CrossMark

*Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, 20 (2023), pp 87–118 © The Author(s), 2022. Published by Cambridge University Press
doi:10.1017/S147940982100029X
First published online 04 February 2022

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

Erin Brooks
*State University of New York–Potsdam*
*Email: brooksem@potsdam.edu*

*In the "terrible year" of 1870–71 – spanning the Franco-Prussian War through the Commune – Parisians looked on with horror at the nightmarish transformation of their* Ville Lumière*. They not only watched, they listened – garnering crucial information but also failing to shut out belliphonic sounds that rendered them sleepless, sick or even unable to function. In a flood of lectures and treatises, a generation of neurologists and psychiatrists assessed the impact of this year on French minds and bodies. Moreover, Charcot and Janet formulated early understandings of trauma amidst the cultural memories and traumatized populations impacted by 1870–71.*

*Weaving together contemporary medical discourse, journals, reportage and iconography, this article reveals a topography of Parisian sonic violence. Drawing on Mark M. Smith and Jennifer Stoever's work on how race, gender, and class structure listening, this case study analyses the positionality of sound's traumatic impacts on nineteenth-century Parisians. Connecting sound, the events of 1870–71, and early conceptions of trauma also critically integrates these decades with subsequent experiences of* la grande guerre*. As I ultimately situate a specifically urban theorization of the aural experiences of war, I conclude with how sonic trauma of* l'année terrible *might stretch far beyond 1870–71. Borrowing from Andreas Huyssen's concept of city as palimpsest – where visual reminders of violence leave 'absent presences' in the heart of an urban space – I query how sonic memories of conflict might similarly leave traces – sonic scars? – in both physical places and in individual and collective memories.*

In his work on twentieth-century Berlin, Andreas Huyssen ponders how places – particularly urban places – experience and remember trauma. Huyssen analyses the city as palimpsest, one whose ruins mark 'absences' just as much as the *visible* presence of past violence is preserved by bullet and shrapnel marks on buildings. Berlin is both 'saturated with memory' and marked by 'willful forgetting', a dichotomy which seems just as pertinent to Paris a century before.[1] In the 1870s and 1880s, Paris was marked by the visible ruins of the Commune, most famously

[1] Grounding this analysis in a discussion of the memory park in Buenos Aires, Huyssen notes that 'cities remain the main battleground on which societies articulate their sense of time past and time present. Once embodied in memorial sites within an urban fabric, remembrance of traumatic events seems less susceptible to the vagaries of memory.' Huyssen sees this as a shift from discourses of 'reading the city as text', from Hugo to Barthes to Baudrillard to many postmodern geographers in the 1970s and 1980s. See *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003): 50, 101. For an evocative consideration of the possibilities of 'acoustic palimpsests', see J. Martin Daughtry, 'Acoustic Palimpsests and the Politics of Listening', *Music & Politics* 7/1 (2013): 1–34.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

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

the gutted Tuileries palace, which remained at the centre of the city for 12 years (Fig. 1). Dr Thomas Evans, an American dentist, wrote of the palace:

> For many long years one huge pile of blackened ruins, the remains of what was once the Palace of the Tuileries, loomed up in the very centre of the city, solemn, grand, and mysterious, like a funereal monument, to remind the world of the uncertain life of governments – in France. It was only in 1883 that, becoming apparently ashamed of this startling exhibition of the savagery of the mob, of this vestige of the reign of the Commune in the *Ville Lumière,* the Government ordered the demolition of these ruins, and covered with fresh turf and flowers the ground on which had stood the home of the most famous kings of France. Every trace of the palace has been removed, effaced, or carefully covered up. And here it is, in this new and formal garden, that to-day children with their nurses gather together in hushed silence.[2]

[2] Edward A. Crane, ed., *The Memoirs of Dr. Thomas W. Evans: Recollections of the Second Empire* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1905): 588. Though her study *Composing the Citizen* focuses on the period after the Commune (France's Third Republic), Jann Pasler includes a 'walk' through Paris as a means of discussing the symbolism of place, particularly in regard to music and power. She writes of the Tuileries: 'suggesting the power of absence as well as presence in the cityscape, these ruins, untouched for twelve years, were fraught with uneasy and powerfully ambivalent symbolism'; Jann Pasler, *Composing the Citizen: Music as Public Utility in Third Republic France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009): 20. For more on ruins and their symbolism in post-Commune Paris, see Colette Wilson, *Paris and the Commune, 1871–1878: The Politics of Forgetting* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), particularly chapter five on photographing ruins of the Commune.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

If the visual reminders of violence and trauma leave 'absent presences' in the heart of an urban space, how might the memories of the *sounds* of conflict be similarly understood as leaving traces – sonic scars – in individual and collective memories? In this article, I consider how the inhabitants of Paris experienced sound as trauma during the war year of 1870–71, and how that sonic trauma was processed, remembered and memorialized.

As discussed in this issue's introduction, trauma has emerged (largely in the last 40 years) as a powerfully interdisciplinary subject of cultural, psychiatric and medical study marked by pivotal events – including the inclusion of the term 'post-traumatic stress disorder' in the DSM-III issued by the American Psychiatric Association in 1980 – and groundbreaking publications such as Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), Dominick LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (2001) and Jeffrey Alexander and others on cultural trauma (2004).[3] Indeed, the concept of trauma has been shaped over the past 75 years by many of the catastrophic events of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – the Holocaust in particular, but also the Vietnam War, 9/11, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, just to note a few. As illustrated by this special issue, several conference panels in the last few years and a number of recent or forthcoming publications, trauma's broader implications are the subject of much current discussion and analysis.

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

---

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

[4] Allan Young, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995): 5. A number of works address this issue; Maria Cizmic provides a capsule summary of the debate in the introduction to her book *Performing Pain: Music and Trauma in Eastern Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Mark S. Micale and Paul Lerner note two main methodological camps: in the first, writers (often in medical or psychological disciplines) 'interpret post-traumatic psychopathology as a timeless, quasi-universal disorder'. An alternate approach (often espoused by anthropologists, social scientists, and historians) rejects this view as 'presentist and positivistic and adopts an emphatically historicist stance'. See Mark S. Micale and Paul Lerner, eds, *Traumatic Pasts: History, Psychiatry, and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001): 6–7.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

"dissociation"'.[5] Mark Micale explicitly places the beginnings of the trauma concept in psychological medicine in the 1870s, noting that political events in tandem with social problems and emerging medicalized discourses helped forge the 'proto-science of mental trauma'.[6]

While it is unlikely that the events of 1870–71 were the single causative agent for this development, the formative debates and concepts about trauma emerged at precisely the moment Parisians experienced and processed the aftermath of a year of war, siege, bombardment, civil war and mass slaughter. Studying this year offers a specific nineteenth-century case study of how individuals understood, discussed and remembered these events at the dawn of the 'trauma concept'. In assessing reactions by Parisians and period medical discourse, it is clear that there are many important continuities between this nineteenth-century conflict and *la grande guerre* (World War I) nearly 50 years later. My analysis, therefore, highlights some ways the emergence of trauma during 1870–71 presaged discourse from 1914–18. Foregrounding sound's role in the traumas of 1870–71, I demonstrate that these memories of wartime sounds not only marked the urban landscape of Paris for decades to come, but that the sounds of war also marked the minds and bodies of Parisians themselves. Ultimately, I argue sound is a critical element in assessing historical understandings of trauma.

## Hearing Nineteenth-Century Paris

As part of the 'sensual turn' in the humanities more broadly, as well as the 'sonic turn' in music studies, Mark M. Smith, Jennifer Stoever and other authors have analysed how the understanding and experience of sound is raced, gendered and classed.[7] Scholars such as Maria Cizmic, Joshua Pilzer, Amy Lynn

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

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

[7] Aimée Boutin provides a short bibliography and explanation of how the senses and sound have emerged in the humanities. See 'Rethinking the Flâneur: Flânerie and the Senses', *Dix-Neuf* 16/2 (2012): 124–32. Scholars from many disciplines have studied the interaction of the senses as a key to knowledge, memory and identity; to name just a few sources, see Michel Serres, *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); the essays in C. Nadia Seremetakis's edited collection *The Senses Still: Perception and Memory as Material Culture in Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and work on the spatial construction of diaspora through the senses by Michalis Poupazis, 'Extending Our Senses: Music, Nostalgia, Space, Artefact and the Mediterranean Imaginary among the Greek-and-Turkish-speaking Cypriot Diaspora in Birmingham UK', (PhD thesis, University College Cork, 2017). For an explanation of sensory anthropology as a means of corporealizing academic investigation, see David Howe, including *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003). For Mark M. Smith's work on the ways sound impacted how Northerners and Southerners (mis)understood each other during the Civil War era, see *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Wlodarski and J. Martin Daughtry have published foundational work considering sound's and music's connections with trauma, largely focused on the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[8] But studying sounds of the more distant past – particularly in the era before sound recordings – is fraught with difficulties, as we struggle to find traces of 'vanished' sounds in the remaining historical evidence. Despite these obstacles, certain sonic vestiges abound in nineteenth-century sources. Building on Lisa Gitelman's concept of the 'inscription' of sound into writing, Ana María Ochoa Gautier's work on aurality in Colombia beautifully details methodological approaches for nineteenth-century sound, including both an 'acoustically tuned exploration of the written archive' and historical sounds inscribed beyond the archive or the written text.[9] In his work on the history of the senses, Smith notes the primacy of sight in the nineteenth century, yet demonstrates how period visual culture often reveals tantalizing traces of the sonic – a particularly fruitful suggestion in the case of 1870–71, a year exhaustively chronicled throughout the world in lithographs, illustrated newspapers and photography.[10]

Studying sound's relationship to trauma in 1870–71 also incorporates elements of both urban studies and the sounds of war. In her study of Parisian street cries during the nineteenth century, Aimée Boutin argues that Walter Benjamin's influential approach to the *flâneur* – an observant individual walking leisurely through urban streets – has perhaps overemphasized the role of visuality.[11] Drawing on

---

Jennifer Stoever has analysed sound's essential role as a 'critical modality' through which people '(re)produce, apprehend, and resist' aspects of racial identities. See Stoever, *The Sonic Color Line: Race and the Cultural Politics of Listening* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

[8] Cizmic, *Performing Pain*; Joshua D. Pilzer, *Hearts of Pine: Songs in the Lives of Three Korean Survivors of the Japanese Comfort Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Amy Lynn Wlodarski, *Musical Witness and Holocaust Representation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); J. Martin Daughtry, *Listening to War: Sound, Music, Trauma, and Survival in Wartime Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); see also Jillian C. Rogers, *Resonant Recoveries: French Music and Trauma between the Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021). Other discussions of music and sound in relation to trauma include: 'Musicology and Trauma Studies: Perspectives for Research and Pedagogy', panel presented at American Musicological Society, Rochester, New York, 2017; 'Music, War, and Trauma in Britain and France, 1870–1920', panel presented at 'Trauma Studies in the Medical Humanities', Durham, England, 2018; 'Music, War and Trauma in the Long Nineteenth Century', panel presented at American Musicological Society, San Antonio, Texas, 2018; 'Music, Sound, and Trauma: Interdisciplinary Perspectives', online conference, 2021.

[9] Ochoa Gautier notes that listening practices are often dispersed across multiple texts constructed for various purposes: she draws on numerous 'sites of inscription' in her case studies (such as travel writing, novels, poems, literary histories, grammars, ethnographies, etc.). See Ana María Ochoa Gautier, *Aurality: Listening and Knowledge in Nineteenth-Century Colombia* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014): 3, 7.

[10] Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*. Beyond acknowledging how sounds might linger in nineteenth-century visual culture, Tina M. Campt's work on identification photography and the African diaspora uses sound to disrupt the archive. Drawing on Ariella Azoulay and Paul Gilroy, Campt's work notes the counterintuitive 'choice to "listen to" rather than simply "look at images" is a conscious decision to challenge the equation of vision with knowledge'; Tina M. Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017): 3.

[11] Aimée Boutin, *City of Noise: Sound and Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015). The *flâneur* has been analysed in a number of ways, such as an 'icon of

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

contemporary sources such as Balzac and Victor Fournel, Boutin instead calls for a concept of 'aural flânerie', arguing that sounds and soundmarks were essential to understanding a city.[12] Indeed, Parisians meticulously listened to their city, particularly the changing sounds of nineteenth-century urban spaces. Throughout most of the Second Empire, Paris was in the midst of massive renovation projects: Baron Haussman overhauled much of medieval Paris in favour of new broad, expansive boulevards, forever changing the city's soundscape.[13] Boutin notes that these new Haussmanian boulevards – 'as wide as their buildings were tall (18 meters)' – echoed and resonated quite differently than the older narrow, resonant streets.[14] These changing urban sounds were understood in markedly oppositional ways; as Shelley Trower discusses, scholars had considered the potentially negative effects of vibrations on the human body since the mid-eighteenth century.[15] By the time of the Franco-Prussian War, many commentators worried how unregulated urban noise could affect the nerves. French hygienist Jean-Baptiste Fonssagrives, for example, argued that noise from omnibuses and other vehicles 'caused windows and nerves to vibrate', creating nervous problems in 'susceptible' individuals.[16] On the other hand, French medical professionals had investigated ways to utilize vibration as a therapeutic process since the Revolution, a focus that intensified throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Jillian Rogers notes in her work on World War I, it is often when sounds become traumatic (as

---

modernity' (including the alienations of modernity in an hostile urban space) and as a source of power via the male gaze. For a complication of the *flâneur*, see Richard Wrigley, ed., *The Flâneur Abroad: Historical and International Perspectives* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014).

[12] Aimée Boutin, 'Aural Flânerie', *Dix-neuf: Journal of the Society of Dix-Neuviémistes* 16/2 (2012): 149–61. Though Boutin clarifies that she does not use the term in this way, she notes Susan Buck-Morris's attention to Adorno's statement describing 'the station-switching behaviour of the radio listener as a kind of aural flânerie'. Boutin's use of the term 'soundmarks' borrows R. Murray Schafer's term for a particular place's unique/specific and meaningful sounds. See Schafer, *The Tuning of the World* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1977): 26. While the term 'soundscape' has become ubiquitous, I concur with the crucial critiques of Schafer's conceptual model from feminist, anti-imperial, and decolonial perspectives. For more, see Edwin Hill, Jr., *Black Soundscapes, White Stages: The Meaning of Francophone Sound in the Black Atlantic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013): 12–15 and Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), particularly the introduction and chapter four.

[13] For a study of anxieties over the changing sound of nineteenth-century Paris, see Jacek Blaszkiewicz, 'Listening to the Old City: Street Cries and Urbanization in Paris, ca 1860', *The Journal of Musicology* 37/2 (2020): 123–57.

[14] Boutin, *City of Noise*, 63–66. She analyses 81 rue Saint-Martin in the 4th arrondissement as an example of an older type of confined space which tended to have enclosed resonant areas such as courtyards, stairwells, arcades, *passages*, etc.

[15] Trower cites David Hartley's *Observations on Man* (1749) as an important early example. See Trower, *Senses of Vibration: A History of the Pleasure and Pain of Sound* (New York: Continuum, 2012): 94–125.

[16] J.B. Fonssagrives, *Hygiène et assainissement des villes* (Paris: J.B.-Baillière, 1874). Cited in Boutin, *City of Noise*, 74. For a study on nineteenth-century urban noise in Victorian London, see John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003): 41–81. I am grateful to Michelle Meinhart for bringing this source on English sounds in the nineteenth century to my attention.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

in times of war) that there is a concomitant effort to harness the positive or soothing effects of sound.[17]

Within its dense layers of soundmarks, Paris had a particularly rich relationship with the sounds of revolution. In 1789, 1830, 1848 and so on, the city echoed with the singing of century-old revolutionary songs, bells calling the populace to arms, the *rappel* or *générale*, bugle calls and the ringing of stone as Parisians constructed barricades.[18] These sounds were both a language and an inherited memory routinely revisited over a century or more, a sonic vocabulary of revolution written into the aural history of Paris.[19] Thus, certain events during 1870–71 had a sort of sonic familiarity, though other new, horrifying sounds disoriented Parisians. From the declaration of war on 19 July 1870, when Parisians flooded the streets singing, to the bloody final battles when detonations, shots and screams resounded street by street, Paris in 1870–71 was riven by what Daughtry has broadly termed 'belliphonic' sounds – sounds produced by armed combat.[20] Scholars have closely examined certain aspects of Parisian musical culture during this period, such as popular song and concert life.[21] What remains understudied is the broader sonic

---

[17] Rogers, *Resonant Recoveries*, chapter 2.

[18] See n. 46 for an example of attempts to control the beating of the *rappel* (drawing on lessons learned from the 1848 revolutions) and n. 50 for Edmond de Goncourt's recollection of hearing an alarm bell in both 1848 and 1871. For scholarship which details sonic continuities from various waves of French revolution, see Martin Kaltenecker, '"What Scenes! What Sounds!" Some Remarks on Soundscapes in War Times', in *Music and War in Europe from French Revolution to WWI*, ed. Étienne Jardin (Brepols: Turnhout, 2016): 3–28. Kaltenecker's work contains an excellent bibliography on war and sound. Though her work primarily focuses on the role of music in the later Third Republic, Jann Pasler's analysis of how musics (and musical events) from the French Revolution were repurposed in the late nineteenth century offers an essential contribution to understanding the borrowings and continuities of revolution, music and meaning in the long nineteenth century. See Pasler, *Composing the Citizen.*

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

[20] Daughtry notes 'the sounds of combat have been a prominent presence in literary depictions of war; documentary accounts and oral histories are similarly saturated with evocations of war's sonic dimension. That sound is regarded as worthy of commentary should not be surprising: armed conflict has been a noisy, grunting, clanging business throughout history'. See Daughtry, *Listening to War*, 3. For testimony about the singing of the Marseillaise and shouts of 'To Berlin!' on 19 July 1870, see actress Sarah Bernhardt, *Ma double vie: mémoires de Sarah Bernhardt* (Paris: Charpentier et Fasquelle, 1907): 201. This was only one of many instances of public singing broadly linked to the conflict; when Victor Hugo returned from exile on 5 September 1870, for example, a crowd flooded the streets singing the 'Marseillaise' and reciting extracts from *Les Châtiments*. Starr, *Commemorating Trauma*, 62. Many testimonies of the period include details about such belliphonic sounds on Paris's streets: see, for example, Lilli Hegermann-Lindencrone, *In the Courts of Memory, 1858–1875 from Contemporary Letters* (Garden City: Garden City Publishing, 1912): 251; and Nathan Sheppard, *Shut Up in Paris* (London: Richard Bentley and Son, 1871).

[21] For work on concert life during the Commune, see Delphine Mordey, '*Moments musicaux*: High Culture in the Paris Commune', *Cambridge Opera Journal* 22/1 (2010): 1–31; 'Auber's Horses: *L'Année Terrible* and Apocalyptic Narratives', *19th-Century Music*, 30/3 (2007): 213–29; 'Dans le palais du son, on fait de la farine: Performing at the Opéra during the 1870 Siege of Paris', *Music & Letters* 93/1 (2012): 1–28. See also Jess Tyre, 'Music in Paris during the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune', *The Journal of Musicology* 22/2 (2005): 173–202. For work on the Commune and popular song, see Jean-Baptiste

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

experience of battle, bombardment, siege and civil war within a nineteenth-century urban soundscape, a focus on what Martin Kaltenecker has noted as the 'phonosphères of war'.[22] These sounds both marked the streets of the French capital with 'aural ruins' – memories or scars of the events of 1870–71 – and marked the minds and bodies of some Parisians with traumatic memories. Time constraints necessitate only a capsule review of the sonic experience of this pivotal year; while I mention a number of sonic episodes, my main focus is on two periods: the Prussian bombardment of Paris in January 1871 and the sounds of the Commune.

## I. 'Le trouble des esprits': Parisian Sounds During *l'année terrible*

### *The Fall of Empire: Sounds and Psychological Impacts in Autumn 1870*

What Victor Hugo deemed France's 'terrible year' (*l'année terrible)* began in July 1870 with the declaration of war with Prussia.[23] The climactic loss at Sedan came in early September, followed swiftly by the fall of France's Second Empire. Residents of the French capital were forced to rapidly assess their options as the Prussian army marched to encircle Paris. Most dug in their heels, preparing for siege or occupation by stockpiling provisions in cellars and burying or hiding valuables. In his memoir, French psychiatrist Dr Henri Legrand du Saulle, who worked at the Dépôt de la Préfecture de Police, noted that in these days of early September 1870, 'disturbance of the spirits is at its highest point'.[24] People reacted in different ways, from fear to trembling, repetitive motions and speech, shouting, weeping or, conversely, silence. Some, wrote Legrand du Saulle, experienced true sensory illusions: 'they think they hear hoofbeats of the cavalry scouts, the sinister chiming of the *tocsin* or the whistles of the enemy's front lines. Imagining that they are going to be captured and immediately attacked, they run to hide somewhere dark. At this moment, we observe some cases of sudden suicide'.[25]

---

Weckerlin, 'L'Histoire en chansons, 1870–1871–1872', *La Chronique Musicale*, 15 July 1873; Georges Coulonges, *La Commune en chantant* (Paris: Les Éditeurs français réunis, 1970); Robert Brécy, *La Chanson de la Commune: chansons et poèmes inspirés par la Commune de 1871* (Paris: Les editions ouvrières, 1991). Kimberly White and Kathleen Hulley focused on café-concert singers during this period in 'Singing the Nation: Amiati, Bordas, and the *chanson patriotique* of the Café-Concert', paper presented at American Musicological Society National Meeting, Rochester, New York, November 2017.

[22] Kaltenecker, 'What Scenes! What Sounds!'.

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

[24] Legrand du Saulle's comments (included as the appendix to his larger work on *folie*) were first given at a medical society meeting on 26 June 1871 in the immediate aftermath of the Commune. Henri Legrand du Saulle, *Le délire des persécutions: Appendice: De l'état mental des habitants de Paris pendant les événements de 1870–1871* (Paris: Henri Plon, 1871): 488: 'Le trouble des esprits est à son comble'. All translations by the author, unless otherwise attributed.

[25] 'véritables victimes d'illusions sensoriels, ils croient entendre le pas des chevaux des éclaireurs, le tintement sinistre du tocsin ou le sifflet de l'avant-garde ennemie, et s'imaginant qu'ils vont être pris et passés immédiatement par les armes, ils courent se cacher dans quelque coin obscur. A ce moment, on observe quelques cas de suicide aigu'; Legrand du Saulle, *Le délire des persécutions*, 488.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Throughout four months in autumn and winter 1870, the entire soundscape of Paris shifted. The Prussians encircled the city on 19 September 1870, initiating a devastating siege in hopes of forcing capitulation. Paris became unnaturally quiet, with distant sounds echoing through the stone streets. Théophile Gautier noted the 'terrifying solitude' of this 'deathly silence', adding that, 'you would think you were in a medieval city, at the hour when curfew sounds'.[26] An anonymous published account added that 'drilling, the rattle of the drum and the booming of distant cannon were the only sounds that disturbed the silence'.[27] In his journal, Edmond de Goncourt noted how the siege's horrors even interfered at times with his ability to mourn the recent death of his brother.[28] De Goncourt believed many French citizens struggled to process the autumn's events. On 4 October, he wrote, 'opening the paper this morning, I read that Callou, the director at Vichy, has had a mental breakdown. He is only forty-two. This year there have been so many minds of forty worn out and done for by pressures of business, politics, literature.'[29]

The winter of 1870–71 was especially cold; in frozen Paris, sounds echoed in unusual ways off the hard angles of cold stone and the icy river. De Goncourt reported:

> In spite of the deadening effect of the snow which falls in dispersed, fluffy, crystalline flakes you can hear everywhere a distant and continuous cannonade from the direction of Saint Denis and Vincennes. In front of Montmartre cemetery the hearses are lined up, their horses breathing noisily, the coachmen in black silhouette against the white snow as they stamp their feet.[30]

With the combined effects of the siege's starvation, a smallpox epidemic and the freezing weather, Paris's death toll skyrocketed. English newspaper correspondent Felix Whitehurst wrote on Christmas Day of 'hospitals crowded with the dying; heaps of dead on our surrounding heights; hardly a family which is not in mourning, and even in grief, which quite another thing; starvation staring us in the face; fuel burnt out; meat a recollection, and vegetables a pleasing dream'.[31] De Goncourt believed that not all of these Parisian deaths were the result of physical privations, but from the interaction of the body and the mind, noting that 'much of this mortality comes from grief, displacement, homesickness'.[32]

### *Sickness and Shelling: The Bombardment of January 1871*

At the beginning of 1871, the Prussians installed artillery pieces – including new steel 'Krupp' guns – in forts around Paris. At 3am on 5 January they commenced

---

[26] Théophile Gautier, *Tableaux de Siège* (Paris: Charpentier, 1871): 120–21.

[27] Anonymous, *Life in Paris before the War and during the Siege* (London: Diprose and Bateman, 1871): 57.

[28] De Goncourt wrote about how the siege affected his mind and ability to grieve on 3 October 1870. See Edmond de Goncourt, *Paris under Siege, 1870–1871: From the Goncourt Journal*, ed. and trans. by George J. Becker, with a historical introduction by Paul H. Neik (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969): 92–3.

[29] De Goncourt, *Paris under Siege*, 93.

[30] De Goncourt, *Paris under Siege*, 177–8.

[31] Felix Whitehurst, *My Private Diary during the Siege of Paris* (London: Tinsley Bros, 1875): II: 158.

[32] De Goncourt, *Paris under siege*, 177.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

shelling the city, with fire concentrated on the commune of Montrouge and the 5th and 14th *arrondissements*, including the Barrière d'Enfer, the Faubourg Saint-Jacques, the Observatoire and the Panthéon.[33] Between 300 and 600 shells hit central Paris each day, with more than 12,000 shells fired into the city over a 23-day bombardment.[34] As a National Guard sentry patrolling Paris's fortifications, composer Vincent d'Indy listened intently to the shelling (indeed he claimed the Prussian guns were pitched in B-flat). In an 1872 memoir on his wartime experience, d'Indy devoted lengthy passages to the bombardment, detailing both the sounds he heard and the somatic response of French soldiers.[35] Narrating a timeline of wartime listening, d'Indy begins with an almost hour-by-hour account of the first days of the bombardment. On the evening of 6 January, he singled out the whistling of shells as especially frightening; hearing the sound almost felt like a sickness.[36] After several days of shelling in January, d'Indy noted his desensitization to many of the horrible sights and sounds of battle, except the horrible whistling of the shells. Despite hearing this sound thousands of times he 'could not help but shiver', and 'feel a cold sweat run through the body upon hearing this terrible *crescendo*'. He hastened to add that this wasn't fear, but a ubiquitous bodily sensation felt even by veteran naval gunners.[37]

The potential physical and psychological effects of shelling were not entirely new concerns in 1871. Since the Napoleonic wars, the phrase '*le vent du boulet*' – literally, being 'in the draft of a cannonball passing by' – was used as a catchall category to describe soldiers who suffered effects from close proximity to shelling. Soldiers might freeze, have difficulty with motor coordination, collapse or lose consciousness, generally without being struck by the gunfire.[38] By the mid-to-late nineteenth century, however, some medical professionals analysed the psychological effects of shelling on non-military personnel.[39] As he worked treating Parisians

[33] The composer Vincent d'Indy included a detailed account of the bombardment's beginnings, noting that on the afternoon of 5 January he counted 38 detonations in a minute. See d'Indy, *Histoire du 105$^{e}$ Bataillon de la Garde Nationale de Paris en l'année 1870–1871, par un engagé volontaire dudit bataillon âgé de 19 ans* (Paris: Charles Douniol et Cie, 1872): 93. For description of the locations particularly effected, see Legrand du Saulle, *Le délire des persecutions* (Paris: Henri Plon, 1871): 498.

[34] Robert Tombs, *The War Against Paris, 1871* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981): 21.

[35] d'Indy, *Histoire du 105e Bataillon*, 93–117.

[36] 'Je ne connais rien de plus affreusement fatal que ce sifflement des obus: on ne peut donner la description de la sensation plus que désagréable que ce bruit fait éprouver: on ressent comme un malaise'; d'Indy, *Histoire du 105e Bataillon*, 95.

[37] 'Mais il est difficile de s'habituer à ce sifflement fatal, inflexible, inexorable des obus. (Epithètes qui caractérisent très bien l'impression que l'on ressent.) Pour nous, bien que nous l'ayions entendu des milliers de fois, au dernier comme au premier jour du bombardement, nous ne pouvions nous empêcher de frissonner, et nous sentions une sueur froide nous parcourir tout le corps, à l'audition de ce terrible *crescendo*. Ce n'était pas de la peur: car les vieux matelots-canonniers qui servaient nos pièces de marine nous avouaient éprouver la même sensation'; d'Indy, *Histoire du 105e Bataillon*, 100–101.

[38] See Laurent Tatu and Julien Bogousslavsky, 'World War I Psychoneuroses: Hysteria Goes to War', in *Hysteria: the Rise of an Enigma*, ed. Julien Bogousslavsky (Basel: Karger, 2014): 157–68.

[39] In the context of twenty-first-century wars, J. Martin Daughtry has analysed how listening to belliphonic sounds can be a source of trauma through hearing loss, PTSD, and other injuries. He argues that, in wartime, sound is not only a source of knowledge ('a source of situational

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

suffering from physical and psychological conditions, for example, Dr Henri Legrand du Saulle noted that the people living in the *quartiers* most affected by the January bombardment indeed suffered from extreme terror and inability to sleep.[40] These Parisians hid in their cellars, paced and spread the wildest rumours. Legrand du Saulle noted that the most strongly affected were:

> prey to a true *panophobia*, to visual hallucinations and illusions of hearing, to the most dismal delirious conceptions, to hyperesthesia and tremblings of the entire body, they arrive at the Dépôt municipal des aliénes with their bodies bent forward, in the position of the most extreme grief. They are weeping, moaning and always repeating the same words: 'Ah, my God, my God. – Everything is lost! – What's going to happen to me'?[41]

Legrand du Saulle also noted that over the course of several days in January 1871, he treated multiple cases of a rare type of *mélancolie avec stupeur*. Describing this condition as an intense disruption of the senses – these individuals could barely see, hear or speak – Legrand du Saulle argued that 'this kind of suspension or temporary annihilation of all the faculties … [is] seen in cases of profound upset, sudden extraordinary events, excessive joy or extreme fear'.[42]

Elements of Legrand du Saulle's writings illuminate a clear connection between traumatized Parisians of 1871 and analyses which would emerge nearly half a century later in the midst of World War I. Legrand du Saulle believed in 'adverse heredity' as a predisposing factor in these conditions, arguing that individuals who were easily impressionable, hypochondriac, melancholic or suffered from other hereditary mental issues were particularly susceptible to terror – an idea that would still have currency in 1914.[43] Legrand du Saulle's accounts of

awareness that might increase survival') but also a weapon and source of danger. See *Listening to War*, 1–12. Suzanne Cusick has studied the use of music in the war on terror, including '"You are in a place that is out of the world …": Music in the Detention Camps of the 'Global War on Terror', *Journal of the Society for American Music* 2/1 (2008): 1–26. See also Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009).

[40] Memoirs from Parisian residents testify to the impacts of the shelling. Suffering from interrupted sleep, De Goncourt complained of migraines and mental fog due to the bombardment; see *Paris under Siege*, 187–8, 198. Some reported more mixed feelings: Nathan Sheppard wrote that on 18 January he 'spent the day in watching and dodging shells', noted his fascination, and that we are 'alternately hilarious and terrified. The moment the peculiar whiz and whir of a coming shell is heard, everybody falls faceforemost upon the pavement.' *Shut Up in Paris*, 220–21.

[41] 'En proie à une panophobie réelle, à des illusions et à des hallucinations de la vue et de l'ouïe, aux conceptions délirantes de l'ordre le plus lugubre, à de l'hyperesthésie cutanée et à des tremblements de tous les membres, ils arrivent au Dépôt municipal des aliénés le corps infléchi en avant, dans l'attitude de la plus navrante douleur, pleurant, gémissant et répétant toujours les mêmes mots: *Ah! mon Dieu, mon Dieu. – Tout est perdu! – Qu'est -ce que je vais devenir?*; Legrand du Saulle, *Le délire des persécutions*, 498.

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

[43] This may be related to Legrand du Saulle's note that traumatic responses to the shelling were not homogenous; he mentions that some Parisians maintained a sort of patriotic

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Parisian residents certainly described a familiar cluster of hyperarousal symptoms and problems of perception: insomnia, tremblings and tremors, inability to straighten the body, extreme hypervigilance of the nervous system and – in the more intense cases of *mélancolie avec stupeur* – mutism, loss of sensory function, incontinence and thoughts of self-harm or suicide. His description of the bent bodies of suffering Parisians is particularly suggestive. In 1915, neurologists Achille-Alexandre Souques and Inna Rosanoff-Saloff coined the term 'camptocormia' for the 'stooped posture of the trunk' of soldiers injured in the trenches of World War I. Souques and Rosanoff-Saloff noted the injury could be a conversion disorder caused by neurosis, especially from anxiety related to the battle, and that the patients might remain in this bent-forward position for extended periods of time.[44] While Legrand du Saulle's account from the bombardment period of *l'année terrible* did not create a specific term for the prostrate positions of the terrorized Parisians he treated, his narrative certainly forges a link between the embodied reactions to shelling in 1871 and the later 'traumatic neuroses' suffered by soldiers during the *grand guerre*.

### *Sounds both Carnivalesque and Catastrophic: The Paris Commune*

Broken by the bombardment, France's interim government signed an armistice, agreeing to crippling war indemnities and the loss of Alsace and much of Lorraine. In elections following the armistice, France mainly sought moderate candidates or the restoration of a monarchy, yet Paris selected radical deputies. Unrest – which had roiled Paris through 1870 and 1871 – came to a head over cannons belonging to the Parisian National Guard. On 18 March 1871 the regular French army deployed at dawn to working-class Parisian neighbourhoods such as Montmartre, planning to seize cannons held by the National Guard.[45] Accounts of this day's events resonate with a web of Parisian revolutionary sounds: the drum beats of the *rappel* and *générale* called for the National Guard to assemble, bugle calls warned the citizenry to disperse, enumerated gunshots spelled additional warnings.[46]

resilience through the intense cold, bombardment, siege and epidemics of January 1871; *Le délire des persecutions*, 498–502. Belief that certain individuals were more 'susceptible' to trauma – usually with concomitant stigmatization, accusations of weakness or cowardice, etc. – was still very much part of the discourse during World War I. For a detailed study of how World War I-era conceptions of shell shock intersected with earlier ideas about hysteria, heredity, social class and physical/mental fitness in a British context, see Peter Leese, *Shell Shock: Traumatic Neurosis and the British Soldiers of the First World War* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002).

[44] Souques trained under Charcot and was his last resident; he also took up a position at the Salpêtrière after Charcot's death in 1893. For the original study, see Achille-Alexandre Souques and Inna Rosanoff–Saloff, 'La camptocormie: incurvation du tronc, consécutive au traumatismes du dos et des lombes; considérations morphologiques', *Revue neurologique* 23–24 (1915): 937–9.

[45] There are a number of different, extremely specific accounts of this morning in Montmartre. Gay Gullickson analyses many of these accounts and the ways sonic memories of 18 March varied for each author; see Gay Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

[46] There were many sonically significant uprisings throughout the year. In February 1871, for example, Parisians angry with the armistice terms gathered in the Place de la

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

As the regular army failed to seize the cannons and eventually fraternized with the citizenry of Montmartre, chroniclers detailed a sonically chaotic, carnivalesque atmosphere in strongly gendered narratives. Georges Clemenceau described the scene as 'perfect bedlam', and Edmond Lepelletier noted the 'noisy confusion' of the cheering, jeering, singing crowd.[47] Gay Gullickson's fascinating analysis of the 18 March crowds analyses how women of Montmartre were remembered as noisier than men, issuing a series of 'reproaches, demands, inarticulate sounds and insults'.[48] In his work on the US Civil War, Smith has analysed how white upper-class Southerners equated quietude with virtue, whereas a woman 'unsexes herself' through unsuitable noise.[49] As Smith demonstrates, noise is often a particularly telling marker of the aural abject, denoting what a particular listener finds objectionable about the class, gender or race of specific subjects. In this foundational triumph for the creation of the Commune, the hill of Montmartre noisily resounded not just with the sonic marks of revolution, but also with sounds that bourgeois commentators constructed and remembered as the abject noises of working-class female revolutionaries.

Due to this failed attempt to seize weaponry from the National Guard, and related violence such as the deaths of Generals Clément-Thomas and Lecomte, the regular army and government fled and established a stronghold at Versailles, while leftists, workers and the National Guard proclaimed a 'Commune' in Paris. Again noting the sonic character of such revolutionary moments, De Goncourt wrote in his journal on 20 March, 'Three in the morning. I am awakened by the alarm bell, the lugubrious tolling that I heard in the nights of June 1848. The deep plaintive lamentation of the great bell at Notre Dame rises over the sounds of all the bells in the city, giving the dominant note to the general alarm, then is submerged by human shouts'.[50] Prosper-Olivier Lissagaray, a Communard, remembered the sounds of the official inaugural ceremony of the Commune on 27 March as resounding with battalion drums, trumpets, cannons and the singing of the 'Marseillaise' and the 'Chant du Départ', all blending in 'one formidable vibration'.[51]

---

Bastille. Under normal order, the *rappel* (a drum signal which summoned National Guard members from a particular arrondissement) was only beaten at the urging of the government – the 1848 revolutions were encouraged in part by spontaneous beating of the *rappel*. In February 1871, the *rappel* was beaten illegally in working class and leftist areas of Belleville, the Faubourg du Temple and the Latin Quarter. See Tombs, *War against Paris*, 27; and Jonathan M. House, *Controlling Paris: Armed Forces and Counter-Revolution, 1789–1848* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

[47] Georges E.B. Clemenceau, *Clemenceau: The Events of His Life as Told by Himself to His Former Secretary, Jean Martet*, trans. Milton Waldman (London: Longmans, Green, 1930): 171; and Edmond Lepelletier, *Histoire de la Commune de 1871*, 3 vols, vol. 1, *Le dix-huit mars* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1911): 417. Cited in Gullickson, *Unruly Women of the Commune*, 30–31.

[48] In her careful reading of the manifold accounts of 18 March, Gullickson provides an excellent analysis of how accounts detailing the genesis of the Commune were subject not only to different interpretations in 1871, but also how historical revision and reshaping of the narrative occurred over time. Gullickson, *Unruly Women of the* Commune, 35.

[49] Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*, 29.

[50] De Goncourt's reference to Notre Dame's 'great bell' refers to Emmanuel, a 13-ton *bourdon* recast in 1681 (the only bell of Notre Dame that was not removed or destroyed during the French Revolution). De Goncourt, *Paris under Siege*, 231.

[51] Lissagaray, *History of the Commune*, 128–9. Augustine-Melvine Blanchecotte likewise mentions the trumpets, drums and fanfares on 27 March in *Tablettes d'une femme pendant la Commune* (Paris: Didier, 1872): 23–24.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

After the proclamation of the Commune in March 1871, the Versailles army besieged and bombarded Paris for a second time in an attempt to retake the city, startling inhabitants already unnerved by the earlier months of siege and bombardment from the Prussians. During the three months of the Commune, new soundmarks emerged in Paris. As Communard fighters perished during battles with the regular army camped outside the city, the Commune venerated their memory and fuelled resentment against the Versaillais by conducting large-scale public funerals. These daily processions began on 6 April; Lissagaray detailed the thousands of men, women and children in the streets, '*immortelles* in their button-holes, silent, solemn, marched to the sound of the muffled drums. At intervals subdued strains of music burst forth like the spontaneous mutterings of sorrow too long contained.'[52]

Atypical soundmarks intensified by late April 1871. The US minister to France, Elihu Benjamin Washburne, described a Paris marked by unusually silent places: all the factories, workshops and sounds of industry were quieted, the Champs-Elysées was deserted and the noisy cafés closed at ten o'clock. Yet the city also vibrated with strange sounds; from his residence at No. 75 Avenue Uhrich, Washburne heard the omnipresent 'roar of cannon, the whizzing of shells and the rattling of musketry'.[53]

Like d'Indy's attentive listening during the January siege, De Goncourt tuned his ears to listen carefully to the shelling from Versaillais forces. He noted on 16 April, 'Yesterday provided me with a serious study of acoustics. I did not know what caused a sort of agonizing wail which I once took for a moaning man. I had read in the paper that it was the special sound of shells. I had heard it was a whistling in the grooves of the lead sheath. Now I know that this wail comes when a concave shell fragment is projected a very long distance'.[54] He commented, nearly a month later, on the psychological toll of these events on Paris's inhabitants, writing 'all the people you meet on the street talk to themselves aloud like crazy people – people from whose mouths come words like *desolation*, *misfortune*, *death*, *ruin* – all the syllables of despair'.[55]

During the infamous *semaine sanglante* ('bloody week') of late May 1871, the Versaillais army entered the capital and, in a bloody civil war, suppressed the Commune in violent fighting, street by street. Accounts of the *semaine sanglante* note the covert entrance of the Versaillais army into western Paris early in the

[52] Lissagaray, *History of the Paris Commune of 1871*, 191. This scene is also mentioned in Gullickson, *Unruly Women of Paris*, 83 and Howard Brown, *Mass Violence and the Self: From the French Wars of Religion to the Paris Commune* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018): 196–7.

[53] Elihu Benjamin Washburne, *Recollections of a Minister to France, 1869–1877* (London: Sampson Low, 1887): vol. 2: 100.

[54] De Goncourt, *Paris Under Siege*, 256.

[55] De Goncourt, *Paris Under Siege*, 292. Italics in original. An extreme case of the psychological toll of this period is (potentially) the death of composer Daniel Auber; although the actual circumstances of composer Auber's death were mysterious, he died sometime during this period, on May 12 or 13. Much of the press coverage of Auber's passing blamed his death on the events of the year in general and the Commune in particular. See Gustave Lafargue, 'Courrier des théâtres – quelques détails sur Auber racontés par M. Oscar Comettant', *Le Figaro*, 30 June 1871; and Lilli Hegermann-Lindencrone, *In the Courts of Memory*, 334. Both are cited by Delphine Mordey, who provides an overall analysis of the circumstances and meanings attached to Auber's death. 'Auber's Horses', 214–17.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

morning of 21 May. Lissagaray recalled this moment as an ominous cessation of noise: 'the cannon were everywhere hushed – a silence unknown for three weeks'.[56]

Communard leaders gradually acknowledged the breach of their defences by a resumption of noise: the *rappel* was beaten all night on 21 May in the working-class district of Batignolles. The next morning, the *tocsin* rang throughout the city while Communard soldiers beat the *générale*.[57] Alain Corbin notes that the *tocsin* – generally hurried, redoubled and discontinuous strokes on a small bell – elicited physical and psychological effects in nineteenth-century auditors, including 'fear, panic and horror'.[58] Indeed, the Commune's ministry had debated sounding the *tocsin* at all, 'on the pretext that the population must not be alarmed'.[59] Anti-Communards, however, welcomed the *tocsin* as a sound of deliverance. During the long night of 21 May, De Goncourt wrote in his journal:

> I go back to bed, but this time it really is the drums, it really is the bugles! I hurry back to the window. The call to arms sounds all over Paris; and soon above the drums, above the bugles, above the clamor, above the shouts of 'To Arms!' rise in great waves the tragically sonorous notes of the *tocsin*, which has begun to ring in all the churches – a sinister sound which fills me with joy and marks the beginning of the end of the hateful tyranny for Paris.[60]

Legrand du Saulle, still stationed in Paris, reported that the *tocsin* chimed day and night while cannons thundered in the streets, powder magazines exploded and the sounds of shots echoed everywhere.[61]

In addition to the *tocsin*, layers of belliphonic sounds horrified many Parisians during the *semaine sanglante*. Augustine-Melvine Blanchecotte, hiding during an endless night on 23 May, wrote of the awful combination of machine guns, cannon fire, the screams of shells, the racket of paving stones, yells from combatants, the falling of bodies, the certainty of an explosion. Like many, she drew particular attention to the terrifying new sound of the *mitrailleuse*, a volley gun that could fire multiple rounds in rapid succession.[62] In a suggestive account, Lillie Hegermann-Lindencrone, a singer and banker's wife, detailed the sounds of violent revolt *and* her state of profound nervous anxiety during the *semaine sanglante*. In letters to her family, she lamented her inability to sleep, to function normally, even to change her clothes. She mentions that singing – usually a source of comfort – was unable to assuage her anxiety. On 25 May, she noted the horrid sounds of the fighting in the Faubourg St. Honoré: 'when I open the door of the vestibule, I can

[56] Lissagaray, *History of the Paris Commune*, 311. Edward Malet, secretary at the British embassy, likewise noted the cessation of the bombardment as important sonic information. Using his ears to glean the changing tides of battle, he heard the crack of small arms in the Champs-Élysées – from this, he knew the Versaillais troops had entered the city; Edward Malet, *Shifting Scenes* (London: Murray, 1901): 318–19.

[57] Tombs, *War Against Paris*, 149.

[58] See Alain Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998): 192–201.

[59] For more on the Ministry's hesitancy to ring the *tocsin*, see Lissagaray, *History of the Commune*, 310.

[60] De Goncourt, *Paris under Siege*, 294.

[61] 'Les splendeurs de Paris sont en feu. Le tocsin tinte jour et nuit. Le canon tonne dans la rue. Les poudrières font explosion. La fusillade est partout'; Legrand du Saulle, *Le délire des persécutions*, 510.

[62] Blanchecotte, *Tablettes d'une femme*, 277.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

hear the yelling and screaming of the rushing mob; it is dreadful, the spluttering of fusillades and the guns overpower all other noises'.[63] Notably, not all Parisians were traumatized by the city's chaotic sonic violence: some became accustomed to the sounds, while others found them mesmerizing. Louise Michel, ardent Communard and anarchist, noted the 'beauty' of revolutionary sounds and chattering machine guns, stating: 'barbarian that I am, I love cannon, the smell of powder, machine-gun bullets in the air'.[64]

Fires swept Paris during the Commune, increasing the sensory chaos, filling the city with ash and smoke and clouding the vision of Parisians (Fig. 2).[65] This foul miasma had two effects: first, it rendered sound as a more cogent means of information than the uncertainties of sight. Parisians listened hard for reports of gunfire around the corner or shouts of troops progressing down the street, knowing that sonic vigilance would increase their chances of survival.[66] Yet the loss of clear vision also enhanced the sense of confusion, intensifying the psychological effects of the belliphonic noises that filled Paris.[67] Benoît Malon, a Communard, explained the powerful combined effects of the city's sounds, sights and smells on the mind. Malon described the sound of shells, clanging bayonets and Gatling guns mixing with cries of agony, 'all of that in an atmosphere of fire, under a crimson sky; divided by billowing flames that rise above the burning palaces, reducing even the strongest men to a stupor'.[68] On 24 May, Edwin Child noted in his diary:

> about 1/2 past 9 we began to hear the roaring of the cannon, the gnashing of the *mitrailleuses* and the continual roar of the fusillade which towards the afternoon became terrible, at the same time the bombs whistled overhead, spreading terror in the whole neighborhood … it seemed literally as if the whole town was on fire, and as if all the powers of hell were let loose upon the town, all day we could hear that terrible din that never ceased for an instant not knowing at what moment our own turn might arrive.[69]

The sounds of Paris's fiery destruction were themselves rendered into a musical metaphor by actress Marie Colombier, who wrote that 'the fire roared like a basso continuo, interrupted from time to time by sharp crackling sounds'.[70]

---

[63] Lindencrone, *In the Courts of Memory*, 326, 334.

[64] Louise Michel, *The Red Virgin: Memoirs of Louise Michel*, ed. and trans. Bullitt Lowry and Elizabeth Ellington Gunter (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1981): 66.

[65] Although my analysis foregrounds sound as a means of trauma, analysing the sensory impact of the Commune's fires – and the ways lack of vision impacted Parisians – aligns with David Howe's call for attention to the interplay (rather than isolation) of the senses. See Howe, *Sensual Relations*, xi.

[66] Daughtry discusses this same effect in the context of the Iraq War. See Daughtry, *Listening to War*, 33–6.

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

[68] Malon, *La troisième défaite du prolétariat français* (Neuchâtel: Guillaume, 1871): 466. Cited in Brown, *Mass Violence and the Self*, 192.

[69] Diary held by King's College, London. Cited in Joanna Richardson, *Paris under Siege: A Journal of the Events of 1870–1871* (London: The Folio Society, 1982): 182, 186.

[70] Colombier also echoed typical anti-Communard propaganda concerning the *pétroleuse* (a myth that working class women set the fires in Paris), stating 'there was nothing but the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

**Fig. 2 Panorama des incendies de Paris par la Commune. Nuits des 23, 24 et 25 mai 1871, lithograph by Isidore Laurent Deroy**

As the Versaillais army pursued the last Communards eastward through the city – finally ending in bloodshed in Père Lachaise on 28 May (Fig. 3) – Parisians moved through an urban landscape filled with death. Killed by firing squad, Communard corpses were buried en masse at the prison of La Roquette, the École Militaire, the Parc Monceaux, Lebau Barracks, the Luxembourg Gardens, the Jardin des Plantes and many others.[71] Renowned photographer Félix Nadar recalled the sights and sounds of huge numbers of Communard prisoners marched out of Paris to internment camps, where they were shot, imprisoned, deported or freed.[72] While exact numbers are difficult to ascertain, the Versaillais government murdered somewhere between 10,000 to 30,000 Parisians during this savage repression. Accounting for the dead was particularly contentious: both contemporary tallies and later analyses by historians varied widely on the actual number of Communards killed during the conflict. These discrepancies made it more difficult

sarabande of the *pétroleuses* round the ruins, trampling the resplendent shreds of that dazzling and gallant glory: The Second Empire'. See Marie Colombier, *Mémoires: Fin d'Empire* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1898): 319–20, cited and translated in Mordey, 'Moments musicaux', 25–6. For more on the myth of the *pétroleuse*, see Gullickson, *Unruly Women*, 159–90.

[71] Many of these executions were settled in prevotal courts, which dispensed the death penalty with no chance of review. Lissagaray, *History of the Paris Commune*, 383–5.

[72] Nadar [pseudonym of Gaspard-Félix Tournachon], 'Enquête sur la Commune', *Revue blanche*, 15 March to 1 April 1897, 228–30. Quoted in Laure Godineau, *La Commune de Paris par ceux qui l'on vécue* (Paris: Parigramme, 2010): 233–4; and Brown, *Mass Violence and the Self*, 198.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

**Fig. 3 L'agonie de la Commune', engraving by Amédée Daudenarde for *Le Monde illustré*, 24 June 1871, collection of the author**

to mourn loved ones who disappeared and were presumably buried in unknown places.[73]

Though the conflict officially ended in late May, Émile Zola recalled that the sounds of gunfire still resonated throughout the streets of Paris in June, as army firing squads meted out 'justice' by shooting Communards. Carts, coaches and wagons filled with corpses rattled across the city for weeks, while other mass casualties were buried quietly at night.[74] Augustine-Melvine Blanchecotte drew specific attention to horrifying new sounds of the Parisian summer of 1871. Though

[73] Scholars have analysed how the lack of a body – or a specific space, or a monument – can interfere with the mourning process. Sigmund Freud touched on this in his 1917 essay 'On Mourning and Melancholia'. See Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London Institute of Psycho-analysis, 1953–1974): , vol. 14: 243–58. For work on Freud that connects his ideas to societal mourning and memorials, see Vamik Volkan, 'Not Letting Go: From Individual Perennial Mourners to Societies with Entitlement Ideologies', in *On Freud's 'Mourning and Melancholia'*, ed. Leticia Glocer Fiorini, Thierry Bokanowski and Sergio Lewkowicz, foreword by Ethel Spector Person (London: The International Psychoanalytic Association, 2007): 90–109. For a study that discusses World War I mourning practices (which sometimes necessitated mourning without a body), see Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Many scholars have also focused on how *disappeared* bodies affect mourners; see, for example, Cecilia Taiana, 'Mourning the Dead, Mourning the Disappeared: The Enigma of the Absent-Presence', *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 95/6 (2014): 1087–1107.

[74] Many accounts of this period noted terrible smells as well; a 'cadaverous odour' lingered along the southwest edge of the city well into June. Lissagaray noted the numerous 'flesh-flies' and dead birds filling the city, and *Le Temps* wrote that a 'decayed, sickening odour arose' near the Tour Saint-Jacques. Lissagary, *History of the Paris Commune*, 390–93.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

she had thought the sound of shelling incomparable, she heard even more chilling sounds after the *semaine sanglante* – sounds that served as an ever-increasing series of traumas for some Parisian listeners. In her entry for 13 June, she detailed:

> Between midnight and one o'clock a.m., singular rolling sounds of a muted, strange and mournful omnibus, a sound which cannot be mistaken once it has been heard; these are, throughout Paris, the exhumations of the dead … [the] sound of shells, which I thought incomparable, was only innocent music beside these most recent noises. The most heartbreaking, the most unforgettable has been – between the Pantheon and the Luxembourg Gardens – these nocturnal noises, for an entire week, these incessant shots of the firing squad, these hasty decisions of human justice.[75]

Blanchecotte then notes, 'Parisians are supposed to be asleep. Blessed, oh! yes, blessed are those who sleep! The dreadful task imagines it is silent, as it imagines itself to be without witnesses.'[76] While the coverup of a massacre was hidden by darkness, Parisians could not close their ears entirely to these macabre sounds.

In fact, the difference between the sounds and sights of violence was one of the strongest markers of trauma for Parisians versus those outside the city. The rest of the world was privy to sights – rather than sounds – of catastrophic violence. As Howard Brown analyses in his study of visual representations of the Commune, graphic lithographs of corpses and executions – 'every gory aspect described in shocking detail' – fed an avid desire for macabre sights of a society coming undone.[77] After May 1871, tourists bought photographs of Paris's smouldering ruins, and the photographed corpses of Communards were likewise readily available for purchase. These images perpetuated an iconography of violence that lacked the sounds (and smells) of the first-hand accounts. Smith's work on the Civil War reminds us that images retain 'tantalizing traces' of the sonic, but it is essential to consider that the very technologies that preserved the visible violence of the year's events often occluded the sonic traumas endured by those within earshot.

## II. Sound and Nineteenth-Century Trauma

There is ample testimony that the sounds of 1870–71 lingered in the minds and ears of Parisians. When Émile Zola described the sounds of gunfire still resonating throughout the streets in June 1871, he commented on the millions of Parisians left with nightmares, terrors that could only begin to heal once the sounds quieted.

[75] 'Cette nuit, entre minuit et une heure, singuliers roulements d'omnibus sourds, lugubres, étranges, auxquels on ne peut se méprendre quand on les a une fois entendus; ce sont, à travers Paris, des déterrements de morts … Ce bruit d'obus, que je croyais incomparable, n'était qu'une musique innocente à côté de ces derniers bruits. Le plus navrant, le plus inoubliable a été – entre Panthéon et Luxembourg – le bruit nocturne, tout une semaine, des feux incessants de peloton, ces rapides décisions de la justice humaine …'; Blanchecotte, *Tablettes d'une femme*, 348–9.

[76] 'La population est supposée endormie. Bienheureux, oh! oui, bienheureux ceux qui dorment! L'affreuse besogne s'imagine être silencieuse, comme elle s'imagine être sans témoins'; Blanchecotte, *Tablettes d'une femme*, 349.

[77] Brown, *Mass Violence and the Self*, 177–91.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

Blanchecotte similarly noted that despite the end of the conflict, 'the cannon's vibration still lingered in the ears, the shaking of the spirits did not ebb away and the despondency of the dead city persisted'.[78] Years later, as Colette Wilson has analysed, the noisy fireworks of the 1878 Exposition Universelle – which sounded like bombshells – may have been triggering for listeners who had experienced the sound of gunfire in those precise Parisian locales.[79]

Attending to sound reveals how constant noise or abject silence tortured Paris's inhabitants during *l'année terrible*. In his writing on sonic warscapes, Martin Kaltenecker defines a 'pathological kind of hearing' in wartime, a constant listening through which a subject strains to hear and interpret sounds. Kaltenecker notes that war can (temporarily) create 'sound displacements, where ordinary sounds arise in places where they wouldn't in peacetime'.[80] Indeed, the sonic effects of 1870–71 rendered the familiar unfamiliar, unsettling Parisians as their city was shattered and remade not just by bullets, but also by sound. Paris seemed divided in two by sound as much as by ideology, a city with dualistic *phonosphères*. This city's sonic discourse was both familiar – the recurrent barricades, century-old revolutionary songs, the tapestry of bells, bugle calls, the *rappel* and the *générale* – but also riven by the uncanny new sounds of the *mitrailleuse* and the Krupp siege guns. Paris's sonic discourse was displaced, with sounds occurring in 'seemingly impossible' places, such as those of the bullets and cannons that ultimately silenced the last Communards in Père Lachaise. In his study of the US Civil War, Smith notes that the 'introduction of new noises and the muting of old sounds', or noises 'that threaten the customary soundmarks of a particular locale', can actually fatigue listeners to the point of hastening capitulation and increasing trauma during a conflict.[81] Moreover, there was no distinction between home-front and battlefield during this conflict: whether soldier, civilian, revolutionary or citizen – categories which were considerably muddied – all residents of Paris contended with the sounds of 1870–71.[82]

### *Responses: Illness and the Asylums*

Numerous Parisians were hospitalized due to the year's events. In an 1872 presentation to the Académie des sciences, a Dr Laurent noted the explosion of more than 1,700 cases of *folie* (madness) in 1870–71; Laurent also notes that 13 per cent of those

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

[79] Wilson, *Paris and the Commune*, 82.

[80] Kaltenecker gives two interesting examples: one, the absence of bells ringing around Saint-Dénis and silence in the streets, and second, bugles and other types of music in places where you would not normally hear them. 'What Scenes! What Sounds!', 9.

[81] Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*, 307.

[82] This lack of distinction is not unusual for certain kinds of conflicts; Smith notes how these were blurred categories during the US Civil War as well, when civilians suffered aural impacts during events such as the siege of Vicksburg. See Smith, *The Smell of Battle, The Taste of Siege: A Sensory History of the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 95–7. There are many other examples of the sonic and traumatic effects of bombings on 'civilian' populations during wartime, such as the bombardment of Paris in spring 1918.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

hospitalized between July 1870 and July 1871 were interned due to 'diseases' related to the events of the year. Breaking down his numbers more precisely, he notes that the percentage was about 15 per cent for men and 9 per cent for women. During the Commune in particular, Laurent reported that French asylums took in hundreds of patients who had become mad due to the year's events. These statistics are tantalizingly incomplete – and linked with mental illness and insanity in problematic ways, as discussed below – but they nevertheless suggest that many Parisians found the sights, sounds and experiences of the *année terrible* unbearable, some to the point of hospitalization.[83]

Reportage, memoirs and fictionalized accounts alike suggest that Parisians were intensely affected by the year's events physically and psychologically. In his popular novel *Les Amours d'un interne*, journalist Jules Claretie sensationally detailed affairs between women 'hysterics' and doctors at La Salpêtrière. In one scene featuring a woman interned during 1871, Claretie wrote, 'the sinister days of the end of this year and the fierce crisis that shook Paris at the beginning of the following year, rekindled the poor woman's frightful neurosis, exacerbated by the suffering of the siege and the terrors of the Commune'. He continues by noting that for these many girls in the hospital, 'science' almost always indicates that their maladies were caused by 'this heartbreaking thing: the civil war. It not only kills bodies, but also minds, and we think of walking corpses.'[84]

While not based in Paris – he was director of the asylum at Saint-Yon in Rouen – French psychiatrist Bénédict-Augustin Morel observed numerous men and women in states of overwhelming anxiety and terror due to the invasion by Prussian troops in late 1870.[85] Isolated and vulnerable, residents in the path of the army feared requisitions, pillage, destruction by fire and sexual violence. While analysing these factors, Morel includes an intriguing aside: describing the

[83] Laurent's report appeared in the *Revue médicale* of 28 September 1872, and was then quoted in Claude-Joseph Tissot's *La folie considérée surtout dans ses rapports avec la psychological normale* (Paris: A. Marescq Ainé, 1877): 396–7. Both of these works are cited in Catherine Glazer, 'De la Commune comme maladie mentale', *Romantisme* 48 (1985): 63–70. One of the contested elements was that (allegedly) there was a paradoxical decrease in the total number of patients housed in French asylums; as Glazer analyses, commentators such as Tissot attributed this (in an obviously biased reading) to the fact that most Communards must have been 'mad' and thus deportations and executions lessened the total number of asylum inmates.

[84] 'Les journées sinistres de la fin de cette année, la crise farouche qui secoue Paris au début de l'an qui suivit, rejetèrent la pauvre femme à son effroyable névrose, exacerbée par les souffrances du siège et les terreurs de la Commune … La guerre civile. On ne tue pas seulement des corps, mais des esprits, et la pensée a ses cadavres ambulants'; Claretie, *Les Amours d'un interne* (Paris: A Dentu, 1881): 93. This novel was written ten years after the Commune, though Claretie himself had first-hand experience of the events of this year (he had served as a reporter during the conflict). Claretie's work is noted in Glazer, 'De la Commune', 67, and Brown, *Mass Violence and the Self*, 30.

[85] Morel provides case studies of both men and women in his text, though he opines that this particular kind of anxiety occurred more often in women – a statement that should be analysed both through the complex histories of gender, pathology and madness in nineteenth-century France and through the understanding that asylums in Rouen were segregated (Saint-Yon for women and Quatre Mares for men). Bénédict-Augustin Morel, *Du délire panophobique des aliénés gémisseurs: Influence des événements de la guerre sur la manifestation de cette forme de folie. Mémoire lu à la Société médico-psychologique dans la séance du 26 Juin 1871* (Paris: E. Donnaud, 1871): 5–6.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

topography of the Pays de Caux plateau in the department of Seine-Maritime, he notes: 'the houses, surrounded by large trees to protect them from the ocean winds, are generally quite far from each other. From one farm to the other it was sometimes difficult to know what was happening, yet this isolation did not keep the most alarming noises from being audible.'[86] Morel's comment suggests particular soundscapes might – in tandem with other factors – intensify the impacts of war.

In a report to the Société médico-psychologique on 26 June 1871, Morel argued the year's horrible events had strikingly increased cases of a distinct type of intense anxiety (*panophobie gémissante*). Struck by the terror of these 'panophobes', Morel observed that 'their faces grimace like they will cry, but they do not shed tears. Some squat with their clothes raised above their heads. The only sign of life that they demonstrate is to moan in an incessant rhythm accompanied by automatic gestures that become *tics* in time with their moans.' Morel added that some individuals who spent months in this state lapsed into 'an extreme immobility, a lack of motion that I find almost cadaverous in certain cases'.[87] Earlier in his career, Morel understood this kind of delirium as madness, but now – in 1871 – he categorized this particular *panophobia* as markedly different from either ancient ideas of melancholy or the kind of depressive state (*lypémanie*) more recently defined by Jean-Étienne Dominique Esquirol.[88] Though careful to explain this panophobia was not a new condition, nor solely caused by war, Morel unequivocally argued that the war of 1870–71 unusually increased its impact.

### *Contexts: Folie, maladie mentale, and connecting politics to the mind*

Like Morel, other French commentators turned to preexistent psychological and medical models in an attempt to come to terms with the events of 1870–71. As Catherine Glazer summarizes in her analysis of the Commune as 'maladie mentale', French physicians, historians and other writers reflected at length about relationships between *l'année terrible* and madness. Borrowing an old framework dating back to early nineteenth-century works on *folie* by Étienne-Jean Georget and Esquirol, commentators newly pondered the relationship between political events and disorders of the mind.[89] Specific positions varied from author to author, but many connected social class, political events and madness, questioning

---

86 'les habitations, entourées de grands arbres pour les préserver des vents de mer, sont assez généralement séparées les uns des autres. D'une ferme à l'autre il était parfois difficile de savoir ce qui se passait, et cet isolement n'empêchait pas la circulation des bruits les plus alarmants'; Morel, *Du délire panophobique*, 26.

87 'Ils ont la figure crispée, grimaçante des pleureurs, mais ils ne versent pas de larmes. D'autres restent accroupis avec leurs vêtements relevés par dessus la tête. Le seul signe de vie qu'ils donnent est de gémir d'après un rhythme invariable avec accompagnement de tel ou tel geste automatique qui finit par passer à l'état de tic et à s'harmoniser avec leurs gémissements. Enfin l'immobilité extrême des terrifiées, immobilité que j'ai appelée cadavérique dans quelques cas extrêmes, constitue l'*habitus* extérieur de certains panophobes qui ont passé des mois à gémir et à répéter incessamment la même phrase'; Morel, *Du délire panophobique*, 4.

88 Morel, *Du délire panophobique*, 10–11. For a description of *lypémanie*, see Jean-Étienne Dominique Esquirol, *Des maladies mentales considérées sous les rapports médical, hygiénique et médico-légal* (Bruxelles: Méline, Cans et Compagnie, 1838).

89 See Étienne-Jean Georget, *De la Folie: Considérations sur cette maladie* (Paris: Chez Crevot, 1820) and Esquirol, *Des maladies mentales.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

whether people who are already 'mad' take part in revolutions, or whether revolutions cause those with a predisposition to insanity to become ill.[90]

Comparing adherents to a cause to people driven insane by religious fervour, Claude-Joseph Tissot and Claude-Étienne Bourdin described the revolutionary crowd as mad, suggesting that political upheaval was the *cause* of mental chaos.[91] Suspicion of two groups – 'pathological crowds' and the working classes – drove much of this late nineteenth-century analysis. The historian Hippolyte Taine, writing in the years immediately after *l'année terrible*, forged an influential 'biohistorical' model of revolutionary crowds as pathological, monstrous, bestial forces of chaos.[92] A plethora of other works on crowd psychology – many in reaction to the events of the Commune – appeared in the 1880s and 1890s, including Gustave Le Bon's *Psychologie des foules*.[93] In addition, certain French writers pathologized working-class participants in the Commune as the 'dangerous classes', drawing on degeneracy theories by Bénédict-Augustin Morel and others.[94] The physician Jean-Baptiste Vincent Laborde's 1872 book on 'morbid psychology' and Parisian insurrection similarly defined *maladie mentale* as a kind of collective social insanity that could cause certain individuals to create societal disasters such as the Commune.[95] In their 1905 work *La contagion mentale*, the doctors Auguste Vigouroux and Paul Juquelier argued that psychological states were contagious.[96]

A number of writers throughout the nineteenth century questioned whether individuals exposed to intense fear and terror might transmit these states to their descendants. Esquirol, in his influential 1838 definition of *lypémanie* – a specific subset of monomania, namely an extreme melancholy or sadness – not only noted that political events could greatly increase both monomania and the number of suicides, but that children conceived or born during the horrors of 1793 were

[90] See, for example, the monograph by psychiatrist Claude-Étienne Bourdin, *Influence des événements politiques sur la production de la folie* (Paris: Delahaye, 1873); cited in Glazer, 'De la Commune', 64.

[91] Bourdin, *Influence des événements politiques*, 10, and Tissot, *La Folie*, 388; cited in Glazer, 'De la Commune', 66.

[92] See Hippolyte Taine, *Les origines de la France contemporaine*, vol. 2 (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1878). The literature on Taine is voluminous, but for an intriguing analysis connecting dance/gesture to social and political movements, see Kélina Gotman, *Choreomania: Dance and Disorder* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 112–38.

[93] Gustave Le Bon, *Psychologie des Foules* (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1895); cited in Glazer, 'De la Commune', 68.

[94] Morel wrote one of the most widely-circulated psychological treatises on degeneracy, attempting to connect various period ideas on pathology with family history and heredity. See Bénédict-Augustin Morel, *Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l'espèce humaine et des causes qui produisent ces variétés maladives* (Paris: Baillière, 1857). Morel's theories were published in the 1850s, and they permeate his later publications during *l'année terrible* (including his analysis of the *panophobie gémissante* of some residents of Normandy).

[95] Jean-Baptiste Vincent Laborde, *Les hommes et les actes de l'insurrection de Paris devant la psychologie morbide: Lettres à M. le docteur Moreau* (Paris: Baillière, 1872): 3. For an analysis of how Laborde's study of the movements of bodies is connected to nineteenth-century concerns about mobs, see Gotman, *Choreomania*, 116–17.

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

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

much more likely to exhibit mental health problems.[97] Authors later in the century borrowed and retooled Esquirol's ideas, including Bénédict-Augustin Morel and Legrand du Saulle, who pondered how events of *l'année terrible* might be bequeathed to subsequent generations. 'Revolutions can create terror', Legrand du Saulle noted, 'and terror can not only change the intellectual state of present generations, but also weigh heavily (by means of heredity) on the mental dispositions of future generations'.[98] Legrand du Saulle was writing within the framework of 'predisposition' and degeneracy theories; for instance, he compared the effect of terror to that of a child born to a parent addicted to alcohol. Even so, his musings might evoke (to us) hints of current epigenetic theories that suggest that trauma's effects can indeed be passed down through multiple generations.[99]

### *Contexts: Early Trauma Theories*

Within the chaotic soundscape of Paris, eminent French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot not only experienced the horrors of war first-hand, he also began to transform his pivotal ideas on hysteria into concepts which would revolutionize early medicalized discourse on trauma. Charcot gave his first lecture on hysteria at the Salpêtrière in June 1870, just before the outbreak of the war; the conflict interrupted his teachings for almost two years. According to a later account by his son Jean-Baptiste Charcot, during the January 1871 siege Dr Charcot travelled by carriage from his home in the 9th *arrondissement* to the Salpêtrière in the 13th. Passing by the Jardin des Plantes in the 5th *arrondissement* one morning, Jean-Baptiste Charcot recalled that his father 'was disturbed in his reading by a shell that passed through both windows of his carriage'.[100] Afterwards, Charcot was close-mouthed

[97] See Esquirol, *Des maladies mentales*, 67. Several of Esquirol's ideas are explicitly cited in Morel's June 1871 report on 'panophobia' and the events of 1870–71; see *Du délire panophobique*, 27, 38–9.

[98] 'les révolutions sont capables d'amener la terreur, et la terreur peut non-seulement modifier l'état intellectuel des générations présentes, mais s'appesantir encore lourdement, par la voie de l'hérédité, sur les dispositions mentales des générations futures'; Legrand du Saulle, *Le délire des persecutions*, 512.

[99] Elizabeth Rosner gives a cogent introduction to the intergenerational transmission of trauma in her work *Survivor Café: The Legacy of Trauma and the Labyrinth of Memory* (Berkeley: Counterpoint Press, 2017). Many scholars are working on epigenetic transmission of trauma; for two important studies, see B.T. Heijmans, E.W. Tobi, A.D. Stein, H. Putter, G.J. Blauw, E.S. Susser and L.H. Lumey, 'Persistent Epigenetic Differences Associated with Prenatal Exposure to Famine in Humans', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences U S A* 105/44 (4 Nov. 2008): 17,046–9, and Rachel Yehuda and Amy L. Lehrner, 'Cultural Trauma and Epigenetic Inheritance', *Development and Psychopathology* 30/5 (2018): 1,763–77. For work on nineteenth-century war's potential effects on subsequent generations, see Dora L. Costa, Noelle Yetter and Heather DeSomer, 'Intergenerational Transmission of Paternal Trauma Among US Civil War Ex-POWS', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 115/44 (2018): 11,215–20.

[100] Jean-Baptiste Charcot, 'Charcot in the Franco-Prussian War', *The Military Surgeon: Journal of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States* 59 (1926): 153–4. Cited in Olivier Walusinski, 'Neurology and Neurologists during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871)', in *War Neurology*, ed Laurent Tatu and Julien Bogousslavsky (Basel: Karger, 2016): 88. This entire account may be apocryphal – Jean-Baptiste Charcot quotes his father's coachman as a source and notes his father "muttered humbug" during this story.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

about *l'année terrible*: he only referred to the cataclysms as 'the events about which you know'.[101]

In the late 1870s, Jean-Martin Charcot began to work on what he deemed 'male hysteria' – variously characterized as '*névrose traumatique*, *hystérie traumatique*, *hystéro-traumatique*, or *hystéro-neurasthénie traumatique*'. All of these diagnoses focused on nervous crises prompted by a triggering traumatic event. Charcot believed that 'intense fright, mediated through a kind of quasi-hypnotic unconscious mental process, could precipitate physical symptoms in individuals with premorbid constitutions'.[102] Charcot diagnosed around 90 cases of male hysteria, almost exclusively of working-class men who suffered paralyses, contractures, sensitivity or lack thereof to touch, melancholia and alterations in vision after an accident.[103]

One of the most provocative narratives in Charcot's 1889 *Leçons du mardi à la Salpètrière* concerned 'D…cy', a 45-year-old former soldier traumatized after being struck by lightning.[104] Charcot noted that 'D…cy' had served at the Battle of Puebla in 1862 – 'where the thunder roared as loudly as the cannons' – fought in multiple campaigns of the Franco-Prussian War, and was not only part of the Versaillais army during *la semaine sanglante*, but also was wounded during the final battle in Père-Lachaise, 'where shells rained down'.[105] As Charcot questioned the patient during his demonstration, 'D…cy' recounted that the sound of the traumatic thunderclap 'was like a cannon shot, accompanied by the clatter of a thousand plates falling to the ground', causing the patient to 'tremble and cry like a child'. Charcot pointed out that this was not a man known for nervous susceptibility or sensitivity to the sounds of war, noting that 'D…cy' 'had not cried or trembled at the Battle of Puebla when thunder and cannon had raged together, nor did he cry at Père Lachaise, when a shell burst quite close to him'. The thunderclap and lightning, however, radically transformed him into one of Charcot's most

[101] See Jean-Martin Charcot, *Lécons du mardi à la Salpêtrière* (Paris: Publications du 'Progrès médical', 1889). For more on Charcot's tantalizing lack of discussion of the Commune and siege, see Glazer, 'De la Commune', 63; and Christopher Goetz, Michel Bonduelle and Toby Gelfand, *Charcot: Constructing Neurology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995): 179.

[102] See Micale, *Traumatic Pasts*, 15. Charcot's work on male hysteria was preceded by Pierre Briquet's *Traité clinique et thérapeutique de l'hystérie* (Paris: J.-B Baillière et fils, 1859) and August Klein's *De l'hystérie chez l'homme* (Paris: Octave Doin, 1880). For a basic account of Charcot's work, see Goetz, Bonduelle and Gelfand, *Charcot: Constructing Neurology*. For a specific discussion of Charcot and male hysteria, see Micale, 'Jean-Martin Charcot and *les névroses traumatiques*', 115–139. For more on the history of hysteria on France, see Micale, *Hysterical Men: The Hidden History of Male Nervous Illness* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[103] Micale tallies 60 case reports of male hysteria between 1878 and 1893 (28 in *Leçons du mardi* from 1887 to 1889, then several more cases in early 1890s, then some cases not published but in archival records). Micale notes that socioeconomic identity was important, since all but five of Charcot's case studies were labourers, peasants, etc., not male bourgeois subjects. Micale, *Hysterical Men*, 123, 130. Charcot did believe there was a hereditary component to hysteria; see, for example, his note regarding the 'influence fatale de l'hérédité', when talking to a young man with a tic from Normandy; *Leçons du mardi*, 126.

[104] While Charcot claims D … cy's symptoms are neurasthénie cérébro-spinale, what he describes very much sounds like depression prompted by grief (the man's mother had died the year before). Charcot, *Leçons de mardi*, vol. 2, 437–8.

[105] 'où la foudre, dit-il, tonnait autant que le canon … il prit part à la prise du cimetière du Père-Lachaise où "les obus pleuvaient dru"'; Charcot, *Leçons de mardi*, vol. 2, 437.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

demonstrative examples, a man who 'shakes, stammers and bursts into tears incessantly'.[106] Charcot did not pursue the question of whether 'D…cy's earlier experiences might have precipitated the traumatic reaction to the lightning strike; he was primarily interested in considering how the lightning's electricity might have prompted the neurological symptoms. Yet what *is* striking in this case study is Charcot's casual admission that the man had already been exposed to much more 'dramatic' and 'terrifying' episodes during wartime, and that some of these terrifying experiences were sonic, namely the sounds of cannon fire.

Through Charcot's work on male hysteria, he established several important observations on trauma, namely that an event or injury may create a loss of sensation seemingly unrelated to any physical wound, and that patients often suffered a delay between the injury and the onset of symptoms.[107] Other than the case of 'D…cy', few of Charcot's case studies made any connection between wartime traumas and 'hysteria'. Yet Micale notes that Charcot's first publication on traumatic male hysteria dates from 1878, with publications on the subject continuing through the 1880s and early 1890s. Micale highlights a chronological similarity that 'the lag in time between the military experiences of 1870–71 and the appearance of these writings is the same as the duration between the American involvement in the Vietnam War and the formulation of the diagnostic category of post-traumatic stress disorder'.[108] It does seem likely that there are links between the events of *l'année terrible* and the causation, discovery and theorization of male hysteria. Charcot was not the only French neurologist concerned with new understandings of male hysteria at this time: 16 French medical dissertations on male hysteria appeared between 1875 and 1895. Numerous researchers – most notably Emile Duponchel in the 1880s and 1890s – searched for hysteria in the army in particular, while civilians remained largely understudied as victims of wartime traumas.[109]

Pierre Janet, who studied under Charcot at the Salpêtrière in the late 1880s and early 1890s, combined his interests in philosophy, medicine and psychology in an influential series of publications in the 1890s on 'automatic' (involuntary) actions and obsessions or fixations (*idées fixes*).[110] Janet spent the last years of the nineteenth century pondering the nature of 'painful memories subconsciously fixed in the psyche', inaccessible due to dissociation.[111] In his text *Névroses et idées fixes*

[106] '[D … cy] mais ce que je me rappelle bien c'est que le bruit ressemblait à un coup de canon accompagné du fracas que feraient en tombant sur le sol des milliers d'assiettes … [M. Charcot] il n'avait ni tremblé, ni pleuré à Puebla alors que tonnerre et canon à l'envi faisaient rage, il n'avait pas pleuré non plus au Père Lachaise, lorsqu'un obus est venu éclater près de lui. Mais depuis qu'il a été « touché » par la foudre, une transformation radicale s'est produite en lui : le voilà devenu émotif à l'excès, pleurard ; désormais sous l'influence de la moindre émotion on le voit fondre en larmes'; Charcot, *Leçons de mardi*, vol. 2, 438, 440.

[107] Micale, *Hysterical Men*, 140.

[108] Micale, 'Jean-Martin Charcot and les névroses traumatiques', 122.

[109] See, for example, Léopold Jannet, *De l'hystérie chez l'homme* (Paris: Medical Dissertation, 1880); Victor-Félix Quinqueton, *De l'hystérie chez l'homme* (Paris: Medical Dissertation, 1885); Emile Duponchel, 'L'Hystérie dans l'armée', *Revue de médecine*, 6 June 1886; and Émile Duponchel, *Traité de Médecine Légale militaire* (Paris: Octave Doin, 1890).

[110] Janet published a number of works on this topic in the 1890s, but see especially Pierre Janet, *L'Automatisme psychologique* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1889) and *Névroses et idées fixes* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1898).

[111] See Janet, *L'Automatisme psychologique* (1889) and Janet, *État mental des hystériques: les accidents mentaux* (Paris: Rueff et Cie, 1894). Micale describes Janet's 'dissociation' as a

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

(1898), Janet, like Charcot, provided a tantalizing example of an individual traumatized by the events of 1870–71. Almost 30 years after the Franco-Prussian War, Janet detailed the physical and psychological problems of a former French soldier who contracted frostbite in 1870. The man had a 'horrendous memory' of that freezing night, but no immediate psychological problems. Several years later, he served as *garde-malade* of a delirious typhoid patient; due to a frightening night spent in close proximity to the patient, the man became extremely agitated, paranoid and suffered from night terrors. After this second event, he suffered from fright and 'dysesthesia', unusual feelings of cold in the calf of his leg, in precisely the same location as the frostbite. In his case study, Janet called attention to the confusing connection between these two seemingly unrelated events, noting:

> The dysesthesia seems to have nothing to do with the second adventure, the night spent near the typhoid patient, and yet it is after this second emotion that the condition appeared. This is, as we have often said, an extremely frequent event: an emotion weakens the strength or resistance of these patients and brings about the development, the manifestation of another long-ago phenomenon, caused by a much older emotion which (remaining latent in the brain) was more valid.[112]

Both Charcot and Janet analysed former soldiers' experiences of traumatic circumstances related to the war – whether sonic or a physical injury such as frostbite – that were then reignited by later events. Both doctors are clearly intrigued by these cases, and by the delay in onset or the connections between seemingly 'unrelated' events. Yet they fail to ask questions that might allow us a clearer glimpse at how physiological reactions might connect to psychological phenomena, or, indeed the ways these patients were traumatized through unexpected recollections. Moreover, Charcot and Janet were silent about (and perhaps unaware of) the ways in which non-combatants might have had similarly triggering experiences. Ultimately, their accounts offer tantalizing evidence, but also demonstrate obvious ways in which contemporary studies were limited by the cultural frameworks of the era.

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

The sheer amount of coverage of *l'année terrible* marked a turning point in narrating trauma. Brown notes:

> the flood of deeply personal accounts that so quickly followed the end of the fighting provided an unprecedented sense of what Parisians had experienced both physically

'splitting of the personality, as the primary psychopathological result of these memories', *Traumatic Pasts*, 14.

[112] 'il a gardé de cette nuit un souvenir plein d'horreur … la dysesthésie qui s'est développée semble bien en rapport avec la première émotion éprouvée en 1870, l'impression de froid persistant aux points saillants du côté gauche qui ont porté sur la glace, mais elle ne semble avoir aucun rapport avec la seconde aventure, la nuit passée près du malade, et cependant c'est après cette seconde émotion qu'elle s'est développée. C'est là, comme nous l'avons souvent dit, un fait extrêmement fréquent: une émotion affaiblit la force de résistance de ces malades et amène le développement, la manifestation d'un autre phénomène quelquefois bien antérieur, provoqué par une émotion bien plus ancienne et qui était resté latent tant que le cerveau était plus valide'; *Névroses et idées fixes*, 300–302. Janet noted the soldier did not have any 'hereditary disposition' towards mental illness.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

> and emotionally. Never before in France had there been such detailed, graphic, and personal accounts of suffering as accompanied the destruction of the Commune.[113]

In an attempt to control the narrative, in December 1871 the Third Republic passed a decree 'banning all representations of the Commune which the censors deemed to be "de nature à troubler l'ordre public" [of the sort to upset public order]'.[114] This attempt to muzzle memory reminds us of the critical connections between trauma and silence (scholars have theorized this in many twentieth-century contexts, ranging from Freudian repressive silences, to Dori Laub's analysis of the struggles of witnessing versus 'not telling' in relation to the Holocaust, to Cizmic's study on politicized silence in Soviet contexts).[115] Despite the Third Republic's decree, by the 1910s there were thousands of accounts of this period.

The flood of testimony recounted in this article demonstrates the extent to which *l'année terrible* served as a collective trauma for contemporary witnesses.[116] Jeffrey C. Alexander says that collective trauma occurs when a group has 'been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways'.[117] Kai Erikson has also demonstrated how a disaster or other event might connect a community but also damage the 'tissues' of the community, just like a wound to a body.[118] The damaging collective experience of 1870–71 spawned countless narrative, artistic and scientific reactions, testimonies which invoke Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub's observation that 'issues of biography and history are neither simply represented nor simply reflected, but are

[113] Brown, *Mass Violence and the Self*, 191. Communarde Louise Michel's memoirs offer a particularly fascinating example of traumatic witness: she pieces together anecdotes nonchronologically 'as they come to mind', moving from historical events to dreams to poetry to recurrent exclamations of grief. See Louise Michel, *Mémoires de Louise Michel écrits par elle-même*. Her writings are translated and (heavily) edited by Bullitt Lowry and Elizabeth Ellington Gunter as *The Red Virgin: Memoirs of Louise Michel* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1981). Lowry and Gunter substantially altered Michel's approach to her story; the preface explains they took Michel's nonlinear narrative and combined repetitions (including those related to grief), removed interpolations and reordered it to create a chronological account.

[114] Wilson, *Paris and the Commune*, 36–7.

[115] See Dori Laub, 'Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle', in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth, 61–75 (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995): 64, and Cizmic, *Performing Pain*, 5.

[116] For more on the connections between trauma and testimony, see Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* and Cathy Caruth's edited volume *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*; Caruth's introductory essay and the chapters by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub are particularly focused on testimony. For connections between nineteenth-century trauma, testimony and music, see the contributions from Elizabeth Morgan and Michelle Meinhart in this issue.

[117] Alexander, *Cultural Trauma*, 1–3. Alexander also incorporates ideas of Arthur Neal from *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998).

[118] Kai Erikson, *Everything in Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976): 154. See also Erikson, 'Notes on Trauma and Community', in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995): 183–99.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

reinscribed, translated, radically rethought and fundamentally worked over' by texts.[119]

Within these texts, acts and responses, however, collective trauma was processed in vastly different ways. Political ideologies (Communards versus Versaillais) alone radically shaped understandings of *l'année terrible*. Micale reminds us of trauma's 'spectrum of responses', how individuals often experience it non-traumatically, or in ways 'not deemed medically noteworthy in their time'.[120] This plethora of responses underscores that not all contemporaneous experiences were traumatic ones, yet evidence certainly suggests that many Parisians were traumatized by the sounds and experiences of this year of war. As Parisians moved beyond the immediate aftermath of *l'année terrible*, they remembered its events in very different ways, just as the nature of memory itself was shifting.[121] And as they remembered, they fought over these memories, not just for their political import, but also through the very sounds and spaces where they could remember or reconnect with the traumatic past.

Two sites in Paris – the *mur des fédérés* (Wall of the Communard troops) in Père Lachaise cemetery and the Basilica of Sacré-Cœur on the butte of Montmartre – demonstrate how spaces served as intensely symbolic territory for continued debates about nineteenth-century trauma, sound and cultural memory. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, each of these spaces reverberated with remembered sounds from the period of the Commune. Moreover, opposite sides of the French political spectrum – supporters of the Communard cause versus adherents of Versaillais government policies – used sound almost as a *weapon* of commemoration in these spaces.

In the initial years after the violent ending of *la semaine sanglante*, Communard supporters began to call for a sacralization of space at Père Lachaise. While he did not mention any specific sites within the cemetery, Lissagary noted in 1876 that *fédéré* victims were buried in mass graves at Père Lachaise, Montmartre and Mont-Parnasse, 'where the people in pious remembrance will annually come as pilgrims'.[122] After the general amnesty of Communards in 1880, an annual commemorative ritual gradually emerged at the *mur des fédérés* in Père Lachaise.[123]

---

[119] Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992): xv.

[120] Micale, *Traumatic Pasts*, 20.

[121] Changing approaches to memory in this period ranged from Théodule Ribot's *Diseases of Memory: An Essay in the Positive Psychology* (1883) to Proust's subsequent musings on involuntary memory to Maurice Halbwachs's work on collective memory. Allan Young has analysed how a new kind of traumatic memory – grounded in repression and dissociation – likewise merged at the *fin-de-siècle*. See Young, *Harmony of Illusions*, 1.

[122] Lissagary, *History of the Commune*, 392. In his work on World War I and cultural memory, Jay Winter analyses the role of rituals at memorial sites and calls attention to the use of silence within those rites. While Winter notes many continuities with nineteenth-century practices, much of his analysis turns on the continued role of religion and spiritualism in the early twentieth century. The ritual at the *mur des fédérés* offers an intriguing counter-example as a markedly secular ritual that nonetheless borrows similar practices. See Winter, *Sites of Memory*, 119–203.

[123] The description of this as a pilgrimage was already present in the 1880s. For a recent study of '*la montée*' as secular pilgrimage, see Franck Frégosi, 'La "montée" au Mur des Fédérés du Père-Lachaise: Pèlerinage laïque partisan', *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 155/3 (2011): 155.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

The rite began in silence, as a cortège filed through the streets of eastern Paris and entered the cemetery. Participants then listened to political speeches accompanied by cries of 'Vive la Commune'.[124]

Continuous fears of another uprising, however, led Parisian authorities to aggressively repress portions of this ritual. By 1895 processions and wreathes were allowed but speech was forbidden: participants filed by in silence under the watchful eyes of the police. In 1900, participants wrested some measure of sonic control by obeying the prohibition on political speeches but nevertheless sang 'La Carmagnole' and 'L'International'. Sonic policing then expanded to explicitly forbid certain revolutionary songs such as 'La Ravachole'.[125] At the *mur des fédérés*, silence was simultaneously an act of mourning commemorating earlier violence and a tool of state repression. Sound was equally multivalent as both politicized occupation and a revolutionary refusal to be repressed.

The basilica of Sacré-Cœur represents the other extreme of contested sonic remembrance of the Commune. The campaign to erect this sanctuary to the Sacred Heart originated with the monarchist Catholic right in 1871. Appropriating the site high on the butte of Montmartre necessitated an 1873 vote of 'public utility'; the National Assembly noted that, 'it was necessary to efface by this work of expiation, the crimes which have crowned our sorrows'.[126] The

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

[125] For an account of the difficulties with the first year's 'commemoration/protest', see L. Boussenard, 'La Manifestation du 23 mai', *La Justice*, 25 May 1880. This protest seems to have been marked by silence, perhaps in an attempt to evade police attention: pilgrims were only allowed to enter in small groups. In 1885 there was an armed confrontation between the police and the pilgrims – see S.L., 'Au Père Lachaise', *La Justice*, 25 May 1885. In 1888, there was a shooting at the ceremony. In 1894, armed guards patrolled the cemetery. The rule, according to the Préfecture of Police, was that 'le préfet de police, après avoir pris les instructions du ministre de l'intérieur, a décidé que les mesures d'ordre seront les mêmes que dimanche dernier. On ne laissera pénétrer dans le cimetière que les porteurs de couronnes. Ils seront autorisés à les déposer au mur des Fédérés, à la condition qu'ils ne soient suivis aucun cortège et qu'il ne soit pas prononcé de discours'; 'La manifestation d'aujourd'hui', *La Justice*, 4 June 1894. In 1895, 'tous défilent en silence sous l'œil inquiet des officiers de paix'; 'La manifestation d'hier', *La Justice*, 28 May 1895. For an account of a speech being silenced, see 'Au Mur des Fédérés', *La Justice*, 25 May 1897. See the coverage in 1900, complete with a brawl with the police, in 'Au Mur des Fédérés', *La Justice*, 29 May 1900. Revolutionary songs, such as 'La Ravachole', a reworking of 'La Carmagnole' in honour of François Ravachol, were generally forbidden. See Richard D.E. Burton, *Blood in the City: Violence and Revelation in Paris, 1789–1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001): 147–8. Robert Gildea notes that 'the SFIO (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière) resumed the cult of the Paris Commune in 1908, following a decision by the municipality of Paris not to use the plot near the Mur des Fédérés for private graves. A plaque in memory of the Commune was placed on the wall in 1909'; Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994): 45, 48.

[126] Hubert Rohault de Fleury, *Historique de la Basilique du Sacré-Cœur*, vol. 1 (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1903): 88 n. 4. Translation cited in David Harvey, 'Monument and Myth', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69/3 (1979): 377.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

project's leaders explicitly described Montmartre as hallowed ground of *recent* martyrs, namely the Versaillais generals killed during the 18 March uprising in 1871.[127]

Though Sacré-Cœur's cornerstone was laid in 1875, construction dragged on for more than 30 years. On 24 November 1918, composer Jean Roger-Ducasse attended the 'Te Deum' in the newly completed basilica. Thrilled by the brilliant Magnificat and the tolling of the church's giant 'Savoyarde' bell, Roger-Ducasse imagined winds carrying these most Catholic sounds from the heights of Montmartre to the tombs of France's soldiers fallen in the first World War.[128] It is difficult to contemplate a more conclusive sonic repudiation of the noisy Communard sounds of Montmartre. Crowned by an enormous white marble testament to 'enduringly Catholic' France, by the late 1910s the butte of Montmartre resounded with ecclesiastical sounds mourning the 'great' war.

Neither of these stories ends in the early twentieth century. The annual *montée au Mur* continues today on the Sunday closest to 28 May, accompanied by speeches and the singing of 'Les temps des cérises'.[129] Sacré-Cœur still dominates the Parisian skyline, today accompanied by a new noisy din, not of revolution, but the chatter of tourists who fill the basilica's steps. Despite continuities and changes to both spaces, their histories testify to Daughtry's comment that 'sound lives on in human memory far after its physical vibrations die away'.[130] Indeed, we might analyse the rites, memorials and design of these spaces as a way in which sounds themselves continue to inform intergenerational understandings of trauma.

***

In 1870–71, Parisians gathered in the streets, agonized, shuddered, hid from the bombs and looked on with horror at the nightmarish transformation of their *Ville Lumière*. They not only watched, they listened. Through this listening, they garnered crucial information, but also failed to shut out the noises of horror, the belliphonic sounds that rendered them sleepless, sick and, in some cases, unable to function. French neurologists and psychiatrists attempted to assess the ways in which these wartime injuries affected French minds and bodies, some drawing on earlier frameworks of madness and hereditary insanity while others forged newer models of understanding. Over the next 20 years, Charcot's work on male hysteria, a huge subsequent corpus of French medical work on traumatic hysteria, and Janet's publications on dissociation and involuntary memories each contributed to early understandings of the trauma concept, all works conceived amidst

[127] For more on Sacré-Cœur, see Harvey, 'Monument and Myth'; Burton, *Blood in the City*, 147–8; Raymond A. Jonas, 'Monument as Ex-Voto, Monument as Historiosophy: The Basilica of Sacré-Cœur', *French Historical Studies* 18/2 (1993): 482–502.

[128] Jean Roger-Ducasse to André Lambinet, letter dated 24 November 1918, in *Lettres à son ami André Lambinet*, ed. Jacques Depaulis (Hayen: Pierre Mardaga, 2001): 122. I am thankful to Jillian Rogers for suggesting this reference to me.

[129] Gildea notes that on the twentieth anniversary of Jean Jaurès's death in 1935, around 200,000 Communists and Socialists marched together to the *mur des fédérés*. During World War II – despite the occupation of Père Lachaise by Gestapo and French police – the Communists revived the commemoration. *L'Humanité clandestine* urged readers 'to tell our illustrious dead that their sons continue the struggle for liberation, that the revolutionary patriots of 1942 know how to fight and die like their fathers in 1871'. See Gildea, *The Past in French History*, 54.

[130] Daughtry, *Listening to War*, 40.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press

the cultural memories and traumatized populations impacted by the events of 1870–71.[131]

As Parisians after the war struggled to banish the sounds of the year from their minds, they engaged in a decades-long battle over how to remember the terrible events of 1870–71. From the 1870s through the 1910s, thousands of narratives of the war, the siege, the bombardment and the Commune appeared; certainly these accounts represent political wrangling over the 'truth', but many likewise demonstrate a desire to testify, to remember, to account for those horrible days and weeks. As Parisians conversed with their pasts, the city itself bore not just visual reminders of the events, but sonic scars of remembered gunfire, screams, or shelling.

We have so many French testimonies from the later *grande guerre*, ranging from musician-soldiers carefully attending to the dangers of shells whizzing overheard to the plethora of medical examinations and analyses of soldiers suffering from shell shock, *commotion* and other neurological effects caused by war. Less well-understood are the ways in which that early twentieth-century war connects to this pivotal collective trauma of the late nineteenth century – the events of *l'année terrible*. When the *tocsin* sounded on 2 August 1914, how many Parisians froze, remembering the clanging bells of decades before?[132] When long-range German guns fired on Paris in March 1918, how many residents suddenly remembered the echoes of those earlier siege shells? As pioneering psychiatrists such as Janet continued to research and publish well into the mid-twentieth century, how did they incorporate their own knowledge of this nineteenth-century collective trauma into emerging twentieth-century discourse on trauma? These are challenging questions, but seeking to connect sound, the events of 1870–71, and early conceptions of trauma critically integrates these decades with the subsequent experiences of *la grande guerre*. Though attention to the traumatic effects of sound and war on human minds and bodies exponentially increased during World War I, these concerns were not new – they had been resonating in Paris decades before.

[131] In addition to commenting on the impacts of the Franco-Prussian war, Micale casts a broader gaze on the many potential contributing factors leading to late nineteenth-century French research on trauma. See Micale, *Traumatic Pasts*, 136–7.

[132] Regina M. Sweeney offers one of the best accounts of sonic and musical continuities between the two wars, noting the events of 1914 'called forth the same lyrics, cries, and graffiti' as in 1870. She focuses on the mobilizations in 1870 and 1914, reading them as ritual scripts marked by the ringing of the *tocsin* and collective participatory singing of songs such the 'Marseillaise'. See Sweeney, *Singing Our Way to Victory: French Cultural Politics and Music During the Great War* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2001): 47–52.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S147940982100029X Published online by Cambridge University Press