

Pertinence

This program of research is concerned with contemporary transformations in the cultural life of Montreal, and with understanding these transformations through a theorization of what contemporary scholars call their *mediality*. Our interest in mediality stems, in part, from the question posed to scholars by the German communications theorist Friedrich Kittler: “Is the city a medium?” (Kittler, 1996). We take, from Kittler’s elaborate response to this question, a more general call to see cities in relation to their mediality. By *mediality*, we designate the ways in which cultural artefacts of various sorts (works of “fine art” or popular culture, adornments to urban infrastructure, and so on) participate in what Kittler has described as the “storage, processing and transmission” of cultural expression (quoted in Griffin, 1996: 711). *Mediality*, in this sense, is a property of all cultural artefacts (such as the plaques affixed to walls that carry poetic or historical texts) and not simply of those technologies, such as television or the internet, conventionally designated as “media”. *Medial* forms, we argue, provide the contours in which cultural expression is contained and shaped; *medial* forms store or transmit this expression in culturally pertinent ways.

This research team came together around two core objectives: The first was to bring together otherwise isolated research projects on the culture of Montreal, in a context of exchange and collaboration, so as to work towards an integrated understanding of that city’s cultural forms and practices. The second was to mobilize ongoing research on urban culture in an enterprise of theory-building, so as to produce new analytic vocabularies and frameworks for the analysis of culture. These vocabularies and frameworks are grounded in a theorization of the *mediality* of urban life. Several developments, in our view, make this research program timely and productive: (a) the significant movement of theories of *mediality* across the humanities and social sciences in recent years, and their rich, internationally-recognized inflection within Québécois scholarship (as with the journal *Intermédialités*); (b) the corresponding absence of significant developments of this theoretical work in relation to cities; (c) the turn, in critical, curatorial and scholarly discussions of contemporary urban culture, towards ideas of relationality and circulation (e.g., Heiser, 2005) and the clear affinity of these ideas with the key concerns of media theory; and (d) the recognition that, while Montreal’s status as a centre of culture and media is usually undisputed, recognition of this status typically sees culture and media as things that Montreal “contains”, rather than as processes that mark space, join people and practices, and shape the very intelligibility of the city. It is our conviction that research produced within this team may contribute to the broad renewal of media theory currently transpiring across the humanities and social sciences, a renewal evident in the work and influence of Kittler (1990), Siegert (1999), Gumbrecht (1994), Fuller (2005), Mons (2002) and others.

The study of urban culture has unfolded within multiple traditions and disciplinary locations. **Ecological models** of city life (e.g., Park, 1925) have been concerned with the fate of community (and its constituent cultural textures) within the modern metropolis; these models have been regularly reinvigorated (as in the work of Jane Jacobs, 1961). *Mediality*, in this work, is reduced to the place of communicative practices in the ongoing negotiation of community identity. Some ecological work on urban media shares the preoccupations of our team; Carroll’s (2000) suggestive analysis of the telephone’s relationship to urban intimacy, for example, has nourished our own thinking about the place of culture in negotiating boundaries between public and private space within cities. The **political economy of urban culture**, in its celebratory (e.g., Florida, 2002) or critical (e.g., Harvey, 2001) versions, is likely to view urban cultural expressivity as a resource bearing an unstable relationship to other resources and to patterns of capital investment in cities. A lively tradition of recent scholarship has revisited the relationship of urban culture to **modernity** as a socio-cultural condition, as in the recent revivals of interest in the work of Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer (e.g., Frisby, 1986). *Mediality*, here, often stands as one among many stimuli which endow urban life with its particular perceptual and psychological character. The work of Lefebvre, de Certeau and others on **the production and appropriation of space** has provided important conceptual

frameworks for the analysis of urban media structures and forms, though it has not been principally concerned with media forms (e.g., Lefebvre, 1974; de Certeau, 1990). Recent scholarship on **cities as places of networked infrastructure** operating at multiple levels (e.g., Graham and Marvin, 2001; Hannam, Sheller and Urry, 2006; Fuller, 2005) informs our collective thinking about the circulatory pathways through which urban expression moves. However, our work is as interested in the sedentary and embedded forms of urban mediality as in those marked above all by fluidity and flux. In this respect, we are working to restore, to the analysis of urban cultural forms, those concerns with linkage, storage and infrastructure that characterized communications theory in several of its founding moments, most notably those of the so-called "Toronto School" (e.g., Innis, 1951; see also Mumford, 1934). Affinities between that work and recent interventions within cultural theory have gone largely unacknowledged.

More specialized work, from within the study of individual cultural forms, has traced the interaction of urban life and aesthetic form in literature (e.g., Stierle, 1993; Sansot, 1993), painting (Zurier, 2006), and cinema (Shiel and Fitzmaurice, 2001, *Ville et cinéma*, 1996.) This work often rests on a notion of "urban imaginary" which retains the divide between genres of cultural artefacts and their social referents. More adventurous scholarship has traced the migration of expressive forms (like writing or imagery) through the spaces and practices of urban life. This includes the work of Simon (2006), Henkin (1998) and Fritzsche (1996) on urban practices of writing, and that of McCarthy (2001) and Mons (2002) on the fixing of audio-visual imagery to public spaces like walls. Recent debates within **the social aesthetics of art** have posed the question of a city's mediality in terms of how artworks find a place within highly mediatized urban environments. Does contemporary art simply *communicate*, through the generation of aesthetic propositions, Mangion asks, or does it *transmit*, in the sense of entering into the social circulation of knowledges (Mangion, 2007: 50)? The recent anthropological scholarship of Gaonkar and Povinelli, from which we draw particular inspiration, calls upon scholars of culture to analyse the "edges of forms" as they circulate. This circulation, they argue, is fundamental in giving texture to social life (Gaonkar and Povinelli, 2003; Doevendans and Schram, 2005). We borrow as well, from influential theories of social discourse, an interest in the ways in which cultural forms "absorb, transform and rediffuse bits of textuality or information" as these migrate through media infrastructures and social space (Angenot, 2004: 12.)

Drawing on these dispersed and sectoral research traditions, our team has spent the first eighteen months building a conceptual vocabulary through position statements, refinements of individual research projects, and publications already in print or forthcoming. Members of the research team joined it with clearly-defined objects of research: public art (Gérin), architectural surfaces and signage (Jacob), public places of ritual and memory (Bélanger), technologically-mediated forms of theatre and dance (Côté), the public media of Hispanic immigrant communities in Montreal (Cisneros), diasporic communications networks (Burman) and urban-focused periodicals (Straw.) In some cases (Côté, Gérin, Jacob, Straw), Montreal had been the central focus of this research; in others (Cisneros, Burman), a shift from cases located elsewhere (Latin America and Toronto, respectively) towards a focus on Montreal had already been underway. To these interests were added a variety of research topics pursued by graduate students who were invited to join the program -- initially on the basis of one per faculty member, later, in response to requests, in larger numbers.

The **structuring effects** of this research program were confirmed in the first eighteen months of activities. In conceptual terms, members have moved to formulate their own research objects in terms of an urban mediality and to conceptualize Montreal in this way. This has led to a significant group interest in the migration of conceptual vocabularies across disciplinary and linguistic boundaries. Specifically, this has resulted in ideas, developed collectively by the team, being recirculated within the disciplinary contexts in which members work: in Art History, Communications Studies, Sociology and Literary Studies (e.g., Straw, 2009b; Gérin and McLean, 2009; Jacob, 2008.) Demonstrably, the interdisciplinary energies unleashed have reshaped graduate seminars, thesis proposals and the theoretical foundations of work undertaken by faculty

and students attached to the team. In terms of outreach, the team has built a positive reputation among cultural administrators in Montreal, professionals in urban cultural administration in Canada (most notably in the Creative City Network of Canada) and international networks of urban scholars. This reputation is a direct effect of the value added by the team context, and has opened up a wide range of opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of resources. This collaboration resulted in successful events like the international conference, supported with a grant from SSHRC, on **La ville intermédiaire/The Intermedial City**, organized by Cisneros and Straw (McGill, October, 2008) and a full-day colloquium on the cultural analysis of Raymond Williams held at the ACFAS meetings in 2009 with the participation of Côté, Bélanger (co-organizers) and Cisneros. At the level of publications, our team is able to maximize the reputations and contacts of individual members in opening up high quality publication prospects to the group as a whole. There is a strong interest, on the part of journals such as Cultural Studies (Routledge) and Space and Culture (Sage) in the team as a unity and in the publication of thematic issues or dossiers resulting from the team's work. At a supervisory level, the team has led graduate students attached to team members to encounter new disciplinary, linguistic and institutional contexts, with benefits that have been both practical (in terms of professional opportunities opened up) and intellectual. .

Research Axes

In the course of our *emergence*, we have revised the conceptual focus of all three axes and renamed one, so as to achieve greater clarity and symmetry between them. The research topics described below are those to which members have committed for the first two years of funding; topics for the remaining two years will be devised on the basis of team and student interest and to maintain diversity and symmetry across projects.

Axis 1: Circulation and Accumulation: Straw/Bélanger

This axis examines the relationship between movement and stasis in the cultural life of Montreal. In part, this axis operationalizes the distinction made by Canadian communications theorist Harold Innis between time-bound and space-bound media : between those forms, like architectural monuments, that accumulate sense and value slowly over time and others, like daily newspapers, that maintain relations across space through the constant passage of short-lived media forms (Innis, 1951). In her work with the team, **Bélanger** is moving from the study of building forms (hockey arena, taverns) as repositories of popular cultural memory to the analysis of urban posterism as a practice that collects and diffuses various 'registers' of urban cultural expression (elite, folk, popular and cosmopolitan sensibilities, for example.). Posterism is thus a 'moment' in the circulation of these expressive registers and a means of preserving their public character. This research takes shape in a dialogue between the key premises of British 'culturalism' (in particular, the work of Raymond Williams on emergent and residual kinds of cultural expression) and the form-sensitive analyses of urban circulation developed by Gaonkar and Povinelli and others. **Straw's** research on newspapers in Montreal examines the current economic crisis of the urban newspaper in relation to patterns of distribution and mobility. The recent rise of the free commuter daily newspaper (*Métro, 24 heures*) has brought with it the re-emergence of a 19th century social figure, the *newshawker*, who reinscribes, in the life of a city, a very old relationship between patterns of urban transportation and the circulation of news. Unlike the pattern of genteel co-existence between newspapers institutionalized, in the early 20th century, in the material form of the news kiosk, the condition of newspapers is increasingly one in which they are the focus of competitive struggles over the occupation of municipal space (such as distribution points in transit systems) and competition for public attention. Arguably, this growing association of the newspaper with mobility and itinerance works against the longstanding place of the urban daily newspaper as an institution of stable cultural authority.

Axis 2. Transparency and Opacity (Cisneros, Côté).

This axis is concerned with the ways in which urban cultural forms participate in the diffusion and concealment of what Jonathan Raban (1974) has called 'city knowledges'. **Côté**, who has explored these

issues in relation to contemporary dance in Montreal (Côté et al, 2008) will extend this work in the study of contemporary theatre in the city. Theatre stands as a unique phenomenon; as an “archaic” form of art, it still competes with the newest media (film, radio, television, Internet), not only for audiences but in its mobilization of new technological supports. This use of media serves simultaneously to heighten the theatre’s accessibility, to audiences socialized within a mediatic culture, and as a means of artistic experimentation that may contribute to the opacity and illegibility of contemporary theatre to large numbers of people. While one ambition of theatre, rooted in the etymology of the term (*theatron*: “the place to see”) is to appear as a “diaphanous”, transparent medium to an urban collectivity, theatre also stands as among the most opaque of contemporary forms of urban culture. As such, it can stand as the very locus of insular, urban cultural experimentation, serving simultaneously to perpetuate a tradition of avant-garde experimentation and to renew that experimental character through its mobilization of technological and other innovations emerging around it. **Cisneros** takes up the question of the accessibility of urban-based knowledges through the study of cultural artefacts within the diasporic communities of Latin American immigrants in Montreal. In the course of the research team’s activities, he has moved from the study of literature as a form that registers the thematics of urban life to a concern with the material supports for Hispanic cultural expressivity in Montreal. The communities Cisneros is analyzing acquire their cultural contours across a range of media forms, from Spanish-language newspapers, radio and television programs through the signage and visual display characteristic of commercial establishments. All of these medial forms participate in processes of cultural recycling, important and adapting cultural materials from elsewhere. At the same time, each is a way of rendering visible or audible the markers of linguistic distinctiveness and intelligibility.

Axis 3 : Materiality and Dematerialization: (Gérin, Burman, Jacob)

This axis is centrally concerned with the relationship between virtual or ephemeral communication within the city and the material structures of the built environment. The ongoing research of **Annie Gérin** concerns the shifting status of the art object and its role in marking public space. In particular, this work is concerned with the conflicting imperatives, in contemporary art produced and exhibited in Montreal to (a) to problematize the material character of the art work, through the production of works of a ephemeral character (such as sound works, digital installations and site-specific works of limited duration) and, at the same time, to (b) mark the space of Montreal with the signs of linguistic or cultural identity, in ways which are more or less permanent. Artworks, in this sense, are caught up within forms of temporality shaped by their status as ‘events’ and, at the same time, pushed to participate in an ongoing fashion in the broader *mediality* of Montreal as a site for the expression of language and culture. **Burman** was concerned in earlier work with the electronic networks for communication and money transfer that linked diasporic communities in Canada to homelands in the Caribbean. In work taking shape with this research team, she has moved to a focus on institutions of money transfer in Montreal and their connections to Haiti and Lebanon. Against the understanding of money as the basis of depersonalized relationships, and building on the ideas of Viviana Zelizer (e.g., 2008) and others on money’s role in affective, sentimental attachments, Burman examines money exchange as a key, usually invisible component of urban mediality. More broadly, Burman is concerned with the role of diasporic communications networks as key components of urban infrastructure. **Jacob** is concerned, in the current phase of the team’s emergence, with cultural interventions into the public space of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. For the research program proposed here, he will look at the relationship between mediated forms of human interaction and the built environment in significant public areas of Montreal, such as the new Quartier des spectacles. These spaces are marked by the scale and stability of buildings and monuments that link them to the city’s history. At the same time, they have become key sites for the use of low-level media, like embedded television screens, interactive information kiosks, and the cellphones used by large numbers of those who move through them. These media may illuminate or preserve the more stable aspects of these spaces (through the provision of historical information by display screens or the taking of souvenir photographs with cellphones), but the very presence of these

media alters the capacity of such spaces to maintain their distinctiveness. Trained in the ethnographic analysis of urban space and its human uses, Jacob will examine the ways in which these media order the experience of public cultural areas in Montreal.

The organization of team work around three axes has proved productive in both a logistical and theoretical sense. During the first eighteen months of the team's work, members of axes met separately to prepare presentations to the group as a whole in three-hour monthly meetings. This collaboration often revealed unexpected affinities and stimulated further collaboration (e.g., Jacob and Gérin on public art and its administration; Bélanger and Straw on the migration of theoretical concepts in cultural analysis.) During the first year, and with the input of graduate students, we have devised a set of concepts that forms the basis of a collective, theoretically-oriented volume to be produced through meetings over the 2009-2010 academic year and submitted for publication to the journal *Space and Culture* (on their invitation.) This follows on, as noted below, from other co-edited and collective volumes produced since the team began meeting. Our activities take shape in a back and forth between intensive theoretical work within the group and a variety of other activities that have seen us contribute to the deliberations of such groups as Culture Montréal, Culture pour Tous, the Performing Arts Center Consortium, and the Creative Construct community. While we conceive our intervention as principally academic in character, the reputation of the team and of its members has led to ongoing invitations to participate in public or quasi-public events and processes.

Our schedule of diffusion activities for the four years of requested funding is presented in the section "Prévisions budgétaires - Plan de diffusion". In each year of funding, we intend to organize one event engaging with cultural institutions (whether creative or administrative) outside the academic world and one event that will intervene in a more focused fashion in the scholarly domain. The choice of venues and collaborators has grown out of relationships developed during the *emergence* phase (or, in some cases, prior to that.) Our schedule of publication lists core volumes planned, and these are conceived to both highlight the theoretical work of the team and provide a showcase for its focused work on Montreal. As active scholars, we anticipate a range of other publishing activities during the four years, particularly as the focus of student and postdoctoral work becomes clear.

While we do not have international collaborators or partnerships in a formal sense, we have identified three existing research centres with similar interests and contacted these concerning relationships which, at this stage, are beginning to crystallize. We regard these centres as part of a network that we hope to extend and strengthen over the funding period. The Director of each of these centres has expressed, in writing, a commitment to ongoing exchanges with our team, to possibly hosting joint events and to developing publications that would concretize our affinities. These Centres were chosen in part on the basis of linguistic, geographical and disciplinary diversity. They are as follows: The Visible Cities Project, York University, Toronto (Director: Dr. Janine Marchessault), GERICO, Equipe de l'Université de Lille 3 en Sciences de l'Information et de la Communication (Director: Dr. Michèle Gellereau), and the Mobilities Research and Policy Centre, Drexel University, Philadelphia (Director: Dr. Mimi Sheller.)

II. Team Members

Responsable scientifique. Dr. Straw has a strong record of achievement in the supervising of postgraduate students in their degree work and within collaborative research. Since taking up his current position at McGill University in 1994, Dr. Will Straw has supervised 42 Masters theses and 33 Ph.D. dissertations through successful examination. In 2006, he was awarded the David Thomson Award for Graduate Teaching and Supervision at McGill University. From 2000-2005, Dr. Straw was Co-Investigator, in charge of the McGill site, of the *Culture of Cities* research program (SSHRC Major Collaborative Research Initiative) and supervised the work of five graduate students per year who were affiliated with that project. Straw has a longstanding interest in collaborative, interdisciplinary research, particularly in the cultural field. He has

served on the Executive and Research committees of the Canadian Cultural Research Network and the Canadian Conference of the Arts. He has twice served as Chair of the *Interdisciplinary Committee* (committee 15) for the adjudication of Standard Research Grants at SSHRC, and once as Chair of an *équipes* adjudication committee for the FQRSC. In 2009-2010, he is serving as Chair of the jury of the FQRSC-Hexagram program *Appui aux arts et technologies médiatiques*. Dr. Straw has published over 100 articles, edited volumes and books. He serves on the editorial boards of several of the leading journals in fields pertinent to this research program (see CV.) After occupying administrative positions over most of the past two decades, Dr. Straw is now able to devote himself full-time to research and teaching.

Chercheurs membres réguliers de l'équipe

The *team* came together originally on the basis of past histories of collaboration and demonstrated complementarities of interest. The team was designed to bring together three academic constituencies: (a) humanists (in Art History and Literary Studies) whose work is concerned with the circulation and “embeddedness” of cultural practices within urban life; (b) sociologists interested in expressive practices (such as those of theatre and television) that mobilize the technological and informational infrastructures of cities; and (c) scholars of Communications, a discipline which, in Canada at least, sits at the intersection of the humanities and social sciences. The *équipe* represents a strong and equitable representation of different ranks and career stages. It is well-balanced in terms of academic rank, gender and primary language of scholarship. As of October, 2009, the number of years in which team members have held full-time academic positions are as follows: Cisneros –5; Jacob –5; Burman –6, Gérin –9, Bélanger –10; Côté –16, Straw – 25.

In their published work, each team member has demonstrated an opening to concerns typically seen to characterize the other side of the humanities/social sciences divide. In methodological terms, all members are interested in the relationship of social theory and artistic theory to analytic currents (like that of Anglo-American cultural studies) in which media have been central. While members of the team are active as scholars in a number of venues, we are particularly drawn to the editing of special issues of scholarly journals, both as a means of expressing our collective identity within particular fields and because delays of publication are typically less than is the case with books. Since 2007, when the team began its planning meetings, Burman has edited a special issue of *Topia: A Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, on the theme of “Diaspora” (2007), Bélanger and Straw co-edited “Dialogues théoriques sur la culture,” a thematic issue of *Cahiers de recherche sociologique* (2009); Jacob has edited one issue of *Lien social* on “La médiation culturelle : enjeux, dispositifs et pratiques” (2008) and is preparing another, for 2010, on “Les transformations de l’espace publique urbaine”. Straw and Cisneros are co-editing an issue of *Intermédialités* with the title “Bâtir: la ville intermédiaire” for 2010. These special issues were conceived, to varying degrees, to address the mix of concepts and methodological frameworks characteristic of contemporary cultural analysis. These interventions manifest the “centripetal” logic of the team’s work, in that they draw a variety of cases and research objects back to the collective project of building concepts and models. Other works produced by team members, like Gérin’s book anthology devoted to public art (Gérin and McLean, 2009) and Burman’s forthcoming monograph on technologies of diasporic communication (Burman, 2010), are part of a “centrifugal” logic by which ideas of urban mediality advanced within the team are adapted and applied within well-established fields. As a team with scholars active in their own disciplines but committed to interdisciplinary inquiry, we are concerned to maintain a balance between these two logics.

Anouk Bélanger (Sociologie, UQAM) received Ph.D. training in Communications Studies. Her record of scholarly productivity includes both conventional outputs (journal issues, refereed articles) and audiovisual materials (a widely-shown film on the disappearance of taverns in Montreal.) She has specialized in the analysis of popular cultural memory and of those elements of the city’s built environment in which memory is preserved. Her contributions to the team center on the fate of popular forms of cultural expression in the face of new development initiatives (like Montreal’s Quartier des spectacles) or in relation to struggles over

the use of urban infrastructure (as in attempts to control postering.) She participates regularly in the activities of public and quasi-public groups such as *Culture Montréal* and *Culture pour tous*. While teaching at Concordia University, Dr. Bélanger was a member of the “Culture of Cities” project (SSHRC 2000-2005).

Jenny Burman (Communications, McGill) was a member of the “Culture of Cities” project, moving from postdoctoral status within that project to a full-time position within the Department of Art History and Communications Studies at McGill. Her research focusses on the ways in which the lives of immigrant groups in Montreal unfold within a complex system of medial interconnections that include money transfer centres, public phone-calling facilities, and more conventional “community” media like newspapers and specialized radio programs. These interests manifest themselves in an important issue of *Topia: A Canadian Journal of Canadian Studies* Burman edited and a forthcoming book (Burman, 2010). Burman is currently Chair of the Canadian Association of Cultural Studies and host of its national conference in 2009.

James Cisernos (Langues et littératures modernes, Université de Montréal) is a scholar of Hispanic (South American) literature and culture and a member of the *Centre de recherche sur l'intermédialité*. His research has long been concerned with the “urban imaginary” within Hispanic literatures, but has moved, over the last two years, to a concern with the broader circulation of Spanish language expression in Montreal through public spaces and specialized media. Dr. Cisernos has edited an issue of the journal *Intermédialités* on the theme “Raconter”, and, with Will Straw, is preparing another, on intermediality and the city, under the theme *Bâtir*. He is currently preparing a book, **Urban Imaginaries**, based on a SSHRC Standard Research Grant.

Jean-François Côté (Sociologie, UQAM) is a sociologist with a longstanding interest in cultural forms and their role in negotiating the multiple dimensions of urban life. This has resulted in book-length studies of artistic-avant gardes (Côté, 2003), a volume on the relationship of urban literature to walking (Côté, 2005), a special issue of *Sociologie et sociétés* (co-edited with Anouk Bélanger) on urban spectacle, and other works on dance and theatre as manifestations of urban effervescence and cosmopolitanism (e.g., Côté, 2008). Côté is editor of the book series *Amériques* (Presses de l'Université Laval), and has organized the translation into French of important works of urban cultural study by the Latin American theorist Nestor Garcia Canclini.

Annie Gérin (Histoire de l'Art, UQAM) is a scholar and curator whose work is centrally concerned with the ways in which art forms assume a public character within urban life. Her book and exhibition catalogue, *Godless at the Workbench : Soviet Illustrated Humoristic Antireligious Propaganda* (2003) studied the use of humor as a device of public instruction. Her ongoing projects include a study of art and architecture built in Montreal during the Quiet Revolution; this work manifests her longstanding interest in public art works as material embodiments of collective identity (e.g., Gérin and McLean, 2009). In current research, she is concerned with the ways in which the specific character of cities (their climate, built environment, habits of movement, and so on) shapes or enables particular kinds of urban, public expression while restricting others.

Louis Jacob (Sociologie, UQAM) is interested in the place of art and culture within the broader social field. He has extensive professional experience in artistic institutions, particularly those dealing with public art. He has served as specialist on public art at the *Centre d'information Artex* (2001-2004) and as an expert and jury member for the *Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec* and *Bureau de l'art publique* de la Ville de Montréal. With Anouk Bélanger, he produced a ‘Répertoire raisonné des activités de médiation culturelle à Montréal’ (2008) for *Culture pour tous*, la Ville de Montréal and the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine of Quebec. His interest in theoretical questions concerning the cultural field is evident in a variety of publications on urban art and public space

Will Straw (Communications, McGill), in his earlier work on popular music, focused on the concept of “scene”, a key term in urban cultural analysis. As Co-Investigator on the “Culture of Cities” SSHRC (MCRI) project, he produced work on the aging of objects within urban space, and moved to a broader consideration of “circulation” as a core concept in urban cultural analysis (e.g., Straw, 2009b; Boutros and Straw, 2010). Recent work has dealt with urban print media, and, in particular, with ephemeral forms such as the crime tabloid or free commuter newspaper (e.g., Straw, 2009c.) He is preparing a book on the Montreal crime newspaper *Allo Police*, and has written on the three-block area in Montreal surrounding the bus terminal as a site for the historical sedimentation of cultural expression (Straw, 2009a).

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