Introduction

"No people in the world are so fond of amusements—or *distractions,* as they term them—as Parisians. Morning, noon, and night, summer and winter, there is always something to be seen and a large portion of the population seems absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure."[1] Cassell's guidebook confirmed that visitors and natives alike expected to find a good time in France's capital. By the last third of the nineteenth century, Paris had become the European center of a burgeoning leisure industry. If Paris seemed a constant source for pleasure, this guidebook also linked that pleasure to the promise of "something to be seen."

"Paris is the real . . . and permanent exposition of all of France," explained Edmond Deschaumes in his book about the city published during the year of the 1889 exposition.[2] The expositions hosted by the city in 1855, 1867, 1878, 1889 and 1900 not only brought millions of visitors (as many as fifty-one million in 1900) to marvel at the temporary displays, but their frequency and success transformed observers' impressions of the city itself. Paris did not merely host exhibitions, it had become one. These impressions of Paris as a place to see captured the defining character of what in the second half of the nineteenth century became known as *Paris nouveau.*

It has become a cliché to speak of the varied means through which representations of the nineteenth-century city and Paris, in particular, attempted to render an increasingly complex and diversified urban space

1. *Illustrated Guide to Paris* (London: Cassell, 1884), 111.
2. Edmond Deschaumes, *Pour bien voir Paris* (Paris: Maurice Dreyfous, 1889), 84.

more legible and transparent. Through both words and images, city life became a spectacular realist narrative, and visualizing the city became synonymous with knowing it.

This book looks at the spectacularization of city life and its connection to the emergence of mass culture. It juxtaposes a constellation of distinctly and self-consciously "modern" and "popular" cultural forms: boulevard culture, the mass press, public visits to the Paris Morgue, wax museums, panoramas and dioramas, and film.[3] Aside from their enormous popularity, these forms realistically represented a sensationalized version of contemporary life. Packaged as *actualités*—"current events, news"—this combination of verisimilitude in representation and the thematic display of a press-style version of everyday life are not mere descriptions of urban mass culture. Their consumption became one of the means by which a mass culture and a new urban crowd became a society of spectators.

At the moment that practically universal literacy became a reality in France, so did the saturation of communication forms with images. The development of lithography, photography and technologies that made illustrated books and the illustrated press accessible and cheap led to an unprecedented circulation of mundane visual representations. But they also connected words and images as never before as general readers could for the first time read words and then directly encounter a referenced image.

For ordinary people in the late nineteenth century, the word and the image were linked as never before, yet scholars have tended to treat them as distinct and sometimes even opposed cultural forms. This is nowhere more evident than in the literature about "city texts." Most studies of urban representations have focused on either written or visual materials in their attempts to explain urban legibility or have indiscriminately moved back and forth between written and visual texts, devoting greater attention to thematics than to the specificity of the media.[4]

3. I take "popular culture" to mean "beliefs and practices, and objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a population." Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson, introduction to *Rethinking Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 3.

4. For an emphasis on written texts see Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); and Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) emphasizes visual culture. Both Priscilla Ferguson, *Paris as Revolution: Writing the Nineteenth-Century City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and

As a study of the visuality of urban culture in late nineteenth-century Paris, this book attempts to demonstrate that urban representation relied on the explicit connection between written and visual texts being made by both their producers and consumers. This book advocates a semiotic analysis that moves across different media while paying careful attention to the specificity of each form. More broadly, it argues for the logic of understanding that a culture that became "more literate" also became more visual as word and image generated the spectacular realities described here.[5]

Urban spectacle has been understood as a defining quality of "modernity" generally construed; and Paris toasted as the quintessentially modern city—the "capital of the nineteenth century" in Walter Benjamin's by now classic turn-of-phrase.[6] Modern life seemed urban by definition, yet the social and economic transformations wrought by modernity recast the image of the city in the wake of the eruption of industrial capitalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. In Paris, the city's midcentury redesign, otherwise known as "Haussmannization," was contrived by Napoleon III and his Prefect of the Seine, Baron Georges Haussmann, to "modernize" the city's infrastructure, creating sweeping boulevards for the city's traffic, a new sewer system, and a reconstructed central market.[7] In this formulation, scholars equate modernity with modernization as a set of social historical relations. As an elaboration of modernization, the city's redesign expressed its material fulfillment as a site created by and for the bourgeoisie in its transformation from an industrial to a commercial capital.[8] For others,

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Christopher Prendergast, *Paris and the Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: Blackwell, 1992) use different kinds of texts to make general claims about representation rather than specific connections between written and visual cultures.

5. Anne Higonnet also advocates including social and literary history in the analysis of visual culture, in her essay "Real Fashion: Clothes Unmake the Working Woman," in *Spectacles of Realism: Gender, Body, Genre,* ed. Margaret Cohen and Christopher Prendergast (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995). I thank Margaret Cohen for helping me clarify this point.

6. Benjamin's term comes from the prospectus for his arcades project, "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century," in *Charles Baudelaire,* trans. Harry Zohn, 3d ed. (London: Verso, 1989). See also David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989); and William Sharpe and Leonard Wallock, eds., *Visions of the Modern City* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987).

7. See especially David Pinkney's classic study, *Napoleon III and the Rebuilding of Paris* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958).

8. Philip Nord, *Paris Shopkeepers and the Politics of Resentment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

modernity is a set of representational practices that embraces what the poet Charles Baudelaire long ago noted in his seminal essay, "The Painter of Modern Life"—the essential quality of being present, the ephemeral, the fugitive and the contingent.[9]

But modernity's several conceptualizations need not stand in opposition—as T. J. Clark's tour-de-force, *The Painting of Modern Life,* demonstrates. Clark brilliantly recast these divergent definitions, insisting that changes in representation—Impressionism in this case—cannot be understood without recourse to social historical transformation; in particular without primary consideration of the domination of urban life by capitalism that resulted in the city becoming a "sign" of capital.[10] In Clark's book, however, the status of representation is nevertheless derived from, if more than simply reflective of, transformations in the "realities" produced by the rise of capitalism. Extending Clark's argument that no history of culture can be divorced from historical context, this book attempts to show that any history is a history of representation because modes of representation constituted rather than merely characterized modern urban culture.

Clark analyzed the death of the old Paris and the ground preparation for the new "consumer society."[11] Inspired, in part, by Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle,* Clark suggests that images replaced social relations in the modern city and led to the atomized, anomic conditions in which the modern urban dweller was seen as alone in a crowd.[12] This alienation, it follows, produced both the failed revolution—the Paris Commune and the bloody week of May 1871—and the decidedly nonrevolutionary nature of social life in Paris for the rest of the century. The anarchist bomb-thrower replaced the revolutionary crowd as the model of fin-de-siècle urban discontents.[13]

This book, in part, asks what happened to the crowd in fin-de-siècle Paris. For, since the Revolution of 1789 forward, whether one's aim was

9. Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays,* trans. and ed. J. Mayne (London: Phaidon Press, 1964), 13. The most influential articulation of this remains Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

10. Clark, *Painting of Modern Life,* 69.

11. Ibid.

12. See Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black and Red, 1983). As Martin Jay notes, Debord argues that the spectacle is a social relation. Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1993), 427.

13. For more on anarchism see Richard D. Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

to tame it, join it, or please it, the crowd became a central player in modern France. If French political culture stood for anything since the end of the Old Regime, it stood for the seemingly limitless powers of the collective action of the urban masses that resulted in the numerous revolutions punctuating French history until the suppression of the Commune. Paris remained a revolutionary space, but in the last third of the nineteenth century, its revolutions were cultural, as the political order of the Third Republic—threatened, challenged, and contested—managed to bend but never break.[14] While the likes of Gabriel Tarde and Gustave Le Bon may have been theorizing the dangers of crowds,[15] this book focuses on the equally potent phenomenon of crowd-pleasing. In particular, this book describes a variety of novel practices and institutions of the visual that sprang up in late nineteenth-century Paris to celebrate the diversity of the Parisian public, as its producers aimed to please this heterogeneous mass through the construction of shared visual experiences.

The use of the term "crowd" has generally implied a sort of urban assembly whose participants derived a collective identity through violent actions. The French term *la foule* also carries the distinctly negative connotations of a term such as "mob." The crowd, and the experience of belonging to an urban collectivity more generally, did not disappear as those who stress the alienation of modern urban life suggest. Rather, their collective violence did. This book argues that there was a new crowd that became the audience of and for urban spectacularity.

In this capacity, this is a book whose depiction of modern urban culture as spectacular questions Foucault's model of interiorization and individuation created by the panoptic machine. For Foucault, the "crowd" disappeared into a "collection of separated individualities" in a disciplinary society.[16] Unlike the model of the Panopticon wherein everyone could be seen, urban spectacle, rather, urged everyone to see. Tony Bennett's formulation of the "exhibitionary complex," which stresses the multiplicity of institutions of exhibition rather than those

14. Not all collective political action came to an abrupt halt in Paris after 1871, as social protest such as the Stavisky riots and May 1968 make clear. Yet new uses for city streets and spaces overtook that of home to the revolutionary crowd. See Ferguson, *Paris as Revolution,* on revolution as the primary metaphor for Parisian life.

15. See Susanna I. Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

16. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 201.

of confinement, is a parallel to Foucault's carceral archipelago and makes a good deal of sense when conceptualizing modern urban culture.

Bennett's model offers an important corrective to Foucault's notions of the mechanisms of power in modernity.[17] Bennett returns to the notion that bourgeois governments needed to win their citizens' hearts and minds and enlisted their active support for the values promoted by and for the state.[18] Bennett, however, still employs Foucault's idea of voluntary self-regulation, here instilled by seeing rather than by being seen. His otherwise useful intervention thus ultimately offers only a different means to the same Foucaultian gloomy end.[19] In what follows I attempt to look beyond the state and its institutions as I explain why visual display and exhibition worked best to win the hearts and minds of the urban crowd.

The visual representation of reality as spectacle in late nineteenth-century Paris created a common culture and a sense of shared experiences through which people might begin to imagine themselves as participating in a metropolitan culture because they had visual evidence that such a shared world, of which they were a part, existed.[20] In short, "spectacular realities" in urban culture need to be added to such processes as the democratization of politics, the fruitlessness of mass uprisings, and increased standards of living, as part of the foundations of "mass society."

This book is situated in, but is not primarily conceived as a study of, fin-de-siècle France. It explicitly, self-consciously and exclusively treats Paris as its subject not because Paris was representative of France but because Paris had enormous power to "represent." When it came to "modernity," Paris stood for things French. Further, as a book whose focus is on Parisian and metropolitan culture, it might more fruitfully make connections with city life in London and New York than in Marseilles or Lyons. It favors the term "fin de siècle" over "Belle Epoque," de-emphasizing debates on whether the age that preceded the First

17. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

18. Ibid., 87.

19. In *Birth of the Museum,* 229–45, Bennett seems to be pushing for the potential for transgressive uses of Blackpool Pleasure Beach and thus for more than public complicity in their own self-regulation.

20. My argument draws on Benedict Anderson's comments on national community. In *Imagined Communities,* 2d ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 25, he suggests that the representation of the contemporary world through newspapers cultivated nationalism because newspapers provided the "technical means for re-presenting the kind of imagined community that is the nation."

World War was more or less "Belle" or "beleaguered."[21] Rather than examine the way cultural phenomena reflected or constructed the political order— and its upheaval—this book explores how cultural phenomena signified and constructed social relations.[22]

The material discussed here was part of a broad transformation in the West known as the rise of consumer culture. Recently, scholars have not only moved analyses of capitalism away from production and work toward consumption and leisure, but also they have been particularly attentive to reconfigurations of public space and to the new publics that appeared freely to inhabit the glitzy, sparkling and seductive spaces of consumption.[23] By describing a constellation of cultural practices in Paris, this book reconfirms the emergence of consumerism as part and parcel of transformations in urban culture. In particular, it delineates the means by which novelty media solicited participation by the broadest and most diverse audience possible. It also attempts to specify what made Paris a particularly interesting site in which to locate these changes.

Beyond the culture of consumption, this book traces the emergence and formation of mass culture in Paris in the late nineteenth-century. Definitions of mass culture are notoriously slippery but have tended to fix on two elements: mass production by industrial techniques and consumption by most of the people, most of the time.[24] The historical study of mass culture has focused primarily on the United States.[25] When mass culture has been discussed in French history, it has been located as part of the history of Americanization.[26] Recent examinations

21. Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors,* 2.

22. This problem plagues Charles Rearick, *Pleasures of the Belle Epoque* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), which understands entertainment as "dancing on the volcano" before the eruption of war.

23. Among the most important works on consumption that relate to this study are Rosalind Williams, *Dream Worlds: Mass Consumption in Late Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), Rachel Bowlby, *Just Looking: Consumer Culture in Dreiser, Gissing, and Zola* (New York: Methuen, 1985), Michael Miller, *The Bon Marché: Bourgeois Culture and the Department Store, 1869–1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

24. James Naremore and Patrick Brantlinger, introduction to *Modernity and Mass Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 2.

25. See, for example, John Kasson, *Amusing the Million* ((New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusement* (New York: Basic Books, 1993); and Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, *The Culture of Consumption* (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

26. See Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Victoria de Grazia, "Mass Culture and Sover-

of "Americanism" by such scholars as Jean Baudrillard and Umberto Eco, as well as the hostile French response to American mass culture epitomized in the denunciations of EuroDisney, have blinded scholarship to the fact that, in the late nineteenth century, the French proudly fêted their "modernity"—especially their introduction of novel technologies such as film and their mastery of urban spectacle and modern modes of spectatorship. By focusing on the origins of mass culture in late nineteenth-century Paris, I argue that Paris was an innovator, not a mere imitator, of modern mass cultural forms. Although today Americans and the French themselves like to remark on the capital's quaint cafés and magnificent art museums, it is no coincidence that the Eiffel Tower, an engineering feat of form, designed as spectacle and accomplished for ephemeral consumption at the exposition of 1889, stood as and has remained, a beacon of Parisian life.

One of the key issues in the history of mass culture involves the status of its consumers, now transformed into spectators. Historians have paid scant attention to the transformations in visual culture that constitute the history of mass spectatorship. Instead, their colleagues in cultural studies and cinema studies have explored its many facets.[27] Initially, scholars in these fields studied spectatorship in fundamentally ahistorical ways as a series of idealized models of individual viewing. On the one hand, psychoanalytic frameworks posited a universal and timeless theory of spectatorship in direct relation to a technology such as the cinematic apparatus. On the other hand, scholars adopted a Foucaultian approach that relied on studying the idealized vision of individuals produced through discourses about perception and embodied in technological innovations.[28]

Spectatorship has only just begun to be studied as an historical phenomenon that is produced in a particular cultural moment. Tom

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eignty: The American Challenge to European Cinemas, 1920–1960," *Journal of Modern History* 61 (March 1989): 53–87; and Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995).

27. Art historians have long been concerned with "viewing" positions, but for a much more limited audience. The most relevant work is Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

28. See Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1981); and Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989). For the ground-breaking Foucaultian appproach see Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990). For a survey of various positions on spectatorship, see Linda Williams, ed., *Viewing Positions* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994).

Gunning, Miriam Hansen, Giuliana Bruno, Mark Sandberg, Leo Charney and I pay more careful attention to specific contexts and conditions of viewing and locate the emergence of film, specifically, in a broader fin-de-siècle visual culture.[29] While previous studies have been technologically driven and media-specific, we argue that spectators participated in a variety of visual entertainments in a given historical moment. Understanding the cues and styles of a variety of visual entertainments enhances what is media-specific while filling out a richer, more historically embedded experience. To contribute to the history of spectatorship, this study locates the emergence of film in a diverse culture of visual habits and activities in late nineteenth-century Paris.

Scholars attempting to historicize spectatorship have turned to *flânerie* and its location in the historically specific conditions of the new consumer-oriented city.[30] *Flânerie* in this context is a shorthand for the mode of modern urban spectatorship that emphasizes mobility and fluid subjectivity.[31] My conceit is that *flânerie* dominated commercial cultural spectating for and by the masses. *Flânerie*'s delights unlock the pleasures of modern urban spectatorship.

As a Parisian "type" the *flâneur* has been taken to exemplify the masculine and bourgeois privilege of modern public life in Paris.[32] The *flâneur* delighted in the sight of the city and its tumultuous crowd, while allegedly remaining aloof and detached from it. His sentiments about life in the city could be found in Baudelaire's pronouncement that "The life of our city is rich in poetic and marvellous subjects."[33] An inveterate stroller, the *flâneur* "goes botanizing on the asphalt" according to Walter Benjamin, who also noted that his original home was

29. See Tom Gunning, "The Aesthetic of Astonishment: The Cinema of Attractions," in *Viewing Positions,* ed. Linda Williams (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991); Giuliana Bruno, *Street-Walking on a Ruined Map* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); and Mark Sandberg, "Missing Persons: Spectacle and Narrative in Late Nineteenth-Century Scandinavia" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1991). See also Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds., *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995).

30. *Flânerie,* like "modernity," has inspired much discussion and debate. On its interpretations and uses see Keith Tester, ed., *The Flâneur* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

31. See Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 16–17.

32. See Janet Wolff, "The Invisible *Flâneuse,*" in *Feminine Sentences* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990), 5. See also Tester, ed., *The Flâneur.*

33. Charles Baudelaire, *The Salon of 1846,* cited in Wolff, *Feminine Sentences,* 37.

the arcade before Haussmann's transformations made the streets themselves comfortable places in which to walk.[34]

According to the cultural critic Janet Wolff, he had no female counterpart: "There is no question of inventing the *flâneuse:* the essential point is that such a character was rendered impossible by the sexual divisions of the nineteenth century."[35] Nineteenth-century writers and artists reinforced this notion through their obsessive depiction of prostitutes.[36] Anne Friedberg, among others, argues there was a *flâneuse* and traces her origins to women's legitimate occupation of urban space through the rise of consumer culture.[37] I would like to suggest that debate over the existence of the *flâneuse* or the working-class *flâneur,* for that matter, misses the point. The *flâneur* is not so much a person as *flânerie* is a positionality of power—one through which the spectator assumes the position of being able to be part of the spectacle and yet command it at the same time.[38]

But there was more to viewing than the "viewing positions" it offered spectators. One of the pleasures of modern life, this book argues, was the collective participation in a culture in which representations proliferated to such an extent that they became interchangeable with reality. As I have already remarked, and as the first chapter will explore in greater detail, life in Paris became so powerfully identified with spectacle that reality seemed to be experienced as a show—an object to be looked at rather than experienced in an unmediated form. At the same time, shows featured modern life, represented as realistically as possible.

Realism has already been well studied in art and literature in nineteenth-century France.[39] As a mode of representation, it worked to con-

34. Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire,* 37.

35. Wolff, *Feminine Sentences,* 47.

36. See Charles Bernheimer, *Figures of Ill Repute* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); and Jann Matlock, *Scenes of Seduction: Prostitution, Hysteria, and Reading Difference in Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) for insights on the representation of prostitutes.

37. Friedberg, *Window Shopping,* 32–37. See also Bowlby, *Just Looking;* Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight;* Erika Rappaport, *The West End and Women's Pleasure: Gender and Commercial Culture in London, 1860–1914* (forthcoming, Princeton University Press) on women in the city; and my paper, "Gender and Boulevard Culture: Were the Only Women in Public, Public Women?" delivered at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, San Francisco, 1994.

38. I thank Jeannene Przyblyski for helping me rethink *flânerie.*

39. See Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (London: Penguin, 1971); T. J. Clark, *Image of the People* (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1973); Michael Fried, *Courbet's Realism* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1990); Georg Lukács, *Studies in European Realism,* introduction by Alfred Kazin (New York: Grosset and Dunlop, 1964); Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis,* trans. Willard Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); Fredric

struct standards of the real to which it then referred. The real is thus only an effect although it seems to precede its representation.[40] This book explores its effect on forms of mainstream commercial culture designed for a mass audience using texts and images that have, for the most part, gone unexamined. In particular, it attempts to explain the appeal of the category of reality as an object of consumption and delineates the way that experiences were configured into moments and events.[41] This study also shows how sensationalizing and literally spectacularizing became the means through which reality was commodified.

The cultural forms described in this book represented, captured and "produced" reality in a variety of ways. Some forms, such as the panorama, existed as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century; others, such as film, arrived at the century's end. Haussmannization occurred at midcentury. But it was in the fin de siècle—which in this project denotes Paris after the Commune, and mostly in the 1880s and 1890s—that the phenomena examined in this book first coexisted in an urban frenzy out of which a culture "for the masses" emerged.

Each of the five chapters of this book approaches the construction of spectacular realities through different but allied material. The first sets the stage by examining the visuality of modern boulevard culture and its connection to the way the mass press used sensationalism to frame and re-present the everyday as spectacle. The second chapter concerns the popularity of public visits to the Paris Morgue, where bodies were laid out behind a large display window for consideration by anyone who stopped by. As a free theater for the masses, the morgue fit into a modern Parisian landscape in which the banal and the everyday were embedded in sensational narratives.

If the first two chapters elaborate the way that modern urban life was re-presented as spectacle, the next three chapters focus on novel entertainments whose form and content attempted to be as realistic as possible. Chapter three examines the wildly successful wax museum

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Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); George Levine, ed., *Realism and Representation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail* (New York: Methuen, 1987); and Cohen and Prendergast, eds., *Spectacles of Realism*.

40. Roland Barthes describes the notion in "The Reality Effect," in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986).

41. Joel Fineman suggests that because the narration of a singular event uniquely refers to the real, it has a privileged status among forms of historical narrative. I think the depiction of urban life as a series of singular news items also shored up their status as real. See Joel Fineman, "The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction," in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veeser (New York: Routledge, 1989).

opened in 1882—the Musée Grévin—and asks why a wax museum captured the public imagination in fin-de-siècle France. In the course of my research in France, I gained access to the museum's private and uncataloged papers, which also provide a rare glimpse into the daily workings of this institution belonging to the nascent entertainment industry. Chapter four examines the contemporaneous "o-rama" craze of the 1880s and 1890s. Chapter five details the history of early cinema at the Musée Grévin as a prism through which to see cinema's origins as part of a broader cultural climate that demanded "the real thing."

This book takes popular behavior and entertainments seriously in order to explain what might be appealing about such things as the morgue and the wax museum to rather diverse groups of people. It is not merely that these phenomena were the best "sold"—although they had to be sold well to succeed. Anyone who has mulled through the bankruptcy files at the Paris Archives knows that for every successful type of novelty there were infinitely more failures. Mass culture works through a dialogue between its producers and consumers—a dialogue that disrupts the fixed notions of production and consumption. This book attempts to illuminate the possible spaces between manipulation and enjoyment that Michel de Certeau introduced in recognition that culture is more "poached" than it is produced and consumed.[42]

The perhaps seemingly eclectic juxtaposition of these different cultural practices identifies a newly forming Parisian mass culture characterized by a shared visual experience of seeing reality represented. This project delineates the popularity of seeing "reality" as a set of referents—people, places, incidents—that Parisians shared, whatever their social origins or gender identities. Nowhere do I claim that these different sets of eyes experienced this culture of realist spectacle in the same way. No doubt, they did not. Rather, by studying the realistic re-presentation and visualization of modern life, this book shows that what appears to the historian like disparate phenomena formed a shared culture in late nineteenth-century Paris. This culture produced a new crowd as individuals joined together to delight in the transformation of everyday life into spectacle while avidly consuming spectacles of a sensationalized everyday life. In this way, Paris not only earned its label as the "capital of the nineteenth century," it brilliantly anticipated the twentieth.

42. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), xxiv.