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## "Vivez sans temps morts, jouissez sans entraves:" Language and Identity in the May '68 Student-Worker Action Committees

John Cowles

In May and June of 1968, ten million people, or more than two-thirds of the French workforce precipitated the largest general strike in French history. This unprecedented act of solidarity constituted what has arguably become the most influential mass movement in modern European history, a struggle that comprised all sectors of the economy and nearly all of French society, resulting in the near collapse of the popularly elected government. Sociologists and historians have for forty years attempted to "explain" the essence and character of May '68, and the events have been studied from nearly every ideological perspective. May '68 has even become a battlefield over which current political struggles are waged. During the 2007 presidential election, then Interior Minister Nicholas Sarkozy made May '68 a pillar of his platform, calling on the French people to censure, or "liquidate" its legacy; "The heirs of May '68 have imposed the idea that everything has the same worth, that there is no difference between good and evil, no difference between the true and the false, between the beautiful and the ugly and that the victim counts for less than the delinquent."<sup>[1]</sup> According to Sarkozy, May '68 is a set of abstract ideas rather than a political event, a subversive ethos divorced from the development of alternative social forms or resistance to political and social oppression.<sup>[2]</sup>

The events of May '68 evolved suddenly and unexpectedly from the student disturbances at Nanterre, the new suburban campus of the University of Paris, in March of 1968. Following the closure of the University in late April, a small group of radical students associated with the March 22 Movement relocated to the Sorbonne in the Latin Quarter of Paris, where their activity led to the arrest of around six hundred students and the occupation of the university by police.<sup>[3]</sup> Immediately, violence erupted in the streets between students and the "forces of order," and in the coming days, the Sorbonne, the Odéon Theatre, and the Faculty of Letters and Sciences at Censier were occupied by groups of several thousand students, activists and leftist *groupuscules*.<sup>[4]</sup> In response to dozens of "wildcat" strikes at important manufacturing centers across France, a phenomenon not originally associated at all with the student movement, a general strike was declared on May 13 that included *all* labor organizations. By mid-May more than ten million Frenchmen of every profession ceased working. The country was completely paralyzed. President Charles de Gaulle left for Germany to secure the loyalty of the military, and in dozens of streets and boulevards across Paris, students and workers staged the familiar theater of the barricades. What had begun as an anarcho-socialist student movement at Nanterre and a small wave of uncoordinated factory strikes developed into a nationwide struggle that vanished even faster than it appeared.

The historical vernacular of the workers, students and citizens who labored for a better future has been completely supplanted by the narrative of May as a conciliatory conversation between *gaulliste* and

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*gauchiste*, a reinvention or revitalization of French national culture, and a generational revolt that closely mirrored the rise of an oppositional youth culture in America during the 1960's. The myth of May as a *yé-yé* era cultural revolution concerned with reforming sexual values, school dress codes and birth control and saturated in the language of voyeuristic desire is alienated from the Maoist understanding of "culture" that militants were familiar with in 1968. Indeed, the *gauchiste* principles of "the base shall lead the head" that saturated the political discourse of May has not applied in the development of its popular legacy. This appropriation of May's legacy is so thorough in contemporary French culture that by the fortieth anniversary commemoration in 2008 it is well within reason to claim that the image of a militant, divisive and violent May '68 no longer exists in French cultural memory. The narrative of common people speaking, writing or acting in tandem with and in response to particular historical conditions has receded from view, replaced by the foreign narrative of an incongruous "individualism" and liberal humanism. During the 1980's, these themes became irrevocably attributed to the cultural legacy of the events, leading to the foundation of a privileged national fiction that is at once therapeutic and conciliatory, arranged so that the past is enlisted to help make sense of the present. In this sanitized May '68, the deaths of workers at the hand of the CRS (French national police), police brutality in the Latin Quarter, the intimate personal and working relationships between militants of all classes, the intense hatred, mistrust and betrayal between militant students, workers and the state police force that culminated in the "night of the barricades," or the exhilarating sensation of rapid change experienced by those participants who believed they stood at the precipice of a new world, vanishes before the specter of a mythologized "French" movement, reflecting precisely the values and perspectives of contemporary French society.

The work of the historian, however, is not so much to lay waste to the representations, or "afterlives" of May, but to respond to them with new myths gleaned from more direct sources, the unanalyzed and unmediated "voices from below" that reflect the desires and objectives of militants during the movement. It is very much impossible to speak of a "student movement" as a group, space, or time characterized by a coherent revolutionary objective or ideology. From the perspective of social history, the creation of communal myths and the manipulation of language is tied to the reinforcing of local identities. Therefore, the creation of a new social identity, the evolution of a discursive space that constitutes a merging of two classes, contradicts many of the key assumptions of the practice of history. Scholars have missed the historical significance of May '68 entirely; in their search for "action" and "accomplishment" in the language of the student movement, they neglect to study the character of the language itself, which implicitly contains all of the hopes, desires and objectives of the movement. The new social relationships that resulted from the fluid cross-class membership in action committees did not have the time to stabilize and become sufficiently formal as to become visible to the historian, who is trained to search for physical manifestations of change. The violence of the barricades and the divisiveness of the General Strike confirm May as a true "social movement" by reference to the demands of social history as a discipline. However, I contend that May '68 was largely a discursive movement, an argument predicated on the assumption shared by the student militants of the action committees that language served as the fundamental signifier of social and political identity. The most important development of the student movement was the transformational reevaluation of communal identity that showed at once a remarkable reflexivity of thought as well as a profound desire to escape and destroy the class discourse and political authority inherent in the language and culture of the French bourgeoisie. The political pamphlets and tracts published by the student-worker action committees of Censier reflect a desire to destroy received political and social signifiers of identity by negating all discursive evidence of power.<sup>[5]</sup> By examining the political language of the Student-Worker Action Committees at Censier it is possible to reconstruct the very particular concept of identity produced by

the interaction of workers and students, the evolution of a consciously inclusive discursive code that afforded students and workers of diverse social classes the necessary space to form novel and productive social relationships.

The celebrated flowery rhetoric of May '68 was indeed an austere anti-rhetoric; the initiatives of the action committees were strikingly minimalistic, direct and intimately personal. When viewed in the context of French literary culture, the extreme simplicity and directedness of the language in the action committee tracts communicates as least as much about the true goals and desires of the student militants as the barricades, occupied lecture halls and colorful slogans. The students who opened Censier to striking workers acknowledged as a source of power their rejection of speech and the social relations tied up in it (formal speech was closely related to class and social rank in the 1960's French society).<sup>[6]</sup> Discursive means of expression, the privileged domain of students as "functionaries of the word trade" corresponded precisely to student's refusal to produce "discourse about discourse," or in short, to hold a dialogue with power, coded in bourgeois language, which must necessarily alienate the working class. The students refused to speak as students, a conscious negation of a classed identity that "is tantamount to going on a strike: the blissful silence of the factory when the workers shut down their machines or the hissing and booing of the workers at Billancourt responding to the terms of the Grenelle negotiations."<sup>[7]</sup> Language became the praxis of the movement because the class and function-specific codes implicit in discursive communication were viewed as the most fundamental signifier of social identity. Thus, in consciously rejecting the everyday manifestations of their literary heritage in written discourse, the students attempted to collapse their local interests into those of common affairs, to merge their political identity with that of the largest possible group. The conscious suppression of class-coded discourse created the necessary space for transparent communication to develop, which immediately and necessarily precipitated a temporary collapse of profession, class and specialized political interests among action committee participants. It is indeed through language that we uncover the central revolutionary praxis of the movement.

Unlike the many revolutionary uprisings in Paris during the nineteenth century, the events of May 1968 involved the full diversity of French society. Indeed, it is the very decentralized and universal coordination of the movement across class and economic function that drives both the impulse in contemporary France to relive the movement, as well as feeds the hunger to suppress its continuing hold on the imagination. The desire to know intimately, to comprehend completely May '68, whether to appreciate the "impossibility" of the movement, or to actively liquidate its memory through an explanation and formulization of its structure and culture, has lent to contemporary French culture a rich arsenal of universally-recognized symbols and iconic representations that rank only with the tricolor and guillotine in their prominence as signifiers of French national identity. Indeed, one could say that in the dozens of picture-books of street graffiti, protest posters and photographs published every year, France has managed to assimilate May '68 from a profoundly radical movement to a bold affirmation of a unified and vibrant national culture. For example, the iconic *bleue-blanc-rouge* artwork on the cover of a recent work on May '68, *Paroles de mai*, seems to yell, "Today, we are all still Frenchmen."

Consequently, many of the militants, especially the leaders of the student movement, have attempted to shift the discourse of May '68 scholarship by leveraging their historical importance in an attempt to situate the events within a grand teleological narrative, one that closely mirrors the present political and ideological orientations of the militants and of French society in general. It is important to take into consideration that May '68 must be properly historicized to gain a more profound understanding of what happened. With that

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said, May '68 cannot be studied entirely separate from its subsequent representations, as the only means to properly gage the value of any historical event is to measure the influence it has exerted on a society. For example, many scholars agree that the events of May '68, in the most objective sense, were far less monumental quantitatively (number of combatants and activists, amount of documented violence, amount of tension between different classes and social groups, etc) than many other revolutionary movement in French history, but such a study does not begin to provide an explanation for the extremely drastic reaction of the right in France, the victory of Pompidou, the near complete dissolution of the French left, the tens of thousands of pages of research written on every aspect of the events, as well as its massive cultural legacy (a legacy that continues to exert a tremendous influence on the trajectory of political identity and discourse in contemporary France). It is futile to try to "explain" May '68, just as the *Parti Communiste Français* and the French right attempted during and after the student and worker revolts. The very nature of the "*pensée de Mai*," if it is even fair to speak in such general terms, sought to deconstruct the objective materialism of the far right and far left, to shift the political and intellectual discourse of France so radically as to destabilize the very "social necessity" of functionalist "reality" in modern industrial, neo-capitalist society. Not surprisingly, many scholars have chosen to examine the student revolt in exclusion from the workers movement, assuming the two groups cannot have shared interests and values, thus reconstituting in their scholarship the discourse of the "necessity of specialization" that May protestors so passionately tried to look beyond.

In general terms, there are two divergent views of interpreting the trajectory of May '68 events. Besides those scholars who believe that May '68 can be explained objectively versus scholars who contend that the cultural afterlives of the event are far more important, there exists a deeper division that is rooted in the very foundation of late 20<sup>th</sup> century intellectual inquiry; the conflict between the humanist and the social science paradigms. At the heart of the discourse of the French New Left lies the ideal of humanism, the Cartesian idea that man always has the choice to change his internal world of consciousness, and thus by extension, his physical or political reality. This explains the efforts among "existentialised" socialists, anarcho-syndicalists, libertarians and even Marxists like Henri Lefebvre, Cornelius Castoriadis, Antonio Gramsci and Jean-Paul Sartre to interpret society as an imaginary institution (the idea being that if workers ceased to believe in bourgeois values, society would destabilize and the possibility of a system founded on new values could be created). To these thinkers, who I believe to be the most influential and reflective of *la pensée '68*, social structures exist in a literary capacity; being imaginary, men can become conscious of their alienation and "change the world from its base," an idea that relies heavily on the uniquely French concept of the thinking and knowing, self-conscious subject ("*Je pense, donc je suis*"). Many scholars, when assessing the success or failure of May '68, assume the "social sciences approach" to analyzing historical phenomena, pioneered in France by Lévi-Strauss and brought to its culmination under Michel Foucault. Foucault stated that he did not seriously believe in the power and the possibility of revolution, as "social structures make men" and furnish them social and political essences, just as Roland Barthes famously announced the death of the author (language uses men for its purpose). According to Foucault, as well as such influential critics of May '68 as Luc Ferry and Alain Renault, revolutions merely change the appearance of the power relations within a society, but the structures and networks of power will be reconstituted across time, due to the necessity of organizing people toward the direction of a goal.<sup>[8]</sup> The moral here is that the students and workers cannot erase bourgeois social values and gain freedom as they cannot possibly be conscious of all those values, and the hidden webs of power that control and direct the formation of social essences.

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A militant student associated with the Student Worker Action Committee suggested during the occupation of Censier that "the work of the revolutionary is not to *define* the conditions that may lead to an impossible revolution, but to *create* the conditions that lead to a possible revolution."<sup>[9]</sup> Together, the students and the workers questioned if "the objective conditions" of the working class, such as political apathy and dependence on the bureaucratic classes to realize the reform, were based on truths. At Censier, the workers came in large numbers under their own accord, despite the union lockout of students from occupied factories. By the third week of May, when the students of Censier decided to occupy the *faculté*, following the example of the workers of Rédon and Caen, young non-unionized workers began attending evening meetings of the Censier Action Committee, where they exerted a great influence on moving the militant students away from "soapbox activism."<sup>[10]</sup> Workers were searching for opportunities to participate in the experimental social project, although at the Sorbonne, the only presence of the workers was in the political discourse of students, who genuinely believed the "old university" was a microcosm of the power relations, functionalism, specialization and excessive bureaucracy visible in the larger society. At the Sorbonne, the very few workers who joined the occupation and participated in "verbal delirium" had previously been politicized and toughened by street violence, or had a history of militant activity, and they were marched in front of the general assembly as prizes in an effort on the part of the students to "universalize" their struggle.<sup>[11]</sup> At Censier, the workers were attracted by the open presses, the debate halls open during all hours, a willing audience, as well as the available workforce to establish liaisons and order the necessary supplies for the printing and distribution of leaflets. This was also an open space, where the factory workers did not have to worry about constant supervision, inexplicable limits on their behavior and movement, or the presence of superiors and supervisors.<sup>[12]</sup>

The enigmatic events of May '68 occurred alongside and were nourished by a reevaluation of the "modern man." This has led to the negative effect of many scholars attempting to identify May '68 as a "cultural revolution," or a "generational revolt" that is free of any meaningful extension into social, political and economic history. Indeed, the political tracts issued from Censier from the beginning of the occupation on the evening of May 6 show a clear escalation of rhetoric; the conscious efforts to maintain a state of "spontaneity" acted to "blow the lid" off the internal discourse of the movement.<sup>[13]</sup> The revolutionary program of the action committees released a "libidinal charge" whose relation to specific social and political goals became increasingly ambiguous and uneasy as the occupation movement evolved. The specific political demands expressed on the morning of May 10, namely the removal of CRS forces from the Latin quarter and the release of student prisoners, were eventually discarded as the occupiers of Censier quickly adopted a more radical, theoretical, and less confrontational vocabulary in which the oppositional "Other" of the state, represented by President Charles de Gaulle, receded from view. On May 16, militant students of the Student-Worker Action Committee of Censier entered a Renault factory on strike in the suburb of Billancourt and spoke with workers.<sup>[14]</sup> That evening, a tract was written and distributed to workers at occupied factories throughout the Paris suburbs, which presented in clear and direct language the students' reasoning:

We affirm that:

1. We have assumed power; we refuse to accept orders from above.
2. We refuse the education they impose on us, as we refuse to become your future patrons and exploiters.

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3. The Sorbonne is now open to workers, together we will make all decisions regarding action.

4. We want the presence of workers here (Sorbonne), and if they ask we will organize classes (seminars) on the questions that interest them... (we will offer) secondary school instruction in factories during the evening. [15]

Here the agenda of the movement is described in a manner that preserves the essence and social function of all participants involved. Students, as the inheritors of the French cultural heritage, offer knowledge to uneducated, passive workers who they believed would benefit from their assistance and intervention. This extension of received social function into the discourse is not the most interesting element of the tract and should not be altogether surprising considering the early date of its publication. The student's understanding of education and specialized training as a function of power indicates a profound self-consciousness that constituted the beginning of a radical reinterpretation of the students' identity. In another document dated May 16 (presumably the same group), the language intensifies:

#### OF THESE THINGS UNITE US

Under the current university regime, the students are being groomed to become the cops (*cadres flics*) of your factories. We must prevent the students from becoming the oppressors of workers. From now on, they must refuse to play this role.

Now, it is *indispensable* that students and workers come into contact with one another to elaborate common objectives.

Workers, students are coming to your factories and are in your neighborhoods.

Workers, the universities are open to you. *Inform yourselves!* [16]

We are suddenly presented with a startling sense of urgency that gives the impression that the students were no longer concerned with leveraging their social value to achieve class solidarity. Student militants became more critical of their own social role, which led to a crisis in which they began to understand that class solidarity would never be possible without a reevaluation of themselves. Choosing the easy way out, the students attempted to negate, or deny themselves an identity. Another document dated May 18 continues the theme:

#### THE SORBONNE FOR THE WORKERS

...It is necessary to go to the working class, not to give him lessons, but to explain to him the experience of our struggle, (to convince him) of our will to reverse (bring down) the regime, and also to share the concrete experience of exploitation.

The development of the workers struggle will cause power to tremble, as his (the worker's) oppression is much stronger.



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...Those who only attempt to profit from the situation to strengthen their own group deceive themselves, as we refuse their sectarian quarrels and their opportunist parliamentarianism.[\[17\]](#)

In only two days, the students already began to recede from their own discourse as they first abandoned the symbolism of their status, before finally denying their own function as guardians of culture. Here, it becomes apparent that, as Marx argued, the paradox of revolutionary change is that it provides oppressed peoples with the opportunity to construct an identity for themselves, but that without some such identity already in place (such as the worker's identity as an oppressed and faceless mass) that process could never be initiated. Traditional Marxist theory tells us that the oppressed already know who they are; the problem arises in that the "bourgeois oppressor" will not listen. However, in this case the student movement, the oppressor identified himself, and fearing alienation, attempted to merge with the colonized to escape alienation.[\[18\]](#) Thus, members of the committee explored, questioned, and attempted to destroy the received distinctions between worker, artist, student, manager and professor in an attempt to deconstruct social and political structures by reappropriating the foundational assumptions of human nature. May '68 was characterized by a sustained displacement of the political onto peripheral areas of everyday life, such as shifts in the cadence and objective of work and the intentional politicization of previously neutral spaces and traditional forms of communication. In effect, at the heart of the movement was a transgressive reconfiguration of identity made possible through radical transformations of the social and cultural institutions of everyday life. The political propaganda of student and worker militants shows a heightened awareness and profound critique of problems of housing, labor, management, sexuality, leisure and family life.

Henri Lefebvre, an influential French sociologist, argued that every society produces its own unique space, an immutable extension of the ideological and cultural spheres of reality into the organization of daily existence. A complex social construction, based on cultural values and the "social production of meaning," space cannot be sufficiently analyzed as an agglomeration of people and things in physical space, but rather the reflection of assumed values, ideologies, and epistemologies in the construction of the ordinary lives of human beings; the extension of social ideology into even the most banal and unprivileged components of quotidian existence, or the ideological rationale behind the physical and temporal organization of the everyday world.[\[19\]](#) Thus, space is necessarily open to critique as a contingent social institution, especially if one takes Lefebvre at his word, in that the production of space is the hinge around which social systems (such as capitalism or socialism) are able to reproduce themselves.

Historians have long ignored or minimized spatial history, often relinquishing it to the unstable world of perception, sensation and myth, the territory of the isolated poet or voyant. By examining the social character of space, historians can extrapolate the social relations implied and dissimulated in a time and place, thus allowing for a penetrating perspective into the meanings and implications of everyday life.[\[20\]](#) However, the structural and hierarchical power oftentimes visible in space does not always determine the conditions of daily life, particularly during times of crisis and rapid change. Sometimes the tide reverses and structure is eroded to the point of reversal by sudden shifts in the organization of daily life, which not only problematizes the vast majority of scholarship on the structure of the student movement, but calls into question some of the foundational assumptions upon which political and social historians have constructed their definition of modernity.



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The dissolution of spatial boundaries and the marriage of intellectual space (subjective and personal) with the external, ordered world of daily existence (material, physical space) during May '68 was tied to a specific agenda of action with overt political goals. The shift in the method and venue of artistic expression during the student movement confirms a conscious attempt to reappropriate individual and group identity through an active recoding of urban space. The preoccupation of so many scholars with the cultural legacy of "street art" is well founded and easily explained: a mass activity, street art democratized and made public (hence political) the private world of self-expression (readily fitting the label of "postmodern art," which is itself a genre with its own formulaic form and narrative of development). Here, the association of art and the language it employs with individual, professional and bourgeois thought is, at least, symbolically negated.

The walls of the Latin Quarter are the depository of a new rationality, no longer confined to books, but democratically displayed at street level and made available to all. The trivial and the profound, the traditional and the esoteric, rub shoulders in this new fraternity, rapidly breaking down the rigid barriers and compartments in people's minds.[\[21\]](#)

In the endless anthologization of the particularly colorful May '68 street slogans, we too easily lose sight of the intentionality and the overtly political discourse embodied in the "art." Instead of analyzing the language in juxtaposition to previous forms of lyrical poetry, historians must unmask the apparent romanticism of the slogans to explore the changing spatial configurations and new social relationships that explain why the slogan ended up scrawled on a public wall to begin with. Most of the famed slogans themselves were not the ludic linguistic jests that the anthologizers of May's legacy would have us believe, but were demonstrative, denotative, straightforward and orthodox, comprising clear and readily intelligible demands of power: "*Libérez nos camarades,*" "*À bas l'état policier*" "*Travailleurs, étudiants soldaires*" "*Vive les conseils ouvriers.*"[\[22\]](#) The strategic location of the expression on the street subverts a critique of the art itself in its importance as an event in the narrative of developing artistic movements. In fact, the radical displacement of expression onto the public space of the street corner necessitates an abandoning of art's content as individual, organic and intentional:

For everywhere there is a profusion of pasted up posters and journals ... It is difficult to read them, so covered are they with critical comments. On a hoarding, I see a large advertisement for a new brand of cheese; a child biting into an enormous sandwich. "*C'est bon le fromage 'so-and-so'*" runs the patter. Someone has covered the last few words with red paint. The poster reads "*C'est bon la Revolution.*" People pass by, look, and smile.[\[23\]](#)

Here the boundaries of private and public space, indeed private and public property, collide to produce a hybrid space that, through the reappropriation of individual expression as spontaneous and anonymous (and therefore communal), already indicated a profound shift in the relations between individuals. In the context of urban space, the slogans represented a very profound and political rebellion, a demand for freedom and an early effort to construct an "emancipatory dynamic" that could break up the exclusionary nature of public space and private property (the perceived "engine of history").

On the evening of Saturday, May 11, only one day after the catastrophic "night of the barricades" in the Latin Quarter, Prime Minister George Pompidou announced that the police would be withdrawn from the Sorbonne, and that the faculties would re-open on Monday, May 13. For many of the student militants,

Pompidou's "surrender" was proof that direct action worked. Numerous concessions and reforms to the education system had been secured not through parliamentary means, but through the exertion of violent force.<sup>[24]</sup> Early on Monday morning the CRS guarding the entrance to the Sorbonne were withdrawn. Immediately, groups totaling a few thousand students moved in. By the early afternoon, the occupation was complete; every *tricolore* was promptly hauled down, every one of the ancient lecture halls occupied.

The interior courts of the Sorbonne became dedicated exclusively to political discussion. Literature stalls organized by all manner of leftist *groupuscules* appeared along the inner perimeter, offering every kind of literature ranging from leaflets and pamphlets by anarchists, Stalinists, Maoists, Trotskyists, the PSU and innumerable other groups: "Everywhere there were groups of ten or twenty people, in heated discussion, people talking about the barricades, about the CRS, about their own experiences, but also about the commune of 1871, about 1905 and 1917, about the Italian left in 1921 and about France in 1936." As the days went by, another kind of invasion took place, the infiltration of the Sorbonne by the "cynical and the unbelieving, or more charitably, by those who 'had only come to see.'"<sup>[25]</sup> Soon, the vast number of journalists and passers-by threatened to paralyze the occupation movement before it even had a chance to organize itself. Thus within the first week of the occupation, much of the serious work (almost exclusively the work directed toward the working class) was relocated to the remote Faculty of Letters at Censier, which had been occupied a full week before the Sorbonne.

The *Centre Censier* (the new Paris University Faculty of Letters) was an enormous steel, concrete and glass building situated at the south-east corner of the Latin Quarter. Due in part to its location, the occupation of Censier attracted far less attention than did that of the Sorbonne, though its role was central to the functioning of the student movement: "While the Sorbonne was the shop window of revolutionary Paris, with art that that implies in terms of garish display, Censier was its dynamo, the place where things really got done."<sup>[26]</sup> While assemblies and committees argued at the occupied Sorbonne, groups of Censier militants handed out leaflets at factory gates or in the working-class suburbs; leaflets that had to be drafted, typed, duplicated, and the distribution of which had to be carefully organized. Soon after Censier had been occupied, a group of activists commandeered a large portion of the third floor. This space was intended to be the headquarters of a proposed "student-worker action committee." The highly decentralized body was to establish links with groups of workers wherever they lived or worked; to educate themselves in the lives of the working class, as well as to raise consciousness of the potential of a real link between the student movement and the general strike (which was just developing on the 13<sup>th</sup>, as the Sorbonne as occupied).<sup>[27]</sup> Contact having been made, workers and students cooperated in the joint drafting of leaflets, which discussed the immediate problems of particular groups of workers. A leaflet would then be jointly distributed by workers and students, outside the on-strike factory or office to which it directly referred; in some instances the distribution was undertaken by students alone, in others hardly a single student assistant was needed. University duplicators were commandeered from the Sorbonne and the offices of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Stocks of paper and ink were obtained from various sources and by whatever means were possible. Leaflets began to pour out of the center by the tens of thousands as links were established with one group of striking workers after another. On the first day of the occupation alone, workers at Renault, Citroen, Air France, Boussac, the *Nouvelles Messageries de Presse*, Rhone-Poulenc and the RATP (*Paris Métro*) were contacted, and documents were immediately prepared for distribution.<sup>[28]</sup>

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To the Censier militants, a rapid and autonomous development of the working class struggle was needed to prevent the government from arranging compromises with individual factions of the movement. Elected strike committees were set up, which linked union and non-union members so that fundamental decisions regarding work action remained in the hands of the rank and file and not the CGT and other political unions. Worker's Defense Committees were organized to defend pickets from police intimidation, and through the student-worker action committees, a constant dialogue was fostered with the revolutionary students with the goal of restoring to the working class its own traditions of direct democracy and its own aspirations of self-management (*auto-gestion*).<sup>[29]</sup> Until the very end of May, the various Trotskyist and Maoist groupuscules at the Sorbonne remained in the dark about what was developing at the *Centre Censier*. Instead, they spent their time in public debates in the grand lecture halls, discussing more than anything which faction had the most revolutionary potential (hence leaflets from the Sorbonne were mostly abstract and ideological). Though the majority of the Censier militants had been involved in groupuscule activity, the presence of workers very early in the occupation changed dramatically their views of political action. The Censier student-worker action committee leaflets communicate a need for a "moderately structured" revolutionary movement, though the construction of an ideological struggle was clearly not an immediate concern.<sup>[30]</sup>

Every evening at the *Centre Censier*, the student-worker action committees reported back to an *Assemblée Générale* devoted exclusively to discussing strategies to best infiltrate working-class spaces. The reaction to each distribution of leaflets was assessed, and the content of future leaflets discussed with students and workers in attendance. These discussions would usually be led by the worker "contact" of a particular factory, who would describe the impact of the leaflet on his colleagues. The leaflets were usually very short, never more than two or three hundred words. Most began with a clear enumeration of worker's grievances, sometimes merely describing their conditions of work. They ended by inviting workers to Censier or the "liberated" Sorbonne. As a general characteristic, most leaflets contained one or two key clear political points or critiques of power. The response was instantaneous, and resulted very rapidly in the separation of Censier from the Sorbonne as functional spaces. Increasing numbers of workers, mostly young and non-unionized, visited the committee and assembly meetings to draft leaflets with the students.<sup>[31]</sup> One student witness to the occupation of Censier describes the worker's reception of the jointly-authored leaflets:

Every evening we heard of the response: "The blokes think it's tremendous. It's just what they are thinking. The union officials never talk like this." "The blokes liked the leaflet. They are skeptical about the 12%. They say prices will go up and that we'll lose it all in a few months. Some say let's push all together now and take on the lot," "The leaflet certainly started the lads talking. They've never had so much to say. The [union] officials had to wait their turn to speak..."

I vividly remember a young printing worker who said one night that these meetings were the most exciting thing that had ever happened to him. All his life he had dreamed of meeting people who thought and spoke like this. But every time he thought he had met one, all they were interested in was what they could get out of him. This was the first time he had been offered disinterested help.<sup>[32]</sup>

Though the Censier students and workers were critical of ideology, the leaflets were overtly political, reflecting a profound reevaluation of what constituted political action:

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During the whole of my short stay in France I saw nothing more intensely and relevantly political ... than the sustained campaign emanating from Censier, a campaign for constant control of the struggle from below, for self-defense, for workers' management of production, for popularizing the concept of workers' councils ... of organized self-activity, and of collective self-reliance.

Over 90% of the students there are of petty bourgeois or bourgeois backgrounds. Yet such is their rejection of the society that nurtured them that they were working duplicators 24 hours a day ... This kind of activity had transformed these students and had contributed to transforming the environment around them. They were simultaneously disrupting the social structure and having the time of their lives. [33]

The presence of workers was the essential element that precipitated the formation of a new social form and configuration of space at the *Centre Censier*. The organization of the student-worker action committees reflected a Commune-inspired society organized from the base, the space of the center defined by the social production therein, the successful functioning of cross-class cooperation and activism.

Of prime importance to the movement was the realization among militants that the dominant social and political power structures divide and appropriate space. Central Paris, the political heart of France and the seat of the French cultural heritage, was essentially closed off to workers. In addition, the strong paternalism of the de Gaulle presidency acted to limit political participation even among the Parisian bourgeoisie. A very clear characteristic of the student movement was the breakdown of spatial hierarchy, which followed the establishment of spaces of political deliberation and decision making that were transparent to everyone and widely publicized from within the decision making bodies. All agendas, minutes and discussions regarding internal organization of the action committees were published and distributed immediately, resulting in a spontaneous temporality in which student and worker militants ceased to be passively informed of their own history, instead sharing the experience of active participation in directing the development of the movement. Information disseminated from the action committees was complete and whole, and workers received the same communiqués as students, professors and white-collar professionals who sympathized with or contributed to the occupations.

The most widely-recognized symbols of the student movement, and probably the cultural relics of May 1968 that are instantly acknowledged by the Western public, are the graffiti slogans that were spontaneously painted on the walls throughout the Latin Quarter during the occupations of the Sorbonne and Odéon Theatre. These short and simple phrases have assumed such a vast cultural afterlife that it has become impossible today for a publisher to sell a book about May 1968 without branding the cover with a photo of Situationist graffiti. Many of the phrases speak of freedom, happiness, work, power, violence, oppression, even love, sexual pleasure, abolition of work, the end of class society, and solidarity with the striking workers. However, the street graffiti, like much of the literature produced during the student movement, reflects a rebellion within the boundaries of French bourgeois culture. References to French men of letters such as Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud and Victor Hugo mix freely with phrases that originate in Situationist, Maoist or traditional Marxist philosophy. Themes of decadence, eroticism, existential freedom, exoticism, solitude and intimacy reflect the bourgeois critique of modern urban space founded by Baudelaire in his *Paris Spleen*, successfully realizing the long sought-after politicization of art by placing it in the street, the most unprivileged and public of spaces, where it became an anonymous, democratized, and semi-permanent fixture of daily life.[34]

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Baudelaire's critique of modernity hinged on his principle of *épatage*, or shocking of the bourgeoisie through the questioning of received values and morality, which was to be accomplished by inventing a new subject that was more at liberty, less alienated from himself and those around him, and living constantly in-the-world, determined in his actions by nothing other than his desire and the spontaneous sensuality of life. The revolutionary potential of transgressing popular morality is a common theme: "Those who speak of revolution and the class struggle without reflecting explicitly on daily life, without understanding that there is something subversive in love, and something positive in the refusal of constraints, they are already dead."<sup>[35]</sup> Political and social engagement is tied to love and implicit sensuality: "The more that I make love, the more I want to make revolution; the more I make revolution, the more I want to make love." Imagination, possibility and promise permeates the student's language: "Power to the imagination," "Be realistic, demand the impossible."<sup>[36]</sup> Much of the graffiti reflected the tradition of the late nineteenth-century Symbolist poets, emphasizing the visionary, the escape from an irrelevant and unfulfilling reality by retreating to the fantastical: "Grammar is a mandarine," "Never Work!" "Damn happiness, live!" "Eat your professors," "Professors, you are ageing us," "The barricade closes the street but opens the way," "I am in the *pavés*"<sup>[37]</sup>.

The famed graffiti of the Latin Quarter, along with the iconic posters created by students at the occupied Ecole des Beaux-Arts in support of the movement, marked an important change in the use of the French language in the context of evolving forms of postmodern art, and can be seen as a parallel development to the literary revolution of the *nouveau roman* movement. However, the entire preceding analysis of the graffiti, slogans, and popular posters is proof that much of the language produced by the student movement, though acknowledging the importance of the working class struggle in precipitating revolutionary change, was produced by bourgeois students and directed primarily at bourgeois students. Though certainly radical within the context of post-war French political culture, the language of the student *enragés* is littered with rich allusions to the French cultural tradition, from the Dada movement, to Lefebvre's theories of urban space, to the Marxist concept of alienation. Some of the most widely-distributed propaganda, much from the various Situationist *groupuscules* of the Sorbonne, proclaimed poetry as the privileged starting point of the ideal revolutionary agenda: "It is not sufficient to place poetry in the service of the revolution, but to place the revolution in the service of poetry."<sup>[38]</sup> For many student *enragés*, the objective of transforming everyday life through the inversion and reconquering of the self through personal expression was realized. However, this proposed point of departure necessarily excluded the working class which lacked not only an authentic poetic voice, but also a cultural understanding of the self as contingent and open to possibility and "otherness." Thus, most of the writings of the *enragés* must be treated as a code produced and destined for consumption within the community of young, educated Parisian men; a specialized system of political language that evolved in tandem with and in response to the escalation of violence in the Latin Quarter, and one that reflects the implicit extension of preexisting social and political identities into the language of the student movement, and by extension its very structure and function.

The influence of the slogans in contemporary characterizations of May 1968 is so pervasive that the language, imagery, as well as philosophical and cultural references have been imposed on parts of the movement that were not fully involved with or were exempt from the student's political discourse. The common assumption among scholars that the student movement was somehow characteristic of May '68 in its entirety has colored the works of many historians and sociologists, including Alain Tourain, Michael Seidman, Daniel Singer and Raymond Aron, who depict the striking workers as reacting opportunistically to

the university occupations at Nanterre and the Sorbonne.<sup>[39]</sup> Not only is this position unsupported by primary sources from the student movement itself (notably the March 22 Movement, which was consciously modeled after the "wildcat" factory strikes of early 1968), but it threatens to distort the story of the evolution of the movement, rendering the worker as the passive, reactionary object of the narrative instead of the perpetual subject of the student's political language.

The students of the 1960's were trained in the French cultural heritage, and as guardians of culture, poetry, personal expression and abstract thought they also possessed the means and the social authority to speak to power and be heard. One could say that the young bourgeois students formed the aspiring officialdom of language, which in France holds far more importance than Anglo-American scholars may readily see. The urban *flâneur*, the perceptive mystic who used words and language to transcend and ultimately flee the increasing determinism of modern life, who traveled without purpose around the streets of the urban Paris, became over time the privileged bourgeois transgressor. The *flâneur*, simultaneously part of and apart from the subject, invokes sociological, anthropological, literary and historical concepts in an attempt to render in verse the changing relationships between the individual and the growing urban populace. Following the 1848 Revolution, the evolving social landscape of the Second Empire came to be built on the foundations of bourgeois notions of order and popular morality. Baudelaire responded in his little known *Critique d'art* that traditional art, with its focus on platonic beauty and morality, was inadequate to address the novel banalities, abstractions and alienation of modern life. The social changes precipitated by the experience of modernity demanded that the artist immerse himself in the metropolis and negate alienation through the merging of the personal voice with that of the perceived whole. The radicalism of the symbolist and surrealist writers equated to a profound critique of modernity, but this great shift in meaning behind the words is almost exclusively interpreted as a strictly literary, discursive phenomenon. With Rimbaud, the young bourgeois *voyeur*, the visionary finds meaning in the transvaluation of morality and the rejection of codes of social conformity; the critique directly engages bourgeois culture (that which it knows). Thus, the failure of the disillusioned bourgeois poet is implicit in his inability to offer a critique that contains sufficient space for the voice of the working class, the peasant, the true "objects" of the modern urban universe, or those outside of history. Language furnishes voice, and voice constitutes history. Here one can easily see the difficulty of studying the culture and mentality of the working class subject, as they did not participate directly in the discourse because according to the necessary functioning of modern systems of social production they were never instructed how to express themselves. The working class could hardly be said to have developed a cultural critique of their world or social milieu.

However, Baudelaire and the radical poets of the nineteenth century began the long retreat from Platonism. Baudelaire's passion for the banality of urban life, combined with his desire to construct heroes out of the anonymous men and women of modern Paris, indicates the beginning of a progression towards the destruction or realization of art in its marriage with daily life; the mythologization of banality. Radical criticism would not have been unknown to the student militants, as most theories of the New Left had as their goal the reformation of the bourgeoisie and the functioning of power. The working class figured prominently in leftist critiques such as the Lettrist, Situationist and Frankfurt movements, but only in a peripheral function. According to the students of the occupied Sorbonne, the university contained all social relations of French society, with all inequalities and injustices reproduced there in miniature (such as the exclusion of children of the working class and immigrants). Their expression, comprising an egalitarian dream, fell within the space produced by the bourgeois self-criticism; reflecting a revolutionary code, a specialized speech or play in which the bourgeoisie played the principal role. The idealistic and utopian ideas

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of Fourier and Rimbaud, among all the sources of the noble and aberrant thoughts of May, are mere points of departure; any "voice of the worker" quoted in the occupied amphitheaters falls outside this projection. The mental, expressive space of the worker does not contain the capacity for movement, the hunger to merge with the aesthetic one of "the other" (the theme of the "dream" in contemporary May '68 discourse). If the workers do not have the capacity to dream and to desire like us, we will abandon ours and take up theirs.

The political tracts produced by the student-worker action committees grouped around the campus of Censier, the first occupied university in Paris, began in the early days of May with a critical evaluation of the role of student as assigned by society, reflecting the same desire for unity across class lines that characterized the political language of those *enragés* who occupied the Odeon Theatre. However, by mid-May, the militants of Censier recognized that to build effective relationships with members of the working class, foreign immigrants, as well as militant agricultural laborers, they needed to reinvent a vocabulary, become conscious of the symbolism and cultural coding embedded in their voices, and deny themselves a classed identity (the concept of "bourgeois" is assumed to be implicit in the descriptor, "student," though not all students were actually products of bourgeois culture). At Odeon, and among the diverse *groupuscule*-oriented occupation movements at the Sorbonne, the political language never acquired this distinctly *carnavalesque* quality that renders the student-worker action committees the most interesting and radical manifestation of the student movement.

The most important measure of the movement was, as Marx said of the Commune of 1871, "its own working existence," much more than any assumed objective or teleology of development. The action committees and general assemblies of the occupied university campuses were *working bodies*, defined not by the functioning of abstract and professionalized political systems, but through the organization and coordination produced through their labor. The disregard of hierarchy and the authority implicit through representation in parliamentary politics gave way to an understanding of power that had immediate effects on everyday practices of decision-making and social organization. In the general assemblies and coordinating committees populated by students and workers, the representative became interchangeable with, and thus equal to, the represented. Authority and power was infinitely distributed, almost to the point of negation, and continually revocable. Within the student-worker action committees of occupied Censier, the breakdown of specialized political function was far more extensive than at the Sorbonne, Odéon Theatre, and the occupied Beaux-Arts academy, where the heightened publicity and extensive police presence encouraged the students to appoint spokesmen and centralize the structure of militant committees and *groupuscules*.

Following the mass societal disruptions and political chaos of the general strike of May 13, when more than ten million workers of all sectors of economy and bureaucracy stopped working, students watched as the student movement quickly receded from national attention. However, the strike quickly came under the control of the "political unions," who carefully directed the weight of the strike toward ensuring a quick agreement with the government. Fearing a parliamentary resolution to the strikes, students at Censier set about to revise the purpose and strategy of the movement. The result was the relegation of the students, within their own discourse, to a position in support of a movement that was to be led "from the base." Workers were invited en masse to the Censier center, and documents attest to the presence of Censier militants infiltrating train stations, factories, department stores and factories. In the action committee tracts, the worker as victim of dual exploitation (as wage earners and consumers) was replaced by praises of human productivity and labor. Thus, almost from the beginning of the occupation, Censier action committee



tracts exhorted wage earners to join the occupation movement, while at Odéon and in the courts of the Sorbonne leftist *groupuscules* argued amongst themselves incessantly and enacted largely symbolic measures toward the reorganization of society.

The occupiers of Censier shared the critique of Marcuse and Debord vis-à-vis the organization of work and life in capitalist society, though they "preserved the core of traditional productivist rhetoric." [40] In stark contrast to the antiwork sensibilities of the militant groups who occupied the Odéon Theatre, Censier students celebrated the force and vitality of the working class, and enthusiastically wrote and distributed dozens of tracts calling for wage increases, thirty hour weeks, and the free distribution of some mass-produced goods to strikers and their families. Importantly, the language of action-committee discourse became less formal; workers were addressed intimately, as peers. An undated Censier tract makes a very political use of the familiar article of the French language:

Like 10.000.000 workers, you are on strike. A strike that everyone knows is a part of a vast movement of the base. You have proved your capacity to assume responsibilities in grave circumstances. You have become conscious of your force...  
What do you think of the current situation? How can it succeed?

Comme 10.000.000 de travailleurs, tu es en grève. Une grève don't tout le monde sait qu'elle est partie d'un vaste mouvement de la base. Tu as prouvé ta capacité à prendre tes responsabilités dans les cas graves. Tu prends conscience de ta force...  
Que penses-tu de la situation actuelle? A quoi peut-elle aboutir? [41]

For a Frenchman alive in the 1960's, the use of *tu* or *vous* in everyday public conversation served as an indicator of class identity. Among those raised in a bourgeois milieu, it was not uncommon for children to address their parents in the formal *vous*, or even for wives to address their husbands. Thus, *tu* could be used strategically, acting as a code that helped establish the boundaries between the internal, household, intimate space, and that which is external, foreign and anonymous. Here, it is effectively employed to indicate intimacy, and would certainly have been the first characteristic of the tract noticed by recipients, regardless of social class. In addition, the author asks a very direct question (regarding the goal of the movement, no less), and the insistent repetition of *tu* here renders an illusion of individual immediacy. The language indicates more than intimacy, hinting at an attempt to reverse cultural understandings of private and public space, beyond even the obvious negation of the student's stature as possessors of culture and knowledge.

Another document, a full page tract interspersed with only a few words, communicates a strong affection that shows *ouvrièrisme* transforming from abstract theory into a subtle reappropriation of identity:

You, my comarade / You who I ignored before the turbulences / You strangled, afraid, asphyxiated. COME, TALK TO US.

Toi, mon camarade / Toi que j'ignorais derrière les turbulences / Toi jugulé, apeuré, asphyxia. VIENS, PARLE NOUS. [42]

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The visceral imagery of repeated, oppressive violence is effectively communicated through the undoubtedly carefully chosen vocabulary of choking, fear and drowning, which should be taken as a dramatization of the general feeling of malaise and hopelessness that militants later claimed drove them to call for a "fundamental transformation of society."<sup>[43]</sup> This document likely owes many of its intimate characteristics to the view among students that the shared experience of police repression had leveled all Frenchmen, regardless of class, into the position of oppressed victim.

For the radical students and workers who occupied their universities and factories all over Paris and throughout the French provinces, May '68 was as much an astonishing aberration as it is for the historian who tries to make sense of it. The movement arose neither from war or any preexisting societal disturbance. It was not a response to a crisis, and the event certainly cannot be attributed to any local concerns, such as the often-cited "crisis of the university" or even the growing wave of wildcat strikes in early 1968. To paraphrase Gilles Deleuze, the current crises in France are rooted in the inability of French society to assimilate the significance of May '68; "French society has shown a radical incapacity to create a subjective redeployment on the collective level, which is what 68 demands."<sup>[44]</sup> What is the result? French society quickly abandoned the experience of collective dreaming, of widening the realm of the possible. Those who participated in the shared experience of otherness watched as everything new was marginalized or reduced into caricature, the sole form of memory that French society could safely contain. Thus, the mythic representations of which Kristin Ross speaks were unavoidable; French society could simultaneously contain the significance of May '68 while avoiding the danger of inviting a return to the possible. Adding to the allure of May '68 is its paradoxical nature as a radical movement that sought to completely negate all forms of power and class in the most profound way possible, though students and workers who formed assemblies and action committees relied on remarkably conservative mechanisms of direct democracy. Students and workers who joined ranks at Censier formed action committees which closely resembled the workers councils of the Paris Commune of 1871. Radical socialist, communist and anarchist ideas were discussed without restraint but almost entirely in an orderly fashion, and students were well on their way to beginning serious experiments into transformation of modern French society. Despite the bold rhetoric and incessant calls for spontaneous popular action, the actual functioning of power in the occupied facilities across Paris resembled an archipelago of extremely decentralized direct democracies functioning as near-autonomous communities. The majority of the documents left by Censier occupants refer either to internal organization or describe the condition of the worker in clear and specific language. Although some aspects of the movement are unexpectedly conservative, student and worker militants successfully renegotiated their social roles, using the campus of the occupied university to create a space where a different social order was possible. Indeed, *ouvriérisme* became uncritical, as students, recognizing that the workers constituted the historical force of social change, sought to gain control over a future that they increasingly viewed as hostile and alien. In this way, perhaps the collective cross-class experiences of young students and workers represented an attempt to depart from history, to escape time and flee the menace of an uncertain future. To further explore the world of the university occupations *as it existed*, it would be very rewarding to continue the project of recovering the perspectives of the militants by allowing the participants to "let their voices speak." Aside from a more thorough examination of the documents left by Censier militants, a series of interviews with participants, in particular members of the working class who were involved with the action committees, would certainly be the best means of increasing the stature of the Censier occupation in the historiography of May '68.

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[1] Alexandre Piquard. "Nicolas Sarkozy veut « tourner la page de mai 1968. " *Le monde*. 29 April 2007.

[2] Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999), 182.

[3] Michael Seidman, *The Imaginary Revolution: Parisian Students and Workers in 1968*. International studies in social history (New York : Berghahn Books, 2004), 96.

[4] *Groupuscule* is the French term describing a small political action group. Such organizations proliferated among the French left during the 1960's.

[5] The Censier Center, *l'Université Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris 3)*, is an extension campus, or annex of the Sorbonne (*l'Université Sorbonne Paris 1*), located at 13 Rue Santeuil.

[6] French bourgeois culture is noted for its literary nature; subtleties, troping, suggestion and endless abstraction are privileged components of written discourse amongst the educated classes. Despite the conscious simplicity of the student's language in action committee texts, the astute readers can always pick up on the subtle artistry and color of their language, though it appears that students employed their familiarity of poetic writing to create short, seemingly austere phrases charged with latent meaning and simple but profound symbolism.

[7] Kristin Ross. *Ibid*, 187-8.

[8] Luc Ferry and Alain Renault. *La Pensée '68: Essai sur l'anti-humanisme contemporain*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 54.

[9] Roger Gregoire and Fredy Perlman. *Worker-Student Action Committees: France, May '68* (Detroit : Black & Red, 1970) 37.

[10] Michael Seidman. *Ibid*, 124.

[11] Kristin Ross. *Ibid*, 107-8.

[12] Andrew Feenberg and Jim Freedman. *When Poetry Ruled the Streets : The French May Events of 1968* (Albany: State University Press, 2001), 65.

[13] Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (New York : Verso, 2008), 12.

[14] Alain Schnapp. *Journal de la Commune Etudiant* (Paris, E'ditions du Seuil, 1969), 342.

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[15] 1. « Nous y sommes chez vous, nous y AVONS PRIS LE POUVOIR, nous n'admettons plus des ordres imposées d'en haut. 2. Nous refusons l'éducation qu'ils nous imposaient, car nous refusons de devenir vos futurs chefs exploités. 3. Dès maintenant, la Sorbonne appartient aussi aux ouvriers : nous prenons ensemble les décisions d'action. 4. Nous y voulons la présence d'ouvriers, et s'ils nous demandent nous organiserons des cours sur les questions qui les intéressent et sur tout l'enseignement secondaire dans les usines, le soir. »  
Cela veut dire que (16 mai 1968). Translated by author. Fonds d'archives, Centre d'Histoire Sociale du XXIème Siècle, Paris.

[16] Action, no.1 (16 Mai 1968). Translated by author. Fonds d'archives, Centre d'Histoire Sociale du XXIème Siècle, Paris.

[17] Pour l'action immédiate (18 mai 1968), Fonds d'archives, Centre d'Histoire Sociale du XXIème Siècle, Paris.

[18] Henri Lefebvre. *The production of space* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007), 43.

[19] Henri Lefebvre. *Critique of Everyday Life* (New York: Verso, 1991), .xvii.

[20] Henri Lefebvre. *The production of space*. Ibid, 81.

[21] "Paris May 1968: An eyewitness account from *Solidarity*." *The Struggle Site*. (<http://www.struggle.ws>).

[22] Michel Albin. Ibid, 24.

[23] Paris may 1968. Ibid.

[24] Michael Seidman. Ibid, 69

[25] Paris may 1968. Ibid.

[26] Paris may 1968. Ibid.

[27] Michael Seidman. Ibid, 70.

[28] Roger Gregoire and Fredy Perlman. Ibid, 42.

[29] Kristin Ross. *May '68 and its Afterlives*. Ibid, 97.

[30] Paris may 1968. Ibid.

[31] Michael Seidman. Ibid, p 73.

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[32] Paris may 1968. Ibid.

[33] Paris may 1968. Ibid.

[34] Ross, Kristin. *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune*. Ibid, 74.

[35] « Tract Comité enrégés, internationale situationniste. » Michel Albin, *Les Paroles de Mai*.

[36] "Censier" Michel Albin, *Les Paroles de Mai*.

[37] 'Paving stones'

[38] "Il ne s'agit pas de mettre la poésie au service de la révolution, mais bien de mettre la révolution au service de la poésie. » Internationale situationniste, No. 8.

[39] Andrew Feenberg. "Remembering the May Events." *Theory and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Jul., 1978), pp. 27.

[40] Michael Seidman. Ibid, p. 124.

[41] "Camarade." (undated, 1968). Translated by author. Fonds d'archives, Centre d'Histoire Sociale du XXIème Siècle, Paris.

[42] "Toi mon camarade." (June 20, 1968). Translated by author. Fonds d'archives, Centre d'Histoire Sociale du XXIème Siècle, Paris.

[43] "Camarade," Ibid.

[44] Deleuze, Gilles, and David Lapoujade. *Two regimes of madness: texts and interviews 1975-1995*. Los Angeles: Semiotext, 2006), 224.

