster ordained behaviour on the part of a population. This activist momentum brought by the early-reformers and their renewed ideals of urban planning played a critical role in the elaboration of Montréal's parks and playgrounds; altogether meaning that parks became potent tools of social transformation.

Yet, As Bart Sarsh argues in his thesis pertaining to crime and homosexuality in Toronto's parks, ironically, civic reformism that aimed to create spaces thought to be physically and spiritually healthy, actually propagated the problems they endeavored to remove.¹² Because entry was not contingent on any monetary exchange, the park rapidly became a popular spot for amusement and adventure. Sensing this unforeseen effect, calls for nightly supervision and adequate lighting were continuously repeated. In fact authorities almost saw it as their mission to impose structure; this would be achieved through the way the space was maintained, managed, and developed. Taking this argument one step further it could even be argued that a closer monitoring of the Park's development was necessary due to the fact that people who *needed* monitoring now frequented the park. Indeed, a crowded park allowed the polity's project of rule to be casted over a wider audience.

Accordingly, Mount Royal Park can be understood during the first half of the 20th century as a focal point of culture, whereby cultural norms became an intense point of contention between authorities and the public.¹³ More than a simple question of physical design, administrative interventions in the park during this period mirrored power relations within its space.¹⁴ The organization of Mount Royal's space must be seen as a process of regulation through which municipal authorities became visible and sought to mark their presence on the urban territory. It was a place where each social group viewed the space differently based on their needs and desired uses – at odds with each other, creating conflict.

1.2 Postwar Morality and Modernity

Embedded in the governance of Mount Royal Park during the postwar period was a project of rule dictated by two sets of postwar ideals: morality and modernity. In order to

¹² Sarsh, ““Disgusting” Noises, and “Dangerous” Spaces,” 25.

¹³ Zinger, “Le mont Royal,” 79.

¹⁴ Dagenais, “Inscrire le pouvoir municipal dans l'espace urbain,” 348.

understand how the physical landscape of Mount Royal Park evolved we must understand the framework of these ideals and how they travelled ‘globally’ in Montréal to ultimately transform Mount Royal Park’s physical environment. These two sets of visions should not be seen as competing, but rather as complementary. As numerous scholars have recognized, members of a recipient society (in this case Montréal) had choices with regards to their policies, but their choices were conditioned by the values of a global capitalist modernity (in this case American notions of morality); culture and modernity thereby became a ‘global’ fate encompassing capitalism, mass culture, and urbanism.¹⁵ Therefore, though modernity was not a defining issue of Mount Royal’s management prior to the postwar period, what propelled this modernism into the management of Mount Royal Park was the issue of immoral activities within its perimeter. The changes that occurred in the immediate postwar period within Montréal’s urban territory ought to be examined under the scope of modernist transformations in parallel to the moralist discourse.

During this time clerical-nationalist circles engaged in a fierce struggle against the perceived degeneration of public morality.¹⁶ While the so-called “morality crusade” attempted to rectify immoral behaviours and eliminate the city’s undesirable population, the modernist agenda sought to synchronize postwar developments with ideals of modernism. In this sense, modernity was open to progress, with almost blind faith, as a solution to many of the ills present in the postwar era (such as immorality). The moralist backdrop can be explained by an acceleration of urban dynamics: prosperity and economic growth, increased migration to Montréal’s metropolitan area, demographic growth and housing issues, development of the consumer society, moral debates and changing values in popular culture under the influence of North American mass media.¹⁷ The authorities’ moral fixation led to the closure of the city’s *Red Light* district in 1944; this was the result of an injunction from the military authorities, who were increasingly alarmed by the rates of venereal diseases among soldiers.¹⁸ Following

¹⁵ The most outstanding of which have been Jürgen Habermas and Marshall Berman. Jessica C.E. Gienow-Hecht, “Cultural Transfer,” in *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*, 267.

¹⁶ Lacasse, *La prostitution féminine à Montréal*, 106.

¹⁷ Lapointe, *Nettoyer Montréal*, 19.

¹⁸ Under this inquiry, Montréal’s nightlife faced an uncertain future – with the *Red Light* district closed an increasing discourse vilifying the ‘immorality of night’ emerged. Daniel Proulx, *Le Red Light de Montréal* (Montréal: VLB éditeur, 1997), 60.

the closure of the district, social anxiety was at its height concerning morality, crime, venereal diseases, prostitution, and the state of youths in Montréal.

Faced with a deepening public crisis over the morality of its youth in the 1940s Canadian police forces invented new technologies of surveillance and discipline and in turn reshaped their role in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. In fact, critical developments in urban policing including fresh ventures like the creation of the Juvenile Morality Squad (later the Delinquency Prevention Bureau), a juvenile nocturnal curfew, and the Police Juvenile Club.¹⁹ The advent of the Juvenile Prevention Bureau in 1947 signalled the arrival of new bureaucratic measures of surveillance, leading to the centralization of processing minors and police records on “bad” youths.²⁰

In the second-half of the 1940s Pacifique (Pax) Plante, ex-assistant director of the Montréal Police Service explained through a highly prolific and controversial series of publications in *Le Devoir* how municipal authorities – political and police alike – fostered and protected vices such as gambling and prostitution.²¹ Plante’s revelations caused strong reactions within Montréal’s population. The sensational tone of Pax Plante’s articles enhanced his reputation as an urbanite and tantalizing character of the places he wrote about, which included visits to illegal drinking or gambling establishments.²² Indignant, some citizens gathered to demand a judicial enquiry into the situation of public morality in Montréal.

It was thus on March 19, 1950, at the Windsor Hotel, that the first reunion of the Comité de moralité publique (CMP) was held. The CMP was founded upon a strong belief that each individual was responsible for his or her own sexual experiences;²³ “réclamer une éducation de morale sexuelle qui enseigne au jeune homme à s’élever au-dessus de l’animalité par la domination de ses instincts... Nous disons qu’il n’y a pas deux morales selon les sexes,

¹⁹ According to Myers, the implications of these new developments, caused young people—especially working-class, racialized, and those labelled ‘sexually precocious’—to experience unprecedented intervention from police in the name of protection, prevention, and discipline. Myers, “Morality Squads, Curfews, and the Sports Solution.”
²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ This series was eventually transformed into a published collection of articles. Pacifique Plante, *Montréal sous le règne de la pègre* (Montréal: Éditions de l’Action nationale, 1950).

²² Will Straw, “Montreal and *The Captive City*,” *Québec Studies* 48 (Fall 2009/Winter 2010): 16.

²³ François David, “Le Comité de Moralité Publique de Montréal,” *Cultures du Canada Français*, 8 (Fall 1991): 92.

mais une seule morale égale pour tous et des responsabilités égales pour tous.”²⁴ As Mary Louise Adams argued, social conditions particular to the postwar period combined to put notions about youth and adolescence at the centre of sexual discourses. Moreover, in her words, “Assumptions about the corruptibility of young people, about their need for protection from moral harm, and about their role as representatives of the future helped to set boundaries for how sexuality, in a general sense, could be understood.”²⁵ Through these, the social anxiety of sexual activities and corruptibility of youths, it became obvious to Montréal’s authorities that a surveillance of the city’s urban space was needed.

This surveillance would be achieved through a policing of space especially at night. According to cultural historian Will Straw, for the CMP, the extension of entertainment and human sexual activities late into the night was the result of deliberate infractions of urban law and propriety by transgressors who could be identified.²⁶ Indeed, obsessed with night-time sociability – in a city widely viewed as open and corrupt, the CMP’s reports would describe suspicious forms of sexual interaction transpiring on the streets outside bars or upon their premises.²⁷ The basis of the morality campaigns, coupled with the indignation regarding criminal activities, would lead to an arduous inquiry into Montréal’s political activities based on ecclesiastic mores, opposing un-normative and immoral behaviours.

As studies of this era demonstrate, reformers presented public immorality as a stark reflection of the defects of the political system upon the citizen and their youths. This was especially true for neighbourhoods that were prone to such immoral activities. However, how does Mount Royal Park fit within this paradigm of social change in Montréal? How can we explain the fluidity of what was at first political reform, and its subsequent manifestation in the politics of park management?

²⁴ Bibliothèque et Archives nationale du Québec (hereafter BANQ), Fonds Comité de moralité publique (hereafter CMP), Paper presented by J.Z. Léon Patenaude at the Club Optimiste Laurentien, February 24, 1953. CLG47, J,1.

²⁵ Mary Louise Adams, *The Trouble with Normal: Postwar Youth and the Making of Heterosexuality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 3-4.

²⁶ As tools for capturing the nightly withering of commercial activity, the lists of the Comité are rich in the levels of empirical detail and moral judgement they provide. Will Straw, “The Urban Night,” in *Cartographies of Place: Navigating the Urban*, ed. Michael Darroch and Janine Marchessault (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014), 192.

²⁷ Straw, “Montreal and *The Captive City*,” 17.

1.3 Morality in Montréal Parks

One way to elucidate this is to view postwar Montréal as a city full of children who invaded its streets, laneways, parks, and schools. According to attendance figures submitted by the Recreation Department of Montréal there were 276,491 children enrolled in 107 clubs playing softball and baseball in Jeanne Mance Park (adjacent to Mount Royal Park) during the summer of 1949. The figures for the winter attendance were even more impressive totalling 700,250, averaging 544 per day, as children were part of 92 clubs, using the two hockey rinks and a large skating rink.²⁸ Yet, this same impressive figure of attendance in Montréal's parks was a source of concern for authorities; parks were one of the very few spaces where adults did not monitor children's activities. According to historian Paul-André Linteau, this caused a social problem where children could fall victims to vice, corruption, and immorality.²⁹



Figure 2: This snapshot was part of a photographic report produced on November 18, 1953 named the, “*Parc du Mt Royal: Différents paysages.*” The report depicts various faces of the Park, notably hikers, squirrels, and patrons in the chalet's restaurant. VM105-Y-1_0054-003.

²⁸ MUA, MPPA, Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Meeting of April 8th, 1949. M.G. 2079, C,1 – file 43.

²⁹ Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération* (Montréal: Boréal, 2000), 385-386.

Whereas the urban environment seemed degenerative at once physically and morally, parents, teachers, and citizens wished to cleanse the climate of the metropolis in order to ensure the blooming of youth, and prevent its delinquency.³⁰ It is therefore imperative to consider the morality debate as one wishing to preserve the sanctity of children, including their foremost frequented space – parks. Mount Royal Park at this point was seen as a ‘natural sacred space’ sheltered from the city’s insalubrious and immoral confines, perhaps even of modernity. Yet, with the subsequent closure of the *Red Light* district, authorities feared that immoral behaviour would infiltrate other public spaces; and with policing intensified in poorer neighbourhoods, parks became the most important site of public immorality to surveil.

Parks would indeed begin to be associated with insalubrity after 1945. Rosaire Morin of the Jeune Laurentiens (a youth division of the Morality Squad) called for not only a more pronounced presence of authorities in the city’s parks, but moreover better lighting and imposition of fines for persons arrested on charges of immoral acts and for frequenting these spaces after 11 o’clock at night.³¹ As Lapointe argues, the authorities’ preoccupation with parks was partially motivated by greater licentiousness during the 1940s, and furthered after the violent rape and murder of John Benson (9 years old) in Mount Royal Park on February 25, 1945. Benson’s body, slashed and head buried in the snow, had been found by his friends who were meeting with him to ski on the Mountain. *Le Devoir* highlighted the fact that the Police Department had never seen citizens this preoccupied by a case in Montréal.³² Moreover, this event scandalized the paedophile’s young lawyer and future mayor of Montréal, Jean Drapeau, who after the trial vowed to purge the city of vices and immorality.³³

The viciousness of this event brought issues of urban and park safety to light. Newspapers began publishing articles to denounce the negative aspect of the Mountain’s

³⁰ Lapointe, *Nettoyer Montréal*, 279.

³¹ Livre des procès verbaux du conseil central des jeunes laurentiens, 1945-1946, CRLG, Fonds Rosaire Morin, (P16/C,11); quoted in Lapointe, *Nettoyer Montréal*, 107.

³² “Trois suspects détenus pour le meurtre sur la montagne,” *Le Devoir*, February 28, 1945. The murderer, Roland Charles Chassé, had been arrested prior to this incident for molesting three other young boys. Following his conviction in the John Benson case, he was hanged at the Bordeaux prison on February 13, 1946. Allen, “L’aventure sexuelle clandestine,” 92.

³³ Jean-Francois Roberge, “Influence de la presse écrite sur l’émancipation de la communauté gaie montréalaise au XXe siècle,” (M.A. Thesis (Communications), Université du Québec À Montréal, 2008), 20; Lapointe, *Nettoyer Montréal*, 107.

excess crowding stating that, “Le mont Royal est malpropre dû à l’affluence.”³⁴ Citizens were asked to collaborate to keep the Mountain clean; the lack of employees made the maintenance of the Mountain’s paths and landscape harder to uphold especially during summer months. The lack of employees should also be seen as a cause of the growing degradation of the Park’s trees and wider ecology.

According to other sources it was the neglect to enforce morality within the boundaries of Mount Royal Park that led to the decline of the Park’s condition. In a letter written by the Comité diocésain d’action catholique to the president of the city’s Executive Committee, J.-O. Asselin, the municipal government was asked to consider placing signs in parks to remind visitors that whomever was found to take part in immoral behaviour would be fined \$40 or be sent to prison: “Le fléau grandissant de l’immoralité dans nos parcs cesserait vite, si adultes et jeunes pouvaient y lire des enseignes de ce genre: Est passible d’une amende de \$40 ou même de la prison quiconque se livre à des familiarités déplacées, à des actes indécents, immoraux, propres à scandaliser notre jeunesse.”³⁵ The diocesan committee would further this position, ending its letter by articulating their hope that the city, as soon as circumstances would be more favourable, would fulfill its modernization program by improving lighting in streets and parks of the city. Implicit in these comments were the concepts that immorality could be curbed through a modernization program that included the steps of (1) eradication, (2) policing, and (3) lighting.

It is no surprise that policing city parks did indeed become a growing concern for authorities. In an article published on July 31, 1946 it was said that the lack of law enforcement and supervision in Mount Royal Park caused serious problems:

As result of this neglect, undesirable characters are again in evidence. A number of cases of young children being accosted have recently been reported. One would have imagined that the child murder which so shocked local parents a year and a half ago would have resulted in increased supervision of the entire Mountain Park. Will it take a repetition of that crime to bring the police back to the most heavily patronized section of the park, where they were formerly so much in evidence?³⁶

³⁴ AVM, FPDM, “La malpropreté du Mont-Royal: L’affluence de plus en plus considérable en est responsable,” July 8, 1946. P118,S4,SS1,D74.

³⁵ AVM, FPDM, “L’immoralité dans nos parcs publics,” August 23, 1946. Ibid.

³⁶ AVM, FPDM, “Police Needed in Mountain Park,” July 31, 1946. P118,S4,SS1,D74.

Through this same article we are made aware of the geographical location of the problems. It was not the Mountain as a whole, but rather a specific section of it that caused concerns: “you may roam Fletcher’s Field and the wooded slopes above for hours without sighting a protective uniform.” The focus of reporters and authorities alike were set on Fletcher’s Field and the eastern flank of the Mountain – an area named the “Jungle” (Figure 4). The Jungle is more than half a mile long, about 400 yards wide, and is shaped like a horseshoe curving around the east slope of the Mountain from (now) Jeanne-Mance Park to Mount Royal cemetery. Police had found that most offences occurred in the lower Jungle section, the section off Park Avenue and Mount Royal Boulevard, where the landscape included slopes and dense bushland on either side of the Mountain tramline. In this sense it was a frontier, in the way people perceived its inaccessibility and insecurity. The construction of a tramline in 1928 had resulted in the modification and delineation of the Jungle’s territory.³⁷



Figure 3: *The blue shaded area within the perimeter of Mount Royal Park is the area known as the Jungle.*
 Source: Google Maps

Though the Jungle was largely viewed as an undeveloped part of the Park, seen as a wild and untouched natural space by authorities and citizens alike, it did not reflect the design wished by Olmsted. Indeed, it is important to state that Olmsted suggested it was best to

³⁷ This tramline would eventually be transformed into a roadway; this will be looked at in the third chapter.

improve on nature itself.³⁸ As Bernard Debarbieux argues, his work was “explicitly conceived according to a Romantic model of mountains,” influenced by poetry and aesthetics.³⁹ Such an influence testifies to the Victorian vision of Olmsted, and that such a style did not see the Park as in a natural state, but rather as a product that should be nurtured and nourished. Therefore, what is particularly interesting about the Jungle – one of the least nurtured and cared for parts of the Park, is the fact it became the Park’s “Achilles’ heel”; its aesthetics produced conditions suitable for acts that were deemed immoral. It should also be noted that the Jungle was located closer to poorer and Francophone neighbourhoods—in complete opposite to Mount Royal Park’s western flank located in and around the Golden Square Mile and Westmount neighbourhoods, both of which were largely inhabited by Anglophones. Yet, as the second chapter demonstrates, demands to develop and clear the Jungle emerged mainly from Anglophone newspapers.

One of the first steps undertaken by the municipal administration was to transform the so-called ‘watchmen’ patrolling Mount Royal Park into police officers. Indeed prior to these complexities, those patrolling parks were agents under the umbrella of the Park Service, not police officers. Their lack of authority led patrons to dismiss their role and ridicule them. Therefore in the mid-1940s their role augmented to that of police officers due to increased ‘hoodlumism’ in parks:

With 66 members of the Parks and Playgrounds division of the Public Works Department to be sworn in shortly as special constables, another temporary measure to meet the police shortage was put through by the municipal executive committee yesterday. Because of hoodlumism in a number of city public parks and playgrounds and the levity with which some of the younger element as well as adolescents and adults meet the reprimands of monitors, watchmen and other guardians, it was found necessary to appoint special constables to cope with the situation.⁴⁰

It was thought that by giving special powers to these constables, they would more easily meet with the depredations of youths who failed to respect authority.

³⁸ “All that you have seen and admired of the old work of nature must be considered as simply suggestive of what that is practicable, suitable, and harmonious with your purposes of large popular use,” Law Olmsted quoted in Marsan, *Montreal in Evolution*, 303.

³⁹ Debarbieux, “The Mountain in the City,” 411.

⁴⁰ Moreover, it was said “too many times they laugh at watchmen ordering them off rinks or persist in cruel demonstrations toward smaller children, or risk injuries to other by blatant disregard of rules.” AVM, FPDM, “Park Supervisors Named Policemen: Wartime Measure Meant to Improve Discipline on Playgrounds,” February 2, 1945. P118,S4,SS1,D74.

1.4 The “Undesirables” in the Jungle and Park Management

With the growing attention given to parks by Montréal’s police officers, and the issue of morality having been highlighted, what remains to be understood and identified are the individuals who were deemed to be fouling Mount Royal Park’s attractiveness, and the attributes which brought them to the Jungle. According to queer historian Luther Allen, the Park’s romantic design by Olmsted, combined with the intimacy generated by the presence of trees and shrubs, contributed to attract a homosexual community.⁴¹ Correspondingly, a notable shift in homosexual cruising patterns in Montréal was apparent from the early decades of the 20th century, moving from the sites on or close to the river towards the Mountain and its park space.⁴²

The attractiveness of the Jungle to such clandestine activities can be explained by the romanticism that the space itself evoked, being a space where an individual could walk up and blend into the environment, become anonymous and undertake immoral activities, peripheral to the urban landscape and “under the mantle of darkness.”⁴³ It was also the possibility of egress due to its location, natural attributes, and its architectural design, which favoured clandestine and nocturnal presence. Parks were indeed attractive for nocturnal homosexual encounters and cruising due to the fear of darkness for the “normals,” thereby driving them out, and the geographic isolation reinforced by the late hour of visitation (late hours and geographic isolation imply a third trait of night spots – the threat of physical danger).⁴⁴ The immediate problem identified with the parks’ undesirable population was their desire to act under darkness, which conversely steered the “normal” population away. Altogether these contributed towards the designation of this area as a location of police surveillance.

The Jungle’s designation as a space needing surveillance was due to the prospect of arresting criminals in the act at night. However, as I have mentioned in the introduction, the criminal population of the park was not restricted to homosexual behaviour. Though

⁴¹ Allen, “L’aventure sexuelle clandestine,” 87.

⁴² Ross Higgins, “A Sense of Belonging: Pre-Liberation Space, Symbolics, and Leadership in Gay Montreal,” (PhD diss. (Anthropology), McGill University, 1997), 241.

⁴³ Edward William Delph, *The Silent Community: Public Homosexual Encounters* (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1978), 96-97.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

homosexuals were in many ways scapegoats to problems that occurred in parks—as denoted in the city’s newspapers, they were by no means exclusive to the categorical term of “undesirable” in Mount Royal Park. In a 1947 article *Le Devoir* stated that many municipal councillors complained that little surveillance could be seen in Montréal’s parks. Through this article we are also made aware of homicides occurring in the park, a crime by no means correlative to homosexuality:

Un incident récent a montré jusqu’à quel point la surveillance laisse à désirer sur le mont Royal. Un étudiant de l’Université McGill y est mort, frappé d’une balle, et son cadavre n’a été découvert que deux jours après son décès. Interrogé sur le sujet, le directeur des parcs et terrains de jeux de la ville, M. Delphis Demers, a déclaré que l’on manque de surveillance « dans tous les parcs ». Les conseillers qui étaient présents lors de cette discussion ont conclu qu’il fallait insister pour que les choses rentrent dans l’ordre avant que les vacances ne commencent. « Les dangers de la rue sont déjà assez nombreux, sans que nos enfants soient exposés à des accidents dans les parcs de la ville », a-t-on dit.⁴⁵

Still struggling with surveillance in Montréal’s streets the issue of parks grew larger and more important to the agenda of the authorities. Articles such as the one above remind us of parks’ sanctity to the wellbeing of children and the fact that the Mountain was serving as a prospective space of surveillance for the police. The same characteristics that brought homosexuals into the park contributed to attract alcoholics and criminals (pedophiles and murderers). It is under these circumstances that campaigns of morality landed in Mount Royal Park—a gradual construction of the Park as an unsafe space, filled with wretched peoples, which was moreover sensationalized in the city’s major newspapers.

In order to deter these established communities from the Park, new concepts of surveillance had to be imagined. Around the same time, the director of the police service – Fernand Dufresne, compelled the director of public works to renew instructions to police Montréal’s public parks, more particularly at night. Police officers were asked to give particular attention during summer months to youths loitering these spaces:

Me Dufresne annonce qu’il y a maintenant une surveillance constante dans [Le parc Lafontaine], avec agents en uniforme et agents en civil se répartissant le travail en trois équipes. Depuis la fin de l’hiver jusqu’à date, une trentaine de personnes ont été arrêtées dans ce parc sous diverses accusations. Le directeur de la police a assuré M. Des Marais qu’il se rend pleinement compte de l’importance de la surveillance policière au parc Lafontaine, et dans tous

⁴⁵ Pierre Laporte, “La surveillance laisse à désirer dans les parcs de la métropole,” *Le Devoir*, May 28, 1947.

les autres parcs de la ville. Mais, ajoute-t-il, “si nous ne faisons pas plus pour le moment c’est parce que nous n’avons pas, à notre disposition, le personnel voulu.”⁴⁶

In order to secure and preserve morality in Montréal’s parks network, it was thought that police officers should be subtle and dress as civilians. Surveillance was therefore one way to address the issue of immorality; it enabled a richer and more detailed discourse of perversion to develop, control, and increased policing for the safety of the park facilities. Moreover in another news article, the presence of police officers in parks at night was said to be in favour of citizens, and especially children, who would be guaranteed their inalienable right of protection during the summer.⁴⁷ Police presence in the park had up to that point not been as fundamental, but given the historical context – the morality crusade, the greater number of patrons in Mount Royal Park, and the safety of children – surveillance was deemed inadequate.

What could therefore be observed within the elaboration of this structure of power within the parks system in Montréal was a differentiation, defence from, fixation on, and hierarchization between the authorities in power and *Others*—a typical strategy which sociologist Michel Foucault insists is a response to an urgent need at a given historical moment.⁴⁸ Though the Jungle had loomed large historically within Montréal’s homosexual community, it was under the scope of morality that its presence in this space became a palpable issue for authorities.

The real issue concerning the presence of undesirables in the Park’s space was the fact that they could not be easily targeted and harassed by the police, and thus remained concealed. Due to the dense ecology and vast territory, the tactics of surveillance and policing needed to be radically different from those used in “urban” neighbourhoods. This suggests that the production of this space – its cultural and physical organization, informed a distinctive sexual microgeography, which largely interplayed between the public and private spheres.⁴⁹ Indeed, the appropriation of the Jungle by homosexuals caused the space to be produced in a way that went against the heteronormative behaviour of ecclesiastic and technocratic ideologies.

⁴⁶ AVM, FPD, “L’éclairage dans les parcs: Nouvelles instructions du directeur de la police Me Fernand Dufresne,” July 8, 1946. P118,S4,SS1,D74.

⁴⁷ AVM, FPD, “Surveillance dans les parcs le soir,” July 6, 1946. P118,S4,SS1,D74.

⁴⁸ Foucault, “The confession of the flesh,” in *Power/Knowledge*, 195.

⁴⁹ Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 54.

According to Maurice Leznoff—who wrote in 1954 what is widely regarded as the first sociological study of homosexuals in Canada—the most effective way to understand the convergence of this community towards the Jungle was through the prism of a developing homosexual community and its “deviant” attributes as a response to a hostile society.⁵⁰ However, the very production and originality of his research was popularized and denounced in the city’s newspapers including *The Montreal Herald*. It is important to acknowledge and highlight the fact that *The Montreal Herald* had recently been purchased by the Montreal Star Company on October 23, 1944, and turned into a tabloid newspaper.⁵¹ What therefore occurred was an unwanted effect of bringing further publicity, attention, and increased police presence to the Jungle. Indeed, since newspapers reported that a study of homosexual subjects was ongoing, and that these subjects were located in the Jungle, authorities decided to act upon these reports and increase surveillance. In the end this created a rupture between Leznoff and his homosexual ‘informants’ and prematurely concluded his groundbreaking work.⁵²

Though citizens naturally wanted the Jungle to be clean and safe for all, they nevertheless hoped that a farsighted master plan would be envisioned to keep the natural appeal of the Park. One of the most insightful comments concerning these notions came from Arthur L. Gravel of the MPPA:

The City Council and Executive particularly, may make a permanent contribution to good management of this asset, of which the big dividend is recreation, in many forms. But Montrealers have proved themselves unitedly adamant on one point: that no one of the multiple uses made of the park must encroach on its native charm, which is to remain a beautiful piece of wooded hill and dale... Some of the savings from not doing vast and costly public works could be used to provide a trained and adequate staff of wardens, charged with policing and maintaining the whole area, including more floral embellishment... Plans for “improvements” should be both imaginative and practical, but “THE ART ITSELF IS NATURE.”⁵³

According to Gravel the Park was an art form within itself, a place of culture. By revealing the Association’s sentiments towards plans for the Mountain, he also epitomized the issues

⁵⁰ Maurice Leznoff, “The Homosexual in Urban Society,” (M.A. Thesis (Sociology), McGill University, 1954).

⁵¹ See Douglas Fetherling, *The Rise of the Canadian Newspaper*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990), 62. It had historically been a reputable Protestant news source. Regardless, it would be a few years after its purchase, on October 18, 1957, that it ceased operations after 146 years of publishing. Wilfred H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 90-91.

⁵² An increased police presence was observable on the Mountain following an announcement in *The Montreal Gazette* which detailed his research and highlighted the fact that many homosexuals frequented the Park. Maurice Leznoff, “Interviewing Homosexuals,” *American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 62, No. 2 (1956), 204.

⁵³ MUA, MPPA, Arthur L. Gravel, “Foresight planning for Mount Park,” February 1952. M.G. 2079, C,1 – file 33. Emphasis in original text.

pertaining to the (re)development of Mount Royal Park. On the one hand, modernization could not encroach upon the physical landscape and natural beauty of the Park, but on the other hand something had to be done to counter immorality and delinquency in the Park. These ‘gatekeepers’ of Mount Royal Park would seek to resolve these issues without diminishing the cultural value of the Park. Could immorality be curtailed without defiling the *art of nature*? And could the Mountain be made more accessible without encroaching on the romantic design?

Part of these questions would be answered in the city’s development of a Parks Department and the subsequent spatial management this department would engineer. Indeed, up until 1953 the Public Works Department governed Montréal’s Parks and Playgrounds. Burdened with external factors—such as declining municipal revenues, budget cuts, and crime, during the postwar period, expenditures were cut for parks and recreation, thereby resulting in the decline of park maintenance and proper stewardship of public landscapes.⁵⁴ This was especially true for Mount Royal Park, whose space was increasingly mismanaged, deteriorating, and out-dated. Therefore, the Park was not only associated with immoral behaviours, but also with a deplorable ecological state.

It was therefore at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the City of Montréal, held at City Hall on February 13, 1953, that the creation of the Parks Department of the City of Montréal was ordained and enacted. The Parks Department assumed powers that had been those of the Public Works Department and had authority to “install, dismantle and repair all equipment of the parks and playgrounds and to supervise its use; it shall also carry out such works concerning the development of parks and playgrounds as may be entrusted to it.”⁵⁵ The creation of the Parks Department can therefore be seen as a response to cries emitted by civic groups in face of the deterioration of the city’s parks. Through this same statement the authorities articulated their will to (re)develop and modernize park spaces.

The Parks Department accorded a preponderant amount of resources towards the development of the parks for the wellbeing of children and youths. Under its director, Claude

⁵⁴ David Schuyler, “Parks in Urban America,” *American History: Oxford Research Encyclopaedia* (2013): 10.

⁵⁵ AVM, Fonds Comité exécutif (hereafter FCE), VM074, 103, 320.

Robillard, the Parks Department set in motion a number of cultural activities. This was crystalized in Paul Buissonneau’s *Roulotte*—a travelling puppet show, the Jardin des Merveilles, modernized playground equipment, park parades, and most notably in Michel Rabagliati’s comic book starring fictional Jeannot, a child who at once represented any of the 200 000 children of age who frequented Montréal’s parks. Such recreational and cultural programs were believed to combat idleness in youths and instill in them art and culture.⁵⁶ According to Robillard idleness had indeed been at the essence of moral vices, and the goal was to interest children in cultural activities by making them available, thereby fostering favourable (and moral) lifestyles. These measures demonstrated that the Parks Department, alongside the City of Montréal, sought to modernize Montréal’s park space through notions of integration and inclusion, most notably by way of theatrics and physical activities for children. These notions were also a direct response to the growing demand to purify the city and eradicate moral vices.

1.5 1954: From the Federal “to the little tactics of the habitats”⁵⁷

*But the so-called microsociological vision leaves out a good number of other things: as often happens when you look too closely, you can’t see the wood for the trees...*⁵⁸

—Pierre Bourdieu, *Social Space and Symbolic Power*

As was the case in other parks in North America, homosexual activities began to be viewed as source of danger after the war, where panic over sex crimes in the late 1940s and early 1950s helped displace the earlier stereotype of the effeminate “queer” as an object of ridicule with a new stereotype of the homosexual as a “dangerous psychopath, a menace to young boys.”⁵⁹ Homosexuals were, at this time, losing their employment and designated as a

⁵⁶ AVM, Fonds Claude Robillard (hereafter FCR), “Culture et récréation à Montréal,” Conférence sur “Les ressources et notre avenir.” (Montréal: c.1958). P 137, S3, D4.

⁵⁷ Referencing Foucault’s quote used in the introduction; “A whole history needs to be written of spaces – which would at the same time be the history of powers – from the great strategies of geo-politics to the little tactics of the habitats.” Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 149.

⁵⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, trans. Matthew Adamson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 131.

⁵⁹ However the authors argue that in reality, gay park users were much more likely to be crime victims than victimizers: “thugs, who knew that gay men frequented the park at night and that they were reluctant to go to the police because of a fear of public exposure, preyed on them in the Ramble.” Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park And The People: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 479.

‘national security threat’ because of their ‘character weakness’.⁶⁰ This fear, of both the character weakness of homosexuals and of them frequenting urban parks, could be seen not only in Montréal, but moreover in the ‘global’ trend looking to purge cities of immorality – Mount Royal Park’s Jungle being a microcosm exemplifying all these issues at hand.

One of the factors that furthered the position of the municipal government to police immoral spaces was the Royal Commission on the Criminal Law Relating to Criminal Sexual Psychopaths (the McRuer Commission) established in 1954 upon the recommendation of the Minister of Justice. The commission held hearings in all provincial capitals as well as Montréal, Ottawa, and Vancouver from March 29, 1954 to February 1956. It sought to extend the criminal charges onto homosexual activities; such activities were viewed, at the federal level, as the inability by crazed and deviant individuals to control sexual impulses.⁶¹ Indeed, during this mid-1950s Commission an incontestable disapproval towards homosexuals was vocalized among politicians, authoritative figures, academics, and society at large. Issues that have continuously been emphasized throughout this study (youths, homosexuality, policing, urban parks) were evoked in the 1954 Report:

Homosexuality is a constant problem for the Police in large centers, and if the Police adopt a laissez-faire attitude toward such individuals, city parks, intended for the relaxation of women and children and youth recreation purposes, will become rendezvous for homosexuals. In addition to his immoral conduct, the homosexual requires further Police attention, as he is often the victim of gang beatings, or robbery with violence, and is easy prey for the extortionist and blackmailer. Homosexuals have been stabbed and wounded and in a few cases even have been murdered. The saddest feature of all, however, is that homosexuals corrupt others and are constantly recruiting youths of previous good character into their fraternity.⁶²

What is exemplified through the hearings of the Royal Commission is the increasing discourse concerning the insalubrious state of North American cities, including their parks and more particularly a concern expressed towards the corruptibility of youths. This addresses the fact that these issues were not specific to Montréal, but rather part of a ‘globalized’ trend looking to rid immoral (homo)sexual behaviour from urban centres.

⁶⁰ Gary Kinsman, “‘Character Weaknesses’ and ‘Fruit Machines’: Towards an Analysis of the Anti-Homosexual Security Campaign in the Canadian Civil Service,” *Labour/Le Travail*, vol. 35 (1995), 134.

⁶¹ Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers: National Security as Sexual Regulation* (Toronto: UBC Press, 2010), 72-73.

⁶² *Report of the Royal Commission on The Criminal Law Relating to Criminal Sexual Psychopaths* (Ottawa: The Queen’s Printer, 1954), 27.

In parallel to this, Montréal was experiencing another inquiry probing into the ills and moral state of authorities, citizens, and the nature of certain neighborhoods – namely the Caron Inquiry. Like the American municipal reform movement, with its high-profile senate investigation and local crime commissions in states and cities, Montréal had its own judicial body looking into racketeering and police corruption. Emerging from this inquiry was the hegemonic discourse concerning crime and morality. In both Québec and the United States, a wave of print culture forms (from crime-oriented tabloid newspapers through investigative magazine articles) covered the panic over urban vice, adopting perspectives that ranged from the openly titillating to the earnestly amelioristic.⁶³ Although the final report of the Caron Inquiry was published on October 8, 1954 it would not signify the end of morality obsession in Montréal.

The indication that Montréal was poised to move towards a morally reformed urban centre would especially prove true when the prosecutor of the commission himself, Jean Drapeau, was elected mayor of Montréal on October 26, 1954. Indeed, 1954 was also an election year, which saw the retirement of four-time mayor Camillien Houde and the election of the new candidate for the Civic Action League (CAL), Jean Drapeau (his first of two mandates). Drapeau was elected on a platform that promised to further clean the city of corruption and immorality.⁶⁴ However, this did not mark the complete end of this public morality campaign, but rather a turning point where it would be transformed by the procurement and exercise of power.⁶⁵

Though it is often stated that the number of arrests and raids rose to a draconian level after Drapeau took office,⁶⁶ one could question if it was truly Drapeau's undertaking or rather a reflection of the ongoing moral crusade, since Drapeau took office in October of that year. Regardless, the determination to prosecute the Jungle's occupants was upheld under Drapeau.

⁶³ Straw, "Montreal and *The Captive City*," 16.

⁶⁴ Jean Drapeau, who would give Quebec's metropolis its "modern" attributes, was brought into power in an electoral tidal wave promising to counter the narrative that the city was "open" to prostitution, illegal gambling, and therefore influenced by "organized crime". Lapointe, *Nettoyer Montréal*, 11.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁶⁶ As queer historian Patrice Corriveau states, the number of charges for gross indecency in Montréal augmented from 65 in 1953 to 311 in 1954, the year of Drapeau's election Patrice Corriveau, *Judging Homosexuals: A History of Gay Persecution in Quebec and France*, trans. Käthe Roth (Toronto: UBC Press, 2011), 98.

1.6 Conclusion

The mid-20th century urban reformers and authorities, whose ideals hoped to counter the defects of the political system, gambling, and prostitution, acted in accordance with the geographical location they hoped to transform. This moralist project of rule crept across districts and neighbourhoods to eventually land into Mount Royal Park, once the initial cleansing of certain neighbourhoods (i.e. *Red Light* district) was accomplished. In a sense this ideological endeavour was one that was geographical in nature – the authorities scrutinized the locale that they believed was most endemic to vice and corruption. The fact that municipal authorities’ strategy of power mutated from places that were immoral, towards spaces “designed” for recreation and youths, in the span of a decade, also meant that the morality of youths was a prime concern for them. This rhetoric reinforced the notion that the city was in a booming period, where morality had to be instilled into the population from a young age.

To explain the undesirable attributes of Mount Royal Park during this period we must consider the concepts of *night*, *Otherness*, and *policing* – elements at the forefront of the morality campaigns – and proper to the modernization agenda of the authorities. Though morality and modernity were in essence, divergent structures of progression, they nevertheless collided and led to the eventual transformation of the physical landscape and original design of Mount Royal Park through mid-century (re)developments. These (re)developments would be answers to both, the morality problems as well as the need to modernize the city. The convergence of these ideas during the immediate postwar period within Montréal’s landscape, ultimately landing into the confines of Mount Royal Park, meant that the built environment would undergo a metamorphosis to harmonize with such social mores. Moreover, the cultural and social power of Mount Royal Park, its visibility and iconicity within Montréal, meant that it would be a place where power relations would be expressed and exemplified. Though police officers were already placed in parks, they henceforth wished to maintain a more thorough guard on nightly park activities to surveil the community that had established itself there. By understanding concepts related to differing imaginaries of Mount Royal Park, its iconicity, and the debates surrounding it, we gain an understanding as to how these issues would have a profound and transformative impact on the environment of the Park.

Chapter 2. The Morality Cuts: Planning Mount Baldy 1954-1958

L'homme, par son action et par son inaction, n'est-il pas le seul et unique responsable du délabrement du Mont-Royal? N'a-t-il pas profité, en égoïste, depuis Jacques Cartier, d'une forêt hospitalière et généreuse? Par manque de connaissances techniques, n'a-t-on pas, durant des dizaines d'années, coupé, fauché, la réserve forestière, la réserve des peuplements en brandissant la bannière de la vertu et du puritanisme? Est-ce une façon de combattre le mal que de couper ras de terre des jeunes arbres... dont la seule faute était d'avoir poussé dru dans une terre riche et féconde? Les arbustes, les arbrisseaux, les jeunes arbres ont disparu du Mont-Royal... et le vice, a-t-il aussi été emporté par les flots du St-Laurent? J'en doute !!¹

—Jean-Joseph Dumont, 1961

It was initially under pressure from the Montréal Police Service that the Executive Committee of the City of Montréal passed an order on August 26, 1954, which planned to clear-cut Mount Royal Park's Jungle, improve lighting installations, and further modernize its space. The order, known as the Morality Cuts, not only reflected the position of Montréal, and Canadian authorities at large during the Cold War period where police surveillance of suspected homosexuals and other so-called sexual “deviants” were part of a larger effort to fashion a morally sound, heterosexual nation,² but also reminded Montréalers' that the authorities were in a veritable crusade to purify the city and render its space moral and modern. Indeed, the issue of Mount Royal Park's transformation was one that highlighted the link between the landscape design of public space, social use of space, and the disparate political agenda of the authorities. The redefinition of the Park's Jungle would constitute the first episode whereby the newly implemented Parks Department of Montréal had to answer to the requests of the political authorities by grappling with ideas of modernization through urbanist, landscapist, and functionalist methodologies.

The push to transform this section of the Park's landscape would be one that was fundamentally driven by the press and political authorities, more than by citizens.³ This lack of civic engagement is a stark contrast to the debates that would occur around the same time surrounding the construction of a roadway, and later a housing-complex, on the Mountain.

¹ AUM, FAB, Dumont, *Rapport relatif à l'état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal*, 9.

² Jeffery Vacante, “Writing the History of Sexuality and ‘National’ History in Quebec,” *Journal of Canadian Studies, Revue D'études Canadiennes* vol. 39, no. 2 (2004), 32.

³ Although Peter Jacobs argues that both the press and citizens drove this campaign – the vilification of immoral activities and undesirable characters in Mount Royal Park, citizens in fact did not mobilize themselves asking for the Park to be redeveloped. Jacobs and Foisy, *Les quatre saisons du Mont-Royal*, 42.

Indeed, the articles published in the newspapers reveal the ambivalent position with regards to the clearing of the Jungle. It is a glimpse into the conflicting reality of the matter where the Park's gatekeepers adamantly wanted to conserve the culture of the 'natural' aspects of the Park, but did not wish for any undesirable characters to frequent its grounds. Therefore, caught between the realities that something had to be done to remove the undesirables and police the area, they remained silent to the fact that a section of Olmsted's romantic design was being wrecked.

Yet, as the Cuts were realized the authorities were not rearticulating how these would enable a safer space—what had in fact been the initial reasoning behind the Cuts—but rather, how they were able to generate a better park through the removal of both “weakened” plants and characters. The clearing of the Jungle would in the end have a radical impact on the Mountain's environment, devastating its original aspect and ecology, thereby highlighting the intrinsic relationship between urban planning of social space and the tailoring of the physical environmental form. In the end the name of “Mount Baldy”⁴ would enter the colloquial vernacular, thereby signifying a shift in the ecological characteristics of the Park—seen not only from a professional scientific stance, but moreover in the sociological rapport between its form and the citizens using its space.

2.1 Crime in the Jungle

During the mid 1950s, articles were published in the city's newspapers to denounce the undesirable character of Mount Royal Park. The role of the press in the embellishment of these aspects of the Park should be seen as an imperative factor leading to the planning of re-developmental schemes. These articles sensationalized the fact that many of the Park's night patrons were, according to their authors, sexual perverts, alcoholics, homosexuals, or thugs. Demonstrably, the attention drawn by journalists towards immorality and indecency in the Park was a contributing factor to the premature termination of Maurice Leznoff's groundbreaking thesis when his “informants” refused to conduct interviews in light of increased policing on Mount Royal. Though none of his informants had been arrested, their

⁴ The Mountain would gain the nickname of “Mont Chauve” within the francophone community.

response to the newspaper articles, increased police presence, and arrests in the Park indicated a palpable fear within the homosexual community.⁵

The city's 1954 budget was therefore fashioned in order to curb crime, with an acute orientation towards the "problem of homosexuals frequenting Mount Royal Park."⁶ To curb these crimes the director of the police service, Albert Langlois, conceived a system of honorary police membership for people who helped the police capture these "dangerous criminals." Such a system details the tactics and etiquettes used by the authorities within the spatial confines of Mount Royal Park; by inciting the citizens to partake in acts of vigilantism and capture these criminals, the city was not only fabricating a proactive policing stance, but more importantly, elaborating a greater distinction between the *Same* and the *Other*.⁷

Nevertheless, these preliminary tactics did not satisfy those who devotedly sought a safer, cleaner, and more tranquil park. Indeed, during the first week of August 1954 a six-year-old boy named Raymond Trudeau was murdered in the Jungle. On August 5 *The Montreal Herald* ran an article entitled "Mount Royal Jungle 'Must Go'" whereby they stated that better lighting, more police surveillance, and total elimination of the Jungle would make it safer for children and women to enjoy Mount Royal Park. Though Mount Royal Park had historically been known as a place of relaxation and recreation, the recent crimes had led councillors to believe that the number of constables and police surveillance in the Park was inadequate.⁸ According to one councillor interviewed, "If the city isn't ready just now to cut down the bushes, then the area known as the jungle might be closed to children till that is done. As it is at present, it is more of a danger than a scenic attraction."⁹ The next day *The Montreal Gazette* reported that the Montreal Trades and Labor Council (TLC) had also made an appeal to

⁵ Gary Kinsman, *The Regulation of Desire: Sexuality in Canada* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1987), 119.

⁶ MUA, MPPA, "Council Adopts 1954 Budget with Eye on Curbing Crime," *The Montreal Herald*, April 15, 1954. M.G. 2079, C,12 – file 155.

⁷ Defining the opposition between 'the Same' and 'the Other', Foucault states that the *Other* represents what is unacceptable in terms of activities or populace and thereby necessitates some response of policing, removal, or even eradication from authorities. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 1989).

⁸ MUA, MPPA, "Mount Royal Jungle 'Must Go'," *The Montreal Herald*, August 5, 1954. M.G. 2079, C,12 – file 155.

⁹ *Ibid.*

Montréal municipal authorities to liberate the city of “sex maniacs, vagabonds and drunkards roaming the streets, lanes and public parks.” The 40,000-member body declared:

[A]ll queer characters, whether they be drunkards or vagabonds, should be put away in appropriate institutions where they will not be a constant threat to children and others... Even if the murderer of little Raymond Trudeau is duly convicted and punished, as he well deserves to be, this will not restore the child to his family nor compensate the parents for their suffering... Something must be done to prevent a recurrence of this kind of criminal act.¹⁰

The murder of Trudeau, amidst the morality campaigns, altered the way the Jungle would be perceived and dealt with. Indeed, according to civilians, though the Jungle had previously been a space that was best to avoid, crowded with undesirable characters, it had now transformed into a wretched, and clearly threatening space.

Following this murder, *The Montreal Herald* decided to investigate the Jungle—at night. Robert Walker, a journalist for the newspaper, was sent on the slopes of Mount Royal to “learn the facts about the Jungle.” There, he posed as a bum for two nights and produced two articles based on what he saw in the Jungle:

What goes on up there and who are the men who hide there? To try to answer these questions, I spent two nights as a jungle bum, drifting from spilled-beer dives on St. Lawrence Blvd. to the east slope of the mountain... I talked to tramps, prostitutes and perverts. When I'd finished my two nights as a derelict, I talked to police... And it is, believe me, a jungle.¹¹

In light of this, Mount Royal Park was beginning to display similar characteristics to that of the slum, which was also a source of moral issue for Montréal's authorities and seen as an obstacle to modernity and to the common good.¹² Mount Royal Park, like the slum, was a space seen as a menace to public health and moral order—and underdeveloped space.

Walker's first article, entitled “Denizens of Mountain ‘Jungle’ Lurk in Wait for Tots at Play,” opened with the following sentence: “The police patrol it in pairs or in threes because it's a viper's nest of uncounted perverts and near-insane alcoholics... Yet children play nearby.”¹³ The newspaper wished to sensationalize the issue at hand by depicting the Jungle's patrons as not only immoral, but as the essence of the city's impurities, and played on the fact

¹⁰ “Put Away Perverts, TLC Asks,” *The Montreal Gazette*, August 6, 1954.

¹¹ MUA, MPPA, Robert Walker, “Denizens of Mountain ‘Jungle’ Lurk in Wait for Tots at Play,” *The Montreal Herald*, August 16, 1954. M.G. 2079, C,12 – file 155.

¹² Éveline Favretti, “Montréal Fait la Guerre aux Taudis: Démolitions et Expropriations (1950-1966),” (M.A. Thesis (History), Université du Québec À Montréal, 2014), 31.

¹³ Walker, “Denizens of Mountain ‘Jungle’ Lurk in Wait for Tots at Play.”

that children frequented spaces adjacent to it: “children playing on the grass bordering Park ave. in the last of the sunlight are watched from less than 100 yards away by maniacs... Occasionally a child wanders too close to the maw of the jungle”¹⁴ According to Walker the Jungle was such a dangerous space that even the police was ambivalent about entering:

[An officer] would hesitate to send even two armed men to the scene... If, for example, it were learned that a man was molesting a child in the jungle, he would favour calling two patrol cars and sending three constables on foot to help them... In the middle of a city of a million and a half people! ... Why don't the police go through the area and drive out all the derelicts in a one-night sweep? It sounds like a fair question – if you've seen the jungle... One man could hide in it for weeks without being found.¹⁵

This article indeed focused on the fact that the Jungle was a space that was favourable to immoral behaviour by highlighting the undergrowth, seclusion, and darkness of it – the space as a *frontier* through characteristics of ecological wildness, otherness, and darkness. The Jungle was at the same time – by virtue of these attributes, a hard section to police. Accordingly, Walker ended the article by mentioning that a body had been found, suspended from a tree in the Jungle, during the night he had spent there.

The second article, entitled “Dregs of Humanity Foregather In Sinister Mountain Woodland,” focused less on the geographical and physical aspects of the Jungle, but rather on the activities and characters encountered in this space:

I saw gross indecency. I saw stunned drunkenness. The men who hide in the matted undergrowth of the mountain's east slope are perverts, homosexuals or alcoholics. Some of them are ordinary derelicts. Many of them are dangerous... On the mountain I saw mostly trees and a view of Montreal at night but some of what I saw was indescribably disgusting.¹⁶

Walker even disclosed that he witnessed scenes that were too graphic for the printed press.¹⁷ Whether this is true or simply aimed to further the newspaper's rhetoric, it demonstrates that the undesirable population of the city was associated to the defiling of the 'romantic' nature and Victorian culture of the Mountain. What undeniably became apparent at that moment, in the Jungle, was the structuring of its space as a theatre of fear.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ MUA, MPPA, Robert Walker, “Dregs of Humanity Foregather In Sinister Mountain Woodland,” *The Montreal Herald*, August 17, 1954. Ibid.

¹⁷ “Sometimes, with the wind in the trees for a background, you can hear a man retching violently in the bushes. While I was there, I heard unprintable language and saw the grotesque and the simply disgusting.” Ibid.

Finally, in a self-congratulatory manner, *The Montreal Herald* published another article a week later, which highlighted the praise they had received for their investigative work. William Bowie, the executive director of the MPPA, endorsed the articles and stated that, “Something definitely should be done about the foul situation,”¹⁸ but did not yield any practical solutions. The executive secretary of the City Improvement League also endorsed the articles and stated that the Jungle “is a nasty thing to tolerate in this city of ours [but police] should cope with the problem, not civic groups.” Indeed, such reforms would come straight from the Executive Council; more precisely, Councillors Émile Pigeon, Paul Bertram and Armand Brisebois, who argued that the Park could no longer be “left undeveloped as a pleasantly-wooded mountain hide-away” – such hide-outs were, according to them, “very inviting for perverts.”¹⁹ These articles also demonstrate that a proactive stance was the preferred position of Anglophone newspapers and pressure groups—while Francophone activism was near inexistent. Indeed, by shedding light on these events, Anglophone newspapers were essentially pressuring (largely Francophone) City Councillors to act upon this space. Though City Councillors were receptive to the fact that something had to be done about the Jungle, they did not push for an outright and quick solution.

Before transforming Mount Royal Park, Montréal’s police service came up with different tactics and strategies to preserve the moral and social order; among these, was the use of agent provocateurs to ensnare homosexuals.²⁰ These tactics created relative uneasiness since many observers viewed informal police tactics as actually partaking in vice and criminality themselves—coming into dangerous proximity to the sexual and moral deviance they were supposed to prevent. Though such tactics were used elsewhere, such as in London and Toronto, what differentiated Montréal from other municipalities was its final solution and tactic to eradicate undesirables from Mount Royal through the process of altering the ecological design of the Park and its Jungle.

¹⁸ “Jungle Raids Stepped Up,” *The Montreal Herald*, August 26, 1954.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Corriveau, *Judging Homosexuals*, 98.

2.2 Conceptualizing Schemes of Re-development

When *The Montreal Herald* asked what steps councillors would suggest to put a halt to the drift of homosexuals to the Jungle, most councillors supported the argument that by transforming the tramline into an auto roadway, where automobiles and bus of the Montreal Transportation Corporation (MTC) could circulate, the Park would be made much more attractive and its full development would then be worthwhile.²¹ Initially it was thought that by transforming the tramline into a useable bus line, a new, more desirable, type of patron would frequent the Jungle – thereby driving the undesirable characters out.²² Indeed what was of chief concern for the authorities in the eradication of this population was the fact that this section of the Park remained an undeveloped frontier. Furthermore, in articulating these concerns the Directors of both the Police Department and Parks Department, Alfred Langlois and Claude Robillard respectively, believed that if the Jungle were to be cleared and developed then so too would they proceed to modernize the entirety of the Park:

City hall authorities called Police Director Alfred Langlois Parks Director Claude Robillard into conference, and the two were reported to have suggested that good results could only be obtained by full development and clearing of the entire 500-acre area... Municipal officials agreed too that clearing of bushes away from the lower slopes of Mount Royal along Park ave. many years ago only sent degenerates, perverts and alcoholics higher up the mountain to wooded areas which still remain today. Plans for full development of the 500 acre park should be ready some time next spring, officials explained.²³

Though *The Montreal Herald* stated that it would take more demands from the general public before the Jungle is remedied – demands such as a curfew, better lighting, and closer police patrolling, it was nevertheless the next day that a motion was put forth.

Late during the evening on Thursday August 26, 1954 the Executive Committee considered the following motion from Councillor Jean-Paul Grégoire, and seconded by Councillor Pigeon, concerning the clearing of the eastern slope of the Mountain (the Jungle):

WHEREAS the Mountain is the scene for certain immoral acts;
WHEREAS, in spite of supervision by the Montréal Police, this state of affairs is becoming worse and such offenses are becoming daily more numerous;
WHEREAS appearances in Municipal Court for such offenses are constantly increasing as was recently pointed out by Chief Judge Roland Paquette;

²¹ Ibid.

²² This idea will be further analyzed in the third chapter.

²³ “Jungle Raids Stepped Up,” *The Montreal Herald*, August 26, 1954.

WHEREAS it would be desirable to take the necessary steps to end this condition which has become a social problem;
WHEREAS it is advisable to assist the Police Department in making its work easier;
WHEREAS the work of the Police would be facilitated if the eastern flank, of the mountain were cleared and lighted;
That the Executive Committee be requested to consider the advisability of clearing the east slope of the Mountain and of providing that this locality, frequented by persons committing such offenses, be better lighted in order to diminish the incidence of these occurrences.²⁴

This motion was prepared following a police report that recommended “better lighting for the whole mountain area, and particularly for the one section [and] the removal of dense undergrowth.”²⁵ Grégoire was quoted as stating, “Il est désirable de prendre les mesures nécessaires pour faire cesser cet état de choses qui devient un problème social...Il y a lieu d’aider le service de la police en lui facilitant son travail et ce travail de surveillance serait sans doute facilité si le versant est de la montagne était défriché et mieux éclairé.”²⁶ He added that Mount Royal Park was beginning to develop as a “rendezvous for abnormal people,” and his motion was categorically intended to remove these “abnormal persons from that area.”²⁷ Furthermore, newspapers reported that another solution conceived at that time was to enact a “curfew for the wooded areas of the mountain.”²⁸

A few days after the resolution, articles continued to report the problems persisting in the Jungle. *The Montreal Herald* reported that following a police raid in the area, the number of persons captured and charged for gross indecency had now approached 500 for the summer of 1954 alone.²⁹ Through this article, which reiterated the number of issues in the Jungle, a disclosure of novel schemes was articulated. These schemes, emerging from the Executive Committee, stated that the needs were simply to (1) cut out the low lying brush, not the trees, (2) provide lighting, and (3) that these schemes should also include a motor road to follow the

²⁴ AVM, FCE, Order 229 of the Special Meeting of August 26, 1954. VM074-6-D040.

²⁵ According to *The Montreal Daily Star*, these reports were probably the outcome of the brutal stabbing to death of 9-year-old John Benson in the Jungle a decade earlier, as well as the stabbing of Raymond Trudeau. Moreover the report suggested that there had been more than 350 arrests in the Jungle during the summer of 1954 alone. Lawrence Conroy, “City Council Moves to Clear Mount Royal ‘Jungle’ Area,” *The Montreal Daily Star*, August 27, 1954.

²⁶ “Moyens suggérés par le conseil pour supprimer la “jungle” du Mt-Royal,” *La Presse*, August 27, 1954, 13.

²⁷ Clive Clift, “Council Votes to Clear Jungle,” *The Montreal Herald*, August 27, 1954.

²⁸ Lawrence Conroy, “City Council Moves to Clear Mount Royal ‘Jungle’ Area,” *The Montreal Daily Star*, August 27, 1954.

²⁹ This number was nearly reached following the arrest of the nine persons, one of which was a woman; each were charged and released on a total bail of \$950 after pleading not guilty. “9 More Caught in ‘Jungle Net’,” *The Montreal Herald*, August 31, 1954.

tramline's grade up and around the Mountain. This latest statement therefore confirmed the will to modernize Mount Royal Park's facilities; such a modernizing scheme would be an answer to both postwar progressive needs, as well as rooted in proactive policing and surveillance of the area. They would be accomplished by clearing the Jungle, thus enabling police officers to patrol, and through the implementation of a lighting system, thereby further enabling said police tactic. In the end these motions were unanimously voted in favour with the hope that the safety of families would be guaranteed.³⁰

That same summer the Public Works Department of Montréal hired Gilmore Clarke and Michael Rapuano, New York landscape architects to redevelop Mount Royal Park.³¹ Their firm, Clarke and Rapuano, was awarded \$240,000 to draw plans within a twelve-month period – with an estimated budget cost of \$6,000,000 for “the rehabilitation of the existing facilities and otherwise to develop and improve the area known as Mount Royal Park.”³² Working closely with the Director of Public Works and the Director of the Parks Department they would formulate a master plan that would envision the future of the Park.

Their vision for the future of the Park was one where notions of modernization would overcome those of the original Victorian appeal, as Olmsted had conceived it. This is exemplified in their *Programme for the development of Mount Royal Park*.³³ Indeed, though the first three aspects of this program were “conservation and improvement of the natural beauty of the park, reforestation and erosion control, and provision of better areas... in character with the topographic and other existing features of the park,” the essence of their redevelopment undeniably aimed to modernize the Park's facilities. Their *Programme* was in fact divided into two distinctive measures: restoration of the ecological environment and the

³⁰ This was reflected in Councillor Guy Vanier's statement; “les pères et mères de familles ainsi que les personnes à qui des enfants sont confiés s'inquiètent au sujet de la “jungle” il est temps de prendre les moyens nécessaires pour supprimer définitivement cette inquiétude.” “Moyens suggérés par le conseil pour supprimer la “jungle” du Mt-Royal,” *La Presse*, August 27, 1954, 13.

³¹ AVM, Engagement d'architectes-paysagistes pour la préparation des plans du PARC MONT-ROYAL, 3^{ème} série conseil Rapports et Dossiers, 107,249.

³² Signed on August 20, 1954. Ibid.

³³ This program included twenty different aspects of the Park that were earmarked to redevelop or simply develop. Evidently, the congruent developmental phases of this programme are numerous and have therefore been dealt in a twofold fashion and divided in two chapters – those pertaining to the clearing of Jungle in the present chapter and those pertaining to the construction of the Camillien-Houde Roadway in the third chapter. The twenty steps to modernize the Park are available to consult in the annex of this thesis.

development of park facilities and equipment. This developmental program was reflective of the new methods of park governance in the city's landscape.

Though the programme was essentially elaborated to develop and modernize the Park, the restoration of the ecology occupied only a fraction of the plan's equation. Indeed, the programme accorded much more value to the development of facilities and equipment rather than the restoration of its ecology. The plan was, according to the MPPA, something that would breach the vocation and tranquility of this public space, as a "refuge of quiet beauty contrasting with the noise and tension of the city below."³⁴ This breach would be enabled through the construction of a sports area, motor road, concert hall, or museum.

Indeed, as Clarke and Rapuano's plans were made known, the public's response was ambivalent. Civic groups did welcome aspects related to the development for Mount Royal Park. However the overemphasis accorded to the modernization and development of its space alarmed them. As the MPPA suggested, the hiring of Clarke and Rapuano signified an ill-considered philosophy seeking to *overdevelop* the Park:

In July 1954, the publication of the instructions given to Messrs. Clark[sic] and Rapuano, the New York landscape consultants, marked the inception of a new policy based on a radically different concept, though this may not have been clearly recognized at the time. Certainly the consequences of the change were not foreseen... We welcome the program of tree-planting and of landscape development, but believe that these programs, together with other work in the park, should be brought under a system of design control.³⁵

What is observable in these comments is the fact that not all plans for Mount Royal were contested. In fact, though the MPPA favourably received the plans conceived by the Parks Department, they were against Clarke and Rapuano's plans to modernize Mount Royal Park.

2.3 Transforming the Jungle and the Mountain 1955-1958

The developments in Mount Royal Park would therefore be phased incrementally; the greater the transformation, the longer it would be delayed due to public pressure and budget constraints. As this inchmeal progress would gradually become apparent *The Montreal Herald*

³⁴ MUA, MPPA, "Mount Royal Park: The need for a new and settled policy – A statement prepared by the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association Inc. (June 15, 1962) – notes for a discussion with Mayor Jean Drapeau." M.G. 2079, C,1 – file 6.

³⁵ Ibid. Emphasis in the original text.

stated, “Public opinion will force the new city administration to provide ample funds in the 1955-56 budget to eliminate the “Jungle” on Mount Royal.”³⁶ According to the newspaper, though City Council had urged to send bulldozers into the Park to clear out the underbrush in autumn 1954, city hall asked councillors to wait until the receipt of further park layout plans from Clarke and Rapuano before demanding an all-out campaign against the Jungle whose clean-up was estimated to cost up to \$100,000.³⁷ Although, *The Montreal Herald* called upon citizens to “force” the new Drapeau administration to undertake the cuts, the lack of response by civic groups revealed their ambivalence to initiate developments within the Park.

In the summer of 1955 lights were added on the Mountain; this was the first act that noticeably altered the original design of the Park. Though lights were foreign to the original conception of certain parts of the Park, it was “for the sake of safety and convenience, [that] some touches of civilization have been added.”³⁸ These lights were added along roads, paths and stairways. It was thought that they would be useful, not only for nightly security purposes, but also to enhance the charm of the Mountain: “Subdued lighting would detract little from its unspoiled charm, but would be of real benefit. For the visitor overtaken by darkness... its expanse is magnified.”³⁹ The key intent around which these schemes revolved was the interplay between urban lighting as a product of technological modernity, and darkness that was no longer natural but given meaning and substance through its interaction with light.⁴⁰ This movement from darkness to light would represent a “symbolic movement from disorder, depravity, and dangerous privacy to order, morality, and the purity of full publicity.”⁴¹ Though artificial lighting did make Mount Royal Park safer, it was nevertheless no panacea since lights can only support architectural structures that are synchronistic to their utilisation;⁴² in other words, if the Jungle were to remain dense and bushy, then lights could only be effective to its outer layer, its peripheries. Therefore, implemented into the framework of a well-

³⁶ “Clean-up of ‘Jungle’ Predicted,” *The Montreal Herald*, February 1, 1955.

³⁷ These plans hoped to include areas for many recreational purposes, for games of all sorts, and would recommend improvements to the system of park roadways and the building of new roads.

³⁸ “Lights On The Mountain,” *The Montreal Star*, July 12, 1955.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Straw, “The Urban Night,” 189.

⁴¹ Houlbrook, *Queer London*, 61.

⁴² Merle Pottharst and Benjamin Könecke, “The Night and Its Loss,” in *Space-Time Design of the Public City*, ed. Stefano Stabilini et al. (New York: Springer, 2013), 40-41.

developed and integrated lighting concept, was the need for a reconceptualization of the space, satisfactory to the needs of police surveillance.

In 1957 the restoration strategy of the city was put into place for the Jungle, and Mount Royal Park as a whole, after the city awarded \$20,000 to Clarke and Rapuano for the master plan they had devised.⁴³ Indeed, rather than simply transform the Jungle, the authorities opted to re-develop the Mountain, whose state was increasingly delapidated. Hence in October 1957 employees from the Forestry Division begun the cutting and clearing, and it was said that the Jungle would disappear within two years; “Des arbres malades y sont abattus. Les épaisses broussailles sont éliminées. Et l’on procède à des travaux de nivellement[sic] sur le terrain rocheux. D’autre part, dans d’autres secteurs, 500 arbres seront plantés cet automne.”⁴⁴ Jean-Joseph Dumont, superintendent of the Parks Department’s Forestry Division, stated that the clearing of the Jungle felt like he was given a vast expanse of *new* parkland and that his division’s duties had to be extremely detailed; “It’s a gigantic project, but it’s certainly not a hit-and-miss affair... We are saving the healthy, stately trees and giving them room to breathe by cutting down the diseased, damaged, and deformed ones.”⁴⁵

This statement effectively speaks to the overhauling and refurbishing methodology used to manage the Park. As actions commenced, the Mountain was effectively transformed into a “cast laboratory for the trimming course.”⁴⁶ The work – carried out by thirty men, including a group of fifteen students in the city’s Forestry Division’s tree-trimming course – included the taking down of numerous trees that had rotted or choked out, and over 400 types of plantations, lasting well into the winter of that year. Most of the trees cut down were birches but also included some ill elms, maples and ashes, which would all be replaced by more ‘vigorous’ species.⁴⁷ These included, at first, resinous and evergreen plantation and trees, whose attributes were more favourable for the Mountain’s soil and weather conditions. Montreal’s Jungle, had therefore within the span of a few months lost its unenviable label and

⁴³ AVM, FCE, Extrait du procès-verbal d’une séance du Comité exécutif de la Cité de Montréal, tenue le 6 août 1957, 3^{ème} série conseil Rapports et Dossiers, 107,249.

⁴⁴ “La “jungle” de la montagne disparaîtrait d’ici 2 ans,” *La Presse*, October 2, 1957, 40.

⁴⁵ “Vast Expanse Of New Parkland Freed Under Long-Range Reforestation Plan,” *The Montreal Gazette*, October 2, 1957.

⁴⁶ “‘Jungle’ Clearing Extended,” *The Montreal Gazette*, November 8, 1957.

⁴⁷ “Travaux de déblaiement en cours à la montagne,” *Montréal Matin*, November 8, 1957.

been revitalized under the city's extensive reforestation program to be featured as an integrative part of Mount Royal Park.



Figure 4: *An employee of the city's Forestry Division analyzes the decrepit state of a tree in autumn 1960. Trees in such a state were voluminous in number at the time in Mount Royal Park. Source: AUM, FAB, Dumont, Rapport relatif à l'état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal.*



Figure 5: *View of Mount Royal's summit following the Morality Cuts. AVM, SAI, May 10, 1962, VM094, B009, 006.*

The strategy as a whole, which had involved the cutting down of some 3000 dead, sick, or troublesome trees, would in the end have a pernicious effect on the whole Mountain, leading to the erosion of the Park's land. "We are losing trees by the hundreds," confessed Robillard, "and this in turn causes erosion of the land and additional expenses."⁴⁸ One news source reported that the trees on Mount Royal had been ill, malformed, or too compact and therefore a nuisance to other vegetation; choices therefore had to be made, where "un bouleau sain peut être sacrifié pour protéger un chêne."⁴⁹ Indeed, in areas where the vegetation was compact, the authorities decided that it was better to cut down a birch if its space would mean that an oak could breathe and survive. According to Dumont, the topography of Mount Royal Park was the leading factor to the demise of its trees, which were more susceptible to abrupt climate variations, thereby favouring parasites – as opposed to Montréal's other parks. He stated that four specific factors contributed to the unique attributes of the area; its climate,

⁴⁸ Ross Warren, "Theatre Key Phase In Mountain Park," *The Montreal Star*, October 3, 1957.

⁴⁹ "Secteur de la montagne rendu plus accessible," *La Presse*, November 8, 1957.

physiography, edaphic properties, and the influence of the vegetation on the soil.⁵⁰ Indeed, with a lack of vegetation, most importantly trees and undergrowth, erosion worsened the condition of the Mountain thereby creating a vicious cycle of soil erosion and windthrow—the fewer the vegetation, the more the soil would erode and the weaker the plants would become. The systematic elimination of the underbrush had accentuated these issues. This situation, combined with the clearing of bigger (at times dead) trees, contributed towards the fashioning of Mount Royal Park’s bald image. This unintended result revealed the intricate relationship between modernist ideals and the natural environment; “the administrators’ forest” made the Park evermore unnatural and demonstrated the perversity of human intervention within the Park.⁵¹ In the end this new ecological reality generated cries for sensible planning, an episode that will be explored in detail in the following chapters.

In response to what has now been termed the *Morality Cuts*, landscape architect and Mount Royal Park’s Beaver Lake Pavilion designer, Hazen Sise, declared that the moralist agenda of the authorities by means of policing of its space had overpowered the Park’s romantic design:

But alas! The endless battle between public morality and sound landscape design has here (and almost everywhere else on the mountain) been won by the police. Nearly every low-growing tree, bush or shrub that could shelter a pair of lovers or hide a gangster, has been ruthlessly cut down. The whole park thus presents a sadly ragged appearance and the Beaver Lake Pavilion, which was carefully designed to be seen against a solid mass of greenery, has been deprived of its original background and suffers the consequence. This is a difficult problem, but it does not seem to affect the design of forest parks in other lands. Are we less law-abiding? Do the fires of youth burn more strongly in Montreal? It may be so, but I doubt it.⁵²

The development of the Mountain could be viewed as an attempt by the authorities to control nature and the Mountain Park, proving their dominion over the environment. The authorities had reshaped the landscape of Montréal’s most predominant topographical feature, consequently reproducing the historical vocation of Mount Royal Park as a landmark reflective of power relations.⁵³

⁵⁰ AUM, FAB, Dumont, *Rapport relatif à l’état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal*, 4.

⁵¹ As Scott states, human intervention in forests reduces resiliency; “the simplified forest is a more vulnerable system, especially over the long haul, as its effects on soil, water, and “pest” populations become manifest.” Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 22.

⁵² MUA, MPPA, Sise, “The Future of Mount Royal.” MG 2079 C1, File 39.

⁵³ Klopfer, “Upon the Hill,” 102.



Figure 6: *Ground view of Mount Royal after the Morality Cuts in autumn 1960; notice the sparse trees and near in-existent underbrush. Source: AUM, FAB, Dumont, Rapport relatif à l'état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal.*

2.4 Circumscribing These Developments

As the plans were underway in 1957 and the city's Parks Department and Forestry Division were interviewed, at no point did they state that these schemes were an answer to the 1954 police report which aimed to extend surveillance and extract undesirables from this space. Indeed, rather than rearticulate the initial context in which these schemes were conceived, the city's Parks Department stated instead that they were reorganizing the Park, and making it more accessible. This reorganization was a form of development; by developing the Park, it was made more accessible to all types of citizens and therefore modernized. What seemed of foremost importance at this point for Mount Royal Park, and thus articulated by the city, was the fact that it was being developed and modernized, as opposed to the initial context of simply clearing the Jungle to moralize its space.

It is therefore interesting to note the rupture in the authorities' discourse during these

procedures. Whereas in 1954 they had been reacting to a police report related to morality, in 1957 they emphasized how a newly developed parkland commendably helped to modernize the city. This would be exemplified by Dumont who stated, “The aim of the department is to make the park as accessible as possible to the people, but at the same time retaining its natural form...We’ll retain the forest, but it will be a clean forest where everyone can enjoy the natural beauty.”⁵⁴ This “natural beauty” that they could instill and (re)create within the Park was a modernized view of the Park. Yet, with the modernization of the Park’s facilities a certain breach was sensed by the ‘regular’ patrons of the Park who viewed the increase in facilities and accessibility a violation of the Park’s historical vocation as a space of tranquility.

Nevertheless, both the initial context in which these schemes were conceived and *a posteriori* articulations were not necessarily competing visions. As Drapeau stated in a speech on public morality, “Dans tous les cas, on retrouve à des degrés divers les trois mêmes maux : la corruption dans l’administration, le triomphe de l’immoralité, la perte du sens civique. De tous les trois, c’est encore la dégradation du sens moral qui me semble le plus grave, parce qu’elle est souvent à la racine des deux autres.”⁵⁵ It was therefore logical for authorities to *uproot* immorality to implement their strategy of power by disciplining and organizing the space through the clearing the Jungle—a form of modernizing the urban landscape through moral superiority. The Park had in fact been a privileged space, a moral space, and now a modern space. As Lapointe states, if French Canadians, minority by language, wanted to manage their cultural survival in Canada and Montréal’s society, they needed to avoid being inculcated by deleterious vices.⁵⁶ With the eradication of homosexuals from this space, the authorities felt as though morality was upheld – and the Park regained its ‘natural’ vocation as a place of ‘solitude’ and peacefulness. The Senior Prosecutor of Montréal, Jacques Fournier, best articulated this sentiment:

We have the privilege to have a mountain right in the middle of the city, but it is too convenient, and the homosexuals were going there, and for a number of years some of them were arrested, but great work has been done to get rid of them at that place so that in 1954, we will say, the police took action to get rid of them on the mountain. Now where are they? They

⁵⁴ “Vast Expanse Of New Parkland Freed Under Long-Range Reforestation Plan,” *The Montreal Gazette*, October 2, 1957.

⁵⁵ Jean Drapeau, *Communisme et moralité publique (discours prononcée le dimanche 9 septembre 1956)* (Montréal: Comité de Moralité Publique), 11.

⁵⁶ Lapointe, *Nettoyer Montréal*, 281.

are not on the mountain. The mountain is a solitude, and during the summer those people were there.⁵⁷

As the Jungle was cleared, the city could state that their moralist agenda, especially pertaining to morality in public spaces, had literally reached its *summit*, effectively demonstrating the limitlessness of morality – going “above and beyond” any height of the city, surpassing the natural environment.⁵⁸ The Morality Cuts episode therefore details the position of the city, which still held on, strongly, to traditional values.

2.5 Conclusion

The Jungle—characterized by undergrowth and dense woodland, had made it harder for police to conduct surveillance and therefore was predisposed to attract undesirable and immoral characters. Although immorality had been occurring decades beforehand in the Jungle, authorities had not proceeded to eliminate the issue prior to the 1950s; it has been argued that the authorities’ obsession with a morally pure society and a modern spatial conception of the city drove them to take action. That being said, actions taken to preserve morality in public spaces were not unique to Montréal at the time. While Toronto, New York, and London policed their parks (especially at night), redesigned their urinals, and improved lighting,⁵⁹ they all conceived a way to address immorality without scarring the landscape. Montréal’s technical solution, to stifle such undesirable characters from entering and wandering within the Jungle, would in the end ecologically transform it through means of clearing underbrush and cutting of trees. Though Montréal was part of the ‘global’ crusade against immorality in parks, it nevertheless was the sole entity to destroy its natural landscape in the process. As architect Hazen Sise observed, authorities elsewhere had found ways to address these issues without affecting the design of their parks. The Cuts should therefore be understood as a re-appropriation of Mount Royal Park by the municipal government, responding to the active night community who had established itself there. The power

⁵⁷ *Royal Commission on the Law Relating to Criminal Sexual Psychopaths*. Testimony of Jacques Fournier, Q.C., Senior Prosecutor in the City of Montreal, p. 975-994. Exhibit No 43 (appended to p. 978), quoted in Higgins, “A Sense of Belonging,” 103.

⁵⁸ This would be further exemplified with the idea of constructing a 25,000-person capacity church on the Mountain, the biggest one in the city. MUA, MPPA, January 21, 1953. M.G. 2079, C,1 – file 288.

⁵⁹ For Toronto see Sarsh, ““Disgusting” Noises, and “Dangerous” Spaces”; New York see Delph, *The Silent Community: Public Homosexual Encounters*; London see Houlbrook, *Queer London*.

relations exemplified through this episode therefore highlight particular conceptualizations of space and place, both directly and indirectly, with regards to social constructions of identity between power and civil society.⁶⁰

However, as the Jungle was cleared, the city did not reiterate its will to purify the space as it had initially intended, but rather took a functionalist stance on the issue seeking to reconcile the needs to restore, develop, and modernize the Park's dilapidated environment as a whole. The state of the Park was due to the fact that it had not been tended to, nor botanically nourished since its conception. The clearing of the Jungle was therefore presented by the authorities as a modern development of Mount Royal Park, rather than an issue of moralization of space. However this modernization came at a high cost – to the extent that Mount Royal was no longer considered a “park”; indeed, in 1961 when Dumont would later propose efforts of replanting, he stated that his goal was to “introduire des espèces et variétés horticoles de façon à transformer progressivement le Mont-Royal en un parc.”⁶¹ His vision for Mount Royal Park was one that viewed the Park horticulturally, with an arboraceous canopy and underbrush. This horticultural vision evoked a nostalgia towards the design created by Olmsted and certain type of Park—yet, it was no longer Mount Royal Park's reality. Others shared this vision, such as Hazen Sise and the MPPA, who wished the Park's mission to be emphasized upon its serviceability in terms of natural beauty, as opposed to a park equipped with modern facilities. After the Cuts, Dumont would in fact seek to restore (within his capacity) the ecology and vegetation of the Park and made it his mission to “ornier le Mont-Royal, d'épurer l'air du centre de la ville, d'empêcher l'érosion de s'étendre et de la réduire selon les cas”⁶²—a nostalgic, and more importantly, a reminder of the Park's initial vocation within Montréal's urbanity. However, before the creation of this ornamental park, a final modernist re-conception of Mount Royal was needed, completed with a mechanism of surveillance, serviceable to the automobile.

⁶⁰ Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 2.

⁶¹ AUM, FAB, Dumont, *Rapport relatif à l'état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal*, 9.

⁶² *Ibid*, 15.

Chapter 3. Camillien-Houde Roadway: Modernity and Encroachment 1955-1958

Few things can arouse so much indignation among Montrealers as a suggestion to (1) build a hot dog stand on the mountain, or (2) make it more accessible to the public. But recently there has been an avalanche of suggestions on how to cope with the historic mount. Some favour building a road over the top; others want a tunnel through the middle; one group suggests a miniature railway to reach the top. So far, nobody has suggested trying to move the mountain away.¹

—Glenn McDougall, *The Montreal Herald*, 1955

During the mid-1950s questions concerning the (re)development and spatial management of Mount Royal Park in relation to its integration within the city emerged. As the *Programme* prepared by New York landscapist firm, Clarke and Rapuano details, the development of Mount Royal Park was also imagined as an attempt to include it into efforts to modernize the city; this would be achieved by constructing a trans-mountain roadway. Such a roadway was conceived to make the Mountain both accessible and solve the growing traffic problems surrounding it. However, unlike the Morality Cuts, whereby the press, municipal authorities, and most importantly, the public itself were unanimously in favour to eradicate undesirable persons of the Jungle, the debate surrounding the construction of a trans-mountain roadway within Mount Royal Park was highly criticized. While politicians thought that such a roadway would democratize Mount Royal Park, many citizens took issue with such an austere plan and voiced their opinions within the city's major newspapers – the most vocal group being the MPPA.² The Association sent out letters to various groups and institutions hoping to generate cohesion within Montréal's community towards a concerted effort to keep the Mountain intact.³ While some energetically supported their efforts others rejected them:

¹ Glenn McDougall, "Work on Mount Royal Park Delayed While NY Company Draws Up Plans," *The Montreal Herald*, March 25, 1955.

² It is important to note that the Association nevertheless did not benefit from an extensive Francophone network, this is particularly highlighted in the sources available and in the numerous opinion pieces they published in Anglophone newspapers. An internal memo illustrates this gap: "I would propose to address copies to Star and Gazette, and Asselin, Howde, Rochon of the municipal government. Also, through offices of a friend, I would see one of the French city editors and ask for assistance to get it translated and published." MUA, MPPA, Memo from Arthur L. Gravel to Capitan William Bowie (Executive Director, Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association) February 13, 1952. MG 2079 C1, File 33.

³ A number of associations sided with the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association concerning their opposition to the construction of a roadway on the Mountain including – Montreal Young Women's Christian Association, Junior League of Montreal Inc., Montreal Women's Club, The Diggers and Weeders Garden Club of Montréal, The Business & Professional Women's Club, Montreal North Home and School Association etc. Even the President of the National Hockey League Clarence S. Campbell opposed construction of a roadway on Mount Royal. MUA, MPPA, MG 2079 C1, File 43.

I am sorry not to share with you such non progressive ideas. How a Montrealer could be willing to make five to six thousands of his friends and good neighbours walk in the horse manure, from Côte des Neiges road to the chalet at every concert or public representation.[sic] I do not like horse perfume nor your cheap ideas. As a good Montrealer for 70 years, I cannot have old maid ideas. I want a greater and greater Montreal every day,
Yours untruly⁴

This statement, by physician Stephen Langevin, effectively points to the contentions of both factions—oppositions in terms of urban integration, landscape design, and environment. This issue held even more areas of contention: upholding of the park’s heritage, solving the growing traffic problems, and modernization of Montréal’s wider territory. Those who favoured the construction of the roadway read their urban environment with ideas pertaining to modernity, while those who wished to conserve the Park, saw it as form of high culture with a vision of romantic ideals – a “segment of unspoiled nature,” as defined by Law Olmsted.⁵ However the postwar Park of the 1950s had long mutated, as had Montréal, from its 1880s form.

While this episode demonstrates the ambivalence within Montréal’s community, especially pertaining to ideas of conservation and modernity, such ideas are symptomatic of larger ‘globalized’ debates occurring in relation to urban landscapes.⁶ This chapter shall demonstrate that, while a faction of citizens were afraid that such a scheme would alter *their* conception of Mount Royal Park, the goal of politicians remained simple – integrate the Mountain into the urban fabric while making it easier to circulate, and correspondingly, easier to police. Despite criticisms and opposition to encroachment, the end result was the construction of a scenic road that replaced an already established public transit system.

3.1 Motorizing The Mountain

In order to historicize this episode of Mount Royal Park it is important to consider the advent of the automobile within Montréal’s landscape. The rise of the automobile raised the question, ‘who (or what) were streets for?’ – increasingly centred on the competing demands

⁴ MUA, MPPA, Letter from Stephen Langevin to the MPPA, August 1, 1957. MG 2079 C1, File 43.

⁵ Françoise Choay, *The Modern City: Planning in the 19th Century*, trans. Marguerite Hugo and George R. Collins (New York: George Braziller, 1969), 23.

⁶ See Danielle Robinson, “Modernism at a Crossroad: The Spadina Expressway Controversy in Toronto, Ontario ca. 1960-1971,” *Canadian Historical Review* vol. 92, no. 2 (June 2011): 295-322.

of traffic and pedestrians.⁷ Until the late 1930s the automobile could be accommodated within the existing urban structure with only comparatively minor changes. However, wider ownership of automobiles in the 1950s resulted in greater consumer mobility, which in turn was a major contributor to the development of new physical layouts. Ideas of freeways and roadways within the downtown core of Montréal were part of the greater rationalist urbanization movement that was occurring in the United States and Canada at the time.⁸

Particularly influential were the idiosyncrasies of Robert Moses, whose vision of urban development favoured freeways and the automobile rather than the *spontaneity of nature*, a symbol of progress and modernity.⁹ As Michele H. Bogart states, Moses was a man of power whose ideals laid in utilitarian conceptions, not memory nor restoration.¹⁰ Hence, road design and the use of the car (re)defined park visits.¹¹ Within this same timeframe Montréal's political authorities were required to resolve the harrowing problems related to the expanding use of the automobile.¹² It was within this general pattern that Mount Royal Park became the epicentre of considerations pertaining to modernity in Montréal; these considerations between citizens and authorities gave way to notions related to appropriation of space, urban engineering, and the architecture of the natural environment. In order to adhere to a transformation of urban lifestyle, the political authorities believed that no place should be exempt from modernization and recommended immediate construction of roads over the Mountain – reportedly stating that Mount Royal was the most concrete symbol of the

⁷ Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, 144.

⁸ For more on the reorienting of Montréal's policies in accordance to automobile culture and the development of its infrastructures see Alexandre Wolford, "Le choix du tout-à-l'automobile à Montréal (1953-1967) : un contexte propice à l'aménagement de l'échangeur Turcot," (M.A. Thesis (History), Université de Montréal, 2015).

⁹ See Robert A. Caro, "The Highwayman," in *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the fall of New York*, ed. Robert A. Caro (New York: Vintage Books, 1975): 895-921.

¹⁰ For more on the influence of memory in the representation and fashioning of park design see Michele H. Bogart, "Public Space and Public Memory in New York's City Hall Park," *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 25, no. 2 (1999): 266-257.

¹¹ Louter states that the integration of automobiles into parks was a process that, "required thinking of roads not as the antithesis of primeval nature but as constructions that enabled people to know primeval nature better." David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington's National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 12.

¹² During these years we witness other important constructions which further demonstrate notions of modernity occurring on the Mountain; this is exemplified through the rapid expansion of Université de Montréal and the arrival of other important institutions, such as Ste-Justine hospital, Montréal General hospital, and Vincent-d'Indy school. Groupe d'intervention urbaine de Montréal, *La Montagne en question: le projet municipal, la problématique d'aménagement, les usagers, le contexte administratif* (Montréal: Groupe d'intervention urbaine de Montréal, 1988), 49.

problems facing the municipal administration and had to be overcome at all costs since it was strangling the city “to its limits.”¹³

Yet, the Mountain was already being utilized to partially ease traffic strains by means of an incline railway. It had in fact been made accessible in the early 20th century with an incline railway, which brought patrons from Fletcher’s Field above Park Avenue and up to the present site of the chalet. This incline railway was one of the few built in Canada and opened in 1884. However, traffic on the railway fell off badly and did not increase and, in 1918, when the time came to renew the railway’s contract, the owner, The Mountain Park Railway, chose instead to liquidate its assets.¹⁴ In 1930 a streetcar was built linking the Smith House and Park Avenue. This streetcar, according to historian Michèle Dagenais, helped to urbanize Mount Royal’s space, linking it to the city’s circulation network. Furthermore, she argues that this development marked not only the Mountain’s entry into the 20th century, but moreover constituted an important democratising process of this “espace de loisirs.”¹⁵

Nevertheless, this development was only satisfactory to the extent that it provided accessibility to the Mountain for citizens living in proximity to the streetcar’s network or nearby the entrance of said streetcar onto the Mountain. Under these circumstances, a number of rudimentary schemes were conceived, but in essence, never thoroughly undertaken nor scrutinized to modernize this facility and its transportation network. L. T. J. Decaire proposed building a “MontMetro” (1933) from a station underneath Dominion Square to a point directly beneath the Chalet; Ernest Zbinden proposed a funicular railway (1947) from Peel to the Chalet (with each car holding 60 passengers); Max Seigler suggested the Montréal “Skyway”

¹³ “Mountain Must be Overcome,” *The Montreal Gazette*, February 15, 1955. Rapid motorization created tremendous pressure on urban places and the notion of ‘strangled cities’ was felt throughout the continent as Arthur Gallion noted in 1950: “The city is strangling itself with the congestion of vehicles that are themselves choked in the tangle of city streets.” Arthur B. Gallion and Simon Eisner, *The Urban Pattern: City Pattern and Design* (Princeton, 1950: 193) quoted from Gerald T. Bloomfield, “No Parking Here to Corner: London Reshaped by the Automobile, 1911-61,” *Urban History Review/Revue d’histoire urbaine*, vol. 18, no. 2 (1989): 139-158.

¹⁴ Phillip Mason, “Man Conquers Mountain: A history of Montréal’s Mountain Park Railway,” *Canadian Rail* no. 209 (April 1969): 110.

¹⁵ Dagenais, *Faire et fuir la ville*, 33-37.

(1952), where motor buses would be equipped with a special apparatus on the roof, so that they could be lifted bodily through the air to the top of the Mountain.¹⁶

However, what was truly needed for the Mountain was a transportation mode catering to the modernist needs of urbanites and their automobiles. The idea to motorize the Mountain was not specific to the space it occupied, but rather part of the city's growing need to alleviate traffic problems. In the 1950s these problems were indeed of prime concern for mayor Jean Drapeau, who believed that one day Montréal would no longer be the metropolis of Canada due to traffic jams; "speed has attained the dominance not only of progress but also of existence, where every moment lost may cause serious inconvenience and even tragic consequences."¹⁷ Demonstrably, as streets were widened to make way for cars the urban environment was bulldozed.¹⁸ Notions of progressivism were therefore coupled with acceleration of urban life and modes of transport.

Hence, in 1955, it was said that traffic projects throughout Montréal, which would be launched in the following two years, would amount to at least \$100,000,000.¹⁹ The proposed developments were nevertheless held in limbo until City Council would vote in favour. Though the Director of the Parks Department, Claude Robillard welcomed such plans, he reflected upon the fact that the city had functioned in an *ad hoc* fashion and strongly recommended a master plan: "We have not always dealt with Mount Royal very satisfactorily in the past. It's time we discussed the whole park instead of just individual sections of it...I'm against anything that will scar the park."²⁰ It was nevertheless the accessibility of automobiles onto and over the Mountain that interested the political authorities most, a definitive scar on the landscape.

¹⁶ Mason, "Man Conquers Mountain," 111-112.

¹⁷ MUA, MPPA, (title unknown) *The Montreal Herald*, January 11, 1955. MG 2079 C12, File 155.

¹⁸ One of the most telling example is the widening of St-Urbain Street. As the street was being widened the city's Forestry Division of the Parks Department wrote to Claude Robillard to demand funds to cut down "le plus gros arbre de Montréal, un peuplier de six pieds de diamètre à hauteur d'homme et de quelque cent vingt pieds de haut." AVM, "Autorisation de location d'appareil Grue mobile de 25 tonnes," August 9, 1955. 3^{ème} série conseil Rapports et Dossiers 111, 244.

¹⁹ The mayor added that traffic wasn't the city's only big problem: "He spoke briefly on housing – "probably more urgent because of its moral aspects" – and on the effects of the St. Lawrence Seaway, and warned that these deserved as much attention as traffic." MUA, MPPA, (title unknown) *The Montreal Herald*, January 11, 1955. MG 2079 C12, File 155.

²⁰ MUA, MPPA, (title unknown) *The Montreal Herald*, January 11, 1955. MG 2079 C12, File 155.

Accordingly, in the city's 1955-56 and 1956-57 budgets, the trans-mountain roadway was slotted as the most important project.²¹ As Jean Drapeau stated in his address to the Royal Automobile Club in 1955:

There is no doubt in my mind that in 50 or 100 years citizens will be astonished that, in 1955, people had to go around the mountain instead of crossing above or underneath it. The mountain, in the dead centre of the city should not be an impediment to traffic. It shouldn't be a stone curtain cutting off south from north, east from west... Unless each and everyone of us unites his efforts right away to solve certain problems of prime import, we may awake some day – maybe in a few years – to the sad realization that Montreal is no longer the Canadian metropolis.²²

In Drapeau's vision, the modernist approach towards Mount Royal Park's planning would be through its functionality. By developing and integrating it into the urban fabric, the city could answer to many of its postwar needs. However, the dismantling of the so-called "stone curtain" frontier was not a straightforward ordeal; a whirlwind of proposals were suggested. Tentative plans called for a north-south or east-west expressway, roadway, tunnel, or roundabout with multiple directions and destinations. In January 1955, it was suggested the best option would be a winding roadway from Pine Avenue, up and across Mount Royal to Maplewood Avenue with a roundabout at the summit.²³ This option was probably the most destructive one to the natural organization of the Mountain – allowing for cars to navigate from and to each neighbourhood surrounding the Mountain. The authorities also discussed plans for a north-south highway, stating that it would ease many of the traffic problems occurring in relation to direction and flow of traffic from these directions. However, the natural gradient of the Mountain as well as the composure of Montréal's climate as a winter city was enough to stifle this option.²⁴ Moreover, all these propositions traversed through the most widely used parts of Mount Royal Park.

Yet, it was another scheme that fascinated the mayor most – a roundabout buried deep in the bedrock of the Mountain. The roundabout would have been fed through a six-tunnel system, like the spokes of a wheel ending at, Bellingham Road, Queen Mary Road, Côte-des-

²¹ "Trans-Mountain Roadway Still Tops Major Projects," *The Montreal Herald*, February 29, 1956.

²² MUA, MPPA, (title unknown) *The Montreal Herald*, January 11, 1955. MG 2079 C12, File 155.

²³ MUA, MPPA, Clive Clift, "Legislature Must Approve Roadways for Mount Royal," *The Montreal Herald*, January 11, 1955. MG 2079 C12, File 155.

²⁴ Clive Clift reported that, "if [a road] went straight up from Pine and past the Lookout chalet, cars using it would have to climb a quarter-mile, making a 200 foot climb up a steep grade. In winter weather, with icy roads, many cars might have difficulty in pulling themselves up the 200-foot mountain ladder." *Ibid.*

Neiges Road, Mountain Street, University Street, and Park Avenue at Mount Royal Avenue. What appealed most to the mayor in this plan was the fact that it appeared to be a solution *both* to trans-mountain traffic difficulties and to the problem of a civil defence shelter for the city. He stated: “I do not hesitate to say that it is not only a tunnel but a system of tunnels under the mountain which would be needed. This would be more serviceable in time of peace and would be of no doubted utility should war occur... I have already stated that a great many cities would be glad to have such a mountain in their very centre so as to use it as a natural means of defence.”²⁵ Nevertheless, this pipedream of a civil shield would have required sharing costs between the municipal, provincial, and federal government, and accordingly failed.



Figure 7: One of the most ambitious project to be conceived was the creation of a multi-directional tunnel system servicing adjacent neighbourhoods in a way that would both ease Montréal’s traffic woes and answer to the need of national self-defence. “City To Study Plan For Traffic Circle Under Mount Royal,” *The Montreal Star*, February 1, 1955.

²⁵ MUA, MPPA, “City To Study Plan For Traffic Circle Under Mount Royal,” *The Montreal Star*, February 1, 1955. Ibid.

For the municipal government, developing and planning the Mountain was synonymous to a number of hurdles, not only from citizens who opposed modifications to the Mountain as we shall see, but moreover, from the government of Québec as well.²⁶ In January 1952 City Council had agreed to transform the MTC tramline, from Mount Royal and Park avenue to Remembrance road, into the eternally sought after roadway; however, a City Charter amendment prohibited city hall from building any roadway which would allow automobiles to use any of the Mountain roads. Any modifications of Mount Royal Park had to be legally approved by the Québec legislature before being accepted, a fact that had been dismissed by the city's executive committee at the time.

Ultimately, the city's answers to traffic woes were dictated by the way the municipal authorities thought the city should be conceived. According to one editorial piece in *The Montreal Star* the discontent was therefore not directed at urban planners but rather to councillors at city hall who disregarded public opinion: "The planners are, of course, not immediately concerned with the legal difficulties. Their job is to plan. But the administration must be aware not only of the legal difficulties but of the state of public opinion about the mountain."²⁷ For the conception of the trans-mountain road, anger was not directed towards architects and urban designers, but rather towards the governance of such designs.

3.2 General Outcry

*I represent people who can't afford to get out of the city for a weekend. The only place they have to go to get away from the heat and traffic is the mountain. Nature gave us this haven right in the heart of the city. We shouldn't take it away. The city should remember these people when planning roadways... I respect Mayor Drapeau's action in trying to solve this traffic problem. It is the proposed solution that I cannot agree with.*²⁸

—Nat Aronoff, City Councillor

Citizens who challenged modernist assaults of the Mountain's planning disputed the argument that Mount Royal Park was an obstruction to modernization. They instead offered a

²⁶ Clift, "Legislature Must Approve Roadways for Mount Royal." Ibid.

²⁷ "That Mountain Road," *The Montreal Star*, March 9, 1955. As Samuel Hays states, citizens tend to reserve different modes of analysis for the responsibility accorded to the technical professionals than for the public leader whose vocation is politicized Samuel P. Hays, *Beauty, Health, and Permanence: Environmental Politics in the United States, 1955-1985* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 5.

²⁸ MUA, MPPA, "Disciple Disputes Mayor on Tunnel," *The Montréal Herald* January 13, 1955. MG 2079 C12, File 155.

vision of the Park as the natural antithesis to the bustling city. The attempts to ‘save’ the Park were indeed anchored and informed in a production of the Park that was tailored to a specific conception of spatial management of the Mountain and the city. This conception became crucial to the representation and politics of the Park as a public space. Similar to the case of Vancouver’s Stanley Park, a road was seen as a form of privatization, for the benefit of a few visitors. According to Sean Kheraj, opponents to the Stanley Park’s road were concerned that the road would divide the forest in two and permit the city to invade the park.²⁹ However in the case of Mount Royal Park the roadway should not be interpreted as one permitting the city to invade the park – for the park is in the heart of city – but rather to accommodate a certain faction wishing to visit it. Those who wished to conserve the aesthetics of the Park reinforced the socio-cultural construct of the antithesis conception of Mount Royal juxtaposed to the bustling city.

Articles published in the city’s newspapers effectively reveal this clash between ideologies of landscape conservation and modernity. As described in an article entitled “Citizens rally to save Mountain from Speedways,” *The Montreal Star* journalist Fred Poland reported that the Mountain scheme was “definitely not acceptable to the people of Montreal” since such a scheme would “mar the beauty of Mount Royal Park.”³⁰ The article also listed the demands from citizens who wished to save the Park; among these were ideas pertaining to the conservation of the current beauty of the Park as well as a strong opposition towards any attempt to motorize or it, stating that such plans for the Park were illegal under the current City Charter. This vision also saw Mount Royal Park as a counterpart to the world’s other grand parks such as London’s Hyde Park and Paris’s Bois de Boulogne; an article in *Le Petit Journal* even compared any park encroachment as a form of raping the landscape – an occurrence that was inconceivable within the world’s greatest parks.³¹ One citizen who was especially against any encroachment onto the Mountain stated: “We now have something

²⁹ Kheraj, *Inventing Stanley Park*, 148.

³⁰ MUA, MPPA, Fred Poland, “Citizens rally to save Mountain from Speedways,” *The Montreal Star*, January 14, 1955. MG 2079 C12, File 155.

³¹ “Les Londoniens protègent leur Hyde Park comme la prunelle de leurs yeux; ce n’est pas eux qui s’aviserait de le scinder en l’affligeant d’un autostrade. Les Parisiens ont leur Bois de Boulogne. En dépit de l’âge du machinisme et des difficultés de la circulation, aussi grandes dans ces métropoles gigantesques qu’à Montréal, elles gardent farouchement leurs parcs inviolés.” AVM, FPDM, “Épargnons au mont Royal les laideurs qui le menacent,” *Le Petit Journal* 16 January, 1957. P 118, S4, SS1, D74.

which is unique among North American cities. If it is to be criss-crossed by highways it will cease to be a thing of simple beauty which it is now. If this plan is to be used as a first step to the erection of the sort of buildings proposed last year then it will be a crime against the children.”³² Similarly, the MPPA, who were strongly against any encroachment, stated that “Roads cannot be built on the mountain without taking up a great deal of space now available for recreation, or without endangering the lives of children who use this space for play.”³³ However, *The Montreal Star* reported that planners and traffic experts at City Hall said that the day would come when the Mountain would *have* to give way in some fashion or other to the needs of “progress.”³⁴ For the case of designing Mount Royal Park and its integration into the urban fabric, those who wished it to remain as it was, were well-meaning citizens, yet their visions were anchored in Victorian ideals of park conceptualizations.

In 1957 plans for the road were still in the works – citizens and political authorities could not come to an agreement on what could be done on the Mountain. The very fact that inchmeal progress of plans on Mount Royal interfered with concrete actions throughout 1955-57 indicates that those who were interested in the modernizing projects were conscious of widespread (though perhaps unorganized) opposition. As *The Montreal Herald* reported, though the opposition may have appeared “doomed to futility by normal evolution of the city and root causes and trends of its strangling traffic congestion, it will not die easily.”³⁵ In another article entitled “Mount Royal’s Gasoline Curtain,” by *The Montreal Gazette*, readers were made aware that if public opinion did not assert itself “emphatically and promptly,” Mount Royal Park would suffer the “most serious and permanent defacements in all its history.” The article goes on to state that park protection was the true modernist approach:

There are always those who will say that parklands must not be allowed to stand static. They must be changed and modernized, according to new conditions. If the matter were not so serious there would be something distinctly humorous to such statements. For the idea of meddling with parklands and trying to turn them to other uses is very far from being new or modern. This is the old attitude, the antiquated point of view. The truly modern attitude is to realize what a priceless treasure an area of natural beauty is to a hurried and harried modern city.³⁶

³² “In Protests: Proposal Brings Fast Reaction,” *The Montreal Star*, January 11, 1955.

³³ “Saving The Mountain,” *The Montreal Star*, February 25, 1955.

³⁴ “In Protests: Proposal Brings Fast Reaction,” *The Montreal Star*, January 11, 1955.

³⁵ “Mountain Park Infiltration,” *The Montreal Herald*, February 25, 1957.

³⁶ “Mount Royal’s Gasoline Curtain,” *The Montreal Gazette*, July 4, 1957.

Such an advocacy had been forewarned by Mount Royal Park architect Olmsted who asked Montréalers to preserve the Mountain from “puerile, extravagant, wasteful alterations” and to preserve the “eternal beauty of their Mountain.”³⁷

The discourse articulated by those wishing to save the Park from any encroachment was not localized; parallel debates concerning other projects in Montréal were occurring. Citizens were worried of accrued debt and the city’s vast spending; \$360 millions for the construction of 640 miles of streets and expressways to accommodate automobiles, \$120 millions for a subway, \$20 millions for parking facilities, and \$137 millions for waterworks and sewage treatment facilities, housing and “amenities,” parks, a concert hall and so on:

At the instance of the Montreal Citizens’ Committee, a brief has been prepared for study by the civic administration and the Montreal public on ways and means of ensuring Montreal’s development at the proper rate... The obvious shortcomings of the past short-range planning are in themselves a strong argument for careful examination of a plan that fits resources, actual and potential, to needs, present and anticipated.³⁸

3.3 Omnipresent Surveillance

While these debates occurred and as the final design for the road was about to be unveiled to the public, the authorities articulated ulterior motives of surveillance in relation to its construction. As the *Report on the Redevelopment of Mount Royal Park and Fletcher Field* by Clarke and Rapuano detail, notions of policing were indeed at the forefront of the designs and architectural planning of Mount Royal: “Concentrated use of the Park by the public will require constant patrol and supervision by the police. A small headquarters building, providing for a minimum of administration and detention facilities and garage space for patrol vehicles, is suggested at a strategic site on the north-bound driveway.”³⁹ Policing and surveillance were therefore reintroduced into the modernist redevelopment of Mount Royal Park. Indeed they were *reintroduced* since the idea of surveillance in the years leading up to the creation of a road had not been an area of contention or debate in the newspapers, editorials, or in meetings of the MPPA. Instead, as the idea of a roadway was being simultaneously revered and reviled, authorities and citizens discussed its potential as a traffic-relieving artery, source of

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ “A New Perspective on Montreal’s Growth,” *The Montreal Star*, November 21, 1957.

³⁹ AVM, Fonds Service du greffe (hereafter FSG) Clarke and Rapuano, *Report on the Redevelopment of Mount Royal Park and Fletcher Field* (February 11, 1960), 6-7. VM 006, D1903, 1-A.

accessibility to the Mountain, or as marring the beauty of the Mountain—not its potential as a tool of surveillance. It is therefore surprising that as the inauguration of the Roadway loomed, Parks Director, Claude Robillard, argued that the opposition to the development of Mount Royal Park would fade as the Mountain would be made safer and more accessible. He stated in a speech to the Rotary Club of Montréal on May 21, 1958:

The Mountain's beauty will be preserved at all cost... Natural beauty was being sacrificed, we heard. Yet the new road there has opened up the park, contributed to its beauty and taken its place as one of our best scenic drives... We feel that the more we open up the mountain, the easier it will be to police. That has been the case with the clearing we have done in the so-called jungle that existed in the eastern section of the park. With the clearing of underbrush and old trees, the patrolling of the whole park has been made easier.⁴⁰

Robillard, revealing the administration's surveillance and policing concerns, continued and reassured citizens that the Roadway would open up new and delightful sections that were rarely visited up until that moment except by undesirable persons. What therefore is stunningly interesting about the construction of the trans-mountain road was its foreseeable usage as a surveillance tool.

Claude Robillard's considerations prompts us to remember that as the political authorities were conceiving new developments for Mount Royal Park, notions of policing were indeed ulterior motives of urban planning resolutions – even if the population's outcry remained focused on the preservation of Mount Royal Park's Victorian aesthetic of beauty. Here again we witness the seeping of the moralist discourse into landscape design. It is only when Robillard revived the need to police the Park that editorials began reorienting the focus of conversation in such a direction. *The Montreal Star* ran an editorial by William Eckstein two weeks later to counter what Robillard had said about the presence of police on the Mountain; he wondered whether Mr. Robillard had ever walked in Mount Royal Park and seen the vastness of the Park, an area which could not be policed solely by a few men on duty. He went on to state that men who were not on horseback were not worth considering as part of the police force on the Mountain, and moreover, stated the overall ineffectiveness of surveillance in the park: “The mountain appears to have been divided into five separate police beats with

⁴⁰ “Mountain Changes Will Appeal To Public, Robillard Declares,” *The Montreal Gazette*, may 21, 1958. Claude Robillard was also quoted on the same date in *La Presse* as stating, “Plus le parc du Mont-Royal sera facile d'accès au public, plus la surveillance de la police sera facile, comme on l'a vu dans le cas de la « jungle » maintenant nettoyée.” Quoted from Allen, “L'aventure sexuelle clandestine,” 90.

constables working morning and afternoon shifts. Last year the police department delayed putting on a night shift until well into the summer. Rarely were all five police beats manned at one time and parking lots were often left without police on duty.”⁴¹ Not only was the road facilitating policing efforts in the Park, but the city also made sure that a police station would be built on the Mountain itself.

In fact, in the plan proposed by Clarke and Rapuano the 16th development had been to “Provide for the design and location of additional Police Stations.”⁴² This station (rather than a number of them) would eventually be constructed on the Roadway, where it remains to this day. In an internal memo by Claude Robillard, entitled “Parc Mont-Royal – travaux de réaménagement – écuries,” the Parks Director pressed the issue of policing to the Director of Services, Lucien Héту. The Parks Director had been pressured by the assistant director of the police service to make a formal decision on the issue of horse stables on Mount Royal:

L’assistant directeur de la police à qui j’en ai parlé m’informe que son service serait intéressé à loger dans le parc Mont-Royal les quelque vingt-quatre chevaux qui sont actuellement rue Ontario. Il devient donc de plus en plus urgent de prendre une décision au sujet de mes recommandations de faire construire de nouvelles écuries dans le parc Mont-Royal. Les chevaux de la police pourraient être logés soit dans les écuries dont il a été question dans mes rapports précédents, soit dans un bâtiment attenant au nouveau poste de police qui est prévu dans le plan de réaménagement du parc Mont-Royal.⁴³

Policing the Park and establishing a station on the Roadway was an issue that most likely preoccupied the administration due to the undesirable population that had previously established itself within the premises of Mount Royal Park. This was furthermore exemplified as the municipal authorities created a squad whose sole mandate was to police the parks, on horseback and skis:

La fusion des escouades de policiers à cheval et de policiers en skis est un fait accompli à la police municipale. Les nouvelles escouades seront combinées sous le nom de division des parcs. Leurs fonctions : la surveillance, hiver et été, du Mont-Royal, du parc Angrignon et du parc Jarry... Ces précisions ont été fournies hier, par le directeur Albert Langlois, qui a annoncé également l’achat de 40 nouveaux chevaux et la construction imminente, sur le Mont-Royal, d’une écurie et d’un poste de police, l’un des plus modernes au monde.⁴⁴

⁴¹ MUA, MPPA, “Too Few Mounted Police for Mountain Patrol,” *The Montreal Star*, June 4, 1958. MG 2079 C1, File 21.

⁴² *Programme for the development of Mount Royal Park – Attached and Forming Part of the Agreement Between Clarke and Rapuano and the City of Montreal*. AVM 107,249 3^{ème} série conseil Rapports et Dossiers.

⁴³ AVM, FSP, Claude Robillard, “Parc Mont-Royal – travaux de réaménagement – écuries,” february 28, 1958. VM 105, 117558.

⁴⁴ Lucien Champeau, “Division des parcs créée à la police,” *La Presse*, September 19, 1958.

Though the building of a police station within the Park had little effect on its natural composition, the surveillance and disciplinary mechanism it represented had a repercussion on the symbol of the Park as a place of tranquility.

It is therefore important to consider that the initial development of this space was generated by the need to surveil the citizens of Montréal—a need that reflected the moralist agenda of the authorities—as stated in 1959, a few years after the completion of both the Camillien-Houde Roadway and Morality Cuts, by Albert Langlois during a meeting of the Executive Committee of the City of Montréal:

M. Alfred Gagliardi (commissaire): Pour aller rapidement, je veux poser une question, y a-t-il des homosexuels à Montréal?

M. Albert Langlois (Directeur du service de la police): Le problème existe depuis des années. Ça ne s'est pas aggravé, Ça se maintient en autant que sont concernés les rapports que j'ai. Il y a peut-être une régression vu l'augmentation de la population. Les homosexuels ne sont pas en grand nombre.

Q. Il y avait autrefois beaucoup de surveillance qui se faisait sur la montagne. Est-ce que ça se fait encore?

M. Langlois : On n'en fait pas, parce que la partie de la montagne qui était le refuge a été coupée. La jungle a disparu.

Q. Est-ce qu'on peut croire que la population peut se rendre sur la montagne sans danger?

R. Je n'ai eu aucune plainte en ce qui concerne la montagne depuis longtemps.

Sarto Fournier (Le Maire) : Quand la jungle a-t-elle été nettoyée?

M. Langlois : C'est le service des Parcs qui a fait ça à la demande de la Police.⁴⁵

Indeed, complementary notions of spatial modernization were used with regards to the Morality Cuts—if this space were modernized by removing undesirable plants the same would occur with undesirable characters. For the governing bodies, the issue was one of modernizing its space and a realization that problems related to urban decay needed to be answered. The creation of the Roadway demonstrated that the governing body was ready to further transform Montréal's environment, nature, and topographical dimensions to modernize its space—an achievement that quintessentially reflects North American aspirations of spatial modernization. It would also demonstrate the new methods of policing Mount Royal's space; this methodology no longer dwelt in the proactive policing of the forest and its inhabitants but rather through the patrolling and surveillance that a roadway would enable.

⁴⁵ BAnQ, CMP, Meeting of the Executive Committee of the City of Montréal, held December 9, 1959. CLG47, P47/H,10.

3.4 The Roadway

After two years of debates, planning, and envisioning the future of Mount Royal Park, the decision was finally settled on a ‘scenic’ roadway which followed the pre-established MTC tramway line from the corner of Park and Mount-Royal Avenues to Remembrance Road, the same that had originally been commissioned in 1952. Incidentally, it was this finalized plan that was tolerated by the MPPA and met with the criteria enunciated by the public. In an article entitled “Road Across Mountain Not Opposed This Time,” *The Montreal Gazette* quoted the MPPA as stating: “Naturally, we regret any part of the mountain being used for any other purposes than a park, but we will not oppose the proposed roadway from east to west provided the embankments are, embellished and landscaped.”⁴⁶ Though they had fought against proposals to build multiple roads or tunnels through Mount Royal, what appealed to them was the fact that the final plan did not encroach upon the Mountain further, but instead, replaced the tramline route. They nevertheless wrote to the mayor to argue that, foreseeably, the number of cars circulating on the Mountain would seek parking and therefore the creation of more parking spots to accommodate these vehicles was “self-defeating in the long run; in the end there would be no park left.”⁴⁷

Construction of the Roadway thus began in March 1957 after Lucien L’Allier, director of the Public Works Department wrote an internal memo stating, “Pour faire suite aux instructions du Comité exécutif de procéder à la construction le plus tôt possible de la route sur le Mont-Royal, je recommande que l’on retienne les services de la firme d’ingénieurs Lalonde, Girouard et Letendre, pour la préparation des plans et cahiers des charges.”⁴⁸ This engineering firm, like the New York landscape architects, enumerated the specificity of their plans to the Parks Department. Though the Roadway was constructed to respect the integrity of the park, the engineering firm nevertheless undertook procedures that damaged aspects of the Park through acts of construction and deformation; these included underground installations, the removal of the tramway tracks, and demolition work in order to level the

⁴⁶ “Road Across Mountain Not Opposed This Time,” *The Montreal Gazette*, February 26, 1957.

⁴⁷ MUA, MPPA, “Future of Mount Royal Park – to The Mayor of Montreal and The Chairman and Members of the Executive Committee,” December 11, 1961. MG 2079 C1, File 6.

⁴⁸ AVM, FPDM, Lucien L’Allier, “RE: Route sur le Mont-Royal,” August 19, 1955. 107,249 3ème série Conseil Rapports et Dossiers. P 118, S4, SS1, D74.

ground. Their workbook, submitted to the city, included eighteen aspects that considered environmentally challenging aspects to the construction of the roadway. After the installation of concrete sewers and the removal of the tramway tracks, the third most important procedure was a clause entitled *Déboisement et essouchement* whereby “Tous les arbres dans l’emprise de la route seront abattus... l’entrepreneur devra abattre tous les arbres ayant un diamètre inférieur à six pouces mesuré à trois pieds du sol et devra enlever les souches. Tous les autres arbres au-delà de six pouces seront coupés et enlevés par le département des parcs.”⁴⁹



Figure 8: Meandering from the top-right of the photograph towards the left is the final version of the Camillien-Houde Roadway. AVM, SP, VM105-Y-01_0975

The Roadway was finally opened to the public on July 21, 1958 at 3 p.m., with a total cost of \$1,292,047. On September 16, 1958 the Roadway was christened with its official name “Voie Camillien-Houde,” in honour of former Mayor Camillien Houde, who had died a few days prior on September 11, 1958.⁵⁰ In a press release by the director of municipal services the importance given to the Mountain road was overtly centred on the need for practical transportation structures.⁵¹ The new route was described as keeping in fashion with the natural

⁴⁹ AVM, FSP, Lalonde, Girouard & Letendre “Cahier des charges spéciales: Route de la montagne,” August 2, 1957. VM 105, 116704.

⁵⁰ AVM, FCE, Extrait du procès-verbal d’une séance du Comité exécutif de la Cité de Montréal. September 16, 1958.

⁵¹ “Route sur le Mont-Royal,” Notes pour *La Presse* a/s du directeur des services municipaux. AVM, dossier Camillien-Houde.

landscape and appeal of Mount Royal Park, conserving a rustic and dissimulated frame.⁵² In this finalized conception of the roadway the notion of the romantic Victorian park was sustained, thereby explaining the reluctance of civic groups to contest it. This minimal modernist impairment thus testified that civic groups did not in fact monopolize the idea of defending the Park's beauty and that this vision was also shared by the authorities.

While the production of Mount Royal Park during the second half of the 1950s revealed the strong hand of authority, especially in terms of urban planning and the conception of a modernist city, the agency and mobilization of citizens should be viewed as a success. As the MPPA president Raymond Caron stated, had it not been for the Association, the defilement of the Mountain would presumably have occurred.⁵³ Citizens and journalists alike reprised the sentiment that opposition towards encroachment on the Mountain was not fruitless, and moreover, commended the efforts by the MPPA. In a 1958 article entitled "No More Trespassing on Mount Royal Park!" *The Montreal Star's* William Eckstein praised the MPPA:

The specter of slicing, and tampering with the Mountain has loomed up again, and I would like to issue a warning to the Park and Playgrounds Association and all lovers of the Mountain to be on the alert, step in before it is too late, and stop any further trespassing or loop roads emerging from the road now under construction between Remembrance and Park... I feel sure that the public and *The Montreal Star* will back us up and help us to keep the Mountain "God's beautiful country" in the midst of a city.⁵⁴

Hence, at the opening of the Roadway, the president of the Executive Committee of the city, J.-M. Savignac reiterated the themes discussed throughout this chapter – where the administration's will to construct a roadway was anchored in representations of modernity in the design of the urban environment of the city; "Par l'ouverture de la rue sur la montagne, nous avons surmonté un obstacle que l'on avait jusqu'alors jugé infranchissable. L'est et l'ouest se donnent maintenant la main pour assurer le progrès de la ville tout en mettant davantage en valeur le magnifique parc naturel que constitue le Mont-Royal." The Camillien-

⁵² The same article gave the final dimensions of the Roadway: "La route aura 24 pieds de large, avec un accotement de 10 pieds. Elle rejoindra la rue Remembrance qui sera élargie à deux chaussées de 24 pieds et aura deux accotements de dix pieds"; "La route sur le Mont-Royal sera construite dès cet été," *Le Devoir*, February 22, 1957.

⁵³ "It is no exaggeration to state that had the Association not existed, a large part of Mount Royal's four hundred and eighty acres would now be covered by auditoriums concert halls, theatres, restaurants, churches, speedways and parking grounds, all desirable in themselves but not at the expense of the finest natural big-city park in the world." MUA, MPPA, Raymond Caron, March 18, 1959. MG 2079 C1, File 21.

⁵⁴ "No More Trespassing on Mount Royal Park!," *The Montreal Star*, May 29, 1958.

Houde Roadway represented the breaking down of another frontier, one that saw renewed accessibility and dominion over the Mountain. Nevertheless this accessibility had impeded onto the tranquility that sought park wanderers, as Alfred Ayotte stated, “Il faut garder à notre Mont-Royal, sanctuaire de réflexion, de détente et de repos, son atmosphère de paix et de silence.”⁵⁵



Figure 9: *At the confluence of two differing utilities for the Mountain are the automobilist and the park wanderer. Notice how the road partitioned the bedrock of the Mountain and uprooted the vegetation to its borders. AVM, SP, VM105-Y-2_242-014.*

3.5 Conclusion

Whereas earlier developments of the Mountain’s accessibility, such as the streetcar, marked the entry of the Mountain into the 20th century, the roadway marked the entry of postwar modernist planning of urban space, which occupied the imagination of politicians, into this park space. This episode therefore illustrates the epicentre of the debates related to rupture and continuity occurring at a time when modernity, urban landscape design, and

⁵⁵ Alfred Ayotte, “Et le piéton, qu’en fera-t-on?,” *La Presse*, December 14, 1960.

policing were at the heart of political decisions. While the police station ensured that the municipality would maintain control over the area, the Roadway was built in order to “level” the natural barrier represented by the Mountain thus linking the east and west of the city.⁵⁶ Yet these modernizing schemes had a dividing effect within the city; as Parks Department employee de Laplante stated, “Nous étions une poignée à penser, comme Olmsted, que la montagne devait être protégée.”⁵⁷ According to him those who wished to uphold Olmsted’s Victorian vision were not against modernization, and even encouraged functionalist plans, but were rather against schemes that were unsubtle and constituted scars within the Park’s landscape.

This episode also signified that representations of Mount Royal Park and urban designs were by no means static, an ideal that was strongly believe by some of the more resistant advocates against transformations of the Park’s landscape. By being attentive to the discourse of space, it becomes obvious that even the most advanced attempts to model the city were not developed in a one-way process but rather resulted from interactions between municipal authorities and urban populations. As articulated by Dagenais, the relationship which a city has with a given space is revealed through mediated schemes during their initial development, as well as by successive adjustments thereafter.⁵⁸ Hence the Camillien-Houde Roadway was produced through a series of debates which opposed on one side, those who supported unreservedly conservation of the Park’s design, and on the other the municipal authorities who sought to produce and represent a totally different integrative vision of the Park. Nevertheless, both parties wished for the Park’s natural aspects to be conserved. While civic groups believed that the conservationist approach of the authorities did not fully consider the Park’s Victorian appeal, the authorities defined their understanding of nature in modern, functionalist and urbanist fashions. Indeed, though the natural appeal of the Park had been modified, it did not mean that it was eradicated but rather that the definition of the nature changed. This definition was one that sought to reconcile the urban modern environment of the 1950s with Mount Royal Park. However, the ensuing two years of debates, proposals, and vocalization of each party’s standpoint proceeded to moderate the automobilist rhetoric. It is within this framework

⁵⁶ Jacobs and Foisy, *Les quatre saisons du Mont-Royal*, 43.

⁵⁷ Jean de Laplante, *Les parcs de Montréal: des origines à nos jours* (Montréal: Méridien, 1990), 150-151.

⁵⁸ Dagenais, “Introduction,” 14.

that a process of mediation occurred; this process was a more delicate approach to urban planning that considered the needs of citizens and their attachment to Mount Royal Park. The public setting of the debates, within newspapers, helped to democratize the urban planning schemes and the production of the space in which citizens incidentally interact.

The (re)developments in the Park also signified the beginning of an era where Mount Royal Park would be associated with automobile accessibility and therefore give way to new park conceptions. Such conceptions demonstrated the municipal government's landscapist, modernist, and functionalist agenda as stated in the 1958 Parks Department Annual Report:

...tell me, dear Reader, if from the top of Mount Royal you haven't discovered a new vision of your city?...Over the years suggestions—some pertinent, some preposterous—succeeded one another for the improvement or restoration of this or that corner of Mount Royal Park. Nothing happened for many years, however, because it was necessary to see the whole problem. In 1954, the administration ordered plans for the redevelopment of the park as a whole. What are the results? We know now where we are going; we can proceed without fear that we shall have to tear down tomorrow to make place for what we did not foresee yesterday. A program of reforestation and erosion control is under way, sites have been selected for the small number of buildings still to come, a system of paths, ski trails, bridle paths, and walks have been designed, all fitting perfectly into the pre-arranged plan. The new road, opened August 11th, 1958, marks the turning point in the transformation and beautification of the whole park.⁵⁹

Historicizing the Roadway should therefore not be seen as a simple case of rending traffic woes as it was first suggested; the debates represented much more than an equation to traffic strangulation. At the forefront of the Roadway's inception were notions of appropriation of space, power relations, and mediation. As is made evident in the case of motorizing the Mountain, the production of this space would moreover give greater surveillance powers to the municipal authorities. As urban planner Peter Jacobs argues, though the Roadway was considered to be at the back door of the Mountain Park, it is in fact at the very centre of the Mountain landscape thereby sectioning the landscape in halves.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, with time, the presence of the automobile within Mount Royal Park became inseparable to its urban planning form.⁶¹

⁵⁹ AVM, FCR, *Annual Report: 1958*, Service des parcs. P137, S3, D5.

⁶⁰ Jacobs, "The Magic Mountain," 59.

⁶¹ This would be crystalized in the public hearings that surrounded the establishment of Mount Royal Park as a provincial heritage site in 1988. The public asked that the focus of the road be realigned to its scenic vocation, but that it remain accessible to automobiles. Bureau de consultation de Montréal (BCM), *L'avenir de la montagne: plan préliminaire de mise en valeur du mont royal (septembre 1990)*, (Montréal: Rapport de consultation publique, 1990), 92-96.

Chapter 4. Saving The Mountain: Efforts of Rehabilitation, 1959-1961

With such a long history, we are in a position to point out that the controversies of the last six years have been much more frequent and bitter due to the existence of a Master Plan for the park which has no official status because it has never been submitted to the Council and yet is being carried out stage by stage. Each element of the plan has been submitted to Council as a separate item so that the councillors never have any opportunity of judging the inter-relation of one item with the others, nor estimating the long-range effect of the whole plan.¹

—Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association, 1961

The accomplishment of the mid-1950s schemes had a profound consequence on the Mountain's ecology and landscape, reshaping what was understood to be 'natural' and artificial sections of the Mountain.² Yet, another important episode in the mid-century history of Mount Royal Park emerged, the Cedar Avenue issue. This issue concerned the selling of the old Children's Memorial Hospital in 1958—which was located in the southeastern section of the Mountain—to real-estate developers for the construction of a housing complex. The Cedar Avenue issue was seen as correlating too closely to other high modernist developments that wished to shape the city around notions of corporate prestige, culture, and consumption and obliterate the old for the modern.³ Mount Royal's geographical proximity to Montréal's downtown was therefore, once again, subject to modernity, progression, and urban transformation as Montréal competed for flashy titles.⁴

As news of this issue was propagated, a plea for sensible urban planning for Mount Royal re-emerged appealing to 1) prevent any further encroachment and development on the Mountain, most particularly the Cedar Avenue housing project and 2) re-create the Park and its ecological composition with the planting of at least 100 000 trees, thereby quadrupling their number on the Mountain. This (re)planting scheme would constitute a response to both the clear-cutting of the trees that had been ordered a few years prior, and to the issue of erosion.

¹ MUA, MPPA, "Future of Mount Royal Park – to The Mayor of Montreal and The Chairman and Members of the Executive Committee," December 11, 1961. MG 2079 C1, File 6.

² Indeed, sections of the Park were viewed as subtly modified and curated nature—an artificial landscape, whereas other sections, such as the Jungle, were viewed as naturally wooded areas, made up of natural undergrowth.

³ André Lortie, *The 60s: Montreal Thinks Big* (Montréal: Canadian Centre for Architecture-Douglas & McIntyre, 2004).

⁴ Newspapers highlighted the transformation undergoing in the *alley of skyscrapers* on Dorchester Boulevard and compared it to transformations occurring in other Canadian metropolises. "La course aux grates-ciel entre Montreal, Toronto, et Vancouver." *La Presse*, July 9, 1960.

As previously mentioned, wind and water had a sustained and perverse effect on the Mountain as excessive windthrow, water runoff, and soil erosion further undermined the ecology of the Mountain. Therefore, occurring in parallel were public calls for a dismantling of plans to encroach and develop, and the rehabilitation of the Mountain's ecology.

The call to end encroachment and further developments was undertaken in the public sphere as newspapers published open letters from private citizens, public bodies, and the larger "Save-the-Mountain" movement.⁵ These calls were not caught up in political questions, but were rather designed to re-establish what they saw as the beauty and peaceful characteristics of Mount Royal Park's environment.⁶ Jean-Joseph Dumont, Montréal's superintendent of the Parks Department's Forestry Division, shared his vision for the future of the Park and stated that the goal remained "d'assurer la pérennité de la forêt, de veiller à son développement harmonieux et de la former à sa destination sociale."⁷ Indeed, what remained most important for individuals concerned with the wellbeing of the Park was a policy to protect and save the Mountain from further encroachment and ecological deterioration. This call for policy led to an important ruling that secured the future of Mount Royal Park for decades to come, an increase of its parkland and designation of its territory as protected space under provincial legislature in 1960. This chapter therefore demonstrates how the planning of Mount Royal during the 1950s, which corresponded to its ecological degradation, fuelled a concerted effort towards a new and permanent legislation for Mount Royal Park's space.

4.1 Ecological Degradation

It was in the late 1950s that the ecological degradation in Mount Royal Park became ostensible; the Park had an anaemic number of trees and its foliage was lacking vitality. The planning and architectural muddle of the previous years had left Mount Royal Park lackluster and its patrons in a state of distraught. To this end, Dumont stated that since 1956 sections of Mount Royal Park had degraded with such a rapidity that within a decade's time the Park

⁵ Peter Hoos, "Cedar Avenue Issue: 'Save-the-mountain' Movement Prepares For All-out Battle," *The Montreal Star*, January 13, 1960.

⁶ "Saving The Mountain," *The Montreal Star*, September 7, 1960.

⁷ "Depuis 1956, le Mont-Royal s'est dégradé avec une telle rapidité, qu'il est permis de dire, sans crainte de se tromper, que la calotte et les secteurs en pente auraient été impropres à la culture d'ici une décennie." AUM, FAB, Dumont, *Rapport relatif à l'état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal*, 2.

would have been unserviceable to the culture of Montréal.⁸ His statement in fact conveyed Mount Royal Park's manifestation as a tool of cultural betterment for Montréal's citizens, and the fact that this "cultural" institution had suffered from the municipal government's planning. His cry also revealed his vision for Mount Royal Park as a densely natural-wooded forest.



Figure 10: View of the Camillien-Houde Roadway meandering in a horseshoe-shape (right side). Also notice the sparse tree covering Mount Royal Park between the Roadway and Park Avenue (forefront) – what was formally known as the Jungle. Source: *Les amis de la montagne*.

In light of the changes occurring on the Mountain the Montreal Citizens' Committee (MCC) circulated a letter among groups whom they believed had the best interests for the Park. The Committee was composed of planning consultants from the architectural firm Van Ginkel Associates; signatories of the letter included Hazen Sise, Harry Mayerovitch, Leslie Gault, and John Lynch-Staunton. Their letter, a call to arms for architects and planners alike, surveyed the past failures of the authorities and enounced their wills and resolutions to ensure the conservation of the Park against further encroachment:

Whereas: a major portion of Mount Royal has been developed into a park for the perpetual enjoyment of the citizens of Montreal and surrounding municipalities, not only as a practical measure but commemorative of Montreal's origins and quality and

⁸ AUM, FAB, Dumont, *Rapport relatif à l'état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal*, 1.

Whereas: there has been no overall plan for the development and preservation of Mount Royal Park since the Olmsted Plan of 1877 and
Whereas: ever since the establishment of the Park nearly a hundred years ago the citizens of Montreal have had to engage in an incessant struggle to protect and preserve the essential features of the Park against a wide variety of schemes that at best would have changed its character and at worst were plainly destructive and
Whereas: today, more than ever before, imminent real estate projects threaten encroachment to the great detriment of Mount Royal Park
Therefore: be it resolved that the time has come to ensure an orderly future development of the Park to keep pace with the continuing growth and importance of the Montreal region and that therefore the Montreal Citizens' Committee strongly recommends immediate action to formulate and implement an adequate master plan for Mount Royal.⁹

Though the letter was environmentally progressive, it also delivered a vision for the Park that largely sought to preserve and perpetuate Victorian qualities considered inherent to its history: romanticism and gracefulness – in the preservation approach, and pride – in the quality and commemorative origins of the Park. The letter also called for the Park to be given an “identity,” a process they hoped would secure its future from encroachment and development—what they perceived had been the reason for the rundown state of the Park.¹⁰ The ecological degradation was also reported in *The Montreal Gazette*; “Instead of the stately mellowness of an old area, long cared for and valued, too many parts of the mountain are coming to have the bleakness of the frontier.”¹¹

Similar sentiments would be shared in the MPPA’s vision for the Park. They wished for the Park to remain true to its historical vocation as a Victorian park, naturally wooded, and most of all where citizen could enjoy tranquility—such a vision did not exclude development *per se*, but did seek to limit developments if they were implemented. The MPPA wrote of the challenges associated with the current state of the Park, the past failures from the elected officials in keeping with Olmsted’s original design, and advice to future authorities:

It is worth recalling that Olmsted himself was so disgusted and alarmed by the confusions, stupidities and acts of bad faith that threatened Mount Royal in his own day, that, in 1881, he felt compelled to write a book on the subject in order to rally the citizens to the defense of this unique heritage, which had given the city its name... The last two summers have dramatically demonstrated the unwisdom of opening the Park to motor traffic via the Camillien Houde

⁹ CCAA, Van Ginkel Associates fonds (hereafter VGA), “Mount Royal Park Proposal,” September 23, 1960 Montreal Citizens’ Committee AP 027.A12.02 ARCH253456.

¹⁰ “Lacking a clear identity and a certain future, Mount Royal Park always will be the object in sudden, selfish raids and desperate, last minute defenses.” CCAA, VGA, “Legal Memorandum: Mount Royal Sub-Committee,” Montreal Citizens’ Committee AP 027.A12.02 ARCH253456.

¹¹ This same article argued that “an increase of firs on some of these barren or blighted slopes would bring a most welcome refreshment to the eye”; “Bleakness On the Mountain,” *The Montreal Gazette*, May 7, 1957.

Parkway, which was a major element of the Clarke and Rapuano plan... There is now no possibility of escaping the conclusion that the old controversy between “pedestrian” and “intensive” development has become futile.¹²

According to this statement, and in keeping with those of the MCC and *The Montreal Gazette*, the fact remained that the Mountain’s interests were too easily manipulated by political interests and therefore had to be defined, delimited, and enforced to ensure its apolitical future.

However, Mount Royal’s ecology was not only suffering from human induced damages but also from tenacious and unwanted natural forces. According to superintendent Dumont, Mount Royal Park’s trees were being ruined by “the super-abundance of squirrels,” an issue that could be curtailed by “trapping many annually to ship them to northern forests.”¹³ Mice were also an issue since they chewed bark and ate seeds, and insects ruined the ecological diversity; nevertheless, Dumont offered no solutions and simply stated that these were problems that required much attention. These issues reiterated the fact that though landscape designs should ‘appear’ natural or naturalistic they were very much produced through human ‘intrusion’ to counter ‘natural’ forces; as historian Sean Kheraj states, such projects are a struggle *against* the autonomy of nature.¹⁴

But the ecological issue was not solely one of environmental beauty, beheld in the eyes of onlookers; it was also one that intrinsically linked ecology and economy. In addition to the lack of trees and greenery—a costly replanting within themselves, the slopes of the Mountain had to be damned to control water erosion. Parks director, Claude Robillard, stated that “L’un des grands ennemis de la montagne est l’érosion.”¹⁵ The problem was so serious that if heavy rainstorms occurred during the morning Mountain dirt was found in the St. Lawrence in the afternoon. According to landscape architect Hazen Sise the remedy would be costly and involve “the planting of quantities of low, soil-binding shrubs or bushes, and in some places

¹² MUA, MPPA, “Future of Mount Royal Park – to The Mayor of Montreal and The Chairman and Members of the Executive Committee,” December 11, 1961. MG 2079 C1, File 6.

¹³ Paul Leduc, “City Approves Plan To Keep Mountain From Going Bald,” *The Montreal Star*, August 21, 1961.

¹⁴ Kheraj, *Inventing Stanley Park*, 94-95.

¹⁵ “Vastes améliorations en cours sur le Mont Royal : On veut rendre la montagne plus accessible aux citoyens de la métropole, sans sacrifier la beauté des lieux, dit M. C. Robillard,” *La Presse*, may 21, 1958.

retaining walls will be needed,”¹⁶ an important insight into a fraction of the economical costs at hand.

Dumont stated that the ground soil of Mount Royal was extremely poor in minerals such as phosphor and potassium and that one way to curb these issues was to plant evergreens (*résineux*) that were less soil demanding and would therefore grow easily on the Mountain.¹⁷ However, he stated that this would be a transitory phase into, eventually, a more sustainable and curated park:

Ce qui nous importe le plus ce n'est pas seulement maintenir et utiliser le mieux possible les forces productrices du sol, en entretenant un bon couvert et en favorisant la formation d'humus, c'est surtout rétablir une situation désastreuse et rendre le sol capable de produire une végétation saine... L'érosion détruit le Mont-Royal parce que celui-ci manque d'humus.¹⁸

In light of this what remained clear according to both professionals, Dumont and Sise, was the fact that the Morality Cuts of the Jungle was the principal cause and aggravator of soil erosion, particularly on the steepest slopes.¹⁹ The authorities had entered Mount Royal Park, cleansed it, but failed to rehabilitate its environment and ecological properties.

In the 19th century planners determined that urban forests improved the air quality and reduced summer heat. Half a century later, a new modern approach emphasised the impact of urban forest canopy on storm run-off, temperature fluctuations, and levels of particulate matters in the air and in the soil.²⁰ Dumont and Sise were themselves envisioning the nature of Mount Royal Park as more than a vehicle of beauty—the nature would also serve the purpose of preserving and upholding the ecological, topographical, and geographical state of the

¹⁶ Here Sise took the opportunity to blast the recent costly architectural designs of Montréal and stated, “we can only hope that they [future projects on the Mountain] will be faced with unobtrusive native masonry; avoiding the Adirondak stone and Jazz-cubist rubble that have defaced Montreal in recent years”; “MUA, MPPA, Sise, “The Future of Mount Royal.” MG 2079 C1, File 39.

¹⁷ In many places on the Mountain the soil was only nine inches deep according to Dumont. These evergreens would be used because of their double functions as 1) their roots don't go deep and don't need much earth and 2) could grow out a long way and were great help against erosion; Don Newnham, “Mountain Receives ‘Beauty Treatment’,” *The Montreal Star*, August 12, 1961.

¹⁸ AUM, FAB, Dumont, *Rapport relatif à l'état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal*, 7. Emphasis in the original text.

¹⁹ J-J Dumont stated that the “city's action a few years back in destroying the bush on a part of the mountain which was known as the jungle” was a primary cause to this degradation. Paul Leduc, “City Approves Plan To Keep Mountain From Going Bald,” *The Montreal Star*, August 21, 1961.

²⁰ Joanna Dean, “The Social Production of a Canadian Urban Forest,” in *Environmental and Social Justice in the City*, ed. Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud and Richard Rodger, (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 2011), 67-68.

Mountain. A plan to halt the ongoing degradation would therefore be the undertaking of the city's forestry and horticultural divisions.²¹

4.2 Cedar Avenue Issue

While the worries concerning the ecological reality of the post-Jungle area heightened, another section of the Mountain was being contested and claimed—Cedar Avenue. Similar to the issue of the Jungle (pre and post developments), the Cedar Avenue issue offers important insight into the way authorities were planning the city.²² Indeed, if any of the issues throughout this period could be seen as the *last straw*—this is the one. It was another modernist plan seen as further encroachment, and ignoring the long-term effect, onto the Mountain's space. However, what essentially differentiated this episode—as opposed to the Morality Cuts or the creation of the Camillien-Houde Roadway—is the fact that real estate developers were attempting to develop this part of the Mountain, not the public authorities. As *La Presse* reported, the city had already authorized projects, which came perilously close to encroaching on the Mountain, and this new project further worried citizens due to its unconcealed capitalist motives.²³

Cedar Avenue is a stretch of road on the south-eastern part of Mount Royal which stands high on the Mountain. In the early 1950s the decision to relocate the Montreal Children's Memorial Hospital to the site of the Western Hospital—adjacent to the Montreal General Hospital, was taken in order to lower costs and bring the Children's to more modern facilities.²⁴ According to the municipal director of Departments Lucien Hétu, on October 18, 1956 a city official was authorized to approach John Molson, then president of the Children's

²¹ Daniel Chartier and Denis Marcil, *Parc du mont-royal: plan directeur d'aménagement des secteurs du sommet et de l'escarpement* (Montréal: Division aménagement des parcs, Service des loisirs et du développement communautaire, 1992), 12-13.

²² As Nerbas argues, the architectural and planning possibilities in mid-century Montréal were shaped decisively by “the speculative world of commercial real estate, the availability of financing, and the quest for corporate prestige.” Don Nerbas, “William Zeckendorf, “Place Ville-Marie, and the Making of Modern Montreal,” *Urban History Review/Revue d'histoire urbaine*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2015), 6.

²³ “Depuis quelques années, un bon nombre de permis ont été accordés dans ce district pour la construction d'imposants édifices d'appartements et que récemment l'acquisition, par des intérêts étrangers, du Montreal Children's Hospital, a inquiété de nombreux citoyens.” Amédée Gaudreault, “Les hautes constructions sont-elles en train de masquer le Mont-Royal?,” *La Presse*, July 7, 1958.

²⁴ Jessie Boyd Scriver, *The Montreal Children's Hospital: Years of Growth* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1979), 122-125.

Hospital, to get a quotation for the Cedar site. However, the Executive Committee had decided against the purchase “in view of the high asking price of \$2,500,000.”²⁵ A group named Mountain Village Inc. therefore bought the land for \$1,500,000 in 1958 hoping to develop it into a housing complex; this occurred even though Claude Robillard had recommended that the city acquire the property.²⁶ The issue at hand was thus the following: a five-unit 11-storey apartment complex known as the “Cedar Towers” was to be built on the 365,000 square feet site of the old Children’s Hospital.



Figure 11: Here the members of the Save-the-Mountain movement overlook plans of the area affected by the proposed Cedar Avenue apartment housing project. From left to right: John Lynch-Staunton, Councillor Hugh Savage, and Harold Thorpe vice-president of the MPPA. *The Montreal Star*, January 14, 1960.

When news of this was made public, general contestation erupted from all fronts; civil servants, private citizens, newspapers, and interest groups banded together to save the Mountain under the aptly named banner of “Save-the-Mountain movement.” The emergence of this movement should be seen as a reaction to the overdevelopment and selling of the Parkland. In fact, if earlier developments of the Park could be seen as modernist needs of an

²⁵ “It Was A Busy, Mixed-Up Day: Minutes Describe Cedar Switch,” *The Montreal Gazette*, January 28, 1960.

²⁶ He had asked on July 26, 1956, January 24, 1958, and January 14, 1959 that the land be integrated into the Park. Myer Negru, “Hide Mountain Or Extend Park City’s Dilemma,” *The Montreal Gazette*, March 19, 1959.

urban city, these newly conceived developments were a step too far and countered the interests of the general public. In concert with this movement, the MPPA declared that it would take “every action possible” and was joined by several public bodies and private citizens in its protest against further developments on the Mountain.²⁷ The movement would also be supported by four leading architects and planners who wished to 1) incorporate the land of the former Children’s Hospital into Mount Royal Park, 2) protect the skyline, and 3) argued that the housing development would be too dense for that part of the Mountain.²⁸ William Eckstein undoubtedly depicted the issue most accurately:

Once again the ugly spectre of interfering with and marring the beauty of the Mountain has reared its head, and now that we know that we have the press behind us we intend to give them a run for their money, and try to prevent it. Where is everybody? Mr. Robillard, Director of Parks and Playgrounds, the Montreal Parks and Playgrounds Association, Mrs. Casgrain, the thousands of mountain lovers? We’ll never get anywhere if we just sit back without putting up a fight...We know we have many level-headed men in the Executive Committee. Why don’t they have the law department of the city try and find some loop-hole which would cancel any agreements or contracts signed up to date which would make the sale of the land null and void?²⁹

Detailing the importance of civic engagement in such claims and the need “to put up a fight,” Eckstein’s message also saw the issue as one of democracy, whereby shared public spaces were intrinsically linked to notions of living together. He noted that it was important to get actors from different backgrounds and social status to save the Mountain. However, would the movement be able to concert its efforts amongst different interest groups? Moreover, would the city’s Executive Committee back these claims and listen to its electorate? In the end, a cunning ‘loop-hole’ would indeed emerge out of the fiasco.

Nevertheless, it became apparent from the start that not all wished the land to be saved, as one opinion piece in *La Presse* stated, “il me semble tout à fait illogique que la ville

²⁷ This included amongst others the Civic Improvement League, Montreal Citizens Committee, Van Ginkel Associates, Services des loisirs du diocese de Montreal, and the president of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Col. Hugh Wallis. CCAA, VGA, AP 027.A12.02 ARCH253456. The Montreal Council of Women also published an open letter in which they stated “Nous représentons 40,000 citoyennes de Montréal et nous protestons dans les termes les plus énergiques qui soient contre tout projet qui pourrait souiller le mont Royal”; “Pas d’édifices sur le mont Royal,” *Le Devoir*, April 14, 1959.

²⁸ They suggested that it could be possible to build an acropolis on the Mountain, as long as it was carefully and monumentally planned and that “ambitions of speculative apartment buildings are something else”; Boyce Richardson, “Mountain Acropolis: Architects Oppose Apartment Project For Mount Royal,” *The Montreal Star*, March 20, 1959.

²⁹ William Eckstein, “Would Protect Mount Royal Even By Sit-down Strike,” *The Montreal Star*, April 1, 1959.

investisse plusieurs millions de dollars pour l'achat des terrains.”³⁰ Moreover, the issue was not only one of land contention but of the construction of housing units; this created a division at city hall since the Urban Planning Department and Parks Department were both against the construction stating that it would create a traffic problem in the area; they argued that the land be incorporated into Mount Royal Park instead.³¹ The divergence in ideologies gives insight into the relative mores and values of the opposing factions, and into the financial reality of the matter. On the one hand Mountain Village Inc. had lawfully acquired the vacant lots and wished to create new living space, but on the other hand the fact remained that the Park had recently been too easily manipulated through a string of modernist developments.

On August 27, 1959 the Executive Committee moved to expropriate Mountain Village Inc. from the site, even though the latter had deposited a \$500,000 down payment. The city's Planning Department park plan, on which the Executive Committee's resolution was based, envisaged the addition of the whole of the north side of Cedar Avenue to take in the “natural limits of the mountain.”³² However the City Council opposed the Executive Committee's expropriation with a 61-23 vote.³³ Regardless of the defeat in the City Council, the Executive Committee planned on being able to revoke the Mountain Village Inc. permit through Québec's Legislative Council.³⁴ Their hope was that by changing the wording in the Montreal Bill by the Legislative Assembly concerning the official perimeter or ‘homologated lines’, the site of the Children's Hospital would remain in “status quo.”³⁵ A retroactive amendment was therefore passed through the Private Bills Committee of the Quebec Legislative Assembly stating that it “would nullify homologation if an homologated property were placed before City Council for expropriation and expropriation were refused.”³⁶ The exhibits filed by City

³⁰ This argument was rooted in the idea that Montréal had much greater problems to tackle such as slums, highways, and a multitude of other projects. “A propos du Mont-Royal,” *La Presse*, July 15, 1959.

³¹ “Pour agrandir le domaine du parc Mont-Royal,” *Le Devoir*, March 29, 1959.

³² CCAA, VGA, Leon Levinson, “Cedar Pros And Cons Debated Then Judge Reserves Decisions,” (*date unknown*), AP 027.A12.02 ARCH253456.

³³ Raymond Masse, “Le parc du Mont-Royal ne sera pas agrandi,” *La Presse*, September 15, 1959.

³⁴ The Executive Committee authorized the expenditures for the impromptu trip to amend the Montréal Charter to Québec City from January 10 to 13, 1960 for Lucien Héту. AVM, FCE, Resolution 119000/20 of the Meeting of January 15, 1960. VM074-6-D051. A few days later Mayor Sarto Fournier, Lucien L'Allier, J-M Savignac, Pierre Des Marais, Jean Drapeau, and more would be paid back for their roles in the Québec City trip.

³⁵ Myer Negru, “Cedar Development: Issue Still Before Courts,” *The Montreal Gazette*, January 22, 1960.

³⁶ It was made retroactive to September 1, 1959 thereby affecting the Mountain land involved in the apartment project. “Opposition Forms Up: Apartment Project Hit,” *The Montreal Star*, January 13, 1960.

Councillor Theodore Lespérance during the city’s brief defence included copies of a nearly hundred-year-old map in contention that, “more than half of the site under litigation was within the area intended for future acquisition by the city. Acts of the Legislature in 1871-72, the city submits, authorized the city to acquire the Cedar Ave. area for inclusion in Mount Royal Park.”³⁷ The arguments were that the inclusion and homologation of the hospital site merely carried out “the original destiny established by law for the greater part of the site in question [since 1871-72].”³⁸ The black outline above Cedar Avenue in Figure 12 delineates the section that was under contestation; as the map demonstrates, it had been part of the original design and meant to be incorporated into Mount Royal Park.

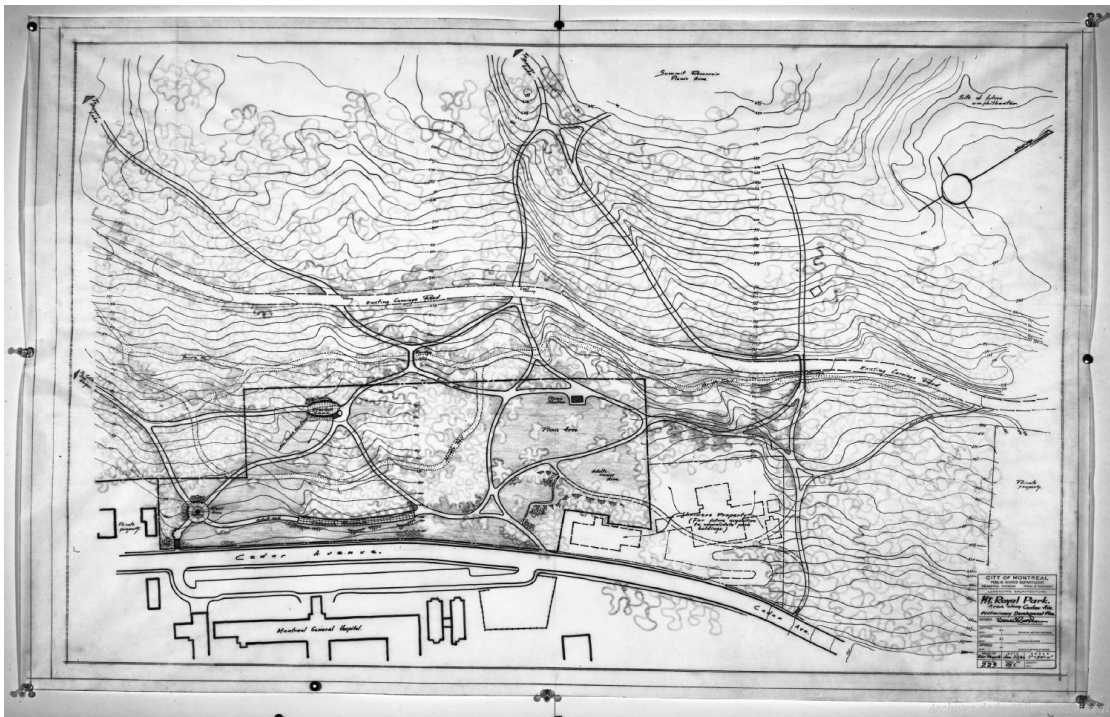


Figure 12: 19th century map of Mount Royal Park, with Cedar Avenue at its southern edge. VM105-Y-1_0757-02.

The issue was therefore presented again to the Council in June after the Executive Committee resolved to 1) expropriate a number of lots situated on the northern side of Cedar Avenue and east of chemin de la Côte-des-Neiges in order to increase Mount Royal Park’s area and 2) that the \$1,000,000 acquisition of these lots be paid for by the city.³⁹ This would

³⁷ Leon Levinson, “Cedar Evidence Nears End, Pleas Due Today,” *The Montreal Star*, February 2, 1960.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ AVM, FCE, Resolution 118737/2b of the Executive Committee meeting of June 2, 1960. VM074-6-D052.

be voted for in favour of 55-16 votes in the City Council.⁴⁰ The municipal administration indeed had favoured amendments to the City Charter to protect Mount Royal; “Le service d’Urbanisme serait appelé à préparer un plan topographique de toute la montagne et tout terrain et bâtiment ne faisant pas partie intégrale du parc Mont-Royal mais étant compris dans les limites de la montagne ne pourraient être ni construits, ni aménagés, ni modifiés à moins qu’ils ne soient conformes au plan général préparé par le service d’Urbanisme.”⁴¹

In the end, the whole debacle surrounding the Cedar Towers would not have ended with the inclusion of the land into Mount Royal Park had it not been for the press and pressure groups. The city’s ‘homologation order’ and refusal to issue construction permits had, according to papers, “resulted from last minute pressure applied by a ‘save-the-mountain’ campaign conducted by the local daily press and representatives of citizen organizations.”⁴² Indeed, Antoine Geoffrion of Mountain Village Inc. stated that if the city had been sincere in claiming it wanted to expand Mount Royal Park, why had they not included those properties while they were still available? Instead, he claims, “they acted hastily on the matter in the face of the “save-the-mountain” campaign. They did a patch-up job to avoid the wrath of the papers.”⁴³ Though the property had indeed been bought in “good faith”, the pressure exerted by the press and civic groups proved that the city could no longer remain immobile and avoid responses to its citizens. It was therefore on June 9, 1960 that the Executive Committee resolved, under the proposition of councillor Alfred Gagliardi:

Que le contentieux municipal soit chargé de préparer un projet d’amendement à la charte de la Cité à l’effet d’accorder à cette dernière droit de regard ou juridiction sur toute l’étendue du territoire connu sous le nom de Montagne du Mont-Royal, au-delà des limites actuelles du parc Mont-Royal, ledit droit de regard ou juridiction devant surtout viser à assurer la conservation de la montagne du Mont-Royal, selon un plan topographique et territorial à être préparé par le service d’urbanisme, comme parc récréatif pour toute la population régionale montréalaise et à lui conserver son attrait naturel tant sur le plan esthétique qu’architectural.

Qu’il soit également stipulé par ce projet d’amendement que tout terrain et les bâtiments dessus érigés ne faisant pas partie intégrale du parc Mont-Royal, mais étant compris dans les limites du territoire désigné dans le plan à être préparé par le service d’urbanisme, ne pourront être ni construits, ni aménagés, ni modifiés à moins qu’ils ne soient conformes au plan général préparé par le service d’urbanisme.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Gerard Dery, “Stand Reversed on Hospital: City Council Votes To Expropriate Site On Mountain Slope,” *The Montreal Star*, June 3, 1960.

⁴¹ AVM, FPD, “Pour protéger le Mont-Royal,” *Montréal-Matin*, June 10, 1960. P 118, S4, SS1, D12.

⁴² “It Was A Busy, Mixed-Up Day: Minutes Describe Cedar Switch,” *The Montreal Gazette*, January 28, 1960.

⁴³ City’s Motives Questioned: Press Said Cause of Cedar Decision,” *The Montreal Gazette*, February 3, 1960.

⁴⁴ AVM, FCE, Resolution 119896 of the Executive Committee meeting of June 9, 1960. VM074-6-D052.

The Mountain henceforth benefited from protection in a double fashion, in the Private Bills committee for expropriation of the site of the former Children’s Hospital and through the legislation the city of Montréal retained the right to all the territory roughly bounded by Pine, Cedar, Côte-des-Neiges, Maplewood, Mount Royal Boulevard, and Park Avenue. According to *The Montreal Gazette* this was the first time that such powers were clearly established and regulated, and represented important gains for the Park: “Considering the way in which the Mountain, only about a year and a half ago, seemed to be menaced from nearly every direction, the scope of these measures for its preservation is remarkable... For the large gains that have been made for its preservation reflect to the credit of the civic administration and the provincial government.”⁴⁵ This “New Approach” had the merit of simplicity according to *The Montreal Star*; redefining Mount Royal’s park, boundaries, and laws—thereby safeguarding it from encroachment and dispossession.⁴⁶ It would also encompass and maintain in perpetuity the newly acquired land with the exception of peripheries owned by universities or used for hospitals.⁴⁷ This vision for the Park condemned any capitalist ventures and saw such entities as unserviceable to the public. This episode should nonetheless not be regarded as one where the governing authorities simply relinquished their control over this space but rather as opening new articulations with citizens for years to come.⁴⁸

4.3 Planting and Ornamentalizing

While issues of contestation between the governing authorities and civil society seemed to wither, and perhaps even rekindle following the Cedar Avenue issue, the Park’s environment still had to be rehabilitated and replenished. Moreover, now that the Mountain

⁴⁵ “Good News for the Mountain,” *The Montreal Gazette*, February 17, 1961.

⁴⁶ “Enlarge The Park: Fine New Approach To Mountain Area,” *The Montreal Star*, June 16, 1960.

⁴⁷ The MPPA helped to draw up amendments which stipulated that the city had to perpetually preserve and maintain as a park the land it owned on Mount Royal and any it would acquire which would forbid the City Council to “dispose of any part of the land for the purpose of special rights, privileges or franchises of a special nature.” MUA, MPPA, “Mount royal Park Protection Sought From Legislature,” M.G. 2079, C,1, File 39. In November of 1960 it sent to City Council an approval to request the Québec legislature to amend the City Charter for that purpose.

⁴⁸ This would be evermore exemplified in the Milton-Park Affair (1962-1983) when developers hoped to completely transform a neighbourhood adjacent to the Mountain. Similar to the Cedar Avenue Issue this *affair* shed light on how “power struggles are waged.” Claire Helman, *The Milton-Park Affair: Canada’s Largest Citizen-Developer Confrontation*, (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1987).

benefited from a long-range plan for preservation, backed by legislative law, the strategy towards the rehabilitation of Mount Royal Park became the ubiquitous scheme on the Mountain. According to Dumont the goal remained to transform as rapidly as possible “le Mont-Royal de forêt délabrée qu’il est, en un parc d’ornement.”⁴⁹ The idea of an ornamental re-conception of the Park was at once reflective of the new ideas emerging in the fields of urban forestry and park management, as well as an answer to the way the park would be rehabilitated:

Au mont-Royal, le reboisement se fera nécessairement à partir d’un peuplement déjà constitué, mais en très mauvais état, pour suppléer à l’insuffisance de la régénération naturelle. Comblant les vides et clairières, introduire une ou des essences nouvelles. Je préconise la régénération artificielle parce qu’elle est la plus avantageuse ou la seule possible... Le but à atteindre est d’obtenir une formation de végétaux viable, ayant elle-même pour mission : 1) d’ornier le Mont-Royal, 2) d’épurer l’air du centre de la ville, et 3) d’empêcher l’érosion de s’étendre et de la réduire selon les cas.⁵⁰

Interwoven in Dumont’s comments were new and emerging concepts of horticulture that brought a conciliatory vision of ecological management for this space with regards to its original design. While the ornamentalization of Mount Royal Park represented, according to Daniel Chartier, “la fin du déclin de la végétation et le début d’opérations d’envergure pour revitaliser la végétation et le réseau hydrographique du parc du Mont-Royal,”⁵¹ it also meant that an ecological mosaic would be created and developed in the Park.

Mount Royal Park’s environment would therefore be laboured and reworked in a twofold, and sometimes overlapping, plan. The first part was its rehabilitation, which was a short-term endeavour seeking to mitigate the aforementioned deleterious environmental processes. Already in the early summer of 1958 a drainage system was under construction to preserve Mount Royal’s soil.⁵² This would be undertaken in the Jungle area, near the Roadway and Beaver Lake, and where systems of drainage and aqueduct would be placed.⁵³ Though this project was initially thought to be part of a five-year program, Dumont later recognized that

⁴⁹ AUM, FAB, Dumont, *Rapport relatif à l’état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal*, 12.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Daniel Chartier, *Gestion des eaux de surface et des milieux humides sur le mont Royal* (Direction des grands parcs et de la nature en ville, Service du développement culturel, et de la qualité du milieu de vie et de la diversité ethnoculturelle: Ville de Montréal, 2007).

⁵² “Vastes améliorations en cours sur le Mont Royal : On veut rendre la montagne plus accessible aux citoyens de la métropole, sans sacrifier la beauté des lieux, dit M. C. Robillard,” *La Presse*, May 21, 1958.

⁵³ Dollard Morin, “Espaces de verdure sauvés de l’envahisseur,” *La Presse*, March 7, 1959.

the project at hand was much grander than first anticipated stating that it was more likely to take fifteen years due to “the masterproblem” of soil erosion, which could not be combatted overnight.⁵⁴ While the soil was being worked the first types of trees added were evergreens (White spruce, Red pine and Scots pine) due to the urgency of the situation and their availability at the Berthierville provincial nursery.⁵⁵

The second and most laborious work was the tree rehabilitation of Mount Royal through the extensive planting and curating of the Park. Though a number of trees were planted in the years previous, bringing the total to 33,577 trees on Mount Royal, no planting effort was as remarkable as those undertaken during the summers of 1959 and 1960. This laborious enterprise would not only regenerate the ecology of the Park, but moreover served as a check to ongoing erosion. Teams of foresters planted trees in the most abrupt slopes of the Mountain, to the extent that they required safety belts with ropes attached to (mature) trees further up the slope.⁵⁶ As was the case with erosion control these works were carried along the Mountain’s “bare spots” that is, the borders of the Camillien-Houde Roadway and near Beaver Lake—the post-Jungle area. At this time most of the new trees planted were Canadian spruce, but where it was deemed that where there would be a lack of shade, firs were planted instead; most of the trees planted were ten to twelve feet apart on flat stretches and six feet apart on slopes.⁵⁷ Some diseased trees were also cut down. Dumont emphasized that the work they were carrying out was extremely important in the preservation of the “mountain playground” adding that, “it would deteriorate very rapidly unless it was given special care.”⁵⁸

The table below is a comparative figure of tree plantings in Montréal’s parks over the period of a decade; taken from the 1960 annual report of the Forestry Division of the Parks Department, it exemplifies the immense push to ‘environmentalize’ the city, and most importantly Mount Royal Park.⁵⁹ Trees had become an important source of concern at city hall

⁵⁴ “Beauty Treatments For Mountain Park Will Take 15 Years,” *The Montreal Gazette*, November 21, 1959.

⁵⁵ Chartier and Maril, *Parc du mont-royal*, 13.

⁵⁶ The angles of these slopes were measured as being over 55 degrees in certain areas.

⁵⁷ Bob Hayes, “‘Alpinists’ Planting Trees To Save Mountain Slopes,” *The Montreal Gazette*, September 30, 1959.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ A scanned graph of this table is available in the annex section of this thesis. MUA, MPPA “Annual Report 1960,” Forestry Division of the Parks Department. MG 2079 C1, File 41.

due economic studies preponderant to their value and societal impact.⁶⁰ The annual report of the Forestry Division of the Parks Department showed that 6,804 trees were planted during 1957 but that there was only a “gain of only 97 trees on the year because 6,707 had to be cut down – 1,397 old trees which had died, 338 removed for works, 383 damaged by storms or accidents, 952 cleared from Mount Royal Jungles[sic]” and a number of others died during the wintertime.⁶¹ At this point the Forestry Division envisaged to lay down turf and flowerbeds on the flatter grounds and plant between 50,000 and 60,000 trees in Mount Royal Park—with 14,000 in the immediate future of this transitory phase. Most of these would be white spruce and once they had countered the erosion problem they could start planting deciduous trees.⁶² This colossal task was even more impressive if we are to compare Montréal to Toronto; the latter had planted 5,000 trees in its streets and parks between 1957 and 1959. To this Dumont replied, “We planted 28,254 in 1959 alone.”⁶³ Though a citywide reforestation program was well under way, the rhetoric remained that without a master plan Mount Royal Park would have been completely treeless within 10 years.

Year	Number of Trees Planted in Parks
1951	520
1952	302
1953	562
1954	388
1955	196
1956	464
1957	717
1958	888
1959	21,815
1960	36,139 (31,173 on Mount Royal)

“For the first time in her life Montréal’s ageless coquette is taking beauty treatments,” exclaimed Don Newnham from *The Montreal Star*.⁶⁴ The Executive Committee chairman,

⁶⁰ In 1958 a report stated that the city’s trees were worth \$42.5 million. This was based on Claude Robillard’s estimate on valuations reached by United States courts in assessing damages to trees in that country. The general assessment at that time was \$25 an inch of diameter at four feet from the ground. By this rule a tree 16 inches through at four feet from the ground would be worth \$400; “City’s 170,000 Trees Worth \$42,500,000,” *The Gazette*, January 30, 1958.

⁶¹ Ibid. However, and more specifically, it was later reported that in 1957 only *one* tree was on Mount Royal whereas 936 were cut down. AUM, FAB, Roger Champoux, “Désastre évité de justesse: Quelques années encore et le Mont-Royal était sans arbres.” P 173, 900.354, D8.1.

⁶² “Beauty Treatments For Mountain Park Will Take 15 Years,” *The Montreal Gazette*, November 21, 1959.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Don Newnham, “Mountain Receives ‘Beauty Treatment’,” *The Montreal Star*, August 12, 1961.

Lucien Saulnier had announced that city had approved of a project aiming to convert the Mountain into “a real park rather than a scraggly forest,” which would cost about \$5,000,000 over a 10-year period.⁶⁵ This project offered few new insights into the rehabilitation other than what had been previously undertaken, the unrestrained planting of trees and rehabilitation of the soil. The city established designated areas around the northern half of the Mountain crest to establish double rows of poplars (which would reach 30 to 40 feet high) to counter the damaging windthrow, which had been “smashing trees” for years and stunting their growth.⁶⁶ Moreover an other ingenious engineering feat was used to enhance the soil’s properties; during this time modernizing projects on St-Joseph Boulevard and Pie IX Boulevard supplied fill for the Mountain thereby ensuring soil supplies for planting and growing areas in the Park to make it “proper for nicer-looking trees”⁶⁷—a step away from the transitory resinous trees used to rehabilitate the park. With this soil supply the Park could therefore enter a phase of rehabilitation and beautification through the planting of various species. In all Montréal had planted more trees than any city in the world in 1960.⁶⁸ It was only in 1964 that the employees of the Forestry Division would begin planting various specimens of trees ranging from, Norway maples and silver maples, pines, spruce, oak, ash and elm trees, for a total of 8,500 that year.⁶⁹

Over the span of two years the Forestry Division had planted over 60,000 on the Mountain and another 15,000 would be added in the next two years to give the Mountain over 105,000 new trees. Regardless of the positive impact Dumont had on Mount Royal Park’s environment, his intervention cannot be seen as flawless. Mount Royal was the subject of an ecological survey in the late 1980s whereby biologist Richard Boivin stated that the vegetation planted in the 1960s was poorly chosen. According to him the intervention of the 1960s had not been respectful of the intrinsic value and fragility of the various milieus found on the Mountain and was reflective of a poor human intervention.⁷⁰ The challenge for future planners

⁶⁵ Paul Leduc, “City Approves Plan To Keep Mountain From Going Bald,” *The Montreal Star*, August 21, 1961.

⁶⁶ Don Newnham, “Mountain Receives ‘Beauty Treatment’,” *The Montreal Star*, August 12, 1961.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Dumont confirmed this after verifying with fellow-members of the International Shade Tree Conference. Ibid.

⁶⁹ “Le reboisement du mont Royal,” *La Presse*, March 21, 1964

⁷⁰ His ecological analyse had proven that “le couvert forestier parcellaire représente une mosaïque de lambeaux de la forêt originale voisinant les plantations, les boisés régénérés naturellement après une intervention humaine

and landscape architects according to him was their ability to satisfy the public, in accordance to the recreational demands, without impeding the natural environment and causing irreversible damages to it. The damages caused by ill-considered types of species planted was the subject of another research which demonstrated that the invasive qualities of the Norway Maple (planted during the Dumont years) would eventually supplant the native sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) from Mount Royal's ecology.⁷¹



Figure 13: *The deciduous trees in the background of this photograph illustrate the abundance of newly planted Norway Maple trees on Mount Royal at this time. Photograph taken on January 26, 1965. VM94-A0178-017.*

et des zones aménagées”; Richard Boivin, “La végétation forestière du Mont-Royal (Montréal-Québec),” (M.Sc. Thesis (Biological Sciences), Université de Montréal, 1989), 81-86.

⁷¹ Marie Lapointe, “Les facteurs écologiques influençant la dynamique d’une espèce exotique envahissante, *Acer platanoides*, et d’un congénère indigène, *A. saccharum*, dans une forêt urbaine du sud du Québec,” (M.Sc. Thesis (Biological Sciences), Université de Montréal, 2009).

4.4 Conclusion

The middle of the 1950s gave way to a call for planning that would regenerate Mount Royal Park. The Mountain's ecological condition had deteriorated and given way to modernist ideals, a contrast to its historical vocation as "an ideal place for outdoor play and relaxation."⁷² Indeed with the evident ecological degradation on the Mountain, coupled with the foreseeable economical costs, the Parks Department called for action on Mount Royal seeking to restore the Park as a lush forest. While congratulations were quickly given to Claude Robillard for the rehabilitation of Mount Royal into a park,⁷³ few have recognized or even celebrated the work of Dumont, MPPA, or the newspapers during this tumultuous event in Montréal's environmental history. What bound these groups, civil servants and private institutions together, was the selling of public property and the shrinking of shared public space in the proposed housing complex on Cedar Avenue. In the end their call could no longer be overlooked or avoided.

What therefore constitutes the interest of this postwar period of mobilization is in fact the apparent determination to reconcile urban development with respect for ecological integrity. This was a significant shift from the developments occurring at the beginning of the decade and reflects different negotiations in the spatial-temporal development and planning projects. In fact, a similar discourse resonated during the 1960-1970s with the anti-modernist attitude of 'new urbanists' such as Jane Jacobs and Lewis Mumford.

Dumont's work would indeed achieve what he, as well as a number of other interest groups, sought; ensuring the perpetuity of the forest, fostering a harmonious development, and modelling it to its social and cultural destination:

Le Montréalais ne s'en doute pas et pourtant il est passé à deux doigts d'une catastrophe ! Si des fonctionnaires municipaux aussi compétents que clairvoyants n'avaient pas mis en œuvre

⁷² Tom Harrison, "Mourns Mountain's Natural Beauty," *The Montreal Star*, September 14, 1961.

⁷³ Jean de Laplante, who worked at the Parks Department during this time, states that Robillard's eight year tenure as the Director of the Parks Department represented a golden era for Montréal's parks and constituted a unique movement in Montréal's history; de Laplante, *Les parcs de Montréal*, 131. Sise also stated that, "nature was mostly allowed to take its course until the appointment of Mr. Robillard as Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. Since then, reforestation has been instituted on a large scale, certain developmental projects have been completed and others planned for execution whenever opportunity seems ripe." MUA, MPPA, Hazen Sise, "The Future of Mount Royal." M.G. 2079, C,1, File 39.

des mesures d'urgence et d'autres à longue échéance, le Montréalais aurait été bien étonné et mortifié de voir le sommet du Mont-Royal se dénuder petit à petit de ses arbres. Puis, un jour, au cœur de la métropole nous aurions eu « le mont chauve » ou « la montagne pelée » !⁷⁴

In the comparable fashion morality and modernity had been used as scientific tools to promote and suggest the redevelopment of Mount Royal Park, so too now, were ideals related to environmental benefits being promoted to stimulate a campaign of replanting on Mount Royal Park. These efforts were not native to Mount Royal Park but were part of competing visions for the future of Montréal and its urban space. On the one hand Montréal wanted to retain its title as Canada's greatest metropolis, while on the other it was undergoing a complete greening campaign as trees were being planted in public spaces, parks and streets alike. For some, the Park's environment had been "saved" from nefarious interests emanating from the modernist ideals of developers and authorities—while others believed it had lost its Victorian appeal, appearing instead as an unwooded, bare, and automobile friendly landscape. As environmental urbanist Gilles Sénécal points out, after the mid-century planning of the area the city was left wondering what the mission of the Mountain in the city was: "il reste à définir le statut du parc, réserve naturelle ou parc urbain, à fonction de conservation ou de récréation."⁷⁵ It would only be a number of decades later during the late 1980s that the issue of Mount Royal Park would regain a preponderant place within public debates as a commission was put together with the mandate to determine the future of Mount Royal within Montréal's environment.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ AUM, FAB, Roger Champoux, "Désastre évité de justesse." P 173, 900.354, D8.1.

⁷⁵ Gilles Sénécal, "Les marches du Mont Royal: faire de nature raison – Le bois Brébeuf à Montréal," *Les Annales de la recherche urbaine*, no. 74 (1997), 77.

⁷⁶ Groupe d'intervention urbaine de Montréal, *La Montagne en question : le projet municipal, la problématique d'aménagement, les usagers, le contexte administratif* (Montréal: Groupe d'intervention urbaine de Montréal, 1988).

Conclusion

How right it was, not only as a practical measure, but commemorative also of Montréal's origins and quality as a city, that a major portion of Mount Royal should have been developed into a park for the perpetual enjoyment of its citizens and their visitors. And how strange it is that, ever since the founding of the park nearly a hundred years ago, these same citizens have had to engage themselves in what has seemed like a perpetual struggle to protect and preserve the essential nature of the park in the face of a wide variety of schemes that, at worst, were plainly destructive and, at best, would have changed its character. Today, we are not only still faced with this struggle, but the time has come to ensure an orderly future enlargement of the park to keep pace with the continuing acceleration of the city's growth and importance.¹

—Hazen Sise, 1961

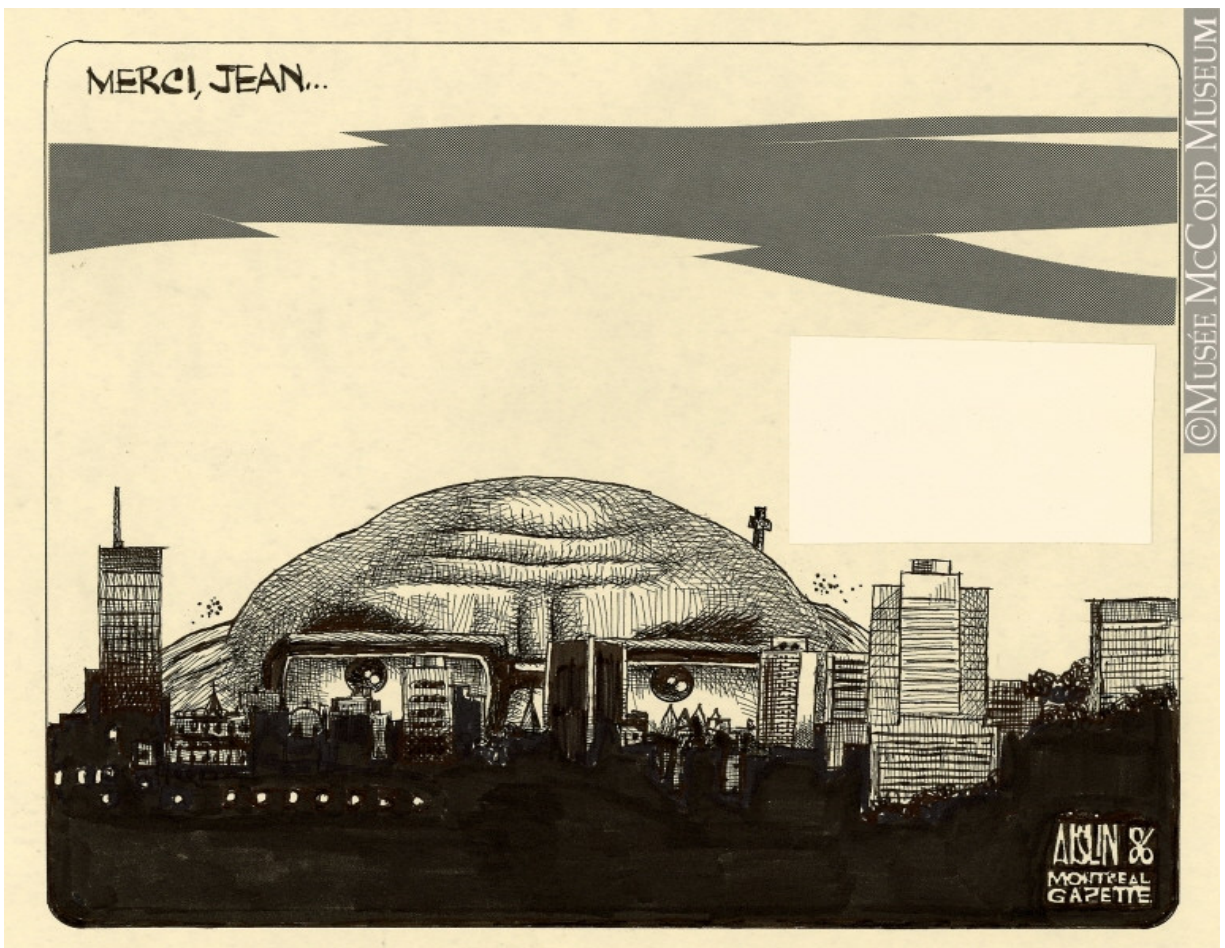


Figure 14: “Merci, Jean”: In 1986 *The Montreal Gazette* cartoonist Aislin (Terry Mosher) drew this effigy of Jean Drapeau in light of his retirement. McCord Museum Archives, M987.244.62.

When Terry Mosher drew the political cartoon above he stated “Mayor Jean Drapeau was the dominant figure in Montreal municipal politics for several decades. During that time,

¹ MUA, MPPA, Sise, “The Future of Mount Royal.” MG 2079 C1, File 39.

we cartoonists had a field day with his eminently caricaturable physiognomy!... I drew this cartoon, comparing his presence in Montreal to that of Mont Royal.”² Though Mosher compared Drapeau’s stature to the emblematic figure that is the Mountain, what ought to have been the central focus of this cartoon was the fact Drapeau’s physiognomy reflected the decisions taken during his time in municipal politics with regards to Mount Royal Park. Indeed, though Mosher had perhaps not realized it, Drapeau’s bald physiognomy directly reflected the bald image and state of the Mountain during the early-Drapeau years.³

Indeed, it is important to see the development of Mount Royal Park as a transformation of the Park into a space that would further the authorities’ agenda. In the immediate postwar period a growing sense of urban acceleration, modernization, and moral values led the authorities to reimagine their city and the public spaces they held authority over. For the growing moralist discourse, a policing of space was needed to ensure that Montréal’s citizens, most importantly impressionable youths, were being inculcated with moral values that aligned with those of the authorities—this particularly regarded issues of gambling, alcohol consumption, prostitution, and sexuality. If their will to inculcate youths was more or less apparent by the late 1940s, it became clearer in the 1950s as programs revolving around park sociability were being developed, thereby ensuring the perpetuation and upholding of moral values in public spaces. Hence, the moral inculcation of citizens was undertaken through a functionalist plan—if a morally sound urban centre was going to be achieved it would be through a modernization of its space. Yet, the reverse would also be true; if Montréal wished to be modern, then it would have to demonstrate its moral purity and capability to withstand vices and moral degradation.

This vacillation between moral and modern was demonstrated on August 26, 1954, the day on which Montréal Executive Committee voted in favour for a transformation in the Park’s landscape – with as of yet no definite plan. As *The Montreal Herald* reported, the Committee discussed the need for a renewed urban plan to take place in Mount Royal Park;

² MMA, Terry Mosher (alias Aislin), <http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/collection/artifacts/M987.244.62>.

³ As one opinion piece pointed out concerning the state of the Mountain, “Moussorgski n’aurait jamais imaginé que sa musique prendrait une telle actualité à des milliers de milles de l’Oural!” This was in reference to Moussorgsky’s fatalist composition, “Night on Bald Mountain,” which reflected the ecological and metaphysical state of Mount Royal Park at that time. AVM, FPDM, July 12, 1959, P118, S4, SS1, D90.

this came after this same newspaper had published a series of articles which brought to light the definitive undesirable characteristics of the Park at night. One of the most insightful segments of this piece was the interview conducted with City Councillor Bertrand who declared: “The Mountain is hardly used at all now by our people. If we want to keep it as a major park, it must be improved...I believe the mountain playground is not fully used now because there are no roads to let people get to the top.”⁴ This statement speaks of a specific crowd of *Others* on the Mountain segregated from what the councillor refers to as *our* people. The road was the initial solution offered to morality problems in the Park. The call for “improvements” made by Councillor Bertrand can therefore be seen as a double process – a removal of the *Other*, through a clearance of the Jungle, simultaneous with a plan to give access to “our people” through the construction of a roadway.

If the municipal authorities sought to modernize space and further exercise their powers, they made it clear that no location was impervious to such accelerated postwar overhauls. Seeing as Mount Royal Park was increasingly associated with insalubrity, both in its physical and moral form, the Police Department sought to extend its power of surveillance through a redevelopment of the Park. Their original focus was to clear the Park of undesirable characters, an issue that was sensationalized largely in the city’s Anglophone newspapers and picked up at city hall by councillors who were themselves preoccupied with the city’s moral state. Indeed, though Francophone newspapers were not at the forefront of the call-to-action, it did not mean that linguistics would obstruct demands for a moral and modern planning of Mount Royal Park. If the undesirable characters were to be eradicated from the Park’s Jungle, where they had established their quarters, a redesign of this park space had to be conceived for the good of all citizens. In its simplistic vision of urban design, the Police Department offered that the Jungle be cleared and better lighted, thus facilitating the Police Department’s work of surveillance.

Parallel to this demand, the Parks Department offered that the Park simply be developed as a whole—for the Park did not reflect what modern urban parks ought to offer in the postwar period, equipped with modern facilities, made for the greater public, and

⁴ “Jungle Raids Stepped Up,” *The Montreal Herald*, August 26, 1954.

accessible by automobile use. The answer to these issues, and to the demands made by the Police Department, would come from a landscape and architecture firm from New York, Clarke and Rapuano. Their *Programme* for Mount Royal Park was positively received at city hall, but distrusted by civic groups who maintained that they held the best interest for Mount Royal Park. Their suspicions were based on the fact that the *Programme* accorded too much value to the development (what they deemed was an overdevelopment of the site) and too little value to the nature and the Park's ecological state. Regardless, the *Programme* would be processed and the development of Mount Royal Park would begin with the addition of lights in the Park, followed by clearing of the Jungle, and the cutting-down of other sick or dead trees. In this sense the upholding of moral values would be intrinsically linked to the domestication of nature and of control over the dynamics (darkness of night and the possibility of concealment in the underbrush) that enabled immoral acts to occur within the Park.

Yet, it was not a concrete plan from the start—in fact its mutability and *ad hoc* nature was demonstrable in the different schemes of the *Programme* that were, or not, realized. The most notable scheme in this regard was the issue of a roadway. In its most grandiloquent form it represented either a shield of national defence against bombs, a highway, or roundabout. These schemes reflected an attempt by the authorities to further their possession and manipulation of the Mountain. Indeed though the Mountain had been a municipal space since its inception as a park in 1876, the schemes were an elaboration of this possession over the natural grad—it was a functionalist approach to the city's environment. In the end, after a series of highly public debates between civic groups and the governing authorities, the Camillien-Houde Roadway would be built over space that had already been designated for transit. The roadway was therefore presented as a modern project that replaced a tramline that had previously been there and subtly modified the environment of the Park. Yet, this modification of the Park represented more than simply a roadway linking the city west to east it was also a form of further surveilling patrons of the Park; this conceptualization of the roadway was articulated by civil servants and municipal officials alike, who deemed to have rendered the Park as a safer public space as the roadway was inaugurated.

Though the Park's most important transformations were indeed accomplished at this point, in 1958 the city further demonstrated its compliance to develop and modernize spaces adjacent to the city's downtown. With the selling of the land belonging to the Children's Memorial Hospital on Cedar Avenue to real-estate developers, the city demonstrated its reluctance to preserve public space and moreover that this public space could be utilized as a source of capital gains. However, this scheme was considered as an inconsiderate encroachment of Mount Royal Park; in fact, civil servants, professionals, and citizens would collaborate and create the Save-the-Mountain Movement. The creation of this Movement spoke to the fact that the city needed to include citizens in its decision-making. Whereas these citizens were either reluctant or suspicious of the municipality's management of park space during the 1950s, the selling of this land was simply unacceptable and a step too far. By asking that the land be preserved and integrated into the current landscape of Mount Royal Park they were enabling a discourse between themselves, authorities, and architects and planners to decide how the environment is built; it was a form of participatory place-making and urbanism. Their demands would in fact result in a policy that would protect the parkland from further encroachment and secure its environment permanently. Moreover, this same environment would be rehabilitated through an unprecedented planting effort.

In the end these decisions had been, as architect Sise decried in the epigraph above, counterintuitive to the Park's "essence and character," which he defined as a "'natural' wooded landscape, subtly modified for human use... a 'romantic' park."⁵ For him the issue of Mount Royal Park was one of a citizens' struggle against the high-hand of the authorities. Many critics of the municipal government's intervention kept their vision synchronized with Olmsted's idea of the urban park, and saw any development as detrimental to the essence of the Park. In this sense nature was constructed differently, ideologically and conceptually during the 1950s, as opposed to the 1880s when the Park was inaugurated—a concept that was held onto by the MPPA, Hazen Sise, and others. Therefore, what truly frightened those who

⁵ MUA, MPPA, Sise, "The Future of Mount Royal." MG 2079 C1, File 39.

opposed any schemes, was the defilement of Mount Royal Park as the “antithesis of the city-grid,” their conceptualization of the Park as a particular *lieu de mémoire*.⁶

Indeed, the essence of the Park was rooted in a Victorian heritage, a heritage that was also seen as a form of high culture. Though these factions were not against development *per se*, what they reviled was the disfigurement of Olmsted’s original conception:

When our association learned of the intention of developing a Master Plan, we applauded the idea as being the sort of sensible procedure we had always advocated. As time went on, it became more and more evident that the Master Plan prepared by Clarke and Rapuano was based on an intensive type of development, including 16 structures of which 14 were buildings. With the access roads and parking lots that would have been required, it is clear that the implementation of the whole of this plan would have destroyed Olmsted’s basic concept of a beautiful, tranquil refuge from the noise and nervous tension of the city.⁷

These contentions should therefore be viewed as a battle between visions of what Mount Royal Park ought to be(come). Whereas a faction wanted to preserve, for itself, the Park as an exclusive site of culture—impervious to modern urban acceleration, the governing body saw the Park space as an undeveloped space. Their intervention would henceforth modernize the facilities and make it further accessible to all. Yet, high browed citizens contested that it was already developed, and though it could be improved, “THE ART ITSELF IS NATURE.”⁸ Seeing the Park as a tranquil place, they viewed it as an object of beauty, untouchable, and mostly as a form of high culture within the city’s landscape. The Superintendent of the Forestry Division, Jean-Joseph Dumont, would vocalize this same view of Mount Royal Park, warning in 1961 that in a few years’ time the Park would be “unserviceable to the culture of Montréal.” The notion of high culture would also be expressed in the citizen’s appraisal of Mount Royal Park, likening it to other great urban parks—Central, Hyde, Bois de Boulogne etc. For them it was imperative that their Mountain Park reflect what Montréal had best to offer in terms of architecture, landscape, and design planning; any modernist modification of the public space could not sustain the vision Olmsted had for Mount Royal, and by extension theirs, and defiled one of Montréal’s most important work of art.

⁶ Pierre Nora established the groundwork of the memory-history field. Memory, as he writes, is constantly on our lips – because it no longer exists. Pierre Nora, “Entre mémoire et histoire. La problématique des lieux,” in *Les Lieux de mémoire. Tome I. La République* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984): XVII-XLII.

⁷ MUA, MPPA, “Future of Mount Royal Park – to The Mayor of Montreal and The Chairman and Members of the Executive Committee,” December 11, 1961. MG 2079 C1, File 6. Emphasis in the original text.

⁸ MUA, MPPA, Arthur L. Gravel, “Foresight planning for Mount Park,” February 1952. M.G. 2079, C,1 – file 33. Emphasis in original text.

While these concepts of the Park were based in its cultural heritage as a forest, others would see its modern vocation in terms of its recreational (Robillard) or functional (Drapeau) usage. These interventions were in fact curating the purpose of the park space, transforming the value and the way people perceive the area and how they connect with it. Dumont on the other hand saw the Mountain as a ecological being, more similar to a city's botanical garden; urban planners and architects could not, as he pointed out, leave the environment in a natural state, but rather attend to its needs in a respectful manner. He also stated in 1961, that the rehabilitation of the Mountain would be apparent within a timeframe that correlates with the year this thesis is published.⁹ Therefore, one may now in fact wander in Mount Royal Park and gaze at the fully-grown and lush forest without ever believing Mount Royal was once labelled Mount Baldy. Indeed, this transformation in urban forestry can be observed in the 1992 report concerning the inventory of trees in Mount Royal Park.¹⁰

Looking forward we may ask for studies to further consider the place of the Mountain in the heart of the city. In the late-1980s early-1990s, Montréal's citizens were asked by the city to reconsider the Mountain's place within the urban fabric. This reconsideration hoped to secure Mount Royal's ecological space, and delineate it as a heritage site:

The planning process undertaken by the City of Montréal reflects a firm resolve to restore Mount Royal Park and ensure its integration into the mountain site and the mountain into the city as a whole... The objective of the current planning process is to restore Mount Royal, a symbol and monument of Montréal and the heart of the city and of its network of "green spaces."¹¹

It was apparent that during these latter debates, as opposed to those occurring during the mid-20th century, City Council was much more sensible to public pressure and participation.¹² As Debarbieux and Marois stated, this opportunity gave way to an exchange between the City Council and citizens to put in practice conceptions of "démocratie participative et de la

⁹ "Remarque importante : Un laps de temps considérable, 50 ans au moins, parfois un siècle et plus, est nécessaire à la reconstitution naturelle d'une forêt... pour autant que l'homme n'y exerce pas son action dévastatrice." AUM, FAB, Dumont, *Rapport relatif à l'état actuel de la végétation du Mont-Royal*, 13-14. Emphasis in the original text.

¹⁰ The report details the impressive transformation from 1940 to 1992 whereby the tree cover was drastically different, especially in terms of mature trees—a testament to the Forestry Division's success in rehabilitating the Park. See annex 3 for an overview of the tree cover and types of species between 1940 and 1992.

¹¹ Ville de Montréal, *Preliminary Plan for the Enhancement of Mount Royal*, (Montréal: Service de l'habitation et du développement urbain, 1990), 7.

¹² Yet, it is important to consider the events that happened beforehand, during the 1950s and 1960s as formative and indicative to the type of relationship the city and its population would engage with Mount Royal and its park.

planification urbaine.”¹³ We must indeed view Mount Royal’s late-20th century history as a collaboration between the public, private, and industrial sectors. To historicize the advent of Mount Royal’s delineation as a natural site in 2005 in the provincial *décret de l’arrondissement historique et naturel du Mont-Royal*,¹⁴ is to consider states of ‘natural’ landscape, conservation, and commemoration; researchers ought to therefore think about what *are* the meanings of these states for Montréal within its ‘global’ context, and how can they be preserved or fostered—and moreover seek to understand what role the environment performs within these conceptions.

The redevelopment of Mount Royal Park through the Morality Cuts and the construction of the Camillien-Houde Roadway in the 1950s are stellar examples, not only demonstrating the administrative will to push modernization, but equally as important, the construction of moral ideals through the systematic and tactical repression of certain moral values. Indeed, beyond the intrinsic qualities of its space and the prestige of its architectural value, the Mountain’s character was reiterated as a site of exclusion resulting from the work performed according to the wills of the elected elites to dispossess Others. As Dagenais states, to dominate the Mountain was also a way to dominate the city from afar.¹⁵ The municipal authorities’ interventions were driven by a set of beliefs on notions of (homo)sexuality, landscape architecture, and urban ecologies and were fashioned by the moralist and modernist discourse. Yet what remains important in this history is the importance of the dialectical relation between the municipal government, civil servants, and citizenry. Though the spheres of ideology were not triangularly clear-cut between these three, ideas concerning the future of Mount Royal Park within a modern urban environment enabled a conversation that helped to elaborate its development. The complexities within this history have not been easily teased-out to reveal a linear process; yet aspects of these complexities can be observed even through an untrained eye as the Park lives to tell the tale, though with visible scars.

¹³ Debarbieux and Marois, “Le mont Royal. Forme naturelle, paysages et territorialités urbaines,” 188.

¹⁴ Ministère de la culture et des communications, *Arrondissement historique et naturel du mont-royal : les valeurs et les patrimoines du mont-royal*, (Direction du patrimoine, 2005).

¹⁵ Dagenais, *Faire et fuir la ville*, 25.

Annex

Programme for the development of Mount Royal Park – Attached and Forming Part of the Agreement Between Clarke and Rapuano and the City of Montreal. Prepared by Gilmore D. Clarke and Michael Rapuano, approved by the Director of Public Works Lucien L’Allier on July 29, 1954.¹

1. Conservation and improvement of the natural beauty of the park.
2. Reforestation and erosion control.
3. Provision of better picnic areas; trails, bridle paths; play areas adjacent to the picnic areas such as field sports, paths, parking areas and other necessary park functions in character with the topographic and other existing features of the park; including design of complete drainage and system for the paths, and including design of water and toilet facilities (comfort stations) for picnic and play areas.
4. Winter sports including skiing, tobogganing, skating, sleigh riding. The skating rinks adjacent to Beaver Lake will be designed by others and located on the Landscape Architects’ drawing.
5. Sports areas east of Park Avenue are to be redesigned, taking into account the construction of the proposed reservoir and the fact that there is a hospital adjacent.
6. A parkway, providing a scenic drive and giving improved access to the park and definitely not a high speed traffic artery will replace the existing trolley lines and will follow the route of the existing trolleys. The parkway, a minor thorough-face, shall present a dignified approach to the park. Access to the Chalet from the parkway should be improved. Provide for parking in a few selected locations. Special consideration should be given to the access for patrons of the restaurant in the Chalet.
7. An amphitheatre to seat 10,000 persons should be a permanent “parklike” structure to replace the existing improvised facilities for outdoor symphony concerts, opera presentations, etc...
8. A concert Hall located in a suitable place in the park and designed to seat about 4,000 and an indoor theatre seating approximately 1,000 should be housed in the same building. These are being studied by others. In addition, an outdoor theatre seating about 1,000 should be located adjacent to the concert Hall an indoor theatre or near Beaver Lake, and should be of simple design. Parking access should be provided to serve these facilities. The Landscape Architects will locate the Concert Hall and indoor theatre in block plan only.
9. Parking facilities throughout the park area shall be provided where necessary, using the rate of 4 persons per car to determine capacity.
10. Comfort Stations, for all park areas where required, shall be provided.
11. One or more bus stations and refreshment stand; shall be designed and located at advantageous points. Three permanent refreshment stands shall be designed and located elsewhere in the park.
12. Design and locate a stable to house approximately 10 horses and necessary appurtenances such as feed storage, saddle rooms, manure pits or disposal facilities,

¹ AVM 107,249 3^{ème} série conseil Rapports et Dossiers.

waiting room and groom's room, and including one indoor riding ring and one outdoor riding ring with jumps and the like.

13. Design and locate a Geological Museum and prepare preliminary drawings and appropriate scale. Program for the Geological Museum will be developed in collaboration with the Director of Parks.
14. Indicate in block form only the Master Plan the restaurant and shelter being developed by others in the vicinity of Beaver Lake.
15. The Chalet dining room is being renovated by others.
16. Provide for the design and location of additional Police Stations.
17. Study the possible use of existing service buildings and the addition of a group of new buildings for the housing of park maintenance equipment and storage and service yard.
18. Make an acquisition study showing possible incorporation of adjoining properties into park lands if found advisable.
19. Make a study for the addition of more tennis courts in the Côte-des-Neiges area.
20. Make a study for a location for a residence if found advisable.

2)

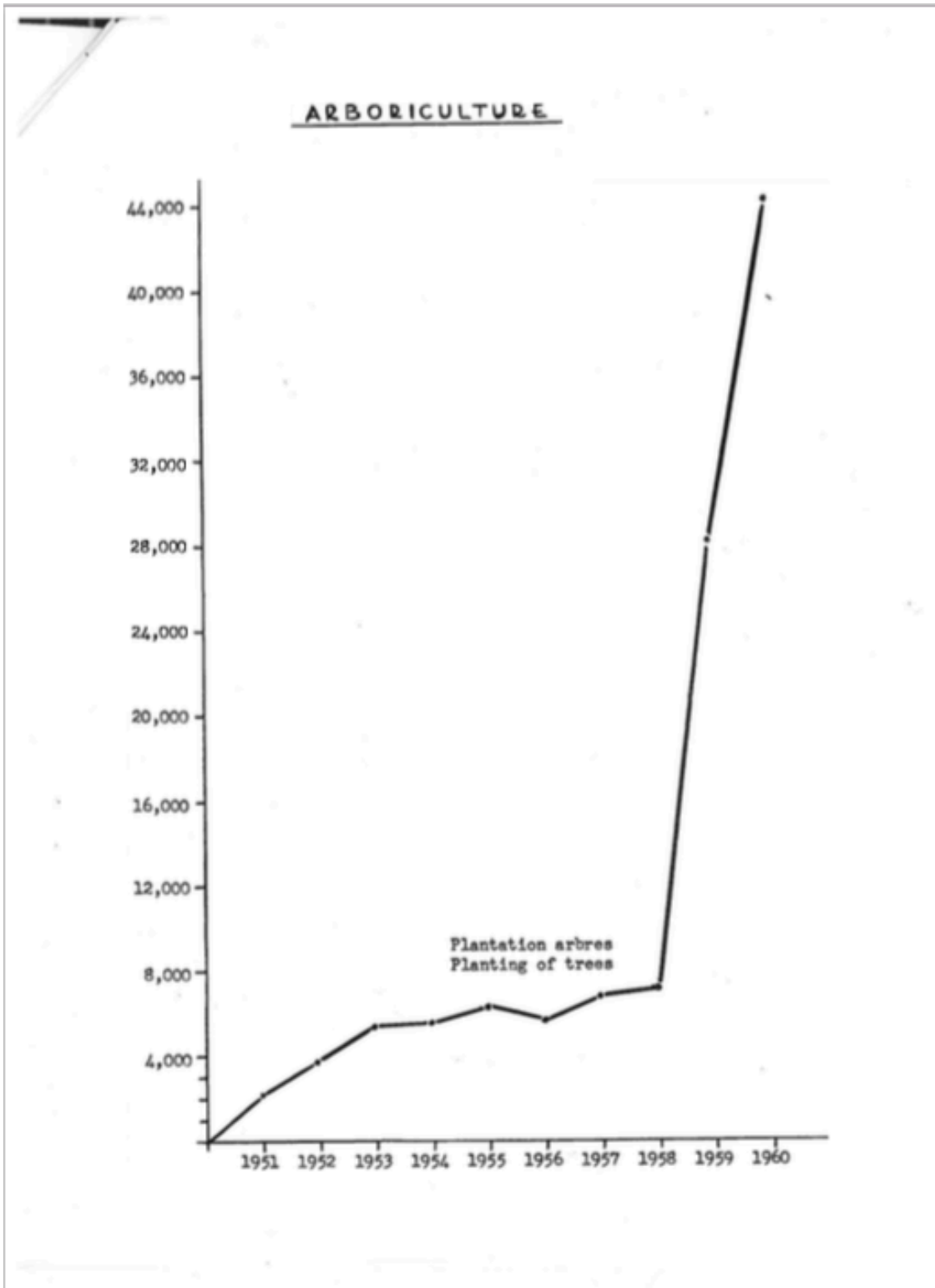


Figure 15: MUA, MPPA "Annual Report 1960," Forestry Division of the Parks Department. MG 2079 C1, File 41.

3)

	1940	1961	1992
	* plus de 12.7 cm		plus de 10 cm
acer platanoïdes		32	4478
acer saccharinum		847	3948
acer saccharum		4608	12051
acer	23758		20477
betula	9809	2234	5854
fraxinus	4863	2266	27295
picea		111	9871
pinus	609	0	2591
populus	5078	309	2327
quercus	12887	4140	10367
sorbus		0	449
tilia	7520	1471	4775
ulmus	4352	1761	2742
autres		1266	19594
TOTAL	80000	19045	106342

Figure 16: Table demonstrating the striking metamorphosis of Mount Royal Park: a periodic evolution from pre to post-transformations. The size of these trees indicates how few mature trees were on the Mountain during the postwar period. Source: Parc du mont-royal: inventaires des arbres, (Service des grands parcs, du verdissement et du mont Royal, 1992).

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