'WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HERE'

Busking, urban space and economy of Montreal

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Abstract

Title: 'We have always been here': Busking, urban space and economy of Montreal

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This dissertation follows the buskers in Montreal to garner from them an understanding of the city's economy, culture and urban space, and their entanglements. It is a historical and geographical study that examines the position of the itinerant entertainer or musician in the political economy of the city. Both history and place are explored from the vantage point of this itinerant figure; and spaces frequented by buskers in the present or in the past are foregrounded in tracing urban transformations effecting the city since the 1960s.

An oral history project, it engages with memories of busking and formal and informal archives to address the lived experiences of buskers in the contemporary city; transformations in spaces of busking and their position with relation to the city's economy; contestations over urban public space; and the neoliberal entanglements of Montreal's economy. The busker's life histories are privileged in exploring concepts such as flexible, immaterial and precarious labour. The thesis, therefore, decenters the creative class in examining the entrepreneurial and self-regulated worker and the nature of labour intermediaries within the neoliberal economy. It shines a light on the role of surveillance and politics of access that are deepening social divides in this new economy. It also compares the historical representation of street musicians and performers to their own perceptions of busking. In doing so, it not only challenges the distinctions between work and leisure, but also between economic and cultural or social domains.

The thesis foregrounds a temporal and spatial claim on the city by buskers. It is an argument for their place and practice in urban space and economy. Implicit is also a critique of urban planning and policies that are producing a sense of displacement among the economically and socially marginalised. Experiences of surveillance and power, institutionalisation of culture, and professionalization of public art within the cultural economy make visible the exclusionary landscapes of the postindustrial city. Finally, in centering informality and informal spaces of work and sociality through buskers, the thesis unsettles dominant narratives of Montreal to challenge a dichotomous framing of the world.

Acknowledgements

Out of respect for my interviewee-participants from whom I sought their life histories and for the sake of the readers of this thesis, it is imperative that I bring myself into the frame at the very outset. I am an immigrant and a settler in Canada. My history in this place called Tiohtià:ke, or Montreal as we have come to know it in the settler colony, begins not too long ago in 2015 when I moved here for my doctoral studies. I grew up in another part of the world, a small town called Bongaigaon in the northeast of India. It is one of those fairly vital commercial hubs of the region that is rarely visible on the national map. Both my parents were teachers. My mother tells a story about how she did a second Bachelor's degree and then a Master's degree in English to send my brother and me to a good school. The good school was a central government-run school that offered English-medium education. As a result, we grew up with four languages. English and Hindi in school, Bengali at home and Assamese elsewhere, and I feel quite at home in three out of four of those languages.

When I was about 12, we moved to Rae Bareli, another small town in Uttar Pradesh. Then, it was Delhi for my undergraduate years, a few years in Lucknow, a return to Delhi and then five years in Bangalore before I moved to Canada. These days, when someone asks me where I come from, my short answer is India; and a long answer is really from all over India. When I moved to Canada, I was 34 years old. But this is jumping ahead of the story. There is a little more that I want to tell about the in-between years.

When I finished my MA in English, it appeared that I had two choices in life— to be married or to become a teacher and then be married. I decided to give myself six months to find a job. In January 2005, I started working as a copyeditor on the newspaper of a national daily, and I did not marry for another five years. The next years were spent working evening shifts on a

news desk and escaping home. I quit when the long evening hours at work started to weigh more heavily than the satisfaction that came with the rush of news and tight deadlines. By then, I had also fallen in love, married and moved from Delhi to Bangalore, further away from home. My research journey really began in 2013 when I started working as an oral history curator. My first transcription, from Bengali to English, was my first lesson in oral history. In the rest of the journey to Montreal, I was partly propelled by events in my life that I am still processing. Suffice it to say that the motivation was two-fold— to be with my then partner and my desire to do an oral history project. I quite agree with Ben Rogaly when he says "any single narrative that makes sense of who I am" is an almost impossible task.[1] These stories, like any life history narrative, are told differently to different audiences. They depend on what we are ready to share at the time of telling. I will keep the other stories for another telling.

Moving is hard and for many reasons. One of them is about making home in a new place. It is about unlearning a lot of things to create space for new experiences. In a nutshell, this project is an effort to belong in this place— to learn the language, to learn about the city and to learn about its people and to share that learning with others. I couldn't have chosen a better way to do this. When I arrived here, I had known Canada mostly through books and some postcards. Life on the ground was different and my place in society here felt different too. I saw my interviewee-participants put themselves in public-eye every day, played incredible tricks, made mistakes, failed and picked themselves up again to repeat their performances and pass the hat. Sometimes they earned a good hat; at other times they went home empty-handed. They channeled this vulnerability into humour, intrigue and awe-inspiring acts. It encouraged me to embrace my own vulnerabilities and then do what I wanted to do anyway. I learnt to speak a new

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[1]. Ben Rogaly and Becky Taylor, *Moving Histories of Class and Community Identity, Place and Belonging in Contemporary England* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 24.

language, made mistakes and then spoke it anyway. I was afraid of interacting with strangers and occupying public space; I found myself in knots over the idea of approaching buskers and then did it all anyway. This dissertation is an outcome of interactions with people who know the art of making friends out of strangers, can build a crowd of 500 people in an empty square, and belong, share and exist in space without owning it. It is about what I learnt from them.

There was never a moment when this project did not bring me joy. It carried me through some difficult years and through the pandemic. Many of my interviewee-participants told me that they saved lives through their music and performances, that they made people smile and helped them forget their pain even if it was only in that moment. I experienced first-hand this power of regeneration in their practice in the summer of 2019. I would like to thank all those street musicians and performers in Montreal who I met with and spoke to during this time. Without you, this project would not exist.

Dawn, Dino, Eric, Graham, Greg (Grégoire), Lara, Lucas, Penny (Penelope Jane), Peter, Robert, Samantha, Stephen, Susana and everyone else I interviewed for this project, I cannot thank you enough for your time, kindness, warmth and generosity. The project and the dissertation are a cumulative result of all those thoughts, opinions and experiences that you shared with me, sometimes on multiple occasions. Without your stories, I wouldn't have known where to look and what to look for in the archives. Greg's stories gave me direction early on in the interviewing process. Thank you to Greg also for the compelling storytelling in the interviews and the box of papers on the Association des musiciens indépendants du métro de Montréal, all of which made me rethink the questions that I needed to ask in this research.

Dawn's care and invitation to join the administrative launch of the 2019 busking season helped me meet many long-time buskers in Old Montreal. If I was able to hang-out at Place

Jacques-Cartier for hours together and weekend after weekend that summer, it was because all of you made it so easy for me to be there. I learnt how to be in place differently; I learnt how to look at space differently. I also want to thank Robert, who despite his age and his health issues, made time for me, graciously accepted an invite to be interviewed, biked down to Concordia on a hot summer afternoon, and shared priceless video footage, photographs and stories about busking at Carré Saint Louis in Montreal and in other parts of the world.

A special thank you also to Dawn and Becca who allowed me to follow them on their little busking expedition one afternoon. The Golden Girls, as you called yourselves, was not just a riveting performance but also a brave experiment. Thanks equally to Susana for inviting me to your protest performance. I have been left transformed by all of your stories and in witnessing your courage to make yourselves vulnerable in public. I am also grateful to those from the borough of Ville Marie who found the time to speak to me and explained the nitty-gritties of governance. I cannot mention everyone who participated in the project by name for reasons of confidentiality but know that you have not been forgotten in this note.

Alongside the people who helped me realise this project, I wish to express my gratitude towards this land and its peoples that have welcomed me, helped me find home and sustained me through these years of research. I acknowledge the unequal and unjust settler colonial relationships that frame us and my part in it. I will strive to do better. This is and will always remain unceded indigenous lands.

I would like to thank my supervisory committee members Dr. Steven High, Dr. Norma Rantisi and Dr. Joshua Neves for guidance, care, encouragement, a lot of inspiration and some very wise words. I have learnt so much from you and I couldn't have asked for a better committee that both challenged me and helped me past the hurdles. I would also like to thank

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Abbreviations

AMIM   Association des musiciens indépendants du métro
(previously Association des musiciens itinérants du métro)

CALQ   Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec

CAQ   Corporation des Artisans de Québec

CMAQ   Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec

CTCUM   Commission de transport de la communauté urbaine de Montréal

FICC   Fonds d'investissement de la culture et des communications

FIDEC   Financière des entreprises culturelles

MAQM   Métiers d'art du Québec à Montréal

MMetRM   Musiciens du métro et de la rue de Montréal

RMMM   Regroupement des musiciens du métro de Montréal

SODEC   Société de Développement des Entreprises Culturelles

SODIC   Société de développement des industries culturelles

STCUM   Société de transport de communauté urbain de Montréal

STM   Société de transport de Montréal

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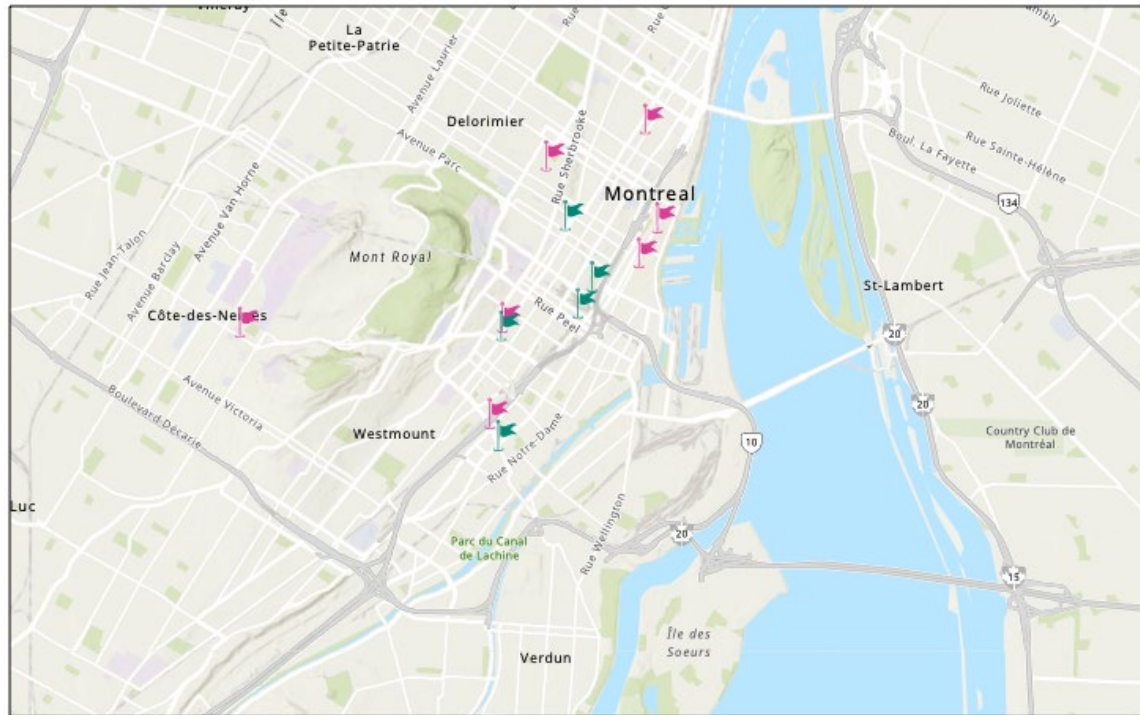
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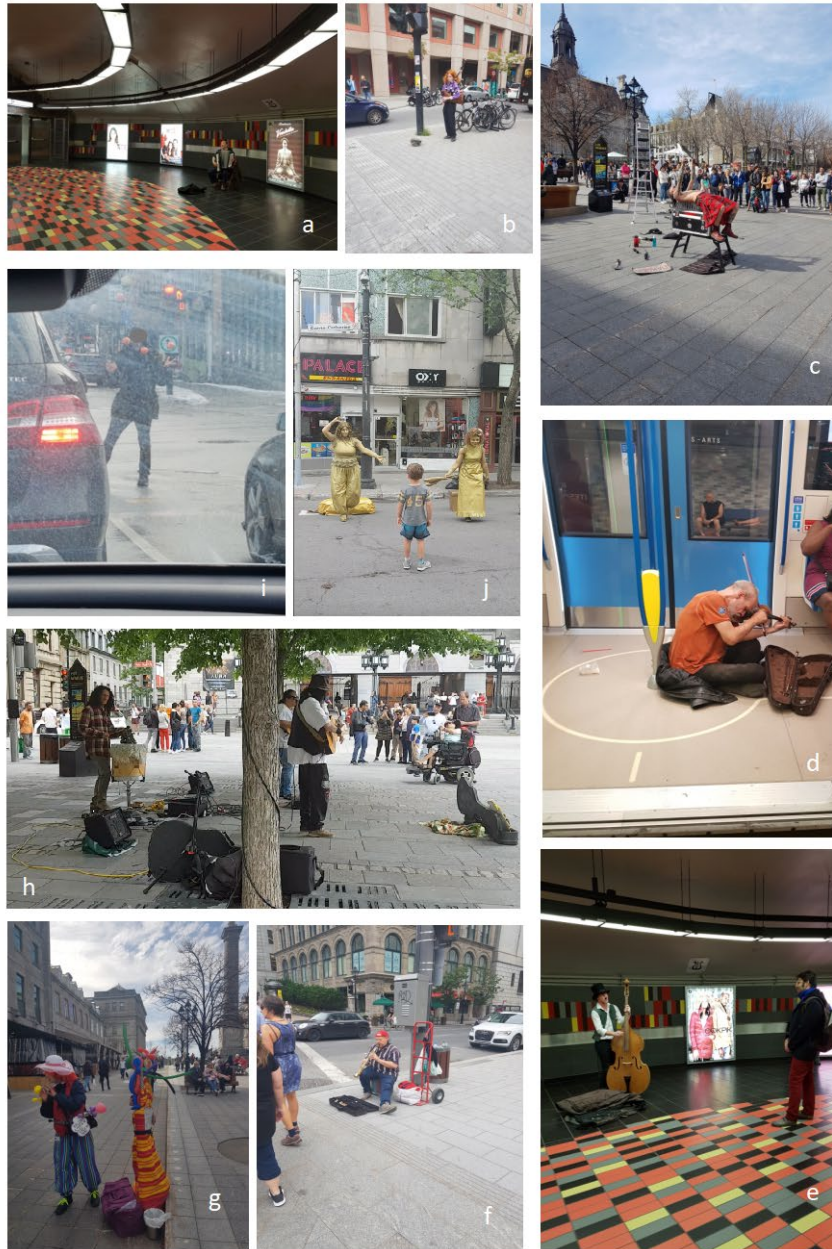
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Introduction

On a Saturday afternoon in December 2018, users of Montreal's underground subway system were greeted with the musical compositions of Bach at a downtown location. Yo-Yo Ma, a cellist of international repute, was holding a concert inside Place des arts metro station at Quartier des spectacles. The Société de Transport de Montréal (STM), responsible for all public transport in the city and for regulating busking in the metro, had pulled out all the stops to accommodate the event. The performance by Ma was an experiment and part of a transnational project to humanise technology through music.[1]

For those unfamiliar with the city's geography, the Place des arts station is located in the heart of Quartier des spectacles, a cultural district managed by a non-profit partnership between public institutions and private players and involves several local organisations and businesses.[2] It incorporates spaces such as Quartier Latin and the red-light district that have had their own distinct cultural identities for over a century. Framed by the commercial downtown on the west, Gay Village to the east and Chinatown to the south, Quartier des spectacles repackages cultural spaces located in geographical proximity to be deployed in the service of the creative city, an identity that Montreal has actively embraced in the past couple of decades with the hope of revitalising urban space and economy through arts and culture. It was created in 2003 with the

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1. Yo-Yo Ma, The Bach Project- Montreal, https://bach.yo-yoma.com/Events/montreal/ (accessed October 31, 2021). The event was organised as part of an initiative spanning six continents, 36 cities and some interdisciplinary conversations. The project explored "connections and disconnections in our contemporary lives," as explains the website.

2. "History and Vision of the Quartier des spectacles," Quartier des Spectacles Montreal. https://www.quartierdesspectacles.com/en/about/history-and-vision/ (accessed January 24, 2022).

aim to promote the city's cultural assets and encourage a culture-led development of the

economy by showcasing talent, institutions and an environment dedicated to creative growth.[3]

To host Ma, a makeshift stage had been erected with speakers, mics and a dynamic

digital art background. During the performance, both the musician and a small audience around

him were secured behind yellow barricade tapes while the STM inspectors ensured that the rest

of the passageway remained free. The STM telecast the concert live on social media. "Il y a des

métros du monde où il n'y a pas d'art, où c'est de la tuile blanche, ce n'est pas une expérience

inspirante," commented Philippe Schnobb, the then head of STM, adding, "Nous, on veut que ça

le soit."[4] In the videos of the event circulating on the Internet, Ma is seen as saying, "C'est

formidable. Dans le métro, pour tout le monde."[5] The local media too did not miss the presence

of the "unusually talented busker".[6] One of the local francophone news dailies, *Le Devoir,* ran

the headline "*Construire des ponts avec la musique, façon* Yo-Yo Ma", emphasising the

musician's attempt to find a connect between machines, humans and culture through music.[7]

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3. See Yuseph Adam Katiya, "Creating Hegemony: Montreal's cultural development policies and the rise of cultural actors as entrepreneurial political elites," MA Thesis, Concordia University, 2011, for an analysis of the role of Quartier des spectacles as an actor in Montreal's cultural economy.

4. Amélie St-Yves of Agence QMI, "Un prodige du violoncelle joue dans le métro de Montréal," TVA Nouvelles, December 8, 2018. https://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2018/12/08/un-prodige-du-violoncelle-joue-dans-le-metro-de-montreal (accessed November 10, 2021).

5. STM Mouvement Collectif, "Yo-Yo Ma dans le métro!," YouTube, December 10, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fj3Xe8L5mds (accessed May 26, 2022).

6. Morgan Lowrie of The Canadian Press, "Yo-Yo Ma gives free concert in Montreal subway," CTV News, December 8, 2018. https://www.ctvnews.ca/entertainment/yo-yo-ma-gives-free-concert-in-montreal-subway-1.4210227 (accessed October 31, 2021) and Catherine Solyom, "Renowned cellist Yo-Yo Ma gives free concert in Montreal métro," *Montreal Gazette*, Montreal, December 10, 2018. https://montrealgazette.com/entertainment/local-arts/renowned-cellist-yo-yo-ma-to-give-free-concert-in-montreal-metro-today (accessed October 31, 2021).

7. Christophe Huss, "Construire des ponts avec la musique, façon Yo-Yo Ma," *Le Devoir*, December 6, 2018. https://www.ledevoir.com/culture/musique/542954/yo-yo-ma-construire-des-ponts-avec-la-musique (Accessed November 10, 2021)

Fast forward to February 2019, some two hours south of Montreal, in Dunham in the Eastern Townships, I was sitting with Grégoire Dunlevy at his and his girlfriend's boutique-cum-atelier-cum-home to hear his life story and memories of busking in Montreal. Over the course of the interview that lasted close to four hours, apart from an intimate knowledge of urban spaces in the city, surveillance emerged as a dominant theme in the stories about busking. Dunlevy, who handcrafted leather and worked as an itinerant entertainer – walking on stilts and playing the flute – at festivals, recalled his experiences of busking in the Montreal metro in 1982:

> Grégoire Dunlevy (GD): I am in Bonaventure…. I'm playing and I see down the hallway…. And all of a sudden, I feel a tap on my shoulder and this cop had come from the other way. He had heard me; he had gone around and come from behind. That was my first ticket. And the first ticket at that time ran a maximum fine of a $100. About a week later, may have been two weeks, anyway, I'm playing there again. This time, I'm keeping eyes on both ends. And all of a sudden, I see a cop coming up this way, so I grab my flute, I shut my case, I turn around, and up to this point I had seen nobody behind me. I turn around, and his partner is just coming down the stairs. They got me from both ends. They nailed me. My second fine was worth up to five hundred dollars, you know. About another week or two after that, the same kind of an incident; and the third fine was worth up to a thousand dollars.[8]

While remembering the incidents, Dunlevy used a lot of gestures to describe the interactions with the metro inspectors, or "cops" as he called them. Bonaventure is among the busiest metro stations with a connection to the train station and corridors that lead to several commercial and office complexes in the area. It was a profitable place for busking but playing music in the metro

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8. Grégoire Dunlevy, oral history interview session- I, Dunham, February 8, 2019.

was forbidden in 1982. After being caught busking three times within a span of a few weeks, Dunlevy had accumulated hefty fines worth over a thousand dollars. "Yes, I was putting money in the bank but taking thousand dollars out of my bank account was going to be pretty, pretty hurtful, you know," he said.[9] This memory appeared somewhat rancorous against the circulating videos of Ma's performance that had been such a welcome event.

At first glance, it seems that busking is a more accepted practice in the Montreal metro now than it was in 1982. Playing music in the underground tunnels and transport system came to be a tolerated practice not too long after these incidents described by Dunlevy, and it gained a formal place at the stations when the lyre signs were put up to demarcate spots in the stations in 1986.[10] The number of buskers in the city have also been on the rise since the 1970s, owing to several factors— the social and cultural movements of the time,[11] rising unemployment due to deindustrialization and the economic recession of the 1980s[12] and an increase in the population of artists, especially musicians, in the city because of a thriving independent music industry and increased state support for art and culture.[13] Beyond the local buskers who are often a mixed group of struggling musicians and artists, and poor and undocumented people, cultural events, such as the music festivals, also draw some internationally circulating professional entertainers

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9. Dunlevy, oral history interview session-I.

10. Emma Avery, "Metro musicians: An underground exploration of Montreal's musical landscape," McGill Tribune February 27, 2018. https://www.mcgilltribune.com/busking/ (accessed May 25, 2022)

11. Sylvie Genest, "Musiciens de rue et réglements municipaux à Montréal: La condemnation civile de la marginalité (1857–2001)," *Les Cahiers de la Société Québécoise de Recherche en Musique* 5, no.1–2 (2001): 32, 31–44.

12. Dino Spaziani, Oral history interview, Montreal, November 6, 2019.

13. Thomas A. Cummins-Russell and Norma M. Rantisi, "Networks and place in Montreal's independent music Industry," *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien* 56, no.1 (2012), 87–89 and 92–94, 80–97. DOI: 10.1111/j.1541-0064.2011.00399.x

from different parts of the world. The "street music problem"[14] of the Victorian era that was associated with "low culture, social disorder, trivial and immoral recreation"[15] has thus emerged as one of the most popular and prolific forms of entertainment in public places in western cities such as Montreal. And if some old itinerant figures and busking spots have disappeared with time, new and more organised sites have emerged in tourist and entertainment districts.

A deeper examination of the phenomenon, however, reveals that this recognition of busking as a legitimate practice rests on the social identity of the busker and produces an uneven terrain of experiences in public space in a city that is increasingly identifying itself as a design-, creativity- and innovation-led economy. Since the 1990s, successive governments have engaged with the idea of Montreal as a creative city, an ideology and a concept that exalts the virtues of the "creative class" and treats it as the panacea of all ills in the economy and urban space.[16] Montreal is thus frequently described as a "design metropole"[17] or a "cultural metropole"[18] where economic decline and peripheralization in global and continental trade are to be countered through what are broadly described as cultural and creative industries and by generating an

14. Paul Simpson, "Sonic affects and the production of space: 'Music by handle' and the politics of street music in Victorian London," *Cultural Geographies* 24, No.1 (2017): 93, 89–109.

15. Bruce Johnson, "From Music to Noise: The Decline of Street Music." *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 15, no. 1, (2018): 76, 67–78.

16. The creative class thesis sets out a formulaic path to regeneration of deindustrialized and abandoned inner cities of the West through creativity and innovation and which, it is argued, can be fostered in place by encouraging people with cultural and symbolic capital, such as artists and young professionals in design and architecture, to move into these derelict spaces and promoting a consumption-driven lifestyle shaped around cafes, studios, co-working spaces and loft-living. For more on the creative city and creative class, see Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: and how its transforming, work, leisure, community and everyday life* (New York: Basic Books, 2002)) and Charles Landry and Comedia, *The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators* (London: Earthscan, 2000). Also see, David Yencken, "The Creative City," *Meanjin* 47, no. 4 (1988): 597–608 https://meanjin.com.au/essays/the-creative-city/ (accessed 10 June 2021) and John Howkins, *The creative economy: how people make money from ideas* (London: Allen Lane, 2001).

17. Deborah Leslie and Norma M. Rantisi, "Governing the Design Economy in Montréal, Canada," *Urban Affairs Review* 41, No. 3 (January 2006), 311, 309–337. DOI: 10.1177/1078087405281107.

18. Martin Drouin, « La métropole culturelle : une nouvelle image de Montréal ? » *Téoros* 25, No. 2 (2006).

identity and a niche area of specialisation that would distinguish it from Toronto. And in the

creative city, argue Deborah Leslie and John Paul Catungal, inequalities are not simply fostered

on racial, gender and class lines but they structure the creative class, producing "uneven

geographies of mobility" and access.[19]

As in 1982, playing music in the metro or performing in public spaces in Montreal now

continues to be fraught with experiences of surveillance, exclusion and forced displacement for

those buskers who already face social marginalisation for multiple reasons. From economic

poverty to age, health problems, racial, gender or ethnic identity, deskilling, and lack of mobility,

digital access, citizenship and symbolic capital such as education and professional training, a

number of factors determine the acceptability of itinerant entertainers in public space in the

creative city. Almost all buskers interviewed for this project shared stories of surveillance though

not all were negative, which further indicates that access to and experience of public space in the

city can vary and are shaped at the intersection of class, race and gender identities.[20] Given

Montreal's history as a settler colony controlled first by the French and then by the English,

since the Conquest of 1760, followed by the nationalist politics of the last sixty years, beginning

with the Quiet Revolution, where French language played a central role in shaping contemporary

Quebec society, linguistic identity too produces a complex experience of urban public space.

In an economy where cultural or creative industries are considered growth driver, the

links between culture and economy are easily visible and particularly taut. Foregrounding

buskers' experiences of marginalisation in this context opens up the possibility of engaging with

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19. Deborah Leslie and John Paul Catungal, "Social Justice and the Creative City: Class, Gender and Racial Inequalities," *Geography Compass* 6 (2012): 115, 111–122.

20. Susan Ruddick, "Constructing Differences in Public Spaces: Race, Class and Gender as Interlocking Systems," in *Public Space Reader*, ed. Miodrag Mitrašinović and Vikas Mehta, first published in 1996 (New York and Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2021), 80–88.

cultural workers while decentering the creative class thesis. This dissertation uses oral histories

interviews conducted with buskers to draw out their experiences of deindustrialization and

postindustrial transformations in Montreal's economy and urban space. The continued economic

and social marginalisation of some buskers in the contemporary city not only challenges the

prescriptive solutions offered by the proponents of the creative city formula but also renders the

lines between creative workers and the "lumpen classes of noncreatives"[21] who are assigned a

secondary role in the economy both legible and uncertain. It also argues that the various

phenomena associated with deindustrialization had a ripple effect on even those who were not

part of industrial working classes and the post-industrial transformations had far-reaching

consequences on their being, reshaping their self-identity. The stories make visible the impact on

individual lives and agency among those who are marginalised.

As the city started to deindustrialize in the 1960s through a long-drawn process of factory

closures, offshoring of industrial manufacturing, weakening of unions, feminisation of labour

and reorganisation of international and continent trade that led to its economic

peripheralization,[22] the economy was veered towards services, cultural and advanced technology

industries. Montreal "reposition(ed) itself as a highly visible centre of creativity, knowledge, and

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21. Jamie Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Classes," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29, no. 4 (December 2005): 759, 740–770.

22. Steven High, *Deindustrializing Montreal: Entangled Histories of Race, Residence, and Class* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022). In this latest book, High discusses deindustrialization of Montreal, a fact that has been debated by many who argue that the city underwent an economic transition rather than deindustrialization. By treating deindustrialization as a socio-economic process and a slow and continuing violence on working class lives and communities in the city, High makes visible the long-term effects of industrial closures on the politics, culture and the economy of the city. For a discussion of the economic factors that contributed to the city's economic peripheralization in the post-war years, see the introduction to Alain-G. Gagnon and Mary Beth Montcalm, *Quebec: Beyond the Quiet Revolution* (Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1990).

services in the post-Fordist economy."[23] In the 1960s and 1970s, the city introduced several

public infrastructure projects, like the metro, hosted mega-events such as Expo-67 and the

Olympics of 1976, and initiated urban redevelopment and revitalisation schemes to "imagineer"

its "world-class" status.[24] After the 1980s, this "internationalization" of the city through urban,

political and economic strategies continued though a transition to post-Fordism also meant

"focus on the new economy and, at least in part, on the economic interests associated with it."[25]

Most recently, the city has employed design as a strategy in cultural policy to attract what are

broadly termed as cultural or creative industries and reimagine its public spaces.[26] The lives of

buskers interviewed for this project are incongruently chequered by these broader historical

processes and events that have shaped the city's economic, political and cultural fabric.

The concept of creative city assumes that a cultivated environment of creativity and

innovation can drive economic revitalisation of deindustrialised and abandoned inner cities and

help them get ahead in inter-urban competition to reattract capital but, as Jamie Peck notes, the

"material payoffs" for implementing such strategies remain "elusive".[27] Making the figure of the

busker a protagonist of this city arbitrates a more heterogeneous disposition for labour in this

economy. It returns the focus on cultural workers and producers in this economy without getting

23. Desmond Bliek and Pierre Gauthier, "Mobilising Urban Heritage to Counter the Commodification of Brownfield Landscapes: Lessons from Montréal's Lachine Canal," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 16, No. 1, (2007): 44, 39–58.

24. Darel E. Paul, "World cities as hegemonic projects: the politics of global imagineering in Montreal," *Political Geography* 23 (2004), 574, 571–596. Also see, Dale Gilbert and Claire Poitras, "'Subways are not outdated': debating the Montreal Metro, 1940–60," *The Journal of Transport History* 36, No. 2 (2015): 209–227.

25. Pierre Hamel and Bernard Jouve, "In search of a stable urban regime for Montreal: issues and challenges in metropolitan development," *Urban Research & Practice* 1, No. 1 (2008), 32–33, 18-35.

26. Guillaume Sirois, "Design: An Emergent Area of Cultural Policy in Montreal," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 51, No. 4 (2021), 240–1, 238–250.

27. Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," 768.

tied by the creative class discourse that not only revolves around an elite group of artists and

professionals but also masks inequalities fostered in this new economic order. Cultural industries

are "sites of intense segmentation and hierarchy."[28] Lily Kong rightly notes that the fluid

boundaries of this economy, owing to each national or local government's policies and a

concomitant use of the concept of creative city, have turned attention away from more pressing

conversations about "the nature of cultural industries"— cultural workers being one of them.[29]

The oral histories foreground the voices of those who navigate the fringes of urban space and

economy and remain invisible in the otherwise "undifferentiated" creative class discourse.[30]

The oral histories revolve around three sites— Prince Arthur East street in Le Plateau-

Mont-Royal, the metro and its underground corridors, and Place Jacques-Cartier in Vieux

Montréal, or Old Montreal from here onwards. These sites form one of the axes of this research

to understand postindustrial transformations in Montreal through the memories and lived

experiences of buskers. Locating buskers in the historical geography of the city is packed with

challenges. Archives are a "discursive formation," writes Nicholas Dirks, that reproduces

"categories and operations of the state itself".[31] Navigating an order and a collection of

documents responsible for constructing and preserving state memory, which reflects the interests

of the economic and the political elite and of the propertied classes, does not lend itself easily to

finding such itinerant figures. This also makes it difficult to upend stereotypes attached to the

28. Leslie and Catungal, "Social Justice and the Creative City," 116.

29. Lily Kong, "From cultural industries to creative industries and back? Towards clarifying theory and rethinking policy," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 15, No. 4 (2014): 605, 593–607.

30. Leslie and Catungal, "Social Justice and the Creative City," 116

31. Nicholas Dirks, "Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History," in *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures*, ed. Brian Keith Axel (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002), 58, 47–65.

figure. Taking a cue from Tony Ballantyne's argument that the "archival turn" in historical

research has placed an "overwhelming emphasis on the intimate connection between the archive

and the modern nation-state,"[32] I followed the logic offered by buskers in interviews in

navigating the archives. History, in this project, is explored from the vantage point of this

itinerant figure and therefore appears intermittently. It ponders over spaces frequented by

buskers either in the present or in the past and attends to urban transformations in the context of

the city's transition from an industrial to a cultural economy. The thesis also explores the

concepts of flexible, immaterial and precarious labour by privileging buskers' experiences;

examines the entrepreneurial and self-regulated worker and the nature of labour intermediaries

within the neoliberal economy; and the role of surveillance and politics of access in producing

deep fissures among workers in this new economy.

"We have always been here", a phrase that appears in the title of this thesis, is drawn

from an oral history interview. I use this phrase in the title of this thesis to foreground a temporal

and spatial claim on the city by the buskers. It represents a contention for place in urban space

and economy, and implicit in this statement is also a sense of displacement experienced by

buskers who find themselves marginalised because of surveillance, increasing control over

public space, institutionalisation of culture, and professionalization of public art within the

cultural economy. The voices of buskers make visible exclusionary landscapes of the city and

contestations over space from below while also offering a non-dominant perspective on the

creative city or the cultural economy.

Musicians, guitar-players, one-man bands, stilt-walkers, jugglers, fire-eaters, unicyclists,

tightrope walkers, clowns, human statues and acrobats can all be described as busking if they

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32. Tony Ballantyne, "Mr. Peal's Archive," in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005): 106, 87–110.

engage in unorganised performances in public spaces, such as street corners, market squares, parks and subway stations, for monetary donations.[33] The use of the word donation in defining buskers' relationship to money and the public obfuscates the real nature of the busking. Donation carries a sense of voluntary giving or charity that delinks the busker from the economy. Claire Marie Chambers, for example, describes busking as the "gift of giving" where the busker's performance opens up the possibility of a voluntary and reciprocal act of giving on the part of the public.[34] Buskers interviewed for this project spoke about busking as an income, job and work— money received as a form of payment for the work they do. Peter Snow, who has been a busker all his life and lived in Montreal for the last thirty years or so, for example described the practice in the following words:

> "Real street performing is go stand in the corner right there, now, and I do a little something and I get a little bit of money. This is the real thing, okay. Going to a place where it's organised and you are invited in, it's fun. I've done a few of them. I did in Toronto; I did a few in Canada…. But that's become a professional circuit now where people would not ever go unless there's a show there. Doing it in the festival, now it's big money. Those performers make five times more than me. No question. They make big money. And me I make very small money"[35]

This tension between the dictionary definition and busking as articulated by buskers themselves lies at the crux of this dissertation. It privileges the busker's view of their practice and asks that

33. "busking, n.2," OED Online. March 2022. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/view/Entry/25250 (accessed March 15, 2022).

34. Claire Marie Chambers, "Busking and the Performance of Generosity: A Political Economy of the Spiritual Gift," in *Performing Religion in Public*, ed. Joshua Edelman, Claire Maria Chambers, and Simon Du Toit (Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013): 257, 256–277.

35. Peter Snow, oral history interview session - I, Montreal, May 20, 2019.

we – the public and the administration – understand it in their terms. After explaining "real street-performing" to me, Snow went on to add that busking is "a recognized profession for a long, long, long time," and that it "goes in and out of fashion and up and down of course, depending on what's going on— I mean they get stopped by the wars and stuff like that."[36]

Snow's gesture here was towards a long history of street music and performances that David Cohen and Ben Greenwood trace in their book *The Buskers: A History of Itinerant Entertainment* by beginning with the archetype of the singing sailor and tracing the figure through the early Roman empire through the Middle Ages, Renaissance Europe, industrialisation and urbanisation of western Europe.[37] The relatively short book captures the complexity of the figure of the busker, which has appeared and reappeared in public spaces in different contexts, served different functions in society, held a variety of trades and have been called by many different names through history. Even as the historiography recognises the discontinuity in the history of street performing, it also traces some continuities through figures such as the Punchman who appears on London's streets in the nineteenth century and drew on the early traditions of mime and pantomime and the character of Pulcinella in *commedia dell'art*.[38] Similarly, the minstrels, troubadours and jongleurs could be considered precursors of the musician, poet and the entertainer on the streets today. However, as Murray Smith writes in his

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36. Snow, oral history interview session - I.

37. David Cohen and Ben Greenwood, *The Buskers: A History of Street Entertainment* (Newton Abbot, London and North Pomfret: David & Charles, 1981). Beginning with the early Roman Empire in western Europe, the focus of this historiography narrows down to some big cities such as London, Paris and Rome as the historiography reaches the second half of the twentieth century.

38. *Ibid*, 98–130.

study of the history of musical busking in Toronto, invoking tradition and stereotyped imageries are sometimes a tactical move on the part of buskers to claim legitimacy in public space.[39]

The word "busker" has roots in the Middle French word *busquer*, which meant "to look for".[40] If the word busking conveys "a tale of opportunistic movement and money,"[41] early uses of "busk" in English also signified peddling goods on the streets, cruising or sailing ships engaged in piracy, and, as a slang, to perform in public. According to the *Dictionary of Scots Language*, the verb "busk" in the eighteenth century meant "to prepare" or "to make ready" and "dress".[42] While these meanings of the word appear different from each other, the figure of the busker embodies all these meanings one way or another— either in practice or in the way they appear before the public and the ambivalent space they occupy between work, leisure and begging. Buskers dress up or adorn themselves to attract people's attention, blur boundaries between legal and illegal, and seek money in return for a display of their art and skills.

There are several street figures in history who come close to the definition of the busker. They emerge from traditions in theatre, other performing arts, itinerant trade and commerce and an array of cultural practices. A saltimbanque, for example, is an entertainer from the nineteenth century whose identity was associated with itinerancy, poverty, unscrupulous behaviour and

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39. Murray Smith, "Traditions, Stereotypes, and Tactics: A History of Musical Buskers in Toronto," *Canadian Journal of Traditional Music* 24 (January 1996): 18, 6–22.

40. "busk, v.4". OED Online. September 2021. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/view/Entry/25236? (accessed October 28, 2021). Similar words are found in sixteenth century Italian – *buscare* meaning "to seek out" – and in Spanish – *buscar*, which too meant "to seek out" or "to procure".

41. Michael Bywater, "Performing Spaces: Street Music and Public Territory," *Twentieth-Century Music* 3, no. 1 (2007): 112, 97–120.

42. "Busk *v.*". *Dictionary of the Scots Language*. 2004. Scottish Language Dictionaries Ltd. Accessed 29 Oct 2021. https://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/busk_v. An example of this use of the word in 19th century Canada — "Hugh, the son of Sandy, is busking hooks" — is found in a Church periodical *The Presbyterian*. See, "An Evening in the Highlands", *The Presbyterian* 16, no.6 (June 1863).

pretension.[43] Similar to a mountebank, charlatan describes a person who is deceitful and claims

to have scientific knowledges, such as that of the healing arts.[44] These figures were typically

identified by their verbosity, used to win the attention and trust of the public. According to

Cohen and Greenwood, though these figures carried a negative image as tricksters, "not every

mountebank was completely ignorant of medicine."[45] The polyvalency of the figure lends itself

well to interdisciplinary engagements. Literature on buskers and busking traditions emerge from

several disciplinary spaces such as social history, sociology, anthropology and social and cultural

geography, not to mention its lingering appeal in literature and film. More recently, scholarship

in areas such as tourism, music and performance, urban, law and sensory studies have picked up

the conversation, which not only reaffirms that the figure "defies categorization",[46] but also

signals its shifting place within the political economy. Dale Chapman, tracing the journey of the

solo multi-instrumentalists from the streets of the industrial city to the contemporary neoliberal

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43. *Saltimbanque* (n.), *Le Petit Robert de la langue française*. https://petitrobert-lerobert-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/robert.asp (accessed 2 December 2020). The word *saltimbanque* in French is similar to the Italian word *saltimbanco.* It connects two words— *sauter*, which means "to jump", and "*banc*", meaning "a bench". It is used for acrobats who perform outdoors, such as in the fairgrounds or private gardens. The English word, mountebank, similar to the Italian *montembanco*, also indicates such a person standing on a bench or a stage but carries a negative connotation. See, "mountebank, n.," OED Online, March 2020, Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/view/Entry/122915?rskey=5MCAJd&result=1&isAdvanced=false (accessed April 30, 2020).

44. "charlatan, nom masculine," *Le Petit Robert de la langue française*. https://petitrobert-lerobert-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/robert.asp (accessed October 28, 2021). Also see, "Charlatan, n.," Merriam Webster Dictionary. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/charlatan (accessed April 11, 2021) The word has roots in the Italian *ciarlatano*, which comes from two different words. Cerretano denotes a resident of Cerreto peddling in medicines or drugs, and *de ciarlare* means to speak with emphasis.

45. *Cohen and Greenwood*, *The Buskers*, 94.

46. Susie Tanenbaum, *Underground Harmonies: Music and Politics in the Subways of New York* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 6.

stage of avant-garde venues and rock clubs, describes it as the "gentrification" of "the institution of the one-man band".[47]

Paul Watt, in an editorial for a special issue on street music in the *Journal of Musicological Research* writes, "street music comes in all shapes and sizes."[48] Indeed, the lines can be blurry when it comes to defining what comprises busking and who is a busker. As a testimony to the scope of street music, the special issue draws on a range of case studies from different parts of world that examine street music and performances in place and also addresses questions related to "social standing and relationship to law" in places and cultures as diverse as Japan, Iran, Hong Kong and Australia.[49] While such a comparative lens also conveys a sense of universality in the practice, as each of the cases show these practices and performances are as much rooted in local cultural traditions with their unique socio-historical relationships to urban space and laws that govern a place.[50] Not only do different artists and musicians experience place differently depending on their social identities, public spaces serve different functions in

47. Dale Chapman, "The 'one-man band' and entrepreneurial selfhood in neoliberal culture," *Popular Music* 32, No. 3 (2013): 457, 451–470. doi:10.1017/S0261143013000317.

48. Paul Watt, "Editorial—Street Music: Ethnography, Performance, Theory," *Journal of Musicological Research* 35, no. 2 (2016): 69, 69–71.

49. *Ibid*, 70.

50. For example, see G. J. Breyley, "Between the Cracks: Street Music in Iran," *Journal of Musicological Research* 35, No. 2 (2016): 72-81, DOI: 10.1080/01411896.2016.1165051 who takes a historical view of street music in Iran and writes about their enduring presence on the streets despite the censorship driven by a discourse related to morality and modernity and bound up in a specific reading of the Islamic law. Carolyn S. Stevens, meanwhile, looks at how a traditional form of street music, *Yobikomi*, was undergoing a change in the new consumer-driven market of Japanese cities in the post-recession era in Carolyn S. Stevens, "Irasshai! Sonic Practice as Commercial Enterprise in Urban Japan," *Journal of Musicological Research* 35, No. 2 (2016): 82–99, DOI: 10.1080/01411896.2016.1155924. Also see, Katherine Ki Tak Wong, "An Ethnomusicological Understanding of the Street Performance of Cantonese Opera 街檔 (*Jie Dang*) in Hong Kong," *Journal of Musicological Research* 35, No. 2 (2016): 100–112, DOI: 10.1080/01411896.2016.1154408; Luke McNamara and Julia Quilter, "Street Music and the Law in Australia: Busker Perspectives on the Impact of Local Council Rules and Regulations," *Journal of Musicological Research* 35, no. 2 (2016): 113–127, DOI: 10.1080/01411896.2016.1161477; and Susan Bird, "Dancing in the Streets: Political Action and Resistance in Melbourne," *Journal of Musicological Research* 35, No. 2 (2016): 128–141, DOI: 10.1080/01411896.2016.1165052

different cultures, and are imagined, shaped and articulated differently through their interaction

with local politics, religious beliefs and economic needs. In order to not lose the complexity and

specificity of the local in understanding buskers' experiences, this dissertation focuses on public

spaces in Montreal and engages with literature that emerge from a similar context in other

western cities.

This shift in scale, away from a global view towards a local perspective, does not deny

connections to other places, peoples and cultures. All places always exist on multiple scales,

simultaneously.[51] The thesis proposes to follow the individual and look at micro-spaces in the

city to understand how marginalisation is produced and experienced in place in the hope to

challenge the dominant narrative of the postindustrial economy as progress. Drawing on Doreen

Massey's sense of a place as not "self-enclosing and defensive, but outward-looking," [52] I treat

the local as an instantiation of connections in time and place. Like street music, and busking in

general, buskers' memories in the interviews reveal experiences of and relationships to several

different places both simultaneously and over time. Through their music, practice and life

experiences, they embody a sense of place that is "constructed out of articulations of social

relations… which are not only internal to that local but which link them to elsewhere."[53] This

idea of place unsettles a static image of the local, while simultaneously emphasising the "power-

geometry" of time-space compression that produces uneven access to the global flows and

interconnections for people.[54] The immobility of buskers and the undeniable relationship to

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51. Ruddick, "Constructing Differences in Public Spaces," 84–85.

52. Doreen Massey, "A Global Sense of Place," *Marxism Today,* June 1991, 24, 24–29.

53. Doreen Massey, "Places and their Pasts," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 39 (1995): 183, 182–92.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/4289361.

54. Doreen Massey, "Power-geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place," in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993): 61, 59–69.

physical space in their practice, which Nick Wees describes as a "cobbled together" performance in his ethnographic work on busking in the Montreal metro,[55] also conveys the locally specific nature of the act.

Ben Rogaly sees in Massey's unbounded sense of place a potential for stories from below and a "non-elite cosmopolitanism" that challenges divisive and inward-looking politics.[56] Oral histories with buskers offer a similar opportunity to engage with a lived history of the city from the margins. The interviews explore lives that sometimes begin in Montreal and at other times elsewhere. These lives run parallel in time or intersect each other in public space, sometimes confirming each other's experiences and at other times challenging them. They also make visible local, regional and international connections with differential access but all the while also reshaping narratives that circulate of Montreal as an international city and a cultural metropolis.

Two historical studies draw out such connections and relationship between places from below. Following the journeys of the much-maligned Italian street children who travelled as harpists, violinists and animal exhibitors with their padrones to cities in Europe and North America throughout nineteenth century, John Zucchi's *Little Slaves of the Harp* elaborates on the socio-economic conditions that encouraged them to take up the street music trade and seek out connections with other places.[57] The debates in the public sphere in the cities where they circulated not only framed their visibility but also led to the crafting of laws and reform

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55 Nick Wees, "Improvised Performances: Urban Ethnography and the Creative Tactics of Montreal's Metro Buskers," *Humanities* 6, no. 67 (2017). doi:10.3390/h6030067

56. Ben Rogaly, *Stories from a Migrant City: Living and working together in the shadow of Brexit* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), 5. E-Book.

57. John Zucchi, *The Little Slaves of the Harp: Italian Child Musicians in the Nineteenth Century Paris, London and New York*. Montreal & Kingston, London and Buffalo: McGill Queen's University Press, 1992. E-book.

initiatives that led to their disappearance from the streets by the end of the century. Meanwhile, Louise Pagé in *Man Behind the Dancing Bear* retraces the footsteps of Pagé's grandfather and other bear trainers who came from Ariège in France to Quebec and North America between 1874 and 1914.[58] A recent special issue on street music published in *Nineteenth Century Music Review* also traces the circulation of street musicians, street music and the bourgeois attitude towards it across Europe and within the British Empire throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[59] These were also migration in search of economic opportunities and these histories shine a light on the circulation of people, music, culture and animals beyond borders and across the Atlantic. If the itinerant entertainers and street musicians participated in the colonial flows of goods and people out of socio-economic compulsions, their visibility and presence is also a testimony to their agency in negotiating broader historical events and processes, such as famines and other natural disasters, social transition from feudal and agrarian to industrial economy, urbanisation, population pressure on land and changing relationship to agricultural lands.

In the contemporary city too, busking is often connected to economic necessity. Susie Tanenbaum writes that street performing in the New York subway picked up after the 1950s for several reasons— civil rights movement and other social justice movements, followed by gentrification that caused displacement, immigration and counter-cultural traditions such as hip-hop that appeared in the city in the second half of the twentieth century.[60] Her ethnographic and anthropological study of subway music also considers the politics of visibility in public space

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58. Louise Pagé, *The Man Behind the Dancing Bear*, originally published *as Montreurs d'ours de l'Ariège à l'Amérique; 1874-1914* in 2016 (Québec: Éditions GID, 2018), Kindle.

59. For an overview of the special issue and its contents, see Paul Watt, "Street Music in the Nineteenth Century: Histories and Historiographies," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 15 (2018), 3–8.

60. Tanenbaum, *Underground Harmonies*, 12–14.

and the reception of musicians by the public and the administration, apart from unpacking buskers' entanglements with laws and challenges in unionisation. Two other works examine the practice of busking in the United States. Sally Harrison-Peppers' work, also set in New York, revolves around busking at one particular site— the Washington Square Park.[61] She examines the historical evolution of the space and street performers' interaction with space, the public and the legal terrain that shaped their busking practice. Patricia Campbell and Alicia Belkin travel to several popular busking destinations in the United States and record the lives, acts and hassles of street musicians and performers in cities such as New Orleans, San Francisco, New York and Boston.[62] All the three works were published within a span of two decades, indicating an interest and an acceptance of busking in public spaces in North America. Zucchi's work, while dealing with a different period, was also published around the same time as the above books.

Though still somewhat sporadic, literature on busking has appeared more frequently since then. Drawing attention to busker's interaction with place, these studies engage with examining their relationship to the built environment and the economy and also examine their traces on the sensory landscape. Karolina Doughty and Maja Lagerqvist, for example, assess the role of the migrant musicians in transforming the experience of a public square in Stockholm,[63] whereas Claudia Seldin explores the connections between busking and the creative city agenda through a

61. Sally Harrison-Peppers, "Drawing a Circle in the Square: Street Performing in Nev York City's Washington Square Park, 1980 – 1984," Doctoral Thesis, New York University, 1987.

62. Patricia Campbell with photographs by Alicia Belkin, *Passing the Hat: Street Performers in America* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1981).

63. Karolina Doughty and Maja Lagerqvist, "The ethical potential of sound in public space: Migrant pan flute music and its potential to create moments of conviviality in a "failed" public square," *Emotion, Space, and Society* 20 (2016): 58-67.

study of street performing and music in Berlin.[64] A similar entanglement of street music and

cultural economy is traced through a case study of Melbourne as a UNESCO city of music. As

the authors argue, while the cultural policies introduced by the government and media

representations enroll street music into producing the image of the creative city, such grassroots

cultural practices can also exist "separately from, and sometimes in opposition to, its positioning

as an economic and branding good."[65] The commodification of busking is further examined by

Adam Kaul at a site where musical busking is enrolled into promoting the landscape of Cliffs of

Mohar as a tourism destination, while also taking away the freedom that is a core value of

busking.[66] Paul Simpson explores the affective dimension and class politics around street music

and treats it as a way to address social space in Victorian London.[67] A more abstract study on the

politics of sounds in public sphere appears in Jacques Attali's *Noise: The Political Economy of

Music* that not only traces the history of music but also the detachment of the musician from their

patron and their association with the market.[68] The street musician and itinerant entertainer, in

Attali's view, are the precursor of the musician as differentiated from the performer and the

commodified figure of the "popular star" in the cultural economy.[69]

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64. Claudia Seldin, "The Voices of Berlin: Busking in a 'Creative' City," *Culture Unbound* 12, No. 2, (2020): 233–255.

65. Catherine Strong, Shane Homan, Seamus O'Hanlon and John Tebbutt, "Uneasy alliances Popular music and cultural policy in the 'music city'," in *The Routledge Handbook of Global Cultural Policy*, ed. Victoria Durrer, Toby Miller, Dave O'Brien, (London: Routledge, 2017), 479, 468–81 E-Book.

66. Adam Kaul, "Music on the edge: Busking at the Cliffs of Moher and the commodification of a musical landscape," *Tourist Studies* 14, no.1, (2014): 30–47.

67. Paul Simpson, "Sonic affects and the production of space: 'Music by handle' and the politics of street music in Victorian London," *Cultural Geographies* 24, No.1 (2017): 89–109.

68. Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (first published 1985; Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2017).

69. *Ibid,* 14–15 and 72–77.

Case studies on the impact of municipal bylaws on busking have also emerged in the recent years from big cities where busking is regulated through permits, spot-bookings, noise regulations and solicitation bylaws.[70] Sylvie Genest examines the changes in Montreal's municipal bylaws relating to street music and musicians since the mid-nineteenth century.[71] Wees' ethnographic study of the metro musicians in Montreal focuses on their practice and what he describes as a bricolage or "improvised assembling" of a performance in public space.[72] Jhessica Reia, in a comparative study between Montreal and Rio de Janeiro, investigates the laws that impact busking after dark in the two cities and the potential positive effects of busking at night on urban culture.[73]

While this body of literature makes visible the transnational links in a place through the circulating figure of the busker, several of the studies also establish busking as a practice that evolves locally through interactions with the laws, built environment, institutions, market, cultural norms and preferences of a place. In the context of the cultural economy, the tension within the practice of busking – an artefact of cultural "authenticity" versus a marketable commodity – is explored by Lily E. Hirsch in her analysis of the project Playing for Change. Playing for Change is a video montage of street musicians playing the same song around the

70. See for example, Julia Quilter and Luke Mcnamara, "'Long May the Buskers Carry on Busking': Street Music and the Law in Melbourne and Sydney," *Melbourne University Law Review* 39 (2015): 539–91; John Juricich, "Freeing Buskers' Free Speech Rights: Impact of Regulations on Buskers' Right to Free Speech and Expression," *Harvard Journal of Sports and Entertainment Law* 8 (2017), 39–62; and Fiona Wright, "Sound Check: Bylaws, Busking and the Local Government Act 2002," *Victoria Uuniversity of Wellington Law Review* 36 (2005): 105–126.

71 Sylvie Genest, "Musiciens de rue et réglements municipaux à Montréal: La condemnation civile de la marginalité (1857–2001)," *Les Cahiers de la Société Québécoise de Recherche en Musique* 5, no.1–2 (2001): 31–44.

72. Nick Wees, "Improvised Performances: Urban Ethnography and the Creative Tactics of Montreal's Metro Buskers," *Humanities* 6, no. 67 (2017).

73. Jhessica Riea, "Can We Play Here? The Regulation of Street Music, Noise and Public Spaces After Dark," in *Nocturnes: Popular Music and the Night*, ed. Geoff Stahl and Giacomo Bottà (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 163–176, E-Book.

world and Hirsch's argument is that the sense of universality conveyed in the music video

conceals a form of "elitism and national chauvinism" and an imposition of one form of music

over different cultural geographies.[74]

The entanglement of creative city, cultural economy and busking extends beyond the

commodification of street music and performance and involves a shift in the figure of the busker

from that of an itinerant to an independent musician, performer and entrepreneur. This

dissertation attends to the transformation of the busker into a cultural worker. The memories and

experiences of busking shared in the interviews turn the focus on busking as labour, and the

marginalisation and displacement of the original busker figure from urban space by professional

artists and artist collectives in the cultural economy. Oral history as a methodology has evolved

around a desire to document and give voice to the marginalised in history. Turning to the radical

roots of this methodology, Daniel Kerr argues that at a time when society is burdened by

"profound economic instabilities and dislocations, deepening inequalities, anti-immigrant

attacks, and public displays of police violence," oral history can go beyond documenting lives

and contribute towards more material social transformation.[75] This thesis is an effort to address

this widening gap in the cultural economy that remains obscured by the creative class discourse

that focuses on "a form of creative trickledown; (and) elite-focused creativity strategies" for

economic revitalisation and urban redevelopment.[76] Focus on buskers, their life experiences and

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74. Lily E. Hirsch, "'Playing for Change': Peace, Universality, and the Street Performer," *American Music* 28, No. 3 (Fall 2010), 361, 346–367.

75. Daniel R. Kerr, "Allan Nevins Is Not My Grandfather: The Roots of Radical Oral History Practice in the United States," *Oral History Review* 43, No. 2 (2016): 371, 367–391.

76. Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class," 766.

how their histories intersect with that of the city provides an intersectional view of workers who are cultural producers but contest the assumed homogeneity of the creative class.

Beyond the untenable nature of the creative class thesis, there are some other significant challenges to the creative city. As Kong notes, there is a general lack of consensus on what sectors of the economy and what industries can be defined as creative, apart from the commodification of culture for profit-making and a confusion over whether creativity was to be deployed for economic growth or social good, and a valorisation of creative labour.[77] Kong argues for a return to the term cultural economy and cultural industries for the sake of clarity in theory and for redesigning policy.[78]

However, the boundaries of cultural economy can be just as confounding. If the arguments of heterodox economists are attended to, all economies are embedded in the cultural domain though the extent to which they can be collapsed into one another remains debated.[79] Timothy Mitchell notes that while the economy is embedded in the social, it also has real effects as an independent entity.[80] For Andrew Sayer, the distinction between the economic and the social – the systems and the lifeworlds – are fuzzy but "indispensable",[81] whereas Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift argue an inseparability between culture and economy and their immanent

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77. Kong, "From cultural industries to creative industries and back?" 596–602.

78. *Ibid*, 602–604.

79. For a broad theoretical discussion of how social and geographical relations constitute the economy and more precisely the market, see Jamie Peck, "Economic Sociologies in Space," *Economic Geography* 81, No. 2 (2005): 129–175. For a critique of the concept of cultural economy as employed by city governments for economic development, see Chris Gibson and Lily Kong, "Cultural economy: a critical review," *Human Geography* 29, No. 5 (October 2005): 541–561. http://doi.org/10.1191/0309132505ph567oa

80. Timothy Mitchell, Introduction in *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 2002).

81. Andrew Sayer, "For a Critical Cultural Political Economy," Antipode 33 (2001): 690, 687–708.

relationship.[82] Instead of going too deep into this theoretical fog, I want to stay with the fuzzy

lines between culture and economy and the market's entanglement with place,[83] which elicit

enough complex entanglements for empirical research.

Any of these above articulations of the cultural economy will allow for busking to be

viewed as a form of informal work. If cultural economy is understood strictly in connection with

cultural industries, busking elicits an array of qualities that fit the definition of immaterial

labour— flexible labour that is intermittent, entrepreneurial and affective work with non-

standard or absent employment relationships and challenges in organising for collective

bargaining, among others. Through the experiences shared in the interviews, I foreground some

of these challenges faced by buskers in an increasingly regulated urban environment. In thinking

through busking as labour, my attempt is also to shine a light on its entanglement with the

cultural economy of the city. Otherwise, if a more entangled view of culture and economy are

drawn upon, busking makes visible how the informal or the non-economic activities are

constitutive of the formal economy.

In Montreal, a visible entanglement between culture and economy through cultural

industries is noted since the 1980s but the roots of it lie in events and processes that were already

unfolding since the post-war period.[84] Despite the economic boom after the end of the Second

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82. Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift, "Cultural-economy and cities," *Progress in Human Geography* 31, No. 2 (2007): 157, 143–61.

83. Jamie Peck, Christian Berndt and Norma M. Rantisi, "Introduction: Exploring Markets," in *Market/Place: Exploring Spaces of Exchange*, ed. Christian Berndt, Jamie Peck and Norma M. Rantisi (Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2020): 1–26. The authors argue that the entanglement of the market with place has been less attended to even though market forces are always shaped by local actors. Markets, therefore, are both shaped by and produce a place. One of the chapters in the volume for example traces the historical evolution of the marketplace and its need by certain actors for political expansion and economic gain. See, Erica Schoenberger, "What are markets for and who makes them? Class, state-building and territorial management in the constitution of markets," in *Market/Place: Exploring Spaces of Exchange*, eds. Christian Berndt, Jamie Peck and Norma M. Rantisi (Newcastle upon Tyne: Agenda Publishing, 2020), 105–118.

84. Diane Saint-Pierre, "Québec and Its Cultural Policies: The Affirmation of a National Identity, a Distinct Culture, Creative and Open to the World," in *Cultural Policy: Origins, Evolution, and Implementation in Canada's*

World War, the city was also experiencing economic peripheralization.[85] In the years after 1960,

Montreal was not only waning in importance in North American and global trade, but also

witnessing a decline in manufacturing production.[86] The state's response was to redirect energy

into developing the tertiary sector, undertake major infrastructure projects and expand public

services, which became major employers, especially in Montreal. The decades of the Quiet

Revolution, which according to Martin Pâquet and Stéphane Savard could defined by the

consensus over a welfare state in the province,[87] saw a massive transformation in governance

alongside the emergence of a nationalist movement pegged to the idea of a distinct Quebecois

cultural identity organised around French language.

The changes manifested in contradictory ways on the landscape and socio-cultural fabric.

Joseph Schumpeter's concept of creative destruction, which Jefferson Cowie describes as the

dialectic of "crumble and rot" alongside "sustenance" for new economic growth,[88] explains the

unfolding events and processes in Montreal during this period. Industrial working-class

neighbourhoods were emptying out, facing job loss and seeing a rise in the number of people on

welfare.[89] Communities were also uprooted because of urban renewal and redevelopment

Provinces and Territories, ed. Monica Gattinger, Diane St-Pierre, Jean-Paul Baillargeon, Nicole Barrieau, Alison Beale and Daniel Bourgeois (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2021), 206, 191–267.

85. Gagnon and Montcalm, *Quebec: Beyond the Quiet Revolution* (Scarborough, Ont.: Nelson Canada, 1990), 6.

86. High, *Deindustrializing Montreal*.

87. Martin Pâquet and Stéphane Savard, *Brève histoire de la révolution tranquille* (Montreal: Les éditions du Boréal, 2021), 16.

88. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, Democracy* (New York: harper, 1942) via Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy-Year Quest for Cheap Labor* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 182–184.

89. High, *Deindustrializing Montreal.*

initiatives.[90] Meanwhile, jobs for professionals had increased by 40.8 percent between 1971 and 1981 and the number of women in Montreal's labour market had also increased substantially, leading to gentrification of some neighbourhoods.[91] Suburbanization, deindustrialization and economic restructuring were parallel processes that shaped Montreal during this time. The Quiet Revolution had "created conditions for working class affirmation and claims for redress of the widespread economic disparity between the French and the English",[92] even as many former industrial workers found themselves being pushed out of their neighbourhoods, in need of retraining to adapt to the labour market, and were marginalised in the labour market and at their places of residence.

The economic transformations manifested differently in different neighbourhoods. Certain neighbourhoods in the Plateau, especially the area along Saint Laurent Boulevard, previously called the Main and a working-class and immigrant neighbourhood with garment and shoe manufacturing industries in the area,[93] gentrified rapidly. Owing to locational proximity of these neighbourhoods to administrative offices, cultural industries, universities, hospitals and organisations in the non-profit sector, the multi-ethnic working-class population was replaced by a growing number of professionals and low-wage white-collar workers – with a high proportion

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90. Steven High, "Little Burgundy: The Interwoven Histories of Race, Residence, and Work in Twentieth-Century Montreal," *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine* 46, No. 1, (Fall 2017): 23–44. Little Burgundy, an area in the heart of the city that had evolved as a Black neighbourhood, fell to urban renewal plans in eth 1960s and 1970s, forcing many residents of the area to permanently relocate elsewhere in the city. The decline of the importance of railways followed by a plan to build a highway through the heart of the neighbourhood cost not only the Black families of the area steady jobs but also displaced them from their residences and community. Also see, High, *Deindustrializing Montreal*.

91. Damaris Rose, "A feminist perspective of employment restructuring and gentrification: the case of Montreal," in in Jennifer R. Wolch and Michael J. Dear (Eds.) *The Power of Geography: How Territory Shapes Social Life*, (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 118–138.

92 Caroline Desbiens, *Power from the North: Territory, Identity and the Culture of Hydroelectricity in Quebec* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2013), 23.
93. Pierre Anctil, *Saint-Laurent: La « Main » de Montréal* (Montreal: Septentrion, 2002).

of women among them – in the public and para-public sectors, such as education, health and administration, and in culture and communications.[94] The gendered labour force was "constitutive of gentrification processes" in these neighbourhoods,[95] and Saint Laurent Boulevard acquired an image of cosmopolitanism.[96] Old Montreal was turned into a historical district in 1964 and massive public infrastructure projects – highways, the metro, the site for Expo-67 and the Olympic stadium among others – were introduced elsewhere in the city to transform its image. Some of the spatial transformations during this period are explored through the memories and experiences of buskers in the city.

Other contradictions were apparent in the social domain. Struggling to keep its place or create a new place for itself as an important economic center and a metropolis in North America, Montreal was on a state-led "Imagineering" project that was shaped by politicians, urban planners and technocrats.[97] This vision of a cosmopolitan city was being challenged by an equally international social and political movement that was drawing inspiration from anti-colonial thought, events and ideologies emerging elsewhere in the world. Sean Mills and David Austin, in their respective works, point to these global connections to the local struggles of Montreal and Quebec during this time. Even as both authors present a landscape rife with activities and intellectual exchanges on an international scale, they also note the marginalisation

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94. Rose, "A feminist perspective of employment restructuring," 124–127.

95. *Ibid*. 133.

96. Marie-Laure Poulot, "Branding Cosmopolitanism and Place Making in Saint Laurent Boulevard," in *Migration, Urbanity and Cosmopolitanism in a Globalized World*, eds. Catherine Lejeune, Delphine Pagès-El Karoui, Camille Schmoll, Hélène Thiollet (Cham: Springer, 2021), 111–123. E-Book. Poulot notes the label of cosmopolitanism has become a trope for place-branding in cities trying to find an edge over others in attracting capital investments.

97. Paul, "World cities as hegemonic projects," 574.

of women in these struggles, which also led to the growth of a robust women's movement.[98]

Moreover, the language of decoloniality employed during this period to argue the cause of

Quebecois self-affirmation not only ignored the status of indigenous peoples in the settler

coloniality[99] but also appropriated the Black historical experience of slavery, contributing to

their invisibility in Quebec society.[100]

Culturally too, it was a period of important developments. The linguistic rivalry had

contributed to a rich pool of cultural institutions in the city.[101] And if the elite and the clergy had

dominated the institutions of education and high culture, cinema scopes served as spaces French-

Canadians gathered outside of church or taverns and helped inculcate a sense of identity that was

simultaneously distanced from the influence of the church and the anglophone elite culture

centered in Montreal.[102] The post-war period thus saw the rise of several secular cultural

initiatives.[103] After the 1950s, francophone Quebecois cinema with its traditions such as cinéma

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98. Sean Mills, *The Empire Within: Postcolonial Thought and Political Activism in Sixties Montreal* (Montreal & Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 13 and David Austin, *Fear of the Black Nation: : Race, Sex and Security in Sixties Montreal* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2013), 120–122. Mills writes that activism in Montreal continued to be a "male preserve" until the Fall of 1969 when women started to organise and come together as an autonomous movement. Austin notes the marginalisation of Black women at the 1968 Black Writers' Congress held at McGill University.

99. *Mills*, *The Empire Within*, 60.

100. Austin, *Fear of the Black Nation*, 64–69.

101. Guy Bellavance and Christian Poirier, "Cultural Field and Montreal Space (I): Cultural Life in Montreal Before 1960," in *Montreal: The History of a North American City*, eds. Dany Fougères and Roderick MacLeod (Montreal & Kingston, London and Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), 513, 509–547. For example, alongside the Montreal Orchestra, which was dominated by the anglophones and was under the influence of McGill Faculty of Music, came up Le société des concerts symphoniques de Montréal in 1934 that offered francophone and local talents an opportunity to perform in the city. This linguistic rivalry also contributed to the development of a robust print culture.

102. Scott MacKenzie, "A screen of one's own: early cinema in Quebec and the public sphere 1906-28," *Screen* 41, No. 2 (Summer 2000): 183–202.

103. Guy Bellavance and Christian Poirier, "Cultural Field and Montreal Space (II): Agglomeration in Transition," in *Montreal: The History of a North American City*, eds. Dany Fougères and Roderick MacLeod (Montreal & Kingston, London and Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2018), 548–596. Many of the local cultural actors – individuals and institutions in the private, public and non-profit sectors – that were to later lend a hand in

direct and société nouvelle were producing their own public culture around filmmaking and viewing.[104] These cinematic texts became key in the production of a new Quebecois identity, which was harnessed to forward the politics that was reshaping the province's economy, politics and culture. Television appeared in 1952. And if the producers' strike at CBC/Radio-Canada in 1958 is anything to go by, the city's cultural landscape was already having important bearings on its economy and politics. With their demand to unionise in Quebec, the producers' strike had conveyed the television industry's relevance to the city's labour force.

One of the first initiatives of the Liberal Party government in 1961 was to create the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. During the Quiet Revolution, even as the ascendancy of French language produced a divide in Montreal society, especially following sovereigntist Parti Quebecois party's political win in the province in 1976 and passing of Bill 101 in 1977, there was also a rapid expansion of infrastructure to support culture and its democratisation and diffusion. As Pâquet and Savard note, the period between 1975 and 1983 was important for the development of a cultural policy, creation of institutions such as the Société de développement des industries culturelles (SODIC) that would support the growth of cultural industries in the province and production of infrastructure for widespread diffusion of culture.[105] Diane Saint-Pierre offers a periodization for the province's cultural policies since the beginning of the Quiet Revolution— first, the liberal approach of the 1960s led by an interventionist state whose vision

the transformations sweeping through Quebec in the second half of the twentieth century had already arrived on the scene in Montreal on the eve of the Quiet Revolution. Institutions such as the *boîtes à chansons* that became patrons of francophone music and local artists across the province were already present on the cultural landscape during the Duplessis regime.

104. Scott MacKenzie, *Screening Quebec: Québécois moving images, national identity and the public sphere* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 122–125.

105. Pâquet and Savard, *Brève histoire de la révolution tranquille*, 206–15.

of culture expanded to include matters of language, urban planning, immigrant integration into

Quebec society and francophone minorities outside of Quebec; second, the policy of the 1970s

that revolved around creating a Quebecois national identity; and third, the period after 1980

when cultural policy came to combine culture and economy through industries.[106] Pâquet and

Savard note that the economic recession between 1981 and 1983 brought Quebec to a new period

to be defined as neoliberalism,[107] and the signs were especially clear in the cultural sector where

a "quasi-neoliberal approach to cultural policy and administration" prioritised high-technology

industries.[108]

Neoliberalism is an "intensely place-based experience" that unfolds in locally specific

ways.[109] Arguing the need to situate this broad phenomenon in context in order to grasp the

nuances, the "diversity within" and the "bottom-up influences on policy", Peter Graefe points to

several trends in Quebec since the 1990s – in social economy, child care and home-care policies

– that to various degrees exhibit neoliberal tendencies but were also introduced as correctional

measures to address the gaps in the previous version of a neoliberal state.[110] These processes tied

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106. Diane Saint Pierre, "Québec and Its Cultural Policies: The Affirmation of a National Identity, a Distinct Culture, Creative and Open to the World," in *Cultural Policy: Origins, Evolution, and Implementation in Canada's Provinces and Territories*, ed. Monica Gattinger, Diane St-Pierre, Jean-Paul Baillargeon, Nicole Barrieau, Alison Beale and Daniel Bourgeois (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2021), 210–21, 191–267.

107. Pâquet and Savard, *Brève histoire de la révolution tranquille,* 15–16.

108. Monica Gattinger and Diane Saint-Pierre, "The "Neoliberal Turn" in Provincial Cultural Policy and Administration in Québec and Ontario: The Emergence of 'Quasi-Neoliberal' Approaches," *Canadian Journal of Communication* Vol 35 (2010): 285, 279–302.

109. Ben Rogaly and Becky Taylor, *Moving Histories of Class and Community Identity, Place and Belonging in Contemporary England* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 20. E-book. Also see, Jason Hackworth, "The Time, Place and Process of Neoliberalism," in *The Neoliberal City* (first published in 2007; Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014), Kindle.

110. Peter Graefe, "Roll-out Neoliberalism and the Social Economy," Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, University of Western Ontario, June 2, 2005, 1, 1–29. http://www.cpsa-acsp.ca/papers-2005/Graefe.pdf (accessed April 29, 2022). Also see, Peter Graefe, "The Quebec Patronat: Proposing a Neo-liberal Political Economy after All," *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 41 (2004): 171-193.

to the appearance of a less interventionist state, reduced public spending on welfare schemes, and

professionalization and corporatisation of social services among other policies are multiple and

sometimes unfold in contradictory movements, involving destruction of old landscapes and

institutions of governance followed by the creation of new entities and practices that then

nurtures neoliberalism.[111] Graefe demonstrates that Quebec's social economy policies show

varying trends— of marketization, flanking and those that skirt both.[112] Norma Rantisi and

Deborah Leslie, through an analysis of the role played by a work-integration social enterprises in

the economy, elaborate the ways in which such community-based organisations become

"conduits for channeling the state's (neoliberal) interests to citizens, rather than making claims to

the state on citizens' behalf."[113] Within the social economy, policies and initiatives can get

enrolled into furthering neoliberalism, but also hold the potential for democratisation and can

temper the gaps created by it. Thus, as Graefe points out, despite the hypothesis around Quebec's

exceptionalism within North America that argues neoliberal policies of the 1980s were replaced

by more conscientious business models in the 1990s that saw value in partnerships with social

institutions and community-based organisations, the overall trend and vision of the economy

remains rooted "within the family of liberal market economies".[114]

 A ministerial committee report of 1986, also known as the Picard report after the

chairman Laurent Picard, was but one indication of such a thinking among the top echelons –

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111. Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism,'" *Antipode* 34 (2002): 349–79.

112. Graefe, "Roll-out Neoliberalism and the Social Economy," 25.

113. Norma M. Rantisi and Deborah Leslie, "In and against the Neoliberal State? The Precarious Siting of Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs) as Counter-Movement in Montreal, Quebec," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 53, no. 2 (March 2021), 354, 349–70. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X20948068.

114. Graefe, "The Quebec Patronat," 188.

politicians, economists and policy-makers – on the problems that plagued the city and the

solutions that could turn around its fate. The report not only identified design, cultural industries,

such as music and audio-visual production, gaming, etc., events and tourism apart from advanced

technology industries as growth drivers, but also recommended changes in the labour laws to

accommodate business interests.[115] In particular, it found problems "with respect to occupational

health and safety and strike-breaking sections," suggesting changes to favour investments.[116] The

committee also recommended that the city become a hub for offices of international agencies and

non-governmental organisations that would set it apart from Toronto. The recommendations not

only normalised the post-Fordist regime but also welcomed a neoliberal state, actively seeking

public-private ventures, suggesting involvement of private players in developing the cultural

sector, and recommending less interferences in the labour market.[117] Several other trends and the

creation of institutions such as SODIC during this time also demonstrate that the city's cultural

economy was entwined with neoliberal policy initiatives that sought to increase the role of

private enterprises. The story of Cirque du soleil, in particular, speaks to the turn that Montreal

was taking. According to Louis Patrick Leroux, the company embraced and successfully

marketed a genre of circus arts that struck a fine balance between "commerce, art and

recuperative national mythmaking" that not only brought it closer to cultural and entertainment

industries, but also applied a Quebecois "imaginative stamp" on it.[118] Soon, the word "cirque"

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115. "Report on the Consultative Committee to the Ministerial committee on the Development of the Montreal Region," Ministry of Supply and Services Canada, Government of Canada, November 1986.

116. *Ibid*, 190.

117. Julie-Anne Boudreau, Pierre Hamel, Bernard Jouve and Roger Keil, "Comparing metropolitan governance: The cases of Montreal and Toronto," *Progress in Planning* 66 (2006), 22, 7–59. doi:10.1016/j.progress.2006.07.005.

118. Louis Patrick Leroux, "A Tale of Origins: Deconstructing North American "Cirque" where Québécois and American Cultures Meet," in *Cirque Global: Quebec's Expanding Circus Boundaries*, ed. Louis Patrick Leroux and

came to represent a particular style of circus arts that, as he illustrates, drew on a long history of

circus arts in North America – artists from Quebec, travelling circus companies from the United

States, and the exchanges between the two cultures – and a new aesthetic adapted to the demands

of the contemporary cultural industries.[119] In other words, if economic necessity had led the city

to embrace culture as a marketable good, the distinct cultural identity that developed during the

Quiet Revolution had also taken an economic turn and become a brand identity.

     In the summer of 1980, the city also hosted its first International Jazz Fest at Île-Sainte-

Hélène, the site for Expo-67. By 1982, the festival had moved downtown, indicating the new role

that the inner city was being assigned in the new economy. Since then, Montreal has added close

to a hundred festivals to its annual calendar. Events and festivals serve as platforms in the

cultural economy to showcase local talent and creativity. They have become key actors in the

production of the creative city, providing space and opportunity for engagement to build

connections between institutions and firms on the one hand, and artists and creative professionals

or cultural workers on the other hand.[120] Commerce Design Montréal is one such example. It

brings together the provincial government, City of Montreal, local artists and enterprises on one

platform.[121] Diane Saint-Pierre cites several arm's length institutions, such as Conseil des arts et

des lettres du Québec (CALQ), Fonds d'investissement de la culture et des communications

(FICC), Financière des entreprises culturelles (FIDEC), and SODIC's evolution into Société de

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Charles R. Batson (Montreal &Kingston, London and Chicago: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 54, 36–54. E-book.

119. *Ibid*, 36–54.

120. Patrick Cohendet, David Grandadam and Laurent Simon, "The Anatomy of the Creative City," *Industry and Innovation* 17, No. 1, (2010), 91–111. https://doi.org/10.1080/13662710903573869.
121. Deborah Leslie and Norma M. Rantisi, "Governing the Design Economy in Montréal, Canada," *Urban Affairs Review* 41, No. 3 (January 2006), 319–322, 309–337. DOI: 10.1177/1078087405281107.

Développement des Entreprises Culturelles (SODEC), as an example of the tendencies towards neoliberalism in state policies to manage culture.[122] And even as Quebec continues to make huge public expenditures in the cultural sector alongside federal investments, as illustrates her analysis of its budget increases,[123] creation of spaces such as Quartier des spectacles, Place des arts, and initiatives such as La Tohu, which encourage public-private partnerships and autonomous organisations are signs of how neoliberal ideology is modulated on ground in interaction with local politics.

In keeping with the broader argument that neoliberalism is diversely manifested and needs to be situated, certain neoliberal tendencies in the city's cultural economy also become visible in the lives lived and stories shared by buskers and in their interactions with administrators, whether of the borough of Ville Marie in Old Montreal or of the metro. The tightening of regulations that impact busking, introduction of measures to manage busking spots, contestations over space between buskers and the city, and the story of buskers uniting to organise themselves into an association bare some of these tensions between neoliberal processes and the social economy. Moreover, some of the buskers interviewed for this project were young adults in the 1960s and 1970s. Those who were born in the city lived through a period of great socio-political transformation during the Quiet Revolution, even as their lives also intersected the broader economic transition of the city from an industrial to a culture- and tourism-driven economy. Their perspective is a ground-up narrative of these major transformations and reveal small details of life in the city. Others who arrived in the city in the later years and as adults

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122. Saint-Pierre, "Québec and its Cultural Policies," 233-36.

123. *Ibid*, 239.

brought in experiences of life elsewhere and their stories make legible the city's connection to other places and cultures through people and their art or music.

In Dunlevy's stories for example, the social churnings of the time were palpable. He talked at length about the love-ins at parc Jeanne Mance, Drapeau's policing of public spaces, café culture and live music of the time, subcultures and underground newspapers such as *Logos*, and "hippie-harassment" towards the end of 1960s, apart from the important political moments such as the October Crisis of 1970.[124] Dino Spaziani, meanwhile, recalled the years leading up to the 1976 Olympics somewhat differently. Spaziani had grown up near Chabanel, the heart of garment manufacturing in Montreal, and had worked as a pattern grader for over fifteen years in a factory in the city. He talked about his decision to quit school at the age of fifteen in 1973:

> Dino Spaziani (DS): Before 1976, it [the city or the economy] was full jobs, no matter what you want to do, you— half the people quit school at sixteen; I wasn't the only one. There were a lot of kids leaving school because there were jobs. There were a lot of jobs before the Olympics. Because there were so many things that were being built and we have, look— if I tell you, in garment we were about 250,000 people working for garment in Quebec, in the province of Quebec, at this time, so imagine! We had a lot of construction; we had the expansion of the metro and the barrage in the north, electricity, it was a lot of jobs, so that was not a problem. After the Olympics, we had a little bit of lowdown economically and it was a bit hard when we arrived in the '80s. That's why we start to have some [pause] houseless people – how do you say that, homeless people – in these years. That's why busking started to be a— [125]

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124. Dunlevy, oral history interview session - I.

125. Dino Spaziani, Oral history interview, Montreal, November 6, 2019.

I don't know how he would have ended the sentence because I interrupted him with a question at that moment. But before this, we had been talking about the garment industry in Montreal between 1970 and 1990, and then I had tried to veer the conversation towards busking by asking whether he was playing music when he was working in garment. That's when he explained to me why he did not remember seeing any buskers in the metro in the 1970s. This reflection also shines a light on the likely reasons why Dunlevy and other buskers were fighting for space with the metro administration to busk in the early 1980s and were desperate enough to self-organise into an association. The full import of Spaziani's comments become clearer against Caroline Desbiens' observations about the presence of the James Bay and the Manicouagan hydroelectricity projects on Quebecois imagination and her own recall that numerous jobs in the city at the time were associated with these projects.[126]

Though I interviewed eighteen people for this project, the lives and stories of only a few buskers are explored in this dissertation in detail. While all interviews were equally informative and important to the project, for lack of space and inability to do justice to the life histories of each individual, I had to make some choices based on the overall narrative that was emerging through their stories and my interest in telling them. Details of all the interviews, except for two that I held back for reasons of anonymity and permission, appear in the bibliography. With two buskers, I did multi-session interviews. The decision to conduct follow-up interviews were based on my need to address new research questions, interest in acquiring new information, and a desire to experiment with a new interview methodology, that of a walking interview, to see the differences in stories elicited in walking or *in-situ* interviews, which go beyond questions and draw on sensory cues to trigger memory, against more sedentary interviews. Given buskers'

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126. Desbiens, *Power from the North*, 1.

relationship to space, the different methodologies used in interviews had a bearing on memories that were recalled, and my attempt has been to stay attentive to these dynamics in analysis.

Liz Bondi argues for a place for emotions in research data concerning human beings.[127] For oral historians too, emotions are an undeniable aspect of their "data". The intersubjective space, which extends beyond the interview often, is potent with emotions of the interviewee-participant and, as Sean Field shows in writing about his father, also those of the interviewer-researcher.[128] To bring oral histories with buskers at the center of a conversation about the city is like riding the roller-coaster of emotions associated with place and the built environment of urban space, such as a lamppost or a particular corner of a square. Anger, sadness and nostalgia caused by displacement, migration or lack of mobility alongside feelings of thrill, joy and exhilaration due to audience recognition and appreciation, and experiences of fear, loss and disappointment because of surveillance and administrative interferences bring to the fore a complex tapestry of emotions attached to urban space.

Through exploring emotions, it is not only possible to unearth and document felt experiences of people, but also see landscapes as "classed, racialized and sexualized in exclusionary ways".[129] They make visible geographies of exclusion, experiences of marginality and oppression in place.[130] The interviews bring up a range of emotions among buskers that are

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127. Liz Bondi, "The Place of Emotions in Research: From Partitioning Emotion and Reason to the Emotional Dynamics of Research Relationships," in *Emotional Geographies*, eds. Joyce Davidson, Liz Bondi and Mick Smith (Farnham, UK and Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2005), 231–246.

128. Sean Field, "'Shooting at Shadows': Private John Field, war stories and why he would not be interviewed," Oral History 41, No. 2, (Autumn 2013): 75–86.

129. Joyce Davidson & Christine Milligan, "Embodying emotion sensing space: introducing emotional geographies," *Social & Cultural Geography*, 5:4, (2004): 523-532, DOI: 10.1080/1464936042000317677.

130. For an overview of the literature, see Liz Bondi, Joyce Davidson and Mick Smith, "Introduction," in *Emotional Geographies*, eds. Joyce Davidson, Liz Bondi and Mick Smith (Farnham, UK and Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2005), 1–16.

woven into the memories of places in the city and of other places elsewhere. Seemingly innocuous changes under urban revitalisation schemes, surveillance practices and minor regulatory measures in the most transitory of spaces, such as a street corner, metro station, and a public square, evoked strong responses and dominated the interviews. Against them were also silences, such as about childhood, family and certain periods life. Space can also be a strategy to not enunciate that which is difficult in life history.[131] In this project, memories of space anchor the interviews, while emotions related to them draw attention to not just their relationship but also the causes behind those feelings.

The personal, which is also incredibly emotional, appears in the research space as memories and as relationships between interviewee-participants and interviewer-researchers. If interviews make interviewee-participants vulnerable, the interviewer-researcher does not emerge entirely unscathed from the exercise of listening. Bonds were formed before and after the interviews through mutual sharing of personal stories of immigration and of life in Montreal and conversations about matters such as childcare, divorce, friendships and frailties in life. After a conversation with a busker – a stranger I had met for the very first time at their home – took a personal turn, I remember wondering if working on this project would require talking about my life. In hindsight, it occurs to me that if I were asking someone to share their life history with me, my own story couldn't entirely escape the frame. My positionality as a researcher did not just shape the analysis of the project; it determined the interaction, frame, form and the content of the interviews. Subjectivity was inherent in the project at every step. Thus, this dissertation is based on co-created research data. The comprehension of the buskers' lives, city and the economy that

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131. Tim Cole, "(Re)Placing the Past: Spatial Strategies of Retelling Difficult Stories," *The Oral History Review* 42, no.1 (2015): 30–49, DOI: 10.1093/ohr/ohv003

is produced as a result of these interactions is "situated", as Donna Haraway argues is the case with all knowledges produced through research.[132]

The dialogue that is at the core of oral history practice is also a process of sharing authority in research. For Steven High, it is a collaborative process where university-based research unfolds in conversation with research participants or with community-based researchers.[133] Oral history projects, in his argument, must take into account the power relationship in research and think beyond the practice of sharing authority in the interview space itself. This approach allows oral historians to devolve power in social sciences research and encourage community participation in decision-making processes. It is a goal that I aspire to but haven't found a way to achieve in this project. Most buskers have a complicated relationship to university spaces and related projects. They could have chosen to not participate; many did not.

Also, the interview itself is an act of collaboration.[134] An oral history interview requires a mutual willingness to talk across difference.[135] It is embedded in an intersubjective narrative space where the interests of the interviewee-participant in telling the stories, interviewer-researcher's interest in listening and asking questions, and the dynamic between them together shape the outcome.[136] The process of sharing authority is thus contextual and can take many

132. Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575–99. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066

133. Steven High, "Sharing Authority: An Introduction*," Journal of Canadian Studies/ Revue d'études canadiennes*, 43, No.1, (Winter 2009) 12–34. https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.43.1.12

134. Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990. Frisch, who first used the term shared authority with regards to oral history interviewing, draws attention to "the nature of authority enacted and manifest, shared or sharable or not, within the actual oral histories at the heart of each story."

135. Alessandro Portelli, "Living Voices: The Oral History Interview as Dialogue and Experience," *The Oral History Review* 45, no. 2 (2018): 239–248, DOI: 10.1093/ohr/ohy030," 241–243.

136. Sean Field*, Oral History, Community, and Displacement Imagining Memories in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 84.

different forms. If it is a collaborative project fraught with challenges with a possible tussle for power over outcomes,[137] it may also appear as letting an interviewee-participant to take on the role of a fellow interviewer and an interlocutor.[138] It can take the form of a safe space for telling stories— as a group that allows relative anonymity against an individual voice that might struggle to stand alone.[139] It may also look like merging research with a cause.[140]

That power and control does not always rest with the researcher and can be challenged by the interviewee-participant is something that I realised through experience. I don't deny my privileges as a university-based researcher in this context but as a racialized woman and a new immigrant to Montreal and Canada, there was very little that I felt was in my control when I embarked on interviewing for this project. I went in expecting to share authority and realised the power dynamic in public space was very different. Authority flowed from the other direction as well when buskers I met decided to invite me into their spaces. I felt authorised when they included me in their conversations and someone said, "she is okay; she is with us." The interviews were a shared space of vulnerability where the interviewee-participant's decisions to tell stories, choice of stories and even the length of the interview rested on their level of comfort, which was contingent on my being open to the conversation, ability to confront difference and

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137. See Lorraine Sitzia, "A Shared Authority: An Impossible Goal?" *The Oral History Review* 30, no.1 (2003): 87–101, DOI: 10.1525/ohr.2003.30.1.87

138. Stacey Zembryzcki, "Sharing Authority with Baba," *Journal of Canadian Studies/ Revue d'études canadiennes*, 43, No.1, (Winter 2009): 229, 219-63.

139. Stéphane Martelly, "This thing we are doing here: Listening and writing in the Life Stories Project," in *Beyond Women's Words: Feminisms and Practices of Oral History in the Twenty-first Century*, ed. Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembrzycki and Franca Iacovetta (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 184–91.

140. See Daniel Kerr, "'We Know What the Problem Is": Using Oral History to Develop a Collaborative Analysis of Homelessness from the Bottom Up, *The Oral History Review* 30, no.1 (2003), 27–45, DOI: 10.1525/ohr.2003.30.1.27. Also see, Fred Burrill, "History, Memory, and Struggle in Saint-Henri, Montreal," Doctoral Thesis, Concordia University, 2021.

listen without judgement. When Susana Martinez, an immigrant herself, chose to speak French in her interview despite my organising a co-interviewer and Spanish speaker, I felt enabled to use my broken French to interview her. These are all moments when it became visible that without them, my thesis would not have taken the shape that it did.

"We have always been here" is an oral history project that engages with memories of busking in the city to address the following questions: What are the lived experiences of buskers in the contemporary city? How have the spaces of busking changed in the transition from industrial to cultural economy in Montreal? What do the transformations mean for buskers and how do they navigate, negotiate or contest these changes? Finally, how does the cultural economy of the city and its neoliberal entanglements impact their lives and shape their practices?

The dissertation is divided into two sections. The first section explores representations of buskers in the archives and their self-representations through informal collections and the telling of stories in the interview space. Chapter one takes readers back in time to the nineteenth century and early twentieth century Montreal and attempts to retrace the figure of the busker in history through the archives. In the process, it also brings up the challenges of finding the itinerant entertainer in history and locating them in place. Facts tangled in fictional representations construct the busker in state memory. Chapter two begins the process of reversing the dynamic of representation of buskers in public sphere by looking at informal collections of various media— paper records, VHS tapes, cassettes, photos and scraps of newspaper clippings. Preserved by buskers themselves, these collections emerged during interviews in conversation with memories of busking. Chapter three turns to life histories to garner from buskers an understanding of their practice and its significance and role in their lives. Their interpretation of

busking as work contrasts with the framing of busking as a non-work activity. It troubles the boundaries of work and foregrounds experiences of precarity in the city.

The second section is anchored in space. In my research, I went where my interviewees took me. The chapters are organised around three different sites in Montreal where busking was or continues to be prevalent. Chapter four takes the readers to Prince-Arthur-East, framed by Carré Saint-Louis and Saint Laurent Boulevard. Working-class area in the early twentieth century, the street became a hip strip of artisanal shops and boutiques in the 1960s, which then paved the way for gentrification and big-money restaurants. Since the 1980s, the street has undergone multiple beautification drives and reorganisation of the public space to benefit the restaurant businesses in the neighbourhood. The buskers' voices articulate a sense of displacement and loss when speaking about this street. Chapter five is about busking at the metro stations that has become an integral part of the underground transit system's identity. Through interviews and the history of a metro buskers' association, this chapter explores buskers' agency and place within the new emerging cultural economy of Montreal after 1980. Not only does it speak to the challenges of self-organising but also illustrates a shift in the function of labour intermediaries within the new economic order. The life stories also speak to the structural violence of the economic transformation and labour market restructuring that reshaped Montreal during this period. Chapter six unfolds as a contestation between buskers and the city and is focussed on Place Jacques-Cartier. The square was a public market for over a century, until it became part of the city's heritage district. The new sanitised space also attempts to have more control over the activities of buskers who have been a part of its life for a long time. As one busker, Eric Girard, argued in the interview, they were always here. The title of the dissertation "We have always been here" draws from this interview and supports this claim on public space.

Section – I

Representations/ Self-representations

Chapter 1

Itinerants in the archives

Un musicien ambulant joue de l'accordéon sur la voie publique. Un agent de police l'interrompt.

« Avez-vous une permission ? »

« Non. »

« Alors accompagnez-moi ? »

« Volontiers, que voulez-vous chanter ? »[1]

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An organ-grinder had been playing before the house of an irascible old gentleman who furiously and amid wild gesticulations ordered him to move on. The Italian stolidly stood his ground, and played on until arrested for causing a disturbance. The magistrate asked him why he did not leave when requested. "Me no understan' mooch Inglese [*sic*]," was the reply. "Well, but you must have understood by his motions that he wanted you to go." "I tink he come and dance [*sic*]," was the rejoinder.[2]

The history of busking is as old as that of urbanisation, writes Patricia Campbell,[3] and yet the buskers' presence in history is not half as well documented as that of the expanding boundaries

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1. "Pour Rire," *Le Monde Illustré* Vol 18e année, No. 890, May 25, 1901, page 62, Canadiana Online, https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.8_06290_890/2?r=0&s=1/ (Accessed October 16, 2021)

2. "Misinterpreted Gestures," *The True Witness and the Catholic Chronicle*, Vol. LVI, No. 16 (October 25, 1906), page 8, Canadiana Online, https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.8_06526_2935/8?r=0&s=1/ (Accessed October 16, 2021)

3. Campbell and Belkin, *Passing the Hat*, 8.

of the city and its transforming landscape. Most of the time, their traces in any place have to be

gleaned from impressions left by observers— writers, painters, travellers, residents, reporters,

inspectors and the police. The well-preserved historical maps of the city of Montreal tell many

stories but not that of the busker. They are easy to miss in the historical documents, but for the

search function of digitised documents. Like the above examples cited from two newspapers in

early twentieth century, such representations of buskers are abundant, yet an inconspicuous

presence in history.

This chapter is a dive into the archives to locate the busker in the city's history. An image

of the busker in nineteenth and early twentieth century Montreal is pieced together, mostly

through representations in print media and depictions in paintings and illustrations published in

newspapers and journals from the period. These images need to be understood as "mediated

representations rather than objective records," writes Gillian Poulter in her book *Becoming

Native*, which examines the appropriation of indigenous practices by British settlers in the

nineteenth century desiring to establish their uniqueness as Canadians that was different from the

English in England and superior to the native peoples of the land.[4] Attending to the historical

figure of the busker reveals a similar politically constructed identity that shifted with broader

social transformations and against which the upper class and bourgeois identities were

established. The buskers, in their stereotyped representations that circulated in the public sphere,

embody the social anxieties of the period. These descriptions also offer cues to reconstruct a

bustling old city of Montreal where, as Mary Anne Putannen writes, men and women lived,

worked and socialised on the streets and in public squares alongside the bourgeoisie and the

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4. Gillian Poulter, *Becoming Native in a Foreign Land: Sport, Visual Culture and Identity in Montreal, 1840-85*
(Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 14.

upper classes.[5] The chapter prepares the ground for an interdisciplinary engagement and the use

of oral histories alongside archival research later in this dissertation to examine the position of

the busker within the contemporary political economy of the city and view transformations in

urban space and economy from their perspective.

Lost in the archive

Locating the busker in the archives is akin to wading through a pool of stereotypes that appear in

many different forms— as news reports, crime briefs, jokes, fictional figures and poetic

appearances. It is often difficult to separate reports of real-life events from representations; their

voice and their perspective are hard to find. In particular, the strolling musician – often an organ

grinder or a hurdy gurdy player – is among the most denigrated images of itinerant public

entertainers in western cities. Representations, whether fictive or real, are always rendered

through the eyes and opinions of the economic and political elite in society. In the nineteenth and

early twentieth century, these views had as much transmission through print media as any

itinerant musician or performer moving from place to place sometimes within the city and, at

other times, to faraway places. However, the voices and perspectives of buskers were seldom

recorded, as notes Paul Watt about the street musicians of nineteenth century London.[6]

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5. Mary Anne Poutanen, "Bonds of Friendship, Kinship and Community: Gender, Homelessness and Mutual Aid in Early-Nineteenth-Century Montreal," in Bettina Bradbury and Tamara Myres (eds.) *Negotiating Identities in the 19th- and 20th-Century Montreal*, (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2005), 25–48.

6. Paul Watt, "Street Music in London in the Nineteenth Century: 'Evidence' from Charles Dickens, Charles Babbage and Lucy Broadwood*," Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 15, no.1, (2018), 9–22. A rare exception is perhaps the work of Henry Mayhew published as *London Labour and London Poor* that, despite its problematic framing against the cholera outbreak of 1848 in London, offers a meticulous account of the lives and voices of street musicians and performers among other street figures of Victorian London. See Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and London Poor, Vol 1-4,* (Project Gutenberg, 2017 [1851, 1865]).

Finding their traces in any place is just as challenging. The historical maps of Montreal tell many stories but not that of the street musicians or performers. Land maps, especially cadastral maps, are "designed to make the local situation legible to an outsider," writes Scott.[7] The maps of the city in the archives trace the boundaries of Montreal through time and its changing spatial order. Drawn primarily for the purposes of facilitating governance and control over the land, they record topography, natural resources, administrative units, street grids, land allotments, estates, property ownerships, types of buildings and public spaces. The purpose of these maps was to help extend the influence of the settler colonial government over land and claim it for the future. Power was inscribed on land by mapping them. The street musician or the itinerant entertainer, because of their transient nature and momentary belonging in place, defy this rationale of control that lurks behind mapping exercises. Moving past their stock portrayal in history is, therefore, challenging.

But there once was an itinerant musician, one François Biancullo, who had an account with the Caisse d'Économie de Notre-Dame de Québec. Some details about his life are discernible from the financial reports of the institution. Between 1886 and 1900, Biancullo had an unclaimed balance of $39.38 in his account. He had made his last transaction in Lévis, Quebec, on October 20 in 1886. The report from 1890 also mentioned his occupation as itinerant musician with the address as simply Quebec with no street name or house number. Many other names that were on the report also did not have any details against their names. Some others had

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7. James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 45.

details such as the widow of such and such person, "actually from the United States", or "in a shelter for the sick".[8]

National archives are an "instantiation of the state's interest in history," writes Nicholas Dirks, [9] illustrating that records of the colonial government were built and ordered to facilitate the functioning of the state and serve its interests, while local knowledges and relationships were either marginalized or left out as unimportant details. They are selective memories that are deemed important for society— remembering and recalling alongside a simultaneous process of forgetting.[10] Biancullo's name appears in all the reports annually presented by the institution before the Parliament between 1891 and 1900, but by 1900 the fact that he was an itinerant musician had been lost. It was irrelevant to the memory of the institution and the state. The details about Biancullo were useful to distinguish him from other accountholders at the savings bank. Such particulars, however, needed to be removed for the purposes of abstraction and decision-making based on data. In the reports that were presented to the Parliament to convey the performance of the caisse d'économie, Biancullo's name, occupation or itinerant status did not matter. The purpose of the report was to convey the financial status of the institution, not the fact

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8. "Report of dividends remaining unpaid and amounts of balances in respect to which no transactions have taken place or upon which no interest has been paid for five years or upwards prior to 31st December 1891 in chartered banks of the Dominion of Canada," Sessional Papers of the Dominion of Canada, Vol 3A, Second Session of the Seventh Parliament, 1892, (Ottawa: S.E. Dawson, 1892), page 3A-310, Library and Archives Canada, Source: Canadiana Online https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.9_08052_25_3/ (Accessed October 16, 2021). Biancullo's name and account also appears in the reports filed in the subsequent years until at least 1900.

9. Nicholas B. Dirks, "Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History," in *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures*, ed. Brian Keith Axel (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2002), 62, 47–65.

10. Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid and Razia Saleh, (Dordrecht, Boston & London: Kluwer Academic, 2002), 20, 19–26.

that Biancullo had not operated his account for years or his identity. The individual and the itinerant were thus made invisible in the archives in the interest of the big picture.

The logic of the archives also influences the location of the records and their retrieval as becomes abundantly clear with Mr. Samuel Peal's papers, the subject of Tony Ballantyne's ethnography.[11] The logics of organisation within state archives shapes not only what information is found in archives but also how they are to be found. Durba Ghosh, therefore, argues for including conversations and interactions with archival staff in ethnographies of archives can shine a light on the power dynamic and the structure of the archives and makes visible the agency of the archivist in shaping historical research.[12] Her suggestion also turns the attention on to the decision-making process in research that has far-reaching consequences. When I had first approached the Library and Archives Canada to research buskers, an archivist had advised me to look at the city archives. And I did, until the pandemic brought life to a halt and I turned to digital databases. If I had to go through physical archives, I most likely would not have looked in the records of a banking institution or of the Parliament to find an itinerant musician. Indeed, the itinerant was too minor a figure for the national archives and yet being able to overturn the logic

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11. Tony Ballantyne, "Mr. Peal's Archive," in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 87–110. Once considered important enough to be archived by the unbounded British Empire under the Polynesian Society Collection, Mr. Peal's papers related to ethnographic work in the northeast of India no longer held much importance or prominence in the New Zealand national library in the postcolonial era. Not only does the collection not sit well with the postcolonial worldview but it also does not fit the bicultural mandate of New Zealand, resulting in the collection's awkward cataloguing and marginality in the archives. Ballantyne's ethnography highlights the possibilities within archives, while also making visible the limits of archival logic.

12. Durba Ghosh, "National Narratives and the Politics of Miscegenation: Britain and India," *in Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2005), 27–44. Working between the archives in Britain and India and trying to trace inter-racial sexual relationships among Indian women of the colonial period, Ghosh had felt that contemporary anxieties about race and gender, level of acceptability of the subject matter in society, and notions of purity and immorality shaped her archival research experience.

of its organisation through keyword search yielded this precious little detail about an itinerant

life in nineteenth century Quebec.

Locating the busker in the archive, therefore, required some unsettling of the order and

subversion of the logic of organisation. Since origins of busking lie in various different cultural

traditions and buskers appear as different figures through time,[13] I had to use multiple keywords

to find their references. Itinerant musician, musicien ambulant, hurdy gurdy player, organ

grinder, jouer d'orgue barbarie, charlatan, saltimbanque, juggler and Indian *fakir* were among the

most commonly appearing terms. While the searches produced abundant references in no time,

all of them had some things in common— condemnation, ambiguity and sarcasm in the portrayal

of the figure. Working against these stereotyped and ahistorical representations where all

itinerant musicians were painted with the same brush, the rest of the chapter attempts to place the

busker in their historical context in nineteenth and early twentieth century Montreal.

Life in the old city

In New France, two kinds of music were heard on the streets— religious music in processions

and military bands.[14] Then, there were the charivaris— a folk ritual brought by European settlers

that involved mocking people and forcing feelings of shame, embarrassment and humiliation on

them for socially unacceptable actions, such as unusual marriage alliances, relationships outside

wedlock and illicit affairs and drew on the practices of dressing up, face-blackening, singing and

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13. David Cohen and Ben Greenwood, *The Buskers: A History of Street Entertainment* (Newton Abbot, London and North Pomfret: David & Charles, 1981).

14. Élisabeth Gallat-Morin, « La musique dans les rues de la Nouvelle-France » Les cahiers de la société québécoise de recherche en musique 5, No. 1-2 (2018), 45-51. Some of the earliest accounts of music on the streets of Montreal are that of the town watch playing La Diane; fifes and tambour in religious processions and at celebrations; and drum rolls that accompanied the town crier whose job was to announce new ordinances and regulations.

dancing on the streets.[15] In the nineteenth century, charivaris came to be used in political protests to express workers' discontent during strikes.[16] Jeanne Pomerleau also documents a rich tradition of itinerant traders, pedlars, repairers of objects, labourers, beggars and minstrels in rural Quebec throughout eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[17] Figures such as the *quêteux* who circulated in the countryside on fixed routes not only brought news but also entertained their hosts with songs, music and storytelling. Some of these figures disappeared with industrialisation, urbanisation and tightening of regulations for some trades and others, such as travelling film exhibitors, appeared with advances in technology. In the nineteenth century, some of these itinerants remained urban figures, while some others regularly in rural areas. As Montreal grew as a city, it also attracted saltimbanques (acrobats or funambulists), street musicians, montreur d'ours (bear trainers), marionnettistes (puppeteers), strongmen and people who travelled with magic lanterns, peep shows and other objects of curiosity apart from circus companies.

One of the earliest traces of such itinerant entertainers in Montreal is from 1835 when *Le Canadien* reported a saltimbanque at the jardin Guilbault in Montreal.[18] Opened in 1832, the private garden boasted of trees, exotic plants and a menagerie apart from displaying lights and fireworks after dark, military music and canon ball fires.[19] Over the years, itinerant performers

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15. Bryan D. Palmer, "Discordant Music: Charivaris and Whitecapping in Nineteenth-Century North America," *Labour/Le Travailleur* 3 (1978): 5–62. On occasion, these events also turned dangerous with gunshots, beatings and mobbing.

16. Allan Greer, "From Folklore to Revolution: Charivaris and the Lower Canadian Rebellion of 1837", *Social History* 15, no. 1 (Jan 1990): 25-43. Greer traces the political use of charivaris in Quebec during the Lower Canada rebellion in 1837. Also see, Dan Horner, *Taking to the Streets: Crowds, Politics, and the Urban Experience in Mid-Ninteenth-Century Montreal* (Montreal, Kingston and Toronto: MQUP, 2020), E-Book.

17. Jeanne Pomerleau, *Métiers ambulants d'autrefois*, (Montreal: Guérin littérature, 1990).

18. From de la Minerve, *Le Canadien* 5, no. 36, Quebec, August 3, 1835. Source BAnQ.

19. Sylvain Gaudet, « Un haut lieu de la culture populaire à Montréal au XIXE siècle: le Jardin Guilbault » *Cap-aux-Diamants* no. 97, (2009), 25–29. *Jardin* Guilbault was a place of amusement for people who could visit and watch the spectacles for a fee. The first of its kind in the city, jardin Guilbault was an early precursor to amusement

became a regular attraction there. In 1836, the presence of another acrobat, Herr Cline, was reported. As the popularity of the garden soared, founder and owner Joseph-Édouard Guilbault hosted other famous entertainers such as the Great Farini and one Michel Thuot[20] Jardin Guilbault closed in the 1860s and was replaced by Viger garden and Sohomer park. These private gardens, along with gymnasiums in the city, took on the role of nurturing local circus talent and acrobats and funambulists would regularly appear in these spaces.[21]

Traces of itinerant performers in the city can also be inferred from the bylaws enacted by the City of Montreal after its incorporation in 1832. In 1841, itinerant performers, equestrians and showmen were required to pay a fee to the city before holding performances.[22] While many performers always travelled as part of circuses that had started visiting Montreal by the end of the eighteenth century, there were others who were crowd-pullers on their own. Noting that public markets in New France were spaces where people gathered not just for trade but also to seek amusement, Yves Bergeron notes itinerant performers at the public market in Trois-Rivières in 1848.[23] Street musicians were also be employed to announce the presence of circuses and

parks in Montreal and was located on Saint Laurent and moved around a few times— to Côte Saint-Louis and Côte-des-neiges before being sold. Jardin Guilbault also hosted circus companies visiting Montreal, equestrian performances, and travelling menageries with exotic animals. In 1861-62, it also constructed an ice rink in a two-story brick building of 200 feet by 60 feet and 14 feet high walls with a 24 feet roof in the middle.

20. *Ibid*, 27.

21. Louis Patrick Leroux, "A Tale of Origins: Deconstructing North American 'Cirque' Where Quebecois and American circus culture meet", in *Cirque Global: Quebec's Expanding Circus* Boundaries, ed. Louis Patrick Larous and Charles R. Batson (Montreal & Kingston, London and Chicago: McGill Queen's University Press, 2016), 47–48, 36–54. Leroux notes a long tradition of circus performers and strongmen in Quebec, many of whom had gained fame travelling for American circuses. The first of the modern travelling circuses in North America, established by John Ricketts, came to Montreal in 1797. Other circus companies too visited the city throughout the nineteenth century.

22. Règlement imposant une taxe sur les acrobats hippiques, les comédeins de passage et les acteurs forains, Règlement municipal no. 32, 8 juin 1841. VM001-33-01-D02-P032, Archives de la Ville de Montréal

23. Yves Bergeron, "Les premières places de marché au Québec," *Material History Review/Revue d'histoire de la culture matérielle* 35 (Spring/printemps 1992): 21–34.

showmen in town. A painting by nineteenth century Canadian artist William Raphael, *Behind the Bonsecours Market, Montreal*, dated 1866, depicts a musician playing the violin on what is now rue de la Commune.[24] The backdrop is that of a busy marketplace. Also visible are the Montreal harbour and the Saint Lawrence river dotted with ships on the other side of the street. The place depicted in the painting is at a stone's throw from Place Jacques-Cartier, which was Montreal's main public market in the nineteenth century.

The city witnessed rapid growth in this period. After the walls of the old town of Ville Marie were demolished in early nineteenth century, the city expanded north and west and soon was to surpass Quebec City in size and importance. By the time fur trade came to a complete halt in the city, its economy had started to diversify. It emerged as an important port for grain trade. Following the opening of the Lachine Canal in 1825 and its expansion in the 1840s, the city industrialised quickly. Population increased from 9,000 in 1800 to 23,000 in 1825, and 58,000 in 1852. People arrived in Montreal in waves— loyalists from the United States, Irish migrants who were escaping the potato famine and French-Canadians who were migrating from rural areas to the city in search of employment and propelled by a high birth rate among the local population, and industrialisation.[25]

The population continued to grow at a rapid pace in the second half of the nineteenth century as well. In 1871, the number of Montrealers stood at 107,000 and reached 250,000 at the

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24. William Raphael, *Behind the Bonsecours Market, Montreal*, 1866, oil on canvas, 67.5 x 109.6 cm, National Gallery of Canada. https://www.gallery.ca/collection/artwork/behind-bonsecours-market-montreal (accessed February 25, 2022)

25. Paul-André Linteau, *The History of Montréal: The Story of Great North American City*, trans. Peter McCambridge (2007, Montréal: Baraka Books, 2013), 69–100. Linteau notes that initially as the city's population grew, the anglophones, who had remained a minority in Montreal despite the British conquest of 1760, outnumbered French-Canadians after 1831. This lasted roughly three decades and French-Canadian rural to urban migration returned them to a majority population in the city after 1860. The social fabric of the city also became more complex as alongside Catholic French-Canadians now existed an anglophone protestant population, which was further complicated by the presence of the Irish who were Catholic and anglophones.

turn of the century.[26] The city area grew as wealthy anglophones started moving westward and

up the mountain in search of more spacious residences than existed in old town, but the area by

the harbour continued to be the central area of commerce. The industrial city followed two axes

of growth in the nineteenth century. Initial growth was along the Lachine Canal, which not only

became the site for heavy manufacturing industries, but also working-class neighbourhoods.[27]

They also often had distinct ethno-linguistic or racial identities. For example, the francophone

Catholics and anglophone protestants in Pointe Saint-Charles were separated by the train tracks

though the divide was both rough and porous.[28] Saint Henri was mostly francophone[29] whereas

Griffintown had a large base of Irish immigrants.[30] The area between Saint-Henri and

Griffintown developed as an anglophone Black neighbourhood, owing to the proximity to

Windsor and Bonaventure railway stations and the fact that most Black men in the late

nineteenth and early twentieth century found a respectable employment only as sleeping car

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26. Bettina Bradbury and Tamara Myers, "Introduction," in *Negotiating Identities in 19th- and 20th century Montreal*, ed. Bettina Bradbury and Tamara Myers (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2005) 11, 1–21.

27. See Herbert Brown Ames, *The City Below the Hill: A sociological study of a portion of the city of Montreal, Canada*, Montreal: Bishop Engravings, 1897), E-book, CIHM/ICMH microfiche series; no. 02168. https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.02168 (accessed February 28, 2022) for a description of the living quarters of workers and working-class neighbourhoods in the area. Known as "the city below the hill", it stood in stark contrast to the upper-class residences on Mont Royal.

28. Piyusha Chatterjee and Steven High, "The Deindustrialisation of Our Senses: Residual and Dominant Soundscapes in Montreal's Point Saint-Charles District," in *Telling Environmental Histories: Intersections of Memory, Narrative and Environment*, ed. Katie Holmes and Heather Goodall (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017): 198, 179–209.

29. Burrill, "History, Memory, and Struggle in Saint-Henri, Montreal," 48.

30. Mathew Barlow, *Griffintown: Identity and Memory in an Irish Diaspora Neighbourhood*, (Vancouver & Toronto: UBC Press, 2017). Barlow writes that the Irish immigrants settled in the area during the construction of the Lachine Canal. The neighbourhood acquired a distinct Irish cultural identity in the subsequent decades as the number of Irish immigrants increased.

porters in the city.[31] The second axis of growth was the Main, now Boulevard Saint Laurent, where the light manufacturing industries, such as shoes and garment, were located. The canal ran from east to west on the island and the Main extended from south to north. East side of the Main was populated by working-class French-Canadians whereas the west side was more anglophone and wealthy. The neighbourhoods along the street slowly acquired a more multi-ethnic identity as Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe and immigrants of other ethnicities and nationalities also came and settled in the area in the twentieth century.[32]

The old town of Ville Marie around what is currently the old port of Montreal became the commercial hub of a growing industrial city and an important port for all trade between Europe and North America. Though it gave the impression of a bourgeois town in the nineteenth century, the old city was far from homogenous when it came to the people on the streets. After being commissioned as the new public market of Montreal in 1808, temporary wooden sheds were erected for butcher shops at the square now called Place Jacques-Cartier. The sheds were demolished in 1847 when Bonsecours Market was inaugurated but the square, renamed Place Jacques-Cartier, continued to have an open market twice a week until the 1960s when it was declared part of the heritage district of Old Montreal.[33]

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31. Steven High, "Little Burgundy: The Interwoven Histories of Race, Residence, and Work in Twentieth-Century Montreal," *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine* 46, no. 1 (Fall 2017): 23–44. Also see, Dorothy Williams, *The Road to Now: A History of Blacks in Montreal* (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1997).

32. Marie-Laure Poulot, *Le long de la Main cosmopolite: Promouvoir, vivre et marcher le boulevard Saint-Laurent à Montréal* (Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2017), E-Book. Also see, Paul-André Linteau, «La montée du cosmopolitisme montréalais», *Questions de culture* no 2, (1992): 27–35; and Raoul Blanchard, *Montréal: esquisse de géographie urbaine*, édition préparée et présentée par Gilles Sénécal, (Montréal: VLB, 1992 [1947]).

33. Gilles Lauzon and Alan M. Stewart, "The Bourgeois Town: The New Face of an Expanding City," in *Old Montreal: History through Heritage*, eds. Gilles Lauzon and Madeleine Forget, (Quebec: Les Publications du Québec, 2004), 107–159. The New Market functioned alongside the more imposing Sainte Anne's Market built in 1833 as a marketplace.

Alongside inns and hotels (and later restaurants), the buildings in and around Place Jacques-Cartier were occupied by merchants, traders, grocers and professionals in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[34] If there were retail stores, tailors and hatters on Notre-Dame street, there were wholesalers on Saint-Paul street and hardware stores and warehouses along Commissioner's street, now rue de la Commune. Overlooking the port and made accessible by the tramway after 1861, the square was also close to two train stations, and would have been frequented by porters, carters, carriage drivers, dock workers and sailors as much as the upper classes who lived or had businesses in the area or visited the place for provisions and amusement. Notre Dame Street had several government buildings, including Château Ramsey, which served as the residence of the Governor-General of the colony since 1778, a prison, a courthouse and the Nelson's monument.[35] Champs-de-mars attracted townspeople and tourists alike with its military bands and other indulgences. It is where prostitutes went to find customers.[36] This was a place where the rich and the poor, and the native and the settler came together in physical space.

It is no surprise that itinerant musicians and performers start showing up on this landscape and in the archives around this time. In the backdrop of these socio-economic transformations, the city was also witnessing an increase in poverty and vagrancy.[37] Many men, women and children, upon their arrival on Canadian shores, took up itinerant trades as a first step

34. VM166-R3545-4, Archives de la Ville de Montréal. The document is a list of buildings around Place Jacques-Cartier and records their occupants and businesses between the mid-nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

35. Lauzon and Stewart, "The Bourgeois Town," 112–116.

36. Poutanen, "Bonds of Friendship, Kinship and Community," 34. Also see, Edgar Andrew Collard, "Wife Murderer to Stonewall's Sunday: The Champs de Mars," in *Montreal: The days that are no more*, illustrations by John Collins (1976; Toronto: Totem Books, 1998) 165–176.

37. *Ibid.*

Image 2: A representation of a street musician by the political cartoonist Henry Julien in the *Canadian Illustrated News* on August 5, 1876. Source: BAnQ numérique.

towards finding economic stability in a new place.[38] Street music was also a way for the socially

and economically marginalised immigrants, children, unemployed sailors and injured soldiers to

make a living.[39] Italian street musicians in Toronto started appearing around 1830 when the city

got its first wooden sidewalks.[40] Italian children, who appeared on the streets of western cities

across Europe and North America, in the nineteenth century were employed by their padrones as

animal exhibitors and street musicians in order to escape economic poverty in their villages in

Italy.[41] The organ grinder and the fiddler became familiar figures on the streets alongside

peddlers who sold a variety of wares, from ice, water, beer and coal. There were also the

marionettistes, funambulists and acrobats who appeared in public spaces and private gardens of

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38. John Benson, "Hawking and Peddling in Canada, 1867-1914," *Histoire sociale - Social History* XVIII, no. 35 (May 1985), 75–83.

39. Genest, « Musiciens de rue et règlements municipaux à Montréal: la condamnation civile de la marginalité, (1857-2001) » 33–35.

40. Smith, "Traditions, Stereotypes, and Tactics: A History of Musical Buskers in Toronto," 6–22.

41. Zucchi, *The Little Slaves of the Harp*.

the city. Similarly, bear exhibitors from France started travelling to Montreal and other cities in

North America when famines occurred and pressure on land increased in their homeland.[42]

Mary Anne Poutannen writes that "men and women of different social and ethnic groups

clustered in the city streets, squares, and green spaces" for business, shopping, socialising, and

enjoying fresh air, and beggars, pedlars, basket-women, children, prostitutes, and vagrants also

"loitered" in the area.[43] Informal work was an unacknowledged reality of urban life. As

Charmaine Nelson notes, Robert Auchmuty Sproule's watercolour landscape, *View of the Champ

de Mars, Montreal*, dated 1830, depicts this coexistence of the idle native and the poor French-

Canadian alongside the soldiers of the British army and the woman with children walking across

Champs-de-mars purposefully though the elite perspective of the artist and the stereotypes are

equally visible on the canvas.[44] Anxieties about vagrancy, loitering and poverty, and race

relations as depicted in the painting, were inscribed on the bodies of itinerant musicians and

entertainers in representations that circulated in the public sphere during this time.

Portraits in Print

In the nineteenth century industrial city, street music and entertainment were associated with low

culture and poverty. The rise in popularity of print culture among the elite and the bourgeoisie

and the authority attached to the visual over oral and aural since the Renaissance period, along

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42. Pagé, *Man with the Dancing Bear*.

43. Poutanen, "Bonds of Friendship, Kinship and Community," 27.

44. See Plate 5 in Charmaine Nelson, *Slavery, Geography and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica* (Abingdon, Oxon and New York, Routledge, 2016). She examines William Satchwell Leney after Robert Sproule, View of the Champ de Mars, Montreal (1830), hand-coloured engraving, 22.8 x 34.8 cm, Lawrence Lande Collection of Canadiana, Lande 34, Rare Books and Special Collections, McGill University Library, Montreal.

Basile demandant à voir la lune.

Image 3: Representation of an itinerant astronomer. *Le Canard,* May 15, 1880. Canadiana Online. According to the accompanying story, the itinerant from Boston promised to show the moon with his telescope to his French-Canadian neighbours and was dragged to the Justices of Peace when Basile, one of the clients, asked for his five cents back after being unable to see the moon.

with technological innovations for recorded music and a general increase in noise on the urban landscape through industrial production and use of cars, contributed to the marginalisation of street music.[45] From being a source of information and cultural transmission, buskers came to be seen as street nuisance in industrial cities. A transition from rural to urban lifestyle also meant a shift in the reception of busking. The noise of industrial production and of motor vehicles on the streets contributed to intolerance of "unproductive" sounds in the city, as shows Robert Hawkins in his study of the ban on street music in New York in early twentieth century.[46] The contempt

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45. Bruce Johnson, "From Music to Noise: The Decline of Street Music," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 15, no. 1, (2018), 67–78.

46. Robert Hawkins, "'Industry Cannot Go On without the Production of Some Noise': New York City's Street Music Ban and the Sound of Work in the New Deal Era," Journal of Social History 46, no. 1 (2012), 106–123.

for street music, which were visible in writings and opinions of Londoners in Victorian England and circulated amongst administrators in European cities, also spread to British colonies.[47]

In the archives, the busker mostly appears as an anonymous stock figure. Apart from news briefs, one place where they commonly appeared are the humour and satirical columns in newspapers and periodicals from this period. They serve many functions in these narratives— from tongue-in-cheek representations of politicians to cautionary tales about morality and propriety, and comic relief. In 1849, *Punch in Canada* used the figure of the busker for a commentary on Montreal. It said:

> An itinerant musician has sent us the following communication, in reference to the great demand at present existing for the article known as "Marseilles," the supply of which, by the way, has rup (*sic*) very far short of the demand. Perhaps the local Board of Health, in the plenitude of its wisdom, will see that, for the future, no hurdy-gurdy shall be allowed to parade our streets without a certificate of ability to grind out that particular description of Republican grain, for which our hungry young friends of *la Nouvelle France* have of late-been so ravenously bellowing.[48]

The image of the itinerant musician that is drawn in this piece is accompanied by all the stereotypes associated with them— poor, foreign, illiterate, witty and itinerant. It goes on to state, "We give our correspondent's letter *verbatim*, considering that its graphical eccentricities shed an additional lustre upon its beauties as a literary composition," before reproducing a letter in English both misspelt and grammatically wrong. In all likelihood, the letter writer, Martini

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47. Paul Watt, "Buskers and Busking in Australia in the Nineteenth Century," *Musicology Australia* 41, No. 1, (2019): 22–35. Watt cites an example of an exchange between the British foreign Office in London and its offices in Paris, Berlin, Rome, Madrid, Vienna, St. Petersburg, and Washington, DC in 1891 over the regulation of itinerant musicians in each of these cities. Also see, Watt, "Street Music in London in the Nineteenth Century," 9–22.

48. "Organ-ization," *Punch in Canada*, 15 August 1849, page 115. Source: Canadiana Online

Sullivani, was a fictitious figure, but the piece is nevertheless a window into the world of nineteenth century Montreal and its perception of buskers. The letter writer is represented as a poor man of Irish descent who spoke a "smattering of French" that he picked up on his travels in Europe, crossed the Atlantic to arrive in Montreal and lived in the working-class neighbourhood of Griffintown. He disguised himself as an Italian in order to play music on the streets of Montreal where his Irish accent was foreign enough to pass off as Italian. Lack of education is conveyed through misspellings in the text of the letter, which also mentions the musician's movement between Griffintown and a more "fashionable" street, coordinates not uncommon for strolling musicians who targeted rich neighbourhoods in the hope to get some money and be bribed into leaving.[49]

One needs to work through the many layers of stereotypes in this representation to understand the busker's marginality in society. *Punch in Canada,* inspired by the *Punch* magazine of London, was a biweekly that published political satires in English. The piece was not only a commentary on the Board of Health in Montreal but also gave expression to elite anxieties about health and hygiene and about immigrants arriving on ships. Griffintown was a poor working-class neighbourhood where a large number of Irish immigrants had settled in the first half of the nineteenth century, mostly because of its proximity to work during the construction of Lachine Canal.[50] In 1849, Montreal had a sizeable Irish population, many of whom had arrived in the city after quarantining in the Grosse-île, following the outbreak of cholera on the ships. The Irish immigrant passing off as an Italian in this piece harks at the

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49. *Ibid.*

50. Mathew Barlow, *Griffintown: Identity and Memory in an Irish Diaspora Neighbourhood*, (Vancouver & Toronto: UBC Press, 2017). Barlow writes that the Irish immigrants settled in the area during the construction of the Lachine Canal. The neighbourhood acquired a distinct Irish cultural identity in the subsequent decades as the number of Irish immigrants increased.

stereotypes that circulated about both these ethnic groups. The Italian street musicians, in particular, had gained notoriety for being poor, living in unhygienic conditions and employing children to beg on the streets. The references to Marseille and the song "La Marseillaise" were to poke fun at the French-Canadians, their political leanings and cultural ties with France.

The white Anglo-Saxon Canadian identity was carefully crafted in the mid-nineteenth century by British settlers "engaging in indigenizing experience to effect the transformation from colonist to native" and simultaneously claiming their racial superiority over both indigenous peoples and French-Canadians through practices of snowshoeing, hunting and lacrosse.[51] Poulter focuses on visual representations of these sporting practices that helped build this identity that was "white and conformed to contemporary notion of middleclass respectability and moral rectitude."[52] It wasn't only the indigenous peoples who were depicted as inferior, but similar stereotypes were also extended to other races and ethnicities, including the French-Canadians, who were all portrayed as the "other" in society. The purposeful conflation of thee identities in the above example – of the Irish immigrant with the Italian street musician singing "La Marsaillaise" – is one instance of how other ethnicities were assigned attributes such as foreign, poor, illiterate and stupid against which the British-Canadian elite identity was defined.

Among all those street figures who came close to the definition of buskers in the nineteenth century, itinerant musicians were the most vilified. These representations were often accompanied by a concern for public health and moral degradation in society. The boundaries between fact and fiction were also blurry in many of these representations. One such description of street musicians appears in *The Montreal Daily Witness* in 1890:

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51. Poulter, *Becoming Native*, 271.

52. *Ibid*, 7

The organ grinders that infest Montreal streets, killing the sensitive public inch by inch

with back-number tunes and soul-rending discords, come to grief occasionally. Among

themselves they tell of an establishment in the heart of the city, where, when the artist

appears, a young man stands at an upper window with a heavy paper weight and a

threatening look, and they speak mournfully of other places where they are told "go at

once," by rude persons who put a tinge almost of resentment into their voices. There are

also dim legends of how when they were trundling their visible means of support along

the streets, a wild and unremorseful butcher boy would drive close behind and shout,

"Faster, faster, want to get home before night," etc., keeping at their heels for a block at a

time.[53]

The report goes on to narrate how the "Italian" uttered some expletives in his language as people

laughed. Words such as "infest" evoked feelings of disease and death; while other reports of

them were also accompanied by negative descriptions of them as nuisance, noisemakers,

tricksters and threats. Attributes of poverty, itinerancy and foreignness were exploited to provoke

a complex set of reactions involving laughter, ridicule and distrust. A one-line brief appearing in

1888: "One of the sights on St. James street is an organ grinder, well dressed, with a heavy watch

chain and smoking a silver mouthed meerschaum pipe."[54] An itinerant musician with the air of

an upper-class man on the streets— like the previous examples, the street musician's unusual

presence in this case too was meant to be laughed at. The mocking and satirical humour was also

employed for political commentary. A politician could be referred to as a *saltimbanque* or a

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53. "An Organ-grinder's Woe," *The Montreal Daily Witness*, Montreal, October 13, 1890, page 4. Collections de BAnQ. https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/3628770 (accessed June 4, 2022).

54. "City Items," *The Montreal Daily Witness*, Montreal, October 10, 1888, page 4. Collections de BAnQ. https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/3628155 (accessed June 4, 2022).

mountebank to suggest dishonest intentions or to ridicule them. For example, a report in 1854

described Napoleon-III as the "great mountebank of Paris". [55]

Another popular image in this regard was that of the Indian *fakir*. Reports about levitating

men and rope tricks by *fakir*s in India and elsewhere circulated in print. These images were so

familiar to the Canadians at the turn of the twentieth century that even George E. Foster couldn't

resist a reference to them in a political speech:

> Away out on the high table lands of India the Indian juggler will do wonderful things. He
>
> will seat himself on a cement platform, dried seven times by the indignant rays of the
>
> burning sun of India. He will set himself there, and all at once by his magic arts he will
>
> make a palm tree grow out of that cement, unfold its leaves and branches beautifully
>
> green, and the birds will sing in its branches, and a spring of living pure water will swell
>
> up from its roots. (Laughter.) (*sic*). That is what an Indian fakir will do.[56]

Foster went on to talk about the tricks that the then Prime Minister of Canada Wilfrid Laurier

could perform for his Canadian electorate. The reason why this description of an Indian *fakir*

likely worked to produce irony and sarcasm in the speech is because it was a familiar reference

for the public. Such descriptions of Indian f*akir*s are an artefact of the British Empire, which

circulated beyond India to Britain and to its other colonies. Indian magicians, also described as

jugglers, fakirs and mystics, carried a negative meaning as they were "regularly portrayed as

genetically inferior, alternating from effeminate subordinates to savage monsters, from mystics

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55. "Foreign intelligence," *The True Witness and Catholic Chronicle*, Montreal, 19 May 1854, 6. Source: Canadiana Online

56 Hon. Geo. E. Foster answers Sir Wilfrid Laurier: Speech delivered at St. Paul's Hall, Toronto, October 15, 1904. CIHM/ICMH microfiche series no. 78702. Source: Canadiana Online. https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.78702/35?r=0&s=1 (accessed June 4, 2022).

and fakirs with supernatural mental and physical powers to merely exotic beings."[57] The

Victorian society had an ambiguity towards the Indian *fakir*[58] and so was the case, to a large

extent, with all buskers.

The cultural sphere was where the identities of the "Self and the Other" were negotiated

and established, while noting this politics of identity and differentiation were crucial "building

blocks for the hierarchies of power which produced empires and uneven relationships among the

citizenry".[59] Drawing on Raymond Williams, Poulter argues that culture can signify many things

and she uses it in her book to tend to discourses that are "a coherent body of ideas and

statements" that produce material effects.[60] Here too, I use these visual and textual records as

manifestations of discourses in contemporary Canadian society about identity of the British and

French-Canadian settlers against those of the indigenous and other immigrant population groups.

The busker embodies the stereotypes of the "Other" and is deployed in varied ways to poke fun

at different communities, immigrants and settlers.

As in the sporting practices of nineteenth century where the exclusion of natives, French-

Canadians and women or their selective presence, defined British settler identity as natives,[61] the

debasing images of the street musician and performer who always belonged in the lower classes,

native and immigrant populations propped up the image of the white, upper-class, Anglo-Saxon

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57. Sarah Dadswell, "Jugglers, Fakirs, and Jaduwallahs: Indian Magicians and the British Stage," *New Theatre Quarterly 23*, no.1, (2007), 3–24.

58. Peter Lamont and Crispin Bates, "Conjuring Images of India in Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Social History* 32, No. 3 (August 2007), 308–324.

59. Jane M. Jacobs, "Travels on the Edge of Empire," in *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*, (first published in 1996; London & New York: Routledge, 2002), 2.

60. Poulter, *Becoming Native*, 13. For a definition of culture, see Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, new edition (first published in 1976; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015) 49-54.

61. *Ibid*, 62.

citizens of Montreal. Following Poulter, I argue that this creation of the "other" was central to bourgeois and the ruling class's image of themselves and which was enrolled into justifying their domination over different groups, whether the poor working-classes, the racialized and ethnic others or women. A short story that appeared in the periodical, *Guide News*, offers an example of this role that street musicians and performers were assigned to play on the margins of society by the bourgeois and the upper-class publics. It's the story of a girl who runs away from an unhappy home after being inspired by an Italian woman singing on the streets. The protagonist of the story, Edith, then finds herself singing for money:

> Plainly, but neatly clad, she stood in the great open space before the fountain, just as the moon shone down brightly on the capitol. The wide street was full of hurrying figures crossing from one depot to the other for the evening trains…. She sang as well as the Italian woman had on the previous evening. Nay, better! For people risked losing the train that they might pause and hear her. And even the street boys and small coloured people forgot, for once, to be insolent, and hung enraptured upon the outer verge of the crowd with most attentive ears.[62]

The story ends with the girl being assaulted by a passer-by and rescued by the love of her life. It is something of a cautionary tale of morality, illustrating the pitfalls of breaking social codes and the woman's need for supervision and protection from the ills of the world.

In nineteenth century Montreal, charities and philanthropical organisations run by upper class and bourgeois women often made a distinction between respectable and non-respectable poor, either excluding those who were found to be of disrepute from receiving help or forcing them to leave town, which in turn forced many women to find work, shelter and socialities on the

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62. Margaret Blount, "Finding Her Fate," *Guide-News*, Watford, (16 June 1882). Canadiana Online.

streets.[63] The busker – the Italian woman singing on the street in the story – only appears to serve as a contrast to the moral codes of the period. It was against this image of the non-respectable woman and the dangers of life on the streets that the deserving girl was to be identified and rescued. The Italian street woman – foreign, itinerant and poor – serves this role of the "other" in the story. There is no question of helping the singing Italian woman in the story as any woman who was "deemed worthy of assistance was expected to have a 'private world' or family to which she could turn" for help or domestic employment.[64] Women who lived and worked on the streets were the constitutive limit of the bourgeois female identity.

Feminist historians of today, such a Poutanen, would argue that these women wielded agency by taking up occupations on the streets, but social reformers, including women's organisations, then were involved in devising multiple initiatives throughout nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that would bring down their populations on the streets. Cohen and Greenwood write that "the singing sailor is the earliest example of the lowest form of street entertainment.[65] Homelessness and itinerancy among them in the nineteenth and early twentieth century Montreal were treated as serious concerns. Institutions such as the Montreal Sailor's Institute were founded as solutions to vagrancy and promiscuity among sailors and their

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63. Poutanen, "Bonds of Friendship, Kinship and Community," 30–31.

64. Anna Shea and Suzanne Morton, "Keeping Men out of 'Public and Semi-Public' Places: The Montreal Day Shelter for Unemployed Men, 1931-34," in *Negotiating Identities in the 19th- and 20th-Century Montreal*, ed. Bettina Bradbury and Tamara Myres (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2005), 77–98.

65. Cohen and Greenwood, *The Buskers*, 1981, 12.

unsettling presence in the city.[66] Homeless shelters too were introduced to keep vagrant men and

the unemployed off the streets as much as it was about providing services to them.[67]

In general, in the nineteenth century, buskers were perceived as strange, untrustworthy

and fake, which explains their association with other negative words such as charlatan and

mountebank. If travelling musicians could inspire nostalgia among their audiences, they were

also "exoticized, or even sometimes racially and ethnically vilified."[68] Racial stereotypes, ethnic

and linguistic tensions, the West's image of the East and the bourgeois attitude towards the poor

often came together to produce these caricatural images of busking. In 1916, *l'Action Populaire*,

published from Joliette, not too far from Montreal, reported blackface minstrelsy on the streets of

London with a headline that referred to England as the "pays de John Bull".[69] Written in an

educative tone, it describes the Blackface minstrels in their colourful costumes and cheerful

countenance as one of the experiences of street life in London. Using the English "n" word that

has always been a racist slur, the writer explains that these musicians were in fact white men of

English origin who used black paint to dress up and perform as African American minstrel

groups. In not questioning the use of the word or the practice, and instead even arguing their

superiority over the strolling musicians of Paris, the report only reinforces its comfort with the

ideology that promoted such a practice in the first place.

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66. Darcy Ingram, "Saving the Union's Jack: Montreal Sailors' Institute and the Homeless Sailor, 1862-98," in Bettina Bradbury and Tamara Myres (eds.) *Negotiating Identities in the 19th- and 20th-Century Montreal*, (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2005), pp. 49–76.

67. Shea and Morton, "Keeping Men out of 'Public and Semi-Public' Places," 77–98.

68. Paul Watt, "Street Music in the Nineteenth Century: Histories and Historiographies," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 15 (2018): 3–8.

69. "Au pays de John Bull," *l'Action Populaire* 4, no. 44, Joliette, December 28, 1916. Collection de BANQ. Online

Blackface minstrelsy, a tradition that emerged in the United States, was premised on an appropriation of a Black cultural practice that simultaneously exploited and mocked stereotypes about slaves from the American south. It was, as Eric Lott argues, "the ground of American negotiation and contradiction" and a complex site of cultural expression and domination.[70] It created a feeling of sympathy, through identification, between black and white working classes, while also expressing difference that aligned the white working-class sentiments with the bourgeoisie.[71] As Michael Pickering further illustrates, it negotiated a complex terrain in England where colonial, racial and class attitudes combined to produce a form of working-class humour that ridiculed British white upper-class attitude and morality.[72] Clearly, the meaning in such practices are discursively produced in context. The report in the newspaper from Joliette is meant as an informative commentary on London aimed to educate its francophone readers about the English capital. Such a representation adds another layer of complexity by recirculating the racist stereotypes among a readership that saw itself in an unequal power relationship with the British.

Black and indigenous peoples were marginalised in urban space in nineteenth century Montreal, but their traces can be deduced from their history in place. Until slavery was abolished in Canada in 1834, men, women and children lived and worked in the old town and in wealthy neighbourhoods of the city as slaves. Olivier la Jeune, a child from Madagascar who arrived in

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70. Eric Lott, "Blackface and blackness: the minstrel show in American culture," in *Inside the Minstrel Mask: Readings in Nineteenth-Century Blackface Minstrelsy*, eds. Annemarie Bean, James V Hatch, and Brooks McNamara, (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1996), 18, 3–32.

71. Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) via Robert B. Winans, Book Review, *American Music* 13, no. 1 (1995), 109–12. https://doi.org/10.2307/3052314.

72. Michael Pickering, *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain* (Aldershod: Ashgate, 2008). For a critical commentary, see Ulrich Adelt, "Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain," *Popular Music and Society* 32, no. 4 (2009): 569–571; and Nathalie Rosset, Book Review, *Cultural and Social History* 7, no. 1, 137–139.

New France in 1632, and Marie-Josèphe Angelique, the Portuguese-born Black woman who was

executed in 1734 on charges of arson, were only two such lives.[73] In 1809, when the first

steamboat in British North America was launched at Montreal, at least three Black men were

employed on it, and at least one of them had been a slave.[74] Black men were employed as cooks

and in other small jobs on boats and were expected to stay below the deck. Since the boats and

ferries ran only in Summer and Fall, they took up work as domestics, porters and carters in

winter months.[75] Indigenous communities had already been either displaced or assimilated into

the settler colony during the early years of the settle colony. Industrialisation and expansion of

the settler colony further disrupted the traditional lifestyle among the indigenous peoples living

along the Saint Lawrence valley. The end of the fur trade in Montreal in early nineteenth century

and legislations passed during this period had a negative economic impact on these communities

and significantly altered indigenous peoples' relationship to the colonial government .[76] Among

the Mohawks who had settled in Kahnawake, many worked as voyageurs in fur trade and as

boatmen before they turned to other work in the steel construction industry and showbiz.[77]

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73. Williams, *Road to Now*, 17 and 19. Also see, Afua Cooper, *The Hanging of Angélique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montréal* (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2007).

74. Frank Mackey, *Done with Slavery: The Black Fact in Montreal, 1760-1840*, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 167.

75. *Ibid*, 183.

76. Final Report, Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress, Gouvernement du Québec, in 2019. https://www.cerp.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Fichiers_clients/Rapport/Final_report.pdf (accessed January 31, 2022). The Indian Act of 1876 consolidated many of the changes, which led to the loss of indigenous sovereignty over their land and its resources by intervening in the governance and the leadership in the nations and determining who were allowed to bear their indigenous status legally. See Serge Courville, *Quebec: A Historical Geography*, trans. Richard Howard (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2008), 202–204.

77. Johnny Beauvais, *Kahnawake: A Mohawk Look at Canada and Adventures of Big John Canadian 1840–1919,* (Kahnawake: Khanata Industries, 1985). Source: BANQ. Also see, Canadien, Jean-Baptiste, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume XIV (1911-1920). http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/canadien_jean_baptiste_14E.html (accessed February 26, 2022). Beauvais traced the history of Mohawks, and their displacement and settlement in Kahnawá:ke through stories and pictures and offers an opportunity to imagine a different visual and auditory landscape than that

But did Black and indigenous peoples ever appear in the city streets and public spaces as street musicians and performers? The Abenakis, who had lived in the valley, had turned to basket weaving and visited the city during summer months to sell their wares, both door to door and in public markets.[78] The Mohawks of Kahnawake also started travelling as performers. A painting by British artist George Heriot – *Minuets of the Canadians* – documents the presence of black musicians in white upper-class and bourgeois gatherings in nineteenth century Canada even as it conveys the white enthusiasm and interest, sometimes even voyeuristic, in African cultures and music that had travelled with the slaves.[79] The musicians job, writes Nelson, "offered less physically arduous employment with the possibility of more social latitude" at a time when black people could only expect to work very physically demanding and modest jobs in the city.[80] Many African-American freemen also performed on Canadian stage in the nineteenth century even though the practice of Blackface minstrelsy, as the above example shows, had been appropriated

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of the settler colony. Among other aspects of indigenous life in their village, it refers to members of the community travelling as showmen to Europe in the 19th century. The book also speaks to the slow but steady process of commodification of indigenous cultures after the decline of the fur trade in Montreal, which had a negative impact on the people of Kahnawá:ke. The Mohwaks found alternative careers in showbiz, performing at vaudeville shows, exhibitions of Indian cultures and in films in the twentieth century. It illustrates, through the retelling of the stories about Big John Canadian and others, that Mohawks contested colonial power, exercised agency and participated in the economy in order to keep up with the broader social transformations.

78. "Abenaki Basket-Making Industry (1870–1920) National Historic Event," History and Culture, Parks Canada, last modified 13 October 2021. https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/clmhc-hsmbc/res/information-backgrounder/vannerie-abenakise-abenaki-basket-making (accessed February 26, 2022). The basket-weaving among the Abenakis flourished between 1870 and 1920.

79. See Plate 6 in Nelson, *Slavery, Geography and Empire*. It's a reproduction of J.C. Stadler after George Heriot, *Minuets of the Canadians*, from Travels through the Canadas . . . (1807). Engraving, 23 x 36.7 cm, M19871, McCord Museum, Montreal. Also see, J.C. Stadler after George Heriot, *La Danse Ronde*, Circular Dance of the Canadians, published in 1807, Engraving, 40.5 x 26.0 cm, M999.27.24.

80. Nelson, *Slavery, Geography and Empire*, 136. Apart from working on steamboats, some also went into trades such as baker, barber and cabinet maker. See Mackay, *Done with Slavery*.

by white men.[81] None of these examples, however, are evidences of street-performing as a practice among either Blacks or indigenous peoples in the nineteenth century. Perceptions of them in the public sphere, which are abundantly recorded through representations in visual arts and print culture, instead convey their invisibility, stereotyped representations and marginality in the city.

A historical geography of itinerant entertainment

The busker is simultaneously a local and a global figure. If the factors leading to their itinerancy are locally produced, their primary mode of survival is through circulation in the city streets and into other cities and sometimes into other parts of the world. The geography of their circulation is therefore both microscopically small and significantly broad. In nineteenth century Montreal, traces of itinerant performers and musicians can be found in rich neighbourhoods, such as the area that is now referred to as Old Montreal which had residences of wealthy settler families and merchants then, public markets and the port area that were frequented by both the rich and the poor and the private gardens where the rich sought amusement and the poor found means of livelihood through entertaining.

A landmark in Montreal in the second half of the nineteenth century was also the Joe Beef's Canteen, where itinerants had a place to sleep and Charles McKiernan, the patron, maintained a menagerie in the basement with animals such as bears, dogs and monkeys.[82] If the menagerie was a source of amusement, they also became a cause for concern among city

81. Cheryl Thompson, "Black Minstrelsy on Canadian Stages: Nostalgia for Plantation Slavery in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada* 31, no. 1 (2021): 67–94. https://doi.org/10.7202/1083628ar
82. Peter DeLottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working-Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889," *Labour / Le Travail* 8/9 (Autumn 1981 - Spring 1982): 9-40. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/25140071

administrators and the menagerie was eventually closed when laws on animal cruelty were tightened in the city. Sylvie Genest writes that as other means of amusement became available and accessible, especially to the rich, regulations became tougher for street musicians, exacerbating their social and economic marginalisation.[83]

There were others like the quêteux who circulated in the region, visiting homes and entertained their hosts with music, songs and stories. The quêteux survived well into the twentieth century though mostly as a relic of the past and is remembered and romanticised in Quebec's popular culture in books and films. Marius Barbeau writes about meeting Louis Simard, a roving blind minstrel in the early 1900s in the region of Charlevoix. Barbeau documents Simard as a carrier of Quebec's collective memory. The itinerant musician not only kept alive cultural ties with old France but also gave them a local character. The songs that Barbeau documents as part of his efforts to record the folklores of Quebec speaks both to the memories of France and of settler lives and attitude towards indigenous peoples of the land.[84]

In the nineteenth century, street musicians were synonymous with Italian organ grinders and child harpists who also worked as animal exhibitors. John Zucchi traces the emergence of the street music trade among the residents of some towns in northern Italy who appeared in cities in Europe and North America and employed children as animal exhibitors, harpists and beggars. While Zucchi's focus was London, Paris and New York, he also mentions the arrest of a padrone and some children at the port of Montreal. The appearance of these itinerant figures on the city streets were connected to weakening ties with land, poverty and migration to urban centers for economic opportunities elsewhere. These street musicians went as far as Moscow in the east or

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83. Genest « Musiciens de rue et règlements municipaux à Montréal » 31–32.

84. Marius Barbeau, *Jongleur Songs of Old Quebec* (New Brunswick and New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1962).

crossed the Atlantic to the west before returning to their places of origin after a season or two of travelling. The children, sold to the padrones by their poor, agrarian families, played music and begged on the streets, handing over all the income to their padrones. Through an examination of these writings and debates in each of the three cities that led to new legislations being introduced to regulate street musicians and children in particular, Zucchi traces the trajectory of their movements and the bourgeois concerns that inspired tougher regulations and reform initiatives.[85]

In another study inspired by her own family history, Louise Pagé examines the history of bear trainers or *montreurs d'ours* who travelled regularly from Ariège in France to Quebec in the between 1875 and 1914. A number of socio-economic and environmental factors, along with an already existing tradition of bear-performing and exhibiting from eastern Europe were responsible for the development of this itinerant trade. These men took up bear training and exhibiting after completing their mandatory three years of military service. Biographies of those who travelled to Quebec and were traced by Pagé suggest other factors, such as the inheritance laws under which land was passed on to the eldest son and the younger children, forced both men and women to find other means of subsistence, which included marrying partners who owned land. Bear exhibiting for a season or two yielded enough money to start a new family, notes Pagé, which made it lucrative. Moreover, bears from the Pyrenees region were less aggressive, smaller and could naturally stand on two legs, which made them more affable to being trained. All these factors together likely contributed to many residents of the region to take up bear-exhibiting as a trade. Pagé traces close to a hundred people who travelled from Pyrenees to Quebec, many of whom returned to France but some, like her grandfather, settled in Quebec.[86]

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85. Zucchi, *The Little Slaves of the Harp*.

86. Pagé, "The Bear Performers from Ariège," in *The Man Behind the Dancing Bear*.

Both books demonstrate a circuit of circulation— of people, animals, their musical and other practices, and musical instruments in Europe and the Americas. These movements were critical to the survival of the poor who took up street music or animal exhibition and training as occupations and tried to fight their socio-economic marginality. Both studies also draw attention to the ways in which these itinerant trades supported rural populations in times of crises— socio-economic transformations and changing relationships to land among the peasants of northern Italy and the potato famine in Ariège, France, in the 1860s. These itinerant trades were informal ways to connect with the flows of the economy, locally and at an international level. Street music, along with peddling of goods and exhibition of animals, were avenues of income and a means of survival among the poor and new immigrants. These historical instances of the itinerant entertainers' presence and circulation within the city and to distant lands indicates the role that busking played in allowing poor and marginalised people to access, participate and stake a claim in the economic flows and the future.

Evidences of buskers in a place, such as on the streets and public squares of Montreal, are not easy to find in archives. The word busker rarely appears in the archives, and almost never in finding aids. Between the street musician and the itinerant juggler, fire artist and clown, busking as a practice has many different forms in history. The one thing that is a common thread among them is the artist's or the performer's itinerancy and social marginality arising from economic, cultural or political reasons. The body of the busker – the minstrel, organ grinder and the Indian *fakir* – is reduced to a site of brutal display of transnational, colonial, racial and class politics without giving them any voice in these matters.

Such representations also serve as a cultural connect between the colony and the metropole. Meanwhile, the invisibility of Blacks and indigenous cultural practices and the

rhythms of life and movement in such representations of street sounds and entertainment in

Montreal speaks to their marginality in urban space. The silences arise for several reasons.

Dorothy Williams writes that Black history in Montreal has been overshadowed by the

intellectual discomfort in acknowledging the place of slavery in Canada and politics of

historiography determined by the rivalry between the English and French.[87] She also notes "a

backlash of segregationist legislations in Canada" in the mid-nineteenth century that came as a

reaction to growing visibility of Blacks during that period.[88] Then, cities such as Montreal were

intended as settler colonial spaces and the representations of urban space reaffirmed this

imaginary. Historically, the walled city had been erected as a place of exclusivity, to protect the

fur traders and then the colonisers against indigenous threats.[89] Even after the wall had come

down, Montreal had continued to be a settler colonial space, a center of industrial production and

trade, that was sustained through exploitation of people, natural resources and land, and

continued exclusion of Blacks and indigenous peoples or their integration into a European way

of life. Both Black and indigenous peoples were unequally placed within this power hierarchy

that shaped the contours of the city in the nineteenth century. If the street musicians and

performers were marginalised, they were twice-removed from access to power in the settler-

colonial city, for they were often excluded from the space itself.

Print culture was used to erase the cultural footprints of the indigenous peoples in Canada

and to establish Europeans as the dominant cultural group in the settler-colony.[90] Poulter's

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87 Williams, *The Road to Now*, 18

88 *Ibid*, 29.

89. Ted Rutland, « L'urbanisme et l'hospitalité ontologique." *Liberté* no. 322 (2018): 32–33.

90. Brendan Frederick R. Edwards, "Print Culture and the Reassertion of Indigenous Nationhood in Early-Mid-Twentieth-Century Canada," in *Comparative Print Culture*. New Directions in Book History, ed. Rasoul Aliakbari, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 227, 225–244.

analysis too illustrates that culture can be mobilised into creating spaces of exclusion. Archives, as a cultural artefact and an embodiment of state memory, reproduce these socio-political dynamics. If an engagement with the archives in this chapter reveals much about how buskers were represented and perceived by the rich and the powerful in Montreal's society, it is also hoped that the silences or the portrayals of Black and indigenous peoples make the power dynamics of public spaces in the city legible.

Chapter 2

Itinerant archives

Traces of itinerant lives and their voices are difficult to locate in the archives. They are often too marginal or minor to figure prominently in institutional spaces that are tasked to construct a particular past, dedicated to legitimizing the interests of the colonial state and privileging its historical presence.[1] Archives are not "innocent deposits" that "become available to the historian by accident."[2] Even private collections that find place within such institutional spaces reconstruct the pasts of the rich, wealthy and those in positions of power. In Quebec and Canada, the continuing project of the expansion and reproduction of the settler colonial state has its echoes in the archives.[3] In Quebec, both municipal and national archives have a history of existence as an extension of the state.[4] They were conceived and instituted to facilitate functioning of the colonial government and for preserving state-sanctioned memories. It is no surprise that the archives were modernisation and restructured during the Quiet Revolution in

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1. Dirks, "Annals of the Archive," 47–65. Also see, Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the archival grain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

2. Paul Thompson, "Evidence," in *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 3rd edn. (first published in 1978; Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000): 124, E-Book.

3. See for example, Trycia Bazinet, "Tracing understanding of sovereignty and settler-colonial violence in the Quebec's Viens Commission (2016–2019)," *Settler Colonial Studies* (2022) Ahead-Of-Print, 1-20. DOI: 10.1080/2201473X.2022.2064148, who argues that the settler colonial relationships with indigenous communities continue to be reproduced in the present day through state initiatives such as the Viens Commission, which refuse to acknowledge the role settler colonial violence on land and body in reproducing experiences of discrimination and disempowerment of indigenous peoples. Also see, Maggie Perzyna and Harald Bauder, "Threats from within and threats from without: Wet'suwet'en protesters, irregular asylum seekers and on-going settler colonialism in Canada," *Settler Colonial Studies* (2022), Ahead-Of-Print. DOI: 10.1080/2201473X.2022.2030083. Perzyna and Bauder examine media representations of indigenous peoples and asylum seekers to argue that the parallel processes of racist immigration and settler colonial histories that structured the state in the past endures within the present-day Canada.

4. See Gille Héon, « Les Archives nationales du Québec: la mémoire de la nation » *Archives* 27, no. 2 (1995): 3–15.

order to reflect, reproduce and legitimise the nation and notion of Quebec.[5] Such institutions that are responsible for preserving heritage and memory in Canada are guided by "passive collecting practices and narrow policies."[6] They marginalise and ignore non-dominant histories of minority or marginalised groups.[7]

An alternative is to look elsewhere, beyond the state-sanctioned institutional archives, for other repositories of memories. Historians, political scientists and anthropologists working in the Global South have confronted the silences around slums and slum-dwellers in official documents by turning to "informal archives"— collections held by communities and individuals that are "unmapped, non-systematized collections of materials" lacking locational fixity and hegemonic organisational logic.[8] Oral historians wanting to privilege the individual and the experiential have turned to a combination of people's memories with their relationships to personal objects, family heirlooms, collections of photographs, places, events and practices to do history from below.[9] Martha Langford shows that such objects and collections, though emerging from personal interests and private spaces, can easily interface with the social and the public worlds

5. Gille Héon, « L'Association des archivistes du Québec : une association en phase avec sa société » *Histoire Québec* 22, no. 3 (2017): 5–7.

6. See Lucie K. Morisset, "But What Are We Really Talking About? From Patrimoine to Heritage, a Few Avenues for Reflection," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 52, no. 1 (2018): 11-56. muse.jhu.edu/article/703425 for a discussion of the definitions of concepts such as heritage and *patrimoine* within the federal and the provincial systems and legislations.

7. Alexandra Mills, Désirée Rochat, and Steven High, "Telling Stories from Montreal's Negro Community Centre Fonds: The Archives as Community-Engaged Classroom." *Archivaria* 89 (2020): 45, 34–68. muse.jhu.edu/article/755768.

8. Adam Michael Auerbach, "Informal Archives: Historical Narratives and the Preservation of Paper in India's Urban Slums," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 345, 343–364. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-018-9270-5

9. Alistair Thomson, "Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History," *The Oral History Review* 34, No. 1 (Winter - Spring, 2007): 51–53, 49-70.

when examined in the context of their material and ontological existence and preservation.[10]

Unlike the objects and documents held in institutional archives, repositories that exist in private or informal collections can be both contingent and ephemeral. They are produced through individual and community efforts and are prone to fading, changing and even disappearing, much more than the archival collections.

For researchers focussing on the experiences of the Global South and desiring to decenter perspectives emerging from colonial-imperial and hegemonic views of globalisation, informal and interstitial spaces, infrastructures and media collections hold out alternative possibilities. Noting the potentialities in such collections, particularly in the context of video cultures, where media formations appear and circulate through practices of piratical and illegal reproduction, selling and sharing in spaces of Global South, Joshua Neves and Bhaskar Sarkar describe the phenomena as the "penumbra of the global"— among other things, an "irrepressibility of local media practices in the face of dominant global norms."[11] The reference to the metaphor of penumbra is to rescue such practices from the frame of illegality and criminality and present the possibility and acknowledge the existence of non-hegemonic experiences of globalisation.[12] This chapter draws on this formulation of the penumbral media cultures as a subversive alternative to explore informal collections of media – papers, boxes, VHS tapes, albums and scrapbooks – that emerge in connection to oral histories with buskers and challenge the hegemonic memory of buskers preserved in the institutional archives.

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10. Martha Langford, "The Album as a Collection," in *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums*, 2nd edn. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021), 40–63. E-Book.

11. Joshua Neves and Bhaskar Sarkar, "Introduction," in *Asian Video Cultures: In the Penumbra of the Global* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2017), 2–3, 1–32.

12. *Ibid*, 2.

Julie-Anne Boudreau argues for informality as it is practised and experienced in the Global South an "heuristic potential" to understand places of and governance in the Global North,[13] emphasising the need to move past the dichotomous ways of thinking— the developed and the developing, the first and the third worlds, and the Global North and South in order to get at the power-dynamics that exist in a place, particularly at the scale of the city. This collapsing of difference and distance is not to argue for homogeneity in the worlds so much as to acknowledge the contradictions within and the possibility of alternative and non-hegemonic ways of understanding urban space and decenter power and role of the state in structuring space and experiences. Applying a lens that is adapted to understanding Global South in a space that is mostly articulated and addressed as part of the Global North makes visible a new landscape of power and inequalities. It is akin to re-viewing and understanding a place in a "different register" or the "minor key", as writes Cindy Katz.[14] Beginning with the informal archives, or what I refer to as the itinerant archives here, I apply this logic not just to privilege lived experiences and actions of itinerant entertainers in the city's history but also engage with the history of the spatial and economic transformations in the city from their perspective. I turn to oral histories in this project with the same purpose of displacing archival memory to focus on lived histories of individuals in place.

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13. Julie-Anne Boudreau, "Informalization of the State: Reflections from an Urban World of Translations," *International Journal Of Urban And Regional Research* 43, no. 3 (2019): 597, 597–604. DOI:10.1111/1468-2427.12701

14. Cindy Katz, "Towards minor theory," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14 (1996): 488, 487–499. Katz draws on this imagery from music to argue that a minor theory, composed in the minor key, is that which eats into and challenges the major or the dominant ways of knowing and understanding. It emerges from and exists in the interstices but should not be treated as marginal or less important. Also see discussion in Mattias De Backer, Claske Dijkema, and Kathrin Hörschelmann, "Preface: The Everyday Politics of Public Space," *Space and Culture* 22, no. 3 (August 2019): 242, 240–49. https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331219830080.

Oral history as a methodology and a field of study emerges from a similar conviction that there are other ways of recording and recalling history beyond the institution of the archives. Oral historians argue for versions of history that live on in people's memories, as opposed to statistical data and official documentation of events, which bring to light new details and experiences.[15] They also argue for a place for subjectivity in historical memory, stressing on meaning of historical events in people's lives rather than facts.[16] Unlike institutional and state archives housed in majestic buildings that are both awe-inspiring and overwhelming,[17] oral history memory lives in people's minds and are often stored away in attics, basements or, as happens in this case, a random store-house somewhere in the middle of nowhere. It is, as Steven High notes, is also increasingly a visual memory and practice.[18] Not only do we use video as a medium of recording interviews, which is able to record body memories alongside orally articulated memories, but the interviews also are a result of interactions that contain visual cues, whether in terms of space, objects or photographs. There is an element of movement in oral history memory. Meanings emerge in the process of recall and articulation of the past and are shaped by interactions with objects, people, space and the sensory environment in the interview space. The present moment and all that transpires between the time an event occurs and that of

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15. Paul Thompson, "The Achievement of Oral History," in *Voice of the Past: Oral History* 3rd edn. (first published 1978; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 82–117.

16. Alessandro Portelli, "The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Memory and the Event," in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*, (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1991), 1–26.

17. See Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid and Razia Saleh, (Dordrecht, Boston & London: Kluwer Academic, 2002), 19–26.

18. Steven High, "Visualizing Oral History in the Ruins of Industry," in *Une autre façon de se raconter : les approches visuelles en sciences sociales et humaines*, ed. Dahlia Nahman and Isabelle Perreault (Ottawa: Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, forthcoming).

its articulation also shape them.[19] Building on this idea of oral history as a visual practice, this chapter is an argument for the use of oral histories and its interaction with various media – objects, collections and the video of the interview itself – to construct an alternative image of buskers in place. It helps to shift the perspective on buskers and garner an understanding of busking, urban space and of the economic transformations in Montreal from their point of view.

The chapter title, "Itinerant Archives", is a homage to the informal collections and their owners, producers and keepers. These collections of papers, cassettes, VHS tapes and diaries appear as material fragments of time carefully preserved in between the folds of memory. This chapter is an engagement with repositories of memories and pasts that only emerge in dialogue with their keepers. They are itinerant because they lack fixity of institutional space and organisational order and are often multivalent in purpose. They comprise of memories that don't find place within archival institutions. These objects as media pertain to the lives, experiences and initiatives of itinerant musicians and street performers are often kept in storages at home or facilities in the middle of nowhere. They give voice to histories that are marginalised, made invisible or distorted in official and dominant narratives. Within the interview space, they present an opportunity to buskers to self-represent themselves and construct an alternative narrative about their lives.

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19. See for example, Indira Chowdhury, "Oral Traditions and Contemporary History Event, Memory, Experience and Representation," *Economic & Political Weekly* XLIX, No. 30 (July 26, 2014), 54–59. Chowdhury illustrates through her conversations with *patachitrakar*s, traditional scroll painters from Bengal in eastern India, that memory and meaning are located somewhere between songs sung from memory during presentation of scrolls and storyteller-singer's reflections emerging from their lived experiences that shape the songs and the scrolls. Not only is there a conversation between different media, but there is also an interplay between memory and media, and they shape each other. The stories and the knowledge of making the scrolls – inherited as oral memories – are central to the continuation of the tradition, even as new lived experiences are recorded and stored for the future through representations in the scrolls and songs sung.

A box in the middle of nowhere

Archives are "traces of the past collected either intentionally or haphazardly" and such

repositories can be official, like the national archives of a state, or they can also be produced

unofficially, by individuals and collectives.[20] In 2019, I arrived upon one such collection— the

papers related to a buskers' association in Montreal. It was my third meeting with Grégoire

Dunlevy, a well-remembered figure in Montreal as the man who walks on stilts and plays the

flute. Dunlevy had forgotten our appointment and when I arrived at his place in Dunham with

my friend Ioana Radu. He was taken by surprise. Soon after a round of apologies from him and

from me for having interrupted his day, we found ourselves back in the car and driving to a

storage facility somewhere around Dunham to find a box of papers relating to the Association

des musiciens indépendants du métro (AMIM), a metro buskers' association in Montreal that

Dunlevy had co-founded and presided over for around two decades between 1983 and the 2000s.

Dunlevy, who had stopped busking on a regular basis in Montreal some years ago, had

held on to the box of papers though the organisation had, in a way, ceased to exist. The

association became the Regroupement des musciens du métro de Montréal (RMMM) in 2009

and since 2020 has existed as an online platform called Musiciens de métro et de la rue de

Montréal (mmetrm.com). The transformation in the nature of labour intermediaries in the

cultural economy is explored through oral histories and the history of this organisation in the

chapter titled "From Itinerant to Independent Musicians". Here I explore the form of this

memory, its relationship to the oral history interview and its place in my research project.

When we arrived at the storage facility, Dunlevy promptly fetched a box— a white

cardboard box with a blue lid with IMPEGA printed on it. The box, which must have carried

20. Antoinette Burton, "Introduction: Archive Fever, Archive Stories," in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions and The Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005), 3.

Image 4 a and b (Left to right): The IMPEGA box that holds the documents of AMIM; and the folders that form part of the content of the box.

stationery supplies at some point, had been reinforced with plastic tape to protect it from falling apart and was now an archive of busking in the Montreal metro. It contained paper folders, documents typed or printed, hand-drawn maps, newspaper clippings, a couple of VHS tape, audio cassettes, and a glass jar with coins and receipts among other things. Alongside traces of Dunlevy's own interest in busking and his busking activities in the past, the box contained papers related to the AMIM— meeting minutes, correspondences, audio cassettes, VHS tapes, receipts, logo design, surveys and studies related to busking practices and organisational work in Montreal and Toronto. Dates and other information were scribbled on folders to give the contents an order and help with recall. After spending a couple of hours talking about the contents of the box and busking, I asked Dunlevy if he would lend me the box for research. He willingly agreed on the condition that I will bring it back.

When I started going through the box later, I realised there was an obvious entwining of

personal and collective memory, which posed an ethical challenge in navigating what I thought I

was authorised to look through. I decided to stick to the documents that were clearly labelled as

belonging to the AMIM. There was the first registration letter from 1983 issued by Ministère des

institutions financières et coopératives, acknowledging the existence of an association. Several

other folders were marked either correspondences or general assembly proceedings. There were

specimens of the guide designed by the AMIM in the 1990s, a sample of the association's

identity card from 1993-94, surveys and logo design among other things. Some general assembly

meetings had been audio recorded, while there were other traces of issues concerning metro

musicians and the association in handwritten notes for meetings— with the transport authority,

amongst themselves and for press conferences. These documents lay mixed with newspaper

cuttings about busking in the metro and elsewhere, receipts of various kinds, coins in a jar, and a

shoebox with photos of Dunlevy dressed for performances and other documents pertaining to his

own employment and busking activities.

Martha Langford notes a fluid movement between the private and the social worlds in

collections of photographs and other objects such as postcards and documents where meaning is

derived as much from content as from attending to the materiality of the objects and the physical

environment within which they are placed.[21] In the box— a collection and a composite media of

memories, there was no clear separation between Dunlevy's life and the papers related to the

AMIM. It illustrated the entangled nature of individual and organisational memory. They were

not just conversations between private and public memories but an entangled view of the two

spheres. Mediated memories, as José van Dijck argues, "are crucial sites for negotiating the

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21. Langford, *Suspended Conversations*, 33.
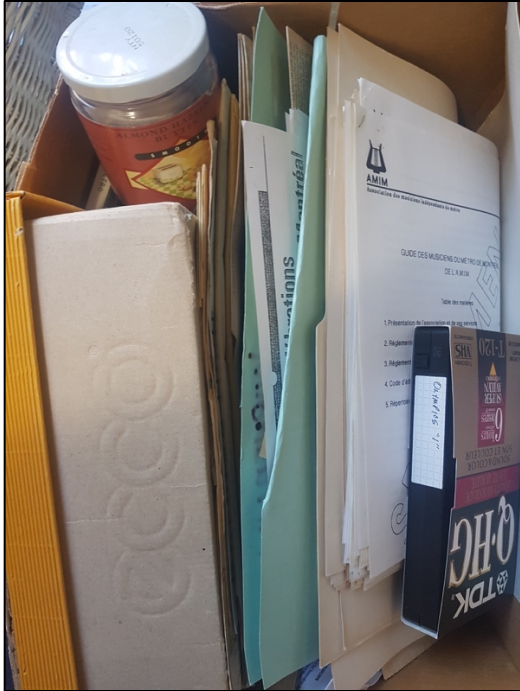
Image 5 a–c (clockwise from top left): Contents of the box; identity card of the association from the year 1993-94 with the AMIM logo; and a glimpse of the contents of the shoebox with Dunlevy's photographs on a stilt with his flute and records of his busking employments. Source: AMIM archives in Dunlevy's possession and lent to author for research purposes.

relationship between self and culture at large, between what counts as private and what is public, and between individuality and collectivity."[22] The box made the personal visible alongside the political and the public.

Such archives that emerge outside institutional spaces and lack recognition as official memory can nevertheless speak to marginalised or minority histories of a place and the presence and the role of institutions that come into existence through community engagement and creation and mobilisation of resources from below.[23] The box offered an alternative narrative of the city in the 1980s and 1990s and made visible the city from the perspective of those who played as metro musicians. There were several lists of musicians who played in the metro, participated in the association meetings and were available as artists for hire to employers in the city. The musicians' interest in engaging with the association and a slow but steady codification of their practices as regulations also indicated the changing nature of busking in the metro. Not only were the relationships between the organisation and the transport authority, then called the Société de transport de communauté urbain de Montréal (STCUM), were formalised, a set of rules or guidelines had been arrived at by the 1990s that musicians were expected to follow while busking in the metro. Correspondences with other musicians writing to the association president also reveal that the AMIM fulfilled an important function as an intermediary between the STCUM, public and the musicians.

During our first meeting, some months before seeing the box of papers, Dunlevy had talked for almost four hours as he sat recalling his life before he started busking, circumstances

22. José van Dijck, "Mediated Memories: A Snapshot of Remembered Experience," in *Mind the Screen: Media Concepts According to Thomas Elsaesser*, ed. Jaap Kooijman, Patricia Pisters, and Wanda Strauven, (Amsterdam University Press, 2008): 77, 71–81. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n2j2.8

23. Mills, Rochat, and High, "Montreal's Negro Community Centre Fonds," 45.

that led him to start playing music in the metro, founding of the association and its functioning. Over the next months, I met him two more times. It was only in our third meeting that he thought of pulling out the box in order to look for a petition that he had talked at length about in the previous interviews. I hadn't expected this collection of material pertaining to the association to exist as enquiries in the STM archives about papers related to the association had been without much results. And it was between his interview and the actual box of papers that the real significance of the association's memory in his life became clear. The reciprocity between the two was also undeniably present.

The three interviews that I conducted with Dunlevy became foundational to my research in many ways, but the box helped to push the research questions further and examine the association's role as a labour market intermediary. It was constructed in many visible layers. Apart from documents of varying nature— from very official correspondences to more personal emails, enquiries, complaints, letters to media organisations and assembly proceedings, there were also three different periods visible in the collection, which were mostly separated by the leadership. While Dunlevy had been at the helm of affairs for most of the association's life course, there were two other presidents – Sylvain Coté and Kim Pelletier – whose styles of leadership and influence on the association were palpable in the documents bearing their traces. While the oral history interview mostly offered Dunlevy's perceptions, the box both complemented his views and challenged them, revealing other contending voices.
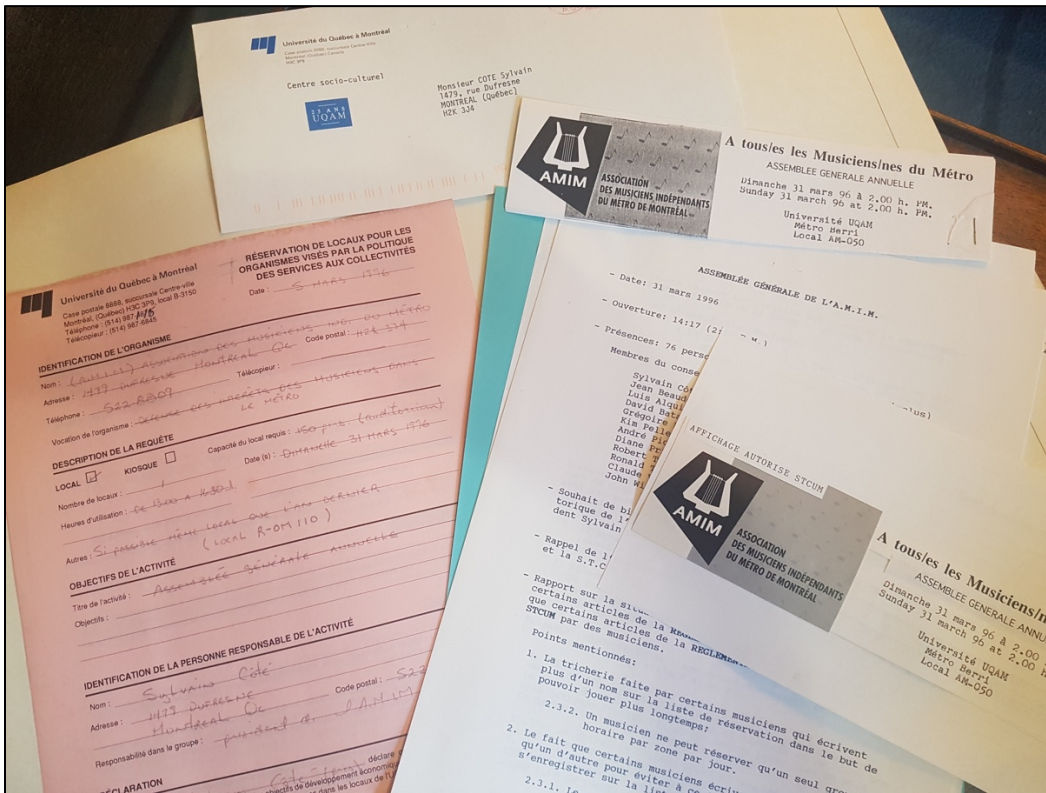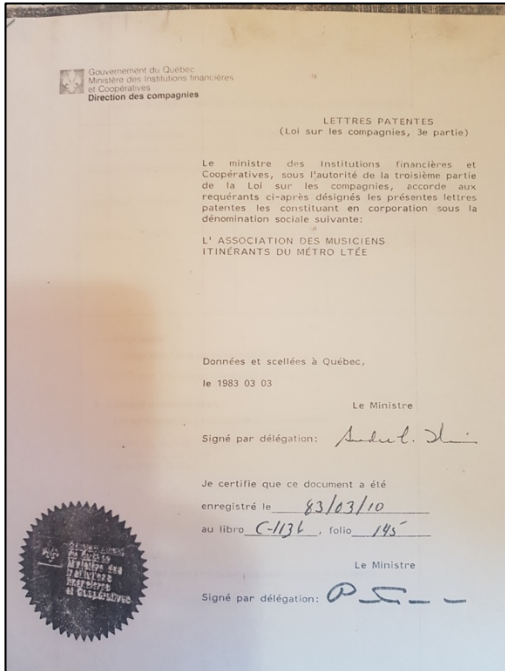
Image 6 a–c (clockwise from top left): The first registration letter from 1983; newspaper clippings of news related to busking in the metro; and contents of a folder that documents a general assembly meeting of the association on UQAM premises and includes room-booking receipt, leaflets announcing the date, place and time of the meeting; and minutes of the meeting.

José van Dijck writes that media and memory "constitute each other".[24] In other words, instead of considering media as a container for storing memory or an outside influence that shapes and distorts memory of the human mind, Dijck's suggestion is to think of them as inscribing each other. An example she offers is that of people using media to make family memories and develop autobiographical collections. In this case, the box not only actively contributed to the construction of a public memory about the AMIM and about buskers in the metro that is hard to find in institutional archives, but they also spoke of Dunlevy's role in this history. The STM had directed me towards the RMMM for any queries and the RMMM website had nothing on the previous organisation, except for Dunlevy's name on it as the founder-president. As an organisational – even if informal – memory of the AMIM, the collection gave the AMIM an identity, a history and a legitimacy as an entity. Moreover, if the box validated and added to Dunlevy's stories in the interviews, it also produced some counter narratives that made visible the association's role in self-reregulating busking and enabling a change in the busker's identity— from a nuisance and noise-maker in the industrial city[25] to an animator of public space in the creative city.[26]

Langford treats private albums as a form of mediated social memory where meaning rests as much in the ordering and placement of the album as in the contents of the photographs.[27] In

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24. van Dijck, "Mediated Memories," 76.

25. Robert Hawkins, "'Industry Cannot Go On without the Production of Some Noise': New York City's Street Music Ban and the Sound of Work in the New Deal Era," Journal of Social History 46, no.1 (2012): 106–123. https://doi.org/10.1093/jsh/shs025.

26. Seldin, "The Voices of Berlin," 233–255.

27. Langford, "Introduction: Show and Tell," in *Suspended Conversations*, 3–21. Langford argues that not only does the maker of an album provide select information about time, location and subject matter of the photographs and guides the trajectory of meaning-making, but the stories and the context of the viewing of an album also contribute to their meaning.

albums, individual's memories are placed in dialogue with the public through their setting,

themes, organisational logic and even the content of the photographs. In some way, the box was

like an album of objects, a display of things that animated Dunlevy's life and world for the

onlooker— me, the interviewer-researcher but also, through me, the wider audience of this

thesis. The interviewer-researcher is often the only listener in the physical interview space, but

the recorder stands in for the wider "absent undetermined audience" of the stories.[28] The

production of the box in this context therefore is also an act of making public such a collection

for the wider public of the interview and the research project.

Objects such as photos, heirlooms, etc. often appear in the interview space, either because

they are asked for by the interviewer-researcher as a way to start conversations or to trigger

memories of a particular time, place or events[29] or because the interviewee-participants bring

them up because they think those objects are important to the conversation. Dunlevy's act of

bringing out the box of papers related to the association was a way of claiming space for this

little piece of history that, as I realised later, was very much an urban legend among buskers but

never really recorded officially as the history of a buskers' association. The material evidence

legitimised what had been an oral memory so far. It also told stories that had remained untold by

Dunlevy, but above all it was also a testimony to a bottom-up organising amongst buskers.

That the box was put in a storage in the middle of nowhere is also telling. In the light of

buskers' social and economic marginality, this history and organisational life of the AMIM was

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28. Alessandro Portelli, "Oral History as Genre," in *Narrative and Genre: Contexts and Types of Communication*, ed. Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson, 1st edn. (first published 1998, New York, Routledge, 2017), 32, 23–45. E-Book.

29. See for example, Emma Harake, "Arabic Speaking Objects: A Collaborative Research-Creation Project Exploring Recent Immigrants' Narratives of Displacement and Settlement," MA Thesis, Concordia University, 2019, for use of an object-oriented interview methodology and exploration of memory among immigrants in Canada.

too small and marginal to have found its way into state or municipal archives. However, Dunlevy's efforts to store this organisational history along with his own personal documents related to busking confirm that the association held a lot of significance in his life. Oral history interviews are "a process in which the respondent actively fashions an identity," writes Lynn Abrams.[30] Through storytelling and interaction with the interviewer and their questions, the interviewee-participant crafts an image of themselves and their life for the public, however narrow or broad it might be. Drawing on Graham Dawson's work in *Soldier Hero*, Penny Summerfield describes this as a search for "composure"— a process of composing a narrative of the oneself led by a pursuit for coherence between events and their meaning, quest for "psychic comfort and satisfaction and a hope of eliciting recognition and affirmation" from the audience.[31] Alistair Thomson argues that this "composure" is arrived at in oral history interviews through "compos(ing) and construct(ing) memories using the public languages and meanings" of stories within a culture.[32] The box and the oral history interview with Dunlevy exist in a dialogical relationship— one animates the other. The interview gave context to the documents in the box, but the collection equally also illuminated his life and gave him an identity.

As far as I am aware, this is the only archival traces remaining of the AMIM, however incomplete the documents may be. The fact that the only possible way to gain access to this history of self-organising among buskers in the city was through Dunlevy's and other buskers' life histories emphasises the role that oral history research can play in foregrounding

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30. Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (Abington, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2010), 33.

31. Penny Summerfield, "Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews," *Cultural and Social History* 1, no. 1 (2004): 69, 65–93, DOI: 10.1191/1478003804cs0005oa. Also see, Garham Dawson, Soldier Hero: British Adventure, Empire, and the Imagining of Masculinities (Abingdon, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 1994).

32. Alistair Thomson, *Anzac Memories: Living with the Legend* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 8. E-book.

marginalised voices and in making alternative pasts and histories in a place visible. The history

of the organisation lives because of its relevance to Dunlevy's life and emerges in connection

with his life history. The box also helps to challenge an age-old narrative about itinerant

musicians in the archives and shines a light on their agency, activities, concerns, self-perceptions

and place in the economy. The stories that emerged in the interactions of the oral history

interviews with the contents of the box are explored in chapter 5. In this chapter, I remain

focused on the various forms of mediated memories that shaped this research.

People agree to participate in oral history interviews for a number of reasons, including a

desire to be heard, counted in and to harness the researcher's agency to strengthen their claims.[33]

The reasons why they bring out objects during or after interviews are just as varied. Susana

Martinez, a flamenco dancer in Old Montreal, and an immigrant from Mexico, showed me

tickets that she had received for unauthorised busking in Old Montreal after the interview.

Though she had carried them with her all the way from home, she had waited until the end of the

interview to pull them out. The papers bore traces of administrative surveillance on buskers, as

the contraventions issued to her had pictures of her performing on the street, were dated and

time-stamped to record evidences of the offence— of busking in places and at times not

approved by the borough. Alessandro Portelli, in discussing oral history interviews as dialogues,

writes that "similarity makes the interview possible; difference makes it meaningful."[34] In other

words, a few things are needed for the interview to take place— the interviewer's interest in

soliciting stories, the interviewee's interest in sharing stories, difference that necessitates a

conversation, and the significance of a "common ground" that brings together the storyteller and

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33. Steven High, "Sharing Authority: An Introduction," *Journal of Canadian Studies / Revue d'études canadiennes* 43, no. 1 (Winter 2009): 17, 12–34.

34. Portelli, "Living Voices," 242.
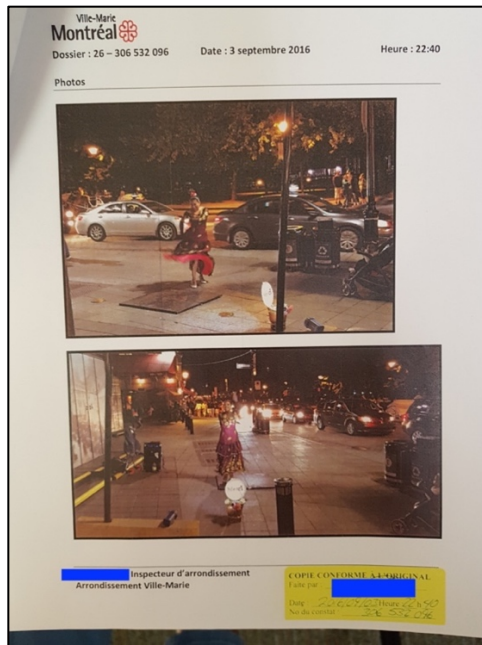
Image 7 a and b: Ticket received by Susana Martinez for busking in Old Montreal. Source: In possession of the interviewee. It is part of the surveillance practice to take pictures of the offenders and submit them as evidence. Maps are also enrolled in the surveillance practice.

the listener.[35] One of the dominant themes in the interview with Martinez was her experiences of

surveillance and the borough administration's interventions into their busking practice in Old

Montreal. It was only after I had showed enough interest in understanding her perspective and let

her speak about how the surveillance and top-down management of busking spaces impacted her

that she felt comfortable to share those tickets with me. Moreover, these contraventions,

animated by her experiences that were shared in the interview, offered a different version of the

events than they would have told if they were accessed from the archives. In the archives, stored

with other similar contraventions, they would have turned the attention on to offences. Here,

accompanied by her stories, they became evidences of surveillance and the corporeal experiences

of administrative power and control in public space.

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35. *Ibid*, 241–242.

Drawing attention to the role that media plays in shaping memory, Valerie Yow argues that memory speaks "a different kind of truth… a psychological truth for the narrator."[36] However, in contemporary society, media is much more than television and radio though their influence, as Yow notes, is also undeniable on producing popular memory that show up often in oral history interviews as well. A lot of the media that came up during interviews were neither meant for broadcast nor mass produced. While I do engage with the entwining of memories with cinema later in the chapter, my interest here is also to explore all the other forms of media that came up as evidence, as reference and as collections to be preserved for posterity.

Martinez wasn't the only one to have brought up objects coded with individual and collective memories and meaning in the interview space. Everyone I interviewed had something to share. If not physical objects, they were references to other media, either made by them or of some value to them. Stephen Moore, for example, brought with him some old photographs of his performances in Place Jacques-Cartier that had been published in newspapers. In 2019, Moore had been busking in the city for over thirty-five years and was proud of this history. The fading colour photograph, an aerial view of Place Jacques-Cartier from the top of a building, had him on a unicycle at the center of a big crowd and conveyed his popularity in the past and was equally a testimony to his ability to draw bug crowds. In the context of the events of 2019 at the square, which is explored in the last chapter, the image partly helped him counter his sense of marginality in the city that wanted to regulate busking in order to make space for professionally trained and internationally travelling artists.

When I interviewed Penny Hamer, she had brought with her the thesis that she had written while at Concordia University. Hamer had put herself through school and completed a

36. Valerie Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for Humanities and Social Sciences* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 2005, 2nd ed.), 58.
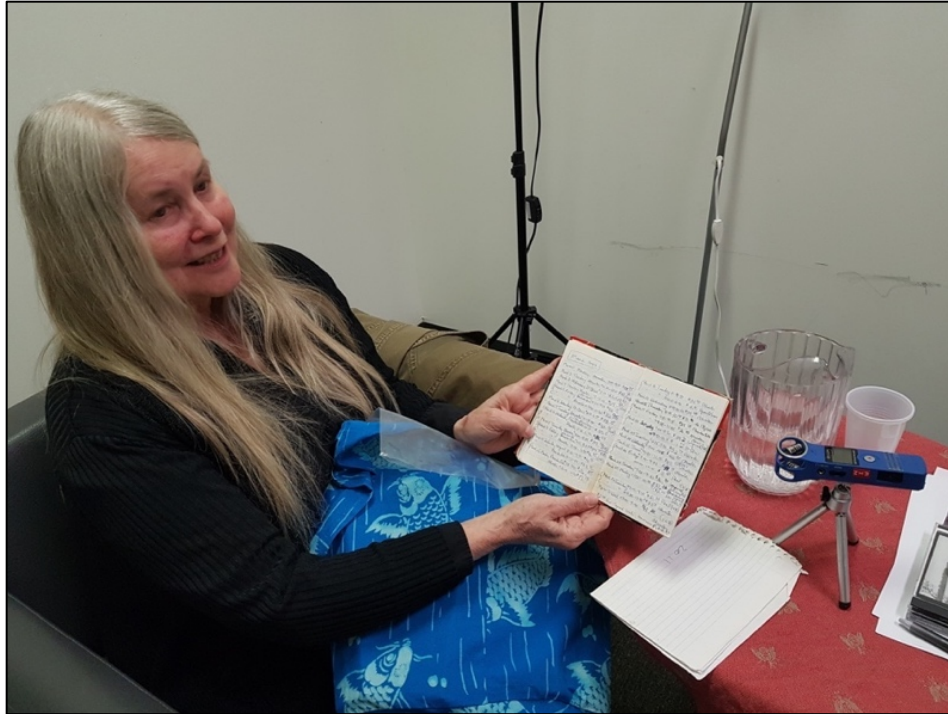
Image 8: Penny Hamer shows her diary after the interview where she noted her day's earnings from busking.

master's degree while also being a single parent. She also presented me with music albums that she had recorded when she was busking in the metro in the 1990s and early 2000s. These opportunities had come by because of busking. Hamer, who had to juggle motherhood, work and go busking in order to make a comfortable living, also shared her diary from that period when she was playing music in the metro. She used to jot down the earnings from busking at the end of the day, indicating that the money was a much-needed part of her finances. These are some moments when the contrast between how buskers are framed in public discourse and their perceptions of themselves become granular, confronting the bias in the official archives that make them visible mostly in the context of poverty, crime, nuisance, complaints and cheap humour that exploit their stereotyped representations in public.

Meeting Robert O'Callaghan made this even more clear. I had first encountered O'Callaghan in the archives of the City of Montreal. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, his name

Image 9: Robert O'Callaghan watching a video of his busking performances at GEM Lab, Concordia University.

often appeared in the newspapers because of his brush with the city and the police. On our first

meeting, expecting it to be a preliminary conversation about my interest in interviewing him and

allowing him time to decide whether he wanted to participate in the project, I had decided to not

carry any audio or video equipment.[37] But oral history interviews are also an incredibly

"precarious, fallible, and exciting human process" that require navigating unpredictability.[38]

Contrary to my reserve in assuming that I was already at the stage of doing an interview with

37. See for example, Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 92–95 on interviewing. Yow advises on having a preliminary meeting to avoid sitting down for an interview with a stranger and it is generally a good advice and a respectful way to do interviews. However, much also depends on personal dynamics and people's willingness to share their stories. Also see, Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, 235–36 where he discusses the disadvantages of treating the first visit as a brief meeting to prepare for a recorded session later. From my own experience, I have learnt that it really depends on people. Some like O'Callaghan felt they had much to share and therefore were very willing to be interviewed, whereas there were others who showed more reticence.

38. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki, "Introduction," in *Oral History Off the Record: Toward an Ethnography of Practice*, ed. Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 3, 1–19.

him, O'Callaghan had prepared for the meeting and dug into his boxes and unpacked albums and scrapbooks to show me. What I had so far unearthed in the archives wasn't even a fraction of the material that he had. And we sat leafing through them, stories flowed. As I left that day hoping for another meeting and interview, O'Callaghan shared a VHS tape with me in the hope that I would be able to either find him a VHS player or digitise the tape for viewing. Though I will never recover from the regret of not having carried my recorder that day, the interaction did pave the way for an interview another day.

I was able to recover some of the stories told during our first meeting in the formal interview, but the telling had lost some of the spontaneity. But it was really the VHS tape that turned out to be the most pleasant surprise. O'Callaghan used to record his busking performances wherever he went. Not only did the tapes document his performances, they also chronicled public spaces in the cities that he visited and performed in. After I had managed to digitise one of the tapes, I invited him to watch it together in the lab. While the newspaper reports spoke of his troubles with the law and the court cases that followed, the tape was evidence of the creativity and the innovative thinking that had gone into the "production", as O'Callaghan himself described his busking. His pride in what he did and the seriousness and passion with which he pursued busking became evident when we went through his personal archives and memory.

Mediated memories

Oral histories are complex sites of meaning-making. Memories that emerge in the interviews are entangled in the intersubjective space— the dynamics of the relationship between the interviewee-participant and the interviewer-researcher, space and set-up of the interview, and all else that shaped the process of remembering, from the framing of the project, questions asked

and the presence of people in the interview space. Technology too plays an important role in this practice of eliciting memories through a conversation between two people that also assumes a wider audience.[39] By the first decade of the twenty-first century as social media and media technologies were propelling a digital revolution, oral historians too were grappling with what the consequences of this technological transformation would be on the field and the practice. Michael Frisch predicted a turn towards "post-documentary sensibility" where audio/video documentary authorship would be replaced by an ease of access, use and shareability of the content.[40] Wondering if "the technological revolution was also a cognitive revolution," Alistair Thomson argued that it might be the next paradigm shift in oral history research as a field.[41] On the lines of Frisch's arguments for a conceptual shift in the production and use of oral history interview, Steven High asserted that new media could play an important role in the publishing of interviews, even as he drew attention to the challenges involved in creating public-facing outcomes.[42]

The presence of and interaction between different media within the space of the interview and during subsequent analysis has received relatively less attention. Alessandro Portelli leaves some cursory notes on the possibilities of oral history theory based on video interviews while himself moving on with the analysis of the audio— sounds and semantics of words to explore

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39. For an overview of the various media technologies that have shaped oral history research, see Mary A. Larson, "The Medium Is the Message": Oral History, Media, and Mediation," *The Oral History Review* 43, no. 2 (2016): 318–337, DOI: 10.1093/ohr/ohw052.

40. Michael Frisch, "Towards a Post-Documentary Sensibility: Theoretical and Political Implications of New Information Technologies in Oral History," (paper presented to the XIIIth International Oral History Conference, Rome, June 2004) and in *The Oral History Reader*, ed. Rob Perks and Alistair Thomson, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 102-14.

41. Alistair Thomson, "Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History," 49-70.

42. Steven High, "Telling Stories: A Reflection on Oral History and New Media," *Oral History* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2010), 101–112. High writes that while oral historians have focused a lot on interviewing, much less attention has been paid towards their dissemination in public.

"oral history as genre".[43] While it's not a question of whether one medium is better than the other, video recordings can reveal powerful information during playback that may have been missed during the interview. It adds a layer of meaning.[44] Not only is the remembering and retelling of the past engaged upon by the interviewee-participant an act of memory production, the recording of the interview in any media format, which is at the heart of oral history analysis, also structures subsequent remembering. Once archived, the playback takes place on different registers. There are the past memories recalled by the interviewee-participant and then there is the memory of sharing one's story during the interview. Even as the disembodied voices have been channelled into oral history analysis and in creative reinterpretation of stories, artists' experiments with video interviews have also shown that body language and facial expressions of interviews can convey meaning and can be turned into political statements.[45]

New possibilities for deeper engagements with the audio and video files of the interviews are gradually emerging but there are also concerns related to privacy, use and access of data in using online platforms. Using digital tools requires considerable thought and examination of what information freedom might mean for research participants and communities involved.[46] If

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43. Alessandro Portelli, "Oral History as Genre," 23–45.

44. High, "Visualizing Oral History in the Ruins of Industry."

45. Edward Little and Steven High, "Partners in Conversation: Ethics and the Emergent Practice of Oral History Performance," in *History, Memory, Performance*, ed. David Dean, Yana Meerzon and Kathryn Prince (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 249–252, 240–256. Little and High write about the various creative outcomes based on the Montreal Life Stories project where interviews were used differently by artists – musicians and theatre practitioners – and these projects explore meaning in the interviews in a variety of ways, including through a silencing of the voice and privileging the embodiment of memories.

46 See for example, Kimberly Christen, "Does Information really want to be free? Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Question of Openness," *International Journal of Communication* 6 (2012): 2870–2893, who discusses what open access and information freedom might mean for indigenous communities working on repatriation of their heritage and creating digital archives of material and how it shifts the generalised assumptions of information freedom and digital rights management.

the digital world has been successful in bridging divides and contributed to political

mobilisation,[47] unencumbered circulation and digital footprints have their downsides as well.[48]

Imagining and communicating to vastly different publics on the Internet is a challenge, just as

containing the breadth of an interview's circulation online is difficult.

Working with video-recorded interviews as primary documents of research therefore

continues to be a cumbersome process and requires better calibration between video and the

transcript.[49] Some software have been developed in the past couple of decades with the needs of

oral historians in mind, but they are not without complexities.[50] If developed as open source,

funding is often a challenge for producing regular updates and maintenance, which are central to

the functioning of such platforms. Along with very dispersed practices of data storage, the

artificial intelligence-based transcription platforms can also draw on the contents of the

interviews to further develop their technology and can have implications on confidential

interviews. The use of such software requires discretion in decision-making and awareness about

digital technologies and the life of data on the Internet on the part of the researcher.[51] Very often,

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47. Jennifer L. Fluri, "Our Website Was Revolutionary" Virtual Spaces of Representation and Resistance". *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 5 (1), 89-111. https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/750.

48. Seeta Peña Gangadharan, "The Downside of Digital Inclusion: Expectations and Experiences of Privacy and Surveillance among Marginal Internet Users." *New Media & Society* 19, no. 4 (April 2017): 597–615. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444815614053.

49. Steven High and David Sworn, "After the Interview: The Interpretive Challenges of Oral History Video Indexing," *Digital Studies/le Champ Numérique* 1, no. 2 (2009), DOI: http://doi.org/10.16995/dscn.110. High and Sworn have laid out some of the challenges involved in audio and video indexing and working with them instead of the transcripts in oral history analysis.

50. See Steven High, Jessica Mills, & Stacey Zembrzycki, "Telling Our Stories / Animating Our Past: A Status Report on Oral History and Digital Media," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 37, No. 3 (2012): 383–403, for an overview of the various software available and developed in the recent years. For this project, I used Nvivo's video-enabled coding platform and transcription software to move between the actual recordings of the interviews and the transcripts and playing them together.

51. In this project, I used the web-based transcription software of Nvivo for some interviews that were released to the public. Confidential interviews were done in-person and offline.

we don't know enough about the inner workings of such platforms that offer data managed and analysis tools. Ian Milligan calls for greater digital literacy among historians in the future to be able to harness computational tools now available for the mining of historical data.[52] There is also a need for greater transparency and information on how such data related to living sources may be stored, accessed and used for different projects.

Body language, facial expressions and gestures carry meaning and they animate the interview space, which get lost in audio recordings unless noted by the interviewer. Between engaging with the conversation, maintaining eye-contact, managing technology and working with other distractions at the interview site, interviewer-researcher's notes can also miss the subtleties of this language. In my project, Dunlevy's interview offers an opportunity to explore the potentiality of video interviews in recording embodied memories and the influence it can have on analysis later. I interviewed Dunlevy on three different occasions— twice at his boutique in Dunham and once in a café in Montreal. The first interview with him was on video and is almost four hours long. The other two interviews were audio-recorded follow-ups. The nature of these video and audio interviews are quite different. The first one is not only more formal but also very lively, engaging and performative. It was during analysis =that I fully realised Dunlevy was a powerful narrator, in the way that Walter Benjamin describes a master storyteller.[53] Not only was he conversant with the camera and used it successfully to present

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52. Ian Milligan, "Mining the 'Internet Graveyard': Rethinking the Historians' Toolkit," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada* 23, no. 2 (2012): 21–64. https://doi.org/10.7202/1015788ar

53. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory 1900-2000*, ed. Dorothy J. Hale (Malden, Ma.: Blackwell Publishing, 2006): 361–378. Benjamin notes that part of the craft of the storyteller is to establish a distance between themselves and the listener that makes a story convincing.

himself, but he also controlled the narrative by creating a distance between himself and me, the listener and the interviewer-researcher.

When I started working with the video and the transcript of Dunlevy's interview, it became clear that he wasn't merely telling *me* those stories but that he was also narrating those stories to an invisible audience represented in the interview space by the camera. In making those stories public through the interview, he was making a place for his experiences as a busker in the city. Visual cues of body language, gestures and facial expressions hold social prompts regarding the comfort of the interviewee, their reticence or desire for pause, and relational dynamics in the interview space.[54] They also add a layer of meaning to the storytelling. During analysis, access to these visual codes can add significantly to the process of analysis.[55]

The video-recorded interview of Dunlevy was important in stressing certain aspects of his experiences as a busker in the city. Through his stories, not only did he control the structure of the interview but also gave direction to my research. Some of the liveliest moments in the interview were when he recalled events involving inspectors, administrators and a court case. Watching out for the "cops", as he called the inspectors of the then Commission de transport de

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54. Sherna Gluck, "What's so Special about Women? Women's Oral History," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 2, no. 2, (Summer 1977), 3-17, 6; and Michael Frisch, "Three Dimensions and More: Oral history Beyond Paradoxes of Method" in *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, ed. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy (New York and London: The Guilford Press, 2008). E-book, 223: 221-238. Gluck argues that non-verbal cues reveal the "emotional tone of the interview" and Frisch writes that meaning is carried in the context and the setting of the interview, in body language, intonation and pauses in speech.

55. High and Sworn, "After the Interview."

Image 10 a–f (clockwise from top left) : These images are screenshots from the video interview with Grégoire Dunlevy. Here, he speaks of his experiences of surveillance and harassment in the metro while busking in the 1980s. Source: Grégoire Dunlevy, oral history interview session-I, Dunham, February 8, 2019.

la communauté urbaine de Montréal (CTCUM),[56] was a big part of his busking memories. He

used his body, facial expressions, and voice to play the different roles— himself, cops, the legal

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56. The Société du transports de Montreal (STM), which is responsible for managing all public transport in Montreal, was called the Commission de transport de la communauté urbaine de Montréal (CTCUM) between 1970 and 1985. The organisation was rebranded as Société de Transport de la Communauté Urbaine De Montréal in 1985. The STM was instituted in 2002. In one interview, a busker who was a member of the Regroupement des musiciens

aid lawyer and some officials of the Montreal metro who could still recall by name. On one

occasion, he stood up to act out an interaction. The camera could not follow his sudden

movements and his gestures and facial expressions went out of the frame for a few seconds.

Nevertheless, even in the absences, the video captures something significant. His narration was

compelling and added a sense of immediacy to the events that had taken place over thirty years

ago. His descriptions of busking spots in the metro stations were not only detailed but also

carried visual cues.

In those moments, I became aware of my distance from his experiences. In the city for

less than five years at that point, I was unfamiliar with the spaces that he was describing in such

great detail from memory. Moreover, even if I did frequent a metro station as a commuter, I

never really looked at the spaces that he had occupied as a busker for hours and over many years.

My experiences of being in public space as a middle-class woman from India were also very

different; so were the stories of his journeys across North America from anything I had

experienced in my young adulthood. Dunlevy was aware of my distance as on one occasion, he

stopped his story in the middle to ask if my French was good enough to know if I would follow

the nuances of the language that were central to the unfolding of certain events in court. This

distance between him as the interviewee-participant and the storyteller and me as the interviewer

and the listener helped established his authority in the interview as the narrator. I asked very few

questions in the interview and mostly sat witnessing his performative storytelling.

Even though these animated performances had a significant influence on the direction of

my research— and made me engage with experiences of surveillance, power and control among

buskers in public spaces, I really realised the impact it had had on my thinking upon reviewing

du métro de Montréal commented that in a way, the STM was a newer organisation than the regroupement, which
came into existence in 1983.

the video. It is important to both "hear and see the person" in analysis to feel connected to the stories.[57] If we return to the question of why people tell their stories to researchers and remind ourselves of the argument that it is often to "persuade the powers that be of the righteousness of their cause or to honour and validate their own lives,"[58] Dunlevy's motives become clear. He wanted those experiences to count, make public the unfair treatment of buskers by the authorities, the surveillance that their bodies are subjected to in public space, and the important role that the musicians played in making busking legal in the metro stations of Montreal.

In the 1980s, busking was a way for Dunlevy to make a living as a struggling artist and craftsperson in an economy that was not only witnessing a global reorganisation of production, but also a restructuring of the labour market. The services and culture-based industries that were replacing industrial manufacturing in the city were also championing a post-Fordist model of the economy, leading to increased labour flexibility and heightened work-related precarity.[59] In the changing economic terrain between the 1970s and the 1990s,[60] busking offered enough flexibility to be combined with other work and networking opportunities. As is discussed in Chapter 5, buskers were also enrolled into the production of a lively urban space. Dunlevy's and

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57. High and Sworn, "After the Interview."

58. High, "Sharing Authority," 2009, 18. In discussing this question, High refers to Robert Storey's work on interviewing injured workers where the author-researcher became a conduit in the workers' attempts at convincing decision-makers about the validity of their insurance claims. See Robert Storey, "'They Have All Been Faithful Workers': Injured Workers, Truth, and Workers' Compensation in Ontario, 1970-2008," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43, no.1, (2009): 154–85. doi:10.3138/jcs.43.1.154.

59. Carla Lipsig-Mummé, "Organizing Women in the Clothing Trades: Homework and the 1983 Garment Strike in Canada," *Studies in Political Economy* 22, no.1 (1987): 44, 41–71. DOI: 10.1080/19187033.1987.11675573

60. See Tara Vinodrai, "A Tale of Three Cities: The Dynamics of Manufacturing in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, 1976-1997," Analytical Studies Branch – Research Paper Series, 11F0019 No. 177, Micro-Economic Analysis Division, Statistics Canada, November 2001, for an overview of Montreal's economic transoformation during this period and its comparative performance against Toronto and Vancouver.

other buskers' experiences, therefore, are a way into understanding these transformations taking root in the city.

José van Dijck argues that "we are who we are because we have constructed our experiences and our memories through and in media."[61] There are two things to note here: one, media is central to recording memories, and this process of recording memories is a mediation between the private and the public. The understanding of public is not the singular public of the public sphere but comprises the possibility of many publics that takes shape against any text.[62] Oral historians grappling with different versions of the same past are familiar with this entanglement of media and memories and the meaning that emerges through the telling of a memory, through both form and content. Alessandro Portelli's examination of oral histories conducted around the event of the death of Luigi Trastulli is a perfect example of this entanglement of media and memory.[63]

Remembered in oral traditions and written records in newspapers, the memory of Trastulli's death is entwined with the nature of the media and the politics of storing and recalling the event. As Portelli goes on to illustrate, the accounts of the event related to Trastulli's death differed between reports, depending on the political alignment of the media. Between written records and oral transmissions, other mediations occurred— shift in the time and year of the event, discarding of some information, addition of new details, and, over the years, a conflation of the event with other events, which amplified certain recurring motifs that carried symbolic meaning for the tellers of the story. Portelli further argues that the memory of the event retold in

61. van Dijck, "Mediated Memories," 79.

62. Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 49–90.

63. Alessandro Portelli, "The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Memory and the Event."

oral history interviews is enrolled into healing a wound that had been left open by "the unpunished murder of a comrade, the impossibility of retaliation… deep humiliation, a loss of face" among the workers of Terni.[64]

The interviews thus become a bridge between the private and the public. Oral history interviews are done with the purpose of making people's voices public, unless otherwise requested in the interviews, and interviewee-participants are aware of the public nature of the interviews. In telling their stories, they also engage in an act of going public with their lives in a way that they deem fit. Every time I view Dunlevy's interview, I not only engage with his memories of busking in the city but am also reminded of his powerful storytelling and the meaning of that performance on camera. In his interviews, Dunlevy always referred to the CTCUM inspectors as cops even though he also made it clear that they were not the police and did not have similar power. His insistence on using the word "cops" shows the kind of power that the inspectors had over the buskers and the brutality of the fines on them. However, without the video recording, this narrative may not have been as compelling. Moreover, I may have missed the nuance in the use of the word "cops" for inspectors. It underlined the importance of these events in Dunlevy's life and emphasized the impact of surveillance on buskers and the public space as a site of contestation.

'You know that film La Strada*?'*

What of the other forms of media that come up as references during oral history interviews? The interview is a site for of identity affirmation[65] and, as many oral historians have illustrated

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64. *Ibid*, 19.

65. Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 33

through their work, people draw on cultural representations to construct their identities in interviews.[66] "The challenge of the historian is to understand the cultural ingredients that go into accounts of a remembered and interpreted past" as public discourse that circulates through television and films shape narratives during interviews.[67] If they can offer a possibility to connect with broader socially accepted cultural representations and help interviewee-participants experience composure, the absence of cultural narratives that could justify individual experiences can trigger a sense of discomposure.[68] There can be discordance in the metaphors drawn on to explain one's life and that itself carries meaning.

In the case of Robert O'Callaghan's interview, this tension becomes visible when he brings up two films as references towards the end of the formal interview. For O'Callaghan, busking was like a "production" and he turned it into a spectacle of sorts. When we sat down for the formal interview, he was most interested in talking about his travels. Noting their significance in his life, he remarked: "My dreams are full of them," adding that it was a big part of his "present mental functioning, you know, spiritual functioning, and all that sort of thing."[69] Towards the end of the interview, he suggested I look at a film:

> Robert O'Callaghan (RO): You know the film *La Strada*? You have to check out this
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> film *La Strada* with Anthony Quinn. It's a Fellini film, and it's about this street performer
>
> who travels around Europe in this kind of combination trailer motorcycle. And he does

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66. See discussion in Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 57–58.

67. Summerfield, "Culture and Composure," 67.

68. *Ibid*, 69.

69. Robert O'Callaghan, oral history interview, Montreal, September 26, 2019.

this act where he breaks a chain on his chest and his adventures doing this, you know.

And I mean, it's all— you have to see it because it's— (trails off).[70]

O'Callaghan's act as a busker and a street musician was very different from what Quinn's character in *La Strada*.[71] Peter Bondanella writes that there is no one thing that the film means, but it has a "fable-like" quality and is almost Christian in its portrayal of the inner reality and the loneliness of the human condition.[72] The film, set to a neo-realist background that depicts the poverty and socio-economic conditions of rural Italy in the postwar period, is a journey through the psychological and emotional landscape of an itinerant strongman, Zampanò, who is left transformed by his association and travel with young and somewhat naïve Gelsomina, who was sold to him by her poor mother. The two travelling characters sleep in a trailer, travel from place to place and make a living by entertaining people wherever they stop. While Zampanò performs his strongman acts, Gelsomina works as the clown and passes the hat. Zampanò's character is brutal, unkind, mercenary and selfish. He kills a man and hides the crime. In comparison, Gelsomina is portrayed as simple girl with a tragic end. The film ends with Zampanò being reminded of Gelsomina and coming to terms with his own life and her death.

There are two things in the film that resonates with O'Callaghan's life narrative. One, he spent a lot of time travelling as a musician and performing in public spaces. His journeys included Italy and he recalled the trips in great detail and with a lot of fondness. He had a van that he drove around in Europe in the 1990s abandoned it somewhere in Europe after travelling became complicated after 9/11. Second, O'Callaghan's reminiscences in his retired and rather

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70. *Ibid.*

71. *La Strada*, directed by Federico Fellini, special edn. (Criterion Collection, 2003 [1954]), 1h 55 min, DVD Video.

72. Peter Bondanella, *The Films of Federico Fellini*, Cambridge Film Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 43–63.

sedentary life in the present, had included regrets over some aspects of his life and his decisions. The film's emotional quality reflected his him, especially because one of the main protagonists was a busker. This association between his life and the film conveyed both a sense of beauty and pain and he wanted me to understand busking and his travels in the context of this film.

Summerfield observes the autobiographical quality of life history interviews, especially amongst the elderly, and the role of popular memory as cultural circuits in making meaning of one's experiences in the process of remembering and retelling.[73] Both facets were visible in O'Callaghan's interview at this point. He was drawing on common references of busking life to convey his experiences and simultaneously constructing his identity as a busker before me and the invisible audience. Instead dwelling on the reference of *La Strada*, O'Callaghan had then gone on to talk about another film *Death in Venice*[74] to further communicate his sense of the life that he had lived. He referred to a particular scene in the film where a perfectly synchronised evening of indulgence at a hotel in Venice is interrupted by some street musicians:

> RO: There's another scene that you should probably check out – if you will; if you're interested – that's interesting. There's a time in the film *Death in Venice*. You've heard of the film Death in Venice? There's one scene in this film in a, uh, a tourist hostel in Venice where there are a bunch of middle-class tourists sitting on a veranda, you know, in the evening. And this party gets crashed by a bunch of street musicians who perform for them, you know, half perform, half make fun of them. And, you know, they're trying to pass the hat but they also kind of mock the clientele.[75]

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73. Penny Summerfield, "Oral History as an Autobiographical Practice," *Miranda* [Online], 12 (2016), online since 01 April 2016. URL: http://journals.openedition.org/miranda/8714 (accessed on June 14, 2022).

74. *Death in Venice*, directed by Luchino Visconti (Warner Bros., 2013 [1971]), 2h 11min. 67 sec., Criterion on Demand eVideo.

75. O'Callaghan, oral history interview, 2019.

The film, adapted from a book by the same name and authored by Thomas Mann is a portrayal of Europe right before the first World War.[76] The feeling of being on the brink of disintegration, of disease and chaos pervades the film. The scene that O'Callaghan recalled in the interview is described by Roger E. Wiehe in detail:

> Visconti captures the progressive boldness of the dancer and his troupe by long shots intercut at an increasing pace with close-ups. A momentary effort by the hotel staff to remove them results in a further climactic invasion. The troupe is caught in medium close-up, then shown in a long shot over the heads of the guests with their leader whirling around them furiously posturing and smirking but with his face half-hidden until he suddenly dashes up the staircase to the terrace, a figure oddly energetic by contrast with his face which is finally shown in close-up as he dances around Aschenbach sitting at his table with his drink…. The scene reaches its climax as the dancer, suddenly gasping as if to mimic a seizure by sickness, runs down the stairs and out the garden gate from whence he returns a second later.[77]

Gustav von Aschenbach, the protagonist in the film, is a dishonoured and dying artist haunted by the idea of death looming everywhere around him, including the unacknowledged presence of disease in the city. In bringing up these two films, O'Callaghan's juxtaposes two sides of the itinerant performer. If on one end of the spectrum is the adventurous, if not dark, and free figure of Zampanò who appears somewhat larger than life and heroic in his feats, on the other end is the mocking, jesting and leering clown-like strolling musicians who are allowed only a fleetingly

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76. Carolyn Galerstein, "Images of Decadence in Visconti's death in Venice," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 13, no.1 (1985), 29–34.

77. Roger E. Wiehe, "Of Art and Death: Film and Fiction Versions of *Death in Venice*," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 16, no.3 (1988), 214–215, 210–215.

presence as an interlude to remind characters in the film and the audience of the dark side of life— death, decay and the inescapability of it all. The musicians mock the guests to their faces, as if to help them recognise the artifice of life and the rot lurking behind the excess.

Popular culture is often evoked in life story narratives as a way to relate the individual to the social and the collective.[78] Paula Hamilton writes about the role that mass media plays in shaping memories of historical events or colouring memories of past experiences.[79] That O'Callaghan brought up these two films as references in the interview needs to be understood in the role that they play in the construction of O'Callaghan's life history narrative. Both films draw in fictional portrayals of itinerant entertainers and exploit the stereotypes that came to be attached to them in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They are also interesting choices against some of the documentary films on itinerant musicians that have been produced closer home, in Montreal and Quebec.

In 1976, André Gladu and Michel Brault made *Le quêteux Tremblay*, a 28-minute film that was part of a television series called *Le son des Français d'Amérique* aired on Radio-Canada.[80] It documents the life of an old violin repairer and a musician who lived a somewhat reclusive and unconventional life in the countryside. The film echoes the sentiments of nationalist politics that prevailed in Quebec after the Quiet Revolution and was produced for a local francophone television audience. Two other documentaries were made in the twenty-first

78. Summerfield, "Culture and Composure," 68.

79. Paula Hamilton, "The Knife Edge: debates about memory and history," in Kate Darian-Smith and Patricia Hamilton eds. *Memory and History in 20th Century Australia*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994), 9–32, via "Excerpts from Paula Hamilton's discussion of oral history's role in interpreting and recording the past from Teaching Heritage," Making Multicultural Australia. http://www.multiculturalaustralia.edu.au/library/media/Document/id/513. (accessed March 10, 2022). Also see, Thomson, *Anzac Memories*.

80. *Le Quêteux Tremblay*, directed by André Gladu and Michel Brault (Nanouk Films (Québec) / Société Radio-Canada, 1978), 28 min, DVD Video.

century and are even closer in context. *Music for a Blue Train* directed by Mila Aung-Thwin in 2003 and produced by funding from National Film Board documents the life of metro buskers in Montreal through a focus on a Black musician and hip-hop artist from the city: Paul Frappier, or Bad News Brown as he was better known.[81] Another film *Resurrecting Hassan* was released in 2016 and explored the life of a blind musicians' family who were very familiar to metro commuters in Montreal.[82] It diverged from the stock portrayals of street musicians and itinerant performers to follow the Harting-Roux family's quest to quite literally bring their son, who had died in a drowning incident, back to life. That O'Callaghan chose more epic portrayals of street musicians instead of more real-life representations of itinerant musicians conveys a sense of larger-than-life space that these journeys occupied in his memories.

Popular memories of particular events that circulate in the media are powerful shapers of memory and people can find it difficult to articulate stories outside of these popular representations, writes Summerfield.[83] Not only were O'Callaghan's idea and image of busking shaped by these cinematic representations of the busker, he was also employing them to construct his identity in the interview space. If he related to the character of Zampanò through his journeys and the faulty yet somewhat heroic persona, he also saw himself in alignment with the mocking street musicians of *Death in Venice* who play an important role as commentators on society. After bringing up *Death in Venice*, O'Callaghan had continued to talk about his own experience of playing on the streets of Siena in Italy and the story of a German family whose son was dying in a hospital. "It was something very important and very healing for them to be able to

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81. *Music for a Blue Train*, directed by Mila Aung-Thwin (National Film Board of Canada, 2003), 48 min, 33 sec.

82. *Resurrecting Hassan*, directed by Carlo Guillermo Proto (Handshake Productions, 2016), 1h 40 min, DVD Video.

83. Summerfield, "Oral History as an Autobiographical Practice," para 16. Also see, Thomson, *Anzac Memories*; Hamilton, *The Knife Edge*; and Dawson*, Soldier Heroes.*

Image 11: Robert O'Callaghan performs in Siena, Italy, in 1992. He had formed a group called Ensemble Carré Saint-Louis that performed both locally and travelled around though except O'Callaghan all other members of the group changed with time. *Siena Agenda,* September 19, 1992. From the papers of Robert O'Callaghan.

have the music, this music, at that particular moment in time," he had added,[84] indicating that there was a bigger purpose to his music in public space.

Interview and identity

Reflexivity within oral history methodology allows space for addressing questions that "include such issues as how interviewees construct themselves through narratives that arise in dialogue with an interviewer, and how personal experience and public histories interact in the production of memory stories."[85] Media shapes this process in many different ways. In all the interviews, media objects were enrolled into producing a different narrative – an alternative version of living

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84. O'Callaghan, oral history interview.

85. Summerfield, "Oral History as an Autobiographical Practice," para 2.

and working in the city, experience and use of public space, and the role of surveillance in producing the creative city – from the perspective of the busker. And if representations in popular culture were drawn on as references to tell life stories, interviewee-participants also used the mediated interview space to construct their identity. If O'Callaghan was relying on films to reconstruct his life narratives, Dunlevy had used his performative storytelling to convey what he had to say about his life and its significance. Different kinds of media – photographs, papers, correspondences and music albums, VHS tapes – that each interviewee-participant brought with them served as a way for them to construct their identity as a busker. The reasons behind this desire to self-represent was also clear in Dawn Monette's interview as she brought forward a different entanglement of media and memory. Much has been written on the use of new media for disseminating oral history interviews and project outcomes. In. Monette's case, new media was an extension of her identity as a busker.

Monette, a contact juggler who also performs as a human statue and clown, was reflecting on her life journey as a busker when she brought up an incident that led her to produce videos and upload them on YouTube. In 2010, a crystal ball manufacturer in the United States had used contact jugglers to market a new ball with a commercial that claimed the ball was magic. "It floats, it levitates," claims the advertisement, also available on social media.[86] Monette recalled the effect of the commercial on her and other contact jugglers:

> What happened was all of my American audience, which happened to be most of my
> audience who were coming through, because we target tourists clearly, they started
> calling me a fraud, sort of started telling me that I know that ball, it floats on its own. You

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86. FushigiBall, "New Fushigi Ball Commercial," YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8M2h9Oy6ms&ab_channel=FushigiBall (accessed March 11, 2022).

shouldn't have to do anything. And I had just spent ten years learning how to do this.

And it broke my heart. Every know-it-all child would come and just, like, tell us we were

frauds; like every five minutes on the street and it was so painful. And I made four anti-

ads; what do you call that, like anti-ad propaganda on YouTube. They became very

famous videos. Definitely, my most prolific work. One of them is called, 'What happens

when you drop a Fushigi ball?' And it's just me dropping the ball. It's me informing

them and comparing, but it was all really just for me to show people that if you drop the

ball, it drops. I just dropped it like a million times until the Fushigi ball broke into tiny

pieces. Um, and anybody who's on YouTube, ten-year-old or whatever, to try and attract

them, so they could be informed better. That was one, and then what balls can you choose

and kind of other videos alongside it.[87]

In the interview, Monette expressed pain at being called a "fraud" and acknowledged feelings of

being slighted over something that she had spent years learning and was her livelihood. It also

hurt her economically. If a ball could float on its own, no display of skill by the contact juggler

was going to bring a dollar in the jar from passers-by. The videos that she produced and

uploaded on YouTube hoped to counter this.

It helps here to return to Neves's and Sarkar's discussion of video cultures at this point.

New media's format portability, function and use has a "penumbral capacity that are disappeared

by dominant epistemological horizons and discourses of global emergence."[88] In the nineteenth

and early twentieth century, representations of itinerant musicians and performers were filtered

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87. Dawn Monette, Oral History Interview, Montreal, May 14, 2019. Also see, DawnDreams, "What happens if you drop a Fushigi Magic Ball?" YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whDi2ANLjg0 (accessed March 11, 2022).

88. Joshua Neves, *Underglobalization: Beijing's Media Urbanism and the Chimera of Legitimacy* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2020), 168, 150–68.

through the eyes and opinions of those who controlled print media and later films and television. The emergence of new media has changed the politics of representation for everyone, including buskers. A complex participatory media culture has spawned. Apart from serving as spaces of fan culture, YouTube has also been used as a highly critical and countercultural space.[89] Monette's video on social media had hoped to counter power in the marketplace. But it was also a part of her online persona as a professional busker, an identity that she wanted to make visible in the interview. In another video titled "How is a Fushigi magic ball like an orange?",[90] she explains how the Fushigi ball is made to look like its floating in air through juggling techniques. The videos have been fairly successful— close to a million views in one and four-hundred thousand in another. The comments left by viewers were equally enlightening. The videos not only functioned as free content provided by an expert, they also became platforms where people discussed their experiences of juggling and learning the skill.

Neves and Sarkar bring into focus otherwise marginalised and piratical video cultures that have taken shape contingently within spaces of Global South. My interest in drawing on their metaphor is to tap into their argument that such video cultures – of copying, sharing and illicit circulation, and also of making and uploading videos – display a resilience and an accommodation of the non-hegemonic, non-corporate cultures within the experiences of the global. This translation of informality from the South to the North, Boudreau argues, is important to expand the understanding of informalization of the state in the Global North and local manifestations of inequalities and injustices in urban space.[91] They challenge dominant

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89. Jeanne Burgess and Joshua Green, "Introduction," in *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, 2nd edn. (2009; Cambridge and Medford, Ma.: Polity Press, 2018), Kindle.

90. DawnDreams, "How is a fushigi magic ball like an orange?," YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ggtKA2li2A&ab_channel=DawnDreams (accessed June 14, 2022).

[91] Boudreau, "Informalization of the state."

narratives. Monette was using digital tools at her disposal and social media to produce counternarratives that challenged corporate power and also claimed space for jugglers and their skills. The relevance of this story in the interview and Monette's work of making and uploading videos on YouTube and other social media platforms becomes visible when her busking is understood as labour in the context of cultural economy in the next chapter. The oral history interview becomes an extension of her immaterial labour to assemble a professional identity as a busker in the cultural economy.

The itinerant musician or performer has historically occupied a space that has been ignored by western theories of society, economy and culture. The informal and the interstitial finds acknowledgement in discussions of and discourses emerging from the Global South. Such media, as Monette's YouTube videos, Dunlevy's itinerant archives of the AMIM kept in a storage facility, O'Callaghan's VHS tapes that produced poor quality videos on digitisation, Moore's album of fading photographs and newspaper clippings with dog ears, Martinez's pile of unresolved tickets that turned into court battles, and oral history interviews that are vaguely factual and incredibly subjective narrations of life and events, have the potential to offer narratives that not only center itinerant entertainers in a city like Montreal but also spaces and experiences that don't find attention either in the archives or in the public sphere.

Image 12: Dawn Monette (right) with Becca Rose counts the day's earnings after street performing in Gay Village.

Chapter 3

Labouring Lives

Dino Spaziani (DS): If you go to work in West Island, it's not the same as if you go to

work at Joliette or Honoré Beaugrand (metro station). It's really different. [1]

Busking was work for my interviewee-participants. It was either a "second job"[2] or "a little

something"[3] on the side. People engage in busking for a number of reasons, including to

economically support themselves because either they don't earn a living wage in the services

industry or want to avoid working in the traditional economy.[4] For my interviewee-participants

too, busking was a way to make a living when nothing else was working out or welfare cheques

were not enough. For some, the extra income saw them through winter months when there was

less work; they supported their children's education, housing and car loans with that money.

When money was not the primary motive of busking, it was still an extension of their

professional life as artists— a place to practice their skills, network and promote themselves as

musicians and performers.[5]

The ambivalence surrounding busking partly emerges from definitions that circulate in

the public sphere, which tend to emphasis the flexible nature of the practice and the affect it

1. Spaziani, Oral history interview.

2. Penelope (Penny) Jane Hamer, Oral history interview, Montreal, May 1, 2019.

3. Snow, Oral history interview.

4. Peter Marina, "Buskers of New Orleans: Transgressive Sociology in the Urban Underbelly," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* (2016): 306–335. DOI: 10.1177/0891241616657873

5. Elizabeth Bennett and George McKay, *From Brass Bands to Buskers: Street Music in the UK* (Norwich: Arts and Humanities Research Council, University of East Anglia, 2019).

generates in urban space. It turns attention away from the labour involved, associated

experiences of precarity and the structural conditions that make buskers come out and perform

each day. Busking is seen as generating conviviality and connection in public space.[6] Buskers

are also described as "outsiders reclaim(ing) space for their own individual uses while taking full

advantage of the sustainable habitat (of the city)."[7] Busking adds value to the urban

environment,[8] but buskers are also perceived as piratical figures, rebels and anarchist punks who

play the margins, reshape the city from below and challenge normative society and capitalism

with their "do-it-yourself politics".[9] Such perspectives in literature either romanticise or

marginalise them as urban fringe figures and bestow a potentiality of transgression when, in

reality, it is a fairly regulated street practice.[10]

Amidst this construction of the busker figure, the oral history interviews that I conducted

highlighted other matters— struggles that brought people to busking, challenges of busking,

experiences of surveillance, the labour involved, and the joys and pains of playing in public. The

experiences of busking shared also made visible the complex interplay between immaterial

labour and the cultural economy. Life history interviews with buskers open up the space to

understand their practice within the continuum of their broader life experiences. They provide a

context through which to place the individual in history. In these interviews, buskers articulate

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6. Doughty and Lagerqvist, "The ethical potential of sound in public space." Also see, Harrison-Pepper, *Drawing a Circle in the Square*, and Michael Amundsen, "Out in the cold: Busking Copenhagen's Nørreport Station and the urban affects of music," *Journal of Urban Cultural Studies* 6, no. 1 (2019): 113–122.

7. Marina, "Buskers of New Orleans," 207, words in parenthesis added by author.

8. Seldin, "The Voices of Berlin," 233–55. Also see, Kaul, "Music on the edge."

9. Jeff Ferrell, *Tearing Down the Streets: Adventures in Urban Anarchy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001), 68–69.

10. See Reia, "Can We Play Here?" for a discussion of regulation of street music in contemporary Montreal. For a historical perspective on bylaws on street music, see Genest, "Musiciens de rue et réglements municipaux à Montréal."

themselves as trying to live a life of dignity, work so as not to be poor, and participate in urban

and economic life of the city on their own terms. This chapter centers how buskers speak about

their practice and anchors the narratives they construct of their lives, in conversation with me, in

the context of the city.

If I had harboured any doubts about whether I could describe busking as work, talking to

my interviewee-participants gave me immediate clarity. Staying with the heterodox definitions of

the economy, which understands economic activity as embedded in place and its historical,

political and cultural context,[11] and drawing on the buskers' own articulation of their practice

and their lived experiences in oral history interviews, this chapter locates busking as labour

within the political economy of Montreal. The city has received significant policy impetus in the

last couple of decades for economic restructuring to reorient it towards a cultural or a creative

economy.[12] These initiatives have come in the backdrop of a deindustrializing economy and

labour market restructuring in keeping with the international division of labour and

reorganisation of industrial manufacturing at a global scale.[13] The oral histories make buskers

visible as labour experiencing deindustrialization and market restructuring, and also as workers

in the cultural economy.

Deindustrialization has been studied not just as an economic and political process but also

as a long-drawn socio-cultural transition.[14] These socio-cultural changes have been described as

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11. See Peck, Berndt and Rantisi, "Introduction: Exploring Markets," 1–26 for an overview of the heterodox definitions of the market.

12. Leslie and Rantisi, "Governing the Design Economy," 317–19. Also see, Sirois, "Design," 240–41.

13. High, *Deindustrializing Montreal*; Gagnon and Montcalm, *Beyond the Quiet Revolution*, 3–17.

14. For an overview of the field, see Tim Strangleman, James Rhodes and Sherry Linkon, "Introduction to Crumbling Cultures: Deindustrialization, Class, and Memory," *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 84 (Fall 2013): 7–22.

a declining industrial "structure of feeling" following a dis-embedding of the economic from the social,[15] "half-life" of deindustrialisation,[16] and "industrial ruination"[17]. The effects of the slow and gradual transformation have been made invisible in workers' lives through processes such as de-recognition, forced forgetting and urban revitalization.[18] The changes have been accompanied by an assumption that the postindustrial – as labour market restructuring, technologization of industrial production, globalisation and growth of services and knowledge-driven sectors – is a progressive movement in advanced capitalist societies.[19] Among other things, it has meant a repackaging of industrial history, heritage and culture into consumable products in the market economy, raising questions about erasure of working class history and representation of the industrial world in tourism economy.[20]

    A new landscape of production and consumption in advanced capitalist societies organised around cultural, festival and event economies; tourism and retail sectors, and

15 Tim Strangleman, "Deindustrialisation and the Historical Sociological Imagination: Making Sense of Work and Industrial Change," *Sociology* 51, no. 2, (2017): 478, 466–482. Drawing on Raymond William's "structure of feeling" thesis, E.P. Thompson's study of the industrial revolution, and Karl Polanyi's concept of embedded and dis-embedded economy, Strangleman argues that deindustrialisation needs to be viewed as an unfolding of a process that may have begun in the 1970s but continues to this day.

16. Sherry Linkon, "Narrating Past and Future: Deindustrialized Landscapes as Resources," *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 84 (Fall 2013), 38–54. doi:10.1017/S0147547913000240. Also see, Sherry Lee Linkon, *The Half-Life of Deindustrialization: Working-Class Writing about Economic Restructuring* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2018).

17. Alice Mah, *Industrial Ruination, Community, and Place: Landscapes and Legacies of Urban Decline* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

18. Steven High, *Deindustrialising Montreal.*

19. See Samuel P. Huntington, "Postindustrial Politics: How Benign Will It Be?," *Comparative Politics* 6, No. 2 (January 1974): 163–191 for a summary of the central elements of postindustrial society as defined by Daniel Bell and others in the 1960s and early 1970s. Also see, Daniel Bell, "The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society," *The Educational Forum* 40, no. 4 (1976): 574–579, DOI: 10.1080/00131727609336501.

20. Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*, 25th anniversary edition (first published in 1982; New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2014). Also see, Cathy Stanton, *The Lowell Experiment: Public History in a Postindustrial City*, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006) and Lachlan Mackinnon, *Closing Sysco: Industrial Decline in Atlantic Canada's Steel City* (Toronto, Buffalo and London: University of Toronto Press, 2020).

knowledge- and information-led industries has pushed for an expanded articulation of labour. Immaterial labour is one of the terms that have been employed, along with other labels such as affective, creative and cognitive labour, to describe the form and function of labour that this new mode of capital accumulation demands, employs and reproduces. Maurizio Lazzarato, who offered the term immaterial labour, describes it as "labor that produces the informational and cultural consent of the commodity."[21] If the term suggests skills required to produce non-material commodities, such as in the financial sector, information technology and services industry, it also refers to activities that are "not normally recognized as 'work'— in other words, the kinds of activities involved in defining and fixing cultural and artistic standards, fashions, tastes, consumer norms, and, more strategically, public opinion."[22] Concepts such as flexible labour and precarity further articulate experiences of workers within this restructured economy and register the distinctions with the industrial worker. Flexible labour has broadly been defined as atypical work and non-standard employment against the standard employment relationships that defined the Fordist worker in a welfare state— unionised, with a permanent job, family wage and other benefits. Precarity, in this context, is largely interpreted as a "shared experience of casualisation" in the labour market among very different groups of workers, in different sectors and having different social positioning.[23]

Despite the precariousness involved in the nature of work in this new economy, there remains a basic assumption that immaterial and flexible labour is moving society "towards a

21. Maurizio Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor," in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, NED - New edition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996): 133–48.

22. *Ibid*, 133.

23. Marcello Tarì and Ilaria Vanni, "On the Life and Deeds of San Precario, Patron Saint of Precarious Workers and Lives," *The Fibreculture Journal* 5 (2005).

higher level of production and social relations".[24] The worker's subjectivity and personality are

channelled into the production process as immaterial labour and subsequently expected to create

economic value but the accompanying precarity of the working conditions is also bestowed the

possibility of organisation and activism for better living and work standards. The term precarity

has acquired a "double-edged" meaning— if it describes uncertain work conditions under

flexible accumulation, it also serves as an organising logic for a political struggle against

capitalism.[25] The hope is that the condition of precarity produced by flexible labour will lead to

new kinds of subject formations under capitalism, ultimately paving alternative ways of life

through initiatives such as the formation of the common.[26] This "utopianization of creative

labour" has led to a lack of understanding of the real-world experiences of workers in the cultural

economy and an absence of "policies to improve the working conditions."[27]

Tim Strangleman suggests moving past the "all change" or "no change" dichotomous

thinking in order to trace the continuities of experiences at work and to understand the changes in

socio-historical context in order to come to fully comprehend the meaning of the contemporary

strands of nostalgia and sense of loss produced by the new economic order.[28] The goal of this

chapter is to foreground life experiences that elicit a contextualised understanding of flexible

labour and precarity with the hope that it may offer a bottom-up perspective that dislodges the

24. Silvia Federici, "Precarious Labor: A Feminist Viewpoint." The Middle of a Whirlwind, 2008.
https://inthemiddleofthewhirlwind.wordpress.com/precarious-labor-a-feminist-viewpoint/

25. Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter, "From Precarity to Precariousness and Back Again: Labour, Life and Unstable Networks," *The Fibreculture Journal* 5, (2005).

26. Tarì and Vanni, "On the Life and Deeds of San Precario," 2005.

27. Kong, "From cultural industries to creative industries and back?," 599.

28 Tim Strangleman, "The nostalgia for permanence at work? The end of work and its commentators," *The Sociological Review* 55, no.1, (2007): 92, 81–103.

creative class as the primary framework for policies in urban planning and economic revitalisation of cities. The oral history interviews pan a broad spectrum of experiences, from industrial labour to restructured labour, work in the services and crafts industry and gig work in the cultural industries. They drive home the point that an array of workers and experiences comprise the cultural economy, which not only confronts the creative class thesis, which tends to homogenise cultural workers, but also makes visible some of the challenges in organising labour in the new economy.

The chapter begins to grapple with the new class fragmentations that are becoming visible in the cultural economy, which are both gendered and racialized and are emerging in a complex nexus with other factors such as age and citizenship in a globalized economy restructured by flexibility in labour, capital and commodities. By using oral histories to understand the cultural economy, I turn to the "kaleidoscopic variety of actually existing markets… [with] a wider spectrum of socioeconomic diversity" to understand Montreal.[29] Markets are located in place, but they also constructed simultaneously at multiple scales. They are shaped by locally relevant politics, historical events and the dynamics of the economy at the global scale. Participation in and access to markets is different for different groups of people in the same place. The oral histories navigate the local even as they contribute towards a broader understanding of labour in the cultural economy and shine a light on the global connections and circulation. As a result, the cultural economy, reconstructed through the subjective experiences of buskers shared in life history narratives, appears somewhat "warped and out of focus."[30]

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29. Peck, Berndt and Rantisi, "Introduction: Exploring Markets," 5.

30. *Ibid*.

Life history of a restructured worker

The transformations termed postindustrial clearly have been uneven and inadequate in practice. Gentrification and displacement of poor, racialized and working classes from their neighbourhoods and communities has been a constant challenge for cities that describe themselves as postindustrial. The changes are both abrupt and a gradual squeezing out, and involve a layered process of evictions, renovations, redevelopments and repopulation of the downtown and previously industrial areas of the city with the middle and upper classes. None of this, however, has been a quiet unfolding.[31] If policies from above have favoured and paved the way for capital's growth and expansion, contestations from below in the form of workers' struggles and community-led movements against gentrification have challenged and resisted this process. Whether described as deindustrialisation or postindustrial transformations, it is best to see them as a "process and an unfolding of relationships" that comprise of both forced compliance and struggle for power over the nature of this unfolding, sometimes turning deindustrialising spaces into sites of resistance.[32] There is a "dynamic quality to social life", notes Strangleman, which makes deindustrialisation a contested process.[33] Drawing on the concept of the structures of feeling, he describes the residual feelings that prompt resistance and struggles as central to the unfolding of the new forms of relationships and order that will surface in the future.

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31. See Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996): 213–222 for an example of how the homeless populations fight back the "revanchist city" by re-erecting shanties and squatters, followed by another cycle of evictions, bulldozing and campaigns to erode community support to such populations in the city.

32. MacKinnon, *Closing Sysco*, 7.

33. Strangleman, "Deindustrialisation and the Historical Sociological Imagination," 472.

Historians and sociologists are still grappling with the causalities of the change, and what

the shift has entailed in terms of cost to human life in places where industries have been replaced

by wide-ranging economic activities that have been categorised as services, cultural, knowledge-

driven and other sectors that are sometimes similar and overlapping but at other times very

distinct from each other. Meanwhile, some disciplines within the social sciences are wrestling

with the cultural in the economy. While some have called for clearer definitions of the cultural in

the economy,[34] others have advocated a more radical understanding of the cultural as intrinsic to

economy or the embedding of the economy in the social and in place.[35] Both concerns are valid

and useful to think through the postindustrial moment where the entanglement of the two spheres

is visible in more ways than one. It is also a critical moment to think through the entanglement. If

there has been a commodification of culture through promotion of art, theatre, festivals, events,

museums, heritage and history as consumable commodities in tourism and leisure economies, the

model of cultural economy with its flexible labour and gig work is also blurring the boundaries

between work and non-work in terms of time, place and activities, throwing up challenges in

labour organising, negotiating employment relationships (or the lack of it) and understanding the

role of the state vis-à-vis economy. Culture – as art, artists and aesthetics – has been drawn into

gentrification, a process of revitalisation of cities undergoing deindustrialisation that displaces

the working poor and the marginalised from their places of work and residence in the inner city

areas.[36] Both the tangible and intangible in culture have been drawn into reconfiguring urban

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34. See for example, Kong, "From cultural industries to creative industries and back?" 602–4.

35. For example, see Amin and Thrift, "Cultural-economy and cities." For a broad discussion on the various threads of this debate, see Peck, "Economic Sociologies in Space."

36. David Ley, "Artists, Aestheticisation and the Field of Gentrification," *Urban Studies* 40, No. 12 (November 2003): 2527–44. Also see, Sharon Zukin, "Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core," *Annual Review of Sociology* 13, No. 1 (1987): 129–47.

space and capital in the postindustrial moment. Lazzarato describes the "restructured worker" that has emerged from this transitional moment as "active subjects" with a higher degree of involvement in decision-making at work where their subjectivity and personality are enrolled into the production process.[37] But what really are the experiences of this restructured worker embedded in the labour market?

Montreal underwent labour market restructuring after the 1960s, following the decline in the manufacturing sector and a simultaneous growth in employment in public and other services sectors. Dino Spaziani's life speaks to what such a restructuring of the economy and of the labour market meant for the individual in the city. Born in 1957, Spaziani grew up in Villeray, close to Chabanel— the garment manufacturing district of Montreal. It was the golden hour of the Quiet Revolution in Quebec, a period when hope and optimism for a better and brighter future had buoyed the city. Martin Pâquet and Stéphane Savard describe it as "une gigantesque opération d'ingénierie sociale, avec l'état comme grand ordonnateur du bien commun."[38] The economic challenges were real but did not yet appear to be menacing. New public institutions and infrastructure development projects were being introduced; Montreal's political and economic elite were on a mission to build a world-class city;[39] and language and culture were employed as key conduits of change and to build Quebec's image, both internally and internationally.[40] When I asked Spaziani about his childhood at the beginning of the interview, he started with a coming-of-age story— of when he quit school at the age of sixteen to join a

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37. Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor," 135.

38. Pâquet and Savard, *Brève histoire de la révolution tranquille*, 136.

39. Paul, "World cities as hegemonic projects," 573.

40. Pâquet and Savard, *Brève histoire de la révolution tranquille*, 126–133.

garment manufacturing company in 1973.[41] "I saw a job in the newspaper, so I called; and they told me, okay you come," he recalled, adding that he learnt the skill of pattern grading and that by then, he was also into drugs.[42]

Spaziani returned to his childhood later in the interview when I asked him about the music he listened to while growing up. He shared a memory of the steel drums at Expo-67, a novelty then, and the big team that came from Trinidad and Tobago and built the steel drums in the basement of their house. The Tripoli Steel Band was a new attraction for the Expo-goers and their unique music and colourful clothes drew a lot of attention.[43] "Me and my brother, we went— I was always in the islands… we heard some Japanese music, some Chinese music, we didn't have it before," he said, adding that he "was impressed".[44] The "islands" that Spaziani was referring to were two artificially constructed islands – Île Sainte-Hélène and Île Notre Dame – that were created in the Saint Lawrence River for the Expo and represented "urban regeneration in a material sense" and Montreal's "urban futurity".[45]

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41. Barbara Lorenzkowski, "Bitter Tales: Children's Sensory Construction of Domestic Space in Atlantic Canada, 1939-1945," Paper presented at the Eighth Biennial Conference of the Society of the History of Childhood and Youth, 26 June 2015, University of British Columbia, Vancouver. In seeking narratives of childhood in war-time Canada, Lorenzkowski notes this tendency among her interviewee-participants where stories begin in "adolescence and young adulthood when they appear "strong and powerful".

42. Spaziani, Oral history interview.

43. Angela Smith, *Steel Drums and Steelbands: A History* (Lanham, Toronto, Plymouth: The Scarecrow Press, 2012), 106. E-Book.

44. Spaziani, Oral history interview.

45. André Jansson, "Encapsulations: The Production of a Future Gaze at Montreal's Expo 67." *Space and Culture* 10, no. 4 (November 2007): 423, 418–36. https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331207304355.

Image 13: Dino Spaziani, screenshot from his oral history interview.

Other memories of working-class life emerged more reluctantly when I asked him if his first job was in the garment industry. Spaziani's parents had separated when he was eleven years old; he recalled doing newspaper deliveries at that age and then moving on to working in hardware with his father at fourteen years. At sixteen, he had started working in garment to afford the things that he wanted. Growing up with four siblings, life wasn't exactly a luxury. His interview also reveals an adult life interrupted by many struggles— job loss, deskilling in the labour market, drug addiction, physical ailments and mental health issues. He worked at Krickets, a children's ready-to-wear clothing company until 1987 when he said he had an inkling of the things to come. He had a "vision that the industry will move away," he had said at the beginning of the interview. When I asked him if the company had closed down when he quit, he clarified that some processes had moved to Hong Kong and then went on to talk about the garment industry in Montreal. "If you go on Chabanel street, Legendre Street, on Meilleur, these times, we figured out about 200,000 people were working for garment in Montreal, in the time

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between 1970 and 1990," he said, adding that there were a number of reasons why the industry was moving away, especially imports and exports. "The material, how you say that, the tissue was on the other side of the ocean, the colours— You take the roll of tissues, you bring it here in Montreal, then you bring back some clothes over there because we were doing some exchange; import and export… a lot of money there."[46]

In the 1970s, labour-intensive garment and textile industries were among the top employers in industrial manufacturing in Montreal,[47] but the industry was being restructured through an international division of labour. Carla Lipsig-Mummé notes two important shifts in garment manufacturing in North America between the 1950s and 1970s— home-based work was increasing and a lot of the processes were already moving "elsewhere", first to the southern states, then to Mexico and Puerto Rico and then to the Pacific Rim countries of Asia.[48] Spaziani's mother had been a home-based worker in the sector. "She could do everything," he explained, "you want a costume, no matter what garment, she was doing everything."[49] Between 1976 – the year that Spaziani described as the beginning of the decline of garment industry in Montreal – and 1996, there was close to fourteen percent decline in the industry's employment share in the city-region with "a decrease of approximately 27,000 workers".[50] While garment had always been a female-dominated industry, a further feminisation of the labour force through employment of home-based and informal workers, moving of operations to the Global South and

46. Spaziani, Oral history interview.

47. Tara Vinodrai, A Tale of Three Cities," 13.

48. Carla Lipsig-Mummé, "Organizing Women in the Clothing Trades: Homework and the 1983 Garment Strike in Canada," *Studies in Political Economy* 36, no.1 (1991), 47–48, 41–71.

49. Spaziani, Oral history interview.

50. Vinodrai, "A Tale of Three Cities," 13.

dismantling of unions had significant impact on the city's economy.[51] The transformations led to a massive industry-wide strike in 1983.[52] Spaziani still had a job in 1987 as a supervisor, but the industry had been marked by massive wage reductions and job cuts.[53]

Spaziani said he first started busking while at a halfway house in the early 1990s. He had a "drug problem" and went through "a bad period" after quitting his job that took him to rehab. "I was playing (music) at the stadium… the nights that the baseball teams were playing, I was playing for the entry and exit of people before the game and after the game." Busking became a way for him to recover from a period of crisis. When he had fully recovered, he went to work for Coca Cola. In 1998, he lost the job after an incident during the big ice storm. He signed a non-disclosure agreement and received a year's salary as compensation. The cycle of illnesses continued even as he returned to school to finish his secondary and post-secondary studies. In 2009, he found himself busking in the metro again, while recovering after a mental health crisis and the end of a relationship:

> DS: My life was like this, up and down, up and down; it stayed like that because I didn't
> have a real program to stabilize my life in every domain that it needed. But music always
> made a difference. I was playing for myself and that's it. After this depression from a
> separation; it was in August 2008 that it ended. And then a morning in 2009, I decided to
> take my guitar; and went to the metro. I wanted to be with somebody. It was about six

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51. Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and Its Discontents: Selected Essays 1984-1998*, New York: New Press, 1998) via Cristina Morini, "The Feminization of Labour in Cognitive Capitalism," *Feminist Review* No. 87 (2007): 40-59. Sassen notes a connection between globalisation and feminisation of paid work. More women were employed in the workforce in advanced capitalist countries in jobs that couldn't be moved elsewhere, while the others that could be moved as part of restructuring of work exploited the cheap labour in the Global South economies.

52. See Lauren Laframboise, "Gendered labour, immigration, and deindustrialization in Montreal's garment industry," MA Thesis, Concordia University, May 2021, for an oral history-based overview of the strike.

53. Lipsig-Mummé, "Organizing Women in the Clothing Trades," 41–42.

months that I had been alone at home. I saw the family for Christmas and that was it. After Christmas, I felt good; I felt in good shape and I wanted to do something, but I was not really in good shape to go back to work. So, I went into the metro; I was on welfare because my unemployment time was out. It was hard, and I was living alone. Rent and everything, it's expensive when you live alone.[54]

At one level, it might appear as a tragic story of an individual battling many odds but against the historical context of economic restructuring, the big picture of structural violence on his life becomes palpable. In the backdrop of a deindustrialising landscape, Spaziani found himself preparing for economic restructuring. In 1998, after losing the job at Coca Cola, he retrained for the labour market— in gestions informatics (computer systems management). "I went back to school at forty years to finish my secondary," he pointed out.[55]

Since the 1960s, Montreal's economy had veered towards the tertiary sector with a significant impetus on cultural and knowledge-based industries after the economic recession of the 1980s. A number of festivals emerged, new venues of cultural programming and expression opened, and the city earned the reputation of being "a music incubator" in North America, especially with its low cost of living and geographical clustering of the independent music industry.[56] The labour market too underwent significant changes, especially since 1975, with a rise in precarious employment and a new form of employment relationship – flexible labour – emerging as the dominant form of labour in Montreal, Canada and other advanced capitalist

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54. Spaziani, Oral history interview.

55. *Ibid.*

56. Thomas A. Cummins-Russell and Norma M. Rantisi, "Networks and place in Montreal's independent music industry," *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien* 56, no.1 (2012): 88, 80–97. DOI: 10.1111/j.1541-0064.2011.00399.x.

countries.[57] This post-Fordist model increased flexibility and mobility in the labour market,

labour processes, goods, and creation of new areas of production and consumption.[58]

Spaziani's overall employment pattern mirrors the course that the city's economy took

during this time. Moving away from industrial manufacturing, he reskilled for the services sector

and then busking became a pathway into the cultural economy of the city. The interview not only

speaks to the churnings in the garment industry in Montreal, but also the symptoms of the new

economic order. The immaterial labour of busking surfaces in reflections shared in the interview:

> DS: Longueil is good for the rush hour, but after the rush hour, the metro is every ten
>
> minutes. Every ten minutes, you have a big bunch of people and they are in a rush, so you
>
> have to tap them. It's about three four minutes; may be two songs— not even, no. In two
>
> minutes, it's over. After that you have another ten minutes to practice. A good station like
>
> Square Victoria, it's cold. You have to be well-dressed; you have to be in good shape,
>
> have a good energy, have good health, go there at six in the morning at rush hour. And
>
> you have three rush hours at Square Victoria. It's morning, lunch and night-time— back
>
> home time.[59]

Immaterial labour does not simply produce non-material goods but also refers to a process where

workers become active subjects responsible for managing their own time, calculating and taking

risks, and fixing their own schedules and generating social relationships required in the creation

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57. Leah F. Vosko, "Precarious Employment: Towards an Improved Understanding of Labour Market Insecurity," in *Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity in Canada*, ed. Leah F. Vosko (Montreal & Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill Queen's Universuty Press, 2006): 9–11, 3–39.

58. David Harvey, "From Fordism to Flexible Accumulation," in *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Conditions of Cultural Change* (Oxford; Blackwell, 1989): 141–172. It is the "cultural logic" of late capitalism, a set of attitudes and practices that matches an intensification of time and space through a global flow of capital, goods, labour and information. Also see, David Harvey, "Flexible Accumulation through Urbanization: Reflections on 'Post-Modernism' in the American City," *Perspecta* 26, (1990): 251–272.

59. Spaziani, Oral history interview

of economic value in the informational economy or cultural industries.[60] Buskers in the Montreal

metro developed a system of their own in the 1980s to self-regulate busking. The dynamics of

the organisation and its evolution are discussed in Chapter 5. It is no coincidence that playing

musical instruments in the Montreal metro was fought for and legalised in the 1980s, a period

when the city was undergoing considerable economic displacement and busking became a way

for struggling artists to support themselves.[61]

Dino Spaziani's interview further reveals the work involved in busking. The reflections

bring to the foreground the demands on a musician's or an artist's schedule, lifestyle and body—

waking up early to sign up for lucrative spots in the metro, keeping a rigorous routine so as to be

profitable, earning an unpredictable income, playing in the cold and in drafty tunnels, pressure of

using time judiciously and always being mobile and flexible. It goes beyond the moment of

busking and includes a change in lifestyle and the way of managing one's own conception of

work and non-work activities. Greig de Peuter notes certain characteristics of a workforce

engaged in immaterial labour and employed in the cultural economy, such as "self-driven,

passionate commitment to work; willingness to work for nothing; perpetual and personally

financed reskilling; habituation to material insecurity; obsessive networking; bold enterprising

behavior."[62] In the two hours slots when Spaziani perform at the metro, he actually worked to

make money for two minutes every ten minutes. The rest of the time he spent in practicing his

songs. A little later in the interview, he also explained the time commitment and practice needed

to pick up a new song on the guitar in preparation for a gig:

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60. Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor," 137–38.

61. See Tanenbaum, *Underground Harmonies,* for when busking in the subways came to be legalized in New York.

62. Greig de Peuter, "Creative Economy and Labor Precarity: A Contested Convergence," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 35, no.4, (2011): 421, 417–425. DOI 10.1177/0196859911416362.

DS: It can be good money, but it depends, okay. I'm telling you that I'm going to engage

you on Saturday night for two hours at hundred dollars for an hour, so that makes two

hundred dollars. But you wake up in the morning and you are on the job for the night

already. You have to think the whole day about what you are gonna do; you have to be in

good shape; you have to eat good. Can't take a chance (and) lose too much energy in the

morning or afternoon…. So, [coughs] the work beyond these two hours, people don't

know but— you know I work with a choir. Our conductor starts with one planning. For

every minute of a song, we need between one hour or two hours of practice. And then

after, we need to repeat the same songs at least twenty times, thirty times, fifty times. It

depends on where the difficulties are and how many difficulties in the song. It's okay if

it's AB, AB, AB but if it's AB, AB, C and then D and back to AB, oh it's not the same

thing. Uh, so yes, two minutes of song, you listen to it and the musician, he plays [clicks

his fingers]; it looks to be easy. It looks to be easy but the time it takes to become easy,

it's not one hour and it's not hundred dollars, the value. It's a lot of determination.[63]

Talking to Spaziani made me realise that busking in Montreal was not an unplanned practice

though it offered a lot of flexibility— to choose the time, place and the intensity of work.

Moreover, there was no clear line of distinction between his busking practice and his identity as

a musician in the gig economy. This found an echo in the interviews of other buskers as well. In

the cultural economy, where there are numerous struggling musicians and artists, busking has

emerged as a form of immaterial labour. Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift offer an analysis of what

they describe as "registers" within "cultural-economy" that determine, order and orient economic

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63. Spaziani, Oral history interview.

activities and which gives us a grip over the role of determination in Spaziani's busking.[64] Apart

from passion, which appears to play a critical role in this economy in multiple ways, other moral

qualities such as determination and efficiency are also key attributes that make the worker in the

cultural economy.

    Spaziani spoke frankly about life's challenges that had brought him to busking. The

interview offers glimpses into the entanglements of a flexible labour market with immaterial

labour, erosion of the industrial manufacturing base and emergence of cultural or creative

industries. The terrain on which the "restructured worker" has emerged is based on the decline of

Fordism and a valorisation of subjectivity within labour.[65] In 2009, Spaziani was also involved in

reorganising metro buskers in Montreal as the Regroupement des musiciens du métro de

Montréal (RMMM) after Grégoire Dunlevy had decided to step away from the affairs of the

AMIM, the old association that was founded in 1983. However, the nature of the RMMM and its

envisioned role in the economy was vastly different from any union. In many ways, it had also

moved away from the previous association that Dunlevy had co-founded. For buskers like

Spaziani, getting involved in self-organising was a way to become workers in the cultural

economy where subjectivity and agency were crucial to participation in the production process

through networking, being visible and sustaining relationships that helped find work and gave

them identity as creative professionals. However, new employment relationships came with

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64. Amin and Thrift, "Cultural-economy and cities," 147–50.

65. Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor," 134–137.

significant challenges in accessing any labour market benefits and in organising.[66] As argues Lazzarato, this was far from a "utopian vision of recomposition".[67]

Spaziani also talked about mixing French and English music during busking, of playing popular songs that always brought money and the type of music to play at any particular time of day or day of the week. It alludes to the variety of information and knowledge – embodied, tacit or acquired – that are needed to be innovative and creative.[68] Knowledge of what might appeal to commuters based on information about the place and its culture helped Spaziani be a successful busker. This was information that was available to him because he was a local in Montreal, was bilingual and had a sense of the linguistic geography of the city, something that might be unavailable to someone who was an outsider.

Viewed from this broader historical and theoretical lens, Spaziani's busking practice appears far from a transgressive act or a cultural practice outside of the capitalist relations of production and consumption. Rather, his condition and necessity to busk had been produced by capitalism, and his practice was shaped by his desire to participate in the flows of the economy. Strangleman notes in his critique of the "end of work" debate that in the postindustrial economy "work still provides structure and meaning in people's lives however imperfectly this may occur – one only has to look at the obverse of people without work to see the reality of this."[69] Busking

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66. See Judy Fudge and Leah F. Vosko, "By Whose Standards? Regulating the Canadian Labour Market," Economic and Industrial Democracy, Papers 22 (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE, 2001): 327–56 for a comparative view between standard and non-standard employment relationship and limitations of the policies that govern the Canadian labour market with regards to flexible workers.

67. Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor," 135.

68. See Amin and Thrift, "Cultural-economy and Cities," 148, for a discussion of "economic knowledge" as a register within cultural-economy.

69. Strangleman, "The nostalgia for permanence at work?," 100.

may be a freedom from the routine of industrial work, but it offered Spaziani the structure, stability and sociality that he didn't find in a more formal occupation.

Troubling the Creative Class Thesis

Immaterial labour entails a reconstitution of employment relationships. Flexibility as a result has emerged as a defining condition of this kind of worker. Flexible labour in post-Fordist economies describes atypical employment relationships that diverge from the Fordist model of standard employment relationship. The latter "developed under the aegis of legislation or collective agreement, incorporated a degree of regularity and durability in employment relationships, protected workers from socially unacceptable practices and working conditions, established rights and obligations, and provided a core of social stability to underpin economic growth."[70] Flexibility in labour is associated with not only the disappearance of permanent jobs and rise in atypical work or non-standard employment relationships that have introduced unpredictability, uncertainty and insecurities in the job market, but also the absence of fixed schedules and workplaces, entrepreneurial labour and hypermobility.[71] Concepts such as work-from-home, tele-work, creative workspaces, flexi-offices and café culture have blurred the boundaries between production and social reproduction. A new kind of seepage between

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70. Gerry Rodgers, "Precarious Work in Western Europe: The State of the Debate," in *Precarious jobs in labour market regulation: The growth of atypical employment in Western Europe*, eds. Gerry and Janine Rodgers (Geneva: International Institute for Labour Studies, Free University of Brussels, 1989): 1–16. Also see, Cynthia J. Cranford and Leah F. Vosko, "Conceptualizing Precarious Employment: Mapping Wage Work across Social Location and Occupational Context," in *Precarious Employment: Understanding Labour Market Insecurity in Canada*, ed. Leah F. Vosko (Montreal & Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill Queen's Universuty Press, 2006): 43–66, for a discussion of the many dimensions of precarious work in the Canadian labour market.

71. Cynthia J. Cranford, Leah F. Vosko and Nancy Zukewich, "Precarious Employment in the Canadian Labour Market: A Statistical Portrait," *Just Labour* 3 (Fall 2003): 6–22. Apart from part-time, temporary and contractual jobs, non-standard employment also includes self-employed, home workers and agency workers.

economic and non-economic activities defines this labour; lifestyle and living permeates work and vice-versa.

The cultural economy is one of the terms frequently employed to describe this new economy— production and consumption of non-material goods, especially cultural commodities, and also a culturally inflected economy fuelled by immaterial labour. The ambivalence in the term has resulted in some overlaps in meaning and uncertainty over its boundaries. For some, the term refers to economies where production of cultural goods is taken to be the priority area.[72] Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt describe cultural or creative industries as part of the knowledge and services economy.[73] Lily Kong retraces the roots of the cultural economy to the Frankfurt School's critical definition of "cultural industry" as mass culture, followed by a more positive definition of cultural industries as a site for contestations within capitalism, and finally as creative industries, which incorporate a broad set of economic activities deployed for urban regeneration of postindustrial cities.[74]

A more radical awareness and consideration of the cultural economy comes from heterodox economists, economic sociologists and geographers who have called for a consideration of the entanglements of culture and economy, such as by considering the

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72. See Frédéric Leriche and Sylvie Daviet, "Cultural Economy: An Opportunity to Boost Employment and Regional Development?," *Regional Studies* 44, no.7, (2010): 807-811, DOI: 10.1080/00343401003732639.

73. Rosalind Gill and Andy Pratt, "In the Social Factory? Immaterial Labour, Precariousness and Cultural Work," *Theory, Culture & Society* 25, no.7–8, (2008): 1–30. DOI: 10.1177/0263276408097794.

74. Kong, "From cultural industries to creative industries and back?," 594–6. Also see, David Hesmondhalgh, *The Cultural Industries*, 2nd ed. (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, and Singapore: SAGE, 2007) for an overview of cultural industries and its evolution.

embeddedness of the economy in the social,[75] "fuzzy boundaries"[76] between them, "immanence"[77] of the two domains, and the rootedness of all economic activities in place.[78] Instead of going too deep into this theoretical fog, I want to stay with the uncertain lines between culture and economy and their rootedness in place, which elicit complex enough predicaments and shine a light on the place of busking in the political economy. Perhaps one need not sway too far on any side of this debate as the figure of the busker can benefit from all the different considerations of the cultural economy.

Considering busking as labour blurs the boundaries between culture and economy though it also requires pushing the work-life entanglement further to examine a cultural artefact of city life as an economic activity that is informal, illegal or extra-legal in nature. This entanglement of busking, immaterial labour and the cultural economy became granular in Stephen Moore's interview and reflections on street-performing. In 2019, at the time of the interview, Moore had been street-performing in Montreal for over thirty-five years. He was a familiar figure on Place Jacques-Cartier and others at the square remembered seeing him perform on Prince Arthur East

75. Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, 1–15. Also see, Timothy Mitchell, "Fixing the Economy," *Cultural Studies* 12, no.1, (1998): 82–101. DOI 10.1080/095023898335627. Mitchell examines the inseparability of the two spheres and takes a historical view of the emergence of the economy as an autonomous sphere in the twentieth century to further argue that while the economy is embedded in the social, it is not only a social construct. In this argument, the cultural or the social world and the economy are entangled but still separate. The economy produces its own effects though it also always exists in conversation with the historical, political and cultural forces, and interacts with human and non-human forms of agency.

76. Sayer, "For a Critical Cultural Political Economy." Sayer argues for a distinguishing line between the economic and the social – the systems and the lifeworlds – that is unclear but crucial. Such a distinction means culture and economy are constantly in conversation with each other but are not one and the same thing.

77. Amin and Thrift, "Cultural-economy and Cities," 157.

78. See Peck, Berndt and Rantisi, "Introduction: Exploring Markets," 1–7. Also see, Peck, "Economic Sociologies in Space," 147–149 on spatializing markets. This line of argument, drawing on heterodox political economy and new economic sociology, places all economic activities firmly within the context of a place— influenced by its history and shaped by its socio-cultural and political milieu and specificities of the local.
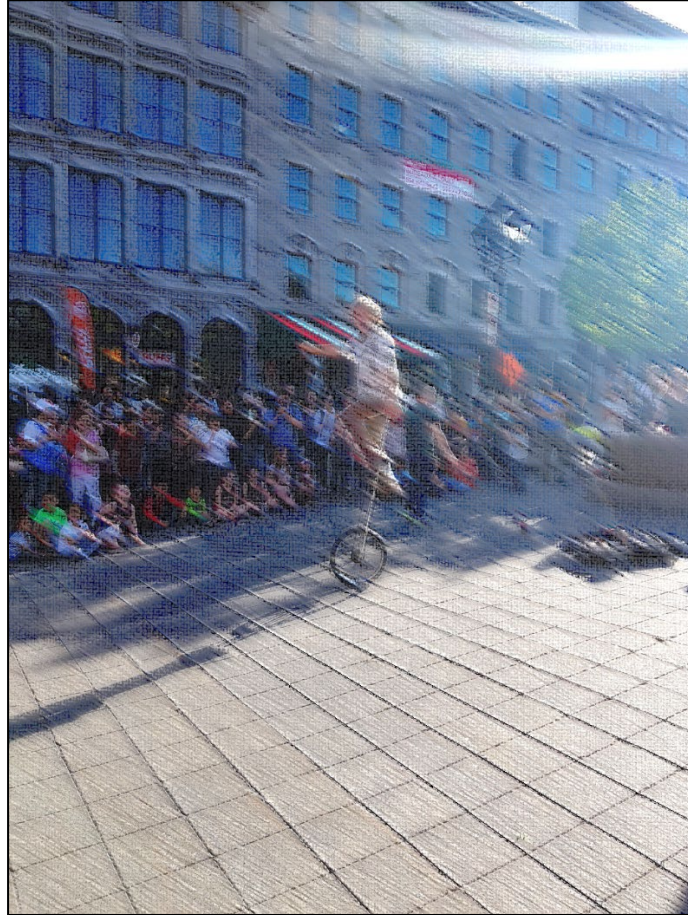
Image 14: Stephen Moore on his unicycle at Place Jacques-Cartier in 2019.

Street, which used to be known for street-performing in the 1970s and 1980s. Born in 1960,

Moore grew up in Laval in a family of five kids and recalled always being good at sports. Like

Spaziani, he too grew up at a time when Quebec was making its mark on the international stage.

Sports, skating and outdoor activities dominated his childhood memories. He trained at the

Olympic stadium for three years to participate in competitions. "I liked diving a lot and I was

taking the gold medals all the time and I used to do my homework in the metro when I was going

towards the diving pool," he said, explaining his commute from Laval to Montreal, schedule and dedication to the sport as a teenager.[79]

Moore's father worked at Dominion Lock on Jean Talon and Boulevard Décarie in west Montreal and that's where he too worked at first. But he didn't last long as he "couldn't stay inside." After six months, he "went in construction after, outside." He said he "never, never thought he would be a street performer." He "tried a couple of jobs", such as repairing vacuum cleaners and then four years in construction. Juggling, unicycle and street-performing came after, thanks to a neighbour. Moore was a young adult at a time when circus, music and festivals were emerging on the city's landscape. His athletic past likely prepared him for circus school but he wasn't convinced to join the industry:

Stephen Moore (SMo): …I went to circus school in '82.

P.C.: Oh, you went to circus school! Okay.

S.Mo.: Ya, I went to circus school for one year; it was at Cirque du soleil. And Luc Tremblay, he was the teacher. He would show me how to do the unicycle. And the next year, we didn't go back. They asked us if we were going to come back because we had a good number…. I had the choice to go to Cirque du soleil because they needed to start it— Cirque du soleil, and they asked us if we wanted to stay. And we didn't want to stay.

P.C.: But why did you not want to stay?

S.Mo.: Well, the difference between a circus and me street performing is— when you sign the first contract in Las Vegas, which was called the Spectacle O, O as in a swimming pool, you sign it for seven years. So if you sign a contract for seven years, after one year, two years, three years, you see the limelight, you see a lot of lights, you

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79. Stephen Moore, Oral history interview, Montreal, 2019.

see all the girls, you had parties, you got drunk, whatever, and next year (on) Christmas, I

want to go see my family, my uncles. No, no, you are performing in Las Vegas for seven

years. So, in Christmas time, you are performing for seven years. Unless you break an

arm or something; then you could go. But without that, you can't go nowhere. Street-

performing, I do what I want, wherever I want. There's a difference between contracts,

signing up two, five, ten years. You got on paper; you can't move, you have to be there.

So, that's why I didn't join the circus.[80]

Circus was among the several cultural industries that emerged in the city in the wake of a

deindustrializing economy. The École nationale du cirque had been founded in 1981 and Cirque

du soleil was to follow in 1983. Moore misremembered the circus school as Cirque du soleil but

this memory is not entirely incorrect because the Cirque did emerge in close association with the

school.[81] As Cirque du soleil became a billion dollar company in the next decades, the influence

and impact of its economic success made circus in Quebec and North America synonymous with

the company's highly stylised and marketable practice.[82] I did not question him on the memory

because I myself was unable to make a distinction between the school and the Cirque as a

company then.

Lazzarato writes that immaterial labour is characterised by "precariousness,

hyperexploitation, mobility, and hierarchy."[83] Moore's refusal to join the circus industry was a

rejection of this form of labour within cultural economy that is highly contingent on the worker's

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80. *Ibid*.

81. Deborah Leslie and Norma Rantisi, "Creativity and Place in the Evolution of a Cultural Industry: The Case of Cirque du Soleil," *Urban Studies* 48, no. 9 (July 2011): 1771–87.

82. *Ibid*. Also see, Leroux, "A Tale of Origins," 36–54.

83. Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor," 137.

mobility and flexibility. As is visible, the demands on cultural workers in this economy extend far beyond the time and space of production of economic value if at all there is a fixity to it and expand into other areas of life. The tension between Moore's reflection and his life is, however, not lost. Even though busking appears a far more just terrain of labour for him, his account of busking and experiences on and off the pitch tell a different story. The different layers of what constitutes immaterial labour surface when his life story is combed through with some attention.

I had asked Moore if earnings from busking were enough to make a living off it. To this, he responded by giving me an account of all the different kinds of work that he did to support his life— a family, a house in Laval and a car. Moore worked multiple jobs:

> SMo: I'm a garbage man really; that's my regular job, a garbage man. And also, I'm a street-performer; I'm a janitor. There's a condominium in Laval that I've been a janitor for nine years. And I just have to keep the place clean and, you know, make sure that the garbage goes outside. And I do also the sugar camps— DJ. When the sugar camps are on for two-three months, in spring, I'm on stand-by because he has got all his guys to do DJs. So once in a while, the guy don't (sic) show up because maybe they got drunk the night before. So, the next day, Steve, you wanna do a 12-5 shift? I go to the cabana de sucre, and everything is there. If you want to bring your CDs with you, bring it there. There are a couple of them there already. So, I bring my old stuff with me and I do the DJ. I still do weddings; I used to be a regular DJ for weddings and all that. But weddings, you have to bring your material, speakers, so much work. Then, as a street performer, all I have to bring is my little suitcase, my bike and I street-perform.[84]

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84. Moore, Oral history interview.

Image 15: Stephen Moore with his little suitcase on the steps of rue La Royer, next to Place Jacques-Cartier. Summer 2019.

On the surface, Moore's world, as he describes it, appears very far from "the Warhol Economy" that nurtures the cultural worker and their "seemingly informal" social relationships in the art and fashion industry.[85] However, if the elitism and glamour of the scene is set aside to focus only on the social relationships that sustain immaterial labour of the cultural economy, a lot of similarities may be noted with how Moore manages his relationships in order to busk in Old Montreal every summer and negotiate work. Moore mentioned that he had an arrangement with his employer to take time off from his garbage picking duties during summer holidays to come to Place Jacques-Cartier to perform seven days a week. He stored the suitcase full of juggling things and unicycle in the boot of his car, drove to work in the mornings, did a shift of garbage

85. Elizabeth Currid, *The Warhol Economy: How Fashion, Art, and Music Drive New York City*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007) as appear in Greig de Peuter, "Confronting Precarity in the Warhol Economy," *Journal of Cultural Economy* 7, No. 1 (2014): 31–47, DOI: 10.1080/17530350.2013.856337.

picking and then headed out to Old Montreal at noon. In winter, he had another routine for the days he expected the weather to be just right for performing and an arrangement with a blue-collar worker:

> SMo: I can go probably— the maximum is -10. It brings people to the rink when it's minus ten. When it's -30, there is nobody on the rink. So, I'm not there but when it's -10, they look at me like, Aye, something's gonna happen. And it's me! Because it's nice weather…. I make sure everything is dry. And there's people to help me. There's a blue-collar worker, comes by once in a while and if he knows it's me— I'll clean the spot for you; put some salt down. Or I get there the night before. If I hear that the temperature will be nice tomorrow, I'll be there the night before shovelling up the whole place. I'll put salt and come back the next day and it'll be ready for me to go. I've a place to put my public. And the people who work around me, the owners, people will sell t-shirts, they look at me, I'm so glad to **see you**; bring us **some people**; make them **laugh** [bold letters to indicate stress on the words while speaking]. And when they laugh, they spend the money easier.[86]

Moore's story reveals some fundamental flaws in the discourse related to the creative classes, the assumed harbingers of urban revitalisation. Critiquing the creative cities scripts that have seen an uptake among many cities of the West, Jamie Peck notes that the formula assigns a "secondary and contingent" role to the "non-creative underclasses" and assumes that they only stand to benefit from a trickle-down effect whereas the responsibility and role falls on the creative workers to lead the show with their creativity, lifestyle choices and preferences.[87] In the

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86. Moore, Oral history interview.

87. Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Classes," 759.

interview, Moore challenges this assumption. In his view, it is he who brings the customers to the shops, makes them stay, and encourages them to consume. Moreover, his life history not only dismantles the elite cosmopolitanism of the creative class discourse but also the watertight compartments of class and role assigned to non-creative workers in the cultural economy. With his multiple jobs, he illustrates that the economy is far more porous, which troubles any clear line between creative and the non-creative worker. "We are international professional street-performers; where I work, there are international people, just as much as local, but we are professionals because we start with nobody, we can get up to 2,3, 400 people around us without selling no tickets," he reflected, driving home the point.[88]

The production of the subject in the cultural worker involves the creation of an entrepreneurial self who takes risks and backs up their intellectual or creative skills with qualities such as passion, determination, flexibility and mobility. If the worker is expected to organise and manage their own work, their ability to produce and sustain social relationships are just as much enrolled into the production process. The subjective self of the worker is important— the personality traits, interpersonal skills and affective qualities. In the case of Spaziani, determination was key. For Moore, it was about interaction. For him, the trick to being successful as a busker was the ability to talk to people— "our voice and improv(isation)" as he said. Busking in the winter also rested on Moore's ability to predict the weather condition, perform in the cold, be organised, build on social relationships, function independently and knowledge of the geography of the place.

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88. Moore, Oral history interview.

Gendering precarity in the cultural economy

The flexible or autonomous worker engaging in flexible and immaterial labour is bestowed a theoretical potential— the ability to break free of the capitalist mode of production. The experience of precarity or precariousness at work and in life is expected to mobilise them into organising against capitalism or find ways to bypass it. It is "a hoped-for means of resistance, if not revolution."[89] The EuroMayDay or the San Precario movement that emerged from Italy in 2001 and spread to other parts of Europe was a step towards this goal. It used precarity, "a modality of control over the life itself of the casualised workforce", as the rallying point for labour organising and activism across industries and economic sectors.[90] The movement gave voice to workers' experiences of exclusion from the benefits of Fordism and the welfare state through the recognition of the condition of precarity induced by "lack of stable jobs, affordable housing, and social welfare provisions".[91]

Foregrounding "the baggage of female experience," as Cristina Morini describes it, is a crucial step to nuancing flexible labour and its relationship to precarity.[92] Precarity is neither an ahistorical experience nor a condition that manifests equally among people. As Silvia Federici argues, "women always had a precarious relation to waged labour."[93] In Canada, the rise in standard employment relationships that occurred in the post-war period of economic boom, welfare state and union activism, was not only restricted to white male industrial workers in

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89. Angela Mitropoulos, "Precari-us?," *Mute*, 9 January 2006. https://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/precari-us

90. Tarì and Vanni, "On the Life and Deeds of San Precario," 3.
91. Sharryn Kasmir, "Precarity," in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. Felix Stein (2018). Online: http://doi.org/10.29164/18precarity.

92. Morini, "The Feminization of Labour."

93. Federici, "Precarious Labor." See section titled "Precarious Labor and Reproductive Work."

certain sectors but also premised on a gendered division of labour that put the burden of social

reproduction squarely on women.[94] The idea that the condition of precarity is homogenous is a

step back for struggles that have been arguing not only that women's reproductive and domestic

labour is work that contributes to capitalist accumulation, but also that experiences in the labour

market is fragmented.[95] When Judith Butler argues for precariousness as an ontological

condition that is common to all life on earth, she also draws a distinction with precarity that is

experienced unevenly among marginalised people, whether the economic poor or the

disenfranchised.[96] It is no surprise then that women's interviews complicated the terrain for

comprehending buskers' experiences in the cultural economy. The life history interviews made

visible that precarity was experienced at a complex intersection of gender, race and class, and

other factors such as age, digital literacy and citizenship. In this section, I will reflect on one such

interview where a contextually produced entanglement became visible.

        In 2019, I saw Dawn Monette perform on a couple of afternoons at Place Jacques-Cartier.

She was returning to work after a maternity break. One of the very few women street-performers

who held the licence of a circle performer or an amuseur public in Old Montreal, she and I talked

about learning to juggle and the time it took to get to where she was— rolling a crystal ball on

her body, from the palm of one hand down the arm, around the neck and on to the other arm and

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94. Judy Fudge and Leah F. Vosko, "Gender, Segmentation and the Standard Employment Relationship in Canadian Labour Law, Legislation and Policy," Economic and Industrial Democracy, Papers 22 (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: SAGE, 2001): 273–277, 271–310.

95. Federici, "Precarious Labor." To see how the concept of precarity has been employed to collapse differences and used as a homogenizing experience among workers, see Guy Standing, "The Precariat," Contexts 13, no. 4 (November 2014): 10–12. https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504214558209. According to Standing, the precariat comprises of an old working class that has fallen into precarity, migrant workers and ethnic minorities, and educated youth and their elderly parents who hold "progressive values of equality, freedom and ecological sustainability," who are all mobilised to struggle against capitalism through the common experience of precarity.

96. Judith Butler, Precarious Life: Powers of Mourning and Violence (London and New York: Verso, 2004) via Kasmir, "Precarity."

Image 16: Dawn Monette counts the money in her hat after a show at Place Jacques-Cartier.

palm. This was one of the many routines that mesmerised her audiences. There were others;

including the one where the ball appeared to float in the air between her fingers. Monette had

been learning to juggle since before the age of 12. In her interview, she reflected at length about

flexibility in her work, economic precarity that came with it and the experiences of harassment in

public space. If all of these experiences were inflected by her gender identity, class, racial and

linguistic identity also came into play, shaping her presence and use of public space for busking.

The separation of "public and private spaces (is)… inextricably bound up with relations

of gender and class," note Liz Bondi and Mona Domosh.[97] And while feminist movements and

women's emancipation have, to some extent, reclaimed public spaces for women, class-specific

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97. Liz Bondi and Mona Domosh, "On the Contours of Public Space: A Tale of Three Women," *Antipode* 30, No.3 (1998): 284–85, 270–89.

contours of these spaces cannot be denied,[98] which also led Bondi to note the complex

manifestation of privatisation as feminisation of public space.[99] The understanding of the

intersectional nature of public space is further deepened in the works of critical race theorists

who illustrate that racialized bodies experience cities differently.[100] Meanwhile, scholarship from

the Global South or non-western cities demonstrate that the subaltern and the marginalised find

contextually embedded ways to negotiate and challenge distinctions between public and private

spheres and their corresponding spaces.[101] In the context of Montreal, feminist social historians

show that men and women from poorer sections of society had a different relationship to public

space and often collapsed the private into the public for want of workplaces and shelter.[102] Thus,

public space has always been a contested terrain negotiated by relationships of power and

domination, whether it is race, class or gender or all three factors wound together.

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98. *Ibid*, 281–84.

99. Liz Bondi, "Gender, class, and urban space: public and private spaces in contemporary urban landscapes," *Urban Geography* 19 (1998): 160–85. Also see an ethnographic study by Anouk de Koning, "Gender, Public Space and Social Segregation in Cairo: Of Taxi Drivers, Prostitutes and Professional Women," *Antipode* 41, No. 3 (2009): 533–556. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-8330.2009.00686.x where Koning examines classed and gendered negotiations of public space in Cairo.

100. See Audrey Kobayashi and Linda Peake, "Unnatural discourse. 'Race' and gender in geography," *Gender, Place and Culture* 1, No. 2 (1994): 225–43, DOI: 10.1080/09663699408721211. Kobayashi and Peake argue that both gender and racial differences are strategies for exercising spatial control, which makes it necessary to "un-naturalise" what are considered biological and cultural differences and treat them as social and political constructs. The production and experience of space by racialized bodies, specifically Black women, in American cities, is explored in Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2019), Kindle. Also see, Teona Williams, "For 'Peace, Quiet, and Respect': Race, Policing, and Land Grabbing on Chicago's South Side," *Antipode* 53 (2021): 497–523 for an exploration of the couplings of police brutality on Black lives, gentrification discourses, production of the urban built environment and preservation of public space in Chicago.

101. See for example, Ayona Datta, "Samudayik Shakti: Working-class feminism and social organisation in Subhash Camp, New Delhi," *Gender, Place and Culture* 14, no. 2 (2007): 215–231. DOI: 10.1080/09663690701213818.

102. See Poutanen, "Bonds of Friendship, Kinship and Community."

As a woman busker, Monette navigated a fine line between being visible and vulnerable in public space. If it was empowering to be able to claim space and demand public attention, it was also occasionally challenging as lines did get breached, either by members of the public or other itinerant people. These experiences left her feeling threatened. She reflected on the challenges in her interview. She had a statue performance called Goldie that she described as a feminine character. But performing as Goldie also required her to draw in people and control the crowd. "Women are often conditioned very harshly; not to make a scene; not to make a big deal," she said, adding that most women buskers break out of that mould; "they will fight back." But Monette's feminine show combined statue work and contact juggling and fighting back "breaks character".[103] She recalled several incidents where she was sexual and otherwise harassed by people. The episodes were hard to shake off:

> Dawn Monette (DM): They made me fill out an incident report and they actually hired a security guard for me. It was amazing… that was really interesting because that happened more often… because I'm also passive, like this is the show. I'm not a big angry, intimidating busker. I have a very soft show, so this does frequently happen and it's interesting to be validated by this guy who was calling it in for back-up for certain people. Because it's not a lot but may be one or two a night in these big festivals. Ah, in these big, big places. And you know, sometimes it's a street, a person living in the street who is behaving weirdly and coming into my show and telling me that I should do this or that or scaring away everybody. There's the one video on the Internet, one of my very first shows in front of the art gallery, my friend Chris Smith was filming and there's a woman doing karate kicks through my show. Like I've a big circle, she just comes in to

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103. Monette, Oral history interview.

do karate kicks. I've never really learnt how to deal with it very well. There's lots of things you can do to intimidate them, to find these power stances, and I think I'm learning them now. But I've always just run away. One time in the art gallery, there were two people threatening each other with knives. And I was in the middle of that.

Monette's reflections echoed in the interviews of other women buskers who felt that the presence of metro staff, cops or CCTV cameras made the environment safer for them to perform. Three other women interviews had brought up instances of harassment from the public or other itinerant people in their interviews and the fact that surveillance cameras in public spaces made them feel secure when performing. However, these stories also stood in contrast to the experiences of administrative or police surveillance by many buskers, such as Dunlevy and Moore who had been fined or arrested for violation of municipal bylaws. Susana Martinez's interview, discussed in the last chapter, makes it evident that class and racial lines were as much determining factors as gender in public space. Martinez, who too was an amuseur public, had a very different relationship to authority. For her, an unencumbered access to public space and the informality of the practice of busking were key factors in balancing motherhood with making a living with dignity.

Monette's social world was very different from that of Martinez. She was born to a businessman father and a banker mother; had grown up between one of the suburban towns of Toronto and a cottage in Parry Sound in the Muskoka region; had experimented with modelling before moving to Vancouver where she started busking while also working as a waitress in a restaurant. "Over my lifetime, I've learnt that I really reject hierarchical systems and uh, authority," she reflected. In busking, Monette had found the freedom of expression that she was seeking. She recalled crying when she made over 250 dollars in one night while street-

performing. "It changed everything," she said, adding that soon after she was accepted at the Victoria Busking Festival and then Toronto Busker Festival. Then she started travelling internationally.[104] The busking pitch, especially for circle performances, was a male-dominated space and Monette was not entirely at ease there. "I love them, but they are loud and abrasive, and I find them intimidating," she said, laughed, and added, "Clearly, I have some of these things, traits, in myself; it's not a criticism." [105]

Monette was born in Montreal in 1980, a couple of months after the First Referendum. When I asked her about growing up in the city, consequently she had led with the memory of moving away. Her father, a businessowner with a lot of clients in the US, had moved to Ontario "so that he could continue to run his business in English." One of the popular memories of the period that circulates is that anglophones in the province were left insecure after the separatist Parti Québécois came to power in 1976 though many have also challenged it, arguing that many English-speaking families instead decided to send their children into French immersion schools.[106] For Monette, the "exodus", as she described it, produced a complex emotional relationship with the city. She would have been too young to have remembered the move, but she also described "a lot of fond memories" of the Laurentians where she returned often to visit grandparents. In 2019, when I interviewed her, she was struggling between the idea of moving back to Toronto and staying in Montreal. There were a few considerations, including the fact that she was ill at ease with French:

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104. Monette, Oral history interview.

105. *Ibid.*

106. Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal*, 111–2 and 127–131. Levine writes that a significant number of well-educated, young anglophone professionals left the province in the aftermath of the changes in the language law in Quebec. However, by the early 1980s, Lévesque and the PQ government were also working to reach certain compromises and in the 1980s, many anglophone families had opted to send their children to French immersion schools despite the option to continue their education in English.

DM: I find Montreal to be at an interesting precipice because I certainly agree that the

French speakers of Montreal were oppressed. They definitely had less opportunities, less

jobs, less positions to CEOs, less advantages. If you didn't speak English in Montreal,

which is why there are so forcefully frustrated, especially the older crowd. And that's the

people who are yelling at me. It's often like women, older women, like 60 years old

women who are giving me this very Quebecois-like zing. And with women of course, it's

a double-edged sword because first of all, you get the language barrier, and then you get

the woman barrier. The intersection between them is a thing. Right. They didn't— ah,

birth control for example wasn't legal in Montreal until 1969. That was actually a big

deal…. And I love Montreal for this, they created an uproar… the women's movement

there allowed for birth control to be a possibility. So, the women in the '60s, now in their

70s, wouldn't have had those opportunities. They would have been blocked by these

kinds of factors. You know, my mum worked here as a banker and she would never have

moved higher up even as an English speaker. She would never have moved higher up

because she was a woman. That's why I have empathy for these women. They wouldn't

have been allowed to do what I'm doing. It wouldn't have been possible for them.[107]

Monette, like all other buskers on Place Jacques-Cartier, mixed French and English in her

performances, a practice that street performers follow in Montreal because their target audiences

are often tourists from the United States. Being a woman with an anglophone accent made her

more vulnerable to comments. The complex and conflicted manifestation of her identity was

visible in her comments as she reflected positively on the changes in society during the Quiet

Revolution. It was, as Monette mentions, a period of significant strides in women's rights

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107. Monette, Oral history interview.

movement in Quebec. Issues such as birth control, or rather the absence of it, were areas of

activism with francophone and anglophone activist groups joining hands to challenge economic,

political and social domination of women.[108] She acknowledged that as a woman she stood to

benefit from the reforms that were triggered as a result of the struggle even though some

dissonances were also there:

> DM: As a busker in Montreal, with subsidised daycare, something that supports women,
>
> that means that I can take artistic risks and take these opportunities. And see what I can
>
> make out of it. That social system that they have built is because of this egalitarian
>
> mindset. And I think it is relative to this fight— the English and French language debate.
>
> Because it's not, it's not possible in the rest of Canada. Why is that? Because there's a
>
> different thinking here that's happening. And that different thing is related to the history
>
> of it, you know, English and French colonists trying to fight for their territory, which is
>
> really somebody else's territory altogether but that's a totally different conversation
>
> [laughs].[109]

Hostility from women in public space were poised at the intersection of gender and language

identity, while she also hints at the undercurrent of class that undergirded the anglophone-

francophone debate historically. Her experiences as a busker – an anglophone white woman

street performer in public space – reflected this complexity. Seeking an intersectional

understanding of class, Angela McRobbie argues that gender, class, and ethnicity need to be

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108. Mills, *The Empire Within*, 119–137. In the chapter "Québécoises deboutte!", Mills discusses the feminist movement that appeared during the Quiet Revolution and that it embraced anti-capitalist sentiments along with decolonization discourse in order to fight patriarchal control over women's reproductive health and other spheres of life at work and at home.

109. Monette, Oral history interview.

knitted into the analysis of immaterial labour.[110] The subsuming of differences in favour of a unified voice, a tendency in theories of precarity and immaterial labour, hides inequalities that construct and perpetuate the flexible labour market. Passing precarity through the lens of gender, class and race becomes important. Drawing on Beverley Skeggs' work, McRobbie further argues that precarity disregards "class de-alignment, class fragmentation and new forms of social divide" that followed as a result of second-wave feminism and opened doors for both white and racialized women to new employment opportunities and education.[111] Skeggs offers an analysis of identity formation among a group of working-class white women and illustrates the continued relevance of class in gendered experiences.[112] Monette's story is an example of how these divides lingered and deepened under flexible accumulation.

Bondi points out a tension within feminism— one that argues for equal rights for women in public space and at work, and the other that seeks to dismantle the dichotomies and the binaries between male and female and public and private.[113] As a woman busker, Monette unsettles the gender order and challenges the notion of public space as a masculine domain. However, unlike many buskers she also insisted on a separation between her private life – of motherhood and domesticity – and work life in public space that not only conveys her class position but also the privilege to maintain a distinction. With a small baby, Monette was unable to spend as much time on the pitch as other buskers. She also felt her earnings from busking had

110. Angela McRobbie, "Reflections on Feminism, Immaterial Labour and the Post-Fordist Regime," *New Formations* 70, (Winter 2011): 60–76.

111. *Ibid*, 68.

112. Beverley Skeggs, *Formations of Class & Gender: Becoming Respectable*, London: Sage, 1997.

113. Bondi, "Gender, Class, and Urban Space," 166.

to justify the money she spent on daycare and the time away from her child when her partner was being the "provider" of the family:

> DM: As a single, like free spirit in Vancouver, making 40 dollars a night was supplemented by my income from my restaurant job. It was a risk I was willing to take; I was like building on myself, finding what it was to be a performer. I was never formally trained. It was literally built on the street. Um, that was okay. As a family, it starts to change my view of finances.[114]

Her gesture towards settler coloniality of Montreal earlier indicates her ability to challenge the dynamics of power in public place. When I asked her if she knew any indigenous person who was busking at Place Jacques-Cartier, she had talked about the privilege of being a white woman that had allowed her to perform in public spaces more easily. Against the historical marginalisation and stigma attached to street performing and women on the streets, Monette was assisted in her endeavour by her class privilege and whiteness in negotiating a gendered public space. Her reflections made visible the complex undercurrents that influence power and control over public space and the location of the busker within this matrix.

For Monette, busking was an extension of all else that she did. The flexible labour of a "living body" needs constant care and attention; and this "idea of infinite adaptability and flexibility" is a well-known reality for women.[115] All elements of the post-Fordist work ethics – the worker "continually available to work, to regard life outside waged work as a time of preparation for and readiness to work"[116] – were visible in her lifestyle and work pattern. Even

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114. Monette, Oral history interview.

115. Morini, "The Feminization of Labour," 46.

116. Mitropoulos, "Precari-us?".

busking in Old Montreal was a way back into the industry. It was an opportunity to practice skills in front of the public, test her shows for festivals, and be visible for gigs. The flexible contracts or the absence of any employment relationships allowed Monette to have higher control over what she did:

> DM: Most of the time my interaction is, Hi, I showed up today. I'm gonna go out and then I'm gonna set myself up wherever I am. Sometimes, they tell you where but as a human statue, because I'm a little tiny thing, they don't really care about me. They don't schedule; I just go, most of time, most of the festivals I've been to. Like you can go wherever you want and set up as long as you are not blocking anything. So that's good.[117]

Citing the example of Edinburgh Fringe Festival that gives a sharp 45 minutes to the busker to set up a show, perform, dismantle and remove their gear from the pitch, she explained that those events tightly manage time and space but nothing more. "If your gear's not off the pitch by the 45-minute mark, you get a red flag and if you get three red flags, then you are out for a day," she elaborated, adding "but everything else is up to you, you know what I mean."

With tourism, events and festivals receiving a fillip in cultural economies, busking is now a partially structured activity where spaces are demarcated and buskers are often hired on contracts to perform, draw and entertain crowds. In Monette's description, buskers appear to be highly flexible, self-sufficient and entrepreneurial artists and performers— the epitome of immaterial labour. They are the autonomous workers and precogs.[118] Monette embraced the freedom to decide the content of her shows. A prior knowledge of when and where to be, for

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117. Monette, Oral history interview.

118. de Peuter, "Creative Economy and Labor Precarity," 2011, 420. de Peuter describes three personas of immaterial labour— the cyberiate, the autonomous worker and the precog. Since buskers often wear many hats and are required to be increasingly technologically savvy, they could also just as well be described as a cyberiate.

how long and a control over her everyday schedule allowed her to juggle between multiple things and multiple spaces. She wanted to be part of the international festival busking circuit and described herself as "vying for status" among buskers. She pointed out that there were reasons that made buskers popular in the cultural economy:

> DM: One of the reason busker festivals are so easy to run, it's because buskers are very independent. They often have all of their own equipment; they can take care of height and they have insurance for fire; they have all these things. So, if you just put amplification, it gets their sounds— their music right, it's fine. But most buskers have like little watches that they can time. The big buskers who have money, who are touring all of the time, have like the Apple watch that they attach to their iPods, and so they can, like, pause their music and time their music. It's easy to do, so you don't need a musician guy in the back because you got yourself covered by yourself, you know.[119]

Well-versed with the Internet and social media, Monette also maintains a strong web and social media presence, regularly uploading videos of her juggling practice and making visible the process of creating shows, learning new skills and offering lessons. Work within cognitive capitalism means "less and less a precise and circumscribed part of our life, and more and more a comprehensive action".[120] Not only was Monette flexible, but her practice quite literally also depended on embodied labour of control over the ball. As a contact juggler there was also no difference between her work and her body. It was as much the skill of juggling as the eye contact with the audience that made people stop and watch. And when she wasn't performing, she was

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119. Monette, Oral history interview.

120. Morini, "The Feminization of Labour," 44.

practising her skills at home while caring for her baby. The YouTube videos and social media posts were as much leisure as professional practice.

Angela Mitropoulos poses the question, "to what extent can an identity which is immanent to capitalism be expected to abolish capitalism, and therefore its very existence and identity?"[121] McRobbie, in a similar vein, asks if the flexible labour market and its accompanying discourse of freedom from industrial work, continued growth and self-valorisation does not in the end produce a more obedient workforce and create schisms within labour.[122] Oral history interviews with buskers definitely point to these tensions within the concept of precarity as an organising logic against the capitalist mode of production and accumulation. However, the landscape is not entirely devoid of hope. This became visible on various instances. This requires trading the lens of universality with locally specific experiences, which means factoring in the dynamics of space and its role in shaping busking practices. The next chapters locate the conversations with buskers in place.

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121. Mitropoulos, "Precari-us?."

122. McRobbie, "Reflections on Feminism, Immaterial Labour," 68–69.

Section II

Space
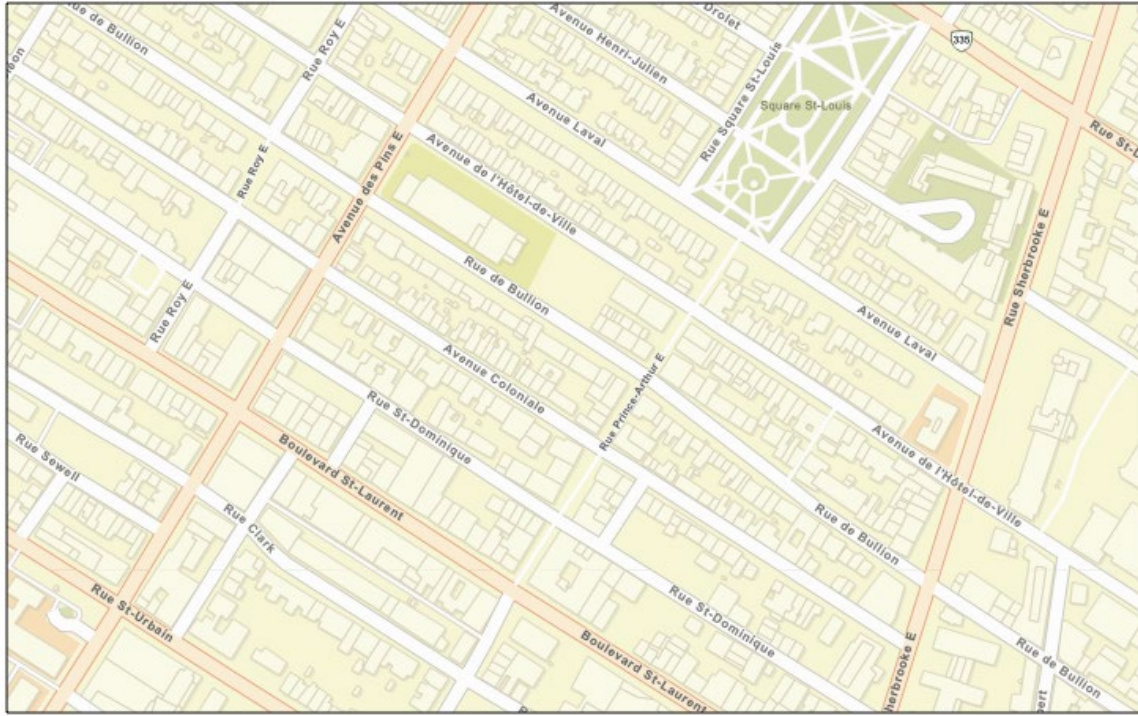
Map 2: Prince Arthur East Street between Saint Louis Square and Boulevard Saint Laurent.

Chapter 4

Prince Arthur East: 'We used to play there'

Peter Snow (PS): An American friend of mine; beautiful man, street performer – I was depressed, I was in heavy depression – he said, you gotta get out of this depression. You should go to Montreal. You'll like it there. I was like, oh, okay. So that's it. I came on a train. I arrived here Sunday evening. There had been a huge storm in summer. It was hot like hell. I arrived and the streets were empty…. Coming from New York— there were people everywhere. There were no people. And then I wandered down to Prince Arthur Street. You know where that is? That used to be a street-performing street. We used to play there. The marvellous people called architects destroyed it completely.[1]

Sitting in a café in Le Plateau Mont Royal, Peter Snow was remembering his first day in Montreal. It was in the late 1980s that he first came to the city with the hope to do street performances here. By then, he had already spent a lifetime travelling and street-performing in Europe, Asia and the United States. In the 1980s, Prince Arthur East was still a popular place among buskers, especially street-performers who, unlike musicians, needed more space to hold shows and were not allowed to perform in the metro. Snow's memory of Prince Arthur was entangled in the emotions about the street's present state. Anger and a sense of displacement were palpable in the caustic note in which he described the architects as "the marvellous people" while simultaneously blaming them for his dislocation from the place.

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1. Peter Snow, Oral history interview session-I, Montreal, May 20, 2019.

Prince Arthur East is not where one would go today to see street-performers entertain

crowds. Though the website of Ville de Montreal claims that the pedestrian stretch is a social

space for people to pause and seek leisure,[2] in Snow's opinion life had been drained out of the

street through multiple interventions to improve and reorganise the space. His comment also

indicated a contradiction within cultural economy and the irony of his situation. The political and

economic elite of the City of Montreal have long-desired and courted, since at least the

publication of the Picard Report, individual actors with cultural and economic capital, such as

architects, artists, designers and entrepreneurs, as key figures in the process of revitalisation of

the economy and in reattracting capital investments.[3] The urban crisis was largely seen as a

problem of design and lack of jobs, with "land and commodities seeking to influence personal

taste and choices and determined by vague technological and economic forces."[4] Ville de

Montreal, in its economic development strategy, identifies cultural and creative industries as the

mainstay of the economy and central to the city's identity and character.[5] And yet, the bitterness

in the remark made by Snow, who himself was a creative professional – a magician and an

2. "Le renaissance de la rue Prince-Arthur Est," Press Release, Ville de Montreal, 15 September 2017. http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page?_pageid=5798,42657625&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&id=29187 Accessed 6 July 2021. In their most recent initiatives ahead of the 375th anniversary celebrations, the city had spent $3.8 million on the "réaménagement" of the street, which included installing street furniture, reorganizing the space to have terraces at the center and walkways on the sides, improving the lighting and enhancing the fountain among other things.

3. Hamel and Jouve, "In search of a stable urban regime," 25.

4. Jean-François Leonard and Jacques Léveillée, *Montrèal After Drapeau* (Montreal and Buffalo: Black Rose Books, 1986), 13.

5. "Montreal Geared Up For Tomorrow: 2018-2022 Economic Development Strategy," Ville de Montreal, https://ville.montreal.qc.ca/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/AFFAIRES_EN/MEDIA/DOCUMENTS/MTL_STRATEGY_EN.PDF Accessed 6 July 2021. Also see, "Montréal, Design of the City/ City of Design: Towards Designation as a UNESCO City of Design," Design Montreal, Ville de Montreal, April 2006. https://designmontreal.com/sites/designmontreal.com/files/publications/candidature_montreal_ville_unesco_design_-_anglais.pdf (Accessed 6 July 2021)

escape artist – conveyed that not all was well with this strategy. If artists were the backbone of the cultural and creative economy, why did Snow feel displaced and marginalised?

Centering the memories of busking on Prince Arthur East and the eventual dislocation of buskers from the street, this chapter traces the spatial transformation of a gentrifying neighbourhood and its impact on a marginalised group such as the street artists. Street performers such as Snow are independent artists and entrepreneurial street figures who survive on busking and a combination of other small jobs. Some are students and struggling professionals who use busking as a way to make a living until better opportunities in the industry present themselves or they complete their training. Sometimes, they move on from busking as soon as they have a foot in the organised entertainment sector. The story of Guy Laliberté and Gilles Ste-Croix and the founding of Cirque du soleil is a case in point where street performing played a role in nurturing entrepreneurial talent.[6] But a small number of such street entertainers continue to occupy the margins of the city and the cultural economy. They experience economic, political and cultural marginalisation for lack of education and professional training, due to physical and mental health problems, language and economic barriers, and the nature of their relationship to place defined by factors such as citizenship and physical disability. By outlining the slow but steady transformation of Prince Arthur East, which was once an important site of garment manufacturing and leather goods manufacturing in the city, to a place of leisure and consumption in the postindustrial city, the chapter shines a light on this contradiction within cultural economies— a simultaneous celebration and marginalisation of artists formally or informally enrolled as workers and producers in the economy.

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6. Tony Babinski and Kristian Machester, *Cirque du Soleil: 20 Years Under the Sun* (New York and Montreal: Harry N. Abrams and Cirque du Soleil, 2004).

A lot of theoretical criticism has been directed at the concept of the creative or cultural economies and their limits in successfully addressing the problems posed by and linked to deindustrialisation, such as disinvestment, unemployment and labour market restructuring, crumbling infrastructure, hollowing out of inner-city areas and dislocation of people from their places of work and residence.[7] This chapter bridges the gap between theory and empiricism by focusing on the experiential aspect of the unfolding of gentrification and the position of buskers in the cultural economy through memories about life on Prince Arthur East in the past. Gentrification is, according to Sharon Zukin, "an individual action, involving the preservation, restoration and re-use of old houses of some certified architectural quality, which — when broad in scale — produces both a demographic change and a change in a space's social character."[8] She goes on to separate this process from new construction, warning against the use of the term for generalised transformation at a scale bigger than that of a block or a neighbourhood. Here, my interest is not so much to do with what is gentrification as it is to understand the impact of these process of urban revitalisation on buskers, historically marginalised in the city for their itinerancy, informality and presence on the streets. In tracing the transformations on the street after the 1960s through the experiences of buskers gathered in oral history interviews and from media reports, I examine the dynamics of the urban landscape undergoing postindustrial transformations. It nuances the affective dimension of this economy by making visible feelings of anger, bitterness and a sense of displacement that exist alongside the oft-painted picture of vibrancy, amusement and pleasure that dominates its framing.

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7. See Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class."

8. Sharon Zukin, "Changing Landscapes of Power: Opulence and the Urge for Authenticity," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 33, No. 2 (June 2009): 544, 543–53.

This chapter casts a slightly wide net to bring into the discussion all those different figures that make a living off the streets— such as caricaturists, portrait painters and sellers of paintings, jewellery and candle makers, alongside street musicians and performers. The reason for this conflation is to indicate that the more important lines in this context are those that establish their legitimacy in public space rather than their trade. In any case, busking and peddling have had fluid boundaries historically. One of the early uses of the term "busking" was to indicate peddling of goods on the streets and piratical movement of people.[9] While both buskers and peddlers in the contemporary city use the streets and public squares to make a living and are itinerant figures, busking has in the past decades gained more acceptability in the cultural economy than peddling. Buskers who play an instrument can perform almost anywhere in the city in public spaces unless they disturb the residents and the business owners in the neighbourhood. Other forms of busking such as circle shows with the use of fire, etc. require specific permissions and have designated spots. Same is the case with artisans and artists setting up temporary shops. They need permits and are allowed only in specific places in the city. Moreover, each borough is responsible for having its own bylaws to regulate busking.

In Montreal, Ville Marie, which oversees the tourist district of Old Montreal, has a defined set of bylaws and permits for regulating all buskers. The other boroughs either do not regulate busking, as they are infrequent in these parts, or accept the permit issued by Ville Marie.

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9. See discussion on the etymology of the word "busking" in the Introduction. Also see, Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (first published 1985; Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 14–15, where he discusses the figure of the jongleur in medieval Europe who entertained both by playing music and with other skills such as mime and acrobatics. An example of fluidity in the boundaries of such figures is the mountebank, medicine men and charlatan in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries who frequented the streets and the fairgrounds, were known for tricking people into buying things such as cures for ailments. They used entertainment, especially speech described as "pattering", to draw attention of the crowds. Similarly, the travelling mendicant in North America often also provided services, worked as farm hand, was a storyteller and a musician during their stay with a host family. See, Pomerleau, *Métiers ambulants d'autrefois*, for the numerous itinerant entertainers in Quebec until the mid-twentieth century.

Prince Arthur East falls in the borough of Le Plateau Mont Royal. Since the borough does not issue permits, it effectively means that musicians there can escape surveillance unless they are disturbing residents or business owners. Buskers also get hired by event organisers for open-air gigs there on the street. The terrain, as buskers note, is unclear; no one bothers unless there is a complaint, which works to the advantage of the buskers.

Ville Marie, the only borough in the city to currently issue busking permits, categorises buskers into different groups – musicien de rue, amuseur public, scuplteur des ballons, artist and artisan – for the ease of administration. It also bans peddling of mass-produced objects in such temporary stalls as are set up at Place Jacques-Cartier. This tension between mass-produced and artisanal objects made an appearance in the public sphere of the city in the 1980s, at a time when Prince Arthur East used to be a hub for street peddlers and buskers. This chapter briefly revisits the debate that played out in the media around fake and authentic art and their place on the streets of the creative city. The debate allows the possibility to examine the ways in which culture is enrolled into exercising power and domination over the physical landscape. The chapter makes a contribution to the literature on the role of art and culture in the gentrification debate, while also deliberating on the economic logic that underlies cultural control in the postindustrial economy where cultural capital is central to the city's economic growth.

Map 3: The layout of Prince Arthur Street in 1949. Prince Arthur East extends from Saint Laurent Boulevard to Saint Louis Square. The lemon yellow buildings indicate single-family housing, orange is for two-family housing, three or more are represented in dark brown (most likely to be working class housing), while carmin red is for commercial buildings, rose is for light industry, violet is for heavy industry, railway land is in blue, parks and playgrounds are in light green and dark green is for public buildings. Source: City of Montreal Planning Department. [Montreal Land Use Map. 1949]. [Montreal]: City of Montreal, 1949. http://public-content.library.mcgill.ca/gis/data/historic/landuse49/100/56-68_n.jpg (accessed April 10, 2022). For the legend prepared by François Dufaux and other details on the collaborative project, see "Documentation and Legend," on https://www.mcgill.ca/library/files/library/doc49en.pdf (accessed April 10, 2022).

A history of the street

Prince Arthur Street is one of the streets off Saint Laurent Boulevard (previously Saint Lawrence

Street or the Main) that extends on the west to University Avenue, at the foot of the mountain,

and on the east to Saint Louis Square, a middle-class neighbourhood that acquired cultural

prominence in Montreal during the Quiet Revolution.[10] The area around Prince Arthur street

developed as Saint Laurent Street industrialised in the nineteenth century. Saint Lawrence Street

or the Main, as it was called during this time, had long served as an arterial road that connected

the old fortified town of Ville Marie on the banks of Saint Lawrence River to the Village de la

Tannerie des Bélair that appeared north of faubourg Saint-Laurent in the eighteenth century and

the lime stone quarries in the area in the nineteenth century.[11] It gained new importance with

industrialisation of Montreal in the latter half of the nineteenth century.[12]

Initially called Courville Street after estate-owner Jean-Marie Cadieux de Courville,[13] it

was renamed Prince Arthur East in 1890 and became an extension of the original Prince Arthur

Street to the west of Saint Laurent Boulevard that has been in existence since 1869.[14] The land

along Saint Laurent Boulevard was populated by East European Jews who started immigrating to

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10. See Robert Lévesque, "L'oublié du carré Saint-Louis," *Liberté* 329 (2021): 12–14 for a description of the literary life anchored around the square in the 1970s' Montreal.

11. Yves Desjardins, "From the Bélair Tannery to Côte-Saint-Louis Village," in Mile-End History, Mémoire du Mile-End, http://memoire.mile-end.qc.ca/fr/chapitre-2-de-la-tannerie-des-belair-au-village-de-cote-saint-louis/#tc-comment-title (accessed April 11, 2022.). Also see, Yves Desjardins, *Histoire du Mile End* (Québec: Septentrion, 2017).

12. Pierre Anctil, *Saint-Laurent: La « Main » de Montréal* (Montreal: Septentrion, 2002). E-book. See chapter 1 "Le Boulevard de la revolution industrielle"; Anctil also offers a historiography of the street beginning with the time when the street lay outside of the old fortified town of Ville Marie in the chapter "Contexte historique: La naissance d'une grande artère urbaine".

13. VM166-R3081-3, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

14. VM166-R3081-1, Archives de la Ville de Montréal. Prince Arthur Street was named after Prince Arthur, the third son of Queen Victoria, to mark his visit to Montreal when he was first posted as a garrison officer. He later returned to the city as the Governor General.

the city around 1880. Between 1901 and 1931, the Jewish population had increased

exponentially, standing at close to 60,000 in 1931.[15] The Jewish immigrants, who brought with

them various skills as workers and traders, primarily worked in the garment factories but a small

number of them also had small businesses along Saint Laurent Boulevard, selling all kinds of

goods such as food, clothing and hardware to both francophone and Jewish clientele.[16]

With its five blocks between Saint Laurent Boulevard and Saint Louis Square, Prince

Arthur East, during this time, was either occupied by light industries or residential units with

some small commercial spaces and closely reflected working-class life and culture. The 1949

map of Montreal offers a detail of the buildings on the street (see Image 35), which were a mix

of residential and commercial and industrial buildings. The Balfour building at the corner of

Saint Laurent and Prince Arthur East, opposite the present-day Starbucks, housed Biltmore

Shirts.[17] Diagonally opposite to the Balfour building, on the corner of Saint Laurent and Prince

Arthur West, was the office of *L'Aiguilleur*, a labour press and the official organ of the

Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union.[18] Prince Arthur Hall, a five-storey building located in

the block between Coloniale and Sainte-Dominique streets, also housed garment manufacturing

units along with the offices of the Polish War Veterans' Society founded in 1930,[19] and some

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15. Acntil, *Saint-Laurent.* Also see, Jacques Langlais and David Rome, "The Great Yiddish Migration, 1880-1940" in *Jews & French Quebecers: Two Hundred Years of Shared History* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991): 25–51.

16. Eve Learner, "Making and Breaking Bread in Jewish Montreal, 1920-1940," MA Thesis, Concordia University, 2002.

17. Anctil, *Saint-Laurent,* 28–29.

18. Robbins L. Elliott, "The Canadian Labour Press from 1867: A Chronological Annotated Directory," *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science / Revue canadienne d'Economique et de Science politique* 14, No. 2 (May 1948): 220–245. https://www.jstor.org/stable/138010

19. "History of Polish War Veterans' Society," Polish War Veterans' Society of Marshal J. Pilsudski, https://www.weterani.ca/history (accessed July 5, 2021).

other small businesses. The building served as the venue for union meetings and cultural events associated with workers' organisations. In 1933, a workers' newspaper, reported a successful meeting of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union at the place.[20] A report filed by the RCMP on 14th November 1934 and classified as "secret" makes mention of a couple of events at Prince Arthur Hall— a meeting to "celebrate the 17th anniversary of the forming of the Soviet Union", a play that "stressed the brutal treatment that the Chinese workers received from the British government", and a meeting with the Young Pioneers and a speech on the state of unemployment.[21] In 1949, the building along with some workers' residences attached to it were gutted in a major fire.[22]

By the 1950s, the upwardly mobile Jewish families who had lived in the neighbourhood had moved out to other parts of the city, mostly to Outremont, Cote-des-Neiges and Notre-Dame-de-Grâce referred to as "uptown", and their places were taken up by other immigrant communities such as the Greek and the Portuguese.[23] Among the small businesses on the street were plumbing stores, tailors, depanneurs, a taxi stand and some eateries. Grégoire Dunlevy, who grew up in Montreal, recalled living and working on Prince Arthur Street as an artisan in the late 1960s:

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20. "On the Amalgamated Front," *The Labor Voice* 2, no.30 (30 March 1933). https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2021&dat=19330330&id=6pkqAAAAIBAJ&sjid=Y14EAAAAIBAJ&pg=5275,1527504&hl=en (accessed 6 July 2021).

21. "No. 732, 14th November, 1934," *R.C.M.P. Security Bulletins*, January. https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/RCMP/article/view/9403 (accessed July 5, 2021).

22. "Vaste edifice incendié rue Prince Arthur; 50 famillies sont evacuees," *La Presse*, Montreal, 7 Avril 1949. VM166-R3081-2_Est_54-180, Ville de Montréal archives*. La Presse* reported that the five-storey building on 57 Prince Arthur Street burnt down, destroying merchandise worth thousands of dollars and putting around fifty workers' families out on the streets.

23 Anctil, "Le Boulevard des nouveaux citoyens," *Saint-Laurent,* 49–63*.*

Grégoire Dunlevy (GD): We opened up a shop on Coloniale, right at the corner of Prince

Arthur. Prince Arthur at that time, there was nothing there. There was Greasy Spoons,

there were a couple of hardware stores, there was a convenience store, like a dépanneur,

right on the corner. The only thing that was there at that time that is still around is the

Mazurka restaurant. Other than that, everything has changed. There were no hip shops of

any type there. It was like any other street, you know. So, we opened up this leather shop

just south of Prince Arthur, walk down four stairs and you go in. We had that for about

five or six months, and we left; and we left the shop in the hands of our friends. And we

headed out west again.[24]

Dunlevy, who had grown up in the western and more anglophone part of Montreal, had found his

way to Prince Arthur Street as a young adult living a hippie life. He learnt to do leather around

this time at a belts shop on Saint Laurent and lived in an apartment on rue de Bullion, off Prince

Arthur East. Dunlevy had shared a shop on Coloniale with another craftsperson. One did soft

leather and the other worked on hard leather, he explained in the interview, while also providing

small details about life and people on the street then, such as a neighbour— an immigrant from

England who was a harmonica player and a jewellery maker.

Dunlevy, who had quit military police service and a regular job with Bell, to play music

in cafes and travel across North America, also recalled instances of "hippie harassment" under

Mayor Drapeau's administration. Memories of the street followed that of surveillance. They

flooded in as he sat recalling his life history— return to Montreal after a journey to the west

coast and meeting the mother of his children. The provincial government's commitment to social

and economic transformation of Quebec in the 1960s had been matched by an equally strong

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24. Dunlevy, Oral history interview session-I.

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political will at the municipal level to turn Montreal into a world-class city through urban

renewal and redevelopment.[25] Mayor Drapeau also came to be known for his high-handed clean-

up of the streets of Montreal, including the newspaper stands. It was also a period when national

security surveillance was not an uncommon experience, especially for those who openly or

secretly identified as gays, lesbians and queers, and also those who aligned with left, union and

separatist politics in Quebec.[26] Dunlevy recalled a couple of arrests during this time:

> GD: I was sitting on the steps of, this is 1967, '68, beginning of '69. This is what a lot of
>
> people were experiencing at this time. If you had long hair, if you had beards, if you had
>
> a different look and not— sitting on the steps of this place at this apartment on Jeanne
>
> Mance Street, where all steps are going up like this. We were about three or four of us
>
> sitting on the steps. And one of these guys was playing my guitar. And the police come,
>
> and they grab us all and one of them smashes his fist through my guitar, you know, for no
>
> reason. They arrest us all and take us in, and it was the same thing two hours later— like
>
> with Jill. You know, just for strict harassment.[27]

His then girlfriend Jill too had been arrested for playing the flute on the street. Alongside these

memories appeared the description of life on Prince Arthur Street. Noting the dynamics between

people and place in the process of gentrification, Zukin writes that artists, along with the

unemployed and informally employed, seek out hollowed out downtown neighbourhoods with

cheap rents but easy access to employment opportunities, information networks and training

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25. Paul, "World cities as hegemonic projects."

26. Gary Kinsman, Deiter K. Buse and Mercedes Steedman, "Introduction," in *Whose National Security? Canadian State Surveillance and the Creation of Enemies*, ed. Gary Kinsman, Deiter K. Buse and Mercedes Steedman (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2000), 4, 1–8. Also see, Madeleine Parent, "Remembering Federal Police Surveillance in Quebec, 1940s–70s," in *Whose National Security?*, 235–45.

27. Dunlevy, Oral history interview.

possibilities.[28] Dunlevy too spoke about finding employment and business opportunities casually while meeting friends or sitting in a cafe while on an errand. Prince Arthur Street provided him with an attractive place to live, learn work as a craftsperson, and then open a workshop alongside other artists who were jewellery makers, leather crafters and boutique owners. Not only did Dunlevy remember places vividly remembered in the interview, but he also recalled the broad political events and atmosphere of the period. By 1970, Dunlevy had moved his shop from this neighbourhood to Saint Paul Street in Old Montreal where he shared space with a candle-maker and a jeweller. This memory was followed by a brief recall of the October Crisis of 1970.

In October 1970, a political crisis was triggered after the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) kidnapped British Trade Commissioner James Cross and the minister of Labour Pierre Laporte within a span of three days. The FLQ was a militant group that emerged in the 1960s to demand Quebec's sovereignty and had enjoyed significant support for their cause until these events when both the provincial government and the independentist Parti Québécois found themselves on a backfoot. The kidnappings were followed by the reading of the FLQ Manifesto of 1970 on radio and TV. The situation escalated with Laporte's murder followed by the then Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau invoking the War Measures Act in Montreal.[29] Dunlevy, in his interview, remembered being greeted by army trucks on the way back to the city from a hunting trip and search for cheap land in Gaspé in northern Quebec. In 1972, he moved to New Brunswick for a few years and Montreal resurfaces in his memories only in the early 1980s and in connection with a different space— the metro. However, that's getting ahead of the storyline. I shall return to his memories related to busking in the metro in Chapter 6.

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28. Zukin, "Gentrification," 138.

29. See William Tetley, *The October Crisis, 1970* (Montreal and Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), for an overview of the events, various political actors involved and the aftermath.

Prince Arthur East, in the 1970s, around the time Dunlevy moved out, had acquired a bohemian charm. Artists and artisans like Dunlevy had set up shops on the street and industrial manufacturing was on a decline. Close to what Zukin describes as an urban village of the 1960s and after, "low-key and often low-income neighborhood, the culture of ethnic and social class solidarity, and the dream of restoring a ruptured community," and a "local response to globalization,"[30] the street had become the place for kitschy boutiques and restaurants specialising in ethnically diverse cuisine that courted a marketable idea of authenticity. Unlike the corporate city, such as represented by downtown financial district of Montreal, places like Prince Arthur East made a play for authenticity that further prepared the ground for capital to roll in and displace long-term working-class residents, their workplaces and businesses that supported their lives. The urban village of this period is merely "an aesthetic projection of interdependence and diversity of the urban social fabric."[31]

Dunlevy and other artists and artisans who opened shops in this area were perhaps taking the first step towards the street's gentrification though their decisions were also propelled by economic necessity in a city steadily drawing closer to an economic crisis due to global economic restructuring and Montreal's economic peripheralization, and a cultural, political and economic self-affirmation that was simultaneously inspiring a massive urban renewal and redevelopment mission. As David Ley points out, struggling artists in search of cheap rents and studio spaces in downtown areas are among those who get enrolled in the process of gentrification and can soon create conditions for their own displacement through a process of

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30. Zukin, "Changing Landscapes of Power," 546.

31. *Ibid.*

cultural valorisation among middle-class residents.[32] Soon bigger businesses such as restaurants were to come in and change the landscape of Prince Arthur East. In 1977, *La Presse* reported three restaurants – Le Mazurka, La Bal Saint Louis and Le Colombier – that served diverse cuisines from around the world and around nine boutiques that offered a variety of clothing choices, leather goods and jewellery.[33] Media was as much responsible in the production this landscape through persistent coverage of the businesses in the lifestyle sections and the use of a discourse that linked and celebrated racialized ethnic cultures, especially represented through food, and authenticity.[34] Local news dailies and weeklies frequently covered the street with headlines such as "Le village Prince-Arthur", "À Montréal La Prince-Arthur: Un peu la Place Pigalle de Maurice Chevalier!", "Rue Prince-Arthur: Le Montréal insolite" and "Prince-Arthur: Une rue à consommé" that valorised its bohemian charm.[35]

Awkwardly enough, this transformation is juxtaposed by Prince Arthur West, which became the site of a historic community-led battle against private capital-driven gentrification around the same time that Dunlevy was living in the area. He does not make any mention of Milton Parc in the interview, but this history speaks to Montreal's activist soul of this period. The city was also witnessing political and community-organising from below in the period after 1960s.[36] In the 1960s, a real estate developer, Concordia Estates Ltd., purchased most of the

32. David Ley, "Artists, Aestheticisation and the Field of Gentrification," *Urban Studies* 40, No. 12, (November 2003): 2540, 2527–44.

33. Stéphane Moissan, "La ville sa donne une âme nouvelle," *La Presse*, Montreal, 5 May 1977. VM166-R3081-1, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

34. Zukin, "Landscapes of power," 549–51.

35. VM166-R3081-1, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

36. Laurence Bherer and Jean-Pierre Collin with Valérie Shaffer, "Urban Issues and Political Mobilization: From Subsidiarity to Institutionalized Governance," in *Montreal: The History of a North American City*, ed. Dany Fougères and Roderick MacLeod (Montreal & Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press), 392, 379–415.

buildings around Prince Arthur West in a quadrangle framed by Milton Street, Hutchinson

Street, Sainte Famille Street and Pine Avenue. The plan was to demolish the housing stock in the

area, which had been occupied by students, artists, activists and young professionals, and replace

them with a residential complex. The project was met with fierce resistance from residents of the

area who came together and formed the Milton Parc Citizen's Committee, which then created

one of the largest community-led cooperative housing projects in North America of that time.[37]

While the Milton Parc community fought a pitched battle on and off the streets to save some of

the old Victorian houses from the bulldozers of the real-estate developer became a cooperative

housing, the tenor of change on Prince Arthur East Street was quiet but steady. Since the 1970s,

the street has been subjected to multiple revitalisation and improvement schemes and the

buildings, many of them destroyed in fires, were redeveloped and repurposed.[38]

Between the 1960s and the 1980s, the factory buildings of Prince Arthur East and

workers' residence had been replaced by a commercial street offering leisure, entertainment and

avenues of consumption of culture. By the early 1970s, the hardware shops, tailors and the

dépanneurs on the street that Dunlevy recalled in his interview had given way to artisanal

boutiques with imaginative names such as Xanadu and Grizzly Fur, and restaurants that served a

variety of "ethnic" food with a clientele coming in from the suburbs. It became an alternative

space close to but not quite the commercial downtown. In the 1980s, along with Duluth and

Saint-Denis streets, the street was frequently referred to as "the village", a romanticised social

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37. See Lucia Kowaluk and Carolle Piché-Burton, "Communauté Milton-Parc: How we did it and how it works now," in *Villages in Cities: Community Land Ownership, Cooperative Housing, and the Milton Parc Story,* ed. Joshua Hawley and Dimitrios I Roussopoulos (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2019), 24–35. Alse see, Claire Helman, *The Milton-Park Affair: Canada's Largest Citizen-Developer Confrontation*, Dossier Québec Series (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1987).

38. Bherer and Collin with Shaffer, "Urban Issues and Political Mobilization," 397.

order proposed by Jane Jacobs that was already disappearing.[39] It espoused a kind of localism that was self-aware and sought diversity in order to find a place in the globalised world, which encouraged gentrification and subsequently replaced the world that it proposed to foster.[40]

A report appearing in *La Patrie* in 1971 described the decrepit housing conditions on the street and blamed it squarely on the immigrants and the city.[41] The transformations of the street that followed in the next decades were led by mixed strategies of new construction and renovations that drive gentrification. *The Gazette* reported in 1980 an increased interest in renovations of old buildings on the street and in Montreal in general.[42] Some buildings were also destroyed in fire in the 1980s, which attracted new construction.[43] The benchmark for urban revitalisation were European cities, such as Paris and Munich. In 1979, inspired by Munich's urban planning initiatives, the Yvon Lamarre-led executive committee of Montreal proposed the introduction of pedestrian or community malls (*mails pietonnièrs*) on Prince Arthur East and some other locations in the city, including Place Jacques-Cartier, with the hope to revitalise businesses in those areas through beautification drives. During the summer months, the street turned into a public square with benches, entertainment and music. According to reports, the

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39. Zukin, "Changing Landscapes of Power," 548.

40. *Ibid*, 548–549.

41. "Les rats dansant sur la rue Prince-Arthur," La Patrie, Montreal, semaine du 18 avril 1971. VM166-R3081-1, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

42. John Cruickshank, "Prince Arthur renovation turns a profit for Murphy," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 6 August 1980. VM166-R3081-2_Est_54-180, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

43. VM166-R3081-2_Est_54-180, Archives de la Ville de Montréal. On 23 July 1983, three restaurants and eight dwelling were destroyed in a fire that started in 158 Prince Arthur. Demos Greek and the adjoining Le Pietonniér were two of the three restaurants. Le Gourmet Grec on 180 Prince Arthur East burnt down in January 1985.

mall at Prince Arthur had a successful season in 1979 leading to the establishment of a

permanent pedestrian stretch there a couple of years later.[44]

In 1983, *The Gazette* reported that over $2 million had been spent "on kiosks, plants,

paving stones and other amenities to convert the street from a thoroughfare to permanent

pedestrian mall".[45] *La Presse* summed up the transition process of the street:

On ne peut pas réellement dire que la transformation de la rue Prince-Arthur a crée des

tensions et des mécontentements. It a été progressif. Des petits commerces – bouchers,

dépanneurs, boutiques généralement tenues par des immigrants – ont cédé la place à des

"artisans", puis à des restaurants plus riches, sans qu'on se souvienne très exactement, au

Comité de logement Saint-Louis, où affluent les plaints des résidents de tout le secteur, si

des gens ont tenté de protester contre cette évolution.

La rue Prince Arthur a d'ailleurs conserve certains de ses anciens commerces et

tous les restaurants n'y sont pas grecs. Il y a aussi des Vietnamiens, un Hongrois, des

Italiens. On y trouve également un fourreur, un bijoutier, une artiste peintre et quelques

autres commerces colorés. Donc une certaine continuité, même si le décor est

profondément change, sans doute pour le mieux.[46]

44. Ray Doucet, "Six Streets to Become Pedestrian Malls," The Gazette, Montreal, 21 March 1979; Denis Masse, "L'idée des mails pietonniérs n'enchante pas tout le monde," La Presse, Montreal, 22 March 1979; and "Pedestrian malls closing after a successful summer," Sunday Express, 30 September 1979. VM166-R3081-1, Archives de la Ville de Montréal

45. Marianne Ackerman, "Trendy Prince Arthur St. sheds its shabby image," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 26 March 1983. VM166-R3081-3, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

46. Jean-Paul Soulié, "Rue Prince-Arthur et Duluth: L'anciennes images s'effacent," *La Presse,* Montreal, 14 October 1982. VM166-R3081-2_Est_54-180, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

Not only did the media start noting the disappearance of "freaks on Prince-Arthur" as one newspaper put it,[47] residents' complaints also made their way to the City Hall. In 1984, some 300 people signed a petition against the mushrooming restaurants on the street, forcing the City Hall to freeze all new licences for restaurants on that stretch.[48] Even as the residents complained about parking problems in the area because of the number of restaurants on the street, businesses on the street were unhappy about the lack of access for cars on the street that negatively impacted their flow of customers. In 1988, the media reported that the merchants on Prince Arthur had proposed a plan for a multi-level parking lot to address the problem of parking around the square. These issues and concerns regularly played out in the media as a section of the residents celebrated the changes and others were annoyed by it.

Memories of a displaced busker

It is in this context that Peter Snow started performing on Prince Arthur East. In his interview, he recalled that upon his arrival from New York on a train, he had headed straight to the street. "I had a piece of paper with rue Prince Arthur written on it." Street performers and musicians at this time were a regular feature of the street. Here, Snow met Chris Ryan, a street performer, who let him do a show. "Some etiquette," he explained, adding that he ended up spending the summer at Ryan's place and performing on Prince Arthur every night. Then he slowly started performing in

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47. Michael Farber, "Prince-Arthur's Freaks Fade Out," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 2 October 1984. VM166-R3081-2_Est_54-180, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

48. "City Hall gets petition on restaurants," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 30 May 1984; "City orders freeze on mall restaurants," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 19 October 1984; and Ingrid Peritz, "Restaurant freeze too late, say residents," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 27 October 1984. VM166-R3081-1, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

Old Montreal. "That was thirty years ago," he said, ruefully adding that he made "more money as a teenager" than he did now.[49]

When Snow mentioned Prince Arthur East in the interview, it wasn't the first time that I had heard of it as a place for buskers. Other buskers I had talked to and long-term residents of Montreal had also mentioned that the street was once "the" place for street performers. For Lucas Choi Zimbel, a musician who grew up the city in the 1990s, Prince Arthur was where he received his first ticket for busking.[50] Eric Girard, a circle performer on Place Jacques-Cartier, too recalled starting out on Prince Arthur.[51] Susana Martinez, who worked at a restaurant on the street, too had started street-performing there.[52] Snow offered a full picture of the street around the time when he started performing there:

> PS: Well, there was also jewellery sellers, painters, like there is now in Old Montreal. But it was there; it was cute, and it was a nice street and the architecture was fun. Well, exactly why I don't know, the city decided to make some structural changes and that allowed more space for the terraces. And then maybe they got greedy, I don't know, or they made them too big that squashed the spaces for the jewellery sellers and the painters and so on. And our space, they put a lamppost in the middle of it, so that just vanished. It was a tiny space anyway. Bit by bit changes came. And then the city tried to do something about it by renovating it. That was a disaster. Then they tried to renovate it

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49. Snow, Oral history interview.

50. Lucas Choi Zimbel, Oral history interview, Montreal, May 29, 2019.

51. Eric Girard, Oral history interview, Montreal, June 2019.

52. Susana Martinez, Oral history interview, Montreal, June 8, 2019.

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again recently and that was an even bigger disaster. It's just terrible right now. It's

horrible.[53]

His memory of Prince Arthur was interrupted by the present built environment of the street and,

which led him to talk about the changes every time he brought up the street. The displacement

was a lived experience that made him emotional when he talked about the changes. Snow's

criticism of the changes on Prince Arthur East indicated a possible collusion between the

decision-makers at the municipal level, urban planners, architects and the restaurant businesses

who contributed to the makeover that shrunk spaces for busking and peddling on the street. His

claim isn't far-fetched as the function of the government in the neoliberal city has transformed

from being a regulator to an enabler of private capital-led businesses in the economy. Terraces

and liquor licences bring in more money into government coffers than permits for busking and

peddling do.

During the interview, Snow digressed often from the question to make observations about

place and people and share his opinions on things beyond busking. It produced a rich narrative

coloured by his perceptions and reflective of his emotions with regards to a place. Oral history

interviewing is a "culturally inflected process" and, in remembering places, people talk about the

meaning of a place in their lives more than the facts about it.[54] The memory of Prince Arthur

East angered Snow and agitated him. He spoke about architects and architecture of the street in

the same breath as busking spots. "I hate architects; no, I hate architecture," he said, continuing

his tirade against the changes visible on the street.

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53. Snow, Oral history interview session-I.

54 Katie Holmes and Heather Goodall, "Introduction: Telling Environmental Histories," in Telling Environmental Histories: Intersections of Memory, Narrative and Environment, eds. Katie Holmes and Heather Goodall, Palgrave Studies in World Environmental History, (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 1–23.

In a follow-up walking interview that I did with him on the street, he was visibly upset. The built environment reminded him of the lack of space for buskers on the street. At one point, he parked his bike by the wall and went on to point at all the different objects on the street, including the lamppost, that had eaten into the busking spot that he used to frequent.[55] Feminist geographers have argued for a place for emotions in research.[56] Oral history interviews that engage with life history narratives are particularly germane spaces for emotions in research data. They need careful attention though it may not be easy to decipher their meanings.[57] Meanings of emotions can be "idiosyncratic" and rooted in the person's individual life experiences.[58] For Snow, the emotions attached to Prince Arthur East were tied to his sense of displacement from the street and found expression in the process of remembering. Memories of performing on the street were invariably followed by those of the spatial transformation of the street through beautification drives and the changing face of the buildings around him. While memories described the place of the past, emotions that he felt were coloured by the present landscape and the events that pushed him out of the place. If emotions can – even if with a certain ambiguity – relate to landscapes and experiences of consumption,[59] they also underpin people's "experiences of inequalities and oppression" in place.[60] Snow's memories gave shape and visibility to a

55. Snow, Oral history interview session-II, Montreal-Prince Arthur East Street, September 25, 2019.

56 Bondi, "The Place of Emotions in Research," 234–238.

57. Katie Holmes, "Does It Matter If She Cried? Recording Emotion and the Australian Generations Oral History Project," *The Oral History Review* 44, no. 1 (2017), 56–76. DOI: 10.1093/ ohr/ohw109

58. Nadia Hausfather, "Ghosts in our corridors: Emotional experiences of participants in Québec's general unlimited student strike campaigns (2005 - 2012)," doctoral thesis, Concordia University, Montreal, 2017, 203. In chapter "Life Stories of Striking Emotions," she discusses the importance of life events in shaping the student activists' emotions and their relevance in the process of meaning-making after the event had passed.

59. John Urry, "The Place of Emotions within Place," in *Emotional Geographies*, ed. Joyce Davidson, Liz Bondi and Mick Smith (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005, 79, 77–83.

60. Bondi, Davidson and Smith, "Introduction: Geography's Emotional Turn," 7.

landscape of exclusion on the street that would have remained invisible if not for our conversation in the interview space.

His sentiments were conveyed in the scathing remarks on the professional architects and the architecture on Prince Arthur. In rereading the transcript, I realise that his emotions about the place and the memories attached to it were inseparable, but Snow had felt his emotions should not figure in the conversation. Soon after complaining against the architects and modern architecture, Snow apologised, "Sorry, I am changing the subject." My research questions hadn't been framed with the idea of probing emotions in the interviews and, at that moment, I did think of these observations as a digression from the topic. I had, however, encouraged him to continue and he immediately linked it all back to street-performing:

PS: It also relates to street-performing. I'll tell you why. I have an exception because the Pompidou centre in Paris looks like a petrol station. It's a giant modern building. Planned by Piano and the other English guy, I forget his name. Two famous architects. And I don't mind that building. It's an exception. But I'll tell you this. Where the architecture is modernist, it's very hard to create an atmosphere. People sense it, okay. Where you have beautiful squares, you have atmosphere. Automatically, immediately. Like in Old Montreal. It's quite nice. It's not a beautiful place, well, but it's quite nice. Place d'Armes in Old Montreal is quite nice. There's atmosphere there. Okay. I can tell you many places in the world, pitches like that, where an atmosphere is already there. People gravitate towards it because they feel it. It's like, it's beautiful. It's warm. There's warmth. See, modernists architects are never warm. When you see old stuff, looks fantastic from the distance and the closer you go, it's still fantastic. You go right up to the door and you see

old work that's done. Beautiful doors and windows, sculpted. It's like that in Europe, in

Asia. It's like that in South America, here.[61]

A little later, once again unsure about the relevance of these comments to my research questions,

Snow told me, "Stop me if I go off on a tangent." Taking inspiration from feminist geographer

Linda Peake's argument that "simply being" is enough to occupy an intellectual space,[62] I would

argue that Snow's reflections were relevant because they came from a place of experience. It was

embodied knowledge of the place. The comments do convey an important facet of the

relationship between the busker and the city— a longing for places where they belonged or have

the possibility of belonging. The "atmosphere" of place that he refers to is that possibility in

public space that is welcoming of buskers and accommodating of their spatial needs for busking.

Compared to the description of Prince Arthur that was filled with words and phrases such

as "hate", "horrible", "disaster", "square inside their head", and "(nothing) of lasting value",

Snow's account of other places around the world included more positive words such as "warm,

"nice", "fantastic" and "beautiful". Old Montreal draws tourists because of the heritage buildings

that present a consumable culture and its regulatory landscape is also more tolerant towards

buskers, precisely for the same reason. Snow is able to see himself there more than he could see

himself on Prince Arthur in the present. This nostalgia was discernible at many places in Snow's

interview. It was both a longing for a place and time that he had lived before but also for an older

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61. Snow, Oral history interview session-II.

62. Linda Peake, "The Suzanne Mackenzie Memorial Lecture: Rethinking the politics of feminist knowledge production in Anglo-American geography," *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe canadien* 59, No. 3 (2015): 258, 257–66, DOI: 10.1111/cag.12174. In my initial draft, I had written: "I don't have the knowledge or the expertise to examine the worth of his comments in the field of architecture, either to dismiss them as misplaced or to praise their astuteness." In retrospect, it appears such a view prioritises academic and professional knowledge. Both oral history and feminist ethics seek to recognise experiential, emotional and embodied knowledges produced outside of spaces that demand objective engagements.

Image 17: Prince Arthur East as it stood in 2019.

Image 18: Peter Snow performs at Place Jacques-Cartier in 2019.

world that stretched beyond his lifetime. Svetlana Boym describes nostalgia as "the mourning of displacement and temporal irreversibility."[63] It is the longing for a home that one cannot return to. But it is also as much a mourning for a time as for a place. For Snow, his memories were mixed with this sentiment— the lack of a place where he belonged. Prince Arthur East still exists but it can no longer accommodate him. During the walking interview, Snow showed me the spots where he and others performed on the street. Mixed with nostalgia, everything from the past appeared more desirable:

> I started here in Montreal first on this street; no, further down. We never performed here. There's a spot I will show you further down. But the whole length of the street, the restaurants— Towards the other end, St. Louis Square, that was more where we performed, okay. Musicians and everything used to hang out there. And there was this guy, Chris Ryan. There was this guy called Johnny Sax, who was the biggest act in Montreal…. Those days you could park anywhere. Basically, the restaurants were good, and they would eat, and they would walk up and down the street and enjoy the street performers, the musicians, the jewelry sellers, the caricaturists and everybody else. And there was a lovely atmosphere on the street. The architecture was very nice and there was a lot of charm about it. I have to say the pitch is not very big.... It's very tiny compared to Old Montreal, but still it was happening, and Johnny Sax was very successful; Chris Ryan was very good. And there were some other people here.

The picture of Prince Arthur East that Snow paints is that of a particular moment in time when gentrification of the street was already well underway. Snow's presence was part of the charm of the street. Zukin notes that a synthesis of culture and capital, in the long run, forces the low-

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63 Svetlana Boym, Introduction, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001): xvi.

income gentrifiers out of the neighbourhood.[64] The restaurants and businesses that had moved into the neighbourhood saw more profit in terraces than in having street performers crowd out potential customers. Residents of the area who increasingly reflected the upper-middle classes comprised of intellectuals and professionals also desired a different aesthetic for the street. The irony in Snow's memory is that the world that he mourns was implicated in his displacement and he was an actor in this process of gentrification. This is why Boym argues that nostalgia is "not for the past the way it was, but for the past the way it could have been".[65]

Snow's nostalgia is for a time in place that allowed him an existence, not the one that displaced him from there. These tensions in nostalgia become visible when his memories conflicted with debates and conversations in the archives. His narrative also contrasts with the manner in which Dunlevy remembers the place and its transformation. Dunlevy's memories are at least two decades before Snow's arrival and he too remembered the place with a tinge of nostalgia. It is best to remember that nostalgia is a tricky emotion and can be a way to cope with the fractured present through reminiscing a past that appears "stable (and) intelligible".[66]

In framing my research questions, which engaged with the busker's relationship to the city, I had not taken into account the affective dimensions of this connection. But in talking to them about the city, I realised emotions were an important aspect of the interviews as they conveyed meaning of the place in their lives. Emotions were expressed not only in remembering life events but also in articulating experiences of places. Stories about place always had affective elements couched in their lived experiences. Elements of joy, nostalgia, thrill, fear, hate, anger,

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64. Zukin, "Gentrification," 143.

65. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 388.

66. Strangleman, "The Nostalgia for Permanence at Work," 94.

agitation and pain coloured the interviews. Toby Butler writes that "combining walking, sound, memory and artistic practice" can provide new insights into place.[67] The connections between emotions and place were particularly noticeable in the interviews with buskers because of their intimate experience of urban space. The walking interview, in particular, generated new layers of meaning that became apparent on relistening to the audio. My questions are barely audible as I was holding the mic to catch Snow's voice, but I also asked very few questions in the interview. Snow was taking his cues to speak from the built environment around him.

Since this was a follow-up interview, there were some repetitions from the first interview, such as the fact that Snow had arrived in Montreal right after a storm and the meeting with Chris Ryan. However, he dwelled longer on the description of place in this interview. The account also had more vivid details of the street and of the people.[68] I let Snow decide the pace of walking, stopping wherever he paused on the pedestrian stretch between Saint Laurent Boulevard and Saint Louis Square. "Stephen (pronounced Stéphane), he used to play here; he used to play for the terrasses," Snow noted, stopping briefly at the open space next to Starbucks. Prince Arthur East is lined with restaurants and other commercial spaces on either side of the road. The street has some murals on the walls, potted plants and a piano that appear every summer, benches, trees and a fountain. A big chunk of the space is also blocked off by restaurant terraces in the summer but none of that life was visible on the street that afternoon in September when we were walking. When we reached the corner of de Bullion and Prince Arthur, he added:

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67. Toby Butler, "A walk of art: the potential of the sound walk as practice in cultural geography," *Social & Cultural Geography* 7, No. 6, (December 2006), 889–908.

68. James Evans and Phil Jones, "The walking interview: Methodology, mobility and place," *Applied Geography* 31 (2011): 849–858. The analysis offered by Evans and Jones demonstrates that walking interviews elicit more place-specific data than sedentary interviews. They also argue that walking interviews are less productive in developing autobiographical narratives, such as the life story interview in oral history methodology. They also offer a typology of walking interviews that range from natural go-along interviews to guided walks.

PS: The big pitch on Prince Arthur was right here, for years. Okay. But none of this was here. That lamp was not even there… [parks his bicycle by the wall] This was an open space like that. Not huge. There was something there. That fountain was like that there since I've been in Montreal. It was there. And here some trees— there were phone booths here. I remember, phones, telephone boxes. The spot was here, here, and we would get the crowd like that so people could walk. This is where all the big acts played. The pitch was not big, the crowds were never big, but they were good. And this is where we used to play, myself, Chris, Johnny Sax, Leslie, there were a bunch of performers, they used to play here, musicians.[69]

While walking past the restaurants and the stores, Snow also commented on the state of their businesses in the present. "From what I hear, it's pretty quiet," he said, adding that some businesses had shown signs of doing well in the last couple of years. "I hear this picking up a little bit, the Greek restaurant at the end." Snow noted that the restaurants were owned by Greeks in the 1990s. "The Greeks controlled everything; so, we used to make jokes about that." Then as we walked past a shoe store, he said, "I think he's closed, finally; this is a very high-class shoe store." He knew the patron. "I know the guy who runs it; his name is Chris, this English guy." He carried a sense of familiarity about the street and an insider knowledge that came with spending hours together at the place. Later, while walking on one of the streets off Saint Louis Square, he showed me the neighbourhood where he had lived for many years and moved out because the rents became too high. In this second interview, not only were the stories dictated by the physical space around us, the place also left its traces on the recording. The ambient noise produced some aural friction. The noise or the lack of it in the recorded audio – for Prince Arthur

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69. Snow, Oral history interview session-II.

was rather empty on a weekday afternoon – brushing against Snow's memories of a lively street full of people created a disjuncture. It also evoked a different sense of the street through words.

A play for authenticity

As if mocking Snow and his idea of a "charming" street, the city archives presented a somewhat different story. Marie Lavigne, outraged by the "*marché aux puces*" (flea market) that Prince Arthur East had become and all the junk that was on sale on the street, wrote a letter to the editor of *Le Devoir* in June 1989. "Rendez-nous nos artistes et cessez cette vente de permis commerciaux," she demanded of the Jean Doré government, also squarely blaming it for the disappearance of artists from the street.[70] In response, one Carmen Tremblay argued that the artists and vendors on Prince Arthur were a great attraction for both locals and tourists who enjoyed exploring the handcrafted artisanal goods and local produces. She added that if there were junk sellers, it was because the administration had been slow at appointing inspectors in charge of keeping a check on permits. Tremblay ended her letter with the line:

> Le danger vient plutôt de gens qui, comme vous, croient que seuls les Artistes (ceux dont vous parlez) ont le droit d'exposer et de commercialiser leurs talents; une telle idée nous enferme dans un élitisme outrageant qui, heureusement, perd sa place, dès que le cœur devient réellement Artiste.[71]

Though the second letter writer accused the first of elitism in defining artists, the two women were not really at opposite ends of the debate. The junk sellers were undesirable for both but, in Tremblay's opinion, it was only due to a delay in placing a mechanism of control.

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70. "Rue Prince-Arthur," *Le Devoir*, 12 June 1989. VM166-R3081-1, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

71. "Rue des artistes," *Le Devoir*, 19 June 1989. VM166-R3081-1, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

Debates such as this appeared in the media throughout the 1980s. If some celebrated the presence of street artists and artisans, others demanded fair regulation through permits and inspections. For example, a report in *The Gazette* in 1985 argued that street life should "flourish" but the city should "deal firmly and fairly with unlicensed vendors; protect visitors and citizens against harassment, fraud, false representation, late-night noise or other nuisances."[72] In a column in *La Presse* later that year, Gilbert Bruné argued, "Oui à l'artiste, non à la camelote." Close on the heels of it, a news report in *The Gazette* sought a more tolerant policy on vendors with the headline: "Let Montreal's artists take wares to the streets."[73] The concerns were not limited to Prince Arthur Street as similar damning reports also appeared about the vendors of "fake" objects on Saint Amable Street in Old Montreal around the same time.[74] These cries for cultural control over public spaces through administrative measures was also occasionally supported by artists as they jostled for space and customers with each other and with other itinerant groups.[75] Authentic art and products were always at the centre of the argument for who belonged in public space.

The authentic versus fake debate as it played out on Montreal's public sphere needs some deliberation. Zukin's contemplation on authenticity is of relevance here to understand the debates unfolding over Prince Arthur during this time. One of the meanings of authenticity, she argues, is associated with creativity and innovation that carries an "aesthetic judgement" about

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72. "Let Street Life Flourish," The Gazette, Montreal, 26 April 1985. VM166-1-1_D32002, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

73. VM166-1-1_D32002, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

74. See Chapter 6 for the transformations on the street since the 1960s.

75. Chapter 5 explores this dimension of street culture through the history of the metro musicians' association and the legalization of busking in the metro.

an object of value.[76] A "crisis of authenticity" is the experience of undesirable urban change.[77] In

a postindustrial cultural economy, what is undesirable is that which questions the authenticity of

a place. Authentic is art and artisanal— creative, singular, handcrafted and rustic objects and

experience. The aesthetic value lies in their singularity and a production process that evokes the

pastoral. In other words, it is far from the rigours of industrial life and its sensory landscape.

Authentic is both selective and hegemonic aesthetics that upholds a moral order that, in the

language of Raymond Williams, is an emergent, if not already dominant, "structure of feeling" in

the postindustrial society.[78]

Fake, in comparison, is a "social, cultural, and economic response, at a local and

apparently trivial level, to the processes of globalization and to the uneven and often unequal

relations that globalization has endangered," argues Ackbar Abbas.[79] Fake is associated with the

economies of the Global South. The illicit, counterfeit and the piratical provide marginalised

groups access to global flows of goods and capital.[80] Alternatively, they can represent a lack of

modernity, of democracy and of a liberal world order. As Joshua Neves argues, the presence of

the various form of "fake" – the illegality and the illegitimacy – is symptomatic of that which is

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76. Zukin, "Changing landscapes of power," 544. The other meaning being related to people's lived relationship with a space, which argues for a diversity in urban space against the homogeneity imposed by what she calls "hegemonic global urbanism".

77. *Ibid*, 545.

78. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford and New York: OUP, 1977), 121–127 and 128–135.

79. Ackbar Abbas, "Faking Globalization," in Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age, ed. Andreas Huyssen (Durham, NC, USA: Duke Un¡versity Press, 2008).

80. Brian Larkin, "Degraded Images, Distorted Sounds: Nigerian Video and the Infrastructure of Piracy" in *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria*, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008): 217-241 and Ravi Sundaram, "Introduction: After Media," in Pirate Modernity: Delhi's Media Urbanism, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010): 1–27. Larkin argues that media piracy is central to the city of Kano's urbanism as it provides the necessary infrastructure for circulation of media goods in a globalized economy. In a similar vein, Sundaram's argument analyses the role of piratical media in giving the urban poor in India an access to modernity, something he describes as "pirate modernity".

anti-modern and undemocratic. The fake is, therefore, a "chimera", all that remains elusive for the people in China despite the so-called experiences of globalization.[81] The presence of counterfeit or mass-produced objects illuminate differential access and relationships to power and to global flows. It also signifies the absence of cultural capital, important in promoting a city as a tourism destination and a cultural economy. Finally, it indicates problems such as poverty and unemployment, just as undesirable on the streets as the other elements.

In the case of Prince Arthur Street, the "fake" objects sold by vendors were mostly mass-produced items. Fake, in this context, is an absence of aesthetic value and, therefore, cultural capital. It is also a presence of the industrial way of life, a residual structure of feeling in a postindustrial economy. Desire for authenticity in this context reflects a need for control over the cultural landscape. It also speaks to the idea of the urban village, an urban imaginary that is evoked in referencing Prince Arthur during this period. The authentic here is an illusion of preservation of an older social order as the diversity that comes to replace the previous multiplicity of social relationships in the space is very different— a form of hegemonic and elitist cosmopolitanism that is not self-sustaining but reproduces, if not exacerbates, the power imbalances of capitalism.

Street art and culture in the 1980s Prince Arthur East pretends an artifice of subversion that actually doesn't upset the dominant social order. A fight for the right to the streets only reinforced the aesthetic that is embraced by postindustrial society. Like art on the street, the presence of all the ethnically varied cuisines at the restaurants served a similar purpose. Ethnic packaging, argue Jason Hackworth and Josephine Rekers, serve the same purpose as art in the process of gentrification— "anchor(ing) bohemian culture for an outside community looking for

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81. Neves, *Underglobalization*, 1–31.

something unlike the suburbs".[82] It makes diversity consumable while simultaneously displacing an ethnically diverse population from gentrifying places. All the renovations, new constructions, urban planning and beautification drives that had followed Prince Arthur East's emergence as an urban village in the 1970s had changed the make-up of the area, so much so that the original artists and creatives who had gathered in that place steadily found themselves displaced by middle-class and restaurant business concerns that reflected in the debates that unfolded in the public sphere— over car parking and fake art.

The busker as gentrifier

The role of the artist – whether a musician, painter or performer – has been a complex one in the process of gentrification. Ley describes a dialectical relationship between the artist and the process of gentrification.[83] Not only do artists seek out neighbourhoods that have the potentiality of gentrification, their presence and their art are drawn into the process that they sometimes criticize. In the postindustrial city, artists stand for class mobility, allowing the middle-class to "deliberately" push "the borders of conventional middle-class life, while at the same time representing its advancing, colonising arm."[84] Zukin, in analysing the role of culture in the transformation of inner-city neighbourhoods into postindustrial spaces of cultural consumption, too writes about the professionalization of art, its democratisation and relationship to gentrification.[85] The artist becoming an ideal for the middle-class in cities such as New York –

82. Jason Hackworth and Josephine Rekers, "Ethnic Packaging and Gentrification: The Case of Four Neighborhoods in Toronto," *Urban Affairs Review* 41, No. 2, (November 2005): 232, 211–236.
83. Ley, "Artists, Aestheticisation and the Field of Gentrification," 2542.

84. *Ibid*, 2533.

85. Sharon Zukin, *Loft Living*, 96–100.

"from 'beat' to 'bohemian' to 'middle-class'" as she describes the journey[86] – embodies the transformation in the role of art in society. On the one hand, the artist's cultural and symbolic capital, often represented in their education and professional training, proves to become privilege in this new economy. On the other hand, art and the identity of an artist, their lifestyle choices in particular, function as vehicles for upward mobility, which explains the practice of purchasing art as investment rather than for their beauty and a desire among the middle-classes for the artist's aesthetic, most embodied in their lifestyle.

This tension comes across most poignantly Robert O'Callaghan's story is placed against that of Snow and other street performers on Prince Arthur Street. Born in Massachusetts, United States, O'Callaghan had moved to Montreal when he was a little over 20 years old. "On the last day of Expo-67," he recalled. He had made up his mind to leave the US at the age of nine, he said, though it was the Vietnam war and a draft notice to join the military that propelled him to leave. "Canada was the easiest," he said, adding that in order to immigrate he took up a job at a music records store. Eventually, he got a job as a milkman for the Guaranteed Pure Milk Company. When he discovered that his partner was pregnant with their first child, he quit that job and bought a flute. By then, he was already taking music lessons at McGill and was fascinated "by the idea of performing in public places".[87]

O'Callaghan was a known figure on Prince Arthur East and the neighbouring Saint Louis Square in the late 1970s and in the 1980s. His ensemble of three musicians played chamber music on the street. "We started playing on Prince Arthur Street but then there's this square that was a lovely Victorian square," he said, adding that, unlike other buskers, he always wanted his

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86. *Ibid*, 96.

87. O'Callaghan, Oral history interview.

public to "sit down" and "show interest" in his music.[88] The square, which had become the

centre of Quebec's literary and intellectual life, provided ample space and a cultivated audience

for his evening performances. I found a few references to him in the newspapers. In the 1980s,

he had gained some notoriety for his performances.

O'Callaghan had been acquitted by the court after being fined under the anti-noise bylaw

for playing music at Saint Louis Square. The news report that mentioned him along with some

other buskers by name also foresaw 100-dollar fine for musicians breaking noise bylaws passed

recently. In 1982, the city had amended the anti-noise bylaw to ban strolling musicians after 7

pm and put a stop to all percussion and electrically powered instruments in public places. The

bylaw would have particularly impacted O'Callaghan who held his open-air concerts at the

square in the evenings. The news report quotes him as saying that busking should be regulated

but the regulations should be reasonable.[89] The 7 pm curfew was reversed later that year but

harassment by the police had continued. In 1983 and 1984, he was in the news for his court

battles for busking at Saint Louis Square.[90] He recalled the matter in his interview:

> Robert O'Callaghan (RO): In Carré Saint Louis, we had that structure, a little concert hall
>
> on wheels… it was a box. It opened up to a bandshell which projected the sound forward
>
> and had a piano mounted in it. And we would wheel this out four-five nights a week from
>
> a garage nearby… It was acoustics because it was illegal to amplify at that time. But you
>
> couldn't miss it. You walk into the square after dark and there was this thing.[91]

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88. *Ibid*

89. Howard Druckman, "Montreal vs. the street musicians," *The Gazette*, Montreal, July 31, 1982. VM166-1-1_D32002, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

90. Multiple report in VM166-1-1_D32002, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

91. O'Callaghan, Oral history interview.

For our first meeting, O'Callaghan had pulled out pictures of the bandshell along with other news coverages of his performances around the world. The ten-feet long and four-feet wide structure had lights fitted to it and a canopy around it. To a journalist, he had argued that the plywood stage was a way to conform with the city's bylaw to not use any amplification in public spaces. He found a way to rent the kiosk, a public building, in the middle of the square to store the bandshell. Describing it as a Victorian-era bathroom that had been brought to the middle of the square, he said he asked to rent it:

> RO: It was empty at that point, so I approached the person responsible— it probably was public markets… He went for it, to my surprise and [laughs] to the surprise of his employers in the City of Montreal. I had a lease, a rental contract with him, so we did the whole year there.[92]

Soon the city took note of the situation and decided not to renew the contract. The building is now a café and was a flower shop for some time. After this, O'Callaghan was helped by a friend, who was also a resident of the square, to store the bandshell in their basement. The rolling in of the bandshell was in itself a performance. O'Callaghan was in the habit of recording his performances and he also taped this part, where he and his fellow musicians of the ensemble would roll in the bandshell on wheels into the park that served as the stage for their evening performances. After being shut down by the cops, he circulated a petition among the residents of the square seeking support for his performances. "Nearly everyone signed the petition; it was just this one person… For him, classical music was on a level way above the street; for me, it was exactly the opposite."[93]

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92. *Ibid.*

93. *Ibid.*

O'Callaghan reflected he wanted "to bring this type of music closer to the street, you know, to bring it to people who wouldn't otherwise experience it." This inspired him to find public spaces that allowed him to hold his shows. After performing for four years on Saint Louis Square, he started travelling with his ensemble, first to Europe and then to South America, in search of public places to hold these open-air concerts. "I would check it out a year before," he explained in the interview, talking about how he scouted for locations in new places. His stories of travelling and busking illustrate the mainstreaming of street entertainment and busking in the culture- and tourism-driven economies. Towards the end of his interview, I asked O'Callaghan that if he were to do things all over again, would he do it the same way. "I'm glad of the experience, you know," he said, then added:

> RO: If I had choices to make now, knowing what I know and with the experience that I had in the past, I would do many things differently. I regret to say that I was kind of a typical American in the process…. What I was describing before of, you know, feeling entitled to do whatever I bloody well pleased, in somebody else's country. I would hope that with the experience that I had and the knowledge that I have, I would do things differently; not just be the outsider coming in and taking over, you know, which is probably what I did. And I could do whatever I wanted, and I was fortunate enough to be very lucky to fall in the right places at the right time.

What he refers to here are the privileges he had, which allowed him to be flexible, travel wherever he wanted, and be accepted in public places in foreign countries without being seen as a threat or being questioned for his presence. If and when he needed to, he successfully negotiated the administrative regulations and sometimes was even helped by the authorities. In preparation for his visits, he shipped himself boxes of cassettes to be sold during performances

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and the money wasn't bad as he managed to pay for his and the accompanying musicians' travels and still made some profits. O'Callaghan was able to claim legitimacy on the streets in many ways: he was white, male and American; he had access to permits whenever needed; and he was a classically trained musician who played chamber music. His stories of busking wherever he pleased are a contrast to the experiences of many other buskers I spoke with. Around the same time that he was busking in Saint Louis Square and fighting his court battles, Grégoire Dunlevy and some other musicians were also in court to contest some tickets issued to them for busking in the metro. The relentless crackdowns by the city reported in the media also tell a different story, which further accentuates O'Callaghan's privileges.

In the 1980s, alongside unemployment and job losses triggered by a deindustrialising economy and a changing labour market, the streets held out a possibility for struggling unemployed musicians and artists not only to make money but also to network and seek social sustenance. In this changing landscape of street culture, a number of buskers' unions had mushroomed. The newspapers referred to groups such as the Support Our Nation's Genuine Street Singers (SONGSS) and *l'Association des chansonniers et musiciens publics*. Dunlevy and some other metro musicians had formed *l'Association des musiciens independents du métro de Montréal (AMIM)*. Musicians argued that playing on the streets was work and that it also contributed to the cultural life of the city. One Mike Pedro, a street musician, was quoted as saying, "We are not dopeheads, rubies and beggars."[94] Fiddler Michael Brown argued that this was the job that kept him off welfare.[95]

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94. "Street musician brought into court under city bylaw against soliciting," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 6 May 1982. VM166-1-1_D32002, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

95 Howard Druckman, "Montreal vs. the street musicians," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 31 July 1982. VM166-1-1_D32002, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

While this was unfolding in the city, O'Callaghan had started travelling. His success as a travelling busker not only points to commodification of busking in tourism economies,[96] but also rearticulation of the figure of the busker. From being the marginal street figure, they have become a welcome presence in western cities that pride themselves on their culture, creativity and vibrancy. They are often sought and encouraged by urban planners and municipal administrations.[97] This transition in their image came with some contestation from below and a remaking of the figure of the busker as an entrepreneur and a cultural producer in the city. The unions and associations that were formed extended such a claim and sought to dissociate themselves from other street figures, such as panhandlers and people with addiction. In differentiating between what was of value in the city's cultural landscape and what was nuisance, once again authenticity played a key role. Artists who could claim authenticity – by displaying skills, creativity and innovation – were more easily accepted than those who lacked similar social and cultural capital. Authenticity is facilitated by privilege, such as citizenship. On Prince Arthur Street, authentic were also the caricaturists and painter, the Vietnamese food on Prince Arthur, the Greek restaurants and Latin American bands and the fiddler on the street who had all the necessary permits and paid for the licences. They commodified diversity and created an illusion of inclusion that did not threaten the idea of the postindustrial landscape. Authenticity, as Zukin notes, is a "cultural lever for claiming space" and "a powerful means of displacement".[98] It justified the presence of some people in public space over others.

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96. See Kaul, "Music on the edge," 30–47.

97. Seldin, "The Voices of Berlin," 233–55.

98. Zukin, "Changing landscapes of power," 551.

Image 19 a–f (clockwise from top left): A series of screenshots from a VHS tape that shows Robert O'Callaghan and his fellow musicians wheeling in and setting up their bandshell for a performance on Carré Saint Louis in the early 1980s. Video collection of Robert O'Callaghan.

Chapter 5

Metro: From itinerants to independent musicians

> Itinerant (n.): One who itinerates or travels from place to place, esp. in the pursuit of a
>
> trade or calling; a travelling preacher, strolling player, etc.[1]

> Mozart, the people shout. I laugh as doors
>
> open, wind snatching notes and rumpling clothes.
>
> Our cases on the wet and sticky floor,
>
> the clinking coins on velvet, crumpled bills.[2]

Sometime during the pandemic, a friend sent me an image from one of the inside pages of a

bilingual children's book on Montreal. At a time when I had barely taken the metro in over two

years, it was a nostalgic reminder of the bustle in the underground city. The image was

undeniably Montreal— the blue body of the metro car and the violinist with his open case were

reminiscent of the city's metro system.[3] The word being introduced was "v: violiniste /

violinist". That the busker found a place in a children's book on Montreal indicates their

entanglement and enrollment in urban space and culture in the city. It also speaks to their

acceptance as musicians against the historical impression of them as itinerants and marginal

figures in the city.

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1. "itinerant, adj. and n.". OED Online. December 2020. Oxford University Press. https://www-oed-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/view/Entry/100333?redirectedFrom=itinerant (accessed December 23, 2020).

2. Barbara Nickel, "Busking," in *The Gladys Elegies* (Regina, Saskatchewan: Coteau Books, 1997), 81.

3. Stéphane Poulin, *ah! Belle cité! / a beautiful city: a b c* (Montreal: Livres Toundra, 1985).

Montreal has been making concerted effort towards promoting cultural industries since at least the early 2000s. It introduced several measures to identify areas of intervention and policy initiatives to promote various cultural sectors.[4] However, this transforming relationship between culture and economy were already becoming visible in the 1980s. It was an important decade for the reconstitution of culture in relationship to the economy. Diane Saint-Pierre argues that this new entangled terrain of culture and economy, until then treated as fairly distinct spheres, was one of the sites where a form of neoliberalism was unfolding in Quebec.[5] The Picard report, which further pushed the cultural economy agenda, came in 1986 but the cultural industries were already galvanising forces in the province by the 1970s. A Sommet des industries culturelles du Québec (cultural industries' summit) was held in 1978, following which the Société de développement des industries culturelles (SODIC) was formed with the aim to protect and expand local control over cultural enterprises in Quebec and encourage growth and founding of enterprises in the cultural domain for an international market.[6] Institutions such as the École nationale du cirque and Cirque du soleil emerged,[7] alongside independent music labels that buoyed French-language records productions in the province.[8] Events such as the International Jazz Fest also began around this time.

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4. Drouin, « La métropole culturelle ».

5. Diane Saint-Pierre, "Québec and Its Cultural Policies: The Affirmation of a National Identity, a Distinct Culture, Creative and Open to the World," in *Cultural Policy: Origins, Evolution, and Implementation in Canada's Provinces and Territories*, ed. Monica Gattinger, Diane St-Pierre, Jean-Paul Baillargeon, Nicole Barrieau, Alison Beale and Daniel Bourgeois (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2021), 216.

6. *Ibid,* 217.

7. Leroux, A Tale of Origins," in *Cirque Global*, 36–54.

8. Line Grenier, "The Aftermath of a Crisis: Quebec Music Industries in the 1980s," *Popular Music* 12, No. 3 (October 1993): 211, 209-227. According to Grenier, the records industry was facing a crisis by the end of the 1970s and overall productions had slumped significantly in the 1980s. However, even as Canadian content and productions were low, new independent labels emerged in Quebec during this time gave the local industry a fresh lease of life.

The legal landscape for self-employed artists, artisans and craftspeople also underwent significant changes in this period. In 1983, the crafts were recognised as a cultural industry in Quebec.[9] Several provincial laws were enacted that had an impact on artists and artisans employed in the various cultural industries. Two of these were the Act Respecting the Professional Status and Conditions of Engagement of Performing, Recording and Film Artists introduced in 1987[10] and the Act Respecting the Professional Status of Artists in the Visual Arts, Arts and Crafts and Literature, and their contracts with promoters in 1988.[11] Meanwhile, the Guilde des musiciens et musiciennes du Québec was also born in 1988 with the merger of Guilde des musiciens de Montréal, AFM Local-406, and the Musicians' Association of Quebec Local-119.[12] Saint-Pierre notes that the cultural development policy that emerged in the 1980s' Quebec was mostly directed at advanced technology industries such as satellite TV, information highway, etc.[13] There was also a simultaneous consolidation of art and crafts as industries during

9. See Marc Ménard and François Montambeault, Les métiers d'art au Québec: Esquisse d'un portrait économique," *Les cahiers de la SODEC*, 2003. http://www.sodec.gouv.qc.ca/libraries/uploads/sodec/pdf/publications/metiers_portrait_econo03.pdf (Accessed 14 January 2021). Ménard and Montambeault provide a brief overview of how the definitions were moved around for the sector to give it professional and industry status

10. S-32.1 - Act respecting the professional status and conditions of engagement of performing, recording and film artists. . http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cs/S-32.1 (accessed April 21, 2022). It relates to all those who work on stage, including the theatre, the opera, music, dance and variety entertainment, multimedia, the making of films, the recording of discs and other modes of sound recording, dubbing, and the recording of commercial advertisements and are not covered by the Labour Code or the collective agreement decrees.

11. S-32.01 - Act respecting the professional status of artists in the visual arts, arts and crafts and literature, and their contracts with promoters. http://legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/ShowDoc/cs/S-32.01 (accessed April 21, 2022). It was passed a year later and was directed at all self-employed artists who create works in the fields of visual arts, arts and crafts and literature and to the promoters of such works.

12. Guilde des musiciens et musiciennes du Québec, Assemblée nationale du Québec Commission d'examen sur la fiscalité, October 2014. https://www.groupes.finances.gouv.qc.ca/examenfiscalite/fileadmin/user_upload/memoires/gmmq.pdf (accessed 10 March 2021).

13. Saint-Pierre, "Québec and Its Cultural Policies," 217.

this period. The Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec (CMAQ), which was founded in 1989 with the fusion of Corporation des Artisans de Québec (CAQ) and Métiers d'art du Québec à Montréal (MAQM), was mandated to represent, counsel and aid in the development of the professional crafts industry in Quebec.

The 1990s were further marked by developments such as the reconstitution of Société génerale des industries culturelles as the Société de développement des entreprises culturelles (SODEC). The SODEC was mandated to promote cultural industrial productions in the province. The design sector in particular saw important initiatives. The Institute of Design Montréal was created as a non-profit with funding and support from various agencies, federal government and the city. In 1991, the city created the position of a design commissioner and launched a competition called Commerce Design Montréal that lasted roughly ten years, between 1995–2004. In 2005, it launched a City of Design municipal action plan and in 2006, the city became a UNESCO City of Design.[14] Since the early 2000s, successive local governments in Montreal have actively embraced the "creative city" agenda and introduced design as a key tool of intervention in the economy and urban space.[15]

The acceptance of busking in Montreal's urban landscape needs to be understood in this context because the practice was not always welcome. Neither on the streets nor in the Montreal metro. In the early years, since its inauguration in 1966, playing musical instruments anywhere in the metro system was illegal. This changed in the 1980s. Resistance from buskers who frequently played in the metro despite it being considered an illegal practice, public opinion that increasingly saw busking as a reflection of the city's cultural vibrancy and creativity, a little

14. "About Us," Design Montreal, https://designmontreal.com/en/about-us (accessed February 22, 2022)

15. Guillaume Sirois, "Design: An Emergent Area of Cultural Policy in Montreal," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 51, No. 4 (2021), 240–1, 238–250, DOI:10.1080/10632921.2021.1918596.

nudge from the justice system, and the changing terrain of regulations, all contributed towards

the accommodation of busking as an accepted activity in Montreal's metro stations.

Both Grégoire Dunlevy and Robert O'Callaghan's memories speak to the confrontations

with the administration and the police in the city around this time. In the metro, Dunlvey, along

with some other musicians, took the initiative to organise themselves into an association and

rally for their right to play music in the underground. This chapter draws on the box of papers

related to the Association des musiciens indépendants du métro de Montréal (AMIM) and oral

history interviews to tell the story of this grassroots organising by buskers. It further engages

with the concerns and interests of the musicians as reflected in the association papers and as

explained in the interviews to trace the trajectory of the organisation— its evolution, appeal and

transformation in the context of Montreal's journey from an industrial city to a cultural

industries-driven economy. The conversations and debates, alongside the personal reflections of

some of its office bearers and members, also illuminate the complexity of the power dynamic

between the STM, the association, musicians and other itinerant groups in the underground. The

history of the association and its eventual disintegration, re-emergence in a new form and its

current form as a web platform that connects musicians to the market further speak to the nature

of labour market intermediaries within cultural economy.

Shifting perceptions

Busking straddles a shadowy line between work, respectability and freedom on the one hand, and

begging, poverty and criminality on the other hand. If the ridiculed and scorned Italian organ

grinder was a common presence on the streets of nineteenth century western cities,[16] there were

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16. See for example, Zucchi, *Little Slaves of the Harp*.

also other musical figures and itinerant entertainers in the history of these cities. German brass bands on the streets of New Zealand and Australia in early twentieth century reminded British settlers of the sounds of their "home" country until they became "enemy aliens" at the beginning of the First World War and disappeared from public spaces.[17] There were the costumed Spanish *estudiantina* plucked string instrument ensembles that appeared on the streets of Paris after the 1878 Exposition Universelle and became internationally popular for a brief period towards the end of the nineteenth century.[18] Towards the end of nineteenth century and until the beginning of the First World War, Montreal received bear trainers and exhibitors from France.[19] The presence and circulation of these itinerant figures were contingent on sociopolitical and economic factors, both in their places of origin and those that they visited. European and North America cities continue to have such figures on the streets, both locals and migrants, who remind of multiplicities of cultures and connections in place through their music and performances.[20] These are often people living on the fringes and eke out a living through busking and myriad other jobs in the services economy.[21]

There are also abundant stories about busking being the stepping-stone to success in musical and performance careers. Many legends started out as street-side talents. One need only

17. John Whiteoak, "What Were the So-Called 'German Bands' of Pre-World War I Australian Street Life?," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 15 (2018): 64, 51–65; and Samantha Owens, "'Unmistakeable Sauerkrauts': Local Perceptions of Itinerant German Musicians in New Zealand, 1850–1920," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 15 (2018): 48, 37–49, doi:10.1017/S1479409817000076.

18. Michael Christoforidis, "Serenading Spanish Students on the Streets of Paris: The International Projection of Estudiantinas in the 1870s," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 15 (2018): 27, 23–36.

19. See Pagé, *Man with the Dancing Bear*.

20. Doughty and Lagerqvist, "The ethical potential of sound in public space," 58-67. Also see, Tanenbaum, *Underground Harmonies*, 13.

21. Marina, "Buskers of New Orleans." Also see, Kevin Fox Gotham, "Tourism Gentrification: The Case of New Orleans' Vieux Carre (French Quarter)," *Urban Studies* 42, No. 7, (June 2005) 1099–1121. DOI: 10.1080=00420980500120881.

look as far as the life of acclaimed singer Édith Piaf to see such a journey from the streets to the international cultural scene. In *La vie en rose*[22], a film about her life and career as a musician, a young Piaf is shown singing *La Marseillaise* on the streets at the beckoning of her street-performer father. Later in the film, Marion Cotillard as Piaf sings on Montmarte in Paris for change, which then opens doors to a professional career. Closer home in Quebec, the story of Cirque du soleil's beginnings on the streets of Baie-Saint-Paul in the Charlevoix region, northeast of Quebec City, is also the stuff of legend.[23] Fans of busking would also be familiar with the videos of British singer-songwriter and music producer Seal from the summer of 2016 when he sang alongside a busker in Old Montreal and then in Manchester. In the Manchester video, he talks about starting out on the streets as a musician.[24]

Nevertheless, busking regularly courts controversies in cities. Robert Hawkins writes about the debate triggered by the New Deal-era ban on street music in New York.[25] Though the regulation was widely interpreted as a ban on Italian organ grinders, Hawkins argues that New York Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia's decision related to all kinds of street music and had much to do with the classification of sounds in an industrial city between productive sounds and

22. *La Vie en Rose (La Môme)*, directed by Olivier Dahan (2007; Paris: Légende Films and TF1 International).

23. Babinski and Manchester, *Cirque du soleil: 20 Years under the Sun*. Also see the website of Cirque du soleil at https://www.cirquedusoleil.com/about-us/history. Founders Gilles Ste-Croix and Guy Laliberté started out as street performers in the 1980s. Their group, which comprised of stilt walker, fire breathers, jugglers, dancers and musicians held their first Quebec-wide tour in 1984. This group later formed the core of what came to be known as Cirque du soleil.

24. Seal, "Street Songs – of Manchester," Facebook Live. https://www.facebook.com/Seal/videos/10153863301652675/ (accessed April 19, 2022). Also see, J Deeh, "Seal and busker duet Stand By Me (Montreal.2016)," YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fYpsr0wGcHM (accessed April 19, 2022).

25. Robert Hawkins, "'Industry Cannot Go On without the Production of Some Noise': New York City's Street Music Ban and the Sound of Work in the New Deal Era," Journal of Social History 46, no.1 (2012): 106–123. https://doi.org/10.1093/jsh/shs025.

unnecessary noise.[26] At a time when unemployed classically-trained musicians were playing

outdoor concerts under the Federal Music Project,[27] public opinion was partly in favour of

considering busking as self-employment in the debate on establishing a line of distinction

between "honest unemployed workers" and "professional loafers".[28] In people's opinion,

allowing buskers on the streets could lessen the burden on social welfare programs, even as an

augmented sense of aesthetics around sound determined municipal policies. It was one of those

moments when the figure of the busker came to occupy a somewhat central place in the public

sphere, even if briefly and owing to administrative and elite interests.

Over half a century later, the debate on whether busking was work and therefore should

be legally played out in the public sphere of Montreal, but on a slightly different pitch. In 1982,

harassed by administrative surveillance and cornered by huge fines, musicians playing in the

Montreal metro rallied together to secure their place of work. By forming an association, initially

called the Association des musiciens itinérants du métro (also AMIM), buskers in the metro

presented themselves as a unified entity with their own self-governing practices that allowed

them to regulate themselves and reduce administrative interventions into busking. However, it

also meant that they played on their identity as musicians to differentiate themselves from other

itinerant groups, such as homeless panhandlers, in order to be seen as adding value to the urban

environment. The history of AMIM is thus also the story of metro musicians' journey from being

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26. *Ibid*. Also see, Karin Bijsterveld, "The Diabolical Symphony of the Mechanical Age: Technology and Symbolism of Sound in European and North American Noise Abatement Campaigns, 1900-40," Social Studies of Science 31, No. 1 (2001): 37–70.

27. Carolyn Livingston, "The WPA Music Program as Exemplified in the Career of Charles Faulkner Bryan," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 21, no. 1 (October 1999): 3–20.

28. Hawkins, "Industry Cannot Go On without the Production of Some Noise," 110.

itinerant musicians to independent musicians, which is indicative of their passage and

rearticulation into the cultural economy.

By the 1970s, busking in Montreal was on the rise and there were various reasons for it.[29]

Susie Tanenbaum writes, about New York, that displacement caused by gentrification in the

1970s, technological developments and regulation of live music in restaurant and bars all drove

musicians to perform in the subways.[30] Montreal too was an epicenter of change in the 1970s.

Economic, political and cultural transformations were sweeping through the province and a new

form of nationalist politics was emerging in the wake of the Quiet Revolution. The city served as

a platform for exchange of ideas and connections with the rest of the world that informed radical

thought and social movement of the time.[31] Deindustrialisation, rising unemployment and the

economic recession of the 1980s likely contributed to an increase in the number of buskers in the

city. An increased government support for the cultural sector was also encouraging the younger

generation to pursue education in music and art. Meanwhile, the turn towards a cultural economy

was accompanied by neoliberal policies that encouraged withdrawal of the state and a

widespread acceptance of a post-Fordist economic model with flexible work. Busking became a

way for musicians and artists to cope with increasing economic precarity in the emerging gig

economy. For struggling artists being close to the market and having a base in the city were

important. Playing at shopping centres such as Eaton, La Baie and Les Terrasses at special

events, store inaugurations and Christmas became a way for them to earn money.[32]

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29. Genest, "Musiciens de rue et réglements municipaux à Montréal," 32.

30. Tanenbaum, *Underground Harmonies*, 12–13.

31. Also see, Mills, *The Empire Within.*

32. "Venez feter l'overture des Terrasses," *La Presse*, Montreal, 18 February 1976, p. G 4; "Ruée vers l'or," *La Presse*, Montreal, 20 May 1972, p. A 16; and "Noël en tête," *La Presse*, 20 December 1978, p. B 7. Collection de BANQ. Online.

Image 20: Announcement of the opening of a shopping mall where itinerant musicians were part of the inaugural celebrations *La Presse*, 18 February 1976, G4. Collection de BANQ. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/2606228 (accessed June 20, 2022)

The metro, in this context, held out a promising public space that was also a refuge from the vagaries of weather.[33] Not only were its long and dull corridors amenable to music but they also protected from rain and snow. The metro project in Montreal had been introduced as a matter of prestige for the city and a symbol of its modernity.[34] It was one of the major infrastructure projects executed by Mayor Jean Drapeau with the hope to give it a "world-class status".[35] And from the beginning, the public transit system had been integrated into the new economy structured around culture that was slowly emerging. The metro blended Montreal's

33. Tanenbaum, *Underground Harmonies*, 12.

34. Dale Gilbert and Claire Poitras, "'Subways are not outdated': debating the Montreal Metro, 1940–60," *The Journal of Transport History* 36, No. 2 (2015): 209–227. http://dx.doi.org/10.7227/TJTH.36.2.5

35. Paul, "World cities as hegemonic projects," 571–596. Also see, Annick Germain and Damaris Rose, *Montréal: The Quest for a Metropolis*, (Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons, 2000).

modernity with cultural uniqueness by showcasing art at its stations.[36] In 1968, when the

Association professionelle des artisans du Québec held the first Salon des métiers d'art du

Québec, it was held on the premises of the Berri-de-montigny station, now Berri-UQAM.[37] The

underground was also a significantly more complex terrain of administration. The metro and the

indoor city with its network of corridors, commercial spaces and stations formed a "collage of

jurisdictions".[38] Initially, the City of Montreal had adopted the bylaw 3333 and entrusted the

running of the metro to the Commission de transport de Montréal in 1966. The Commission de

transport de la communauté urbaine de Montréal (CTCUM), constituted in 1970, introduced a

new set of regulations for the metro in 1975.[39] The stations, however, were surrounded by and

connected to privately-developed spaces that served some public functions as they provided

access to the metro from the streets.[40]

Playing music in the metro was banned. Two articles in particular impacted buskers.

While article 13 banned any solicitation of money or distribution and sale of newspapers,

journals and other merchandise inside the metro stations, metro cars and buses, whereas article

10 banned the playing of any musical instruments inside the metro. The mesh of jurisdictions,

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36. Jacques Besner, "Cities Think Underground – Underground Space (also) for People," *Procedia Engineering* 209 (2017), 53, 49–55. Also see, Grahan Centieni, "The Montreal Metro: Integration of Art and Architecture," MA Thesis, Concordia University, 1987.

37. Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec, "Les moments marquants du milieu des métiers d'art au Québec," 2019. https://www.metiersdart.ca/client_file/upload/Historigramme_metiers_dart.pdf. (Accessed 24 February 2021).

38. David Brown, "The Indoor City: From Organic Beginning to Guided Growth," in *Grassroots, Greystones and Glass Towers: Montreal Urban Issues and Architecture*, ed. Bryan Demchinsky (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1989), 70–82.

39. Julien Garnier, « La constitution d'un cadre routinier au prisme du « pouvoir »: l'exemple du métro à Montréal », *Espace populations sociétés* 1, no. 2 (2015). http://journals.openedition.org/eps/5970 (consulté le 03 mai 2019). See note 3 and 4.

40. Jacques Besner, "Develop the Underground Space with a Master Plan or Incentives," 11th ACUUS Conference, September 10-13, 2007, Athens – Greece.

however, allowed buskers some leeway and they found loopholes to occasionally escape fines. To complicate matters further, fines issued by CTCUM inspectors made their way to the municipal court when challenged. Both articles frequently failed to hold up in court against buskers. A musician was acquitted after the court found that playing the violin with an open case and a few coins in it did not indicate decisive moral pressure on commuters to give money. Moreover, règlement 18, called règlement concernant le transport et la conduite des voyageurs, concerned itself with transport and conduct of the passengers. Buskers found spots for busking outside the turnstiles where their presence did not necessitate having valid fares and claimed they did not fall under règlement 18 as such because they were not commuters.[41]

While public opinion sometimes swayed, the voices in favour of busking were strong in the early 1980s. People articulated busking as a form of urban cultural expression and a way to animate the underground transit system and its corridors. But the co-relation between busking, poverty and unemployment, which has a long history in the portrayal of the Italian street musicians,[42] was still hard to shake off. As a result, it was also conflated with petty crime and begging, and the administration treated buskers in the metro as nuisance. As many amateur and unemployed professional musicians found their way into the metro and turned it into a spontaneous performance spaces, surveillance on them increased. It reflected in Dunlevy's stories. Julien Garnier too indicates such a trend is visible in the archival documents related to the metro administration from the period.[43] It did not fail to attract criticism in the public sphere. A columnist in 1980 voiced their opinion:

41. Garnier, « La constitution d'un cadre routinier au prisme du « pouvoir » .

42 See Hawkins, "Industry Cannot Go On without the Production of Some Noise'," and Zucchi, *Little Slaves of the Harp*.

43. Garnier, note 15, « La constitution d'un cadre routinier au prisme du « pouvoir » , 14.

Prenez M. Hannigan, le p.d.g. de la Commission de transport de la CUM. M. Hannigan,

lui, c'est des musiciens ambulants qu'il a peur. M. Hannigan a été interviewé par notre

confrère Denis Masse, dans le cadre d'une série d'articles sur le métro qui se termine

aujourd'hui dans LA PRESSE. M. Hannigan est contre l'idée de permettre, comme cela se

fait dans toutes les grandes villes, à des jeunes de faire de la musique dans les couloirs du

métro. M. Hannigan préfère le système du «musak». Mais il trouve aussi— ça, vous n'y

auriez sans doute pas pensé spontanément — que des groupes de musiciens dans le

métro, ce serait... dangereux.[44]

The column not only argued for allowing musicians in the metro, but also asked that cyclists be

allowed access to the metro and the administration take a more accommodating approach to

graffiti artists in the city. A couple of years later, another opinion piece highlighted the buskers'

tussle for space in the city. Mentioning the victory of one Michael Brown in court after being

accused of solicitation during busking at Berri-de-Montigny metro station, columnist Guy Pinard

wrote about the conundrum: they were tolerated in Old Montreal because they attracted and

entertained tourists, but the police and the administration were not so kind to them in the metro

or other neighbourhoods in the city.[45] One Etienne Nelis, who self-identified as a singer and

songwriter, also protested the high-handed behaviour of the administration in suppressing artistic

expression in Montreal's underground city in a letter to the editor.[46] The friction between the

buskers and the administration was based on an age-old stereotype. Not only did they have a

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44. Lysiane Gagnon, "La grande peur de nos notables," *La Presse*, Montreal, August 21, 1980, p. A10. VM166-1-1_D32002, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

45. Guy Pinard, "Sur quel pied les amuseurs publics peuvent-ils danser?" *La Presse*, Montreal, June 16, 1982, p. A 3. VM166-1-1_D32002, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

46. Etienne Nelis, "En vrac-Les musiciens dans le métro," *La Presse*, Montreal, January 14, 1983, page A-7. VM166-1-1_D32002, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

function in urban space, but if their image could be dissociated from begging and crime, they would be more easily acceptable. As a result, such opinions expressed in the public sphere often emphasised the musicians' role in animating the urban space and making them safe for commuters. Columnist Guy Pinard brought up the matter in a commentary in 1983 while evoking Paris and its superior practices in managing crime:

> Parmi les moyens pris pour contrer la violence dans le métro de Paris, il est intéressant de constater que chez les dirigeants de la RATP, l'animation occupe une place de choix, le crime ayant à leur avis moins d'emprise dans une station animée. Près de nous, la CTCUM traînait les musiciens amateurs devant les Tribunaux jusqu'à ce qu'elle lance la serviette tout récemment. Quel contraste![47]

Busking became a measure of the city's modernity and cultural vibrancy, and their harassment a symbol of administrative oppression. The crack-down on buskers by the CTCUM on musicians was, therefore, not perceived in a particularly positive light in the public sphere. It was during this time that Dunlevy had first started busking. Like many others playing in the metro, he too had been fined a few times, which had led him to galvanise public opinion to oppose the busking ban in the metro.

AMIM: The beginning

Twenty-four buskers presented themselves in the municipal court of Montreal on February 3, 1983, to challenge fines issued by the CTCUM for busking in the metro.[48] Dunlevy was among

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47. Guy Pinard, "Combattre la violence dans le métro par des moyens « voyants »," *La Presse*, Montreal, March 12, 1983. VM166-1-1_D32002, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

48. Conrad Bernier, "24 musiciens du métro accusés en Cour municipal," *La Presse*, Montreal, February 3, 1983, C15. Collection de BANQ, Online.

them. After being fined three times within a span of few weeks, he was facing fines worth over a thousand dollar. "I had my two kids with me," he said in the interview, explaining his economic situation that made it difficult for him to pay the fine. He recalled the court hearing that took place over thirty-five years ago with a lot of clarity:

> GD: We went into court; I think it was the 3rd or 4th of February 1983…. we had gotten hold of a young legal-aid lawyer called Pierre Denault. Pierre Denault today is a judge. So, he took our case and got all of us put on the same day, so it was just one after the other after the other… [laughs]. Seventeen, 18, or 20 cases, one after the other…. Then he comes to the trial of Steve Smith. This was a guy who had already had his preliminary before. … He [the lawyer] had a copy of our petition, which by now, in a little over a month, we had accumulated over 10,000 signatures on this petition, which was a lot of signatures, you know. … Now in the English translation [of the rule], it said, you are not allowed to play a radio or a musical instrument in the metro. And in the French translation, it said, c'est interdit de faire fonctionner, it is forbidden to make function, un appareil de radio ou un instrument de musique. 'Mais, votre honneur', he [the lawyer] said, 'you know you can faire fonctionner un appareil de radio, an automobile, a sewing machine, all kinds of apparatuses and machines, but you cannot faire fonctionner un instrument de musique, you play an instrument of music, vous jouez un instrument de musique.' … [Laughs] So that's it, we won.[49]

Article 10 of the bylaws banned busking in the metro. In the end, it was language that came to the rescue of the buskers as their lawyer argued that the clumsy French in the regulation did not

49. Dunlevy, Oral history interview session-I.

Images 21 (left): Report on the petition by Dunlevy and other musicians playing music in the metro. Dunlevy with his flute is in the right corner and the musicians are standing outside the Berri-de-Montigny metro station. *La Presse,* Montreal, January 4, 1983, A2. Collections de BAnQ. Online. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/2288745?docpos=2 (accessed June 20, 2022).

Image 22 (right): Report on the court case hearing of Steve Smith and other musicians. La Presse February 3, 1983, C 15. Collections de BAnQ. Online. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/2288921?docpos=3 (accessed June 20, 2022).

make any sense. At a follow-up hearing of the court case on March 9, 1983, the CTCUM

withdrew its complaints against the musicians after Steve Smith was acquitted.[50]

Somewhere in the middle of this conversation, Dunlevy had stopped to check if my

French was good enough to understand the nuance. Oral history interviews unfold as a dialogue

and the interviewer-researcher's presence plays an equally important role in shaping the

interview as the interviewee-participant's intention and willingness to share stories. My

subjectivity, as an outsider, played a role in eliciting the story in the manner that it was retold in

the interview. This dialogue across difference meant Dunlevy had to spell out the subtleties of

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50 Conrad Bernier, "Plaintes retirees contre 25 musiciens du métro," *La Presse*, Montreal, 10 March 1983, p. A 3.

the argument for me.[51] He aware of my outsider status and he used the difference to convey the ridiculousness of the administrative standpoint. Walter Benjamin notes that part of the craft of the storyteller is to make the story convincing to the listener through establishing distance.[52] Dunlevy's interest in establishing this distance wasn't so much to establish fact from fiction for history bears witness to the intense administrative gaze itinerant musicians and performers have been subjected to in cities. This distance was critical in convincing me, the researcher, about the centrality of surveillance in the experience of busking and the ridiculousness of it all. Given the political moment when language was a polarising issue, the lawyer's argument also demonstrated buskers' willingness to politicise the issue to fight for space in the metro. So, Dunlevy went on to carefully translate the bylaw, so I would grasp the problem in the language.

For Dunlevy, the case was a gamechanger and I spent some time looking up the judgement in the various databases. It appeared that the case had not been digitised and no one had produced a summary of it as it was likely not that important to the legal community, but the news reports verified, almost verbatim, what had transpired at the hearing. There was a gap— between Dunlevy's enthusiasm for the story and its absence in the digital database. Alessandro Portelli argues that oral history does not so much convey facts as it tells us about the meaning of events in people's lives.[53] When Dunlevy said, "We won," in the interview, he didn't refer to the complaints being dropped against them. It wasn't a personal victory that he was so keen to put on record. In fact, he never mentioned the complaints being dropped in the interview. For him, the

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51. See Portelli, "Living Voices," 241 where he discusses the meaning of dialogue and employs it to the context of an oral history interview.

52. Walter Benjamin, The Storyteller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968)*,* 83–109. Originally published as *Illuminationen* in 1955. Benjamin argues that journeymen and sailors, who had travelled a lot, were considered good storytellers as they could easily establish a distance between themselves and their listeners.

53. Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories*.

victory was in the fact that the CTCUM reviewed its policy on busking in the metro in the following years.

Dunlevy, who had grown up in Montreal, had returned to the city in 1981 after some years of travelling and living in New Brunswick. An already deindustrializing and peripheralized economy had been hit hard by the economic recession of 1981-82. Unemployment rates were high. But there was more than lack of jobs that had greeted Dunlevy upon his return. The city was on the cusp of change as the interventionist state of the Quiet Revolution was giving way to a neoliberal form of governance. The cultural sector was experiencing significant transformation. As Diane Saint-Pierre notes, the initial cultural policy of the Quiet Revolution, which copied the French approach of the state taking on the role of the patron of culture, was steadily replaced by a more hybrid form of cultural development, which combined a strong state policy revolving around the politics of building a national cultural identity with private interest-led initiatives.[54] By the 1970s, the state was actively taking measures to democratise culture, involve non-profit institutions in the development of culture in the regions and encouraging "interculturalism" that revolved around French as the common language.[55] Since the 1980s, the state has progressively turned towards a neoliberal form of governance, introducing hybridization in the management of culture, blending a strong nationalist policy with private interest-led initiatives through creation of crown corporations that were arms-length publicly funded organisations.[56] Dunlevy's reflection on the past and his lived experiences made visible the transformation from a bottom-up perspective:

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54. Saint-Pierre, "Québec and Its Cultural Policies," 210–216.

55. *Ibid*, 215.

56. Gattinger and Saint-Pierre, "The 'Neoliberal Turn' in Provincial Cultural Policy."

GD: When I came back to Montreal in 1981, that Fall I tried to get in touch with Salon des métiers d'art again with the idea that I had already participated in it. 'Oh no, we are full up. We can't take anybody.'… This was a crafts-people's fair. This time they had—In the ten years, the difference! Ten years span of time, all of a sudden, they had set up a whole committee for Salon des métiers d'art; it had become very classy — but it was already very classy back in 1970 — but now it was like really classy, you know, and they had become very selective. Anyway, I found out that there was another salon des métiers d'art for Laval. So, after that I got in. That year, they had just changed venue. What happens when you change venue of an event is that a lot of people either really cannot find the new thing or aren't aware that it's changed venue. And so, there's a big drop off in customers, you see. And I had heard that the salon was really good… I had put out a lot of money for— a friend of mine had loaned me $400 to get things together, my leather and everything. And anyway, I lost money on it. I was in the hole; I did not have any idea what I was going to do. How I was going to make money and a friend said, 'Well, why don't you go play in the metro.'… At that time, I was working part-time in a music shop on Bleury (Street). The closest metro was Square Victoria. I went into one of the exits of Square Victoria where I was sure nobody was watching me (laughs) and I went in with my flute and I am playing. I played for three hours and I stopped, and I count my money. Wow! You know, I had never made this much money in this amount of time. In three hours, I had something like 40 or 50 dollars. To me this was like, this was a fortune.[57]

Very rarely is cultural economy observed and written about from such a bottom-up perspective. Between deindustrialization literature that focuses on the industrial working classes and the

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57. Grégoire Dunlevy, Oral history interview session I, Dunham, February 8, 2019.

creative class discourse that frames artists and artisans as harbingers of progress and growth,

lives and experiences of people like Dunlevy tend to get lost. Dunlevy, who grew up middle-

class in the anglophone and wealthy part of Montreal. His reflections on his childhood, which

only came in between other stories and not in a chronological manner, conveyed frictions with

his parents and his differences of opinion. He joined military police as a young adult partly to

escape the normative life at his parents' home but his experiences as a member of a UN

peacekeeping force further caused disillusionment and made him question the power of the state.

He quit the force and took up a job with Bell. His young adulthood in Montreal had coincided

with the Quiet Revolution. The spirit of nationalism and the struggle for social justice that were

the hallmarks of this period's social and political life in Montreal had left an indelible mark on

his life choices. He travelled across North America, went to Woodstock, lived in communes and

then moved to New Brunswick for a few years, in between returning to Montreal for a few years.

During the latter half of the 1960s, when he was in Montreal, he had lived on Prince Arthur

Street and learnt to do leather. It was at this time that he had also participated in one of first

Salon des métiers d'art du Quebec.

The description of the salon as "classy" and the observation on the transformation offers

a window into the changes in the cultural sector in Quebec during this time and the widening gap

between professional and amateur artists and artisans. In 1970, when Dunlevy had first

participated in the salon, it was the first year that the event had been held at Place Bonaventure, a

new international trade centre and hotel complex with an exhibition hall, in itself an indication of

the changing place of craft in the economy. In 1965, the word "artisanat" had been replaced by

"métiers d'art" in the name of the fair,[58] which was also an early indication of the slow

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58. Conseil des métiers d'art du Québec, "Les moments marquants du milieu des métiers d'art au Québec," 2019. https://www.metiersdart.ca/client_file/upload/Historigramme_metiers_dart.pdf. (Accessed 24 February 2021).

professionalization of the crafts industry. When Dunlevy returned to the city once again in 1981, he was suddenly negotiating a more professionalised terrain. Likely, there was also increased competition in the wake of state support for artists and artisans. Since his participation in the salon had been disappointing, he was left with some debt to repay. With a part-time job at a music shop and two children, busking earned him a little extra on the side to put some money in the bank. Dunlevy also rejected the industrial time discipline and work. He said he quit Bell because he didn't see himself doing a nine-to-five job for the rest of his life. To borrow the words of Raymond Williams, he echoed what may be described as an emergent structure of feeling in a city transitioning away from industrial economy.[59] It was a way of being and relating to the social world that predicated on a rejection of the present but, as is the case with emergent cultural practices noted by Williams, it wasn't clear whether his choices were oppositional or alternative.[60] He had embraced an alternative lifestyle to escape the grind of industrial capitalism, but the promise of the postindustrial future had also remained out of grasp, which may well be an indication that the cultural economy to come was yet another manifestation of capitalism.

The turf war between musicians and metro authorities unfolded with this in the backdrop. The situation encouraged Dunlevy to write up a petition to garner public support:

> GD: I said to [my girlfriend], I'll do a petition and maybe we can get the public to sign a petition for the metro musicians, you know, because everybody was experiencing the same problems. … we left the Salon des métiers d'art when it closed at 10 o'clock that night with over a thousand signatures on the petition. The following day, I phoned around

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59. Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 121–127 and 128–135.

60. *Ibid*, 125–127.

to the newspapers. … I got hold of *La Presse*, so they put me over to their editor. His name was Claude Gravel and he said, '… I think things are going to work a lot better if we do this after the holiday….' So, the 3rd of January, I give him a call…. the next day, on page 2 of *La Presse* is a half-page article.... That started a whole snowball effect.[61]

The snowball effect was the increased pressure on the CTCUM to change its bylaw and accommodate busking in the metro. The buskers' petition and the newspaper coverage about the court case and in general on busking in the metro had garnered a lot of public attention. Following this, the buskers formed AMIM, which Dunlevy headed as the founding-president for the next several years. While the victory was significant in the backdrop of a long unfolding public debate over the presence of buskers in the metro and elsewhere in the city, going forward the AMIM would play an important role in improving the image of the buskers in the metro.

Integrating in the cultural economy

The AMIM, founded in 1983, was initially called the Association des musiciens itinérants du métro. The box of papers that were in Dunlevy's possession documents various general assemblies of the association, correspondences with the administration and other institutions and also provides traces of connections with buskers in other cities. They speak to the concerns of the musicians in the metro and their negotiations with the administration on matters related to busking and spots. The tonality of the conversations indicates that the AMIM had an amicable working relationship with the administration and was consulted on matters of interest to buskers in the metro. The lyre signs, which designates busking spots in the metro, were first introduced

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61. Dunlevy, Oral history interview session-I.

in 1986, a year after the CTCUM became the Société de transport de la communauté urbaine de

Montréal (STCUM), a crown corporation.

From serving as a link between the industry and the workers to creating opportunities for

networking, training, providing information on industry regulations, best practices and standards,

and representing and rallying for rights of members, labour market intermediaries serve a variety

of functions.[62] In its first letter of patent as a non-profit organisation, the AMIM stated its

objectives as— 1. Etablir et opérer un service d'aide de structuration et de regroupement dans le

domaine artistique et culturel; 2. Etudier, promouvoir, protéger et développer de toutes manières

les intérêts culturels de ses membres artistes; 3. Organiser à cet effet des rencontres, séances

d'information, et établir un secrétariat pour servir de lien entre ses members.[63] The association

engaged in negotiations with the metro administration, developed a consensus among musicians

on certain self-regulatory practices in order to eliminate tensions between buskers and with the

metro administration and on-site staff related to roster, repertoire, hours and sound level, etc.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, one of the primary concerns of the association was also to

manage the public image of busking. Once busking was legalised in the metro and busking spots

were designated, buskers had to legitimise their presence in the space by drawing a line of

distinction from homeless panhandlers and drug addicts.

One of the moves of the association, which reflects the anxiety around the blurred

boundaries of busking, was to replace the word "itinerant" in the name of the organisation to

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62. Chris Benner, "Labour Flexibility and Regional Development: The Role of Labour Market Intermediaries," *Regional Studies* 37, No. 6-7, (2003), 621-633, DOI: 10.1080/0034340032000108723.

63. Patent letter acknowledging the existence of AMIM as a non-profit organisation. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy. It states the objectives as— to serve as an organisational support service in the domain of art and culture for artists; study, promote, protect and develop the interests of artists in the cultural sector and to organise meetings, information sessions; and a secretariat to serve as a link between its members. English translation by author.

"independent". When asked about the reason behind the name change in the interview, Dunlevy explained:

> GD: Originally, we started as the *Association des musiciens itinérants du métro de Montréal*.... We dropped the itinerant because a lot of people felt that itinerant meant sort of— it had, umm, almost beggar or homeless intonations to it, you know. Somebody who is itinerant just wanders around from place to place. And without any specific intentions or anything, you know. So, we said, okay we will change it from itinerant to independent. So, it became *l'Association des musiciens indépendants du métro de Montréal*. That was the first association and that held up until Pierre Deslauriers and Dino Spaziani took over.[64]

The AMIM became the Regroupement des musiciens du métro de Montréal (RMMM) towards the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, but we will get to this transformation a little later in the chapter. The name change was not just a shift from a negative to a positive association, it was also a move to connect busking to the cultural economy. By portraying buskers as independent musicians and artists, the association not only claimed legitimacy of their presence but also integrated them with the formal economy. From being considered an informal and a casual practice in a marginal urban space, busking became associated with work and networking for the gig economy. The moment of this shift in identity is important to understand why buskers benefitted from this.

Line Grenier writes that by the mid-1980s, aided by the independent labels that emerged because of Quebec government's initiatives to support francophone cultural production, the local music industry was growing despite the overall slump in the music industry and the records

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64. Dunlevy, Oral history interview session-I.

market since the late 1970s and the economic recession of 1981-82.[65] Montreal was attractive to budding artists and musicians for several other reasons, including cheap rents, government support for artists and a general increase in local cultural production, especially French-language content.[66] Place plays an important role in cultural economy. Informational networks that foster connections amongst people and with institutions and corporations are rooted in place. The urban environment – spaces, built environment and the web of human and non-human relationships – are all enrolled in generating such networks. If a "rich institutional nexus" in Montreal support design culture and economy in the city,[67] neighbourhoods such as Mile End are ideal locations for independent and struggling artists, creative professionals and cultural workers to live and work in as they offer "quality of life", low rents, loft-style buildings for studio spaces and mixed-use zoning that allows them to live, work and network in the area.[68] Initiatives such as street festivals and workshops help connect independent creative workers with corporations.[69] In the case of buskers, the metro became a place for musicians to find networks to embed in the cultural industries, whether music, entertainment, tourism or leisure.

In an economy reorganising around art and culture, the AMIM became a grassroots collective that was trying to negotiate the trend towards institutionalisation and professionalization of arts and culture by turning busking into a formal and lawful practice in the metro. The STCUM during this time refined the bylaws for the metro, including the definition of

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65. *Ibid*, 211.

66. Cummins-Russell and Rantisi, "Networks and place in Montreal's independent music Industry," 87.

67. Leslie and Rantisi, "Governing the Design Economy in Montréal," 311.

68. Rantisi and Leslie, "Materiality and creative production," 2824–41.

69. Cohendet, Grandadam and Simon, "The Anatomy of the Creative City," 101–04.

busking by addressing the level of acceptable noise and conditions for the use of amplifiers.[70]

According to the proceedings of the public general assembly of the Conseil d'administration de

la STCUM on 3 July 1986, it adopted a resolution that limited the noise level of any musical

performance in the metro to below 80 decibels.[71] The AMIM also came up with certain etiquette

to be observed by buskers, including directives on appearance, behavior, language and variation

in repertoire, so as to avoid conflict with the staff.

The AMIM members took on activities that further established their image as

independent musicians. For example, in May 1983, the association members had volunteered at

least two hours of their time to play music in order to raise funds for the Festival de la paix in

Montreal.[72] In a meeting of the association held on 13 December 1987, on the agenda were

issues relating to "the list" and an STCUM amendment to a regulation.[73] The list related to a

practice among metro musicians to start a roster on paper to determine the day's line-up at each

spot. The buskers tucked the lists behind the lyre signs, but it appears that on occasion, some

errant musicians would also write on the bins at the stations. The AMIM wanted such practices

to stop as a matter of respect towards STCUM property.

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70. Garnier, « La constitution d'un cadre routinier au prisme du « pouvoir », for a discussion of the changes in the metro regulations, especially those under CA-3, as it affected musicians.

71. Meeting minutes. Conseil d'administration de la STCUM. 3 July 1986, Archives of the Société de transport de Montréal; Transcript of Question and Answer session; AMIM archives in possession of Dunlevy.

72. "Les musiciens jouant pour la paix auront une identification," *Le Journal de Montréal*, 6 May 1983. From the personal archives of Dunlevy.

73. Proceedings of the AMIM meeting held on 13 December 1987. Source: AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.
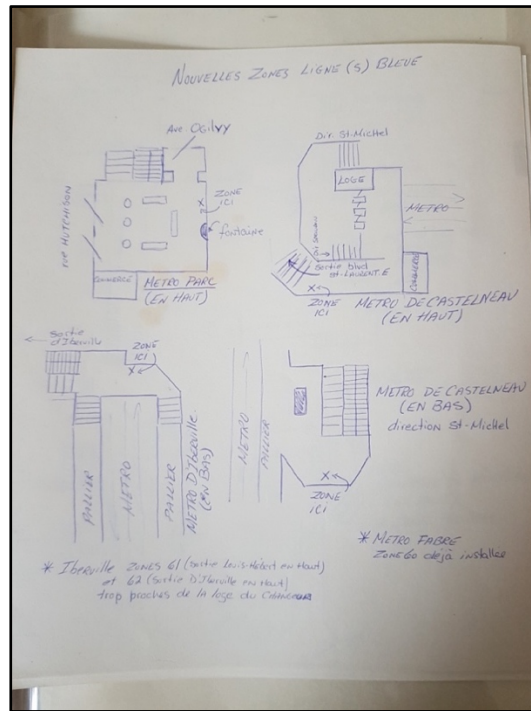
Image 23: A hand-drawn plan of four metro stations that indicate possible busking spots on the blue line of the metro. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.
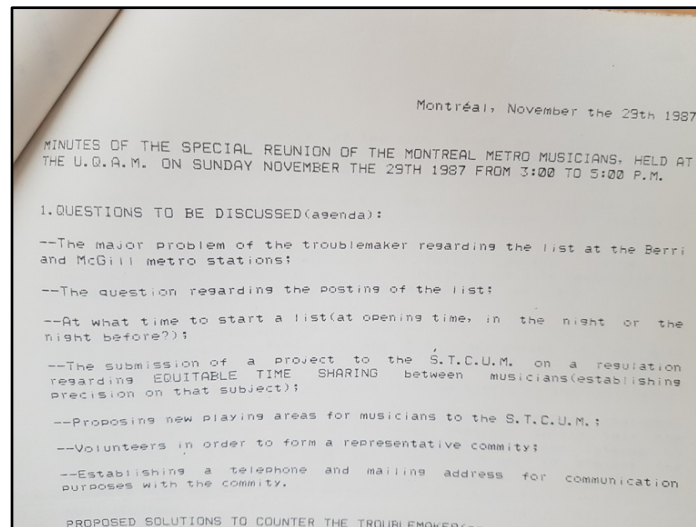
Image 24: The general body meetings of the association concerned itself with a range of issues, which provides a strong sense of its role. This agenda is from a meeting held on 29 November 1987. Matters listed as "to be discussed" include troublemakers, the list system, new spots and propositions for the STCUM among other things. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.

In a meeting on 13 March 1988, a television coverage of buskers in the metro was

discussed and voted on.[74] The association objected to a representation of buskers in the metro in

the program Caméra 88 broadcasted by Télévision Quatre-Saisons and decided to write a letter in

this regard to the producers.[75] According to the letter, the program featured certain metro

musicians who claimed that they played in the trains, marked their territories with cigarette butts

and made eighty dollars in four hours. According to the AMIM, this did not present a positive

image of musicians in the metro and the association was not in agreement with them. Moreover,

the AMIM pointed out that their claims were against the rules of the STCUM and the association

dissociated itself from such practices. The letter asked Caméra 88 to convey the position of the

AMIM in this regard to the public to avoid a negative public opinion of musicians in the metro.

On another occasion, members of the AMIM collectively complained to the STCUM against a

musician for harassment and anti-social behaviour among other accusations.[76]

The AMIM had a seat at the table with the STCUM when it came to making decisions

about busking in the metro. In 1986, at a public meeting where many metro musicians, including

Dunlevy, were in attendance, a representative of the STCUM agreed to look into the

recommendations of the association after questions regarding the lack of lyre signs at many

stations where musicians played.[77] Among the many documents and transcripts and recording of

general assembly meetings are also hand-drawn maps of busking spots at each metro station

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74. Proceedings of the AMIM meeting held on 13 March 1988. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy. Caméra 88 was a program telecasted on Télévision Quatre-Saisons between 1986 and 1993.

75. Copy of a letter to Caméra 88 producers at Télévision Quatre-Saisons. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.

76. Multiple copies of this letter to STCUM exist in the box. It was signed by over thirty buskers. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.

77. Extract of the transcript of the public consultation held by the STCUM on 3 July 1986. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.

done either by Dunlevy or another office bearer or member of the association. Records of such

correspondences and activities undertaken by the AMIM are an indication that the STCUM

collaborated with the association for events and for the day-to-day management of the busking

spots and the musicians' presence in the metro. In 1994, the association officially launched a

guide for busking in the metro was made available to all musicians free of cost through the

STCUM surveillance center at the Berri-UQAM metro station.[78]

The association also served as a link between musicians and the music industry and

prospective clients in the cultural economy of the city. In Dunlevy's papers is a letter from 1985,

written by an employee of the Centre Hospitalier Côte-des-neiges, seeking a list of musicians

and their contact numbers for hire for events.[79] It was only an indication of what was to become

an important function of the AMIM in the next decades. As is apparent from the documents, the

association maintained a bank of artists to be shared with clients on demand. In 1994, Place des

arts invited musicians from the association to play at an event called Les Joies de la musique

Scott.[80] The same year, the association members featured in a fundraising event organised to

fight hunger.[81] One event that received a lot of media attention and coverage was the

Metrolympiade in 1991. Co-organised by the STCUM and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of

Quebec (Le Fondation des maladies du couer du Québec) to celebrate the twenty-fifth

anniversary of the metro and to raise funds for the foundation, the event unfolded over a few

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78. Press conference invitation for a launch of the guide from May 1994 and a copy of the guide are part of the AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy

79. Letter dated May 16, 1985. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.

80. Letter addressed to association president Sylvain Coté, dated October 17, 1994, thanks the association for the musicians' participation in the event. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.

81. Montreal's Taste of the Nation/ Table du partage de Montréal brochure, June 6, 1994. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy. The event was organised by the Share Our Strengths (SOS) Network, which described itself as a nationwide group of creative professionals.
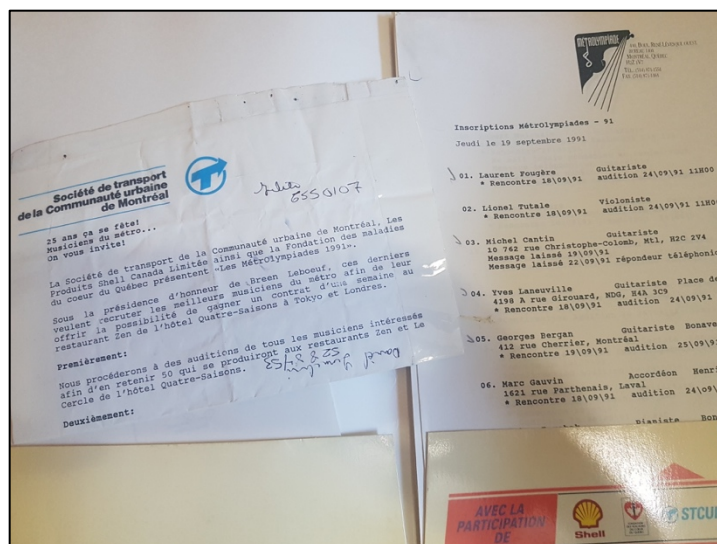
Image 25: STCUM seeks metro musicians to participate in a competition to mark the 25th anniversary celebration of the metro in the city. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.

months as metro musicians auditioned to qualify for participation and a grand finale was planned at two local venues.[82] The four finalists were featured in the promotional material of the event and prizes were announced in collaboration with partners, Shell Canada and l'Hotel Quatre Saison. As correspondences from partner organisations indicate, the AMIM was involved in the roll-out of the event.

In the 1990s, the AMIM was headed by one Sylvain Coté. He stepped down in favour of Kim Pelletier in 1997.[83] Dunlevy once again headed the organisation in the early 2000s. That the AMIM had successfully helped bring busking into the mainstream life of the metro became apparent in Penny Hamer's interview. Born Penelope Jane Hamer, she became a familiar figure in the metro in the 1990s. As a single mother with a job in a community organisation, she was

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82. "Le musiciens du métro en vedette," *La Presse*, Montreal, August 29, 1991; Patrick Gauthier, "Les musiciens du métro auront leur « MétroOlympiade »," *Le Journal de Montréal*, August 29, 1991; and André Beauvais, "Des fêtes originales pour les 25 ans du métro," *Le Journal de Montréal*, September 20, 1991. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.

83. Proceedings, AMIM general assembly, March 28, 1999. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.

struggling to make ends meet when a friend suggested she try busking to supplement her income. It was 1996 and she recalled the time in her life:

> Penny Hamer (PH): We were all trying, and I had— this was not a bad job I had at the community organisation I was in. But we were over our heads…. So, I thought, well I am not going to university anymore. That had taken a huge part of my time when I was doing my thesis; I have a bit more time now. So, I am going to get a second job. You know, so I started thinking, okay, what am I gonna do because it's gotta be nights or weekends. And then this friend of mine said, well, busk… he showed me how to book my name and so on and I remember the first time I did it, I was just terrified and I had about a ten-song repertoire that I felt solid enough to take out in public and the first song I did, you know people started throwing money in my case and I got a really nice reception and I thought, well, maybe this. And then I started doing more and more and then I had to do it on weekends or after 5.30 at night, like I usually got the 5.30 to 7.30 spot because I couldn't; I was working all day…. And I just loved it. And I just couldn't believe that I was making enough money. This was— I found a second job.[84]

Hamer mentioned that she met people – other musicians – through busking and later had an opportunity to record an album through a contact that she made while busking. This acceptance of busking in the metro, however, had started a new turf war between musicians and other itinerant groups who occupied such spaces in the metro. It led the AMIM to propose a permit system that was to be regulated through auditions and a fee of ninety dollars. It wasn't without controversies. And as the meeting minutes of 1999 state, the proposal had been struck down by the STCUM. While the reason seemed to be the cost attached to hiring a lawyer and the STCUM

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84. Penny Hamer, Oral history interview, Montreal, May 1, 2019.

having no such provision for the AMIM,[85] not all musicians were against the idea. Hamer spoke about having voted for the auditions in the general assembly for a few reasons:

> PH: I left before they started having auditions, but I had voted for the auditions because you had to show that at least you had a bit of a repertoire and you could play an instrument, string or whatever you do. Like there's no way that somebody hitting two drumsticks on the ground would have passed the auditions [laughs]. That's the main thing. Someone that would just go out there and waaan... you know, just growling, say they were singing. That happened to me once. Place Dupuis, which is at Berri, which is now closed I believe, but there was a spot there. There was a harp [the lyre sign] there and I went there to play one day, to take my spot. And some guy sitting on the ground, grrrrr, just growling in his hand and I said, I am here to play, and he said, hmmhmmm. I said, No, you are not [laughs]. But, you know, it was— that was the problem. Where do you draw the line? So, the auditions were to draw that line. Not everybody would want them, some of the friends really said, No, this is a bad idea.[86]

Hamer wasn't the only one to have been in such situations. Clashes with homeless panhandlers or errant musicians were not uncommon for buskers. The AMIM, though never intending to take on the role of a surveillance agent, was nevertheless saddled with the job. Dunlevy spoke at length about his confrontations with those who solicited money for drugs and complaints from other buskers. This also makes visible the contradictions within the organisation that aimed to represent buskers. Busking has historically been an itinerant and marginal urban cultural practice. One of the distinguishing features of busking has always been its ambivalence, which

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85. From the personal archives of Dunlevy.

86. Hamer, Oral history interview.

also made it an inclusive practice. Once formalised within the space of the metro, busking started

to have boundaries around who could be considered as busking. The AMIM not only embodied

this tension but as a labour market intermediary also helped modulate the definition of busking to

integrate it with the cultural economy.

The AMIM's function increasingly revolved around facilitating connections between

musicians and the market and protecting the territory of the metro as a place for performing these

connections. When the AMIM was formed, it wasn't the only buskers' association in the city.

Newspapers from this period refer to other organisations such as the Association des

chansonniers et musiciens publics, which was led by one Michel Pietro in the 1970s. Dunlevy

and other musicians in the metro had used the metro to open up a political space to mobilise for

their rights in the underground. However, such new spaces of political action do not by default

create conditions for social justice. As Julie-Anne Boudreau writes, "Space as a target of social

mobilization does not necessarily lead to 'free spaces' of emancipation."[87] The association

distinguished itself by foregrounding an association with the metro and changing the definition

of busker from an itinerant entertainer to an independent musician. Just as musicians became an

important marker of the Montreal metro, the metro became a label for the musicians, which

allowed them access to the gig economy. While there is a fluidity amongst musicians in terms of

spaces where they play, metro musicians or musiciens du métro became an identity-marker that

allowed privileged access to some performance spaces in the city but simultaneously created new

zones of exclusion.

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87. Julie-Anne Boudreau, "Making new political spaces: mobilizing spatial imaginaries, instrumentalizing spatial practices, and strategically using spatial tools," *Environment and Planning* A 39 (2007): 2608, 2593–2611.

Association to regroupement

A letter dated January 2005 to Dunlevy from Registraire des entreprises states that the AMIM's application for registration as a non-profit organisation had been rejected for lacking the required information.[88] In 2009, the Regroupement des musiciens du métro de Montréal (RMMM) was founded. When Dunlevy spoke about the AMIM's transition into the RMMM, he emphasized the continuity between the two organisations. The RMMM website, MusiMétroMontréal, too identified Dunlevy as the founder-president. And its most recent iteration as Musiciens du métro et de rue de Montréal (MMetRM) also acknowledges a continuity with the association founded in 1983. However, Dino Spaziani, who became one of the office-bearers of the RMMM, recalled it somewhat differently:

> Dino Spaziani (DS): Me, when I came back in 2009… people told me that they lost a lot of stations…. There was a lot of fighting for stations, there was a lot of fighting between musicians. And so, I proposed things, and then they asked me, Can you try to do something? So, I did my research to build a non-profit organisation, found two other guys to put their names on the contract and built the organisation. We had our first meeting at UQAM, we were nearly 80 musicians….
>
> P.C.: When you took over in 2009, like why did you form a new organisation? Why did the old organisation not continue? What happened to the old organisation?
>
> D.S.: [clears his throat] The first reason is the law…. You need three signatures; you need three people that respond, have the responsibility of the *organisme* [enterprise]. Grégoire Dunlevy was alone, and he didn't have the knowledge about the new way that it should— I don't know, that's my idea, I never confirmed with him but I know that he left it behind,

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88. Letter from Registraire des entreprises dated January 2005. AMIM papers in possession of Dunlevy.

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I never verified with him but I know that he left it behind. He closed the book and he

dissolved the whole *organisme* from the registry of enterprises.[89]

In Spaziani's memory, they were two different entities. Spaziani also recalled attending some of

the general assemblies of the AMIM in the 1990s. "I went to two general assembly; there was

blah, blah, blah, blah and everyone was complaining before it ended, every time," he said,

adding that he didn't speak out then because "it was in English" and he didn't speak English at

that time:

> DS: But if it didn't work, it's because musicians— when it works, it's because musicians
>
> want that to. When it doesn't work, it's because musicians they don't want it to. They
>
> don't want it for themselves and they don't care about others. And then when they have
>
> some consequences of me, myself and I, then they realize they had to work together.[90]

Though Spaziani indicated that the RMMM had to be organised from scratch in 2009, some

continuities are reflected in the organisational practices. The association, since its early years as

the AMIM, had held its meetings in one of the buildings of the Université du Québec à Montréal

connected to the Berri-UQAM metro. In his interview, Dunlevy mentioned that the musicians

found it a convenient spot to gather, given the number of busking spots at the Berri-UQAM

station. They simply walked in and found a room to hold a meeting. Over time, this practice must

have been formalised as there were some receipts of room bookings on file and records that

small fees were sometimes collected from musicians towards room rental. The RMMM

continued to hold its meetings at UQAM. This also speaks to the essence of the organisation as a

ground-up collective where its existence, practices and role and future were very much

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89. Spaziani, Oral history interview.

90. *Ibid.*

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predicted on the musicians' interest to organise, precisely what Spaziani indicated. The organisation functioned or did not function depending on whether the musicians in that particular moment found it useful to be part of a collective.

Informal archives such as the one held by Dunlevy are not necessarily informal documents, but the organisational logic is not determined by the state.[91] In fact, plenty of documents in Dunlevy's box were copies of official correspondences, but the box also contained a lot of ephemera— fragments of Dunlevy's own life, and others' lives and busking practices that offered a window into that period. However, such informal archives can also help construct a narrative that complements the interview or offers a contesting view of events.[92] There is a lack of clarity on what happened between the years 2005 and 2009. The gap speaks to the challenges of grassroots organising and sustaining such conversations over a long period of time with little more than personal interest and initiative to go on. Both Dunlevy and Spaziani, in their interviews, spoke about the time and energy committed to the work and their frustrations. As the general assembly proceedings of the AMIM also indicated, one of the biggest challenges sometimes was to ensure the presence of buskers at the meetings.

The change in the name of the organisation indicates both a break and continuity between the two entities. It signals a transformation in the role of the organisation, which was now called a "regroupement" instead of an "association". The word "association" carries the sense of a formal organisation of professionals or tradespeople who come together for a reason and with a

91. Auerbach, "Informal Archives," 346–8.

92. *Ibid*, 348. Auerbach argues that such a practice of using informal archives can counter bias in the interviews. However, as an oral historian I would argue that it can make visible contesting versions of history or events.

particular interest in mind.[93] The interest in 1983 was to lobby for the rights to play music in the metro and claim a place within the economy by portraying busking as work. Regroupement conveys coming together of people and has a somewhat informal implication with less emphasis on reasons or interest behind the gathering.[94] It also indicates a more politically neutral role.

The transformation in the role of the organisation became even more pronounced over the years. In 2011, the RMMM, as MusiMétroMontréal, partnered with the metro administration, now Société de transport de Montréal (STM), to introduce auditions and spot-booking at some downtown stations through the Les étoiles du métro program.[95] The program held annual auditions and gave around forty to fifty musicians special access to a spot-booking system that made the self-regulatory practice of having a list among buskers redundant in certain downtown stations. It also gave the qualifying musicians access to special STM contracts.[96] The program ran for a few years before being withdrawn as the relationship between the STM and the RMMM broke down.[97] Hamer, in her interview, was critical of the program. She said though she saw the point of having auditions, the stars' program created an unnecessary sense of hierarchy:

93. "association" (nom féminin): Action d'associer qqn à qqch; and action de se réunir d'une manière durable ; état des personnes qui sont réunies. Le Petit Robert. https://petitrobert-lerobert-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/robert.asp (Accessed 14 January 2021).

94. "regroupement" (nom masculin): Action de regrouper, de se regrouper, Le Petit Robert. https://petitrobert-lerobert-com.lib-ezproxy.concordia.ca/robert.asp. (Accessed 14 January 2021)

95. "The STM Introduces Les Étoiles Du Métro!" STM, Montreal, December 13, 2012. https://www.stm.info/fr/node/2482 (Accessed April 21, 2022).

96. "Les étoiles du métro dévoilées," *Métro*, Montréal, February 10, 2014. https://journalmetro.com/actualites/montreal/445628/les-etoiles-du-metro-devoilees/#:~:text=Les%2050%20musiciens%20s%C3%A9lectionn%C3%A9s%20pour,%C3%A9v%C3%A9nements%20commandit%C3%A9s%20par%20la%20STM. (Accessed April 21, 2022).

97. Marissa Groguhé, "Métro de Montréal: avenir incertain pour les musiciens," La Presse, Montreal, July 15, 2018. https://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/grand-montreal/201807/15/01-5189576-metro-de-montreal-avenir-incertain-pour-les-musiciens.php (Accessed April 21, 2022).

PH: It sort of changes things a bit. When you have to go book your spot, you know, you

committed. You know you wanna do that because you are gonna get up, 4.30, whatever,

in the morning to book a spot…. Whereas, it does change it when you know you have a

spot reserved for you. It's crossing that line and I think some people didn't want that.

You know, that's the problem. people wanted to regulate it enough, so there was a certain

standard, but they didn't want to regulate it so much that it changed the whole the nature

because there is something very special about that…. This whole Les étoiles du metro,

that came later. I don't know whose idea that was. I would not have voted for that

because that also created problems between buskers. You know, all of a sudden— there's

this camaraderie, this honour system that we had. All of sudden, there are the stars and

there's the other buskers. I found that weird…. It's funny, one of the people I know who

voted against this system became an etoile, so I wonder how they are doing, dealing with

that. That's interesting you know. I would try and find out whose idea that was. The

metro system or was it the buskers? I don't even know.[98]

The STM had introduced Les étoiles du métro program but the RMMM was responsible for

organising the auditions and overseeing the day-to-day functioning. Though it might be hard to

point at whose idea it was, it does appear that the program was contentious. Not only did the

program attract more professional musicians to play in the metro, it also created a sense of

hierarchy among the buskers. It took away some of the best spots for busking in terms of

footfalls, acoustics, climatic conditions and donations from regular buskers, displacing those who

failed to qualify the auditions. In 2019, the RMMM was in a flux as it had lost its place on the

negotiating table with the STM. Lucas Choi Zimbel, a professional musician who described

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98. Hamer, Oral history interview.

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himself as a cardholding member of the RMMM for many years and also acted as their unofficial

spokesperson in English, talked about the challenges before the organisation:

> Lucas Choi Zimbel (LCZ): The organization is definitely in a transitional phase right
>
> now. Les Etoiles du Metro doesn't exist anymore. It's kind of hard to stay afloat, as in
>
> like what's the interest? Why would people be members? Because there is a membership
>
> and all that. Now there are a couple of things that incite people to stay as members; right
>
> now, it's the gigs, right. So, you have access to gigs. Fairly well-paid gigs, worthwhile to
>
> be a member. And also the city – the outdoor – permits. We haven't talked that much
>
> about the outdoor permits. Basically, the Ville Marie borough issues the outdoor permits
>
> that costs 170 dollars right now. Last year, it cost 150 (dollars), so we'll see for next year.
>
> But what they used to do was they used to have auditions and you had to audition in front
>
> of one city worker and two professionals from the music industry, whatever the hell that
>
> means…. But since last year, they stopped doing that and now the only way to get a
>
> permit is— There are four ways to get a permit now. You could be a member of the
>
> musicians' guild; if you are a member of the musicians' guild, you can automatically get
>
> a permit. However, being a member of the musicians' guild costs you 210 bucks each
>
> year. And when you sign up, you have to pay a sign-up fee as well, which is a couple of
>
> hundred bucks…. And the last way is that you could be a member of the RMMM. The
>
> executive committee of the RMMM negotiated it because they were also very involved
>
> with the city.[99]

While there was currency in being a member of the RMMM, there were also more epistemic

challenges. The RMMM technically did not represent all buskers in the metro because

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99. Lucas Choi Zimbel, Oral history interview, Montreal, May 29, 2019.

membership was not a requirement for playing music in the underground and one could be a metro busker without being a member of the RMMM. The organisation functioned as an exclusive group that had access to gigs in the entertainment and music industries. According to Zimbel, it didn't take a lot of skills to become a member of the musicians' guild, but it cost more than an RMMM membership. Thus, it served an interest group among musicians who couldn't afford to become members of the guild or their interests were not served by the guild. The appeal of the RMMM lay among the local and marginalised musicians but in trying to represent and benefit the musicians among them, it had also narrowed its appeal. It was caught in the dichotomy of being a buskers' association and yet policing the boundaries of a practice that historically thrived in the ambivalence. Zimbel articulated the confusion well:

> LCZ: It's just an entity that exists to defend the rights of buskers, members and non-members. Whether you are a member of the RMMM or not, the RMMM exists to protect your rights of metro musicians basically. Now, this has created some conflict within the RMMM because some people in the RMMM say how can we represent people who aren't members, you know what I mean. How is that even a thing? So, we have had internal discussions about it quite a bit but right now the position is that we defend the rights of all the buskers in the metro. Rather they defend because I am a member of the RMMM but I'm not on the executive committee. I've never been on the executive committee. you know what I mean. I am just a card-carrying member.[100]

Zimbel was a trained musician who had successfully embedded himself in the independent music industry. He informed that had just released an album a few days before the interview. For him, busking was no longer a necessity but there was a time when he depended on that income as a

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100. *Ibid.*

struggling musician. He was fighting to save the organisation and its principle but also saw the contradictions clearly and the challenges.

Labour market intermediaries, whether community groups or non-profit initiatives and public-private partnership consortiums, have increasingly been enrolled in the neoliberal project of the city. Despite their roots in social justice movements, anti-capitalist, feminist and anti-racist ideologies, community-based organisations can become integrated into the neoliberal landscape of the city and work to produce and sustain a labour market conducive for investment and facilitating the growth of private capital. "Such organizations are conduits for channeling the state's (neoliberal) interests to citizens, rather than making claims to the state on citizens' behalf, with a focus on advancing individualized citizen identity and responsibility," argue Norma Rantisi and Deborah Leslie.[101] They function as an extension of the government by offering funding opportunities and stepping in with supplemental services in the absence of the government. It reflects what Boudreau too alludes to when she argues that new political spaces, such as the Toronto city-region as an imaginary, may in fact further the neoliberal project.[102] In some ways, the RMMM took on such a responsibility when it partnered with the STM to manage the Les étoiles du métro program. However, signs of such collaborations were also visible with the AMIM working in close association with the then metro administration. Even if there was a break between the two entities, this reflects that the organisation has only moved forward in the continuum of a neoliberal approach to governance. In 2021, the RMMM changed its name once again to become the MMetRM.

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101. Rantisi and Leslie, "In and against the Neoliberal State?," 354.

102. Boudreau, "Making new political spaces," 2608.

This short-lived history of a buskers' association tells many stories. To begin with, it speaks to a transitional moment in Montreal's economy from a grassroots perspective. Though Montreal's cultural economy and its transition from an industrial to a postindustrial city has been studied and discussed from different disciplinary perspectives, these studies have revolved around the organised economy. Buskers, who have become key actors of this economic and cultural landscape, rarely occupy a place in these conversations unless as embodied expressions of creativity and cultural vibrancy. This organisational history and the associated oral histories speak to their struggles within the context of this economic transformation. The buskers' coming together as an association not only exposes the vulnerability of musicians and artists in this economy, it also offers a glimpse of a grassroots collective that, even if briefly, attempted to fill the void in the absence of unions and professional associations that would include buskers into their folds. During the interview, Zimbel indicated that he had approached the Industrial Workers' of the World but without much success. The discontinuities between the AMIM and the RMMM speak to the bureaucratic hurdles and expectations that are often difficult to meet for buskers who are used to occupying informal spaces in the city. As Zimbel noted, "you must understand many buskers are not all that there,"[103] indicating vulnerabilities amongst buskers who turn to this trade for different reasons, including mental and physical health challenges and social and economic marginality in the city.

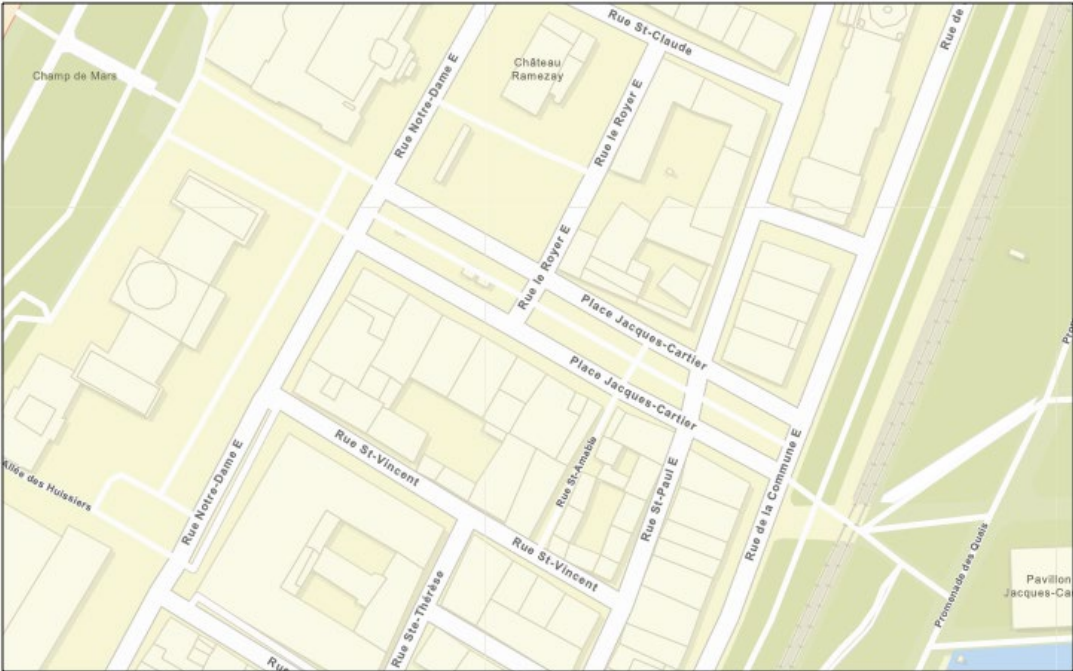The institutionalisation of art and craft through the introduction of laws and unions and professional associations not only contributed to professionalization of these practices but also led to a hardening of boundaries between professionals and amateurs among artists. This reflected in the buskers' efforts to portray themselves as artists and musicians and shed the

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[103] Zimbel, Oral history interview.

stereotype of itinerance that was associated with begging and homelessness in the city. A *La Presse* report in 1985 commented on the increasing acceptance of buskers in the city, also indicating the motivations for busking to be life on welfare, part-time jobs elsewhere, closure of the boîtes à chansons and availability of a larger number of trained musicians with a limited or closed music scene where new musicians struggled to find work.[104] Busking was a way of making money for such musicians as they awaited a break in the music or the entertainment industry. The accommodation of busking in the metro had multiple functions— they animated the underground with their music and served as a preparatory stage and networking platform for new musicians and an avenue of income to supplement or support gig work. The association, therefore, not only represented buskers as a unified professional entity, but also increasingly came to serve as an intermediary in the labour market.

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104. Suzanne Dansereau, "Les musiciens ambulants se font une place de plus en plus acceptée," *La Presse Plus* Montreal, 7 September 1985, 5. Collection de BANQ. Online. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/2251871 (accessed June 20, 2022)

Map 4: Map of Place Jacques-Cartier in Old Montreal

La cartographie de base de Montréal

April 8, 2022

1:2,257

| 0 | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.05 mi |
| 0 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.08 km |

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
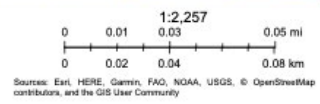
Map 5: Place d'armes in old Montreal

Chapter 6

Place Jacques-Cartier: "We have always been here"

Eric Girard was balancing himself on the edge of the green space – Place de la Dauversière –

next to the busking pitch on Place Jacques-Cartier and getting a sense of the crowd before

starting his show. The restaurant terraces along the gentle slope that meets Vieux Port or old port

at rue de la Commune were also in anticipation of customers. A musician was playing closer to

the Nelson's Column at the north end of the square, next to rue Notre-Dame. Some people were

starting to stroll up the square from old port. Girard decided to give it a few more minutes before

heading out to the pitch to place his amplifier and an old chest, full of blunt swords and myriad

other objects, at the centre of the square to signal that something was about to unfold there.

We were discussing street-performing in Vieux-Montreal or old Montreal and the rules

for busking[1] at various places in the city when he casually noted, gesturing towards the busking

pitch on the public square, "We have always been here." At that moment, I understood the

statement in the context of the borough administration's recent attempts to manage buskers.

Circle performers always performed at that particular spot, unlike musicians, sculpteur des

ballons, artists and artisans who occupied other locations at the square. Girard was, however,

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1. See "Ville-Marie – Permis de musicien, d'amuseur public et de sculpteur de ballons," Ville de Montréal, http://www1.ville.montreal.qc.ca/banque311/node/144 (accessed May 1, 2021) for regulations that govern busking in Old Montreal. In Montreal, each borough is responsible for regulating busking in the areas under their administration. The borough of Ville Marie, which oversees the administration of Old Montreal, requires permits that are to be renewed every year for a fee. The buskers must also respect the bylaws related to noise and nuisance. In case of use of fire for performances, the borough requires the busker to possess a fire insurance and a clearance from the fire department. Buskers are also required to display their permits and insurance during performances in a manner that is visible to the inspector. Busking in Montreal has always been regulated through permits or other noise, nuisance and solicitation related regulations. For an overview of the changes since the mid-nineteenth century, with regards to street musicians in the city, see Genest, "Musiciens de rue et réglements municipaux à Montréal," 31–44.

also alluding to a longer history of itinerant performers' presence at the square, since the early

nineteenth-century, and this became apparent when he brought it up again in the interview.

Focusing on this interview that I conducted at that same green patch next to the busking

pitch and drawing on archival documents, this chapter engages with the history of Place Jacques-

Cartier as a marketplace and a public square and traces its transformation within the context of

Montreal's deindustrialising economy from the perspective of those who are structurally at a

disadvantageous position in the city. The attempt to trace itinerant street performers at the square

in the archives alongside examining their more contemporary lived experiences of place makes

visible exclusions and absences in the dominant narrative about old Montreal's history and

heritage. It reveals a complicity between heritage and gentrification that works to eliminate

histories of marginalised groups from place and imposes an order over the landscape that favours

the rich and the powerful. Finally, a tussle for control over space at the square between the

buskers and the borough administration, as it unfolded in the summer of 2019 and is traced

through the oral history interviews with buskers, opens up the possibility of reflecting on the

square as a contested terrain in the city's history.

Place Jacques-Cartier is a central, yet liminal space in old Montreal. The square is

surrounded by attractions that draw a significant number of tourists every year. Since the 1960s,

as Martin Drouin notes, old Montreal has built itself into a place for cultural tourism.[2] The

buildings have been restored a façade that speaks of a rich architectural heritage. All material

reminders in place are that of the rich and the powerful, and that of the settler colonial state. Alan

Gordon writes that public memory "enshrined in historic sites and public monuments" speak as

much to the "sense of history" of people who make those memories as they "commemorate

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2. Martin Drouin, « Le tourisme dans le Vieux-Montréal : une fonction au cœur de sa renaissance et de sa rehabilitation », *Téoros* 28, No. 1 (2009): 93–6. http://journals.openedition.org/teoros/416 (April 13, 2022).

power" and an "ongoing contest for hegemony.[3] Much of the built environment around the

square is testimony to the versions of histories that the British and the French colonisers wanted

to impose on the place. Slightly uphill, across the street from the square, is the City Hall built in

the early twentieth century and Square Vauquelin that used to be the site of a prison until the

mid-nineteenth century and now has a fountain and the statue commemorating a French naval

officer from the eighteenth century. Next to it is Champs-de-mars that served as an old military

ground and a green space in nineteenth century Montreal. Château Ramezey and Nelson's

column too stand testimony to the French and the British imperial history. These edifices

represent, reify, celebrate and emphasise the European settler history on the land from the

seventeenth century onwards. One has to dig a little in the archives and read into the silences that

are potent with contesting versions of history and which echo what Girard was trying to convey.

The only visible traces of indigenous history on the landscape are assigned to pre-history[4]

with little acknowledgement of the obliteration of and silences imposed on the peoples who

continue to inhabit this land but have been marginalised in history. As Gordon notes, attending to

the history of indigenous peoples will tell a different story of "gradual expulsion and exclusion"

from the place.[5] Marie-Joseph Angelique, a Black slave woman who was sentenced to a brutal

death for a fire that burnt down much of the eighteenth century old city,[6] is the only reminder of

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3. Alan Gordon, Preface to *Making Public Pasts: The Contested Terrain of Montréal's Public Memories, 1891–1930* (Montreal & Kingston, London and Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), xv.

4. See Pierre Bibeau, « Au dessous de Vieux-Montréal. Contribution de l'archéologie à la préhistoire et à la histoire » in *Le Vieux-Montréal, un « quartier de l'histoire » ?, ed.* Joanne Burgess and Paul-André Linteau (Québec: Éditions MultiMondes, 2010), 47–59 on the archeological remains found at different sites in Vieux-Montreal. Bibeau notes that though it can't be concluded that the place was any more privileged by indigenous peoples than other places, its historical importance as a city is undeniable for the French and the British regimes.

5. Gordon, *Making Public Pasts*, 27.

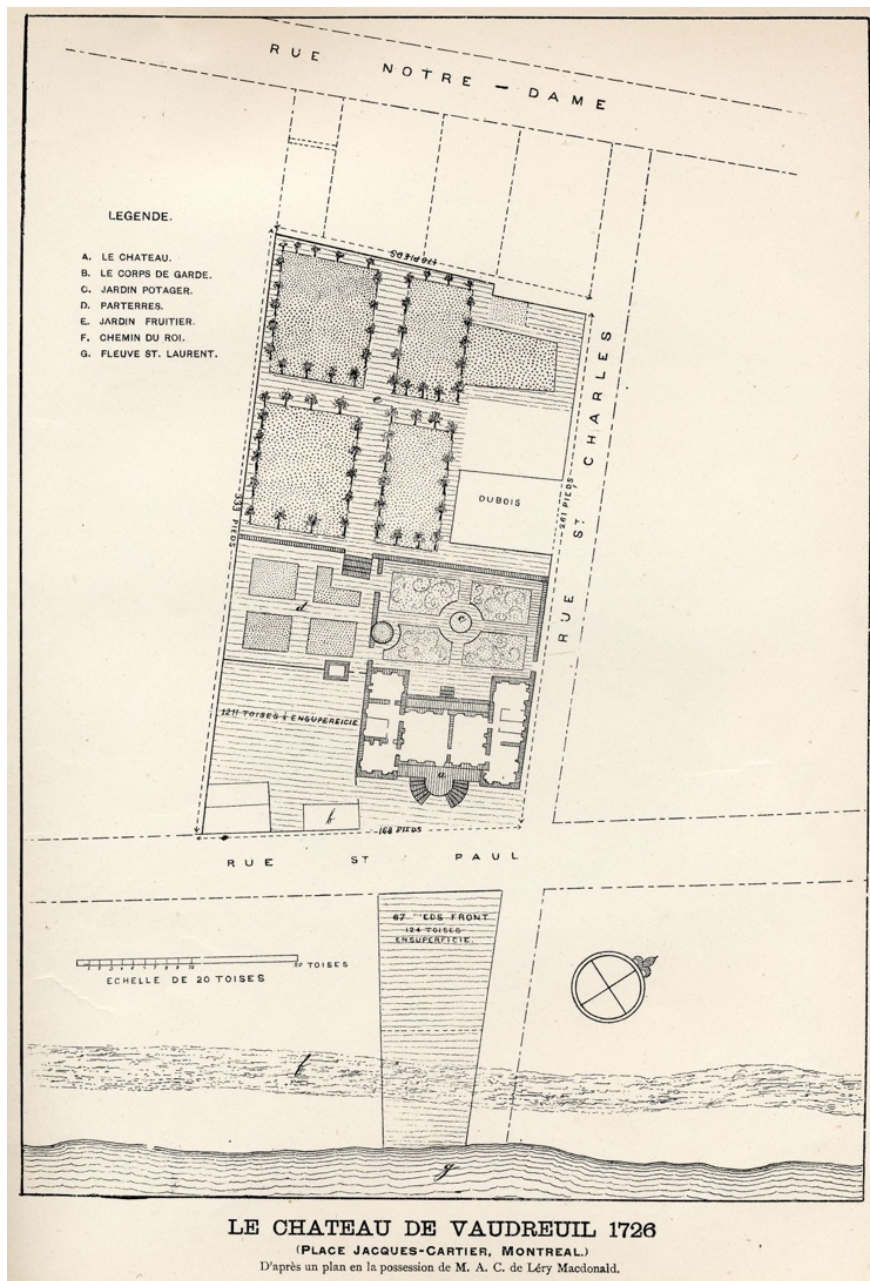6. Cooper, *The Hanging Of Angelique.*

slavery memorialised through a tiny green space on the edge of the historical district. Traces of

that bustling nineteenth century city where itinerant lives – vagabonds, tramps and prostitutes –

that lived, worked and found socialities on the streets are absent.[7] Invisible are also the histories

of labourers, porters, steamboat and railway workers who frequented the streets and the square

for work. The only trace of the marketplace is a little kiosk that sells artisanal products and ice-

cream to tourists. Far from embodying the cacophony of the actual place that can be traced in the

archives, the square memorialises a sanitised version of history that hide the class contestations

and race relations embedded in place.

A nineteenth century market square

In what was still the old town of Ville Marie in the eighteenth century, Place Jacques-Cartier was

the site of Château Vaudreuil, which served as the residence of the Governor-generals of New

France until the conquest of New France by the British in 1760. It 1773, it became Collège Saint-

Raphaël, a seminary run by the Sulpicians.[8] Following a fire that burnt down the building in

1803, the place was turned into a public market (marché public). Opened in 1807, it came to be

known as marché neuf or the new market. In September 1808, a town crier was employed to

announce the auction of the forty stalls at the market square. In 1821, the city gave permission to

a salted meat seller to construct a more permanent structure to the north, between the square and

the Nelson's Column. There were also sellers of poultry, meat, fresh fish, cooked victuals, fruits

and vegetables who set up their stalls at the market. According to a receipts and expenditure

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7. Poutanen, ""Bonds of Friendship, Kinship and Community."

8. "Collège Saint-Raphaël en 1785," Fiche d'une société, Bâtiments, Vieux-Montréal Quebec–Canada.
https://www.vieux.montreal.qc.ca/inventaire/fiches/fiche_gro.php?id=144 (Accessed April 14, 2022)

Map 6: The plan of Château Vadreuil from 1726. Collection de BANQ: MIC/B524\24449 GEN. https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/1956259. The map was published in Benjamin Sulte, *Histoire des Canadiens-français, 1608-1880*: *origine, histoire, religion, guerres, découvertes, colonisation, coutumes, vie domestique, sociale et politique, développement, avenir,* Montréal: Wilson & cie, éditeurs, 1882-1884 vol. 8, tenth illustration following the title page.

Image 26: Market Day at Place Jacques Cartier. The image was published in *C.O.F. Montréal souvenir*, Montréal: Comité de publication, 1892, p. 24. Collection de BANQ. https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/1956398 (accessed June 20, 2022). The photo book was published by Catholic Order of Foresters, De Brebeouf Court, Montreal. In the backdrop are the Nelson's Column and the City Hall.

Image 27: The square in 1942. Horse carriages had been replaced by motor vehicles. Photo by J.M. Talbot. 03Q,E6,S7,SS1,P5530, Fonds Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, Collection de BAnQ. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3034206 (accessed June 20, 2022)

report filed in December 1841, the market employed a clerk and two constables, apart from incurring some cleaning costs and having a small contingency fund.[9]

Noting the importance of public markets to the nineteenth-century Quebec society, Yves Bergeron writes that they were sites of contact and exchange between the city and the countryside. They were bustling and noisy places where farmers, butchers, merchants and fishmongers gathered weekly to sell their fresh produce directly to the clientele in the city without the involvement of intermediaries. The other figures who frequented the public markets included itinerant entertainers, such as acrobats, organ grinders, animal exhibitors and jugglers. By the nineteenth century, the public markets in Quebec had adopted the English style of an indoor market and these markets often served multiple social functions, including as theatre, exhibition hall and bazaar. In Montreal, Bonsecours market (marché Bonsecours), for example, housed the City Hall for a few years and served as the venue for various cultural activities apart from serving as public market for fresh produce.[10]

After Bonsecours market was inaugurated in 1847, the square was decommissioned as a market square. Renamed Place Jacques-Cartier in 1865, it was redesignated as a place for promenades though it continued to be the heart of commercial activities. In fact, not only would it become an important commercial centre of the industrialising city, but the square would continue to be an informal market as people parked their carriages there and farmers hawked their goods from the back of carriages and later trucks, sometimes to the annoyance of the

9. VM166-R3545-3-4_1841, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

10. Yves Bergeron, "Le XIXe siècle et l'âge d'or des marchés publics au Québec," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 29, no.1 (Spring 1994): 11-36

Les ménagères se rendent de bonne heure pour avoir un choix varié

Image 28: Place Jacques-Cartier, between 1870 and 1920. MAS 2-182-c, Collection de BANQ.
https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/2080833 (accessed June 20, 2022)

merchants and traders who had permanent shops around the square. On one occasion in

September 1889, the market committee referred a grievance to the police committee. The

proprietor of Jacques Cartier Hotel had complained that "farmers station(ed) their vehicles

opposite his establishment, to the prejudice of his business".[11] According to a follow up report

from the police committee, it appears that the complaint was not entertained though no reasons

were cited for the same, which goes to indicate that the farmers' stationing their vehicles at the

square was likely an accepted, though contested, practice.

When spatialized and understood in their plurality, markets are complex institutions both

aware of and enrolled in the production of a place.[12] Complaints against farmers, courier-boys

11. Extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Market Committee held on 29 September 1889. Place Jacques-Cartier, Actes notariés et decisions, Ville de Montréal. VM166-R3545-3-4_1841, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

12. See Peck, Brendt and Rantisi, "Introduction: Exploring Markets." In the introductory chapter to the book, Peck, Brendt and Rantisi offer an overview of the various ways in which economic geographers have understood and employed the understanding of markets as located in space and diverse in their forms. Polanyian and other political economists influenced by poststructuralist theories of performativity and actor-network theory and heterodox

and caleche drivers who frequented the square to conduct business, run errands and cart people and goods were common in the nineteenth century, indicating a friction between the wealthy proprietors living and running businesses in and around the square and farmers and workers who came in from the countryside or poorer parts of the city for work. Letters signed and supported by many property owners in the vicinity of the square also indicate the square's improvement was a pet project for the rich. Take for example this letter from the "proprietors and citizens of Jacques Cartier Square and neighbourhoods" that suggested a slew of "improvements and embellishments" to the square that would meet the "approbations of the citizens of Montreal" generally. One of the recommendations was:

> that planked side-walks be constructed on each side of said square from Notre Dame to Commissioner's Streets, at least from 18 to 20 feet in width outside of which a row of — trees should be carefully planted to ensure their growth. Leaving the entire centre of said square or avenue as an open carriageway and for stands for public vehicles thereby securing an uninterrupted free circulation of River air, towards the town and parts of the city behind the Champ de Mars.[13]

Conflicts and contestations over space were also as much about the auditory landscape. Another letter dated 3 March 1896 and written by owners of businesses at the square to the municipal corporation complained of the clutter, especially on market days, that negatively impacted their businesses, seeking immediate removal of the market as it was at the square and the vehicles to

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Marxists, despite their theoretical differences, have argued for an understanding of markets as actually existing places, unlike classical economists' view that markets are free and determined by abstract relationships of supply and demand. It is this understanding of a marketplace, as embedded in social relationships of power, that inspires me to trace the square's history as a market and locate the absences in its current identity.

13. Letter dated 4 August 1854 addressed to the Mayor Alderman and Citizens of Montreal and undersigned by over eighty people. VM166-R3545-3-4_1841, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

free up access.[14] A report from 1896 in *The Montreal Herald* described the square as a "pest-hole" and "scene of filth", filled with a "babel of noise", "loud smells" and "belligerent farmers and hucksters".[15] The reporter noted the importance of the square, in terms of the buildings and businesses it held, against the "seething mass of shouting, cursing and fighting humanity" with odours from decaying vegetables and animal matters.[16] More than fifty years later, in another report in Maclean's, a magazine published from Toronto, a writer who spent a day in old Montreal described Place Jacques-cartier in a similar vein though with less embellished phrases:

> Here farmers from thirty and forty miles around the metropolis fill the darkness with excited shouts as they park big trucks back to back, leaving enough space between to form a passage. On the tailboards they arrange displays of home-grown fruit and vegetables, then settle down to wait for customers. They keep themselves warm over little oil stoves and guard one another's products as they go off in turn for breakfast.[17]

The descriptions of the square reveal a rich sensory landscape. If church bells, military bands and town criers formed part of the soundscape of the square,[18] farmers, hawkers and peddlers were an equally important part of the life that unfolded on the square. Given its proximity to the port, the grain elevator, which was known as Silo No. 2, and the train tracks that ran along rue de la

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14. Letter (written in French) was addressed to the Mayor and the City of Montreal and dated 3 March 1896. VM166-R3545-1_0000-1984, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

15. "A Menace to Heath," *The Montreal Herald*, 16 July 1896. VM166-R3545-1_0000-1984. Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

16. *Ibid*

17 McKenzie Porter, "Twenty-four Hours in the Old Quarter," Maclean's, 1 May 1954. https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1954/5/1/twenty-four-hours-in-the-old-quarter (accessed May 25, 2021).

18. Gallat-Morin, « La musique dans les rues de la Nouvelle-France » 45-51. Gallat-Morin offers an account of some of the earliest accounts of music on the streets of Montreal— the town-watch playing *La Diane*, sounds of fifes and tambour in religious processions, and of new ordinances and regulations being announced with drum rolls for the benefit of the people who were mostly illiterate in seventeenth and eighteenth century Montreal.

Commune, which was previously called commissioner's street, also meant a rich auditory landscape that signified commerce and industry.

Jacques Attali writes that noise references disorder whereas music is the imposition of "purpose and power" on noise.[19] How does one then make sense of the traces of sounds of a place in the archives? Lisa Gitelman argues that the emerging practices of recording sounds in late nineteenth and early twentieth century had embedded layers of signification of class and race relations in America.[20] Memories of sounds recorded in archives through such verbal descriptions equally convey such power dynamics contained in a place. Thick with descriptive markers that provide cues to the hierarchical social relationships, these complaints make visible the class-relations that produced and played out on the square.

These accounts mentioned above are left by merchants, residents and travelers, but the square was also frequented by the working-classes, poor and the itinerants whose perspectives are hard to find in the archives. Archives, through their emphasis on textual records and public memory, reiterate the inequalities of society.[21] The material traces of the poor and property-less in place have to be deduced from accounts that are created from a place of power. Mary Anne Poutanen uses police complaints and court cases to reconstruct a history of old Montreal that makes visible another world— "beggars demanded alms, pedlars sold merchandise, basket-women hawked produce, mothers performed household chores with the assistance of their

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19. Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, 6.

20. Lisa Gitelman, "Recording Sound, Recording Race, Recording Property," in Hearing History: A Reader, ed. Mark M. Smith (Athens and London: The University of Georgia Press, 2004), 281, 279–294.

21 Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 1–19. Schwartz and Cook note that archives traditionally privilege the public as opposed to the private sphere and lay on emphasis on textual documents as evidences, which re-create the power imbalances that structure society. Oral historians too have long contested this power in the archives. Including voices of people through interviewing was a way of centering individual and private lives against the institutional and the public memory in the archives.

children, prostitutes solicited and vagrants loitered."[22] In the latter half of the nineteenth century, tenants of the buildings in the area included bankers, traders, merchants of dry and perishable goods, printers, cobblers, shoemakers, tailors, saddlers, cigar-makers, dockers, advocates, photographers, hatters and barbers apart from innkeepers and establishments such as military mess and officers' quarters.[23] By early 20th century, hotels, inns and restaurant businesses dominated the square. Trains, ships and streetcars connected the square to other parts of North America, the rest of the world and to other locations within the city. The Canada Steamship Line, for example, occupied some of the buildings on Saint Paul and Commissioner's (now rue de la commune) streets and on the square.[24] Strategically placed between the port and the CPR train station on Notre Dame Street and numerous hotels and inns, the square witnessed a steady flow of people, including racialized people and ethnic minorities. Sailors, soldiers, porters and domestic workers among others would have frequented the place. Black men, employed seasonally on steamboats that ferried passengers between Montreal and Quebec City as cooks, waiters, and "boots" in the first half of the nineteenth century, found work as domestic helps, barbers, shoemakers, bakers likely found work during off season.[25] Jacques-Cartier was thus a bustling market square frequented by people from all walks of life and different classes. As a result, contestations over it were also not uncommon.

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22. Poutanen, "Bonds of Friendship, Kinship and Community," 27.

23. List of owners and renters of properties on and around Place Jacques-Cartier. VM166-R3545-4, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

24. *Ibid*.

25. Frank Mackay, "On Steamboats," in *Done with Slavery: The Black Fact in Montreal, 1760-1840* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010): 165. Mackay documents black men who worked on the steamboats that ferried between Montreal and Quebec City. Since the work was seasonal, these workers found other employment in the winter months in a variety of different trades.
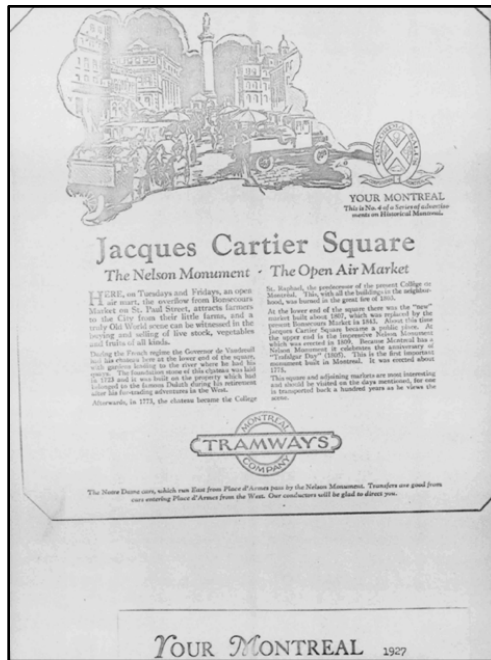
Image 29: A Montreal Tramways Company advertisement from 1927 that showcases the history of Place Jacques Cartier as a place of tourists' interest. VM166-R3545-3-1, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

Image 30: A reproduction of an artist's impression of Place Jacques-Cartier in 1880. MAS 3-163-c, Collection de BANQ. https://collections.banq.qc.ca/ark:/52327/2081596 (accessed June 20, 2022).

A gentrified public space

The square's function and representation in the media turned a corner in the 1960s as old

Montreal came to be rebranded as a historic district. If Expo-67 represented and signified

modernity and futurity of the city before the world, old Montreal was restored to anchor the past

for an equally international audience.[26] The process of gentrification that was triggered at this

time is well summed up in a tiny news report appearing in *The Gazette* in 1959. In documenting

an incident of fire at the square, the report gave a sense of the future as it described the square as

"one of the last significant areas where Old Montreal has lingered, and whose planned

preservation could become one of the greatest assets to the city— an asset which many another

(sic) city in North America would give anything to possess and cherish."[27] The media reports on

Place Jacques-Cartier in the following years are full of references to its "oldness" and its history

as a marketplace.[28] The flower market that replaced the actually existing market at the square

was only a symbolic reminder of the busy and disordered square that it was until then.[29] On

occasion, the media drew parallels with France through phrases such as "un coin de France".[30]

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26. See Raymond Montpetit, « Le Vieux-Montréal, un espace investi de significations » in *Le Vieux-Montréal, un « quartier de l'histoire » ?, ed.* Joanne Burgess and Paul-André Linteau (Québec: Éditions MultiMondes, 2010), 74, 73–79. E-Book.

27. "The Fight for Place Jacques Cartier," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 28 December 1959. VM166-R3545-1-0000-1984, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

28. « La Place Jacques-Cartier sera complètement rénovée » *Metro-Express*, 23 Juin 1966; "Work to Start on Access to Old Market," *The Montreal Star*, 20 July 1966. VM166-R3545-1_0000-1984, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

29. "Flower Mart function again for Place Jacques Cartier," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 11 June 1963; and "Work to Start on Access to Old Market," *The Montreal Star*, 20 July 1966. VM166-R3545-1-0000-1984, Archives de la Ville de Montréal. VM166-R3545-1_0000-1984, Archives de la Ville de Montreal.

30. "Montréal se donne un marché aux fleurs," *La Patrie*, Montreal, semaine du 13 au 19 Juin, 1963. VM166-R3545-1-0000-1984, Archives de la Ville de Montréal. VM166-R3545-1_0000-1984, Archives de la Ville de Montreal.

The process of restoration was also a process of sanitization— of turning a visibly messy and chaotic marketplace into a place for leisurely consumption of history and culture. Lucie K. Morisset makes the observation that heritage in Canada has come to mean property at the exclusion of people.[31] Since heritage is closely linked with ideas of an aesthetic past, of preservation and conservation of resources, which are directly linked to the value of the past in the present, such attempts always other aspects of the past or people who do not serve this purpose. Historical objects, including what is termed as "intangible heritage", are "less concerned with the past than with social order"[32], which establish certain truths to bolster specific claims about national and cultural identity of a place.

The obliteration of some aspects of history and its people is part of a wider politics of image-making and identity creation, which in Doreen Massey's words would be an "inward-looking self-preservation"[33] that overlooks the dynamism and interconnections in the identity of a place. These narrow interpretations of the past take on a central role in promoting history and culture for tourism. Cathy Stanton describes it as "performing the postindustrial".[34] It involves a performance of culture, including but not limited to the use of performing arts, to foreground a place rich in heritage, both visitable and consumable by a particular kind of audience. From this perspective, neither the noisy and belligerent street sellers nor the chaotic marketplace scattered with decaying produce belonged in the sanitized narrative of the past meant "to attract ever more

31. Morisset, "But What Are We Really Talking About?." Morisset also argues that the word heritage in Canada has been "contaminated" by the notion of patrimoine that has historically evolved somewhat differently than "heritage" and carried a different meaning, because of its association with French language and culture.

32. *Ibid* 36–37. Morisset draws an analogy with the décor of the Roman Catholic Church where the objects are a medium that validate the "intercession process along with the intercessor".

33. Massey, "Places and their Pasts," 184.

34. Cathy Stanton, "Performing the Postindustrial: The Limits of Radical History in Lowell, Massachusetts," *Radical History Review* 98 (Spring 2007): 82, 81–96. doi 10.1215/01636545-2006-028

mobile capital, workers, and visitors by making themselves 'visitable,' by branding themselves using narrative design or other place-making strategies."[35] In the 1960s, the flower market at the square inaugurated by Drapeau's wife had young women dressed in nineteenth century costumes who sold flowers, pet animals and birds.[36] Currently, the only reminder of the public market are two semi-permanent stalls that sell overpriced local produce to tourists.

The issue, however, is not so much what it is but what the postindustrial landscape attempts to smooth over. There is no visibility, in this version of the past, of the unequal relationships that produced the place— between indigenous peoples and European traders, slaves and their masters, poor and the rich, and the working classes and the industrial elites that were central to the shaping and the functioning of the marketplace. The tension around creating a consumable past for the cultural economy bubbled over during a renewed debate over rebranding old Montreal as the "quartier de l'histoire" in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The idea of rebranding the place was riding on the back of several initiatives to promote the city as a cultural economy. Following the Montreal Summit in 2002, which marked the coming into effect of the new reorganized municipality of Montreal the same year, several advisory committees were set up, a new masterplan was launched in 2004 and several policies on heritage, cultural development, sustainable development and economic development of the city and the metropolitan community were launched.[37] Quartier de l'histoire roughly translates as to a district of history and carries a signification that there is only one history of the place. But Montreal is

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35. *Ibid,* 82.

36. "Flower Market function again for Place Jacques Cartier," *The Gazette*, 11 June 1963; « Montréal se donne un marché aux fleurs » *Le Patrie*, du 12 au 19 juin 1963. « Un peu d'histoire: Le Marché aux Fleurs à la Place Jacques Cartier » *L'est Central*, 21 mai 1964. VM166-R3545-1_0000-1984, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

37. See Drouin, « La métropole culturelle » 76.

the intersection of many histories.[38] The question was also, as Jean-Claude Robert asks, "À qui appartient l'histoire ?"[39] The matter of rebranding and the proposed name were therefore contested for different reasons though the debate continued to tip-toe around settler colonial ambitions of such projects and the effects of gentrification on the neighbourhood.[40]

Drouin argues that there is a shift in attitude between the previous vision espoused by Mayor Drapeau and the contemporary approach towards the district that acknowledges the presence of working lives and use for residential purposes.[41] But the nexus between heritage and gentrification cannot be ignored. Not only is it a matter of whose heritage and what history gains visibility, such a landscape of exclusion deployed in service of promoting tourism and cultural economy further engenders marginalisation among certain population groups. In examining heritage-making in Sydney, Australia, another settler colonial context, Wendy Shaw notes the presence of "socio-cultural processes at work that privilege, and dispossess," and involve "nostalgic yearnings" for a white settler history.[42] The histories of the working classes, migrant practices and indigenous and racialized communities remain outside the purview of Sydney's

38. Gordon, *Making Public Pasts*, 18–19. Also see,

39. Jean-Claude Robert, « L'histoire de Montréal et l'histoire à Montréal : quelques reflexions » in *Le Vieux-Montréal, un « quartier de l'histoire » ?, ed.* Joanne Burgess and Paul-André Linteau (Québec: Éditions MultiMondes, 2010). 70, 60–71.

40. See Joanne Burgess and Paul-André Linteau (ed.), *Le Vieux-Montréal, un « quartier de l'histoire » ?* (Québec: Éditions MultiMondes, 2010), E-Book, for an overview of the debates.

41. Drouin, « Le tourisme dans le Vieux-Montréal," 94.

42 Wendy Shaw, "Heritage and gentrification: Remembering 'the good old days' in postcolonial Sydney," in *Gentrification in a Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism*, ed. R Atkinson and G Bridge, 1st edition (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2005): 60, 57–71. Shaw discusses the heritage-gentrification nexus in the context of developments in postcolonial Sydney where history in inner-city heritage district is composed of nostalgia for white settlements and architectures. While it may not be possible to term Canada as postcolonial as indigenous peoples of the land continue to fight for equality and justice, histories of European settlers dominate historical narratives about Canadian cities.

idea of heritage. They make no mention of the conflicts; and treat the violence against these population groups immaterial to the present.

In the case of Montreal, even the museums that dot the landscape of this district play a fragmented and partial role mandated by the ontology of their existence.[43] Once a central market square in Montreal's industrial economy, the vestiges of industrial commerce came to be described as eyesores. In 1975, a column in *The Gazette* derided the grain elevators that blocked the view of the river and the taverns that were "the refuge of men who work on water".[44] After the Montreal port was moved further east, the old port too turned into a redevelopment project. The grain elevator on the port side of rue de la Commune was demolished.[45] The steel sheds, train tracks (six out of the eight) and warehouses have been replaced by green parks and entertainment zones. The paved streets and the restored buildings that remind of the Victorian era evoke a sense of history that is at best partial, if not myopic.

The landscape of gentrification too privileges some at the cost of exclusion or displacement of others. Attaching any emancipatory potential to gentrification is tricky as the idea of social mix that it supposedly promotes is only experienced and imagined by the middle-classes.[46] The focus on architectural wealth of old Montreal make indigenous peoples, Black

43. Sylvie Dufresne, « Les musées d'histoires et l'histoire de Vieux-Montréal : des enjeux et des perspectives », in *Le Vieux-Montréal, un « quartier de l'histoire » ?, ed.* Joanne Burgess and Paul-André Linteau (Québec: Éditions MultiMondes, 2010), 97, 80–101.

44. Glen Allen, "Montreal this morning," *The Gazette*, Montreal, 9 June 1975. VM166-R3545-1-0000-1984, Archives de la Ville de Montréal

45. See Natalia Lebedinskaia, "Framing Visibility and Access: Picturing Silo No. 2 as Montréal's Industrial Pride, Modernist Icon, and Public Space," in Palimpsest III: The Dialectics of Montréal's Public Spaces (September 2010). https://cityaspalimpsest.concordia.ca/palimpsest_III_en/papers/Lebedinskaia.pdf (accessed May 20, 2021). Lebedinskaia retraces the location of Silo No. 2 on Old Port and its history as a modernist icon and the transition to an open public space.

46. Tom Slater, "Gentrification in Canada's cities: From social mix to 'social tectonics'," in *Gentrification in a Global Context: The New Urban Colonialism*, ed. R Atkinson and G Bridge, 1st edition (Oxon, UK: Routledge, 2005): 55–57, 40–57.

lives and itinerants untraceable in its history. And the ensuing process of gentrification continues

to dislodge economically, politically and culturally marginalised populations from that space.

The aestheticization of the place masks any contestations that continue to occur in the place.

Long before the toolkits for the so-called creative cities were conceptualised,[47] the economic and

the political elites of deindustrialising Montreal were already making way for the emergence of

such scripts.[48] The cultural valorisation of Quebec alongside industrial decline created perfect

conditions for the emergence of a cultural economy, which is entangled in gentrification

processes. Since the 1980s, a more capital-friendly state has engaged the levers of cultural

economy for economic and urban regeneration. What Drouin argues as an accommodation of

daily life in old Montreal is really an acceptance of a lifestyle that embraces gentrification,

making it one of Canada's "coolest" neighbourhoods.[49]

A contested territory

In 2019, when I started interviewing for this project, I had been in Montreal for a little over three

years and I had visited old Montreal once. Walking around old port, close to the water, and then

into the narrow streets of old Montreal, I had marvelled at the "oldness" of the district – the

cobbled streets and the well-preserved building facades – and had admired the restaurant terraces

with cheerful people and beautiful flowers from a distance. My perspective shifted significantly

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47 See for example, Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class;* and Landry and Comedia, *The Creative City*.

48 See Paul, "World cities as hegemonic projects," and Hamel and Jouve, "In search of a stable urban regime for Montreal." As Paul and Hamel & Jouve demonstrate in their analyses, successive municipal administrations of Montreal, instead of regulating corporate interests, have been complicit in facilitating the new economic agenda of the city driven by business interest and commodification of knowledge, creativity and culture through a promotion of private interest-led growth and an entrepreneurial culture in the economy that are symptomatic of a neoliberal city.

49. Slater, "Gentrification in Canada's cities," 40.

when I started looking for buskers. I learnt to look at the place differently— first, to find buskers, and second, to understand their experiences of the space.

My first lesson in seeing space differently was when I understood that old port was not old Montreal. In my mental map of the city, they had belonged together in the old part of the city where tourists went. Except for the built environment, for one was a port and the other the old town, I didn't see a difference. It wasn't until I understood the regulatory terrain of these two spaces that I saw what buskers knew from experience. Old Montreal is governed by municipal bylaws of the City of Montreal whereas old port is on federal land and is overseen by the Old Port of Montréal Corporation. For buskers, it meant negotiating two different authorities and sets of regulations. In 2019, no buskers were allowed in the old port unless hired by event organisers or the corporation itself. In old Montreal, busking was allowed on Place Jacques-Cartier and Place d'armes but there was a permit that had to be renewed annually.

The subtle differences in the landscape on two sides of the street also spoke to a deeper schism. As a visitor, I had access to both spaces and experienced them differently than the buskers intending to use the public space to hold a little show and make some money. Massey's argument that people, whether in social groups or as individuals, are embedded in the "power-geometry" of place and experience the flows and interconnectedness of the world differently was quite literally visible in this dynamic.[50] While globalisation may have intensified the experiences of time-space compression, it has created new landscapes of inequalities. Experience of mobility, access to information and technologies dictated busking in old Montreal. Not only was old port inaccessible for buskers, it was also turned into a space of privilege through a system of auditioning and contracts. Such hiring practices not only defined the contours of the

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50 Massey, "Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place."
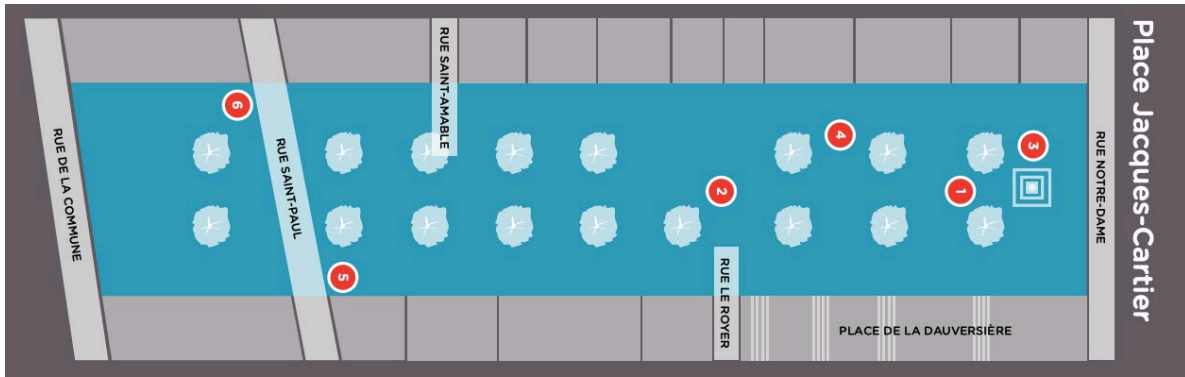
Image 31: Spots for musicians and *amuseurs publics* (marked in red) on Place Jacques Cartier as decided by the borough of Ville Marie in 2018. Source: *Guides des musiciens et des amuseurs publics* issued by the borough of Ville Marie in 2018.

performances, but also established the busker's professionalism. The meanings of busking on two sides of rue de la Commune, therefore, were different. One was organised entertainment; the other appeared to be a more spontaneous practice though I was soon to stand corrected.

In the summer of 2019, Place Jacques-Cartier became the site of a contestation between the amuseurs publics and the borough administration as the latter tried to reimpose a system of online spot-booking that they had been trying to implement, somewhat unsuccessfully, since 2012. Buskers were now not only required to have permit but also register twice a week for a randomised lottery that would assign them busking time and spots. The square had six busking spots but only one of the spots (no.2 in the image) was for amuseurs publics who did circle shows and attracted a 360-degree crowd. The rest were for musicians and balloon sculpteurs. The rest of the space on the square was either occupied by artists and artisans or left open for strolling. In 2019, apart from the insistence on the online lottery system, the borough of Ville Marie had also opened spot no. 2 to musicians.

Image 32: Eric Girard performs at Place Jacques Cartier, at the spot marked no.2 in the plan provided by Ville Marie borough. This spot next to rue Le Royer is the only place that is wide enough to allow a 360-degree audience and yet intimate enough to not scatter them as is the problem in Place d'armes, argue buskers. Moreover, the big tent of Cirque du Soleil across the street from rue de la Commune and the passengers from cruise boats being released at the quay in Old Port allows buskers to expect an influx of people to the square at particular times of the day and at particular intervals, which helps them to plan their performances.

To say the least, it was bad for business for the amuseurs publics like Girard who, on a fairly successful day, would draw eighty to hundred people during a show. Spot no.2 was the only possible spot for this kind of a crowd. The other spot on Place d'armes was too wide a square and lacked a similar kind of public as would be drawn to Place Jacques-Cartier. For years, buskers at the square had decided their day's roster through a card-draw that they held amongst themselves at noon, at Place de la Dauversière. If someone came later, they joined the end of the queue and everyone respected the roster just as they also volunteered to occasionally share their spot to someone else as a token of friendship or a gesture of goodwill towards a newcomer. In 2019, there were less than ten amuseurs publics showing up to perform at the square every weekend. In comparison, there were over a hundred musicians who were permit holders.

According to the borough administrators of Ville Marie, the number of permit-holding amuseurs publics was also slightly higher than were visible. Then, there were travelling performers who visited the city for a short period and would look for opportunities to perform. Mostly, local street performers have their own system of accommodating travelling performers in their performance spaces. However, the borough wanted to infuse more variety and talent through the new spot-booking portal.

In 2012, a lawyer representing the buskers against the city also argued that the system was prejudicial.[51] A busker had been arrested for refusing to register and performing "illegally".[52] From the point of view of buskers, there were good reasons for resistance. Instead of doing two to three shows a day, sometimes more on weekends and holidays and depending on the crowd, the circle performers were to be assigned spots randomly through the week. It left them little control over their time, which as I came to understand was crucial to a successful performance. There was a reason Girard was watching out for the crowd on the square the day I met him first. When enough number of people started to walk up or down the square, Girard slowly and meticulously laid out his objects from the chest in full public view, which led a crowd to start gathering around him out of curiosity. As Peter Snow explained later, "there's nothing; there's nothing; there's nothing; and then suddenly something starts to happen, and people start gathering." Sometimes it's the passengers from a boat that arrives at the harbour or the public returning from a show of Cirque du soleil, the end of rain that spills people out on the street or a warm but not too sunny day that makes the difference. The timing is important.

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51. "Buskers at odds with Old Montreal performance rules," CTV News, Montreal, July 13, 2012. https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/buskers-at-odds-with-old-montreal-performance-rules-1.878417 (accessed April 14, 2022).

52. "Juggling busker caught, tossed into jail," CTV News, Montreal, July 6, 2012, https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/juggling-busker-caught-tossed-into-jail-1.868884 (accessed April 14, 2022)

I interviewed Eric Girard in-between his shows on a bench at the green space officially called Place de la Dauversière, next to the busking pitch at Place Jacques cartier. Girard commanded respect as he was considered amongst the biggest crowd-pullers at the square. He was also among a few buskers who had clearance and insurance to use fire in their shows. With parents in the restaurant business, Girard grew up in Montreal and the small towns off the island. He also recalled seeing street performers in the city in his youth. When Girard moved out of home as a young adult, he moved back to Montreal and then started travelling. He started busking to make ends meet while travelling. After some years, circumstances made him less willing to travel. In 2019, he was living with his daughter and girlfriend in a farmhouse in Saint Eustache with two horses and dogs. On weekends, he drove down to Montreal, parked his car next to the square on rue Le Royer and performed through the afternoons and the evenings on a roster with other buskers. He reflected on this journey while waiting to perform:

> Eric Girard (EG): I really like Montreal. Bahhh pfffff, I really like Montreal. I love Sydney and New Zealand, but it's too far from everyone I know. Yes, I love travelling but I still have a good bond with people I love. Montreal is the easiest— Yes, I've got something with Montreal. The other way here is (to go to) Quebec City, and I don't like Quebec City.[53]

At this point in the interview, he was glancing restlessly at the square as it was once again time for his show. We stopped the recording and picked up the conversation the next day and he talked more about how he learnt to do his juggling tricks while travelling. It was difficult to hold on to a thread of conversation in this interview because of the nature of the space.

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53. Eric Girard, Oral history interview, Montreal (Place Jacques-Cartier), May 2019.

There are various aspects of interviewing, including the positionality of the interviewer and the interview space, that influence the form and the content of the narrative.[54] Here, geographical location of the interview played a very important role in determining the nature of the conversation. Girard had agreed to be interviewed on the condition that it be at the square. Unlike the other interviews that I did at enclosed spaces far from the pitch, this interview is both shorter than the others and interrupted by the events unfolding at the square and its sensory landscape. It exists in fragments, the longest session being twenty minutes. The hustle and bustle of the space did not lend itself well to a life story format, but the space left its mark on the interview. We were interrupted multiple times. Once, it was time for Girard's show. Then the borough inspectors came to the square. On another occasion, we were interrupted by unexpected celebrations by an ethnic minority community at the square. These interruptions did not allow a deeply reflective conversation, which is the nature of life story interviews. Instead, our conversation was rooted in space, which produced a different potentiality in the interview. Toby Butler argues that works like sound walks can be an "embodied, active multisensory way of understanding geographies in time and space".[55] The disjuncture between what is visible on the landscape against the memory of a place can be a powerful carrier of meaning. In the case of Girard's interview, the visual became a cue to the absences, which prompted him to talk about the conflicts over busking spaces and the spots that have disappeared over time:

> EG: I started on Sainte Catherine Street and Prince Arthur (Street), doing small, small
>
> acts and I moved to like— I was blocking the streets and cops would come down and

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54 Portelli, "Living Voices," 241, where Portelli reflects on the interview as a dialogue and speaking across difference located in space that is both social and geographical.

55. Butler, "A walk of art," 905.

(say), You gotta move somewhere; you are too big. And back then, we could perform in the old port. There was a location in the old port, so there was plenty of space.[56]

A little after this, our conversation was once again interrupted. This time, it was the borough inspector at the square that had drawn Girard's attention. He represented the *amuseurs publics* on the *comité paritaire* instituted by the borough to function as an advisory committee on all matters related to busking. He excused himself to go and have a chat with them. The *amuseurs publics* were in a situation of stand-off with the borough after the group had refused to sign up for the online lottery. The borough officials had dug their heels as well and sent out an inspector to monitor the pitch to stop any unauthorised busking. Performing without having assigned a spot could attract a fine. Breaking rules could lead to suspension of their busking permit. So, it was a tense day at the pitch. When we picked up the conversation again, Girard remarked on the limitations of the online lottery system:

> EG: I was just going to say that they (the borough administration) don't have any purpose of it (the online booking system); they don't even know why it should be there. The musicians do agree on the system, the musicians like it. The system has got plenty of room for them. You can book one spot at mid-day, one spot at 2, you know, so they can actually have a good day of work. But us, we have only one spot to book. We just anyway spend the day here and do our thing. So, it's kind of, it's kind of weird like that.
>
> PC: There's no other place in the city where—
>
> EG: We are not allowed to use fire anywhere else, so that's one thing. There is one other place we can; it's in front of the basilica, the Basilica Notre Dame, but—
>
> PC: But no fire?

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56. Girard, Oral history interview.

E.G.: No fire. And it's not, it's not a great place for us. It's not enough popular— there are a lot of people but there's a lot of tour groups. They don't have a lot of time to spend. There's reason why it's here (Place Jacques-Cartier). This place has been like that since ever. You look at old pictures; there's always been a market, a place let's say to manifest [the word has a slightly different meaning in French and conveys performance or demonstration], to do anything. It's like Place Jacques-Cartier was the main happening place back two hundred years ago. We've always been here.[57]

Apart from noting these changes and drawing attention to bureaucratic interferences into busking, Girard was also claiming a long history for street performers at the square. His statement created a dissonance with the narrative that constructed the place in the present. In saying that there had been busking at the square for the last two centuries, he was bringing to the forefront a history of the square as a marketplace, the chaos and messiness of which had been made invisible through a reordering of the square for leisure.

The conflict with the borough in 2019 was not the first, and likely not the last. From Girard's interview, it became clear that the tussle for space was a three-way contest between buskers, business establishments around the square and the borough administration. More often than not, the borough's decision to side with the hotel and restaurant businesses impacted buskers negatively. Around the same time that the borough introduced a system of web registration, another debate was unfolding around rue St. Amable, one of the streets off the square, The street, amongst the oldest in Montreal, came to be known as rue des artists or rue du trésor in the 1970s and 1980s. It was lined with stalls by artists and artisans. A public

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57. *Ibid.*

consultation held on the future of Vieux-Montreal in 2013 includes presentation that was a plea

to save the street as an artists' ruelle.[58] Girard's interview offered more insights into the matter:

> PC: And you don't have the place down there… there were two spots over there.
>
> EG: No. Yes, yes, it's because they didn't like—
>
> PC: Is it because of the construction?
>
> EG: It's because Maggie Oaks, the restaurant there— the big hotel (behind) was built like
>
> four years ago. Before that, it was just a restaurant and there was no hotel. So, all the
>
> painters were along the ruelle, inside the ruelle, like in Quebec City, along the walls of it.
>
> But then the restaurant – the big hotel – said, We don't want anyone there; we bought it,
>
> it's our wall. So, we don't need— we don't want anyone there. So, they had to move
>
> them somewhere. They decided to move the booths down the hill. They removed the
>
> busker from that spot. And every time you remove something, yay whatever— we are not
>
> gonna put anything back. You know, it doesn't matter; they are just buskers, so they can
>
> go anywhere.[59]

In old Montreal, administrative power and control over space extends over the sensory

landscape.[60] While the smells and sights offensive to the upper classes at Place Jacques-Cartier

have been removed through successive restoration efforts and beautification drives since the

1960s, visibility and presence continue to be contested upon on the visual and the auditory

landscape of the square. On Place d'armes, a square less popular with the *amuseurs publics* for

58. "La seule Rue des Artistes à Montréal, un patrimoine culturel d'un demi-siècle à conserver !," Liste De Documentation Pour Consultation Publique Sur L'avenir Du Vieux-Montréal, Office de Consultation Publique de Montréal. https://ocpm.qc.ca/sites/ocpm.qc.ca/files/pdf/P66/8c1a.pdf (accessed April 16, 2022).

59. Girard, Oral history interview.

60. Mark M. Smith, *Sensing the Past: Seeing, Hearing, Smelling, Tasting, and Touching in History* (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007). Smith argues that senses have historicity and they inform class, race and gender conventions.

Image 33: Street artists on Saint Amable street and musicians busking at the corner of the street on Place Jacques-Cartier. Photograph by Henri Rémillard, 1979. 06M,E6,S7,SS1,D790009-1-790010-1, Fonds Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, Collection de BANQ Vieux-Montréal.

Image 34: Saint-Amable Street in 2019.

busking and a couple of blocks west of Place Jacques-Cartier, the church bell occasionally

drowns out musicians playing on the square. Sensory historians have noted the ways in which

sounds of church bells convey meaning in place.[61] The drowning out of the busker's voice or

music is an example of the ways in which the church, as a religious institution tied to settler

colonial history, continues to occupy a central place in the city's contemporary identity and idea

of heritage.

At Place Jacques-Cartier too, there were a lot of contending sounds: the musician's notes,

the circle performer's voice, and one of the installations under the Cité Mémoire project. In order

to extend their control over the soundscape of the square, the borough had lately also installed

amplifiers to discourage performers from bringing their own to the pitch. This created a more

complex dynamic. While musicians preferred to use amplifiers, there were others like Stephen

Moore who were not feel comfortable with such use of technology. But if one busker used an

amplifier on the square, the other performing a few steps away couldn't always ignore the

importance of being audible over others. In a way, installing the amplifier signalled the kind of

tech-savvy buskers the city wanted to encourage but also control. As a result, not only has it

become almost imperative to use amplifiers, it also tried to make redundant the practice of

lending and sharing equipment amongst each other.

In making the place tourist-friendly, the square enrolls the street artists and entertainers to

perform culture and creativity. Cathy Stanton argues that the middle and lower rungs among the

cultural producers – whether musicians, artists, street performers, restaurant workers or hotel

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61. See Alain Corbin, "The Auditory Markers of the Village," in *The Auditory Culture Reader*, eds. Michael Bull and Les Back, (Oxford & New York: Berg, 2003) and Richard Cullen Rath, *How Early America* Sounded (Ithaca and Lonson: Cornell University Press, 2003). Corbin, in studying the soundscape of a French village, notes that the village church bells in 19th century France had specific social and cultural functions. Rath illustrates the history of church bells in North America is linked to European colonisation of the land.

employees who lack educational and cultural capital – are exploited for place-making and place-branding to produce an identity of a place that is then sold to tourists and the "creative classes".[62] The buskers performing at the square are expected to serve as embellishments to the postindustrial and historical narratives that are constructed of the place. But they are also to be othered when it no longer fit the script. Girard's sense of displacement in the city was palpable when he reflected on the changing landscape of busking:

> EG: Well, they (in old port) don't allow it anymore. They stopped everything years ago. But there was an audition process; it's an audition, they can accept you or not.
>
> PC: Who would sit on the auditions?
>
> EG: I don't remember. It was some sort of ground manager of everything that was happening in the old port.
>
> PC: So, it's not necessarily an artist or somebody who has been busking.
>
> EG: No, no. Not necessarily, no. Right now, in Montreal, people who rule the busking scene are not really, like, any artists. They tried to book some people to do that, but it never worked. It's like human— every time they hired someone, that guy was hiring his friend. There was no diversity, so they stopped doing that….[63]

About Quartier des spectacles, he had a similar reaction:

> EG: They don't really want buskers. We did like one year – two weeks – and they were not nice to us; things like that, you know…. It's so booked that they don't need anything. You know, there's always, always something. There's always a festival. And when there's nothing, they'll put like a wall or something. They actually don't need

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62 Stanton, "Performing the Postindustrial," 83.

63. Girard, Oral history interview.

entertainment because if the Jazz Fest is on, the Jazz Fest will get its performers; the Jazz Fest will get the busker. I did the Jazz Fest; I did the Just for Laughs plenty of times. But it's like getting rid of the proper busker, you know, who can just do their thing.[64]

Girard did not go to circus school or professionally train as a juggler. As long as he was willing to travel, he had options beyond Montreal. In the cultural landscape of the postindustrial city, where art and culture are a matter of primary interest and therefore controlled by the economic and the political elite, people like Girard serve as stepping-stones to the postindustrial promise of prosperity. Though Girard's performances drew fairly big crowds at the square, he was unsure about his place there in the future. The irony of the situation was betrayed in the pithy one-liner that he often used before passing the hat at the end of his shows: "Give generously, I come all the way from Sydney, Australia. Just joking, I come from right here, Laval."

'C'est ma vie d'être illégal'

Most of the circle performers that I spoke to in 2019 were not happy with the situation on Place Jacques-Cartier and a resistance was building up, which eventually made the street performers stay off the pitch for the rest of the summer in protest against the meddling by the borough in how they managed the busking spot amongst themselves.[65] It was during this time that I also interviewed Susana Martinez, a flamenco dancer. One of the lingering images I have from my field work in 2019 is that of Martinez holding a protest performance at Place Jacques-Cartier. She had propped up a sign against the amplifier that said street performers are endangered in the

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64. *Ibid.*

65. Dan Spector, "Old Montreal street performers feel threatened by new city rules," Global News, Montreal, July 17, 2019. https://globalnews.ca/news/5511338/old-montreal-busking-rules-street-performers/ (accessed April 16, 2022).

city. Earlier that day, I had interviewed her and, as we were parting, she indicated that she might

do a protest performance if she were not allowed to perform on the square. When I arrived at the

square in the afternoon, she was performing. It was not her designated time and spot but there

was a good crowd on the square. No one had turned up to take the spot since the circle

performers were protesting the new system of spot-booking. In a move to ensure complete

obedience to the system, the borough officials had decided that no one else could occupy an

empty pitch even when the registered performer failed to show up. Martinez had explained it in

the interview:

> Susana Martinez (SM): Il y en a des personnes, oui, qui viennent d'étranger, de d'autres
>
> pays… 'y a des gestionnaires qui les engage. Ce qui est dommage, c'est que les autres
>
> n'ont pas plus, il (ne) réveille pas plus d'intérêt que nous les gens qui payons un permis et
>
> nous ne coûtons rien à la ville, et c'est le public qui nous paye. Ce n'est pas le budget des
>
> contribuables, et puis, voilà, ils nous coupent le sort dans le peu d'endroits autorisés, et
>
> après il faut qu'on soit chanceux. Je ne sais pas pourquoi mais moi, souvent je ne suis pas
>
> chanceuse. Il y a des semaines que, l'année passée, que je me suis retrouvé avec zéro
>
> heure dans la semaine, dans deux endroits que j'étais autorisée; d'autres semaines j'ai eu
>
> la chance d'avoir une place, une autre semaine deux places et là, il a plu, quand c'était
>
> l'horaire autorisé… ou une autre fois, il était 10h, il n'y avait personne à 10h le soir. Ce
>
> qui est injuste avec ce système c'est que, quand quelqu'un ne se présente pas alors que
>
> supposé d'être présent, personne n'a le droit de prendre la place. Si moi, j'ai pas été
>
> chanceuse toute la semaine, j'ai zéro heure, puis dans une journée, samedi, de 11h qui

sont disponibles, trois musiciens seulement se sont présentés, moi je ne peux pas prendre

une heure de les sept heures qui ont été absente.[66]

Martinez was firmly against the system. The weekends were carefully orchestrated precious time

at work with costs and risks attached, and she wanted to make the most of it. Like Girard, she too

lived outside the city. In summer, on Friday evenings, she and her daughter took the train to

Montreal, so she could do street-performing. They spent the weekends with her husband, a

caricaturist who had a stall at Place Jacques-Cartier, in the place that he rented in Chinatown.

"Ma fille est avec moi ou avec lui ou on est les trois ensembles," she said, explaining the

importance of this arrangement. "Puis je peux m'occuper d'elle; elle peut me voir tout le temps

puis; on est tout le temps ensemble." The randomised lottery system interfered with this weekly

schedule and threatened her livelihood. She reminded me that through busking she had an

income, but the new system meant she had fewer and far between slots. "Maintenant avec ce

système n'est plus possible, et on a des inspecteurs qui sont tout le temps après nous, à regarder,

pas à nous aider, juste à nous empêcher de prendre la place, à nous donner des amendes, à faire

la répression," she reflected.[67]

Precarity measured against the standard employment model that evolved under Fordism

disregards both women's precarity under capitalism and the exploitation of precarious labour in

the international context.[68] If women's labour, migrant or immigrant workers' experiences are

considered, precarity is the common historical condition.[69] For Martinez, an immigrant from

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66. Susana Martinez, Oral history interview, Montreal, June 8, 2019.

67. *Ibid.*

68. Mitropoulos, "Precari-us?.

69. Federici, "Precarious Labor." Also see, Neilson and Rossiter, "Precarity as a Political Concept," 51–72.

Image 35: Susana Martinez does a protest performance at Place Jacques-Cartier. Summer 2019

Mexico who left her country of origin in the hope to make a living off arts and culture and to escape the harsh working conditions imposed on labour in the Global South in an international restructuring of economy, busking was a means of earning a living with dignity and balance work with motherhood. In the interview, she reflected on how she started busking. Soon after she arrived in Montreal, she had taken up work at a restaurant on Prince Arthur East Street for less than minimum wage. When she realised that her employer was cheating her of money, she decided to start street-performing at the suggestion of a friend:

> SM: Une journée quand je me suis réveillée, je me suis dis « ben je suis une artiste, je ne
> devrais pas laver les planchers à quatre-pattes [petit rire] » et comme j'avais rencontré
> aussi un ami qui lisait les tarot, lui m'a proposé pourquoi on s'habillerait pas en gitans
> puis, puis on va faire, on va lire les cartes et les monde me demandait « est ce que vous

allez danser? » parce que je mettais mes costumes de gitans. Mon ami me disait « Il faut

que tu danses, le monde te demande, tu devrais danser »… J'étais gênée de danser dans la

rue parce que au Mexico on avait fait seulement le flamenco en groupe et dans une stage.

Mais ce jour là quand j'avais mal partout puis je trouvais ça pas dégradant mais pas digne

de ma personne, j'ai pris la décision… Donc j'ai pris la radio, je me suis habillée, et

comme j'avais pas avisé le patron que j'allais pas rentrer, j'ai tout simplement m'installer

devant son restaurant. Il était comme 1h de l'après-midi, il est sorti de son restaurant.

Puis, après m'avoir fixé un moment, il m'a reconnu [petit rire] et son visage, dans son

visage il était très surpris puis hum, il a dit « ah! C'est toi, c'est toi! Je te souhaite le

meilleur! » [petit rire] Puis, « fait que, qu'est ce qui est mieux pour toi. » [souffle] Voilà.

[avec faible sanglot][70]

Martinez talked frankly about the precarity that had pushed her into busking. When she broke

down, I had asked if she wanted to pause. "*Non, c'est correct,*" she said, and continued to talk

about how, from then on, her former employer had treated her with more respect and kindness.

The camera or the recorder serves as the third interlocuter, a reminder of the absent public.[71] The

formality of the setting lends itself to this act of taking private memories and lives public.

Martinez's comfort with the camera even in such a moment of vulnerability indicated that she

was conscious of this invisible public and that she wanted to be heard and seen. She had also

carefully dressed herself in a flamenco costume and make-up for an 8 am interview, which

conveyed that she wanted to be seen as an artist in the interview space.

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70. Martinez, Oral history interview.

71. Katherine Borland, ""That's not what I said": A reprise 25 years on," in *Beyond Women's Words: Feminisms and the Practices of Oral History in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Katrina Srigley, Stacey Zembryzcki and Franca Iacovetta (London and New York: Routledge, 2018): 31–37.

As we resumed the conversation, my friend and colleague Nadia Hausfather who was helping me do the interview in French, asked her how she had felt at that moment. She said, "à ce moment-là, je me sentais heureuse, ouais," adding that as she made flamenco on the streets her life, she also slowly started to accept her life in Canada. She made friends and met the person who became her life-partner. However, this life that she built for herself was under threat as the borough proposed to introduce regulations that disrupted her work-life balance and rhythm. She had already lost her dancing spot on Prince Arthur East Street to beautification drives. Martinez also embraced her ethnic identity in her performance. She mentioned people's curiosity at seeing her perform and questions about her country of origin and ability to speak Spanish. However, this acceptance of her identity and place in public space was being put into question by the changing terrain of regulations.

Martinez's experience brings to light the contradiction surrounding diversity and multiculturalism in western cities. Difference is either seen as "marketable or reckoned as impediments" to the free flow of human capital or humans for capital.[72] Urban renewal and gentrification schemes often negatively impact immigrant and racialized communities in cities even though diversity is an increasingly sought after goal for policymakers and urban planners.[73] In the cultural economy, busking festivals and buskers at festivals have become popular phenomena. But Martinez also points out that it's the buskers from abroad that were more willingly accepted in the city than the local artists. Her criticism is directed at the elite cosmopolitanism that has come to inform the discourse on the creative class. As Mitropoulos

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72. Mitropoulos, "Precari-us?."

73. See for example, Hackworth and Rekers, "Ethnic Packaging and Gentrification: The Case of Four Neighborhoods in Toronto," *Urban Affairs Review* 41, No. 2, (November 2005): 211–36, and High, "Little Burgundy," 23–44.

argues, it is difference standardised against the measure of money that is most sought after in the

cultural economy.[74] As a racialized immigrant performing flamenco, Martinez embodies

difference but is not so easily accepted in public spaces because she challenges the system:

> SM: Ils me connaissent, ils lisent mes courriels, je suis allée à la réunion du conseil et
>
> tout ça, ils connaissent ma face puis c'est déjà la situation depuis une certain temps, j'ai
>
> déjà la ville à dos [petit rire] et les fonctionnaires me connaissent. Puis c'est une situation
>
> que je vais vivre si je continue, et je vais continuer à avoir des amendes parce que je crois
>
> que si je [petit soupir] fais pas mon métier, ma vocation que c'est de performer dans la
>
> rue, d'amuser le public, si je fais pas ça, je vais faire une dépression, j'ai déjà essayer de
>
> faire autre chose comme caissière ou n'importe quoi d'autre puis j'ai toujours été
>
> déprimée à faire autre chose que la danse dans la rue.[75]

Martinez was risking receiving a contravention from the inspector when she was protesting on

the pitch. Police interventions against buskers are also not unheard of at the square for violating

the regulations. In 2012, Stephen Moore was arrested for "assaulting" an officer when cops

asked him to stop his show and he refused.[76] A video of the incident made and uploaded by an

onlooker shows the cops interrupted his performance, Moore tried to dodge the cops inside the

circle, lifted one of them up on his shoulders and then was pinned to the ground by a few

officers.[77] The word on the street was that some buskers had pooled in resources to fight the

74. Mitropoulos, "Precari-us?."

75. Martinez, Oral history interview.

76. "Montreal busker charged after altercation with police," CBC News, 6 July 2012.
https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/montreal-busker-charged-after-altercation-with-police-1.1159900
(Accessed 23 August 2021).

77. Uriel Lee, "Lalal," YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CR_kG_NzUqU&ab_channel=UrielLee
(accessed April 16, 2022).

court case and lost. Moore refused to speak about the case in his interview because he had signed a confidentiality agreement. Trouble with the city was very real and buskers wanted to avoid it. Another busker I interviewed retracted their permission to use the interview for anything but my supervisor's and my own understanding of the matter for fear of reprisal.

Martinez's interview took a very performative turn towards the end. As in any interview, I had asked her if there was something that she wanted to talk about. She had continued to talk about the "état policier" and the "repression" faced by the buskers. Later, when I was wrapping up after the interview, we had continued to talk about the situation on the pitch. Martinez then asked to speak on camera again. When I turned on the camera again, she said:

> SM: Je me suis dit que c'est comme si on était dans une caisse avec tous ces restrictions, avec tous les interdiction. On n'a pas de droit de rien faire. C'est ça comme des chiens dans des caisses. Mais contrairement, les animaux sont mieux traité que nous…. Voilà la Ville de Montréal traite nous comme les chiens dangereux. Les amuseurs, on est comme les chiens dans une caisse. C'est ce que je voulais dire.[78]

Busking, for Martinez, was not just a way out of economic precarity. It gave her identity as an artist. During the interview, she had also reflected on the fact that she disliked performing on stage, blinded by lights, because she couldn't imagine dancing only for herself. Not being able to perform also had an effect on her mental health. She had to be able to see her audience laugh and share in her joy. Between laughs and deep sighs, she had observed that, if needed, she would continue to perform illegally on the square: "*Peut-être que ça va être— ça ma vie [petit rire] d'être illégale [petit rire]*."

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78. Martinez, Oral history interview.

Image 36 a–d: Susana Martinez dancing with a woman from the audience at Place Jacques-Cartier, Montreal, Summer 2019.

Conclusion

If the pandemic is a portal,[1] is Montreal unlocking the wrong door? In the late summer of 2021,

as the city was emerging hopeful from a robust Covid-19 vaccination drive, bureaucrats at Ville

de Montréal were also hard at work, trying to find a way to restore cultural and economic

vibrancy to downtown districts and draw people out of their homes into public spaces such as

Old Montreal and Old Port.[2] One afternoon, I was drawn to the area, partly by the promise of

some circus performances in open air and partly in the hope to find some familiar busking faces

at Place Jacques-Cartier. At Old Port, not far from the food trucks and along the path that runs

parallel to the water, the afternoon unfolded with performances by Les sept doigts de la main, a

Montreal-based artists' collective. The young performers, deftly moving their bodies into all

kinds of shapes between the crowd, built environment and props, turned the former industrial

port into a spectacle zone. Despite the air thick with anxiety around being near others for fear of

contagion, people gathered for every one of the four shows and seemed to enjoy the

performances.

While the Old Port offers several attractions for entertainment, including Cirque du

soleil's Big Top venue, spontaneous busking in the area has been banned for some years now. In

the oral history interviews that I conducted in 2019, buskers had reflected on the shift in street

performing— their lack of access to the port area and the practice of hiring buskers by event

organisers. In the backdrop of these interviews, the presence of players such as Les sept doigts

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1. Arundhati Roy, "The Pandemic is a Portal," *Financial Times*, April 3, 2020.
https://www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca (accessed April 25, 2022).

2. "2021 economic recovery plan," Ville de Montréal, https://montreal.ca/en/articles/2021-economic-recovery-plan-8767 (accessed April 25, 2022). Among other initiatives, the city had put out a call for proposals to fund public art to draw people out on the streets.

de la main in public space appears to be an even greater transformation. Street performers, who have historically thrived in the ambiguity of their practice, had been replaced by trained circus artists and professionals in the cultural industries. No one passed the hat at the end of these shows, which were being funded by public money and which removed any direct monetary exchange with the public. The informality in busking, which allowed many marginalised people to perform in public and make a living, was replaced by formal relationships between the artists and the public mediated through the state and public and private sector institutions who were now functioning as patrons of art and culture, including that of busking.

This concept of cultural mediation has garnered a lot of interest in Quebec recently. It not only encourages government-funded public art and culture, but also allows municipal administrative workers an active role in determining and managing this landscape of artistic and cultural expression.[3] In some ways, this new governmentality of culture emerges from the policies that were instituted in Quebec during the Quiet Revolution to democratise culture and make it accessible to the public at no cost by the state. However, as Diane Saint-Pierre has argued in her historical study of the cultural policies of Quebec, it has been shaped by neoliberal market forces since the 1980s.[4] It has been accompanied by a municipal trend, in the last two decades, in prioritising design for driving economic and urban revitalisation. The resulting transformation in lifestyle and civic infrastructure have been hailed as progressive and positive despite the commercialisation of art and culture and of public spaces. "The redrawing of the city by design," Guillaume Sirois argues, "is not only a commercial project but also an endeavor that

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3. Martin Lussier, "Cultural Mediation and Municipal Cultural Workers in Québec," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 51, no. 4, (2021): 251–264.

4. Gattinger and Saint-Pierre, "The "Neoliberal Turn" in Provincial Cultural Policy," 285–289.

attempts to build a better place for all its citizens.[5] My hope is that this thesis has troubled this unwavering faith in urban planning, design and top-down management of culture in improving human condition without any regard for their lived experiences. The question that lingers after listening to the buskers' life histories is: Who qualifies to be a citizen in the postindustrial city? And what about those who find their experiences contradict this assumption? Are they to be dismissed as "non-citizens" or should the city or state change its ambition and strategies to accommodate the needs of those who find themselves marginalised in the dominant narrative of progress and well-being? I draw on the lens offered by the busker who sees the city from marginal, liminal and interstitial spaces of belonging to make visible some of those non-normative experiences.

After watching the performances at Old Port that day, I had walked up to Place Jacques-Cartier with the hope to find some buskers. A couple of musicians were playing to the restaurant terraces on the west side of the square. Before the pandemic, the performers and musicians faced downhill, towards Old Port, which indicated that the restaurant clients were not their only or even primary audience. For lack of people at the square that evening, their performances appeared to be an extension of the restaurant terraces on the square. Was it the pandemic or was it the performances at Old Port that had taken the buskers' usual public away from the square? It was likely both, but it is also a fact that the transition was not entirely caused by the pandemic though it may have given that extra push to the administration to exert more control over public space and mediate art and culture in public space.

The steps at Place de la Dauversière was also empty. The flight of stairs that reach down from the green space to rue Le Royer served as an informal backstage for performers on the

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5. Sirois, "Design," 248.

square. It was a place for socialities that allowed buskers to negotiate rosters on the busking pitch. They formed bonds of friendships, built networks, shared ideas, tips and tricks of busking and kept their gears while awaiting their turn in-between performances. It was a community that was formed in practice each day at that site.[6] Certainly, the relationships were not free of power dynamics that foster inequalities and uneven access to place.[7] There were many outsiders to this community— newcomers, city inspectors, and those who challenged its order. Women or racialized buskers didn't always hang out there, indicating people experience place and community differently. The gender and race dynamics of public space remain underexplored in this thesis. Nevertheless, this community that was contingent on busking at the square was also an example of an informal form of agency from below that manifest in space. Apart from offering them a sense of a collective, it was also a way for buskers to control their performance time, frequency and spot.[8]

In the oral history interviews, many buskers talked about battling depression and mental health issues. Beyond an income, busking also provided them with a sense of community and a connection with the public. Peter Snow's nostalgia mourned such a community that had disappeared from Prince Arthur East. This desire for sociality – a connection with other people – had also brought Dino Spaziani to play music in the metro. Stephen Moore's reflections on his craft revealed a different ethic of creativity where buskers both borrowed tricks from one another

6. See David Studdert and Valerie Walkerdine, "Being in Community: Re-Visioning Sociology," *The Sociological Review* 64, no. 4 (November 2016): 613–21. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12429 for a discussion of the concept of community as employed in social sciences and the tensions within.

7. Ben Rogaly, "'Don't Show the Play at the Football Ground, Nobody Will Come': The Micro-Sociality of Co-Produced Research in an English Provincial City," *The Sociological Review* 64, no. 4 (November 2016): 657–80. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12371.

8. Ben Rogaly, "Spaces of Work and Everyday Life: Labour Geographies and the Agency of Unorganised Temporary Migrant Workers," *Geography Compass* 3, no.6 (2009): 1975–87, 10.1111/j.1749-8198.2009.00290.x

while also respecting the uniqueness in each person's shows. Life at the square and the self-regulating roster system, as it had been organised by the buskers themselves, was key to Susana Martinez's ability to strike a balance between work and parenting. She had also found dignity in street-performing when she found out that a restaurant cleaner's job was earning her less than minimum wage. Through busking in the metro, Penny Hamer not only found a second job to support her family, but also a network that helped her record her music. These social networks that developed in place provided both economic opportunities and social sustenance to musicians and performers who were facing economic hardship, capitalist exploitation and social marginality.

To some extent, the pandemic had interrupted this practised sense of community but both the Ville Marie borough administration and the STM had been, for a while, toying with the idea of introducing stricter regulations for busking. The online spot-booking systems[9] that the city tried to enforce in 2019 threatened to disrupt this sense of sociality amongst buskers. Once the street performers at Place Jacques-Cartier were prevented from running their own roster on the pitch, they had stopped hanging out at the square, effectively putting an end to this community. When busking at the metro stations reopened in the winter of 2021, the STM put in place a system of spot-booking[10] that was likely going to end the long tradition of having a self-regulating system of lists by metro buskers. These online platforms produce new terrains of

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9. See, for example, the rules of busking in Old Montreal at "Obtenir un permis de musicien, d'amuseur public ou de sculpteur de ballons," Arrondisement Ville-Marie, Ville de Montréal. https://montreal.ca/demarches/obtenir-un-permis-de-musicien-damuseur-public-ou-de-sculpteur-de-ballons?arrondissement=VM (accessed April 25, 2022). Musicians and performers have to reserve a spot through an online system to perform at certain spots, including on Place Jacques-Cartier and Place d'armes.

10. "Musiciens in the métro – STM opens all authorized performance locations," Société de transport de Montréal, March 4, 2022. https://www.stm.info/en/press/news/2022/musicians-in-the-metro---stm-opens-all-authorized-performance-locations (accessed April 25, 2022).

Image 37: Eric Girard gets a sense of the crowd before starting his show at Place Jacques-Cartier. Summer 2019.

exclusion along the lines of age, digital literacy and access to the Internet and technological devices suitable for using such platforms.

One of the arguments that this thesis makes through conversations with buskers is that a top-down approach to policymaking and management of public spaces do not always elicit solutions that are equitable and improvements in public spaces that benefit everyone equally. More importantly, buskers draw attention to the different ways in which urban public spaces are used and experienced by people and for different purposes. The sense of displacement and marginalisation among buskers, especially arising out of economic and urban revitalisation initiatives, then foregrounds the fact that design and planning interventions often center the interests of the middle and the upper classes – propertied, professionals and business owners – and fail to acknowledge the needs of those who are economically and socially marginalised in

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the city. Moreover, the notion of history seems to ignore the lived histories of people and focus primarily on built heritage. The public consultations in this context appeared more performative than an effective dialogue with people from all walks of life. For example, despite acknowledging rue Saint-Amable's identity as "rue des artists" and their role in animating Old Montreal in their latest "plan de protection et de mise en valeur" of the district in 2013 ahead of the 375th anniversary celebrations of the city,[11] the artists were squeezed out of that space in the following years and placed on Place Jacques-Cartier alongside musicians and street-performers, triggering a fight over space among street musicians, performers, artists and artisans. As one busker wryly noted, the artists had to make way for the hotel that came up on that street. In the historic district and the heart of tourism economy, the urban revitalisation and commercialisation of history was undermining the buskers' lived history on the public square.

Spatial and temporal dynamics of buskers' stories in the city also reveal the busker's complex entanglement with power. As we find a new normal during a pandemic, it is hard to conjecture the future, but the landscape appears favourable to stronger bureaucratic control over public space in Montreal. Occasionally, even buskers give in to the logic of safety and security of people to validate their presence in public space, such as by arguing that their presence brings down crime. Ironically, the city uses the same argument against them to wrest control over their space. Meanwhile, if buskers feel threatened by administrators— police action, surveillance by inspectors and bureaucratic ordeals, this dynamic can also be reversed depending on the space and actors involved. Regulation of busking spots and permits also legitimises buskers in public

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11. Ville de Montréal, "Vieux Montréal: Plan de protection et de mise en valeur," Patrimone Montréal, 2013. https://portail-m4s.s3.montreal.ca/pdf/ville_mtl_plan_de_protection.pdf (accessed May 31, 2022), 21. The documents submitted to the Office de la consultations publiques also contains the record of a presentation to this regard, though the fate of it is now clearly visible on the square. See, 8.3.1.1. Présentation Power Point, Liste de documentation pour consultation publique sur l'avenir du Vieux-Montréal, https://ocpm.qc.ca/fr/consultation-publique/consultation-publique-sur-lavenir-vieux-montreal/documentation (accessed May 31, 2022).

spaces, placing them in a position of power in relationship to other itinerant groups on the streets. The history of the AMIM offers a window into how differential access to power and space are produced, reinforced and exploited in the neoliberal city. The initiative to self-organise among buskers in the metro and the organisation's journey from an association to a regroupement and finally its transformation into a web-based platform for connecting musicians to the market also engages with the role that labour intermediaries are playing in making labour flexible in the post-Fordist economy.

This thesis brings up some of these contradictions within the economy and in labour organising, even as it privileges the voices of buskers and their experiences in public space in narratives about Montreal's urban space, history and economy. The hope is to make visible people's lives as entangled in the broader processes of history— being pulled apart by the structural forces but also simultaneously shaping them from below. Agency, however, is not a denial of the deep inequalities and structural violence that mark individual lives but an acknowledgement that people contribute to, struggle against and contest such forces even if it may seem impossible to turn the tide. As Rogaly points out, sometimes, they only bring "incremental… changes in microspaces of work or living,"[12] but they still have the potential to unsettle the dominant representation of a place.

Consideration of busking as an informal practice, bordering on illegal at times, alongside debates over authenticity and fake art on the streets of Montreal also opens up the space to reconsider the role of informality in the economy and trouble the line between art and imitation. Not only do buskers find novels ways to entertain the public, they also use their creativity to encourage people to loosen their purse strings and leave a dollar or two in the hat. And yet, they

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12. Rogaly, "Spaces of Work and Everyday Life," 1984.

also freely copy, share and borrow music and tricks. Even the best of the jugglers in the city admitted they had copied parts of their shows and hat lines from others— friends and other buskers performing elsewhere. Joshua Neves argues that "informal and illicit culture and creativity—as modes of underperformativity—not only open up new economic zones, fostering circulation, contact, and local value, but also drive a new *distribution of the social*."[13]

Further, drawing on Ackbar Abbas's theorisation of the fake[14] and Neves' critique of his unwarranted reliance on a culture of high-end design and view of fake as reinforcing the global order rather than subverting it,[15] I treat the informality of busking as a possibility and an alternative among those who find themselves marginalised in the city. Instead of the dichotomous ways of looking at urban space and culture, as Boudreau suggests,[16] it allows the informal to be treated as constituting the formal, a separation that is also challenged by heterodox economists arguing for an entangled view of the economy with the political and cultural forces, and with place. In claiming busking as work, buskers not only argue for a place within the economy of the city but also illustrate the mores of this new economic order and their fraught positionality. This role of being integral to the formal economy does not so much mean that it reaffirms order but, rather, a necessity and a potential that remains unacknowledged. Buskers' labour is not only important to producing the creative city, but it is also necessitated by the exploitative and exclusive nature of the city.

Each life story holds up a lens to view the city and its economy. Grégoire Dunlevy talked at length about surveillance in the metro and the harassment of the busker, while Dino Spaziani's

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13. Neves, *Underglobalization*, 13. Emphasis in original.

14. Abbas, "Faking Globalization".

15. Neves, *Underglobalization*, 6.

16. Boudreau, "Informalization of the State."

life history speaks to the structural violence that shapes the postindustrial city. Others such as Stephen Moore and Dawn Monette testify to labour precarity and its intense flexibility in the cultural economy. Voices of Peter Snow and Susana Martinez draw us elsewhere to other challenges and experiences of marginalisation, while Eric Girard's claim that buskers were always a part of the life on Place Jacques-Cartier for two hundred years asks to reimagine the square's history in class terms. When acknowledged as a marketplace, the attention is drawn away from the architecture around the square to the relationships and transactions that unfolded in that place over the years, making the presence of capital more palpable in the city. Penny Hamer and Lucas Choi Zimbel, along with Dunlevy and Spaziani, bring up another aspect of the cultural economy— the role of labour market intermediaries and their enrollment in the neoliberal project. Martinez is the only racialized woman busker interviewed for this project. While it perhaps speaks to the limits of my research methodology of snowball interviews and focusing on the most popular busking spots in the city, it also conveys much about visibility in public spaces and the creativity city. It is hoped that these life histories and lived experiences decenter the creative class discourse that surrounds any engagement with workers in the cultural economy and makes visible labour segmentations and complexities of the new economic order that is exacerbating inequalities.

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CONSENT FORM

You are being invited to participate in the research study titled **"Stories from the Streets of Montreal: An Oral History Project with Buskers in the City"** being conducted by Piyusha Chatterjee, PhD student in the Individualized Program in Social Sciences at Concordia University under the faculty supervision of Dr. Steven High, Professor in the Department of History at Concordia University. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher. You will find the contact details at the end of the form.

At the end of the project, the interviews may be archived at the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University or any other local archives. This form also seeks permission to archive the interviews for posterity and making them available to the public and to other researchers. Please review the form keeping in mind that the project is geared towards making this research public through different media and the Internet.

PURPOSE: The research is funded by a scholarship for doctoral research from the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture. The oral history project aims to document life stories of people who busk (perform on the streets and other public spaces such as the Metro stations for money) in Montreal or have done so in the past. People's memories and lived experiences can say a lot about the wider economic, political and cultural transformations that have impacted the city since the 1960s. Oral history interviews allow such changes to be explored from the perspective of individuals. This project intends to record in people's voices the descriptions of these changes and the effect of these transformations on their lives.

PROCEDURE: If you participate, you will be asked to participate in an audio/video interview with the researcher in which you will be asked to share your experiences of busking on the streets of Montreal, talk about your art and its intersections with life in the city, share memories of the city and of major historical events in the city that may have had an impact on your life, and your life story in general. Oral history interviews can take an hour or more but you may end the interview any time you want by conveying the same to the researcher. The interviews may be conducted at the Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University or another space suitable for a long interview. A copy of the interview will also be shared with you.

The researcher may contact you for a follow-up interview. However, you are not obliged to do multiple sessions of interviews if you agree to participate in the project. The follow-up interview/s may take the shape of a walking interview or involve a mapping exercise of the places that you are familiar with or frequent in the city. If you agree or feel comfortable, the researcher may ask you to wear a GoPro camera during a walking interview or while you perform in a public space where the use of a GoPro is allowed. All such recordings will be shared with you and credit will be given to you for having recorded them for this research project.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION: You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking that your information be not used. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. If you decide that the information you provided should not be used in research, you must inform the researcher within three months of the interview being conducted. After that point, requests to withdraw will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. It may be possible to stop future use of your interview/s but the researcher cannot change prior access and already existing publications.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: Sharing one's life story can sometimes be emotionally distressing. You will be free take a break or discontinue an interview at any point by asking the researcher. Also, archiving the interviews and their possible dissemination in the public domain means that your interview may be listened to or viewed, and accessed for use by other people, including researchers.

This research is not intended to benefit you personally. There is no monetary compensation for participation in the project. However, it will be an opportunity for you to share your story to the world through this research project. Archiving of the interview will mean your voice will become part of historical record available for others to seek and consult, even after your lifetime.

The project also intends to create and sustain a collaborative relationship with research participants through long conversations held over a period of time. Please do not hesitate to contact the researcher if you have something more to share or if you find that the research project could help you in any particular way.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Please review the following conditions. Do not hesitate to ask questions to the researcher if need be. Read and check **both** cases.

> I understand that I am free to withdraw consent and end my participation at any time without any negative consequences.

> I understand that the recording and/or transcripts of my interview may be kept at the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling at Concordia University or any other local archives, respecting the conditions cited in this form, and that these documents will be available to researchers and the public, and may eventually be referred to in future publications.

If you decide to participate, your identity will be known to the researcher of this project. The following section deals with the choices that you have with regard to the use of your personal identity in publications, dissemination/reproduction of your interview in this project and in the archives.

Check **only one** of the options: « 1. Open Public Access », « 2. Limited Access » or « 3. Anonymous »

1. **Open Public Access:** My identity may be revealed in any publication or presentation resulting from this interview. Check **only one** of the sub-options:

   > I consent to the dissemination and reproduction of my interview (sound and images) under this research project, through any method and media. My interview may be made available either in totality or in part, through the archives, on the Internet and/or through online databases.
   > <div align="center">**OR**</div>
   > I consent that my interview be available to researchers and the public strictly for consultation in the archives but the recording will not be transmitted or reproduced in any other way, neither in part or in its totality.

2. **Limited Access:** The recordings will be kept at the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling AT Concordia University and only researchers having signed a confidentiality form will be allowed to consult them. The researchers using this interview will have access to my identity, but they may not divulge it or make it accessible to anyone. They will speak of me using my initials or an alias.
   I choose the following alias: _____

3. **Anonymous:**
   - My identity will only be known by the researcher of this project and the videographer (if involved in the act of recording the interview) and may be revealed to the faculty supervisor at the researcher's discretion. No one else will be aware of my identity, unless I permit it.
   - The video/audio recording will be kept temporarily under lock and key at the Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling. I will receive a copy that I will be able to keep.
   - The transcript of the interview will be word to word. I will receive a copy of this transcript so I can revise it and scratch-out all the parts I would wish to suppress (peoples' names, places, dates, etc.) I will return the revised transcript to the researcher. <u>At the end of the thesis submission or archiving of the interviews (whichever is first), my interview recordings will be destroyed permanently.</u> Only the final version of the transcript will be kept in the archives. This transcript may be accessed, reproduced and disseminated in the public domain.

Other comments or specific conditions indicated by the interviewee:

_____

_____

Please note that in certain situations the researcher might be legally required to disclose the information that you provide even if it is under the condition of anonymity. For example, if the researcher learns that the participant intends to cause serious harm to themself or others, or situations of child abuse.

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research project under the conditions described.

INTERVIEWEE

NAME (in block letters): _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

DATE OF BIRTH (optional): _____

PLACE OF BIRTH (optional): _____

POSTAL ADDRESS: _____

_____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS (optional): _____

INTERVIEWER:

NAME (in block letters): _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

Researcher: Piyusha Chatterjee, PhD student, Individualized Program in Social Sciences, Concordia University **I** Address: Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling LB-1042, Concordia University, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd Ouest, Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1M8 **I** Phone: 514-848-2424 ext. 5465 **I** Email: p_chatt@live.concordia.ca

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Steven High, Professor, Department of History, Concordia Univerity **I** Address: Concordia University S-LB 1001-21, 1455 Boulevard de Maisonneuve O, Montréal, QC H3G 1M8 **I** Phone: (514) 848-2424 ext. 2413 **I** Email: steven.high@concordia.ca

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or oor.ethics@concordia.ca.

FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT

Vous êtes invité.e.s à participer au projet de recherche intitulé «**Stories from the Streets of Montreal: An Oral History Project with Buskers in the City** [Histoires des rues de Montréal: un projet d'histoire orale mené auprès des musicien.ne.s et amuseur.e.s publics, scuplteur.euse.s de ballons et artisan.ne.s de rues]», mené par Piyusha Chatterjee, candidate au doctorat dans le programme individualisé en sciences sociales de l'Université Concordia sous la supervision de Steven High, professeur au département d'histoire de l'Université Concordia. Le présent document vous renseigne sur les conditions de participation à cette étude; veuillez le lire attentivement. Au besoin, n'hésitez pas à poser des questions et demander des précisions à la chercheuse qui vous le présente.

Ce document demande l'autorisation d'archiver les entretiens pour la postérité et de les mettre à la disposition du public et d'autres chercheurs. À la fin du projet, les entrevues peuvent être archivées au Centre d'histoire orale et de récits numérisés de l'Université Concordia ou des autres archives locales. Veuillez réviser le formulaire en gardant à l'esprit que le projet vise à rendre cette recherche publique par le biais de différents formats de média et d'Internet.

BUT DE PROJET: Cette recherche est financée par une bourse de doctorat du Fonds de recherche du Québec - Société et culture (FRQSC). Ce projet d'histoire orale cherche à documenter les histoires de vie des amuseur.e.s publics (dans les rues et dans d'autres espaces publics tels que les stations de métro) à Montréal d'hier à aujourd'hui. Les souvenirs et les expériences vécues par les individus en disent long sur les transformations économiques, politiques et culturelles qui ont affecté la ville depuis les années 1960. Les entretiens permettront de décrire ces changements et d'explorer leurs effets sur la vie des amuseur.e.s publics montréalais.e.s à partir du point de vue des personnes concernées.

PROCÉDURES: Si vous l'acceptez, vous serez invité.e à participer à une interview audio / vidéo avec la chercheuse (et/ou un.e interprète) dans laquelle vous serez invité.e à partager vos expériences dans les rues de Montréal, à parler de votre pratique artistique et de la façon avec laquelle elle s'inscrit avec la ville, à partager vos souvenirs de la ville et des événements qui ont pu avoir un impact sur votre vie et sur votre histoire en général. Les entrevues dureront une heure ou plus, mais vous pourrez à tout moment mettre fin à l'entrevue sur simple avis verbal. Les entrevues peuvent avoir lieu au Centre d'histoire orale et de récits numérisés (CHORN) de l'Université Concordia ou dans tout autre lieu qui vous semblera approprié. Une copie (audio/vidéo) de l'entrevue sera partagée avec vous.

La chercheuse pourra vous contacter pour un entretien de suivi. Cependant, vous n'êtes pas obligé.e de faire plusieurs sessions d'entretien si vous acceptez de participer au projet. La ou les entrevues de suivi pourront prendre la forme d'une entrevue à pieds ou impliquer un exercice de cartographie des lieux que vous connaissez ou que vous fréquentez à Montréal. Si vous êtes d'accord, la chercheuse pourra vous demander de porter une caméra qui captera votre point de vue lors de l'entrevue à pied. Tous ces enregistrements seront partagés avec vous et nous mentionnons votre non en tant qu'auteur.

CONDITIONS DE PARTICIPATION: Vous n'êtes pas obligé.e de participer à cette recherche, il s'agit de votre décision. De plus, vous pouvez mettre fin à l'entrevue à tout moment. Le fait de ne pas participer, de s'arrêter au milieu ou de demander que des informations ne soient pas utilisées n'entraînera aucune conséquence négative. Cependant, si vous désirez que votre témoignage ou certaines des informations que vous avez fournies ne soient pas utilisées dans la recherche, vous devez en informer la chercheuse avant le 31 janvier 2020. Après cette date, les demandes de retrait seront traitées au cas par cas. L'utilisation future de votre / vos entrevue(s), pourra être interrompue, mais la chercheuse ne pourra pas modifier l'accès aux publications existantes.

RISQUES ET AVANTAGES: Partager son histoire peut parfois être éprouvant sur le plan émotionnel. Vous serez libre de faire une pause ou d'interrompre une entrevue à tout moment sur simple avis verbal. L'archivage des entretiens et leur éventuelle diffusion dans le domaine public signifient que votre entretien peut être écouté ou visionné, et que d'autres personnes peuvent y accéder.

En participant à cette recherche, vous ne retirerez aucun bénéfice personnel; il n'y a pas de compensation monétaire pour la participation au projet. Ce sera toutefois l'occasion pour vous de partager votre histoire avec le monde entier. L'archivage de l'entrevue signifie en effet que votre témoignage fera partie des archives historiques que d'autres pourront le consulter pendant votre vivant, mais aussi après.

L'objectif est à créer et de maintenir une relation de collaboration avec les participants à la recherche grâce à de longues conversations tenues sur une période donnée. N'hésitez pas à contacter la chercheuse si vous désirez partager des informations supplémentaires ou si vous pensez que le projet de recherche peut vous aider de quelque manière que ce soit.

CONFIDENTIALITÉ: Veuillez lire les phrases ci-dessous et cocher les **deux** cases.

❑ Je comprends que j'ai la liberté de retirer mon consentement à tout moment pendant le déroulement de l'entrevue et aussi par la suite.

❑ Je comprends que l'enregistrement de mon entrevue soit conservé au Centre d'histoire orale et de récits numérisés de l'Université de Concordia ou dans un autre centre d'archives locales. L'archive respectera des conditions mentionnées dans ce formulaire à maintenir accès de ces entrevues aux chercheur.euse.s et au public et il y a la possibilité que ces entrevues seront mentionnées dans les futures publications.

Si vous décidez de participer, votre identité sera connue par la chercheuse (et l'interprète) de ce projet. La section suivante exprime les choix concernant l'utilisation de votre identité personnelle dans des publications, la diffusion / reproduction de votre/vos entretien(s) dans ce projet et dans les archives.

Veuillez choisir une **seule** option: « 1. Accès public », « 2. Accès limité » ou « 3. Anonyme »

❑ **Accès public :** Mon identité pourrait être révélée dans le cadre de publications ou présentations issues de cette entrevue. Veuillez choisir une **seule** option au-dessous:

❑ J'accepte que l'enregistrement audio de mon entrevue puisse être partagé et reproduit par l'étudiante du projet, à travers n'importe quelle méthode et média. Mon entrevue pourra être disponible en totalité ou en partie, sur l'Internet et/ou dans les bases de données numériques.

OU

❑ J'accepte que l'enregistrement audio de mon entrevue soit uniquement disponible aux chercheur.euse.s et au public au CHORN. L'enregistrement ne pourra pas être partagé ou reproduit, ni en partie, ni en totalité.

❑ **Accès limité :** L'enregistrement sera conservé au CHORN et seulement les chercheur·euse·s ayant signé une entente de confidentialité pourront y avoir accès. Les chercheur.euse.s auront accès à mon identité, mais ne seront pas autorisé.e.s à la dévoiler. Je serai référé.e par mes initiales ou le pseudonyme suivant: _____

❑ **Anonyme :** Seul.e.s l'étudiante, interprète et le professeur-superviseur de recherche connaitront mon identité, et celle-ci ne pourra être partagée avec aucune autre personne sans mon autorisation. L'enregistrement vidéo / audio sera temporairement verrouillé au Centre d'histoire orale et de récits numérisés et je vais recevoir une copie que je pourrai garder.
Je recevrai une copie de la transcription de l'entretien afin de modifier ou caviarder les informations qui pourraient permettre de m'identifier (noms d'individus et de lieux, dates, renseignements sensibles, etc.) Je renverrai la transcription révisée à la chercheuse. <u>À la fin de la soumission de la thèse ou de l'archivage des entretiens (le premier des deux prévalant), mes enregistrements seront détruits définitivement.</u> Seule la version finale de la transcription sera conservée dans les archives. Cette transcription peut-être consultée, reproduite et diffusée dans le domaine public.

Autres commentaires et spécifications :

Dans certains cas, la loi peut nous obliger à divulguer des renseignements que vous nous fournissez. Si une telle situation se présente, nous divulguerons l'information comme le prescrit la loi, nonobstant toute indication contraire aux présentes. Par exemple, si le chercheur apprend que le participant a l'intention de se causer de graves préjudices à lui-même ou à autrui, ou en cas de maltraitance d'enfants.

J'ai pris connaissance du présent formulaire d'information et de consentement et j'accepte volontairement de participer au projet de recherche.

INTERVIEWÉ.E
PRÉNOM ET NOM
(en majuscules):

SIGNATURE :   DATE:

DATE DE NAISSANCE
(facultatif):

LIEU DE NAISSANCE
(facultatif) :

ADRESSE POSTALE :

NUMÉRO DE TÉLÉPHONE:

ADRESSE COURRIEL
(facultatif) :

INTERVIEWEUR.EUSE:
PRÉNOM ET NOM
(en majuscules) :

SIGNATURE: DATE:

Si vous avez des questions sur l'aspect scientifique de cette étude, communiquez avec la chercheuse. Vous pouvez aussi communiquer avec son professeur-superviseur

Chercheuse: Piyusha Chatterjee, candidate au doctorat, Program individualisé en sciences sociales, l'Université Concordia **I** Adresse: Centre d'histoire et récits numérises, LB-1042, l'Université Concordia, 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd Ouest, Montréal, QC H3G 1M8 **I** Numéro de téléphone: 514-848-2424 ext. 5465 **I** Courriel: p_chatt@live.concordia.ca

Professeur-superviseur: Dr. Steven High, Professeur, Département d'histoire, l'Université Concordia **I** Adresse: S-LB 1001-21, 1455 Boulevard de Maisonneuve O, Montréal, QC H3G 1M8 **I** Numéro de téléphone: (514) 848-2424 ext. 2413 **I** Courriel: steven.high@concordia.ca

Pour toute préoccupation d'ordre éthique relative à ce projet de recherche, veuillez communiquer avec le responsable de l'éthique de la recherche de l'Université Concordia au 514-848-2424, poste 7481, ou à oor.ethics@concordia.ca.