

## Sonic Scars in Urban Space: Trauma and the Parisian Soundscape during *l'année terrible*



**Figure 1:** Tuileries Palace (Main Hall, Garden Side), Photograph by Auguste Bruno Braquehais, Thereza Christina Maria Collection, Biblioteca Nacional do Brasil

In his work on twentieth-century Berlin, Andreas Huyssen asks: ‘How does a place - particularly an urban place - experience and then remember trauma through sound?’ Huyssen analyses the city as palimpsest, one whose ruins mark ‘absences’ just as much as the *visible* presence of past violence is preserved by bullet and shrapnel marks on buildings. Berlin is both ‘saturated with memory’ and marked by ‘willful forgetting’, a tension which seems just as pertinent to Paris a century before.<sup>1</sup> In the 1870s and 1880s, Paris was marked by visible traces

---

<sup>1</sup> Grounding this analysis in a discussion of the memory park in Buenos Aires, Huyssen notes that ‘cities remain the main battleground on which societies articulate their sense of time past and time present...once embodied in

of the Commune, most famously the gutted Tuileries palace, whose blackened ruins remained at the centre of the city for 12 years [Figure 1].<sup>2</sup> If visual reminders of violence leave ‘absent presences’ in the heart of an urban space, how might memories of the *sounds* of conflict be similarly understood as leaving traces - sonic scars - in individual and collective memories? In this article, I consider how the inhabitants of Paris experienced sound during the war year of 1870-71, and how that sonic trauma was processed, analysed, remembered and memorialized.

## I. Prelude: Connecting Sound, Trauma, and War through Space

### A. Why Trauma?

Trauma has emerged as a powerfully interdisciplinary subject of cultural, psychiatric, and medical study largely in the last 40 years, marked by pivotal events - including the inclusion of the term ‘posttraumatic stress disorder’ in the DSM-III issued by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 - and seminal publications such as Judith Herman’s *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), Dominick La Capra’s *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001) and Jeffrey Alexander’s work on cultural trauma.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the concept of trauma has been shaped over the past 75 years

---

memorial sites within an urban fabric...remembrance of traumatic events seems less susceptible to the vagaries of memory’. Huyssen sees this as a shift from discourses of ‘reading the city as text’, from Hugo to Barthes to Baudrillard to many postmodern geographers in the 1970s and 1980s. See *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003): 50, 101.

<sup>2</sup> The French government razed the ruins in 1883 and created a formal garden on the palace grounds. In 1905, American dentist Dr. Thomas Evans noted the altered soundscape of the Tuileries Gardens, writing that ‘to-day children with their nurses gather together in hushed silence’. Edward A. Crane, *The Memoirs of Dr. Thomas W. Evans: Recollections of the Second Empire* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1905): 588.

Though her study *Composing the Citizen* focuses on the period after the Commune (France’s Third Republic), Jann Pasler includes a ‘walk’ through Paris as a means of discussing the symbolism of place, particularly in regard to music and power. She writes of the Tuileries: ‘suggesting the power of absence as well as presence in the cityscape, these ruins, untouched for twelve years, were fraught with uneasy and powerfully ambivalent symbolism’. Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009): 20.

For more on ruins and their symbolism in post-Commune Paris, see Colette Wilson, *Paris and the Commune, 1871-1878: The Politics of Forgetting* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), particularly chapter five on photographing ruins of the Commune.

<sup>3</sup> Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence - From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001); Jeffrey C. Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka, *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

by many of the catastrophic events of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries - the Holocaust in particular, but also the Vietnam War, 9/11, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, just to note a few cases. As illustrated by multiple recent conference panels and numerous new or forthcoming publications, trauma's broader implications are the subject of much current discussion and analysis.

Studying trauma in the late nineteenth century, however, presents a different set of historiographical problems. Through an analysis of the 'practices, technologies and narratives with which [trauma] is diagnosed, studied, treated, and represented,' Allan Young has argued that trauma is not a timeless, universal phenomena. Rather, we should analyse trauma through a constructivist, temporally appropriate manner.<sup>4</sup> Assessing how traumatic events were contextualized in the past is difficult - we cannot uncritically transplant today's terminology to earlier eras. Yet the late nineteenth century, including events in France in 1870-71, is a particularly fruitful period for a historical study of trauma. In his work, Young focuses not precisely on the emotions of fear, or suffering, or loss, but on the ways these experiences impacted *memory*. He argues a new type of 'painful' memory emerged at the end of the nineteenth century: 'it was unlike the memories of earlier times in that it originated in a previously unidentified psychological state, called "traumatic", and was linked to previously

---

<sup>4</sup> Allan Young, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995): 5.

A number of works address this issue; Maria Cizmic provides a capsule summary of the debate in the introduction to her book *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Mark Micale and Paul Lerner note two main methodological camps: in the first, writers (often in medical or psychological disciplines) 'interpret post-traumatic psychopathology as a timeless, quasi-universal disorder'. An alternate approach (often espoused by anthropologists, social scientists, and historians) rejects this view as 'presentist and positivistic and adopts an emphatically historicist stance'. See Mark Micale and Paul Lerner, eds, *Traumatic Pasts: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 6-7.

unknown kinds of forgetting, called “repression” and “dissociation””.<sup>5</sup> Mark Micale explicitly places the beginnings of the trauma concept in psychological medicine of the 1870s, noting that political events, social constructs and emerging medicalized discourses helped forge the ‘proto-science of mental trauma’.<sup>6</sup> While it is unlikely events of 1870-71 were the sole cause of this development, formative concepts about trauma emerged at precisely the moment Parisians processed the aftermath of a year of war, siege, bombardment, civil war and mass slaughter. Studying this era offers a specific nineteenth-century case study of how individuals understood, discussed, and remembered these events at the dawn of the ‘trauma concept’. In the article that follows, I foreground sound’s role in the traumas of 1870-71, demonstrating that wartime sounds – and memories of those sounds - marked the minds and bodies of Parisians for decades to come. Ultimately, I argue sound is a critical element in assessing historical understandings of trauma.

## B. Studying Sound

As part of the ‘sensual turn’ in the humanities as well as the ‘sonic turn’ in music studies, foundational publications by scholars such as Maria Cizmici, Joshua Pilzer, Amy Lynn Wlodarski and J. Martin Daughtry have parsed how certain sounds and musical repertoires connect with trauma.<sup>7</sup> Their work, however, primarily analyses twentieth or twenty-first sound. Studying

---

<sup>5</sup> Young, *Harmony of Illusions*, 1. In his analysis of memory, Young notes that PTSD is ‘a disease of time. The disorder’s distinctive pathology is that it permits the past (memory) to relive itself in the present, in the form of intrusive images and thoughts and in the patient’s compulsions to replay old events’. Young discusses the early development of trauma in his first chapter, particularly nineteenth-century explanations of ‘railway spine’ by John Erichsen (1866) and Herbert Page (1885).

<sup>6</sup> Micale, ‘Jean-Martin Charcot and les névroses traumatiques’, in *Traumatic Pasts*, 138. By the 1880s, there was general consensus by experts in England, France, and Germany that fear could produce physiological symptoms.

<sup>7</sup> Sound and music are particularly rich sites for such connections to trauma as traumatic memory itself often has a strong sensory component. Aimée Boutin provides a short bibliography and explanation on how studying the senses and sound has emerged in the humanities. See ‘Rethinking the Flâneur: Flânerie and the Senses’, *Dix-Neuf* 16, no. 2 (Jul. 2012): 124-132. For an explanation of sensory anthropology as a means of corporealizing academic investigation, see David Howe, including *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003).

For work on music and/or sound and trauma, see: Cizmici, *Performing Pain*; Joshua Pilzer, *Hearts of Pine: Songs in the Lives of Three Korean Survivors of the Japanese Comfort Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012);

‘ephemeral’ past sounds is fraught with difficulties. How might one find traces of sounds in available historical evidence, particularly in the era before sound recordings?<sup>8</sup> In undertaking sound studies of the nineteenth century, it is essential to utilize texts, written documents and other materials to tease out hints of these ‘vanished’ sounds. In his sensory histories of the nineteenth century, Mark M. Smith acknowledges the primacy of sight and visuality, yet argues that even printed sources often retain tantalizing traces of the sonic.<sup>9</sup> This intersection between visual and (potential) sonic traces is particularly intriguing in 1870-71, a year exhaustively chronicled throughout the world in lithographs, illustrated newspapers, and photography.<sup>10</sup>

Despite these difficulties, studying historic sounds is critical for forging more nuanced understandings of past experience. Aimée Boutin points out that Walter Benjamin’s influential interpretation of the *flâneur* - an observant individual walking leisurely through urban streets - has overemphasized visual interpretations of cities. Drawing on earlier nineteenth-century

---

Amy Lynn Wlodarski, *Musical Witness and Holocaust Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); J. Martin Daughtry, *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); see also Jillian C. Rogers, *Resonant Recoveries: French Music and Trauma between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). Other discussions of music and sound in relation to trauma include: ‘Musicology and Trauma Studies: Perspectives for Research and Pedagogy’, panel presented at American Musicological Society, Rochester, 2017; ‘Music, War, and Trauma in Britain and France, 1870-1920’, panel presented at ‘Trauma Studies in the Medical Humanities’, Durham, England, 2018; ‘Music, War and Trauma in the Long Nineteenth Century’, panel presented at American Musicological Society, San Antonio, TX, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> The advent of sound recordings in the late nineteenth / early twentieth centuries of course does not solve problems for historians; sound recordings only preserve certain kinds of sounds and elicit additional problems regarding access, reliability and myriad other concerns.

<sup>9</sup> Smith notes these printed sources may have served as an *aide-mémoire* for individuals who had already heard the sounds. For work on the ways sound impacted how Northerners and Southerners (mis)understood each other during the Civil War era, see Mark M. Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> For an analysis of the relationship between visual representations of mass violence in the media, understandings of the individual self, and cultural trauma, see Howard Brown, *Mass Violence and the Self: From the French Wars of Religion to the Paris Commune* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018). Scholars from many disciplines have studied the interaction of the senses as a key to knowledge, memory, and identity; to name just a few sources, see Michel Serres, *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); the essays in C. Nadia Seremetakis’s edited collection *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and work on the spatial construction of diaspora through the senses by Michalis Poupazis, ‘Extending Our Senses: Music, Nostalgia, Space, Artefact and the Mediterranean Imaginary among the Greek-and-Turkish-speaking Cypriot Diaspora in Birmingham (UK)’, (Ph.D. thesis, University College Cork, 2017).

sources such as Balzac and Victor Fournel, Boutin calls for a concept of ‘aural flânerie’, arguing sounds were essential to understanding a city.<sup>11</sup> There has long been interest in analyzing the unique soundmarks - especially the changing or disappearing sounds - of urban spaces, as Aimée Boutin details in her study of nineteenth-century Parisian street cries.<sup>12</sup> Like many nineteenth century cities, Paris’s changing urban sounds were interpreted in markedly oppositional ways, from concern over unregulated urban noise assaulting the nerves to therapeutic applications of vibration.<sup>13</sup> Impressions of a shifting soundscape were exacerbated by the French capital’s massive nineteenth-century construction projects; as Baron Haussman overhauled much of medieval Paris in favor of new broad, expansive boulevards, he forever changed the city’s soundscape.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> The *flâneur* has been analysed in a number of ways, such as an ‘icon of modernity’ (including the alienations of modernity in an hostile urban space) and as a source of power via the male gaze. For a complication of the *flâneur*, see Richard Wrigley, ed., *The Flâneur Abroad: Historical and International Perspectives* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014). See Boutin, ‘Aural Flânerie’, 149-161. Though Boutin clarifies that she does not use the term in this way, she notes Susan Buck-Morris first called attention to Adorno’s statement describing ‘the station-switching behaviour of the radio listener as a kind of aural flânerie’.

<sup>12</sup> Soundmarks is R. Murray Schaefer’s term for a particular place’s unique/specific sounds; soundmarks are generally quite meaningful to communities. See Schaefer, *The Tuning of the World* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 1977): 26. For a study of Paris’s ‘disappearing’ nineteenth-century soundscapes, see Aimée Boutin, *City of Noise: Sound and Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> As Shelly Trower discusses, scholars had considered the potentially negative effects of vibrations on the human body since the mid-eighteenth century. She cites David Hartley’s *Observations on Man* (1749) as an important early example. See Trower, *Senses of Vibration: A History of the Pleasure and Pain of Sound* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012): 94-125.

For a nineteenth-century treatise on how vibrations from street noise caused nervous problems in ‘susceptible’ individuals, see J.B. Fonssagrives, *Hygiène et assainissement des villes* (Paris: J.B.-Baillière, 1874). Cited in Boutin, *Ibid.*, 74. For a study on nineteenth-century urban noise in Victorian London, see John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 41-81. I am grateful to Michelle Meinhart for bringing this source on English sounds in the nineteenth century to my attention.

French medical professionals had investigated therapeutic applications for vibration since the Revolution, a focus that continued throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Jillian Rogers notes in her work on World War I, it is often when sounds become traumatic (as in times of war) that there is a concomitant effort to harness the positive or soothing effects of sound. See Rogers, *Resonant Recoveries*, chapter 2.

<sup>14</sup> Boutin notes the new Haussmanian boulevards - ‘as wide as their buildings were tall (18 meters)’ – echoed quite differently than the older narrow streets. She analyses 81 rue Saint-Martin in the 4th arrondissement as an example of an older type of confined space which tended to have enclosed resonant areas such as courtyards, stairwells, arcades, *passages*, etc. Boutin, *Ibid.*, 63-66.

Drawing upon the notion that historical sound studies offers a rich window into understanding Paris, studying the wartime sounds of 1870-71 broadens our knowledge of French sonic life during an especially fraught and meaningful era. While scholars have closely examined certain aspects of Parisian musical culture in 1870-71 - such as popular song and concert performances - what remains understudied is the broader sonic experience of battle, bombardment, siege, and civil war within a nineteenth-century urban soundscape, a focus on what Martin Kaltenecker has called the ‘phonosphères of war’.<sup>15</sup> Paris is a particularly meaningful site for such sonic analysis, given the city’s history of revolutionary sounds. In 1789, in 1830, in 1848 and so on, the capital repeatedly echoed with the singing of century-old revolutionary songs, bells calling the populace to arms, the *rappel* or *générale*, bugle calls and the ringing of stone as Parisians constructed barricades.<sup>16</sup> These sounds were both a language and an inherited memory routinely revisited over a century or more, a sonic vocabulary of

---

<sup>15</sup> For work on concert life during the Commune, see Delphine Mordey, ‘Moments musicaux: High Culture in the Paris Commune’, *Cambridge Opera Journal* 22/1 (Mar. 2010): 1-31; ‘Auber’s Horses: *L’Année Terrible* and Apocalyptic Narratives’, *19<sup>th</sup>-Century Music*, 30/3 (spring 2007): 213-39; ‘Dans Le Palais du Son, On Fait de la Farine: Performing at the Opéra during the 1870 Siege of Paris’, *Music & Letters* 93/1 (Feb. 2012): 1-29. See also Jess Tyre, ‘Music in Paris during the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune’, *The Journal of Musicology* 22/2 (spring 2005): 173-202.

For work on the Commune and popular song, see Jean-Baptiste Weckerlin, ‘L’Histoire en chansons, 1870-1871-1872’, *La Chronique Musicale*, 15 July 1873; Georges Coulonges, *La Commune en chantant* (Paris: Les Éditions, 1970); Robert Brécy, *La Chanson de la Commune: chansons et poèmes inspirés par la Commune de 1871* (Paris: Les éditions oubrières, 1991). Kimberly White and Kathleen Hulley focused on café-concert singers during this period in ‘Singing the Nation: Amiati, Bordas, and the *chanson patriotique* of the Café-Concert’, paper presented at American Musicological Society National Meeting, Rochester, November 2017. Kaltenecker, “‘What Scenes! What Sounds!’”.

<sup>16</sup> See footnote 41 for an example of attempts to control the beating of the *rappel* (drawing on lessons learned from the 1848 revolutions) and footnote 45 for Edmond de Goncourt’s recollection of hearing an alarm bell in both 1848 and 1871. For scholarship which details certain sonic continuities from various waves of French revolution, see Martin Kaltenecker, “‘What Scenes! What Sounds!’ Some Remarks on Soundscapes in War Times’, in *Music and War in Europe from French Revolution to WWI*, ed. Étienne Jardin (Brepols: Turnhout, 2016): 3-28. Kaltenecker’s work contains an excellent bibliography on war and sound.

Though her work primarily focuses on the role of music in the later Third Republic, Jann Pasler’s analysis of how musics (and musical events) from the French Revolution were repurposed in the late nineteenth century offers an essential contribution to understanding the borrowings and continuities of revolution, music and meaning in the long nineteenth century. See Pasler, *Composing the Citizen*.

revolution written into Paris's aural history.<sup>17</sup> From the declaration of war on 19 July 1870, when Parisians flooded the streets singing, to the bloody final battles when detonations, shots and screams resounded street by street, Paris in 1870-71 was riven by what Daughtry has broadly termed 'belliphonic' sounds - sounds produced by armed combat.<sup>18</sup>

Kaltenecker also notes war can (temporarily) create 'sound displacements, where ordinary sounds arise in places where they wouldn't in peacetime'.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the sonic effects of 1870-71 rendered the familiar unfamiliar, unsettling Parisians as their city echoed with uncanny new sounds such as the *mitrailleuse* or sounds occurring in 'seemingly impossible' places, such as the bullets and cannons that ultimately silenced the last Communards in Père Lachaise. In his study of the U.S. Civil War, Smith notes that the 'introduction of new noises and the muting of old sounds', or noises 'that threaten the customary soundmarks of a particular locale', can actually fatigue listeners to the point of hastening capitulation and increasing trauma during a conflict.<sup>20</sup> Including sound when studying this period, therefore, not only brings us closer to an actual understanding of the era's aurality, it reveals how constant noise or abject silence tortured

---

<sup>17</sup> Some of these sounds had specifically Parisian meanings, such as the *générale*. See Peter Starr, *Commemorating Trauma: The Paris Commune and its Cultural Aftermath* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006): 21.

<sup>18</sup> Daughtry notes 'the sounds of combat have been a prominent presence in literary depictions of war; documentary accounts and oral histories are similarly saturated with evocations of war's sonic dimension. That sound is regarded as worthy of commentary should not be surprising: armed conflict has been a noisy, grunting, clanging business throughout history'. See Daughtry, *Listening to War*, 3.

For testimony about the singing of the Marseillaise and shouts of 'To Berlin!' on 19 July 1870, see actress Sarah Bernhardt, *Ma double vie: mémoires de Sarah Bernhardt* (Paris: Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1907): 151-153. This was only one of many instances of public singing broadly linked to the conflict; when Victor Hugo returned from exile on 5 September 1870, for example, a crowd flooded the streets singing the 'Marseillaise' and reciting extracts from *Les Châtiments*. Starr, *Commemorating Trauma*, 62.

Many testimonies of the period include details about such belliphonic sounds on Paris's streets: see, for example, Lilli Hegermann-Lindenkrone, *In the Courts of Memory, 1858-1875 from Contemporary Letters* (Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing Co, 1912): 251; and Nathan Sheppard, *Shut Up in Paris* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1871).

<sup>19</sup> Kaltenecker gives two interesting examples: one, the lack of bells ringing around Saint-Denis and silence in the streets, and second, bugles and other types of music in places where you would not normally hear them. 'What Scenes! What Sounds!', 9.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*, 307.

Paris's inhabitants during *l'année terrible*. This article explores the ways in which belliphonic sounds resonated throughout the French capital, how they affected Parisian auditors, and offers initial ideas about mapping a sonic history of war.

### C. Mapping Sonic Traumas

Indeed, studying connections between belliphonic sounds and trauma in this period necessitates a turn to urban studies, cultural geography and mapping. I offer an initial inquiry into how mapping wartime sounds (and the sonic traumas they caused) might incorporate historic sources and testimonies to construct richly layered 'thick' representations of individual experiences plotted in space and time. Yet the source struggles of studying historic sound are mirrored by equally thorny questions of how to map ephemeral sensory information such as sound (as opposed to more objective details such as the location of buildings). Similarly, how might one incorporate individual, subjective experiences of the world with a mapped interface?<sup>21</sup> What tension between individual and collective experiences do maps highlight for us? And what sorts of benefits - or conversely, political or ethical concerns - might mapping trauma bring us?

Mark M. Smith, Jennifer Stoeve and other authors have analysed how understanding and experience of sound is raced, gendered and classed.<sup>22</sup> It is also 'placed'. Through a capsule glimpse in this article, I argue for a particularly rich approach to intersectionality when studying trauma and nineteenth-century belliphonic sounds – an intersectionality which takes into account how sound's effects are gendered, classed, and 'placed', or how urban geographies contribute to

---

<sup>21</sup> One of the most inspiring examples of this kind of work based on Paris is the project Bretez, which includes audio in a '5D' map of 18<sup>th</sup> century Paris. See <https://sites.google.com/site/louisbretez/>. For more on other mapping projects, see the excellent website and list of resources compiled at <https://musicalgeography.org>

<sup>22</sup> For Mark M. Smith's work on the ways sound impacted how Northerners and Southerners (mis)understood each other during the Civil War era, see *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001). Jennifer Stoeve has analysed sound's essential role as a 'critical modality' through which people '(re)produce, apprehend, and resist' aspects of racial identities. See Stoeve, *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

uneven effects of sonic trauma. It matters that specific neighborhoods of Paris were more heavily bombed than others in January 1871; it is likewise significant that working-class residents of Paris spent longer listening to screams and rifle fire during the last bloody battles of May 1871. Belliphonic sounds once as the war ended, but in certain cases they hauntingly *remained* in the minds and bodies of Parisians with traumatic memories. Perhaps it is these traumatic memories that marked the French capital with ‘aural ruins’, remembered sounds in specific places.

## II. ‘Le trouble des esprits’: Parisian Sounds and Psychological Impacts During *l’année terrible*

### A. Sounds of Siege and Shelling: Fall and Winter (September 1870 – January 1871)

What Victor Hugo deemed France’s ‘terrible year’ (*l’année terrible*) began in July 1870 with the declaration of war with Prussia.<sup>23</sup> The climactic loss at Sedan came in early September, followed swiftly by the fall of France’s Second Empire. As the Prussian army marched to encircle Paris, residents of the French capital dug in their heels, preparing for siege or occupation by burying valuables and stockpiling provisions. In his memoir, French psychiatrist Dr Henri Legrand du Saulle, who worked at the Dépôt de la Préfecture de Police, noted ‘disturbance of the spirits’ was at its highest point during these early September days.<sup>24</sup> Parisians reacted in different ways, from fear to trembling, repetitive motions, disordered speech, shouting, weeping or silence. Some were stricken with sensory illusions; Legrand du Saulle wrote of residents

---

<sup>23</sup> In protest of France’s Second Empire, Hugo had lived abroad since 1851—he returned to widespread acclaim upon the fall of the Empire in September 1870. Hugo reflected on the events of this pivotal year in his poetry cycle entitled *L’Année Terrible* (Paris: Michel Lévy, frères, 1872). For more on Hugo’s work, see Starr, *Commemorating Trauma*, chapter 3.

<sup>24</sup> Legrand du Saulle’s comments (included as the appendix to his larger work on *folie*) were first given at a medical society meeting on 26 June 1871 in the immediate aftermath of the Commune. Henri Legrand du Saulle, *La folie du doute avec délire du toucher: Appendice: De l’État mental des habitants de Paris pendant les événements de 1870-1871* (Paris: A. Delahaye, 1875): 488: ‘Le trouble des esprits est à son comble’. All translations by the author, unless otherwise attributed.

tormented by anxious thoughts that ‘they hear hoofbeats of the cavalry scouts, the sinister chiming of the *tocsin* or the whistles of the enemy’s front lines’.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout four months in autumn and winter 1870, the entire soundscape of Paris shifted. The Prussians encircled the city on 19 September 1870, initiating a devastating siege in hopes of forcing capitulation. Paris became unnaturally quiet, with distant sounds echoing through the stone streets. Théophile Gautier noted the ‘terrifying solitude’ of this ‘deathly silence’, adding that, ‘you would think you were in a medieval city, at the hour when curfew sounds’.<sup>26</sup> An anonymous published account added that ‘drilling, the rattle of the drum and the booming of distant cannon were the only sounds that disturbed the silence’.<sup>27</sup> In his journal, Edmond de Goncourt detailed the psychological impacts of the fall’s events, describing how the siege affected his own mental state and naming other Parisians struggling with anxiety and breakdowns.<sup>28</sup>

Both uncanny sounds and the suffering of city residents intensified throughout the last months of 1870. The winter was especially cold; in frozen Paris, sounds echoed in unusual ways off the hard angles of cold stone and the icy river. De Goncourt reported: In spite of the deadening effect of the snow which falls in dispersed, fluffy, crystalline flakes you can hear everywhere a distant and continuous cannonade from the direction of Saint Denis and Vincennes. In front of

---

<sup>25</sup> Legrand du Saulle added that these anxious Parisians would run away to hide somewhere dark, or sometimes, committed suicide. *Ibid.*, 488: ‘véritables victimes d’illusions sensoriels, ils croient entendre le pas des chevaux des éclaireurs, le tintement sinistre du tocsin ou le sifflet de l’avant-garde ennemie, et s’imaginant qu’ils vont être pris et passés immédiatement par les armes, ils courent se cacher dans quelque coin obscur. A ce moment, on observe quelques cas de suicide aigu’.

<sup>26</sup> Théophile Gautier, *Tableaux de Siège* (Paris: Charpentier, 1871): 120-121.

<sup>27</sup> Anonymous, *Life in Paris before the War and during the Siege* (London: Diprose and Bateman, 1871): 57.

<sup>28</sup> On 3 October 1870, De Goncourt wrote about how the siege affected his mind and at times even interfered with his ability to mourn the recent death of his brother. De Goncourt also commented on the breakdown of Caillou (director) at Vichy, noting how many minds had been ‘worn out’ this year. See Edmond de Goncourt, *Paris under Siege, 1870-1871: From the Goncourt Journal*, ed. and trans. by George J. Becker, with a historical introduction by Paul H. Neik (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969): 92-93.

Montmartre cemetery the hearses are lined up, their horses breathing noisily, the coachmen in black silhouette against the white snow as they stamp their feet.<sup>29</sup> With the combined effects of the siege's starvation, a smallpox epidemic and the freezing weather, Paris's death toll skyrocketed. On Christmas Day, newspaper correspondent Felix Whitehurst described the capital as crowded with the dead and dying - whether in hospitals or on the hills surrounding the city – and riven by mourning and grief.<sup>30</sup> De Goncourt believed some of these deaths came not from physical privation, but from the psychological distress of 'grief, displacement and homesickness'.<sup>31</sup>

In January 1871, the Prussians installed artillery pieces - including new steel 'Krupp' guns - in forts around Paris. At 3am on 5 January they commenced shelling the city, mainly hitting the commune of Montrouge and the 5th and 14th *arrondissements* (including the Barrière d'Enfer, the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, the Observatoire and the Panthéon).<sup>32</sup> Between 300 and 600 shells hit central Paris each day, with more than 12,000 shells fired into the city over a 23-day bombardment.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 177-78.

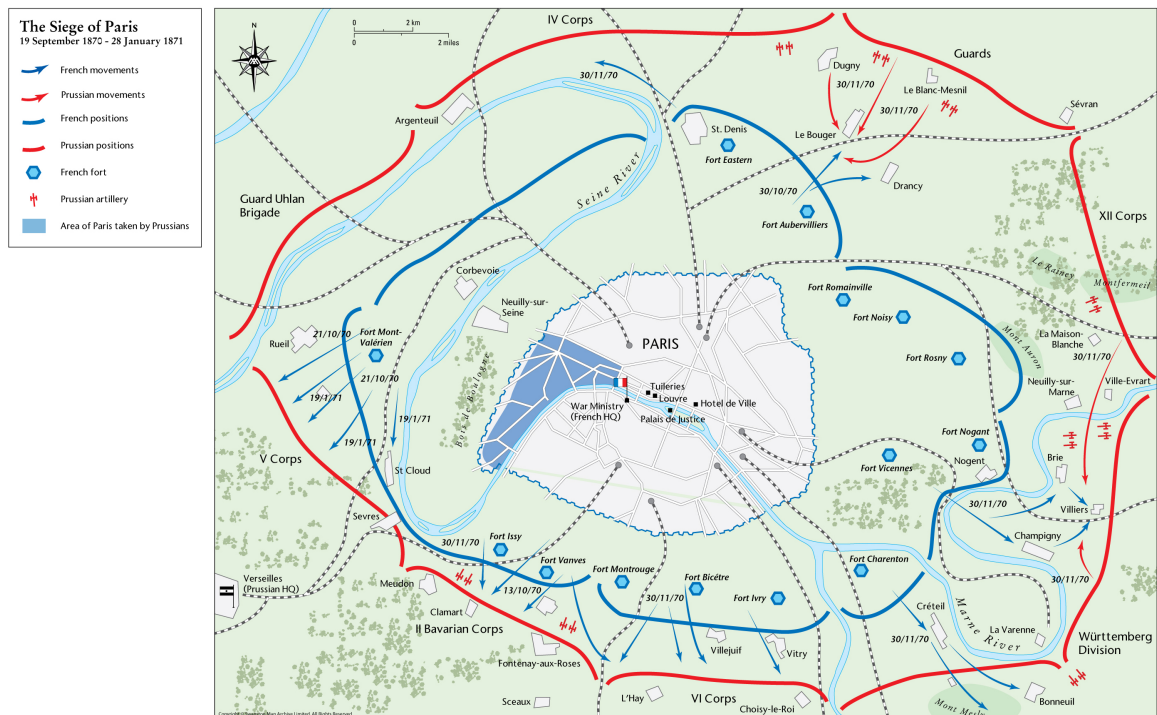
<sup>30</sup> Whitehurst was an English correspondent stationed in Paris during the siege. See Felix Whitehurst, *My Private Diary during the Siege of Paris* (London: Tinsley Bros, 1875), II: 158.

<sup>31</sup> De Goncourt, *Paris under siege*, 177.

<sup>32</sup> Vincent d'Indy, *Histoire du 105<sup>e</sup> Bataillon de la Garde Nationale de Paris en l'année 1870-1871 par un engagé volontaire dudit bataillon, âgé de 19 ans* (Paris : Charles Douniol et Cie, 1872): 93. For description of the locations particularly effected, see Legrand du Saulle, *Le délire des persecutions* (Paris: Henri Plon, 1871): 498.

<sup>33</sup> Robert Tombs, *War Against Paris, 1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981): 21. d'Indy noted that on the afternoon of 5 January he counted 38 detonations in a minute. d'Indy, *Histoire du 105<sup>e</sup> Bataillon*, 95-100.

Drawing on Mark M. Smith’s concept that printed sources might offer tantalizing sonic traces, studying ‘traditional’ military maps of troop and artillery placements can offer information on belliphonic impacts. The map below details the placement of Prussian artillery around Paris, signaling how guns were placed in strategically important places – but the map in tandem with testimony from earwitnesses offers us hints of how the sound of cannon fire would have impacted different parts of Paris unevenly [Fig. 2].



**Figure 2:** The Siege of Paris, 19 September 1870 - 28 January 1871  
The Map Archive

As a National Guard sentry patrolling Paris’s fortifications, for example, composer Vincent d’Indy listened at length to the shelling. Using his musician’s ears - indeed he claimed the Prussian guns were pitched in B flat - d’Indy was terrified by the whistling of the shells. Though he felt words failed to adequately describe the sensation caused by the noise, he noted the sound made him feel physically ill. Despite hundreds of repeat listenings, he was unable to grow accustomed to the whistle; upon hearing it, he ‘could not help but shiver’ and ‘feel a cold

sweat run through the body upon hearing this terrible *crescendo*'. D'Indy's somatic responses were echoed by many other earwitnesses: listening from his villa in Auteuil, De Goncourt claimed the shelling interrupted his sleep and gave him migraines.<sup>34</sup>

The potential physical and psychological effects of shelling were not entirely new concerns in 1871. Since the Napoleonic wars, '*le vent du boulet*' - literally, being 'in the draft of a cannonball passing by' - was used as a catchall category to describe soldiers who suffered effects from close proximity to shelling. Soldiers might freeze, have difficulty with motor coordination, and collapse or lose consciousness - generally without being struck by the gunfire.<sup>35</sup> By the mid-to-late nineteenth century, however, some medical professionals began studying the effects of shelling on non-military personnel.<sup>36</sup> As he treated Parisians during 1871, psychiatrist Dr Henri Legrand du Saulle documented that people living in the *quartiers* most

---

<sup>34</sup> d'Indy, *Histoire du 105e Bataillon*, 95-100, 133-134: 'nous ne pouvions nous empêcher de frissonner, et nous sentions une sueur froide nous parcourir tout le corps, à l'audition de ce terrible crescendo'. During this period, De Goncourt lived at 53 Boulevard de Montmorency; for descriptions of his response to the bombardment, see *Paris under Siege*, 187-188, 198. Not everyone found the bombardment terrifying; Nathan Sheppard wrote that on 18 January he 'spent the day in watching and dodging shells', noted his fascination, and that it was 'alternately hilarious and terrifying...the moment the peculiar whiz and whirl of a coming shell is heard, everybody falls faceforemost upon the pavement'. *Shut up in Paris*, 220-221.

<sup>35</sup> See Laurent Tatu and Julien Bogousslavsky, 'World War I Psychoneuroses: Hysteria Goes to War', in *Hysteria: the Rise of an Enigma*, ed. Julien Bogousslavsky (Basel: Karger, 2014): 157-168. <sup>36</sup> In the context of twenty-first-century wars, J. Martin Daughtry has analysed how listening to belliphonic sounds can be a source of trauma through hearing loss, PTSD, and other injuries. He argues that, in wartime, sound is not only a source of knowledge ('a source of situational awareness that might increase survival') but also a weapon and source of danger. See *Listening to War*, 1-12.

<sup>36</sup> In the context of twenty-first-century wars, J. Martin Daughtry has analysed how listening to belliphonic sounds can be a source of trauma through hearing loss, PTSD, and other injuries. He argues that, in wartime, sound is not only a source of knowledge ('a source of situational awareness that might increase survival') but also a weapon and source of danger. See *Listening to War*, 1-12.

Suzanne Cusick has studied the use of music in the war on terror, including "You are in a place that is out of the world...": Music in the Detention Camps of the 'Global War on Terror', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 2/1 (Feb. 2008): 1-26. See also Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).<sup>37</sup> Legrand du Saulle noted that many of the residents of the *quartiers* hid in their cellars, paced and spread wild rumors. For his discussion of *panophobia*, see *Le délire des persécutions*, 498: 'En proie à une panophobie réelle, à des illusions et à des hallucinations de la vue et de l'ouïe, aux conceptions délirantes de l'ordre le plus lugubre, à de l'hyperesthésie cutanée, et à des tremblements de tous les membres, ils arrivent au Dépôt municipal des aliénés le corps infléchi en avant, dans l'attitude de la plus navrante douleur, pleurant, gémissant et répétant toujours les mêmes mots: *Ah! mon Dieu, mon Dieu.—Tout est perdu!—Qu'est-ce que je vais devenir!*'.

affected by the January bombardment suffered from extreme terror and inability to sleep. He explained that the most strongly affected experienced:

a true *panophobia*, from visual hallucinations and illusions of hearing to the most dismal delirious conceptions to hyperesthesia and tremblings of the entire body. They arrive at the Dépôt municipal des aliénés with their bodies bent forward, in the position of the most extreme grief. They are weeping, moaning and always repeating the same words: ‘Ah, my God, my God. - Everything is lost! - What’s going to happen to me?’<sup>37</sup>

Legrand du Saulle noted that during several days in January 1871, he treated multiple cases of a rare type of intense sensory disruption, *mélancolie avec stupeur*. For these individuals who could barely see, hear or speak, Legrand du Saulle argued that this suspension or ‘temporary annihilation’ of the senses...[is] seen in cases of profound upset, sudden extraordinary events, excessive joy or extreme fear’.<sup>38</sup> His accounts describe a familiar cluster of hyperarousal symptoms and problems of perception: insomnia, tremblings and tremors, inability to straighten the body, extreme hypervigilance of the nervous system and - in the more intense cases of *mélancolie avec stupeur* - mutism, loss of sensory function, incontinence and thoughts of self-harm or suicide. His description of the bent bodies of suffering Parisians is particularly suggestive, positing an important link between traumatized Parisians of 1871 and diagnoses which would emerge nearly half a century later in the midst of World War I.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Legrand du Saulle noted that many of the residents of the *quartiers* hid in their cellars, paced and spread wild rumors. For his discussion of *panophobia*, see *Le délire des persécutions*, 498: ‘En proie à une panophobie réelle, à des illusions et à des hallucinations de la vue et de l’ouïe, aux conceptions délirantes de l’ordre le plus lugubre, à de l’hyperesthésie cutanée, et à des tremblements de tous les membres, ils arrivent au Dépôt municipal des aliénés le corps infléchi en avant, dans l’attitude de la plus navrante douleur, pleurant, gémissant et répétant toujours les mêmes mots: *Ah! mon Dieu, mon Dieu.—Tout est perdu!—Qu’est-ce que je vais devenir!*’.

<sup>38</sup> He added that individuals suffering from *mélancolie avec stupeur* were prone to terrifying hallucinations and attempted self-harm, mutilation and suicide. Legrand du Saulle, ‘*Le délire des persécutions*, 500-501: ‘ Cette sorte de suspension ou d’anéantissement temporaire de toutes les facultés, dont on est témoin dans la mélancolie avec stupeur, a été signalée par les auteurs anciens et aurait été vue dans des cas de commotion profonde, d’événement extraordinaire subit, de joie excessive ou de frayeur extrême’.

<sup>39</sup> While Legrand du Saulle’s account from the bombardment period did not create a specific term for the prostrate positions of terrorized Parisians, his narrative certainly forges a link between embodied reactions to shelling in 1871 and later ‘traumatic neuroses’ suffered by soldiers during the *grand guerre*. In 1915, neurologists Achille-Alexandre Souques and Inna Rosanoff-Saloff coined the term ‘*camptocormia*’ for the ‘stooped posture of the trunk’ of soldiers

## **B. Sounds of Carnival and Catastrophe: The Commune (March 1871 – May 1871)**

Broken by the bombardment, France's interim government signed an armistice, agreeing to crippling war indemnities and the loss of Alsace and much of Lorraine. In elections following the armistice, France mainly sought moderate candidates or the restoration of a monarchy, yet Paris selected radical deputies. Unrest - which had roiled Paris through 1870 and 1871 - came to a head over cannons belonging to the Parisian National Guard.<sup>40</sup> On 18 March 1871 the regular French army deployed at dawn to working-class Parisian neighbourhoods such as Montmartre, planning to seize cannons held by the National Guard. Accounts of this day's events resonate with a web of Parisian revolutionary sounds: the drum beats of the *rappel* and *générale* called for the National Guard to assemble, bugle calls warned the citizenry to disperse, enumerated gunshots spelled additional warnings.<sup>41</sup>

As the regular army failed to seize the cannons and fraternized with Montmartre's citizenry, chroniclers described the chaotic atmosphere as 'perfect bedlam', a 'noisy confusion'

---

injured in the trenches of World War I; they noted the injury could be a conversion disorder caused by neurosis, especially from anxiety related to the battle, and that the patients might remain in this bent-forward position for extended periods of time. See Achille-Alexandre Souques and Inna Rosanoff-Saloff, 'La camptocormie; incurvation du tronc consécutive au traumatisme du dos et des lombes; considérations morphologiques', *Rev Neurol* 22 (1914-1915): 937-939.

<sup>40</sup> There are a number of different, extremely specific accounts of this morning in Montmartre. Gay Gullickson analyses many of these accounts and the ways sonic memories of 18 March varied for each author; see *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996). Two examples of detailed narratives include Communard author Prosper Lissagaray, *History of the Commune of 1871*, trans. Eleanor Marx Aveling (London: Reeves and Turner, 1886, f.p. 1876): 78-81 and Sheppard, *Shut Up in Paris*, 238.

<sup>41</sup> There were many sonically significant uprisings throughout the year. In February 1871, for example, Parisians angry with the armistice terms gathered in the Place de la Bastille. Under normal order, the *rappel* (a drum signal which summoned National Guard members from a particular arrondissement) was only beaten at the urging of the government—the 1848 revolutions were encouraged in part by spontaneous beating of the *rappel*. In February 1871, the *rappel* was beaten illegally in working class and leftist areas of Belleville, the Faubourg du Temple and the Latin Quarter. See Tombs, *War against Paris*, 27; and Jonathan M. House, *Controlling Paris: Armed Forces and Counter-Revolution, 1789-1848* (New York: NYU Press, 2014).

generated by a cheering, jeering, singing crowd.<sup>42</sup> Gay Gullickson's analysis of the 18 March crowds parses the gendered aspects of these depictions, namely how Montmartre's women were remembered as noisier than men.<sup>43</sup> In his work on the U.S. Civil War, Smith has analysed how noise is often a particularly telling marker of the aural abject, denoting what a particular listener finds objectionable about the class, gender or race of specific subjects.<sup>44</sup> On March 18, the hill of Montmartre resonated not just with the sounds of rebellion, but also sounds bourgeois commentators constructed as the abject noises of working-class female revolutionaries.

Upon this failed attempt to seize the National Guard's weaponry, the regular army and government fled and established a stronghold at Versailles, while leftists, workers and the National Guard proclaimed a 'Commune' in Paris. The city resounded with soundmarks familiar from earlier revolutionary moments, from the ringing of the alarm bell on 20 March - the 'deep plaintive lamentation of the great bell of Notre Dame' - to the battalion drums, trumpets, cannons and singing during the official inauguration of the Communard government on 27 March.<sup>45</sup> As the spring progressed, newer sounds emerged in Paris, from large-scale public funeral processions of Communard fighters to unusually hushed urban spaces where the normal din of

---

<sup>42</sup> See Georges E.B. Clemenceau, *Clemenceau: The Events of His Life as Told by Himself to His Former Secretary, Jean Martet*, trans. Milton Waldman (London: Longmans, Green, 1930): 171; and Edmond Lepelletier, *Histoire de la Commune de 1871* 3 vols, vol. 1, *Le dix-huit mars* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911-1913): 417. Cited in Gullickson, *Unruly Women of the Commune*, 31.

<sup>43</sup> In her careful reading of the manifold accounts of 18 March, Gullickson provides an excellent analysis of how accounts detailing the genesis of the Commune were subject not only to different interpretations in 1871, but how historical revision and reshaping of the narrative occurred over time. *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>44</sup> Smith's discussion focuses on how white upper-class Southerners equated quietude with virtue, whereas a woman 'unsexes herself' through unsuitable noise. Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*, 28.

<sup>45</sup> De Goncourt's reference in his journal to Notre Dame's 'great bell' refers to Emmanuel, a 13-ton *bourdon* recast in 1681 (the only bell of Notre Dame that was not removed or destroyed during the French Revolution). De Goncourt also explicitly connected hearing this alarm bell with earlier revolutions, noting that he had heard this 'lugubrious tolling' in June 1848. De Goncourt, *Paris under Siege*, 231.

Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray specifically notes the singing of the 'Marseillaise' and 'Chant du Départ', and that all these sounds blended in 'one formidable vibration'. *History of the Commune*, 128-129. Augustine-Melvine Blanchecotte likewise notes the trumpets, drums and fanfares on 27 March in *Tablettes d'une femme pendant la Commune* (Paris: Didier, 1872): 24.

factories, workshops, cafés and tourist haunts was silenced due to war.<sup>46</sup> Throughout late March and April, the Versaillais army shelled Paris for a second time, startling inhabitants already unnerved by earlier months of bombardment from the Prussians. From his residence at No. 75 Avenue Ulrich, the US minister to France Elihu Benjamin Washburne heard the omnipresent ‘roar of cannon, the whizzing of shells and the rattling of musketry’.<sup>47</sup> De Goncourt likewise tuned his ears to the Versaillais shelling, writing on 16 April of an ‘agonizing wail’ that he mistook for a moaning man but was actually caused when a ‘concave shell fragment is projected a very long distance’.<sup>48</sup> The intensive listening took its toll – Goncourt commented that Parisians ‘talk to themselves aloud like crazy people’, mouthing words like ‘*desolation, misfortune, death, ruin*’.<sup>49</sup>

During the infamous *semaine sanglante* (‘bloody week’), the Versaillais army entered western Paris early in the morning of 21 May; their infiltration of the city was marked by ominous silencing of the omnipresent cannon shots.<sup>50</sup> Communard leaders acknowledged the

---

<sup>46</sup> The daily processions began on 6 April to honor Communards killed in skirmishes with Versaillais army camped outside Paris; thousands marched through city streets to the sound of muffled drums, ‘*immortelles* in their button-holes’. Occasionally quiet strains of music burst forth ‘like the spontaneous mutterings of sorrow too long contained’. Lissagaray, *History of the Paris Commune of 1871*, 191. This scene is also mentioned in Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris*, 83 and Brown, *Mass Violence and the Commune*, 196-197. For a recollection of the unusual quiet of Paris in other places, see Elihu Benjamin Washburne, *Recollections of a Minister to France, 1869-1877*, vol. 2 (London: Sampson Low, 1887): 100.

<sup>47</sup> Washburne, *Recollections of a Minister*, 100.

<sup>48</sup> De Goncourt noted that he was engaged in a ‘serious study of acoustics’ when listening to these shells, and that a newspaper had even (inaccurately) described these wails as whistling in the grooves of the lead sheath. *Paris Under Siege*, 256.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 292. Italics in original. De Goncourt’s note about the psychological toll was written in May, after more than a month of Versaillais shelling. An extreme case of the psychological toll of this period is (potentially) the death of composer Daniel Auber; although the actual circumstances of Auber’s death were mysterious, he died sometime during this period, on May 12 or 13. Much of the press coverage of Auber’s passing blamed his death on the events of the year in general and the Commune in particular. See Gustave Lafargue, ‘Courrier des théâtres—quelques détails sur Auber racontés par M. Oscar Comettant’, *Le Figaro*, 30 June 1871; and Lilli Hegermann-Lindencrone, *In the Courts of Memory*, 334. Both are cited by Delphine Mordey, who provides an overall analysis of the circumstances and meanings attached to Auber’s death. ‘Auber’s Horses’, 214-217.

<sup>50</sup> Lissagaray, *History of the Paris Commune*, 311. Edward Malet, secretary at the British embassy, likewise noted the bombardment’s cessation as important sonic information. Using his ears to glean the changing tides of battle, he heard the crack of small arms in the Champs-Élysées - from this, he knew the Versaillais troops had entered the city. Malet, *Shifting Scenes* (London: Murray, 1901): 318-319.

breach of their defences through a resumption of noise: the *rappel* was beaten all night on 21 May in the working-class district of Batignolles. The next morning, the *tocsin* rang throughout Paris while Communard soldiers beat the *générale*.<sup>51</sup> Nathan Shepperd noted the unending drumbeats made him nervous; indeed, the Commune ministry debated sounding the *tocsin* at all, ‘on the pretext that the population must not be alarmed’.<sup>52</sup> In his sensory history of nineteenth century France, Alain Corbin explains the *tocsin* often elicited fear or panic in nineteenth-century listeners.<sup>53</sup> Anti-Communards, however, welcomed the bell as a sound of deliverance; De Goncourt described it as a ‘sinister sound which fills me with joy and marks the beginning of the end.’<sup>54</sup>

The Versaillais army pushed eastward through Paris throughout the week, engaged in bloody street by street battles with the Communards. Léopold Lambert’s ‘chrono-cartography’ layers the army’s progression across the city with mapping of the Commune’s barricades and the various chronological eras of Paris (pre/post-Haussman construction) [Fig. 3].<sup>55</sup> While Lambert’s inclusion of details about Haussman’s transformation of Paris is related to military questions about whether these changes shaped the trajectory of the Commune, the mapping of these streets provides us with certain kinds of sonic information as well (harking back to Aimée Boutin’s assertion that Haussmanian boulevards echo quite differently than older medieval streets).

Similarly, the demarcation of the barricades on this chrono-cartography provides us not just with

---

<sup>51</sup> Tombs, *War Against Paris*, 149.

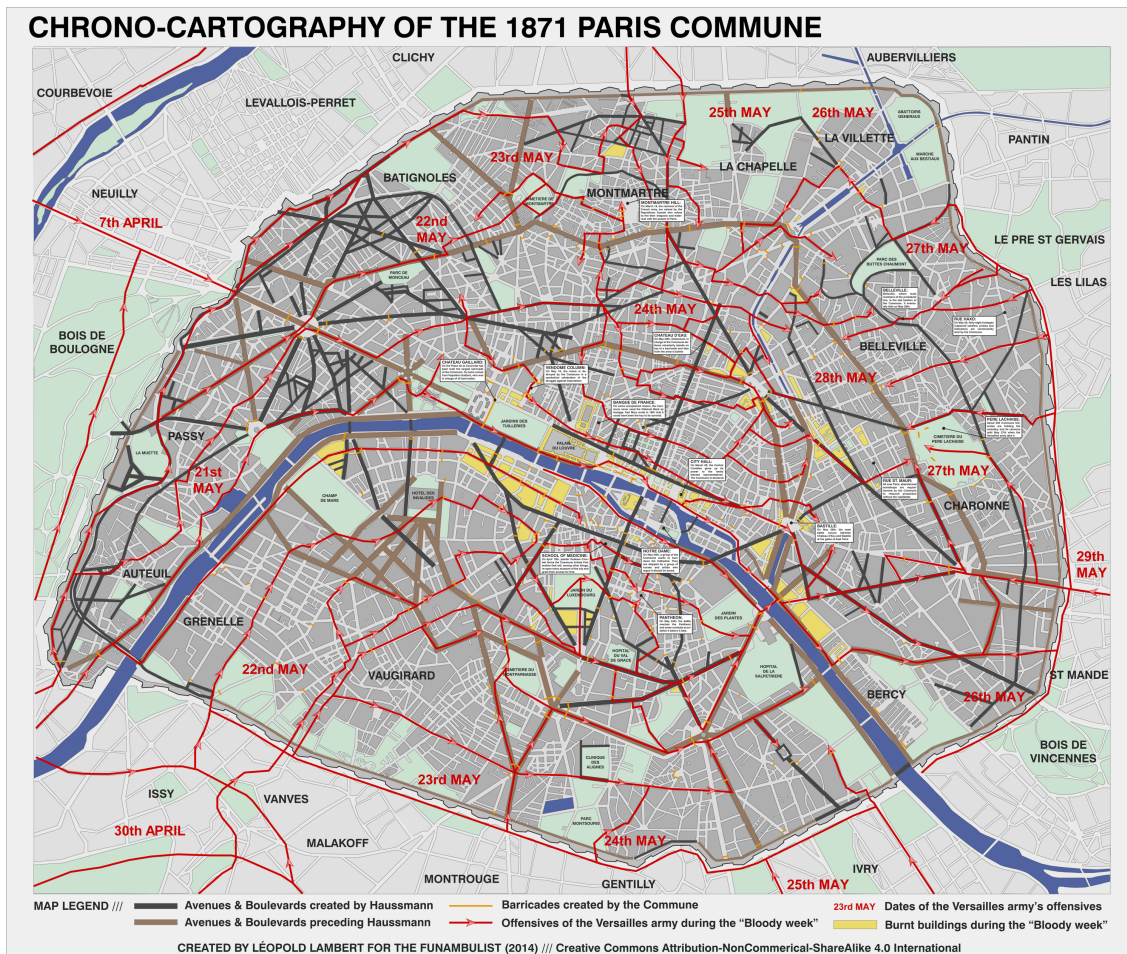
<sup>52</sup> Sheppard, *Shut Up in Paris*, 144. For more on the Ministry’s hesitancy to ring the *tocsin*, see Lissagaray, *History of the Commune*, 310.

<sup>53</sup> Corbin explains that the *tocsin* was usually hurried, redoubled, and discontinuous strokes on a small bell. See *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 192-201.

<sup>54</sup> De Goncourt also noted the sound of bugles, drums, shouts, and the call to arms sounding all over Paris. *Paris under Siege*, 294.

<sup>55</sup> Lambert’s map is a re-tooled version of a plan from 1871. For more on the different layers of Lambert’s map, see <https://thefunambulist.net/history/history-chronological-cartography-of-the-1871-paris-commune>

tactical information about how the Communards attempted to hold Paris; these yellow lines also tell us that streets around these spaces resonated with the clinking of stone, the clanging of picks



**Figure 3: 'Chrono-Cartography' of the Paris Commune**  
Léopold Lambert  
*The Funambulist*

or hammers, the reports of Versaillais fire, and the shouts of Communards as they attempted to hold these defences.<sup>56</sup>

Indeed, as the army advanced, belliphonic sounds horrified Parisian residents.

Augustine-Melvine Blanchecotte, hiding during an endless night on 23 May, detailed the terrifying combination of machine guns, cannon fire, the screams of shells, the racket of paving

<sup>56</sup> For more on the matter of construction of a barricade, see Louis Auguste Blanqui's *Instructions pour une prise d'armes* (1868).

stones, yells from combatants, and the falling of bodies.<sup>57</sup> Lilli Hegermann-Lindencrone, a singer and banker's wife, lamented her profound anxiety and concomitant inability to sleep, to function normally or even change her clothes. Music - usually a source of comfort - was unable to assuage her anxiety. On 25 May, she overheard dreadful sounds of fighting in Faubourg St. Honoré, 'the yelling and screaming of the rushing mob...the spluttering of fusillades and the guns overpower all other noises'.<sup>58</sup> Not every Parisian was traumatized by the city's chaotic sonic violence: some became accustomed to the sounds, while others found them mesmerizing. The Communard Louise Michel noted the 'beauty' of revolutionary sounds, stating: 'barbarian that I am, I love cannon, the smell of powder, machine-gun bullets in the air'.<sup>59</sup>

Reading these testimonies from *la semaine sanglante*, it is clear Parisians experienced sounds differently depending on where they lived. Certain parts of the city were decimated by fighting, others less so. Some individuals could not escape the sounds or sights or experience of violence, others were more protected. Drawing on only the accounts cited in the paragraph above, each of these three women lived in quite different locations: Blanchecotte in the 6<sup>e</sup> arrondissement near the Jardin du Luxembourg, Hegermann-Lindencrone in the 1<sup>er</sup> near the Palais-Royale, Michel in the working-class 'revolutionary hotbed' of Montmartre [Fig. 4].<sup>60</sup> Just as we *must* study sound as a critical component of understanding the impacts of violence on humans in urban spaces, we must likewise attend closely to the specifics of how geographies intersect with gender, political ideology, and class - I argue that we should consider geography as

---

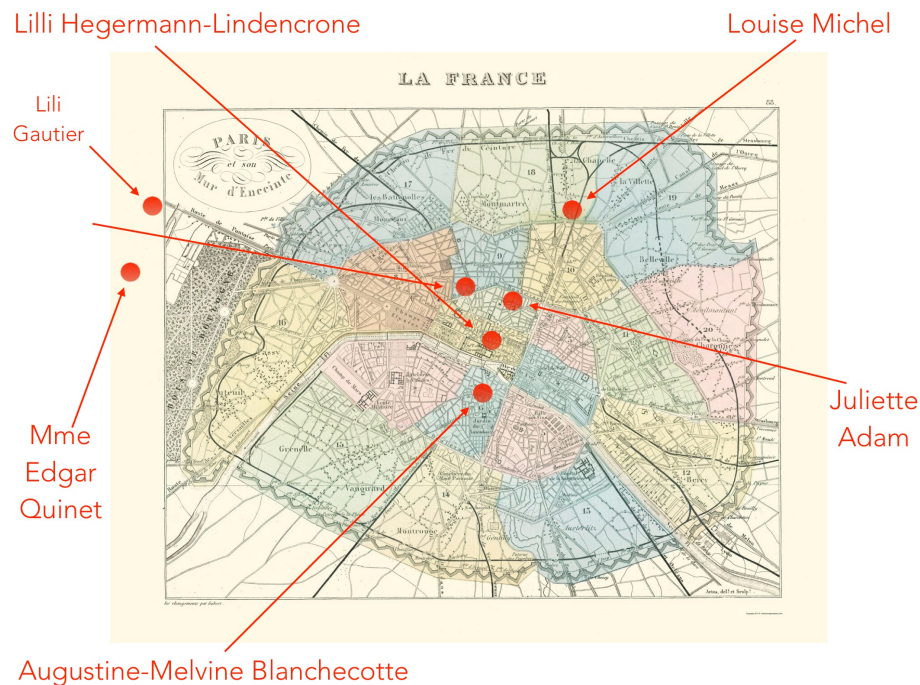
<sup>57</sup> The *mitrailleuse* was a machine gun that could fire multiple rounds in rapid succession. Blanchecotte, *Tablettes d'une femme*, 277.

<sup>58</sup> Lindencrone, *In the Courts of Memory*, 326, 334.

<sup>59</sup> Louise Michel, *The Red Virgin: Memoirs of Louise Michel*, ed. and trans. Bullitt Lowry and Elizabeth Ellington Gunter (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1981): 66.

<sup>60</sup> I have also included the homes of several other women on Figure 4, each of whom also left a testimony about the events of 1870-71.

an essential kind of intersectional identity when studying trauma. It is only through attending to many kinds of difference and careful mapping that we can assess the impacts of aural trauma.



**Figure 4:** Towards a Geography of Trauma

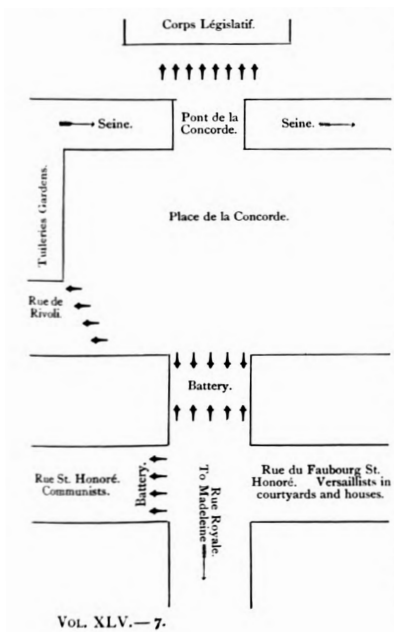
Fires swept Paris during the *semaine sanglante*, filling the city with ash and smoke [for detail on the location of the fires, refer to **Fig. 3**].<sup>61</sup> This foul miasma rendered sound a more cogent means of information than the uncertainties of sight - Parisians strained to hear gunfire around the corner or troops progressing down the street, knowing sonic vigilance would increase their chances of survival.<sup>62</sup> This evokes Martin Kaltenecker's writing on sonic warscapes, where he defines a 'pathological' wartime hearing, a constant listening through which a subject strains to hear and interpret sounds.<sup>63</sup> This kind of obsessive wartime listening is narrated almost step-

<sup>61</sup> Although my analysis foregrounds sound as a means of trauma, analyzing the sensory impact of the Commune's fires - and the ways lack of vision impacted Parisians - aligns with David Howe's call for attention to the interplay (rather than isolation) of the senses. See Howe, *Sensual Relations*, xi.

<sup>62</sup> Daughtry discusses this same effect in the context of the Iraq War. See Daughtry, *Listening to War*, 33-36.

<sup>63</sup> Kaltenecker, 'What Scenes! What Sounds', 9.

by-step in the account by war correspondent Archibald Forbes; Forbes describes not only his own sleeplessness on May 23 as belliphonic sounds penetrated his hotel on the rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin, he also describes his evening walks in such rich detail that they are nearly an instant-by-instant narration of how he *listens* to Parisian streets as he makes his way through the wartorn city [Fig. 5].



**Figure 5:** Detail from Archibald Forbes on the placement of guns in the Place de la Concorde  
'What I Saw of the Paris Commune'  
*Century Magazine* 44 (1892)

The loss of vision from the fires caused confusion amongst city residents, intensifying the psychological impact of belliphonic noises.<sup>64</sup> Benoît Malon, a Communard, described the shells, clanging bayonets and gatling guns mixed with cries of agony in 'an atmosphere of fire, under a crimson sky, divided by billowing flames that rise above the burning palaces'. The horrendous combined effects of these sounds, sights and smells, Malon wrote, 'reduced even the strongest

<sup>64</sup> In Susanne Cusick's analysis of music in U.S. detention camps, her examples demonstrate that loud music was often used in tandem with some sort of visual deprivation (such as strobe lights or rooms painted black) in order to intensify the psychological impacts of these devices. See Cusick, 'You are in a place that is out of the world'.

men to a stupor'.<sup>65</sup> Edwin Child's diary entry for '1/2 past 9' on 24 May similarly noted the fire, cannons, *mitrailleuses*, fusillade, and bombs: it seemed 'as if all the powers of hell were let loose upon the town, all day we could hear that terrible din that never ceased for an instant not knowing at what moment our own turn might arrive'.<sup>66</sup>

After the Versaillais army's massacre of the remaining Communards in Père Lachaise on 28 May, Parisians moved uneasily through their uncanny city. Though the conflict was officially over, Émile Zola recalled the sounds of gunfire still resonated throughout the streets of Paris in June, as army firing squads meted out 'justice'. After death by firing squad, countless Communard corpses were buried en masse at La Roquette, the École Militaire, the Parc Monceaux, Lebau Barracks, the Luxembourg Gardens, the Jardin des Plantes and other sites.<sup>67</sup> Carts and wagons filled with corpses rattled across the city for weeks. In her entry for 13 June, Augustine-Melvine Blanchecotte specifically focused on horrifying new sounds in early summer of 1871:

Between midnight and one o'clock a.m., singular rolling sounds of a muted, strange and mournful omnibus, a sound which cannot be mistaken once it has been heard; these are, throughout Paris, the exhumations of the dead... [the] sound of shells, which I thought

---

<sup>65</sup> Malin, *La troisième défaite du prolétariat français* (Paris: Guillaume, 1871): 466. Cited in Brown, *Mass Violence and Commune*, 192.

<sup>66</sup> Diary held in King's College, London. Cited in Joanna Richardson, *Paris under Siege, 1870-1871* (London: The Folio Society, 1982): 182-183.

The sounds of Paris's fiery destruction were even rendered into musical metaphor by actress Marie Colombier, who wrote that 'the fire roared like a basso continuo, interrupted from time to time by sharp crackling sounds'. Colombier echoed typical anti-Communard propaganda concerning the *pétroleuse* (a myth that working class women set the fires in Paris), stating 'there was nothing but the sarabande of the *pétroleuses* round the ruins, trampling the resplendent shreds of that dazzling and gallant glory: The Second Empire'. See Colombier, *Mémoires. Fin d'Empire* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1898): 319-20. For more on the myth of the *pétroleuse*, see Gullickson, *Unruly Women*, 159-190.

<sup>67</sup> Exact numbers are very difficult to ascertain and contested by both sides of the conflict, but the Versaillais government murdered somewhere between 10,000 to 30,000 Parisians during the repression of the Commune. Many of these executions were settled in prevotal courts, which dispensed the death penalty with no review. Lissagaray, *History of the Paris Commune*, 383-385.

Other Communards were taken to internment camps outside Paris; renowned photographer Félix Nadar recalled the sights and sounds of Communard prisoners marching to camps where many were deported or executed. Nadar [pseudonym of Gaspard-Félix Tournachon], 'Enquête sur la Commune', *Revue blanche* (15 March to 1 April 1897): 228-230. Quoted in Laure Godineau, *La Commune de Paris par ceux qui l'on vécue* (Paris: Parigramme, 2010): 233-34; and Brown, *Mass Violence and Commune*, 198.

incomparable, was only innocent music beside these most recent noises. The most heartbreaking, the most unforgettable has been - between the Pantheon and the Luxembourg Gardens - these nocturnal noises, for an entire week, these incessant shots of the firing squad...'.<sup>68</sup>

Unable to sleep, Blanchecotte notes the pretense by the French government that these dreadful sounds were unheard, without witnesses'.<sup>69</sup> In reality, though the ongoing massacre was hidden under cover of darkness, Parisians could not close their ears to these macabre sounds, nor to accompanying signs from the other senses. Lissagaray noted 'flesh-flies' and dead birds filled the city, and a 'decayed, sickening odour arose' from the Tour Saint-Jacques.<sup>70</sup> A 'cadaverous' smell likewise lingered along the southwest edge of the city well into June.

In fact, the difference between the sounds and sights of violence was one of the strongest markers of trauma for Parisians (versus those outside the city). The rest of the world was privy to sights - rather than sounds or smells - of catastrophic violence. As Howard Brown analyses in his study of visual representations of the Commune, graphic lithographs of corpses and executions - 'every gory aspect described in shocking detail' - fed an avid desire for macabre sights of a society coming undone.<sup>71</sup> After May 1871, tourists bought photographs of Paris's smoldering ruins, and the photographed corpses of Communards were likewise readily available for purchase. Intriguingly, these images perpetuated an iconography of violence that lacks the sounds (and smells) of the first-hand accounts. Smith's work reminds us that images retain 'tantalizing traces' of the sonic, but it is essential to consider that the very technologies that

---

<sup>68</sup> Blanchecotte, *Tablettes d'une femme*, 348-349: 'Cette nuit, entre minuit et une heure, singuliers roulements d'omnibus sourds, lugubres, étranges, auxquels on ne peut se méprendre quand on les a une fois entendus; ce sont, à travers Paris, des déterrements de morts...Ce bruit d'obus, que je croyais incomparable, n'était qu'une musique innocente à côté de ces derniers bruits. Le plus navrant, le plus inoubliable a été—entre Panthéon et Luxembourg—le bruit nocturne, tout une semaine, des feux incessants de peloton, ces rapides décisions de la justice humaine...'.  
<sup>69</sup> Blanchecotte, *Ibid.*, 349: 'La population est suppose endormie. Bienheureux, oh! oui, bienheureux ceux qui dorment! L'affreuse besogne s' imagine être silencieuse, comme elle s' imagine être sans témoins'.

<sup>70</sup> Lissagaray, *History of the Paris Commune*, 390-393 and *Le Temps*.  
<sup>71</sup> Brown, *Mass Violence and the Commune*, 177-191.

preserved the visible violence of the year's events often occluded the sonic traumas endured by those within earshot.

### III. Sound and Nineteenth-Century Trauma

Ample testimony indicates that the sounds of 1870-71 lingered in the ears and minds of Parisians. Émile Zola described gunfire echoing in the streets well into June 1871, commenting that millions of Parisians were left with nightmares and terrors that could only begin to heal once the sounds ceased. Blanchecotte similarly noted that despite the end of the conflict, 'the cannon's still lingered in the ears, the shaking of the spirits did not ebb away and the despondency of the dead city persisted'.<sup>72</sup> Colette Wilson has analysed how the noisy fireworks of the 1878 Exposition Universelle - which sounded like bombshells - may have been triggering for listeners who had experienced the sound of gunfire in precisely the same Parisian spaces.<sup>73</sup>

#### A. Contexts: Madness and Politics

Scientific reports, government statistics, memoirs and fictionalized accounts alike all suggest the immense impact of the year's events, both physically and psychologically. French psychiatrist Bénédict-Augustin Morel, director of the asylum at Saint-Yon in Rouen, observed numerous cases of men and women in states of terror due to the invasion by Prussian troops in late 1870. Intriguingly, Morel noted the terror of his patients was intensified by how belliphonic sound traveled in the isolated topography of the Pays de Caux plateau (department of Seine-

---

<sup>72</sup> Blanchecotte, *Tablettes d'une femme*, vii: 'La vibration du canon durait encore dans les oreilles, l'ébranlement des esprits ne s'apaisait point, l'accablement de la ville morte persistait malgré le réveil des consciences arrachées aux torpeurs récentes', Hegermann-Lindencrone, who fled Paris as soon as *la semaine sanglante* was over, likewise noted she could still hear screams and bursting shells in her mind by mid-June. *In the Courts of Memory*, 335.

<sup>73</sup> Wilson, *Paris and the Commune*, 82.

Maritime, Normandy).<sup>75</sup> Many Parisians were likewise hospitalized; in an 1872 presentation to the Académie des sciences, a Dr Laurent noted the explosion of more than 1,700 cases of *folie* (madness) in 1870-71. Laurent also detailed that 13 per cent of those hospitalized between July 1870 and July 1871 were interned due to ‘diseases’ related to the events of the year.<sup>76</sup> During the Commune in particular, Laurent reported that French asylums took in hundreds of patients who had become mad due to the year’s events. These statistics are tantalizingly incomplete - and linked with mental illness and insanity in problematic ways, as discussed below - but they nevertheless suggest that many Parisians found the sights, sounds and experiences of the *année terrible* unbearable, some to the point of hospitalization.

Some French physicians, historians and other writers turned to preexistent psychological and medical models in an attempt to reckon with the events of 1870-71. As Catherine Glazer summarizes in her analysis, a number of authors connected *l’année terrible* with madness by borrowing early nineteenth-century concepts about *folie* by Étienne-Jean Georget and Jean-Étienne Dominique Esquirol.<sup>77</sup> Morel, however, argued that the year’s horrible events had particularly augmented a distinct type of intense anxiety: ‘delirious panophobia’. In a report read to the Société médico-psychologique on 26 June 1871, Morel noted of these ‘panophobes’ that

---

<sup>75</sup> Bénédicte-Augustin Morel, *Du délire panophobique des aliénés gémissants: Influence des événements de la guerre sur la manifestation de cette forme de folie. Mémoire lu à la Société médico-psychologique dans la séance du 26 Juin 1871* (Paris: E. Donnaud, 1871): 26: ‘les habitations, entourées de grands arbres pour les préserver des vents de mer, sont assez généralement séparées les uns des autres. D’une ferme à l’autre il était parfois difficile de savoir ce qui se passait, et cet isolement n’empêchait pas la circulation des bruits les plus alarmants’.

<sup>76</sup> Breaking down his numbers more precisely, he notes that the percentage was about 15 per cent for men and 9 per cent for women. Laurent’s report appeared in the *Revue médicale* of 28 September 1872, and was then quoted in Claude-Joseph Tissot’s *La folie considérée surtout dans ses rapports avec la psychologie normale* (Paris: A. Marescq Ainé, 1877): 396-397. Both of these works are cited in Catherine Glazer, ‘De la Commune comme maladie mentale’, *Romantisme* 48 (1985): 63-70. One of the contested elements was that (allegedly) there was a paradoxical decrease in the total number of patients housed in French asylums; as Glazer analyses, commentators such as Tissot attributed this (in an obviously biased reading) to the fact that most Communards must have been ‘mad’ and thus deportations and executions lessened the total number of asylum inmates.

<sup>77</sup> See Étienne-Jean Georget, *De la Folie: Considérations sur cette maladie* (Paris: Chez Crevot, 1820) and Jean-Étienne Dominique Esquirol, *Des maladies mentales considérées sous les rapports médical, hygiénique et médico-légal* (Bruxelles: Méline, Cans et Compagnie, 1838).

‘their faces grimace like they will cry, but they do not shed tears. Some squat with their clothes raised above their heads. The only sign of life that they demonstrate is to moan in an incessant rhythm accompanied by automatic gestures that become *tics* in time with their moans’. Morel added that some individuals who had spent months in this state lapsed into ‘an extreme immobility, a lack of motion that I find almost cadaverous in certain cases’.<sup>78</sup> Struck by the intense terror of these patients, Morel noted panophobia was not a new condition, nor one solely caused by war. When he had observed similar symptoms earlier in his career, Morel had confused this delirium with madness. Now, in 1870-71, Morel understood this panophobia as markedly different from either ancient ideas of melancholy or the kind of depressive state (*lypémanie*) more recently defined by Esquirol.<sup>79</sup>

Many writers questioned whether people who are already ‘mad’ take part in revolutions, or whether revolutions cause individuals with a predisposition to insanity to fall ill.<sup>80</sup> Suspicion of two groups - ‘pathological crowds’ and the working classes - drove much post-1871 analysis. Comparing adherents to a cause to people driven insane by religious fervour, Claude-Joseph Tissot and Claude-Étienne Bourdin described the revolutionary crowd as mad. They suggested political upheaval was the cause of mental disorder.<sup>81</sup> The historian Hippolyte Taine forged an influential ‘biohistorical’ model of revolutionary crowds as pathological, monstrous, bestial forces of chaos.<sup>82</sup> A plethora of works on crowd psychology appeared in the 1880s and 1890s,

---

<sup>78</sup> Morel, *Du délire panophobique*, 4.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11. For a description of *lypémanie*, see Esquirol, *Des maladies mentales*.

<sup>80</sup> See, for example the monograph by psychiatrist Claude-Étienne Bourdin, *Influence des événements politiques sur la production de la folie* (Paris: Delahaye, 1873). Cited in Glazer, ‘De la Commune’, 64.

<sup>81</sup> Bourdin, *Influence des événements politiques*, 10; and Tissot, *La Folie*, 388; cited in Glazer, ‘Ibid’, 66.

<sup>82</sup> Taine’s work appeared in the years immediately after the Commune; see Hippolyte Taine, *Les origines de la France contemporaine*, vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1878). The literature on Taine is voluminous, but for an intriguing analysis connecting dance/gesture to social and political movements, see Kélina Gotman, *Choreomania: Dance and Disorder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 112-138.

including Gustave Le Bon's *Psychologie des foules*.<sup>83</sup> Other French writers characterized Communards as the 'dangerous classes', drawing on degeneracy theories by authors such as Morel.<sup>84</sup> The physician Jean-Baptiste Vincent Laborde's 1872 monograph on 'morbid psychology' and Parisian insurrection similarly defined *maladie mentale* as a kind of collective social insanity that could cause individuals to create societal disasters such as the Commune.<sup>85</sup> In their 1905 work *La contagion mentale*, the doctors Auguste Vigouroux and Paul Juquelier argued that psychological states were contagious.<sup>86</sup>

Moreover, some writers questioned whether individuals exposed to intense fear and terror might transmit these states to their descendants. Esquirol, in his influential 1838 definition of *lypémanie* - a specific subset of monomania, namely an extreme melancholy or sadness - not only noted that political events could greatly increase both monomania and the number of suicides, but that children conceived or born during the horrors of 1793 were much more likely to exhibit mental health problems.<sup>87</sup> Later authors such as Morel and Legrand du Saulle revisited Esquirol's ideas; Legrand du Saulle noted 'terror can not only change the intellectual state of present generations, but also weigh heavily (by means of heredity) on the mental dispositions of future generations'.<sup>88</sup> Though Legrand du Saulle was writing within the framework of

---

<sup>83</sup> Many of these works were more or less directly in reaction to the events of the Commune. See Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie des Foules* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1895), cited in Glazer, 'De la Commune', 68.

<sup>84</sup> See Bénédict-Augustin Morel, *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'espèce humaine* (Paris: Baillière, 1857): 390-391. Cited in Glazer, 'Ibid', 67-68.

<sup>85</sup> Jean-Baptiste Vincent Laborde, *Les hommes et les actes de l'insurrection de Paris devant la psychologie morbide: Lettres à M. le docteur Moreau* (Paris: Baillière, 1872): 3. For an analysis of how Laborde's study of the movements of bodies is connected to nineteenth-century concerns about mobs, see Gotman, *Choreomania*, 116-117.

<sup>86</sup> August Vigouroux and Paul Juquelier, *La contagion mentale* (Paris: Octave Doin, 1905). The concept of emotions (and indeed, trauma itself) as contagious continued well into World War I. For more on this period, see Rogers, *Resonant Recoveries*, chapter 1.

<sup>87</sup> See Esquirol, *Des maladies mentales*, 67. Several of Esquirol's ideas are explicitly cited in Morel's June 1871 report on 'panophobia' and the events of 1870-71; see *Du délire panophobique*, 27, 38-39.

<sup>88</sup> Legrand du Saulle was specifically speaking of the terror caused by revolutions. See *Le délire des persecutions*, 512: 'la terreur peut non-seulement modifier l'état intellectuel des générations présentes, mais s'appesantir encore lourdement, par la voie de l'hérédité, sur les dispositions mentales des générations futures'.

‘predisposition’ and degeneracy theories, his musings might nonetheless evoke (to us) hints of current epigenetic theories that suggest that trauma’s effects can indeed be passed down through multiple generations.<sup>89</sup>

## B. Contexts: Early Trauma Theories

Within the chaotic soundscape of Paris in 1870-71, eminent French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot began to transform his pivotal ideas on hysteria into early medicalized discourse on trauma. Charcot gave his first lecture on hysteria at the Salpêtrière in June 1870, just before the outbreak of the war; the conflict interrupted his teachings for almost two years.<sup>90</sup> By the late 1870s, Charcot began to work on ‘male hysteria’— variously characterized as ‘*névrose*

---

<sup>89</sup> Legrand du Saulle compared the effect of terror to that of a child born to a parent addicted to alcohol and noted that individuals who were easily impressionable, hypochondriac, melancholic or suffered from other hereditary mental issues were particularly susceptible to terror. Some of this connects to his note that traumatic responses to the January 1871 shelling were not homogenous; he mentions that certain Parisians maintained a sort of patriotic resilience through the intense cold, bombardment, siege, and epidemics of January 1871. *Le délire des persecutions*, 500-501, 512.

The idea that certain individuals were more ‘susceptible’ to trauma - usually with concomitant stigmatization, accusations of weakness or cowardice, etc. - was still very much part of the discourse during World War I. For a detailed study of how World War I-era conceptions of shell shock reacted to earlier ideas about hysteria, heredity, social class and physical/mental fitness in a British context, see Peter Leese, *Shell Shock: Traumatic Neurosis and the British Soldiers of the First World War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002).

Elizabeth Rosner gives a cogent introduction to the intergenerational transmission of trauma in her work *Survivor Café: The Legacy of Trauma and the Labyrinth of Memory* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint Press, 2017). Many scholars are working on epigenetic transmission of trauma; for two important studies, see B.T. Heijmans, E.W. Tobi, A.D. Stein, H. Putter, G.J. Blauw, E.S. Susser, L.H. Lumey, ‘Persistent Epigenetic Differences Associated with Prenatal Exposure to Famine in Humans’, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA*, 105/ 44 (4 Nov. 2008): 17046–17049 and Rachel Yehuda and Amy L. Lehrner, ‘Cultural Trauma and Epigenetic Inheritance’, *Development and Psychopathology* 30/5 (2018): 1469-2198. For work on nineteenth-century war’s potential effects on subsequent generations, see Dora L. Costa, Noelle Yetter and Heather DeSomer, ‘Intergenerational Transmission of Paternal Trauma Among US Civil War Ex-POWs’, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 115/44 (Oct. 2018): 11215-11220.

<sup>90</sup> During the January 1871 bombardment, a shell passed through Dr. Charcot’s carriage windows as he drove by the Jardin des Plantes. See this (potentially apocryphal) account by his son Jean-Baptiste Charcot, ‘Charcot in the Franco-Prussian War’, *Mil Surg* 37 (1926): 153-154. Cited in Olivier Walusinski, ‘Neurology and Neurologists during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871)’, in *War Neurology*, eds Laurent Tatu and Julien Bogousslavsky (Basel: Karger, 2016): 88.

Charcot was tantalizingly close-mouthed about *l’année terrible*: he only referred to the cataclysms as ‘the events about which you know’. See Jean-Martin Charcot, *Léçons du mardi à la Salpêtrière* (Paris: Publications du ‘Progrès médical’, 1889). For more on Charcot’s lack of discussion of the Commune and Siege, see Glazer, ‘De la Commune’, 63; and Christopher Goetz, Michel Bonduelle and Toby Gelfand, *Charcot: Constructing Neurology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995): 179.

*traumatique, hystérie traumatique, hystéro-traumatique, or hystéro-neurasthénie traumatique*'.<sup>91</sup>

In around 90 case studies of primarily working-class men, Charcot observed paralyses, contractures, sensitivity or lack thereof to touch, melancholia and alterations in vision after an accident—both physical symptoms and nervous crises prompted by a triggering traumatic event.<sup>92</sup> Micale points out the time lag between *l'année terrible* and Charcot's first writings on traumatic male hysteria is not surprising (roughly the same amount of time elapsed between American involvement in Vietnam and the formulation of the diagnostic category of post-traumatic stress disorder).<sup>93</sup> It seems probable that the events of *l'année terrible* played a central role in the development of Charcot's theories.

One of the most provocative narratives in Charcot's 1889 *Leçons du mardi à la Salpêtrière* concerned 'D...cy', a 45-year-old former soldier traumatized after being struck by lightning.<sup>94</sup> 'D...cy's long military career ranged from the Battle of Puebla (1863) – 'where the thunder roared as loudly as the cannons' - to multiple campaigns of the Franco-Prussian War, to action in the Versaillais army during *la semaine sanglante*. He was wounded during the final battle in Père-Lachaise.<sup>95</sup> During Charcot's questioning, the patient recounted the sound of the

---

<sup>91</sup> Charcot's work on male hysteria was preceded by Pierre Briquet's *Traité clinique et thérapeutique de l'hystérie* (Paris: J.-B Baillière et fils, 1859) and August Klein's *De hystérie chez l'homme* (Paris: Octave Doin, 1880). For a basic account of Charcot's work, see Goetz, Bonduelle and Gelfand, *Charcot: Constructing Neurology*. For a specific discussion of Charcot and male hysteria, see Micale, 'Jean-Martin Charcot and *les névroses traumatiques*', 115-139. For more on the history of hysteria on France, see Micale, *Hysterical Men: The Hidden History of Male Nervous Illness* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2008).

<sup>92</sup> Micale tallies 60 case reports of male hysteria between 1878 and 1893 (28 in *Leçons du mardi* from 1887 to 1889, then several more cases in early 1890s and then some cases not published but in archival records). Micale notes that socioeconomic identity was important, since all but five of Charcot's case studies were laborers, peasants, etc., not male bourgeois subjects. Micale, *Hysterical Men*, 123, 130.

Charcot did believe there was a hereditary component to hysteria; see, for example, his note regarding the 'influence fatale de l'hérédité', when talking to a young man with a tic from Normandy. *Leçons du mardi*, 126.

<sup>93</sup> Micale, 'Jean-Martin Charcot and *les névroses traumatiques*', 122.

<sup>94</sup> While Charcot claims D...cy's symptoms are neurasthénie cérébro-spinale, what he describes very much sounds like depression prompted by grief (D...cy's mother had died the year before). Charcot, *Leçons de mardi*, vol. 2, 437-438.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 437: 'où la foudre, dit-il tonnait autant que le canon...il prit part à la prise du cimetière du Père-Lachaise où "les obus pleuvaient dru".'

thunderclap ‘was like a cannon shot, accompanied by the clatter of a thousand plates falling to the ground.’ This sound caused D...cy to ‘tremble and cry like a child’. Charcot pointed out this was not a man known for nervous susceptibility to the sounds of war, writing that ‘D...cy’ ‘had not cried or trembled at the Battle of Puebla when thunder and cannon had raged together, nor did he cry at Père Lachaise, when a shell burst quite close to him’. The thunderclap and lightning, however, radically transformed him into one of Charcot’s most demonstrative examples, a man who ‘shakes, stammers and bursts into tears incessantly’.<sup>96</sup> Charcot did not pursue the question of whether ‘D...cy’s’ earlier experiences might have precipitated the traumatic reaction to the lightning strike; he was primarily interested in considering how electricity might have prompted the neurological symptoms. Yet what *is* striking in this case study is Charcot’s casual admission that D...cy had already been exposed to much more ‘dramatic’ and ‘terrifying’ belliphonic sounds. Other than ‘D...cy’, few of Charcot’s case studies made any explicit connection between ‘hysteria’ and wartime traumas. Yet through Charcot’s work on male hysteria, he established several important observations on trauma: that an event or injury may create a loss of sensation seemingly unrelated to any physical wound, and that patients often suffered a delay between the injury and the onset of symptoms.<sup>97</sup>

Charcot was not the only French neurologist concerned with new understandings of male hysteria at this time: 16 French medical dissertations on male hysteria appeared between 1875 and 1895. Numerous researchers - most notably Emile Duponchel in the 1880s and 1890s - searched for hysteria in the army in particular, while civilians remained largely understudied as

---

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 440: [D...cy] mais ce que je me rappelle bien c’est que le bruit ressemblait à un coup de canon accompagné du fracas que feraient en tombant sur le sol des milliers d’assiettes...[M. Charcot] il n’avait ni tremblé, ni pleuré à Puebla alors que tonnerre et canon à l’envi faisaient rage, il n’avait pas pleuré non plus au Père Lachaise, lorsqu’un obus est venu éclater près de lui. Mais depuis qu’il a été « touché » par la foudre, une transformation radicale s’est produite en lui : le voilà devenu émotif à l’excès, pleurard ; désormais sous l’influence de la moindre émotion on le voit fondre en larmes’.

<sup>97</sup> Micale, *Hysterical Men*, 140.

victims of wartime traumas.<sup>98</sup> Pierre Janet, who studied under Charcot at the Salpêtrière in the late 1880s and early 1890s, penned an influential series of publications in the 1890s on ‘automatic’ (involuntary) actions and obsessions or fixations (*idées fixes*), as well as ‘painful memories subconsciously fixed in the psyche but inaccessible due to dissociation’.<sup>99</sup> In *Névroses et idées fixes* (1898), Janet detailed the physical and psychological problems of a former French soldier who contracted frostbite in 1870. Several years later, a terrifying incident caused the man to develop night terrors and unusual feelings of cold in precisely the same location as the earlier frostbite. Janet focused on the confusing connection between these two seemingly unrelated events, noting ‘an emotion weakens the strength or resistance of these patients and brings about the development, the manifestation of another long-ago phenomenon, caused by a much older emotion which (remaining latent in the brain) was more valid’.<sup>100</sup>

Both Charcot and Janet analysed former soldiers’ experiences of traumatic circumstances related to the war - whether sonic traumas or a physical injury such as frostbite - that were then reignited by later events. Both doctors were clearly intrigued by the delay in onset and the perplexing connections between seemingly unrelated events. Yet they did not pursue their inquiries in ways that clearly parsed how these individuals were traumatized by intrusive thoughts and arousal symptoms. Moreover, Charcot and Janet were silent (perhaps unaware of)

---

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, Léopold Jannet, *De l’hystérie chez l’homme* (Paris: Medical Dissertation, 1880); Victor-Félix Quinqueton, *De l’hystérie chez l’homme* (Paris: Medical Dissertation, 1885); Emile Duponchel, ‘L’Hystérie dans l’armée’, *Revue de médecine*, 6 June 1886; and Emile Duponchel, *Traité de Médecine Légale militaire* (Paris: Octave Doin, 1890).

<sup>99</sup> Janet published a number of works on this topic in the 1890s, but see especially *L’Automatisme psychologique* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1889), *Névroses et idées fixes* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1898) and *L’État mental des hystériques* (1894). Micale describes Janet’s ‘dissociation’ as a ‘splitting of the personality, as the primary psychopathological result of these memories’, *Traumatic Pasts*, 14.

<sup>100</sup> Janet noted the soldier did not have any ‘hereditary disposition’ towards mental illness. *Névroses et idées fixes*, 300-302: ‘C’est là, comme nous l’avons souvent dit, un fait extrêmement fréquent: une émotion affaiblit la force de résistance de ces malades et amène le développement, la manifestation d’un autre phénomène quelquefois bien antérieur, provoqué par une émotion bien plus ancienne et qui était resté latent tant que le cerveau était plus valide’.

the ways in which non-combatants could have similarly triggering experiences. Ultimately, these accounts offer tantalizing evidence, but also demonstrate ways in which medical discourse was limited by contemporary cultural frameworks.

#### IV. Postlude: Memory, Sound, and Silence in Parisian Spaces

The end of *la semaine sanglante* in late May 1871 prompted a torrent of testimonies, memoirs, and other texts on this year; Howard Brown notes these often ‘deeply personal accounts’ gave an ‘unprecedented sense of what Parisians had experienced both physically and emotionally’.<sup>101</sup> The flood of accounts demonstrates the extent to which *l’année terrible* served as what Jeffrey C. Alexander has defined as a ‘collective trauma’, a horrendous event that leaves ‘indelible marks’ upon a group.<sup>102</sup> Though the marks left on Parisians were obvious, individual testimonies reveal a vast spectrum of traumatic responses, shaped by political ideology, geography, gender, class, and other intersectional characteristics. Indeed, Mark Micale reminds us that individuals may experience trauma ‘nontraumatically, or in ways not deemed medically noteworthy in their time’.<sup>103</sup> This spectrum of responses makes it impossible to assess all

---

<sup>101</sup> Brown also calls attention to the uniquely detailed, graphic, and personal nature of these accounts. See *Mass Violence and the Self*, 191.

<sup>102</sup> For more on the connections between trauma and testimony, see Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* and Cathy Caruth’s edited volume *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*; Caruth’s introductory essay and the chapters by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub are particularly focused on testimony. Alexander, *Cultural Trauma*, 1-3. Alexander also incorporates ideas of Arthur Neal from *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Extraordinary Events in the American Experience* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998). Kai Erikson has also demonstrated how a disaster or other event might connect a community but can also damage the ‘tissues’ of a community, just like a wound to a body. Erikson, *Everything in Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976): 154. See also Erikson, ‘Notes on Trauma and Community’, in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995): 183–99.

<sup>103</sup> In terms of political ideology, the accounts from supporters of the Commune versus supporters of the Versailles government differed radically in how they constructed narratives of *l’année terrible*. For more on trauma’s ‘spectrum of responses’, see Micale, *Traumatic Pasts*, 20.

contemporaneous experience within a traumatic lens, yet many Parisians were clearly traumatized by the events and sensory memories of this year of war.<sup>104</sup>

Concerned by the content of certain narratives, the Third Republic passed a decree in December 1871 ‘banning all representations of the Commune’ which censors believed ‘upset public order’.<sup>105</sup> This attempt at official silencing reminds us of later twentieth-century silences, from a Freudian repressive silence to what Dori Laub has analysed as the struggles of witnessing versus ‘not telling’ in relation to the Holocaust to what Cizmic has (in a later Soviet context) noted as politicized silence.<sup>106</sup> Government responses to the Commune – ranging from the covert burials of 1871 to disputes over the actual number of casualties to later attempts to police speech about the Commune – made it even more difficult for some Parisians to process their trauma or mourn loved ones buried in unknown places.<sup>107</sup> Despite such pressures from the Third Republic, by the 1910s there were thousands of accounts of *l’année terrible*.

---

<sup>104</sup> Communarde Louise Michel’s memoirs offer a particularly fascinating example of traumatic witness: she pieces together anecdotes non-chronologically ‘as they come to mind’, moving from historical events to dreams to poetry to recurrent exclamations of grief. See *Mémoires de Louise Michel écrits par elle-même*. Her writings are translated and (heavily) edited by Bullitt Lowry and Elizabeth Ellington Gunter as *The Red Virgin: Memoirs of Louise Michel* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1981). As editors, Lowry and Gunter appear to have erased evidence of Michel’s trauma. The preface explains they took Michel’s nonlinear narrative and combined repetitions (including those related to grief), removed interpolations and reordered it to create a chronological account.

<sup>105</sup> Wilson, *Paris and the Commune*, 36-37.

<sup>106</sup> See Dori Laub, ‘Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle’, in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth, 61-75 (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 64 and Cizmic, *Performing Pain*, 5.

<sup>107</sup> Scholars have analysed how the lack of a body - or a specific space, or a monument - can interfere with the mourning process. Sigmund Freud touched on this in his 1917 essay ‘On Mourning and Melancholia’. See Freud, ‘Mourning and Melancholia’, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachy, vol. 14 (London: Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1953-1974): 243-258. For work on Freud which connects his ideas to societal mourning and memorials, see Vamik Volkan, ‘Not Letting Go: From Individual Perennial Mourners to Societies with Entitlement Ideologies’, in *On Freud’s ‘Mourning and Melancholia’*, eds Leticia Glöcker Fiorini, Thierry Bokanowski, and Sergio Lewkowicz, foreword by Ethel Spector Person (London: The International Psychoanalytic Association, 2007): 90-109. For a study which discusses World War I mourning practices (which sometimes necessitated mourning without a body), see Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Many scholars have also focused on how *disappeared* bodies affect mourners; see, for example, Cecilia Taiana, ‘Mourning the Dead, Mourning the Disappeared: The Enigma of the Absent-Presence’, *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 95/ 6 (Dec. 2014): 1087-1107.

As Parisians moved beyond the immediate aftermath of the year's events, many used testimonies not just to represent the past but also in hopes of controlling the future: Alexander reminds us that collective traumas both irrevocably change memories and also alter future identity in 'fundamental and irrevocable ways'.<sup>108</sup> Accounts of this year demonstrate Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's assertion that 'issues of biography and history are neither simply represented or simply reflected, but are reinscribed, translated, radically rethought and fundamentally worked over' by texts.<sup>109</sup> Memories of the sights, sounds and smells of *l'année terrible* – often shaped by the unique ways sensory memory intersects with traumatic memory – were essential to Parisians as they attempted to construct both national post-Empire identities and individual post-traumatic identities. As Parisians remembered, they fought over these memories through the very sounds and spaces where they could remember or reconnect with the traumatic past. As Paris's residents negotiated these pasts, the city itself bore not just visual reminders of the events, but places which echoed of remembered gunfire, screams, or shelling.

### A. Mapping Sonic Memories?

Two sites - the *mur des fédérés* (Wall of the Communard troops) in Père Lachaise cemetery and the Basilica of Sacré-Cœur on the butte of Montmartre - demonstrate how spaces serve as contested symbolic territory for debates about trauma, sound and cultural memory. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, both the cemetery and the basilica echoed with remembered or memorializing sounds. Moreover, opposite sides of the French political spectrum

---

<sup>108</sup> Alexander, *Cultural Trauma*, 1-3. It is important that this debate occurs just as memory itself was shifting; Changing approaches ranged from Théodule Ribot's *Diseases of Memory: An Essay in the Positive Psychology* (1883) to Proust's subsequent musings on involuntary memory to Maurice Halbwach's work on collective memory. Allan Young has analysed how a new kind of traumatic memory - grounded in repression and dissociation - likewise merged at the *fin-de-siècle*. See Young, *Harmony of Illusions*, 1.

<sup>109</sup> Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992): xv.

– the remaining supporters of the Commune versus various right-wing groups or adherents of official Third Republic policies - deployed sound almost as a commemorative weapon in these spaces.

In the years immediately after the violent end of *la semaine sanglante*, Communard authors began to call for a sacralization of space at Père Lachaise. In 1876, Lissagary noted that *fédéré* victims were buried in mass graves at Père Lachaise, Montmartre and Mont-Parnasse, ‘where the people in pious remembrance will annually come as pilgrims’.<sup>110</sup> After the general amnesty of Communards in 1880, an annual commemorative ritual indeed emerged at the *mur des fédérés* in Père Lachaise.<sup>111</sup> The rite began in silence, as a cortège filed through eastern Paris. Upon entering the cemetery, participants listened to political speeches punctuated by cries of ‘Vive la Commune!’.<sup>112</sup>

Omnipresent fears of another revolutionary uprising led French authorities to aggressively suppress aspects of this ritual. By 1895, processions and wreathes were allowed but speech was forbidden: participants walked in silence, observed by watchful police. In 1900, participants seized a measure of control through sonic disobedience - they obeyed the embargo on political speeches but *sang* ‘La Carmagnole’ and ‘L’International’. New prohibitions ensued, including expanded sonic policing through forbidding specific revolutionary songs such as ‘La

---

<sup>110</sup> At this point, Lissagary did not single out any specific sites within Père-Lachaise for ritualistic remembrance. See *History of the Commune*, 392. In his work on World War I and cultural memory, Jay Winter analyses the role of rituals at memorial sites and calls attention to the use of silence within those rites. While Winter notes many continuities with nineteenth-century practices, much of his analysis turns on the continued role of religion and spiritualism in the early twentieth century. The ritual at the *mur des fédérés* offers an intriguing counter-example as a markedly secular ritual than nonetheless borrows similar practices. See Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 119-203.

<sup>111</sup> The description of this as a pilgrimage was already present in the 1880s. For a recent study of ‘*la montée*’ as secular pilgrimage, see Franck Frégosi, ‘La “montée” au Mur des Fédérés du Père-Lachaise: Pèlerinage laïque partisan’, *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 155/3 (2011): 155.

<sup>112</sup> ‘La Manifestation du Père-Lachaise’, *La Justice* (29 May 1893): 2. Over the course of the twentieth century, the manifestations at Père-Lachaise were attended by a gamut of (primarily left-wing) political groups. Both Robert Gildea and Howard Brown have argued that as *la semaine sanglante* ‘became a collective memory of trauma’, it assisted in developing a particular French working-class consciousness. See Brown, *Mass Violence & the Self*.

Ravachole'.<sup>113</sup> At the *mur des fédérés*, silence was thus simultaneously an expression of mourning, a sorrowful commemoration of earlier violence, and a tool of state repression. Sound was equally multivalent, as both sonic repression and revolutionary refusal.<sup>114</sup>

At a second site miles away to the northwest, the remembered sounds of the Commune similarly struggled against official silencing. In 1871, the monarchist Catholic right campaigned to erect a sanctuary to the Sacred Heart high on the butte of Montmartre and convinced the National Assembly to appropriate the site via a vote of 'public utility' in 1873. Supporters of the Sacré-Cœur project explicitly described Montmartre as hallowed ground consecrated by the deaths of *recent* martyrs - namely the Versaillais generals killed on 18 March 1871 - and noted that 'it was necessary to efface by this work of expiation, the crimes which have crowned our sorrows'.<sup>115</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> For an account of the difficulties with the first year's 'commemoration/protest', see L. Boussenard, 'La Manifestation du 23 mai', *La Justice* (25 May 1880). This protest seems to have been marked by silence, perhaps in an attempt to evade police attention: pilgrims were only allowed to enter in small groups. In 1885 there was an armed confrontation between the police and the pilgrims - see S.L., 'Au Père Lachaise', *La Justice* (25 May 1885). In 1888, there was a shooting at the ceremony. In 1894, armed guards patrolled the cemetery. The rule, according to the Préfecture of Police, was that 'le préfet de police, après avoir pris les instructions du ministre de l'intérieur, a décidé que les mesures d'ordre seront les mêmes que dimanche dernier. On ne laissera pénétrer dans le cimetière que les porteurs de couronnes. Ils seront autorisés à les déposer au mur des Fédérés, à la condition qu'ils ne soient suivis aucun cortège et qu'il ne soit pas prononcé de discours', 'La manifestation d'aujourd'hui', *La Justice* (4 June 1894). In 1895, 'tous défilent en silence sous l'œil inquiet des officiers de paix', 'La manifestation d'hier', *La Justice* (28 May 1895). For an account of a speech being silenced, see 'Au Mur des Fédérés', *La Justice* (25 May 1897). In 1899, the inscriptions on funerary objections/wreaths read 'Aux martyrs de 1871', 'Aux vaincus de la Commune', 'Les Socialistes aux Fédérés', 'Au Mur des Fédérés', *La Justice* (30 May 1899). See the coverage of the event in 1900, complete with a brawl with the police, in 'Au Mur des Fédérés', *La Justice* (29 May 1900). Revolutionary songs - such as 'La Ravachole', a reworking of 'La Carmagnole' in honor of François Ravachol - were generally forbidden. See Richard D. Burton, *Blood in the City: Violence and Revelation in Paris, 1789-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001): 147-148.

<sup>114</sup> Robert Gildea notes that 'to dwell on the defeat of the rising was to establish workers as martyrs and the bourgeoisie as the agents of violence'. The SFIO (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière) resumed the cult of the Paris Commune in 1908, following a decision by the municipality of Paris not to use the plot near the Mur des Fédérés for private graves. A plaque in memory of the Commune was placed on the wall in 1909. See Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994): 45, 48.

<sup>115</sup> The two generals killed in Montmartre during the first day of uprising in March 1871 were Clément-Thomas and Lecomte; their deaths were utilized by anti-Communard propaganda as evidence of the murderous violence of the Commune. See Hubert Rohault de Fleury, *Historique de la Basilique du Sacré-Cœur*, vol. 1 (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1903): footnote 4, 88. Translation cited in David Harvey, 'Monument and Myth', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69, no. 3 (Sep. 1979): 377.

Though Sacré-Cœur's cornerstone was laid in 1875, construction dragged on for over thirty years. On 24 November 1918 – just two weeks after the armistice which ended World War I – composer Jean Roger-Ducasse attended the 'Te Deum' in the newly completed basilica. Thrilled by the brilliant Magnificat and tolling of the church's giant 'Savoyarde' bell, Roger-Ducasse imagined winds carrying these Catholic sounds from Montmartre's heights to the tombs of France's fallen soldiers.<sup>116</sup> It is difficult to contemplate a more conclusive sonic repudiation of the noisy Communard sounds of March 1871. Crowned by an enormous marble testament to 'enduringly Catholic' France, by the late 1910s the butte of Montmartre resounded with ecclesiastical sounds mourning the *grande guerre*. Neither of these stories ends in the early twentieth century. The annual *montée du Mur* continues today on the Sunday closest to 28 May, accompanied by speeches and the singing of 'Les temps des cerises'.<sup>117</sup> Sacré-Cœur still dominates the Parisian skyline, today accompanied by a new noisy din, not of revolution, but of tourists who fill the basilica's steps. Despite continuities and changes to both spaces, their histories testify to Daughtry's comment that 'sound lives on in human memory far after its physical vibrations die away'.<sup>118</sup> Indeed, we must analyze the rites, memorials and design of these spaces as a way in which sounds themselves continue to inform intergenerational

---

For more on Sacré-Cœur, see Harvey, *op. cit.*; Burton, *Blood in the City*, 147-148; Raymond A. Jonas, 'Monument as Ex-Voto, Monument as Historiosophy: The Basilica of Sacré-Cœur', *French Historical Studies* 18/2 (Autumn 1993): 482-502.

<sup>116</sup> Roger-Ducasse's reference to fallen soldiers was explicitly aimed at the recent dead of World War I. See Jean Roger-Ducasse to André Lambinet, letter dated 24 November 1918, in *Lettres à son ami André Lambinet*, ed. Jacques Depaulis (Hayen: Pierre Mardaga, 2001): 122. I am thankful to Jillian Rogers for suggesting this reference to me.

<sup>117</sup> Gildea notes that on the twentieth anniversary of Jean Jaurès's death, 19 May 1935, 'Communists and Socialists marched together, for the first time since the schism, to the Mur des Fédérés, 200,000 strong...in 1942 the Communists revived the commemoration of the Commune at the Mur des Fédérés. The Père Lachaise cemetery was to be occupied by the Gestapo and the French police, but *L'Humanité clandestine* issued its readers that flowers would nevertheless be laid, 'to tell our illustrious dead that their sons continue the struggle for liberation, that the revolutionary patriots of 1942 know how to fight and die like their fathers in 1871'. See Gildea, *The Past in French History*, 54.

<sup>118</sup> Daughtry, *Listening to War*, 40.

understandings of trauma. If we want to study ‘vanished’ sounds in relation to trauma and memory, how might mapping provide us essential tools to do so? How might mapping, even if supported by richly nuanced testimonies and accounts, be likewise limited in evoking the richness of individual responses to sonic trauma?

In 2011, the collective RaspouTeam engaged in a series of projects aimed at prompting the French public to remember the Commune; in addition to an interactive journal and mapping projects, RaspouTeam also temporarily installed historic photographs in the precise places where events of the Commune had occurred [**Fig. 6**]. They also used QR-Codes to allow smart-phone users to learn details about the historic events.<sup>119</sup> It would certainly be possible to include sound in similar projects, but whose memories or understandings of sound would we chose? Sound is not neutral [nor, for that matter, is photography]. What are the ethical questions of mapping sounds associated with trauma- is it triggering or can it help with reconciliation and remembrance? These are difficult questions, but it is crucial for us to include sound’s intersections with trauma in our connections of music, mapping and urban geography.

---

<sup>119</sup> RaspouTeam was a collective organized in 2011 to mark 140 years since the Commune. Through an interactive journal, mapping projects, and installations in public space, they hoped to engage the public with remembering the events of 1871. For more, see RaspouTeam’s website: <https://raspou.team/1871/> or a summary in English of the project here: <https://thefunambulist.net/history/history-paris-1871-commune-recounted-by-raspouteam>



**Figure 6:** Barricade de la Rue des Abesses, 23 mai 2011 by Raspouteam