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‘La société en miniature’: Queuing at Theatres and Railway Stations in Nineteenth-Century Paris

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ABSTRACT
In mid-nineteenth-century Paris, theatres and railway stations had become popular gathering places for urban crowds seeking leisure or transport. While the interiors were strictly segregated according to economic and social status, the mixed queues outside served as spaces of human contact and negotiation. I argue that queuing became an everyday spectacle that reflected the contemporary mass society. Architects and authorities imposed functional regulations on queues. The public developed a variety of habits of collective waiting. Artists depicted them in paintings, caricatures and panoramic literature. All three contributed to the queuing phenomenon by producing stereotypes related to class, gender, profession, and custom.

KEYWORDS
Paris; theatre; railway station; urban mass society; everyday culture; queue; human differentiation

Introduction: Relating the Theatre and the Railway Station

In the essayistic railway novel *La Vie en chemin de fer* from 1861, the writer Benjamin Gastineau offered a poetic reflection on the railway station as a condensed tableau of modern life. ‘Toute la vie sociale est contenue entre les murs d’une gare de chemin de fer: types multiples des citoyens du monde. Babels de tous les idiomes, de tous les sentiments, colis de toutes les marchandises, contrastes de toutes les positions’ (Gastineau 1861, 20). Astonished by this diversity, Gastineau called for the study of these different groups of people, which he referred to as ‘types sociaux’ (41). For him and many of his contemporaries, the new railway was not only a prominent symbol of industrialisation and progress in the nineteenth century, but quite literally a common place where social, linguistic, habitual, physical, and emotional diversity could be both experienced and narrated. To underscore the significance of this transport revolution, Gastineau employed a revealing metaphor in his literary reflections: ‘La gare de chemin de fer, c’est la société en miniature, c’est le théâtre des milles scènes, de mille intrigues, de mille déceptions aussi’ (22). The hustle and bustle of the railway station is presented here as a theatrical performance, mirroring the contemporary state of French society in miniature. And theatres were indeed among the most important cultural institutions of the nineteenth century. They were the principal form of collective entertainment in cities, spaces where social order was both represented and negotiated – on the stage and in the interactions of the theatregoers. In likening the station to the theatre, Gastineau aligned two spaces that shaped modern urban subjectivity through shared public experience. Both the station and the theatre reflected and exemplified a particular configuration of contemporary society: the urban crowd with its manifold ‘types’ of human beings.

This article builds on that association to argue that, in mid-nineteenth-century Paris, the relationship between the railway station and the theatre was not merely metaphorical but increasingly structural and material. Focussing on practices of queuing, it compares the spatial organisation and cultural functions of theatre and station entrances, arguing that these sites became critical arenas for conceptualising and managing social difference. In both, the visible ordering of diverse publics enabled contemporary efforts to classify individuals according to a variety of categories imbued with social value or judgement. By examining how queues at these spaces were represented, experienced, and regulated, this study contributes to broader debates surrounding the spectacularisation of urban life and the emerging logics of mass society.

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Recent scholarship has highlighted the representational power of spaces such as the theatre and the railway station. Stéphanie Sauget (2009a), in her study on the history of mentalities in nineteenth-century Parisian stations, shows how the population culturally appropriated the new buildings and their transport logic and describes the early station as a 'théâtre de la vie moderne' (Sauget 2010, 23). The station, she argues, was a place where railway companies sought to satisfy their contemporaries' appetite for sensation and familiarise them with the new industrial technologies by displaying them. Sauget's argument highlights the allure of technical novelty. Yet I would add that an equally important fascination, though less remarked upon, was social rather than technical. This was a fascination with people themselves – both in their masses as travellers and in their diversity as members of society. According to Vanessa Schwartz's study *Spectacular Realities*, everyday life in nineteenth-century Paris is to be understood as a dynamic 'boulevard culture', in which 'a new urban crowd became a society of spectators' (Schwartz 1998, 2). These studies show how sites of mobility and entertainment jointly rendered the modern social order visible. Following this, I contend that railway travellers were both subjects and objects of their own everyday urban spectacle – something inherited from theatregoers, other *flâneurs* (de Tholozany 2013), and especially omnibus passengers. Masha Belenky, in *Engine of Modernity: The Omnibus and Nineteenth-century Urban Culture*, explores the close link between nineteenth-century Parisian public transport and popular culture. After their introduction in 1828, omnibuses, she notes, not only brought more people to performances but also became a frequent theme in plays and literature, symbolising the democratisation of urban life. Writers portrayed the omnibus as both a stage and a spectacle, highlighting its theatrical nature and its role in reflecting the city's social diversity.[1] The recurring motif of the *société en miniature* thus framed the omnibus as a microcosm of Parisian society, offering insight into the city's dynamic and heterogeneous character: 'In the seemingly chaotic randomness of city life, writers found multitudes of stories about a wide range of human types all conveniently gathered along the vehicle's seats. The omnibus allowed writers to dissect the Parisian social body in all its diversity while providing an insider's guide to the changing city itself' (Belenky 2019, 61).

I expand on Belenky's work by shifting focus from the vehicle to the queue – a shared cultural practice across efforts to regulate movement and classify individuals. I argue that railway stations in fact absorbed and adapted the logics of access, privilege, and display that operated at theatres. My claim is that stations learned from theatres in managing the mobility of people, and that observers recognised and responded to this transfer of knowledge. In short, I will show how the queue became a shared yet stratified space, where access to theatres and stations was shaped by economic power even before entry. This comparison reveals how both sites reflected and reinforced social order, becoming symbolic touchpoints in broader debates about modern urban life and thus serving the era's impulse to categorise and label human difference as 'types'.[2]

In this sense, I aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of how the 'spectacularisation of city life and its connection to the emergence of mass culture' (Schwartz 1998, 2) unfolded in nineteenth-century Paris. While Belenky rightly analyses literature and caricatures in terms of the relevance of gender and class, I believe that an even broader study of human categorisation is required – one that focuses on the continual differentiation by and of the Parisian population according to nationality, class, age, gender, occupation, and achievement.[3] The analysis of queues at theatres and railway stations offers a particularly illuminating case study for understanding how contemporaries made sense of complex modern phenomena of sorting people into kinds. Theatregoers and travellers alike were divided into distinct categories or classes based on economic power. Privilege, comfort and service came at a price, determined at the ticket office, which in turn created the desired separation between different groups. This complex differentiation was not only evident within the buildings – when people were seated in designated areas or waiting in segregated lounges – but was already foreshadowed by the entry procedures. Yet, according to French conventions, the queuing public at this preliminary stage remained largely heterogeneous. Consequently, managing access and circulation in front of ticket offices has long been a delicate issue in Paris. Moreover, both theatres and railway stations had a significant impact on their surrounding urban environments, attracting large crowds and fostering a specific kind of small-scale commerce – and even crime. For this reason, urban crowds were perceived as a potential threat to public order and safety, and the so-called masses became a central concern in nineteenth-century political, social and scientific discourse.[4]

In terms of structure, my analysis will show how and why queuing consequently garnered attention from three distinct groups. First, architects, theatre and station managers, and local authorities developed

functional systems for regulating queues – for them queues were challenging crowd control mechanisms. Second, queuing publics developed various routines and practices of waiting – for them, queuing became an almost daily occurrence. Third, artists and social observers, in turn, created aesthetic representations of queues, making them into a recognisably modern urban phenomenon – for them, queues became a subject of cultural production. The comparison between these two crowded urban spaces is justified, on the one hand, by the demonstrable parallels in architectural planning, public usage, and artistic representation concerning access to theatres and railway stations. On the other hand, unlike the less frequent queues found in institutions such as the parliament building, *grands magasins*, world exhibitions, stock exchanges or omnibus stations, contemporaries drew multiple, and sometimes unexpected, connections between queuing at theatres and at railway stations. To explore these connections, I examine both specialised sources (plans, articles, encyclopaedias) and popular cultural materials (paintings, caricatures, book illustrations and drawings, as well as literary sources).

There are four steps to my analysis. First, I consider the existing scholarship on waiting and queuing in order to trace the French origins of the queue and the practice of queuing. Second, I examine how crowd control was implemented in front of ticket offices, focusing on a combination of architectural features (such as barriers) and human agents (such as *surveillants*). Third, I explore aesthetic representations of queues, particularly the work of Honoré Daumier, who caricatured people waiting outside theatres and railway stations. Fourth, I analyse another form of cultural production – panoramic literature – which depicts and narrates everyday urban life, and also focused on the queue. The conclusion brings together these threads to reflect on how the theatre and the station jointly shaped the choreography of access in modern urban life.

Queuing in Nineteenth-Century Paris: the 'Quasi-Art of Standing in Tail'

The phenomenon of waiting is surprisingly complex and varies significantly according to time period, geographical location, and specific context. Consequently, it has attracted considerable scholarly attention across multiple disciplines. Recent studies on the history of waiting include works by Harold Schweizer (2008) and Timo Reuter (2019), who explore the philosophy of waiting from a phenomenological perspective, drawing on a wide range of cultural historical examples, and Helmut Puff's (2023) investigation of the antechamber in early modern continental Europe at the intersection of art, architecture, and social history. These authors treat waiting as a neglected cultural phenomenon, yet – with the exception of Reuter – they do not examine the queue as a distinct formation. In contrast, psychologists, management scholars, and sociologists have extensively researched queues through both qualitative and quantitative studies, focusing on behaviour and interaction (Mann 1969; Schwartz 1975), although they lack a historical or cultural studies perspective.

More pertinent to my inquiry into urban mobilites are studies that examine waiting and queuing within the context of passenger transport. For roughly two decades, the research inspired by the new mobilities paradigm has contributed significantly to this field, which not only investigates movement but also draws attention to the long-overlooked phenomena of immobility and waiting, as outlined in Vozyanov's overview of the research field (2014). Particularly relevant are investigations into the power relations embedded in the organisation of waiting. For example, Gillian Fuller describes queues as a 'type of control architecture where a temporal/spatial position seems to override a social position' (2014, 206) – a concept crucial to understanding human differentiation. Within the cultural history of railway waiting, mobility historian Robin Kellermann's (2021) study is especially valuable. Focusing on the historical situations in England and Germany, it is the first systematic account to link the industrialisation of transport, the architectural evolution of stations, and socio-cultural change. However, Kellermann does not address the French context or queues in particular.

Literary scholar F. W. J. Hemmings's (1993) seminal study on the social history of nineteenth-century Parisian theatres contains a brief but insightful section on the queuing public. Hemmings provides essential textual sources regarding the social composition of theatregoers – including issues of class and gender. Visual representations and imaginings are likewise vital for understanding the cultural significance of queues, in that they can illuminate the political and social conditions of a given era, as other studies have demonstrated. Clayson, for instance, investigates the types of women queuing during the siege of

Paris in 1870, analysing issues of gendered urban space and the 'politics of food queue pictures' (Clayson 1999, 397–402). Another example is Clark's (2022) analysis of the evolving visual portrayal of waiting in American popular culture between 1870 and 1930 in relation to migration, politics, consumerism, and health. Clark demonstrates how queuing imagery transitioned from a tool of critique to a ubiquitous advertising motif that became integral to the self-image of a modernising United States.

In my analysis of Parisian queues outside theatres and railway stations, I particularly benefit from recent research by urban studies scholars Schimkowsky, Jensen, and Frank (2024). Their work integrates mobilities research with a mobilities design approach, offering an innovative analytical framework for both contemporary and historical queuing, as the three ethnographic vignettes – supermarkets, stadiums, and airports – they develop can also be taken as a useful perspective for nineteenth-century case studies. They argue that 'queues are dynamic outcomes of the interplay between waiting spaces and waiting groups' (5). These perspectives help me analyse on the one hand the material configuration of the built environment (e.g. barriers), and on the other, the ways in which queues are constituted, embodied, and experienced through interpersonal interaction (with fellow queuers or staff). Although they acknowledge that a historical analysis of queuing would meaningfully contribute to understanding it as a socially structured and learned skill (5), they do not provide concrete references to its genealogy.

As cultural historian Joe Moran explains in *Queuing for Beginners*, the widespread belief that the British are the most adept queuers is a myth dating back to publications by George Orwell and others following the Second World War. Referring to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which traces the term to 1837, Moran argues that queuing had already emerged as an established social form in the early nineteenth century in 'more urbanised, industrialised societies which brought masses of people together in one place' (Moran 2007, 61). This earliest source given by *OED* is *The French Revolution: A History* by the Scottish publicist Thomas Carlyle – a reference that is frequently cited, yet rarely quoted. Carlyle specifically describes the French 'talent … of spontaneously standing in queue' (1837, 2: 312) during the famine of the early 1790s, when bread shortages in the capital prompted the following observation: 'If we look now at Paris, one thing is too evident: that the Bakers' shops have got their *Queues*, or Tails; their long strings of purchasers, arranged in tail, so that the first come be the first served, – were the shop once open!' (287). Carlyle thus offers one of the earliest English-language descriptions of the phenomenon, which he romanticises as uniquely Parisian: 'In time, we shall see it perfected by practice of the rank almost of an art; and the art, or quasi-art, of standing in tail become one of the characteristics of the Parisian People, distinguishing them from all other People whatsoever' (287). This statement is striking in its generalisation (the figure of 'the Parisian People'). Yet the question remains: what are the origins of the term *queue*, and when was it applied to the practice of waiting outside French theatres?

The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* of 1762 defines *queue* in its original biological sense – as the rear part of an animal's body (tail) – but also notes its figurative extensions, such as the rearmost position in military formations (1762, 512). By the 1798 edition, the phrase 'une queue à toutes les portes de Boulangers' appeared for the first time as a figurative expression (1798, 400). In the subsequent 1835 edition, the practice was formalised as a civil technique of the body. This entry thus affords official recognition to the vernacular usages: 'Faire queue, Se ranger par ordre, les uns derrière les autres, afin de passer chacun à son tour à une audience, à une distribution, etc'. (1835, 544). Notably, alongside queues outside bakeries, a new illustrative usage is included relating to another major institution: 'Il est fort ennuyeux de faire queue à la porte d'un spectacle' (544). Thus, the phenomenon of queuing rapidly expanded from a linguistic and cultural history rooted in food scarcity to encompass the cultural infrastructure of Parisian life – namely, theatre spectacles.[5] A small handbook of theatre terms from the same year includes an entry on *la queue* warning readers of potential ticket fraud (Jacques-le-Souffleur 1835, 57). A social hierarchy becomes evident here: some privileged professional groups enjoy free access and are exempt from queuing, as are the wealthy, who can reserve an entire box in advance. Everyone else has to wait. Unlike in British theatres, Parisian ticket offices were always located outside the theatre building – compelling most patrons to queue in the discomfort of the public street until the box office opened.

In fact, by the time of the Restoration, the queue in front of Parisian theatres was already an established topos depicted by artists in prints and paintings. An early example is by the genre painter Louis-Léopold Boilly, whose work *L'Entrée du théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique à une représentation gratis* was even selected for the annual Salon in 1819. (Figure 1) The painting shows the main entrance of the original theatre

Figure 1. Louis-Léopold Boilly, L'entrée du théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique à une représentation gratis, 1819. Courtesy Musée du Louvre.

building on the Boulevard du Temple, besieged by visitors. This was a special performance. Since the eighteenth century, there had been a tradition among bourgeois theatres of offering free performances several times a year for poorer audiences who could not otherwise afford to attend. Here we see that Carlyle's 'Parisian people' are no longer a homogeneous group, but are clearly differentiated. In the right half of the picture, men, women and children in simple clothing squeeze through a narrow entrance. The chaotic scene is watched sceptically from the left by a bourgeois family, who also ignore a begging child in front of them. Overall, the crowd is so large that it is nearly impossible to discern who or what is regulating access. On one hand, at least four uniformed gendarmes in bicorn hats are attempting to keep order. On the other, a narrow waiting area in front of the entrance is enclosed by a metal barrier and sheltered by a canopy, forcing the remaining visitors to queue in the background. The painting thus also reflects the excessive demands placed on this arrangement of material and human actors during a particularly crowded performance attended by people unaccustomed to the theatre. The disorganised queue emerges here as a site where individuals of different backgrounds, ages and genders come into close contact, yet whose behaviour is markedly distinct and subject to the viewer's judgement. As in other genre paintings, Boilly presents a bourgeois family of passers-by keeping their distance from the unruly working-class crowd in a public space.

Architecture and Manpower: Crowd Control at Ticket Offices

If Parisian theatres have reached out to the widest possible range of social groups since the eighteenth century, the same can be said of the French capital's railways since the mid-nineteenth century. Both became so popular that they not only had to accommodate a wide variety of visitors, but also an immense number of them. Railway stations, therefore, faced challenges similar to those of theatres in managing large crowds. 'How to provide for the crowds?'– this, as Carroll Meeks puts it, encapsulates the central challenge in his architectural history of the railway station. Yet he goes on to qualify the influence of theatres on stations:

> Churches and theaters, the principal prototypes for a building serving large numbers of people at one time, were not much help to him [the station]: in these, the worshipers and the audiences flowed inward at stipulated times

> and outward at others, so that entrances could be used as exits when the leisurely flow reversed its direction. But at stations people were arriving and departing continuously, anxious to make their connection or seek their destination, burdened with luggage (Meeks 1956, 92)

This observation may be accurate in terms of the general spatial design required to accommodate different flows of people. However, Meeks overlooks the concrete regulation of access and underestimates the contemporary connections between theatre and station, although elsewhere he cites the renowned French station architect Auguste Perdonnet who highlights precisely this, drawing attention to the similar function of colonnades on the façades of both buildings (Meeks 1956, 42).

A closer look at the historical sources provides more information. The first issue of the *Revue générale de l'architecture et des travaux publics* (RGA) appeared in 1840. This new journal for architects and engineers published monthly articles on a range of building types. One such article by Hippolyte Meynadier (a civil servant working in city planning), entitled 'Études théoriques et pratiques d'un théâtre pour l'Académie Royale de Musique', was published in 1844. In the section 'Le premier pas' (1844, 465), Meynadier details the individual spaces of an ideal theatre building, including the layout of the entrance area. He proposes an ingenious system to regulate the waiting crowd, referred to as the 'division des amateurs' (in contrast to the 'division de lion en loge', the wealthy with reserved boxes who bypass the queue). The layout features a long gallery running along the side of the building, where 'la queue se forme sur trois rangs', enclosed by 'le mur

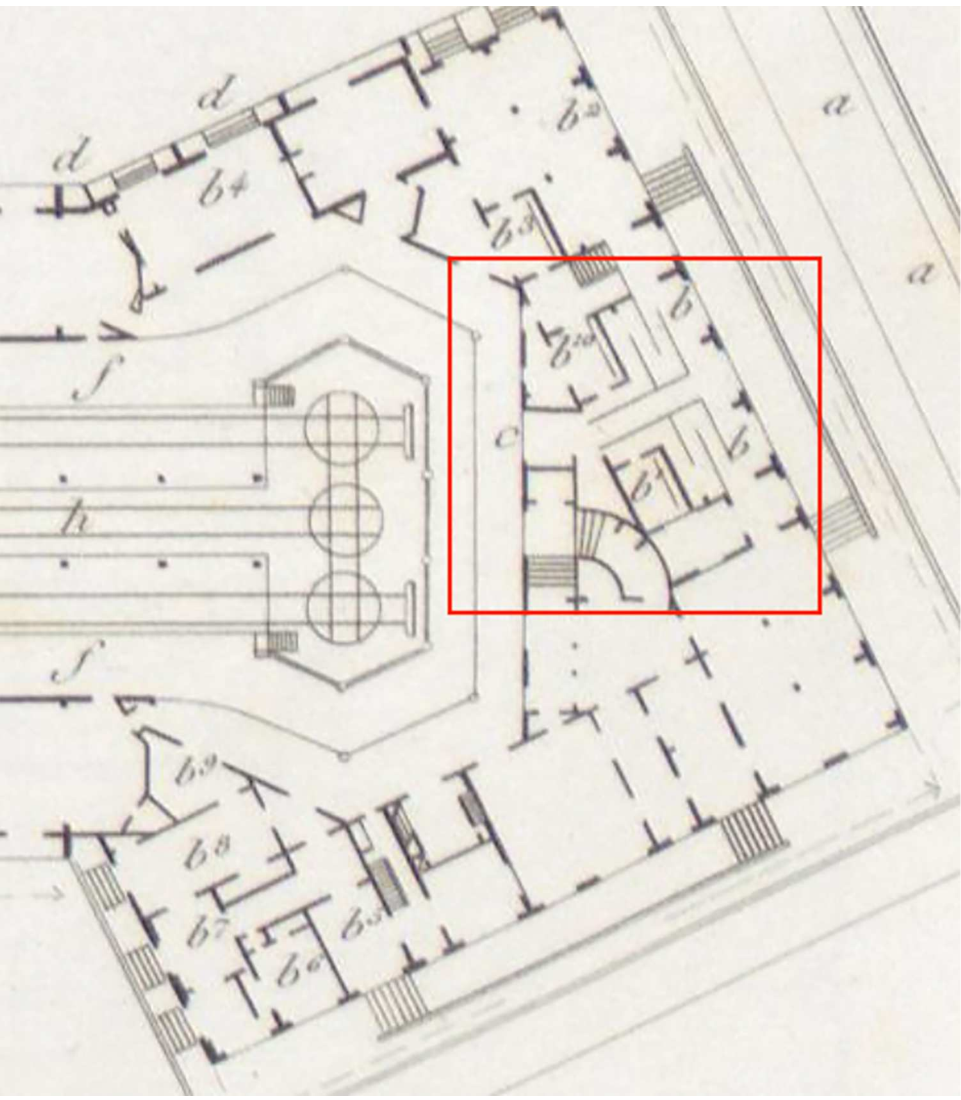

Figure 2. Floor plan of Gare du Pecq with winding barriers in front of ticket offices, illustration (detail) from the Atlas of *Portefeuille de l'ingénieur des chemins de fer*, 1843–46. Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France.

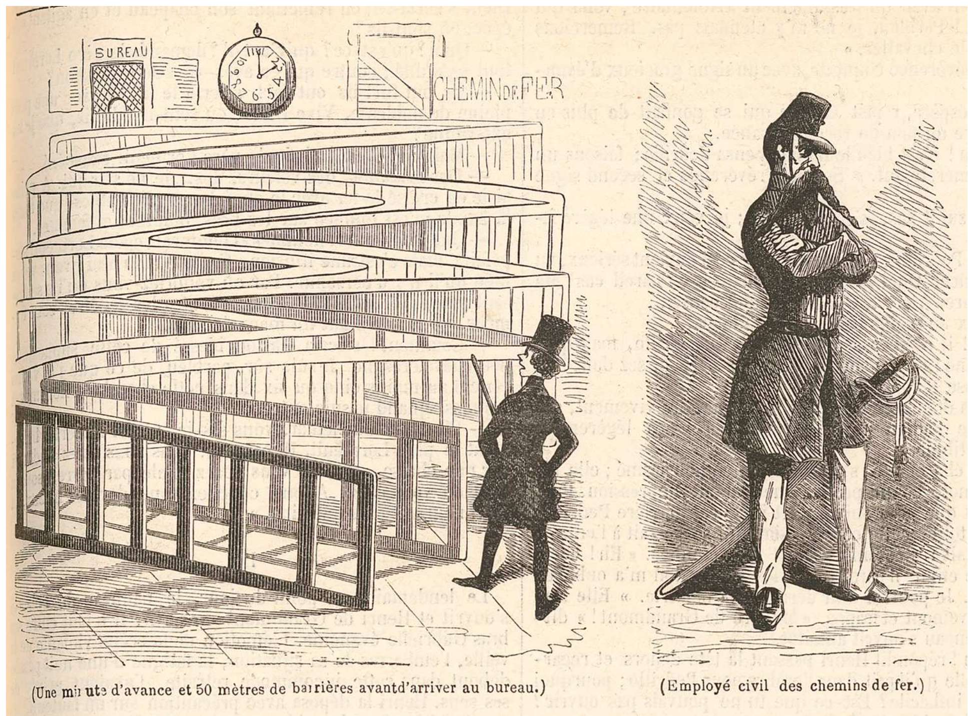

Figure 3. Caricatures of French railway station organisation by Cham, illustration from *L'Illustration* 146, 15th Decembre 1845. Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France.

et une balustrade de fer à demeure' and segmented by 'barrières mobiles' and doors to channel the movement of 'la foule, d'ordinaire assez folle' (466). An officer of the municipal police was to supervise the area to maintain order. Meynadier's article vividly summarises the state of the art in controlling theatre crowds.

However, similar challenges arose elsewhere. From 1837 onwards, the first terminus stations were constructed in and around Paris to provide access to the new railways. Unlike British stations, French stations did not separate passengers by class at the ticket office. All passengers purchased tickets – regardless of class – at the same counter and were only separated afterwards in the waiting rooms (Ribeill 1987). Concerned with disorderly gatherings and undesirable social mixing, the authorities and private railway companies introduced measures to channel passenger flow, aiming to regulate movement in both spatial and temporal terms (Ullrich 2024). As early as 1840, the same journal, RGA, discussed the layout of early railway stations. From the outset, interior design was understood as an architectural means to control passenger behaviour:

> Après la porte d'entrée, les voyageurs doivent être conduits naturellement … aux distribution des billets de toutes les classes. Pour cela, un corridor ou des travées sont ménagés de telle sorte qu'ils ne peuvent passer qu'un à un ou deux à deux, d'une manière analogue au mode adopté pour l'entrée des théâtres. (Polonceau and Bois 1840, 519)

The two authors explicitly saw theatre entrance design as a model for organising and directing crowds in station vestibules. They linked this to a clear goal: 'Cette répartition de la foule permet une surveillance active: l'on peut ainsi arriver à la maîtriser et à la contenir' (519) – preventing travellers from wandering the station, whether by accident or out of independent curiosity. Such controlled movement towards the ticket counter, as guided as possible by architecture, was already evident in one of the earliest stations west of Paris: the Gare du Pecq from 1837. (Figure 2) Floor plans in the first French manual on station design illustrate such queue-management features: in the vestibule of Pecq station (b), there are two ticket counters (b'). In front of them, 'sont indiquées des barrières en bois qui servent à diriger la foule' (Perdonnet and Polonceau 1843–46, 100), arranged in the shape of a zigzag or twisted tail. Travellers then proceed through a corridor (c) with their tickets to the waiting rooms. As with theatres, ticket counters at railway stations only function effectively when equipped with barriers to shape crowds into queues and render their demands processable within a specific operational logic.

However, as with theatres, architecture alone could not suffice. According to a manual for railway employees, these barriers were to be supervised by staff: 'Un surveillant est placé en dehors du guichet, pour maintenir l'ordre parmi les voyageurs, et répéter à haute voix la destination et la classe demandées' (Schillings 1848, 81). Such barriers, when manned, were intended to transform chaotic crowds into manageable queues, as described in the sources above. A series of caricatures by Cham in an 1845 issue of *L'Illustration* reveals that this form of discipline irritated contemporaries. (Figure 3) On the right, we see a military-looking *surveillant*, asserting his authority through a uniform and sabre. On the left, a traveller is shown sorted into a queue. Given the seasonal fluctuations in traffic on the limited number of railway lines, observers noted how absurd this paternalistic system could appear when there was no actual rush at the ticket office. Cham ridiculed this over-engineered crowd-control device – curved like a tail – that looked farcical when underused (Sauget 2009b).

While the construction of railway stations from the late 1830s focused on structural and operational regulation through organised waiting and transit areas, by mid-century the discourse had expanded to include popular cultural representations. Passenger traffic in the station vestibule became a subject and site of reflection for observers grappling with the experience of modernisation and the industrialisation of social life. The following two sections explore selected representations (caricatures and literary depictions of urban life) to illustrate how queues at theatres and stations – shaped by regimes of infrastructural control – reflected the diversity of urban society and everyday life.

Caricatures: Depicting Class, Gender and Age Differences

Selected caricatures by Honoré Daumier offer insights into the everyday culture of nineteenth-century Parisian urban life (Le Men 2008). In series and individual works, Daumier regularly portrayed railway stations and travel, as well as theatre and other kinds of shows or spectacles.[6] While he also depicted queues in other urban contexts, such as outside exhibitions, queues formed through barriers appear exclusively in front of theatres and railway stations. The following two examples illustrate how the enclosed queue became an aesthetic phenomenon around mid-century, generating stereotypical images of people shaped by local entertainment culture and national labour migration. This staging reflects and negotiates a range of human categories – gender, age, class, origin and occupation.

In the series *Physionomies des chemins de fer*, published in *Charivari* in 1852, Daumier created ten caricatures of unpleasant moments during train journeys or at stations. Five depict stressful situations, while the other five depict waiting. Figures in this and similar series are often shown with disproportionately large heads, giving them a grotesque expression. A caricature dated 23 March 1852 shows a waiting scene in the vestibule of the Gare de Lyon, marked by a wooden barrier and passageways through walls. (Figure 4) The waiting figures appear disorganised, and the queue fades into the background. The dominant theme is presented in the foreground with the label 'nourrices de Bourgogne'. The rural origins of the four nurses – each carrying a baby and engaged in a typical form of female labour – are signalled by their traditional dress (white bonnets, clogs). Working-class characters recur throughout Daumier's oeuvre, and wet nurses were a motif to which he devoted numerous prints and paintings (Sussman 2018).

In her book on breastfeeding in the nineteenth century, Lisa Algazi Marcus (2022) explores the shifting literary and popular representations of breastfeeding mothers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These depictions, she argues, often reflected male fantasies and bore little resemblance to the realities of motherhood, as many mothers continued to rely on the services of wet nurses rather than breastfeeding themselves. Wet nurses – women who breastfed other mothers' infants for a fee, because the mothers were unable or unwilling to do so, or had to engage in paid work instead of caring for their children – were a widespread phenomenon in France from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. In Paris, the profession was institutionalised in 1769 with the establishment of the *Bureau de la Direction générale des nourrices*. By the nineteenth century, half of all newborns were being breastfed and cared for by wet nurses. While affluent Parisian families could afford to employ wet nurses within their own homes, poorer families sent their infants to wet nurses in the countryside.

Traditionally, many women from rural Burgundy travelled to Paris either to collect babies or to seek employment. With the gradual expansion of the railway network from Paris to Burgundy beginning in 1849, this form of labour migration shifted to the railway. From then on, wet nurses and infants became

Figure 4. Honoré Daumier, Le chemin de fer de Lyon, from the series *Physionomies de chemins*, 1852. Courtesy Musée Carnavalet.

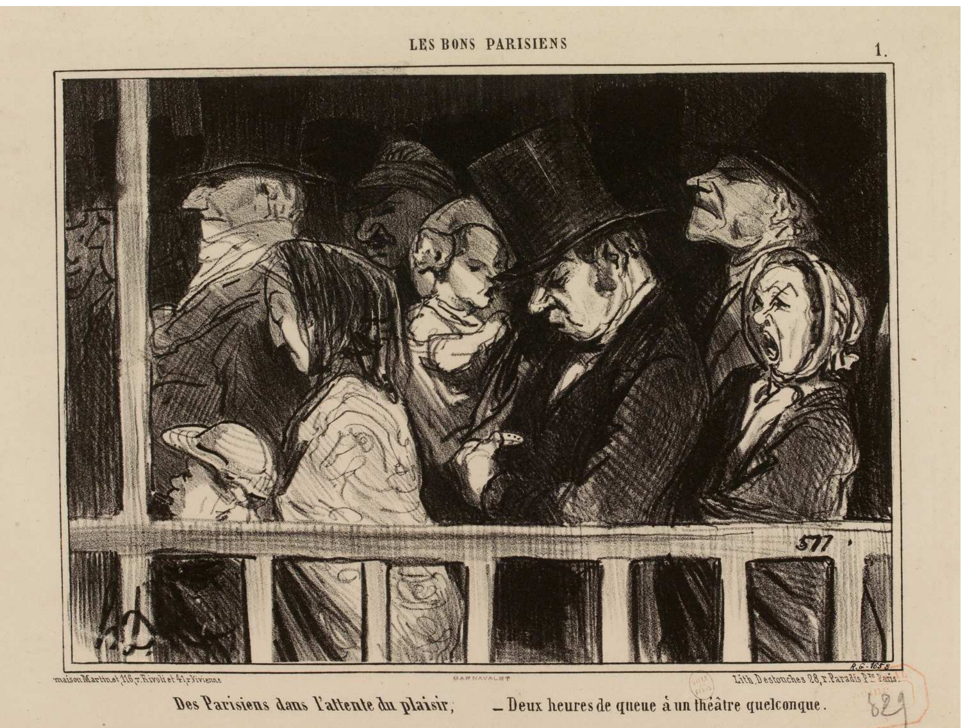

Figure 5. Honoré Daumier, Des Parisiens dans l'attente du plaisir, from the series *Les Bons Parisiens*, 1855. Courtesy Musée Carnavalet.

a familiar presence on this and other routes, which is why they frequently appear in contemporary depictions of everyday customs (Sussman 2018, 89). As Belenky notes, wet nurses were also a recurrent, often caricatured figure among omnibus passengers – marked by their class (ordinary appearance) and femininity (exposed bosom) (2019, 142–148). At the same time, these largely pejorative literary depictions reveal 'a deeper fascination with – and anxiety about – the female body on display in public' (143). However, this does not seem to be the main concern in Daumier's work, where middle-aged women are portrayed without sexual connotations. Instead, their collective presence asserts a strong visibility in the public space of the station, sometimes accompanied by sensory impressions such as odour (the second nurse from the right is changing a baby's nappy).

Daumier's caricature appeared just three days after the reopening of the Gare de Lyon, which bears the city's name because it promised to connect Paris to the south-east of France and the Mediterranean (although the full rail link would not be completed until 1855). This is the context behind the caption, which does not celebrate the 'Chemin de Fer de Lyon' as a gateway to the south, but instead refers to the new station as the 'Embarcadère spécial de nourrices de Bourgogne'. In this way, Daumier also satirises the bourgeois travel fantasies of the Parisian upper classes, which are unsettled by the unexpected social reality of a working-class and distinctly female practice of labour migration. The queuing scene in the station vestibule thus captures how, from the mid-nineteenth century, a rural social group became a visible and integral part of everyday metropolitan culture.

By contrast, in a print dated 5 March 1855 from the series *Les Bons Parisiens*, Daumier caricatures city dwellers indulging in one of their favourite pastimes – going to the theatre. (Figure 5) Here, however, it is not the aesthetic experience of the performance that takes centre stage, but rather the scene in front of the theatre. The caption reads: 'Des Parisiens dans l'attente du plaisir. Deux heures à un théâtre quelconque'. The caricature deliberately leaves unspecified which theatre or play they are waiting for. The focus is on the act of waiting itself, which, according to the series title and the caption, is presented as a typically 'Parisian' activity among typical Parisian audiences. Queuing is thus framed as a metropolitan habit. Indeed, the crowd gathered outside is an urban microcosm, differentiated according to broad human categories such as gender (female/male), age (infant in arms, child, and older adult), and class (predominantly middle class, but with the visible presence of a worker or craftsman in a cap in the background). These diverse individuals stand close together, yet maintain a minimal distance; they do not engage with one another; and despite the density of the crowd, each person appears isolated. No one's gaze meets another's; all look straight ahead, underscoring their isolation. What unites this temporary gathering of Parisians is their shared goal – a willingness to wait. Irrespective of age, gender or class, they are momentarily equalised in this collective act of waiting, their faces uniformly marked by impatience, weariness or irritation. The irony of the title lies in the emphasis on 'plaisir', which obviously does not apply to any of the double meanings of 'attente' (waiting and expectation). Rather, these queuers exhibit the sort of demeanour that Georg Simmel would describe, half a century later in *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, as 'blasé attitude' and 'reserve' (Simmel 1913, 413–415). The subject of the caricature is precisely this experience of isolated waiting and its psychological effect on the crowd of theatregoers. The flat, shallow composition of the image further underscores the material and spatial conditions of this ritual: wooden barriers, parallel to the picture's edges, heighten the monotony of the scene and render those waiting as prisoners of their own anticipated pleasure (Stasik 1980, 65).

Daumier's caricatures are particularly effective in capturing both the material configuration of queuing spaces and the practices of those who queue within them. In this respect, queues at theatres and railway stations share a key feature with the omnibus: following Belenky, each becomes 'both a daily practice and a visual symbol that brought city dwellers together at the same time as it underscored that which separated them'. (2019, 5) The internal structure of the omnibus – with its opposing benches – proved especially apt for representing the vehicle's social diversity, as Belenky demonstrates through several of Daumier's cross-section illustrations (74, 78, 88, 124, 125). These scenes allowed contemporary viewers to reflect on the complex composition of the urban population and to construct 'typologies of passengers' (79–83). Hence this kind of cultural production was something shared by omnibuses, theatre entrances and railway stations alike – their queues became 'a medium of social observation and a tool to render legible the changing urban environment reflective of a society in flux'. (84)

Comparing the two caricatures, we can discern significant parallels in how queues in front of theatre ticket offices and railway stations operated. Following my argument that the station learned from the theatre, we can read Daumier's caricatures as evidence that this influence was not limited to the functional use of barriers and security personnel to regulate queues. Rather, several conventions present in contemporary stations would have been familiar to visitors of the theatre – most notably, a shared temporal regime and comparable spatial regime.

On the one hand, both theatre performances and train journeys possess specific temporal affordances – fixed beginnings and durations – that demand preparation and punctuality, thereby shaping the daily rhythms of urban life. While theatre ticket offices in Paris typically opened in the late afternoon ahead of evening performances, railway stations operated according to a different rhythm. The variable departure times of trains had to be advertised in newspapers, travel guides and station notices. Ticket offices maintained their own rigid schedules, as a manual for railway employees makes clear: 'Le receveur ouvre son guichet pour la distribution des billets une demi-heure, et ne le ferme que cinq minutes avant le départ de chaque train. La délivrance des billets doit se fairé avec calme, avec ordre, et pourtant avec le plus de célérité possible' (Schillings 1848, 81). A cultural technique used for synchronisation in both settings was the ringing of bells. These acoustic signals helped ensure that people arrived punctually – before the start of a performance or the departure of a train. In railway stations, bells (alongside the whistle) formed part of the operational soundscape and are thus frequently mentioned in architectural journals, travel literature and guidebooks. Despite being constantly reminded by posters and manuals of the rigid and locally variable opening hours of French railway ticket offices, travellers regularly forgot or disregarded them. The bells were thus crucial as a repeated reminder to enforce discipline on the crowd.

On the other, the theatre and the station shared a common spatial regime. Like railway stations from the late 1830s onward, theatres had, since their liberalisation during the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century, drawn a broad social spectrum (Hemmings 1993, 9–132). Travelling by train and attending a performance were both communal experiences that expressed an ideal of social equality. Nevertheless, to preserve the desired aesthetic experience, undesirable social encounters had to be managed. In France, people from all social backgrounds queued together at both theatres and stations. At the ticket office, they could choose from various price categories, which then determined the nature of the experience that followed. In both cases – whether travelling or attending a performance – the ticket purchase reflected and reinforced one's economic and social status. At the railway station, passengers could choose between first, second, and third class tickets. In the theatre, the hierarchy was even more granular due to the building's static architecture, with historical seating categories ranging from the *parterre* to the boxes, galleries and the so-called *paradis* (the cheapest seats beneath the ceiling). Yet regardless of the status divisions that followed, nearly everyone queued together at the ticket counter, resulting in the kind of heterogeneous social mixture across class, gender, and generation that Daumier liked to depict. And like his caricatures, the genre of panoramic literature discussed in the next section demonstrates how queuing was an everyday practice in Paris and how it was interpreted in its contemporary cultural context.

Panoramic Literature: The Everyday Urban Spectacle of Queuing

In the 1830s and 1840s, a genre emerged in Paris that Walter Benjamin later called panoramic literature in his *Arcades Project*. Despite their heterogeneity, the works of this genre shared a common aim: to offer a broad overview of contemporary urban life, customs and society (Cohen 1995; de Tholozany 2013). A more concise form of this genre were the *physiologies*, humorous portrayals of particular social types of the metropolis that gained immense popularity (Stiénon 2012).[7] Another form consisted of expansive panoramic compilations of text and image, which sought to visualise the city in all its variety. In the mid-nineteenth century, this continued a literary tradition of metropolitan description explicitly following Louis-Sébastien Mercier's renowned *Tableau de Paris* (1781). Prominent later examples include Paul de Kock's *La grande ville: Nouveau tableau de Paris, comique, critique et philosophique* (1844) and Edmond Texier's *Tableau de Paris* (1852/53), both of which contain extensive chapters on Parisian theatres and railway stations, each of which discusses queuing. The following focuses on *La grande ville* to explore the aestheticisation of queues and entrances.

Figure 6. Parisians entering the Gare Saint-Lazare, illustration from *La grande ville. Nouveau tableau de Paris*, 1844. Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France.

'On ne saurait se faire une idée de l'enthousiasme, de la joie, de l'empressement avec lesquels les parisiens ont accueilli le chemin de fer', reads a caption in de Kock (1844, 1:188), beneath an illustration in which the grand portals of the Gare Saint-Lazare appear to draw in the city's inhabitants: old and young, men, women and children, soldiers and hunters, on foot or in horse-drawn carts, some burdened with luggage, stream across the courtyard and ascend a staircase into the station, above which a large clock displays the time. (Figure 6) 'Alors tout le monde se pressait, se poussait, se mêlait; chacun voulant arriver avant son voisin et craignant de ne plus partir' (189). Vignettes in the vestibule depict stereotypical townspeople (such as a hesitant small trader or a father with his anxious wife) navigating the commencement of their journey.

The second volume of *La grande ville* opens its section on Parisian theatres with an illustration showing a crowd in front of the newly constructed Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique on the Boulevard Saint-Martin. (Figure 7) *Flâneurs* encounter a dense gathering of theatregoers. So many people jostle towards the entrance that a metal barrier (adjacent to the signage) is scarcely visible. While the queue is unruly enough to warrant police intervention (a bicorne-hatted officer appears in the scene), the foreground depicts various petty traders catering to the crowd's needs and profiting from the wait: printed matter and snacks are on offer, and a *marchand de coco* sells a liquorice drink, a popular refreshment in Paris at the time. The focus here is not on the theatrical performance itself, but rather on the quotidian drama of the street outside. The caption drily observes that on the boulevard 'le spectacle est aussi bien à la porte du théâtre que dans le théâtre' (de Kock 1844, 2: 259).

This broad, tree-lined promenade on the former city ramparts was popularly known as the Boulevard du Crime, named for the eight popular theatres (among the roughly twenty across Paris) located nearby. Their sensationalist productions – particularly melodramas and vaudevilles – drew large working-class and

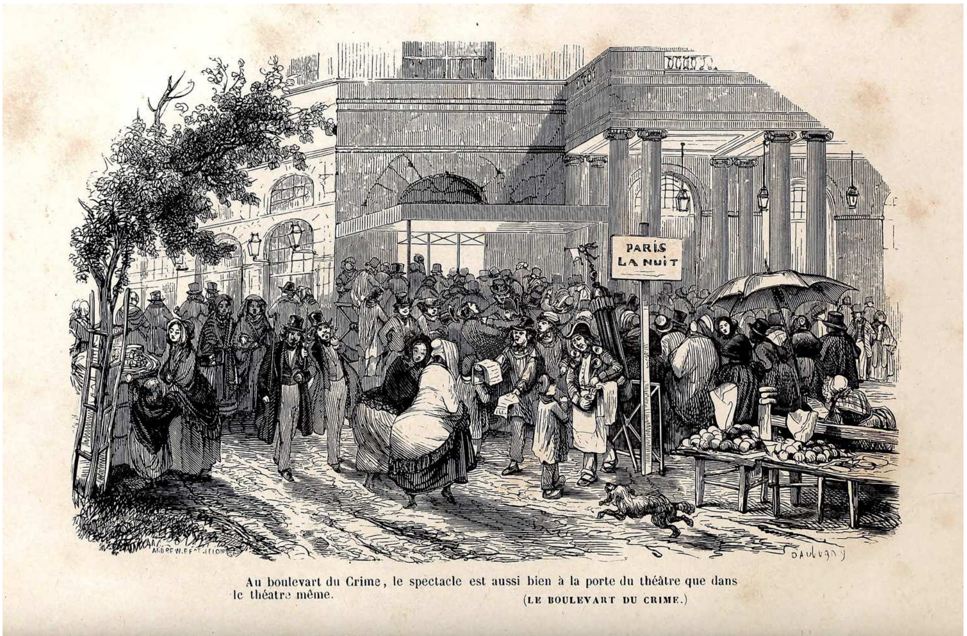

Figure 7. Parisians queuing in front of the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique, illustration from *La grande ville. Nouveau tableau de Paris*, 1844. Courtesy Bibliothèque nationale de France.

bourgeois audiences. Historians of the period describe the Boulevard du Crime as the most bustling entertainment district in Paris, hosting thousands of spectators daily. When most of its theatres were demolished in 1862 under Haussmann's renovations to make way for the present-day Place de la République, chroniclers wrote nostalgically of the 'pauvre ancien boulevard! Perpétuele kermesse de Paris, rendez-vous de toutes les classes sociales, cherchant l'égalité du Plaisir' (Challamel 1873, 74). Others remembered it as a 'fidèle tableau des goûts et des mœurs de chaque temps', now irretrievably lost:

> Dès trois heures après midi, le public commençait à venir remplir les espaces préparés par des barrières placées devant chaque théâtre. A six heures, plus de huit mille personnes envahissaient le boulevard, formant des queues à perte de vue devant les bureaux, attendant avec impatience l'ouverture des portes des contrôles … La queue la plus grande indiquait le plus grand succès. (Faucheur 1863, 104)

Queue length is understood here as a visible index of popularity (Hemmings 1993, 15), a perception bolstered by other sources. Success could also be manufactured: 'tout cela pour satisfaire l'amour-propre du directeur, qui aime à voir une longue queue, et laisser au buraliste le temps de prendre son café, et se chauffer tranquillement' – even as the waiting public endured inclement weather (Bouchard 1878, 218–219).

Just before their demolition, the artist Martial documented the theatres endangered by Haussmann's plans in a series of views stretching from west to east: Folies-Dramatiques, Théâtre de la Gaîté, Théâtre des Funambules, Théâtre des Délassements-Comiques, Théâtre des Associés and Lazari. In 1861, he produced a preliminary sketch, which he developed into a large painting the following year. (Figures 8 and 9) The comparison between these two images is historically illuminating due to the differing times of day. In the morning sketch, long barriers in front of each theatre are clearly visible; in the evening painting, these are obscured by the throngs of people who now queue in front of and beyond them. In *La grande ville*, each of these theatres receives its own entry. One full page is devoted to a vivid description of queuing practices:

> La *queue*, puisqu'il faut l'appeler par son nom, prend naissance à la porte même de la salle, se déroule graduellement sous le péristyle, occupe l'étroit labyrinthe formé par les balustrades, saute en dehors, s'étale sur le trottoir et court bientôt jusqu'à la chaussée. C'est un aspect curieux que celui de cette foule qui se heurte et s'entasse, se pousse et se renverse, qui murmure, qui se plaint, qui hurle à la moindre usurpation de ses droits, au moindre pouce de terrain qu'elle s'imagine avoir perdu. Quand les perturbateurs sont mis à l'ordre, quand le calme est rétabli, tout ce peuple cherche naturellement à tromper les heures d'attente. (de Kock 1844, 2: 269)

Figure 8. Martial, Boulevard du Temple in the morning, 1861. Courtesy Musée Carnavalet.

Figure 9. Martial, Boulevard du Temple in the late afternoon (detail), 1862. Courtesy Musée Carnavalet.

The subsequent paragraph catalogues the many ways of passing the time – unwrapping food, delivering impromptu speeches, discussing the play, insulting fellow queuers, baiting police officers – before chaos ensues (women's hair is ruined, children hide, pickpockets operate, tempers flare) and the long-awaited opening of the ticket office allows the crowd to finally enter the theatre. The author notes that this extreme version of the queue is unique to the three easternmost theatres of the Boulevard du Temple, whose audiences were largely working class ('elle est exclusivement peuple'). The queues at other venues are described as 'moins bruyantes et moins séditieuses'. A respectable bourgeois man from the Marais or the rue Saint-Denis might feel comfortable bringing his wife and daughter to these theatres, but 'ce qu'il n'oserait jamais faire à la porte de Lazzari, des Funambules ou des Délassements'. (270) The *La grande ville* account thus conveys a finely grained understanding not only of the practicalities of theatrical queuing, but also of the differing reputations and social make-up of the queues along the Boulevard du Crime.

Panoramic literature was particularly adept at describing queues in terms of both the material and spatial configuration of their settings and the social differentiation of the participants. These depictions typically adopted the viewpoint of an external observer; explicit first-person narratives of queuing are comparatively rare. A notable exception is Jules Lan's *Les Inconvénients de voyages sur les chemins de fer, par un ex-chef de train* (1862), which includes a description of station queuing that draws direct comparisons with theatre entrances. Lan begins by contrasting the speed of theatre ticketing (1,500 tickets issued) with the sluggish pace of railway sales (only 200 tickets in the same time), before expressing frustration at the egalitarian nature of railway queues. Unlike London, where ticket counters were separated by class, French railway stations forced wealthy travellers to wait alongside ordinary people. Lan articulates this indignation through

two rhetorical questions, sharply delineating bourgeois travellers from others whom he deems unable to behave in a civilised manner:

> Est-il bien agréable, au surplus, à un homme bien élevé d'être obligé de céder le pas à une nourrice protégée par un troupier raviné et la pipe à la bouche? A une dame élégante, d'ètre coudoyée, pressée, pincée même quelque fois par des gens en blouse, gens qui ont la stupidité de prendre en haine une femme rien que parce qu'elle porte un châle et un chapeau! (Lan 1862, 38)

Here, the means of distinction are habitus, dress, conduct, and profession (including the type of a wet nurse). Moreover, Lan accuses the 'uncivilised' of misreading bourgeois identity: first, by resenting an elegant woman for her appearance, and second, by mockingly labelling *vous* (Lan or his bourgeois readership) as *aristos* in working-class vernacular: 'Ces prolétaires qui vous traitent d'aristos' (38–39). This small anecdote about the station vestibule illustrates a key tension: although barriers separate travellers from onlookers and potential fraudsters, they offer no protection from fellow travellers. The queue itself brings potentially antagonistic social groups into close, compulsory proximity – a tension only temporarily diffused later in the waiting room or train carriage, through the logic of travel class separation.

Such conflicts were part of the everyday urban experience of queuing, whether in front of theatres or at railway stations – a familiarity shared by most contemporaries. Yet, as Jules Lan wryly notes, the traffic of influence between the theatre and the station was not a one-way street. Lan points to the success of the 1860 play *Le Voyage de monsieur Perrichon* as an apt depiction of the chaos in Parisian stations (51). The comedy's first act is set in the vestibule of the Gare de Lyon and includes a scene where the protagonist nearly misses his train because of confusion at the ticket counter. The moment is humorous because monsieur Perrichon, in his nervousness, arrives too early, disrupts the queue and is firmly corrected. The play premiered at the Théâtre du Gymnase-Dramatique, just off the Boulevard du Crime (Sauget 2009a, 122–124). The railway station, with its mobilities, barriers and queues, had thus itself become a theatrical stage. Queuing was reimagined in performance – a comic mirror of the audience's own everyday urban routines.

Conclusion

In nineteenth-century Paris, theatres and railway stations had become prominent gathering places for crowds. Whether for leisure or transport, both institutions concentrated large segments of the population, exerting significant influence on the urban surroundings. Moreover, the entrances to stations and theatres acted as bottlenecks, becoming points of physical contact and social encounter. They were not merely mirrors of society in a general or metaphorical sense. Rather, as the phenomenon of queuing illustrates, issues of nineteenth-century mass society, everyday culture, and urban mobility were negotiated in highly concrete terms on at least three distinct levels. As my analysis has shown, queuing was discussed in theory, experienced in practice, and represented aesthetically by three groups of contemporaries. The first group – architects, station and theatre managers, and local authorities – focused on the functional regulation of access. Designing and managing queues posed a challenge of crowd control. The second group, the public assembled in front of the ticket office, developed a wide range of queuing behaviours, appropriating the space and passing the time in various ways. Their queues became a habitual feature of urban life. A third group, artists and observers, became interested in the patterns and practices of queuing, seeing in them a vivid emblem of urban modernity. For this group, queues were a compelling subject of artistic creation, offering insight into contemporary customs and society. While these three groups responded to the same phenomenon, they did so from different vantage points and with differing motivations. Their discourses and practices did not necessarily intersect directly, yet it is fruitful – even necessary – to understand their shared historical context in mid-nineteenth-century Paris. Comparing the two sites has revealed deep parallels between theatres and railway stations in various forms of cultural production, and more specifically, how cultures of transport and pleasure were historically linked through similar mechanisms, practices, and representations of queuing. In sum, then, two aspects of the queue in nineteenth-century Paris deserve emphasis: its functional and cultural dimensions.

First, the technical expertise needed to regulate access to public buildings was explicitly borrowed from theatre construction and operation – an industry with several decades' experience – at a moment when

architectural debates around station design emerged in architectural journals around 1840. That the station had learned from the theatre was made quite explicit in one article by engineers Polonceau and Bois, who advocated for a layout 'd'une manière analogue au mode adopté pour l'entrée des théâtres' (1840, 519). The functional goal was to supervise and discipline crowds to ensure procedural efficiency and maintain public order, and this required the sorting and sequencing of bodily movement. Such operations were entrusted to a network of infrastructural elements in which spatial and architectural features (barriers, counters) worked in tandem with human agents (policemen, employees). Together, they transformed the heterogeneous crowd of station and theatre patrons into an ordered flow of travellers and spectators. The agency of physical barriers in front of theatres and stations is well documented in the sources: floor plans and textual descriptions in architectural journals and manuals, caricatures by Daumier, and Martial's illustrations all attest to the involvement of non-human actors in the social differentiation that occurred in queues. Both the theatre and the station faced the challenge of crowd control, but also allowed space for confusion, improvisation and subversion – as visual and literary representations by Boilly, Cham and de Kock, as well as the theatre play *Le Voyage de monsieur Perrichon*, so memorably demonstrate.

Second, this infrastructural apparatus established a spatial and temporal regime of serialised bodies. It not only choreographed a specific form of movement, but also structured a form of observation: the architecture of these transit spaces rendered the diversity of railway passengers and theatregoers legible in new ways. In the queue, socially distinct individuals encountered each other at close quarters and were forced to navigate (often unwelcome) proximity. This led to the articulation of new forms of interpersonal distance, and the cultivation of behaviours that the sociologist Erving Goffman would later theorise as 'civil inattention'. Strangers, temporarily assembled, engaged in new face-to-face encounters that simultaneously prompted boundary-making and community-building. Queues thus had more than a functional role in urban crowd control: queuing in front of theatres and stations acquired a distinctive social and cultural significance. They staged and framed the spectacle of public life, similar to what contemporaries experienced within the interiors of new forms of transport such as omnibuses or railway carriages. Queuing travellers and theatregoers were both spectators and participants in an aesthetically consumable performance of industrialised mobilities, a subject quickly seized upon by artists and journalists. In the rich popular culture of painting, caricature and panoramic literature, theatres and stations were imagined as miniature representations of society. This pictorial metaphor is evident in Gastineau's description of the station as 'société en *miniature*' (1861, 22, my emphasis), or in Faucheur's depiction of the Boulevard du Crime as a 'fidèle *tableau* des goûts et des mœurs de chaque temps' (Faucheur 1863, 104, my emphasis). In literary terms, Texier invokes Balzac when he describes the station queue as 'une des plus amusantes *scènes* de la comédie humaine' (Texier 1853, 327, my emphasis). In the same work, he offers one of the most striking accounts of Parisian theatre queues, portraying the eclectic crowd through the lens of social contrast – distinguishing them by wealth or modesty of appearance: 'Vous pourrez voir des queues, et dans ces queues, des têtes bien curieuses, bien étranges, bien imprévues. … Une réunion de plusieurs milliers de badauds, de flâneurs, de toilettes brillantes (si l'on veut) et de parure demi-vraies, de blouses et d'habit, de faux castor et de casquettes, voilà ce qui constitue les longs serpents dont chaque écaille est un être humain' (Texier 1852, 69).

It was the very formation of the queue that enabled such social and cultural layers of meaning to emerge – by bringing people together in confined space and shared time. Fellow human beings, waiting side by side, became the objects of comparative scrutiny and artistic representation. They could be used for social critique (the painting by Boilly; Lan 1862), caricature (the images by Daumier; de Kock 1844), or even glorification (Gastineau 1861; Challamel 1873). The cultural production of queuing narratives helped make sense of the city's complex social structure by translating the diversity of urban experience into typologies of cultural categories – class, gender, age, habitus, origin, profession, and so on. Examples include the anxious male traveller depicted by Cham or Monsieur Perrichon, or the wet nurse discussed by Lan and caricatured by Daumier at the Gare de Lyon, whose figure combined rural origins, physically demanding migrant work, and femininity. In their various ways, Boilly's painting and the panoramic literature of de Kock and Lan explored the tensions between bourgeois and working-class identities, including age and gender distinctions, as they manifested in front of theatres and at stations.

This complex, extensive process of human differentiation involved a range of human and non-human actors: the architectural configurations of entrances with their ticket offices, walls, and barriers; media technologies such as floor plans, illustrated journals, and acoustic signals, such as bells; classification systems;

and a host of participants including authorities, employees, architects, artists, curious bystanders, criminals, and the queuing public itself. Together, they all contributed to the emergence of mass culture and everyday urban life in the nineteenth-century metropolis. Queuing became a new form through which human diversity could be observed and rendered intelligible. The vague notion of an indistinguishable *foule* could, if only temporarily, be translated into a compendium of distinct and easily recognisable social types, standing as miniature embodiments of the population. In nineteenth-century Paris, the queue became both an intelligible and a sensual experience of urban modernity – the spectacle of the social, by all and for all. These new urban crowds evoked both fear and fascination, and gave rise to a vibrant cultural production and novel techniques of mobility control. This, in turn, reveals the real and representational connections between the two spaces: the theatre queue and the railway station queue.

Notes

1. For a discussion of the relation of theatre and omnibus see also Jennifer Terni (2006, 2015).
2. In *La Comédie humaine*, Balzac famously set out to draw up a complete picture of 'espèces sociales', along the lines of the animal nomenclatures established by the naturalists Buffon and Cuvier. In his famous 'Avant-propos à la Comédie Humaine' from 1842 Balzac developed the idea of 'type' as a taxonomic principle to group and analyse the personalities that seemed to appear in modern social life (see Collet 2018). See also the chapter 'Parisian panorama: codes and classifications' in the classic study *A Human Comedy. Physiognomy and Caricature in 19th Century Paris* by Judith Wechsler (1982).
3. I am drawing on the concept of human differentiation (Hirschauer 2023) which is based on the fundamental assumption that people are not different per se, but that differences are created processually. Human differentiation refers to the ongoing process that produces types of people at historical moments, which can then form as categories, groups, classes, identities etc. People are not only the objects of this socio-cultural form of differentiation, but also its central subjects. For the discussion of a railway station as an infrastructure of human differentiation, see Schabacher (2023). For the discussion of performances as practices of human differentiation in historical and contemporary forms of theatre, see Kreuder and Wihstutz (2024).
4. For an excellent analysis of the concept of crowd and mass in French culture see Jonsson (2006).
5. However, the lexicon seems to be several decades behind in recognising the phenomenon. Hemmings (1993, 14–15) shows that the writer Joseph Lavallée described the practice of a *queue* in front of Parisian theatres and the related fraudulent practice of the *gardeur de place* as early as 1804.
6. The most extensive series on the subject of railway travel and stations are *Les Chemins de fer* (1843) and *Physionomies des chemins de fer* (1852). Caricatures on the subject of theatre can be found scattered throughout the work, for example in the series *Croquis Parisiens* (1853) and *Croquis Dramatiques* (1856).
7. The first two chapters of Léon d'Amboise's *Physiologie du parterre, types du spectateur* (1841) deal with the queue and how it splits into different types of visitors after the entrance and branches out in the theatre. Siebecker's *Physiologie des chemins de fer* (1867) is a late work that describes in great detail various types of railway passengers and employees.

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