A Republican Mirage: 
Zuber et Cie’s *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*

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ABSTRACT

JOANNA M. GOHMANN: A Republican Mirage: Zuber et Cie’s Vues d’Amérique du Nord
(Under the direction of Dr. Mary D. Sheriff, Dr. Ross Barrett, and Dr. Pika Ghosh)

In 1834 the French wallpaper company Zuber et Cie, produced a scenic wallpaper titled Vues d’Amérique du Nord, in which scenes of American life unfold across the forty-nine foot composition. Using the popular tropes of viewing spectacles, Zuber et Cie frames American society as a series of five idealized, picturesque vignettes. When considering this wallpaper, there are two levels of spectacle that occur simultaneously: those occurring on the wallpaper’s surface and the larger spectacle, which the viewer would have experienced when surrounded by the panoramic-like wallpaper. In this thesis, I examine the layered spectacles, placing the wallpaper within a large context of French interest in America, popular vocabularies of spectacle, and the nineteenth-century French home. Through my analysis, I articulate how and why Vues d’Amérique du Nord was a product of a very specific time in the July Monarchy, during which America was envisioned as the future of France.
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Introduction

The nineteenth century witnessed an explosion of public spectacles in the form of picturesque tourism, theatrical performances, monarchical parades, panoramic rotundas, and gigantic dioramas. In addition to these large-scale, public spectacles, which could be accessed for a nominal fee, there were small-scale viewing devices, such as perspective theaters, magic lanterns, perspective prints, and panoramic wallpaper that could bring spectacle into the domestic space. These viewing extravaganzas, both private and public, organized and defined the world in which individuals lived. Not only were spectacles a form of entertainment, they were educational experiences as well. Showmen were considered to be educators, revealing and explaining the unknown.  

1 William Gilpin, the forerunner of picturesque theory and tourism, believed that an individual could “know [his/her] place by contemplating visual forms,” suggesting that spectacles, like those discovered in picturesque tourism, allowed a person to understand how he/she fit into the greater whole of the world.  

Like the Claude Glass, used as a framing device in picturesque tourism, spectacles structured and organized visual information for nineteenth-century populations. They presented visual hierarchies, conveyed narratives, and relayed unknown information.

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1 Barbara Maria Stafford, “Revealing Technologies/Magical Domains” in Devices of Wonder: From the World in a Box to Images on a Screen, eds. Barbara Maria Stafford and Frances Terpak, 1-142 (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001), 85.

Spectacle confined and held attention, providing viewers with an opportunity to scrutinize and explore images of their communities, the historical past, and distant lands. The 1835 publication of *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* defined a spectacle as “any object or set of objects that attract attention, attention which arrests the view.”³

For the purposes of this paper, I shall expand upon this nineteenth-century definition by suggesting that “spectacle” refers to a purposeful, planned event; a “spectacle” is not spontaneous. The term designates planned visual events, which arrest an individual’s gaze. When accompanied by a guide or narrator, these happenings attempt to disseminate specific messages, narratives, or lessons. Furthermore, a “spectacle” takes place in a distinct environment, be it on a miniature proscenium stage, inside a darkened room, or behind a backlit cloth; a spectacle occurs in a distinctive environment that is different from those that we encounter on a daily basis. It is also defined by a manipulation of sight. For example, spectacles can exercise visual control through enlargement, miniaturization, hand-held frames, and focused light. Lastly, within the confines of this paper, “spectacle” can be understood as a visual device that brings people together into group. A spectacle’s audience becomes an imagined, united community.⁴ Spectators, although they many never meet or see one another’s faces, become part of a cohesive community brought together by sharing a common experience.

Because spectacles were exceedingly popular in the nineteenth century, it is no surprise that Zuber et Cie, one of France’s most renowned wallpaper companies, based in the village of Rixheim, created a scenic wallpaper in 1834 titled *Vues d’Amérique du*.

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Nord. It imagined America in a series of five distinct spectacles: an Indian dance in
Virginia, the thundering water at Niagara Falls, strollers on the Palisades of New York,
military drills at West Point, and shipping docks in Boston Harbor (Figures 1 & 2). There
are spectacles occurring simultaneously: the five that the Americans depicted on the
wallpaper engage in, and the visual display which the French, nineteenth-century viewer
would have experienced in front of the wallpaper. I analyze these two levels of spectacle,
placing this wallpaper within a larger context of both physical and literary images of
America and spectacles within the domestic space. Ultimately, I shall demonstrate that
this particular scenic wallpaper allows the viewer to visually access an historical moment
during the July Monarchy (July 1830-1848) in which America was idealized as the
future of France.

Manufacturers and scholars define scenic wallpaper, also called panoramic
wallpaper, as “a depiction of a continuous landscape, with no repetition of scenes or
patterns printed on a series of strips that join to cover all walls of a residential room with
the goal of creating a special atmosphere at an affordable price.” Scenic wallpapers were
produced in France between 1797 and 1862 and covered a wide variety of subject matter;
by the mid-nineteenth century there were more than 100 different scenic wallpapers, each
depicting a unique subject. Until 1840, figured scenes dominated panoramic papers,

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6 Robert P. Emlen, “Imagining America in 1834: Zuber et Cie’s Scenic Wallpaper ‘Vues d’Amérique du
Nord” in *Winterthur Portfolio* 32, no. 2/3 (Summer-Autumn, 1997), 190.
whereas after 1840, landscapes and garden scenes were most popular.\textsuperscript{7} The peopled scenic papers can be classified into three subject groups: literary works, voyages and views of distant lands, and military and heroic deeds.\textsuperscript{8} Subjects and specific images were frequently taken from popular literary and print sources, such as the epic of \textit{Jerusalem Delivered}, ensuring that wide audiences would be familiar with the scenes and narratives portrayed. Additionally, using fashionable and widely known prints and stories ensured that the papers would attract buyers.

Regardless of subject matter, panoramic wallpapers possessed compositional similarities. Ranging from 33 feet to over 50 feet in length, these papers were produced in vertical strips measuring approximately 18 inches wide. The paper strips provided the wallpaper with great flexibility, as it could easily be trimmed and rearranged to fit into any space. Furthermore, panoramic papers contain regular, rhythmic compositions with multiple scenes, or passages, separated by architectural motifs or “generic landscape scenery.” These separators spanned the width of a paper strip, and allow the wallpaper to adjust to the space.\textsuperscript{9} Affixed to the wall above the chair rail, approximately four feet from the ground, the paper would unfold around the room with the most details near the bottom of the scene. Typically the horizon line appeared at eye-level and a blue sky


\textsuperscript{8} Odile Nouvel-Kammerer, “Scenic Wallpaper, Social Mirror: Themes Reflecting a New View of Everyday Life” in \textit{French Scenic Wallpaper}, trans. Deke Dusinberre, 103 – 134 (Paris: Musée de Arts décoratifs, 2000), 104. Wallpaper based on literary works such as \textit{Paul et Virginie}; voyages and views include such wallpapers as \textit{Scènes Turques}; and military and heroic deeds include wallpapers such as \textit{Passage Napoléonien}.

\textsuperscript{9} Emlin, “Imagining America,” 194. See also: Françoise Teynac, Pierre Nolot, and Jean-Denis Vivien, \textit{Wallpaper: A History} (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005), 24. Doors and windows caused breaks in the composition; a separator could be included or excluded based on the measurements of the room.
continued to the ceiling. Customers could order the appropriate amount of sky to fit a particular ceiling height.¹⁰

Like the wallpapers that preceded them, panoramic wallpapers were produced in a variety of cost levels, allowing different social groups to purchase them.¹¹ Zuber et Cie produced 23 panoramic papers, ranging in prices between 32 francs for a grisaille, such as *Les Vues d’Écosse*, to 120 francs for a colored set, like *Les Zones Terrestres*.¹² In France, panoramic scenes were installed in inns, bourgeois homes, and noble palaces.¹³ Zuber et Cie’s price lists suggest that the company produced a range of wallpapers, allowing a wide spectrum of customers, not just the upper class, to hang them in their homes.

Because scenic wallpapers resemble other art forms such as folding screens, frescos, and panoramic landscape paintings, they have captured the attention of several scholars, such as Francoise Teynac, Odile Nouvel-Kammerer, Pierre Nolot, and Vivienne Webb, in the form of articles and wallpaper survey texts. Scholarship about specific wallpapers has tended to focus on *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*, a scenic paper produced in 1804 by Dufour et Cie, Zuber et Cie’s largest competitor. Depicting Captain

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¹⁰ Emlin, “Imagining America,” 189. Zuber et Cie could produce a paper for a room with up to 16 foot ceilings

¹¹ Teynac, Nolot, and Vivien, *Wallpaper: A History*, 21-22. By the mid-seventeenth century, European papermakers were producing reproductions of both Chinese papers and Indian fabrics. Papiers de tapisserie, or paper versions of fabric hangings, were popular throughout the seventeenth century. Made to look like leather, Indian fabrics, and architectural elements, papiers de tapisserie frequently produced spatial and tactile illusions. These wall covers functioned as a more economical way to suggest wealth and extravagance; further, these papers could produce an illusion of high social standing.


James Cook’s voyage to Tahiti, this wallpaper has attracted extensive attention from historians interested in colonialism and cultural exchange, as it provides insight into domestic understandings of colonialism.\textsuperscript{14} Exhibitions and articles alike have discussed this scenic paper’s importance and have ultimately attracted attention to the panoramic wallpaper genre at large.

\textit{Zuber et Cie’s Vues d’Amérique du Nord} has been largely understudied; only one article completely dedicated to this wallpaper has been published. Writing in 1997, Robert P. Emlen, an American material culture historian, presented his article, “Imagining America in 1834; Zuber’s Scenic Wallpaper ‘Vues d’Amérique du Nord,’” as an exploration into the paper’s visual sources and reasons for its use in colonial revival America.\textsuperscript{15} Providing a strong foundation for an analysis of the wallpaper, Emlen names \textit{Vues d’Amérique du Nord}’s head artist as Jean-Julien Deltit (1791-1863).\textsuperscript{16} In addition to finding and listing the paper’s current locations, Emlen also identifies the paper’s primary visual sources.

Emlen reports that Deltit outlined his ideas for \textit{Vues d’Amérique du Nord} in a four-part list, suggesting that Deltit had control over the contents of the wallpaper. Deltit designed the wallpaper and Jean Zuber approved it for production. Emlen emphasizes that Deltit pictured an idealized America because he never “traveled outside France to

\textsuperscript{14} For a full analysis of \textit{Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique} see: Art Gallery of New South Wales, \textit{Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique; Manufactured by Joseph Dufour et Cie 1804-1805 after a design by Jean-Gabriel Charvet} (Sydney, Australia: National Gallery of Australia, 2000).

\textsuperscript{15} Emlen, “Imagining America,” 189-210.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 192. Not much is known about Jean-Julien Deltit other than he did train at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and produced portraits, religious paintings, and landscapes. He designed two other scenic papers for Zuber et Cie, including: “Les Vues de la Grècs” (1827) and “Les Vues du Brésil” (1829).
any of the exotic tableaux he painted.”\textsuperscript{17} But by 1830, France was inundated with current newspapers, magazines, and literary works produced in the United States,\textsuperscript{18} and Deltil would have certainly had an idea of the conditions of Jacksonian America. Zuber et Cie moreover would not have manufactured an idealized vision of America simply because the head artist had never left the country. Rather, this vision was constructed for specific reasons and for a specific audience.

As a view of a far away country, this wallpaper certainly follows the standard thematic and compositional tropes of panoramic papers. Jean-Julien Deltil selected the scenes from J. Milbert’s popular travel book, \textit{Picturesque Itinerary of the Hudson River and the Peripheral Parts of North America}, and presented them for Zuber’s approval. Published in 1828, the illustrations found in Milbert’s text were soon transformed into prints and circulated throughout France.\textsuperscript{19} As with other scenic wallpapers, using a popular, recognizable, and fashionable print source as a starting point guaranteed marketability. Zuber et Cie’s artistic team, however, made dramatic alterations to Milbert’s compositions by adding more figures, changing perspective angles, and updating costume and transportation. It seems that these changes were made in order to transform the meaning of Milbert’s images. In creating his picturesque tour, Milbert attempted to create an American experience for a European viewership. Although Milbert’s images are set against American backdrops, they are somewhat generic in content; the figures do not engage in specifically American activities, they simply look at

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{18} John deWitt McBride Jr., \textit{America in the French Mind During the Bourbon Restoration} (PhD diss: Syracuse University, 1954), 50.

\textsuperscript{19} Emlen, “\textit{Imagining America},” 191.
the scenery. Choosing five well-known locations in the young nation, Zuber et Cie presents scenes as unmistakably American through the images’ content and setting.

Although there is no definite starting point within the vignettes or a clear narrative, the images are compositionally united. Thirty-five vertical paper strips, measuring roughly eighteenth inches across, compose the entire wallpaper; six strips make up the scene at the Natural Bridge, six form Niagara Falls, seven define New York, seven compose West Point and nine strips define Boston Harbor. The strips connect, forming a perfect circle. Foliage frames each image, extending vertically and then making a slight swoop towards the center of the images; the framing devices make the images appear as if the viewer peeks through the wilderness onto the scene. Following the picturesque tradition outlined by William Gilpin, the vignettes contain tripartite structures, with three clearly defined distances: the fore, middle, and background.20 Deltil, however, departs from the strict picturesque formula by placing all figures and focal points within the foreground, rather than the middle ground. Appearing as the largest and brightest elements within the landscape setting, the viewer’s eyes immediately focus on the figures in the foreground.

Not only are the landscapes compositionally linked together, they are also bound through time and are thematically associated through ideas of republican progress, visually shown through allusions to equality and infrastructure improvements. The vignettes depict five different scenes within the time frame of the 1830s, during the heart of Andrew Jackson’s American presidency. The scenes occur simultaneously without a

proscribed storyline or difference in time of day. Zuber et Cie presents America in an idealized fashion, which dramatically contrasts factual, well-known American conditions, suggesting the success of republican government and ignoring its downfalls.

Through an analysis of the layered spectacles in *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, I intend to expand and complicate Emlen’s conclusions. My discussion begins with a brief synopsis and analysis of French perceptions of America and the images that France produced during this period. I then turn to the wallpaper itself, highlighting the ways in which Zuber et Cie employs the tropes of spectacle when imagining America. Ultimately, I consider the spectacle of the wallpaper in the home; why would it be installed, who would purchase it, and what would occur in front of it. *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* was not simply created to please the eye and decorate; rather, it participated in defining and creating social identities and relationships.

More specifically, this thesis argues that *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* depicts an ideal vision of America that would have appealed to a bourgeois audience during the July Monarchy. The price, American subject matter, and visual detail suggest that the French bourgeoisie purchased this particular wallpaper as an educational spectacle. Installed in the domestic space, *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* functioned as a didactic tool that articulated the principles of successful republicanism and ensured that future generations could identify and implement this political system.
Chapter One
French Perceptions of America during the July Monarchy

The ideals of the July Monarchy provide a context for understanding and interpreting Zuber et Cie’s *Vues d'Amérique du Nord*. The July Monarchy (July 1830-February 1848) marks the reign of Louis Philippe I, the only French monarch to assume the throne as an immediate result of a popular uprising. In its early stages, the July Monarchy responded to the cries of “liberté, égalité, et fraternité,” the same republican principles that *Vues d'Amérique du Nord* celebrates.

During this period in French history, “republican” denoted a political state in which power rests in the populous, rather than an absolute monarchy. Aspects of a republican government include political representation, equality before the law, and individual liberty; republicanism did not necessarily mean democracy. The revival of this particular political ideal and the attitudes surrounding the 1789 revolution suggests a simultaneous revival of eighteenth-century Americanism, a philosophical ideal common amongst French Revolutionaries. Eighteenth-century Americanists, such as Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de LaFayette (1779 – 1834), Denis Diderot (1713 – 1784), Voltaire (1694 – 1778), and Guillaume Thomas François Raynal (1711 – 1796) believed that America represented the political future of France: a working republican system that protected individual liberty. Because of the attitudes of major political figures involved with the July Monarchy, the revival of the 1789 spirit, and the overall call for republicanism, America once again served as a political aspiration and
ideal. William Rawle, editor of *Mélanges politiques et philosophiques extraits des Mémoirs et de la correspondance de Thomas Jefferson* clearly articulates this belief, describing the United States by saying:

> The name of republic, long-time reported in our country as a synonym for anarchy and disorder, or at least as a symbol of an impractical utopia, has recently taken a serious and respectable form … On the other side of the Atlantic, they offer a powerful nation in the example of a republic, it provides an answer to all the critics.  

This quotation reveals French anxieties about republicanism, yet ensures the reader that this novel form of government can be successful, as on the other side of the Atlantic, in America, the nation has become “powerful.” Rawle declares that United States serves as an “example” for the French population to follow.

Because of the American and French commitment to liberty, late eighteenth-century France positioned itself as America’s parental figure. Bound up in enlightenment thought, philosophes understood the “self-evident” truths outlined in the American Declaration of Independence as a direct result of French political writings and philosophies. As supporters of the American cause, France entered into the Revolutionary War in 1778. By the war’s conclusion, several French individuals, such as

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22 The July Monarchy marks a return to the same ideals and beliefs in the late eighteenth century.

the Marquis de LaFayette and Pierre Charles L’Enfant (1754 – 1825), had directly fought for America’s independence and completely invested themselves in the idea that “… all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.”24 With the Treaty of Paris and the ratification of the Constitution of the United States of America in 1787, Benjamin Franklin, the American diplomat to France (1776- 1785), issued a French translation of the Constitution, ensuring that all of France could read about and celebrate the future of American liberty. 25

By the conclusion of the Revolutionary War, a mix of Rousseauian and Progressionalist ideals composed the French image of America. On one hand, the French imagined the young nation as class-less, dedicated to lives of communal simplicity bound to the earth. This idea was simultaneously contrasted by the belief, on the other hand, that America was the “torchbearer” for humanity’s quest for virtuous perfection and the advancement of European traditions and the ideals of liberty.26 For the philosophes, “liberty” held implications of a return to the classical past, while at the same time suggesting that liberty guaranteed newness, freethinking, and prosperity. The French idealized America’s potential, imagining it as timeless nation, perfectly blending the best qualities of the past and future.


26 Echeverria, Mirage in the West, 151-152.
Jean Suan’s 1784 painting *Allegory of France Liberating America* (Figure 3) depicts the allegorical figure of France bestowing Liberty, the bare-breasted woman, on the young nation of America. The figure of America, an American Indian, has one foot on shore and the other in a canoe, preparing to row away, taking the French gift to the new nation. Not only does Suan’s painting illustrate the Franco-American bond of liberty, but also it represents French belief that the future of European ideals lay in the hands of America. France has great hopes for her young nation friend, as French boats have gathered for the Americans’ departure. The American canoe, dwarfed by the French sailing ships that fly the tricolored flag, suggests the nation’s young status. The large French boats protect the American canoe, creating a harbor and sheltering it from waves. Furthermore, the boats, referencing larger ideas like commerce and trade, serve to remind the viewer that liberty includes the freedom of commerce. As the French boats shield the American canoe, France protects multiple components of American liberty (economic, political, and social), eager for their success. American success was vital, as it would validate French dreams for the triumph of liberty.27

Eighteenth-century French Americanists developed clichés about the new nation, imagining it as a land of prosperity, liberty, equality, religious freedom, virtue, and republican civility. These clichés certainly dominated French popular thought, so much that Americans such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine (1737 – 1809), and Thomas Jefferson (1743 – 1826) wrote against these opinions in the form of published pamphlets.

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27 This idea resonates with the tradition of the “translatio imperii,” a philosophy of the history of civilization that stresses the linear trajectory and westward movement of socio-political development. This philosophy suggests that each successive empire carries on and continues to develop the successes of the last empire or civilization. For further reading on this philosophy: Cary J. Nederman. *Lineages of European political thought: explorations along the medieval/modern divide from John of Salisbury to Hegel* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 177-189.
and books, emphasizing that the French vision of America was grossly embellished and far from the truth.\textsuperscript{28} Despite the American writings, the French continued to idealize American government and society. In *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society*, Durand Echeverrian emphasizes that American virtues were strategically exaggerated in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of French philosophical and political principles, especially during the years leading up to and during the French Revolution. America as a real place did not matter as much as its republican philosophical principles. French enlightenment thinkers and revolutionaries were dedicated to a political ideal and the United States served as its symbol.

Throughout the early nineteenth century, especially in the 1820s, several political phenomena brought French attention to the American Nation. For example, the Marquis de LaFayette’s political “Farewell Tour” of the United States in 1824 captivated both French and American audiences. After serving under George Washington in the American Revolutionary War, President James Monroe invited LaFayette to the United States as a thank you for his service and dedication to liberty. Artists produced several prints and engravings, commemorating his extensive journey. Prints such as *Réception de l’hôte de la nation aux États-Unis*” by Bové (Figure 4), illustrate a diverse crowd, including people of all ages and races, and polite government officials receiving the French hero. In this particular print, several people have gathered at the New York harbor. Amongst the crowd, one can identify a black mother and child amongst well-dressed middle class Americans. The amalgamation of blacks and whites at a government event suggests a degree of social equality. This print implies that LaFayette has been

welcomed into a land in which all people can gather together. Images such as this piqued interest in both LaFayette and the American political system.

Because of LaFayette’s grand reception and the extent of both visual and literary sources extolling his American trip, he grew in esteem throughout France. In 1829 LaFayett’e personal secretary, P. Auguste Levasseur, wrote a popular account of LaFayette’s 1824 tour, *LaFayette en Amérique en 1824-1825; ou Journal d’un voyage aux États-Unis*. Levasseur narrates his and his employer’s American experiences, documenting everything from political systems to festive parties and American gossip. The same year, LaFayette toured Southern France, sharing his American experience. Extolled as “Héro des Deux Mondes” and “L’Ami de Washington,” LaFayette became a symbol of republican government and principles. Some scholars have suggested that by August of 1830, LaFayette could have proclaimed the Second French Republic and dubbed himself as the first president. Because of France’s monarchial past, however, LaFayette believed that a Second Republic was not possible in the 1830s; rather, he supported a limited monarchy with republican policies, and thereby supported Louis Philippe I, the duc d’Orléans. LaFayette publicly endorsed the duc d’Orléans as the next king, appearing along side of him during the parade to the Hôtel de Ville, the traditional seat of power. Standing on the balcony, draped in the tricolored flag, a symbol of the France’s First Republic, LaFayette and the duc d’Orléans embraced while the

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30 McBride, *America in the French Mind*, 266.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., 267.
crowds cheered.\textsuperscript{33} This particular scene at the Hôtel de Ville suggested that the new king’s reign would be a republican regime, supporting the renewed, revolutionary cries for “liberté, égalité, et fraternité.”

Images from the time period depict a French nation bedecked with signs of revolutionary change and commitment to liberty. Delacroix’s \textit{Liberty Leading the People}, perhaps the best-known painting produced during the July Monarchy, illustrates these renewed passions for republicanism, especially liberty (Figure 5). Although a scene of street violence, the bare-breasted allegorical figure of Liberty charges across a barricade carrying the emblem of liberty: the tri colored flag. Liberty steers the rebellion, leading the French masses towards political advancement. M. Pettit illustrates the same political fervor in his print, \textit{29 July 1830, General LaFayette returning to the Hôtel de Ville} (Figure 6). This image depicts LaFayette and the future Louis Philippe I walking with linked arms, surrounded by tricolored flags and a massive crowd. A dog approaches the figures in the foreground, suggesting Louis Philippe’s faithful commitment to the people and republican principles.

The bourgeois population would have been attracted to images like Delacroix’s and Pettit’s, which celebrated liberty. French aristocrats continuously criticized the lack of pomp and circumstance surrounding Louis Philippe’s monarchy. In many ways the king snubbed the very rich, as he rejected a court life and abolished every branch of the Maison du Roi, the cultural entourage that surrounded previous monarchs.\textsuperscript{34} During the


\textsuperscript{34} Philip Mansel, \textit{The Court of France 1789-1830} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 191-193. In addition to abolishing all of the Maison du Roi, he also accepted a civil list of 12 million francs. Charles X accepted 32 million francs a year.
first years of his rule, Louis Philippe was dubbed the “Citizen King,” as he walked the streets dressed in everyday fashions without servants or attendants. By excluding the extremely wealthy from his immediate circle, Louis Philippe supported the growing bourgeoisie, giving balls and promoting business around the Tuileries and Fontainebleau. The absence of a formal court allowed “private salons, shops and business” to take control as the center of “power, jobs, fashion, news, and entertainment.” Making up between 15% and 20% of the population, the bourgeoisie not only assumed control over cultural phenomena, but they also gained political representation in the form of French Parliament. The bourgeoisie felt the impacts of republicanism, as Louis Philippe excluded the very wealthy and sympathized with middle class needs. The French bourgeoisie clearly owed the July Monarchy’s republican foundations for the class’ growing political and social power. In all likelihood, the French middle class celebrated and endorsed republicanism, and, therefore, following the eighteenth-century example, looked towards America for validation and inspiration.

The popular French enthusiasm for republicanism leads one to conclude that the United States once again served as France’s republican model, especially during Andrew Jackson’s American presidency (1829-1837). In 1833, Paulin, Libraire – Editeur, a Parisian publisher produced a French edition of Thomas Jefferson’s writings titled, *Mélanges politiques et philosophiques extraits des mémoirs et de la correspondance de*

36 Ibid., 192-193.
37 Ibid.
Thomas Jefferson. Containing a translation of the American Constitution and Jefferson’s political ideologies, this publication re-introduced the principles of the early stages of America’s formation.\textsuperscript{39} Further, it brought Jefferson’s ideals back to the forefront of the French imagination. Not all of his political texts were translated into American legislation; rather, the majority of his writings remained as ponderings on the potential success and idyllic workings of republican government. The publication of \textit{Mélanges Politiques et philosophiques extraits des Mémoirs et de la correspondance de Thomas Jefferson} must be understood as a contribution to and influence on France’s re-idealization of the United States of America.

Regardless of American democracy’s faults and contradictions, specifically racial inequality, America served as a working model for a republican government in which individual liberties were protected. In \textit{LaFayette en Amérique}, Levasseur admires the political system that he and Lafayette witnessed, praising the duties of the president, saying:

\begin{quote}
The difference between the president of the United States and the kings of Europe is great…..He gave orders to an army of general managers, division heads, employees of all classes with large wages. The president is obliged to work and earn his pay well……It is true that he attends lavish dinners with members of Congress, but nevertheless he is a wise man who understands that only through honesty and hard work, and not by corruption, he will perform the duties imposed upon him.\textsuperscript{40}
\end{quote}

This quotation emphasizes that the two Frenchmen glorified and understood the position of president as being occupied by a virtuous and humble man. Further, by referencing the

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{40} Levasseur, \textit{LaFayette en Amérique}, 65-66. Translation is my own.
\end{quote}
“army of general managers,” Levasseur suggests a high level of organization and efficiency. Levasseur and LaFayette, however, visited America in the midst of one of the biggest political scandals: the 1824 American Presidential Election. During the election, one presidential candidate, Andrew Jackson, accused another, John Quincy Adams, of entering into a “Corrupt Bargain” for the presidency.\(^{41}\) The highly publicized “Corrupt Bargain” did not promote a vision of presidential virtuosity. Certainly the scandal did not go unnoticed by the Frenchmen; but despite the questionable American politics, Levasseur and LaFayette produced an idyllic vision of political infrastructure and offered a pristine image of America for French consumption. As in the early eighteenth century, the French were apt to exaggerate and idealize the American government’s workings in order to demonstrate the validity and future of French political ideals.\(^{42}\) Ultimately, the republican foundations of the July Monarchy depended on America’s success. To validate the ideological underpinnings of the July Monarchy, the French romanticized American society and ignored American shortcomings. Idealized beyond historical accuracy, Zuber et Cie’s *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* must be understood in this context as an illustration of the French vision of a perfect, successful republican government.

During the early years of the July Monarchy, before LaFayette’s death in 1834, prints of his American Farewell tour, such as Bové’s *Réception de l’hôte de la nation aux États-Unis*, and American landscape prints, like Thompson Thomas’ *Port of New York*

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\(^{41}\) Parsons, *The Birth of Modern Politics*, 95-108. During the American Election of 1824, no candidate received the required majority of votes, forcing the House of Representatives to select the president. John Quincy Adams, a presidential candidate, had a questionable meeting with Henry Clay, the Speaker of the House. After this meeting, Henry Clay emphatically petitioned the House for John Quincy Adams’s presidency. John Quincy Adams received the presidency and the public credited his position to Henry Clay’s and John Quincy Adam’s meeting, or Corrupt Bargain.

\(^{42}\) Echeverria, *Mirage in the West*, 146.
from Battery Park (Figure 7), were widely circulated. Images like these perpetuated the republican ideal, depicting a diverse, American middle-class crowd united together in equality around a viewing spectacle. The American subject matter, blatant republican qualities, and the print medium suggest that the bourgeois class would have also collected images like the ones Bové and Thomas produced. Zuber et Cie’s *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, an idealized vision of America, clearly resonates with print images of the United States and French political attitudes during the July Monarchy.
Chapter Two

*Vues d'Amérique du Nord – A Vision of Republican Progress*

The idealized American landscapes and republican gatherings suggest that this wallpaper would have been well received by those, such as King Louis-Philippe’s bourgeois supporters, who dreamt of America as France’s future. In this extensively detailed wallpaper, Zuber et Cie presents an image of America that resonates with eighteenth-century French perceptions of the young nation, presenting it as a land of “liberté, égalité, et fraternité,” ideas that would have been celebrated by the French bourgeoisie.

In this chapter, I analyze how Zuber et Cie represents the United States of America as a model nation by depicting components of an idyllic republican government: unity, equality, economic prosperity, and interconnectivity. Using visual details and the tropes of spectacle, Zuber et Cie reveals these republican qualities. Departing from historical realities, *Vues d'Amérique du Nord* illuminates an ideal America, emphasizing the potential success of a republican government and ignoring its faults. In this wallpaper, America is not so much a geographical place as much as it is a working ideology.

**Unifying Spectacles**

Within each vignette, Americans are drawn together around specific spectacles that metaphorically represent components of the nation at large. The figures, pictured across the foreground of *Vues d'Amérique du Nord*, are symbolically united into an
imagined political community as they share a common experience in front of planned viewing spectacles representing the historical past, natural resources, each other, the federal government, and the free market economy. Through their participation in these spectacles, Americans simultaneously participate in the nation at large.

At the Natural Land Bridge in Virginia, figures are engrossed in an Indian performance that symbolically stands for America’s historical past (Figure 8). This vignette presents a moment that would not have happened, as on May 29, 1830, President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act into law, forcing all Indian tribes to begin the move west towards the Oklahoma territory. 43 Americans understood the Indians as a trace of the continent’s untamed past and regarded them with fear. In southern states, like Virginia, Indians frequently attacked settlements and posed a threat to the new, civilized American lifestyle. 44 Yet, in this particular scene, the Virginian spectators calmly watch the Indians perform. The Native Americans engage in a stylized war dance only a short distance from the spectators. Raising tomahawks towards each other, the Indian dancers do not aggressively engage the American spectators. The onlookers to the left of the dance, a woman and two men, watch intently with wide eyes. The seated man rests his hand on his leg while his seated female companion excitedly

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43 David S. Reynolds, *Waking Giant: America in the Age of Jackson* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008): 92-93. Americans commonly believed that the Indian tribes could not successfully integrate with the Americans; for Jackson’s government, the only way to reconcile this discrepancy was removal from American soil.

44 Southern Indians would not agree to disband their tribal governments and blend into the American republic. Several Indian tribes, such as the Seminoles, fought the American government and resisted with violence. The aggressive behavior and Indians’ refusal to convey to Christian faiths, prompted Americans to view American Indians as a threat to white civilization.
stares and smiles. Closely positioned near the dancers with weapons, the spectators do not express alarm; rather, they calmly watch, gesturing and discussing.

The artist confines aggressive behavior in the spectacle, a planned visual experience, rather than showing the actuality of warfare. Through the stylized language of spectacle, the Native Americans only engage with themselves and present a safe glimpse into the life and traditions of the American Indians: America’s historical ancestors. This viewing experience made the unsafe safe, allowing individuals to come together and explore the unknown, mysterious existence of the country’s past. This spectacle suggests that citizens of a republican government are bound together around the nation’s history and origins.

The Niagara Falls scene presents a landscape spectacle in which Americans democratically come together to enjoy the bountiful natural resources and uniquely American landscape (Figure 9). In the face of Niagara Falls, which functions as an emblem of America’s resources, citizens become small and on equal footing; their social position does not matter in the face of nature. All figures within the scene are engaged in the spectacle of landscape tourism, paying someone to provide them with exciting vistas. By 1835, legends, guidebooks, tours, and viewing platforms had transformed Niagara Falls into a consumable spectacle. According to the historian William Irwin, completion

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45 The Indian performance resonates with the way eastern Americans harbored feelings of both fear and fascination with American Indians. The scene also resonates with commercial spectacles of Indian life, such as George Catlin’s Indian Gallery, that were increasingly popular in America during this period. See: William H. Truettner. *The Natural Man Observed: a Study of Catlin’s Indian Gallery* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979); Marjorie M. Halpin. *Gatlin’s Indian Gallery: The George Catlin paintings in the United States National Museum* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1965).
of the Erie Canal in 1825 permitted a “regularized tourist procession” towards Niagara.  

To accommodate the increase in travelers, private companies began constructing ladders and viewing platforms. In his popular travel book, *Picturesque Itinerary of the Hudson River and the Peripheral Parts of North America*, J. Milbert describes the proscribed path around the falls: “A handsome staircase with several ramps was recently constructed on the American side, making it possible to reach the bottom of the falls safely and comfortably.” This quotation reveals that views of Niagara were constructed both amongst the rocks and at the base of the falls.

Hired tour guides facilitated movement amongst the Niagara landscape. Within the Niagara Falls vignette, a guide figure appears at least three times, suggesting that viewing experiences were pre-planned. This figure, clothed in a blue jacket and wearing a round, straw hat carries a walking stick (Figure 10). The guide provides patrons with a planned viewing experience, unveiling and describing the spectacle from predetermined locations. On the grassy cliff above the Niagara River, a clearly defined tour guide reveals the Niagara view. Wearing the identifiable uniform, the man carries a walking stick and satchel. He stands in profile but his face turns away, leaving him as an anonymous figure. His patrons, a well-dressed man and woman gaze excitedly towards the waterfall. Four other figures, positioned behind the group of three, seem to listen on; one man points towards the falls, gesturing for the other women to look to the spectacular natural sight. On the left cliff, above the river, a tour guide with a walking stick leads

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figures along the ledge by the waterfall (Figure 11). On a rock that jets out into the river, more figures, led by a tour guide, explore the sights. Thus, at Niagara Falls, Zuber et Cie presents a dramatic, natural spectacle in which all figures participate.

The figures found in the New York Palisades scene are also drawn together through tropes of spectacle, yet in this scene, the people create a spectacle for one another to see (Figure 12). Twenty figures travel across the foreground along a wide dirt road, observing the landscape scenery and each other. As a space for sociable display and leisure, the New York Palisades are representative of nineteenth-century New York, as Chateaubriand explains that New York was a sociable, “gay, populous, and commercial city.”

In a journal entry, Tocqueville emphasizes that New York was a place of high society, as he explains that: “The company with whom we eat, is always composed of attractive people. Evenings we make calls; and each day we make new acquaintances.” He continues to emphasize the busy social calendar of New Yorkers, describing summer homes and parties: “The set [the home] in a favorable spot … all the rich families of this country have one, where they pass the summer [with each other]…” This quotation suggests that New York was a locale of fanfare and display.

People dressed to perform for each other, conveying their identity and social standing. Five groups of figures converge on this particular patch of road. Four people, sitting in a delicate carriage pulled by four horses, speed across the center of the canvas. A cloud of dust surrounds the wheels and horses’ feet, suggesting that the group moves at a fast pace. To the left of the carriage group, three men and one woman, riding

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sidesaddle, gallop along the road on horseback. Engaged in conversation, the figures look at and gesture towards one another. All wearing elegant top hats, the figures are well dressed for an afternoon on the Palisades. On the left, a man escorts two women, one on each of his arms. The man in the center shows off the women on his arms, clothed in delicate white gloves and elegant bonnets with bows and feathers; certainly both women wore their best, expecting to encounter other people along the road.

All figures inspect their surroundings, scrutinizing the other passersby. In particular, the fancily dressed group of African Americans attracts a lot of attention (Figure 13). On the left side of the image, a woman looks over her shoulder while the other figures simply turn their heads to get a better look at the group of African Americans. Here, the viewer witnesses several Americans socially bonding and forming an imagined community, fashioned by inspection and judgment. Located outside of New York City, these individuals planned to travel to this location, as it was the place to see and be seen, and travel up and down the Palisades. In doing so, the figures participate in a ritualized enactment of stylish society.

The vista of West Point Military Academy appears alongside the Palisades of New York vignette (Figure 14). Popular as a tourist destination amongst both Americans and Europeans, West Point Military Academy allowed the public to watch the American military in action.\footnote{Because of lingering suspicions of standing military forces, throughout the nineteenth century, the American army was quite small. Thus, this large military scene is certainly idealized. For a description and analysis of the formation of the military and the founding of West Point Military Academy, see: Robert M. S. McDonald, \textit{Thomas Jefferson's Military Academy: Founding West Point} (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004).} Zuber et Cie depicts a common image of West Point, looking down onto the drill field, marked by the American flag and Colonel E.D. Wood’s obelisk tomb.
In his travel book, *Voyage aux États-Unis d'Amérique*, Gideon Davidson describes West Point as an “inexpugnable barrier,” emphasizing the strength of the American military. He continues to extol the Military Academy, suggesting, “it is a barrier, which Liberty’s enemies cannot penetrate.”\(^{51}\) West Point represents the military at large and thereby also stands for the American government, suggesting that the government, in all its forms, protects and defends liberty.

The figures within the scene gather around the open field, watching a patriotic spectacle in the form of military drills. The wide-open, green drill field extends across the middle ground, creating a distinctive, stage-like environment; the crowds gather on the hillsides, gaining a clear view of four orderly blocks of soldiers marching in formation. The military drills certainly manipulate the spectators’ gaze through the formation of enlarged, precise geometric patterns. In front of the orderly groups of marching cadets, six drumming soldiers, under the direction of one soldier waving a baton, provide a marching beat.

Occupying the middle ground, distanced from the viewer, the soldiers are small and highly abstracted. Measuring approximately two inches tall, the figures are not individualized; rather, red, white, and blue lines conceptually represent the soldiers. Echoing the American flag, flying above the drill field, the soldier units symbolically resonate with the flag’s colors and stripes. Through this visual association, the soldiers become representative of the nation; like the one nation, composed of several states, individuals come together to form a cohesive group. One can therefore understand the soldiers in the middle ground as a metaphor for the nation at large.

A large crowd gathers together around the metaphoric nation. In the foreground, twenty-two brightly-dressed figures spread across the edge of the wallpaper. Men, women, and children stand, the majority with their backs to the viewer, watching the American military cadets practice drills. Planned drumbeats, cannon fire, patriotic uniforms and dramatic, orderly movement, arrest the spectators’ gaze, igniting excitement and wonder. Everyone in the crowd watches, as all heads turn towards the drill field and some individuals point in excitement. The cadets provide an identifiable spectacle, as the drills are planned, highly visual and geared to promote a message of national strength. Spectators gather together around the military, emblem of federal power, suggesting their commitment to and involvement in the government’s success.

In the Boston Harbor scene, Zuber et Cie depicts the American free market economy through a lens of spectacle (Figure 15). Seated upon a barrel, looking down on the harbor, the scene’s spectator, located in the left portion of the image, occupies a distinct viewing space in which he can see everything. The standing man points to various elements of the harbor, providing a narrative that instructs and informs the spectator about what he sees. The standing, pointing man possesses authority over the unfolding scene of labor. His pose seems to speak to an organizing vision or conception over the scene, allowing one to read the figure as a capitalist, directing the flow of work. In contrast to the other vignettes with finely dressed, middle class citizens engaging in leisurely behaviors, the figures throughout Boston Harbor are engaged in labor.

The figures’ dress and collective workforce emphasize “liberté, égalité, et fraternité.” The workers are free, individual agents, possessing liberty. The workers throughout the composition perform their assigned tasks, choosing when to work and
pausing to take breaks as they see fit. Although the image does not depict a class-less society, the vignette continues to idealize the American nation as the workers are structured and organized, performing their tasks with ease. Through their labor, the figures are united in an imagined community. Thus, a spectacle of collective work arrests the spectator’s gaze, suggesting that in America, work occurs in a natural, orderly fashion.

The spectacles establish a series of imagined communities in which the American citizens are united through their shared spectatorship. The spectacles shown on the wallpaper metaphorically represent how the extremely large American nation, containing thousands of citizens, is drawn together into a cohesive whole. According to the visual cues in *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, the historical past, the American landscape, social gatherings, the federal government, and market economy provide the occasions in which American citizens form large, nation-wide imagined communities.

*Equality Amongst Citizens*

While the five distinctly American spectacles suggest how citizens in the expansive nation come together to form a national brotherhood or “fraternité,” the types of figures participating in and watching the spectacles are also indicative of how the French understood the republican ideals of “liberté, égalité, et fraternité.” In four of the vignettes, a viewer can identify black and white figures, dressed in similar styles, peacefully comingling and engaging in the American spectacles. Despite common knowledge about American slavery, the French artists seem to suggest republican progress by visually idealizing American racial relationships.
Several French writers pointed out the injustices and contradictions of slavery in America. In *American Democracy*, Alexis de Tocqueville rejects slavery, explaining:

> Slavery dishonors labor; it introduces idleness into society, and with idleness, ignorance and pride, luxury and distress. It enervates the powers of the mind, and benumbs the activity of man.\(^{52}\)

Tocqueville, representing typical French, republican ideologies, identifies slavery as both an injustice to slaves and humanity at large. Nevertheless, between 1820 and 1850, the number of enslaved black people in America rose from 1.5 million to 3.2 million; at this time, it seemed that the American economy could not exist without it.\(^{53}\) Although French writers expressed distaste for the institution of slavery, France had complicated outlooks regarding African Americans. By 1791, the National Convention abolished slavery throughout France and its colonial holdings; all Africans were granted the rights of citizenship.\(^{54}\) However, Napoleon reinstated slavery in the French colonies in 1802. Slavery and the slave trade continued through the Restoration government of 1815. The July Monarchy of Louis Philippe committed itself to gradual emancipation, completely abolishing slavery throughout France and its colonial holdings.\(^{55}\) Despite emancipation,

\(^{52}\) Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835. (Cambridge: Sever and Francis, 1862), 36.


\(^{55}\) Cohen, *French Encounter with the Africans*, 204.
throughout the nineteenth century, the French regarded intermarriage between blacks and whites with horror.\textsuperscript{56}

These French attitudes towards slavery and emancipation complicate Zuber et Cie’s Natural Land Bridge vignette, as it cannot be understood as a reflection of contemporary American or French principles. Positioned in a line facing the Indian performance, four figures, two black women, one black man, and one light-skin man, stand in a frontal pose (Figure 16). The central pair is intimately connected, as the woman has removed her gloves and linked her arm through her companion’s. The outer figures appear more formal than those in the center, as the man has removed his hat and the woman keeps her gloves on. Wearing a blue waistcoat, the outer man matches the woman’s parasol and suggests a connection between these figures. The central man slightly extends his arm in front of the woman on the end, presenting his authority as her father.

The color arrangement and formality suggests that the outer figures are engaged in a courting ritual; perhaps the light-skinned man in the blue jacket has asked to speak to the central figure’s daughter. The racial mixing implied in a courting or romantic scene, extends beyond socializing to the realm of sexuality. The ambiguity of the light-skinned man’s race creates an even more dramatic story, as the viewer could be witnessing “miscegenation” on several different levels; the pale man could potentially be half black and half white. This figure group reflects the liberal, republican aspirations of complete “liberté, égalité, et fraternité.” By picturing successful racial integration, America

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 111. Beginning in 1764 and extending into the late eighteenth-century, no more slaves or freedmen were allowed into France because the two groups presence would lead to births with “a mixture of blood that increases daily.” See also p. 113: in 1787 a play was performed in which a mixed race couple married. Every time this play was performed, riots ensued.
becomes a place of racial progress, a place in which republican ideologies are actualized and citizens treated equally.

French abolitionists were very hesitant about freemen’s abilities to adapt to white society.\(^{57}\) They believed that because of the way whites had treated blacks, freemen could never heal from their oppression and would forever resent white people. In fact, in *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville explains that blacks and whites cannot ever live side-by-side in America or anywhere else.\(^{58}\) Tocqueville explains that “the tradition of slavery dis-honors the race, and race perpetuates memories of slavery,” suggesting that blacks, free or not, could never coexist with whites because of slavery’s history.\(^{59}\) Tocqueville continues, saying:

…after they have abolished slavery, [there are] three majorly prejudices to contend against, which are less easy to attack and far less easy to conquer, than the mere fact of servitude – the prejudice of the master, the prejudice of the race, and the prejudice of the color.\(^{60}\)

This quotation reveals the common assumption that blacks could never seamlessly comingle with whites.

In the New York Palisades scene, one encounters an image of awkward racial integration, a scene that is more closely aligned with nineteenth-century French perceptions. Isolated on an island-like green patch of grass, the four black figures gather in conversation (Figure 13). The three African American women are dressed dramatically

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\(^{57}\) Ibid., 199.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 195.

\(^{59}\) Tocqueville, *Democracy*, 458.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 459.
different than the white women; the black women wear brighter, fancier, and more elaborate garments. The white women in the image wear bonnets topped with a feather or scarf, while the black women wear overly-embellished hats with several bows and decorative ornaments. Each African American woman also sports identifiable jewelry; the woman in pink wears gold earrings, a necklace, and bracelet while the other women wear pearls. Their outfits are completed by delicate white shoes, which contrast to the white women’s dark shoes. The African American women are not properly dressed for an afternoon of walking on dirt roads.

While the black figures may be free to occupy the same space and participate in the same performative spectacle as the white figures, visually they do not fit in. Nor does the African American man. With his leg fully extended, he bows in an exaggerated manner. His posture mimics the stance of the horse, and its rider, behind him. This parallel stance equates the African American man with the horse, subtly suggesting the black man, and his companions’, lesser status. Clothed in a similar manner to the other men in the image, wearing a tailed jacket and long white pants he appears to be a member of the same social class. His hairstyle, however, makes him comical and reduces him to a stereotype. Yet despite the obvious racist aspects of the work, the nineteenth-century French viewer would have been struck by the figure’s overall inclusion and participation in the scene at large. Although visually distinct, the African Americans are active participants in a republican social exchange.

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61 Emlen, “Imagining America,” 196. Emlen suggests that these images are direct quotations from Edward Clay’s Life in Philadelphia series. This series were meant to ridicule the free, northern, middle-class African Americans’ attempts to participate in polite northern society.
The West Point image depicts the ultimate republican ideal of racial integration (Figure 17). Revolving around a spectacle of national government, not a social gathering, racial mixing happens seamlessly. In the ideal republican form of centralized government, all citizens receive representation and equal treatment, regardless of race. Two black figures, a man and a woman, appear in the exact center of the foreground. The man appears in profile, well-dressed in a top hat and coat. The woman, facing the viewer in a frontal pose, immediately arrests the viewer’s gaze, as she is the only figure whose back is not facing the viewer. Dressed in the same style as the other woman spectators, the black woman wears a blue dress and bonnet tied with a pink bow. The colors of her garment beautifully complement the white woman, clothed also in pink and blue, standing in profile, gesturing towards her in conversation. The artists’ use of color establishes a social grouping and articulates a convivial exchange, as the women are bound together through dress and discussion. Additionally, the color grouping formally works to attract the viewer’s eye, emphasizing the importance of this particular cluster of people.

This arrangement depicts a peaceful coexistence of blacks and whites, and thereby continues to emphasize American social progress. The black woman turns away from the military spectacle in order to inform the viewer that the crowd contains all races. One must infer that both black and white American citizens compose the large crowd that curves around the right of the drill field. Brought together by participating in viewing a spectacle of the American government, this diverse conglomeration, including family groups, has great political implications. Rallying together around the governmental spectacle, the audience is part of the American republican system at large. Members of
the same social class and occupying the same space, the figures gather around the government in equality, suggesting that each figure (black and white, young and old, men and women) has equal participation in the political realm.

The diverse, racially integrated spectators crowding the foreground of the wallpaper, illustrate that the United States grants all citizens “liberté, égalité, et fraternité.” In Vues d’Amérique du Nord and in the ideal republican government, all citizens, black and white, participate in republican government and society. Although Andrew Jackson was the first president labeled as a “common man,” elected by the masses, the majority of the government still remained in the hands of an elite few. Only white males who owned property were allowed to participate in political affairs.62 The years after Andrew Jackson’s election witnessed a growth in abolitionist and feminist movements, which strove to make America a true Democratic state, where everyone’s civil liberties were guaranteed and protected. The French were certainly aware of these reformist efforts, however, during the 1830s, the French needed a perfect image of America in order to legitimize French aspirations for a republican government. The French wanted an image of working republicanism, not a government needing improvement.

**Economic Prosperity**

Throughout Vues d’Amérique du Nord, Zuber et Cie continuously references the nation’s natural resources and economic potential. In doing so, the wallpaper company pictures America not only as a model republican society but also as the perfect

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geographical place for the development of this particular governmental ideology.\textsuperscript{63} The Niagara Falls, Natural Bridge, and Boston Harbor vignettes illustrate a nation in possession of natural products, which could be harvested in order for the country to economically support its citizens. Furthermore, Zuber et Cie illustrates Americans in the act of exploring the nation’s natural assets; in the United States individuals are granted the liberty to use the nation’s resources for their own benefit. All of the figures illustrated across the wallpaper have benefited from America’s economic success. Wearing fashionably elegant clothing and engaging in leisurely pursuits, the majority of citizens are part of the middle class.

Since its discovery, Niagara Falls captivated the European imagination, as the Old World had no counterpart. Tourists, both American and European, traveled to the falls, establishing it as a major American tourist destination. The American historian, John F. Sears, speculates a practical reason for the European captivation with waterfalls, suggesting that the “height and breadth, and the inexhaustible volume of water flowing over [Niagara Falls] made it an apt emblem for the resources of the new nation.”\textsuperscript{64}

Appearing in several French travel books on America, Niagara Falls was an American must-see.\textsuperscript{65} The falls elicited extreme reactions, forcing visitors to confront the extreme

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\textsuperscript{63} George Wilson Pierson, \textit{Tocqueville and Beaumont in America} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), 79. Pierson argues that on their journeys throughout America, Beaumont and Tocqueville sought to “know how far such a society was a product of its environments” and how well it could adapt to the natural environment of others. Rather than focusing on the country’s resources, Pierson focuses on the “social fabric” of the American population.


power of nature. Gideon M. Davison, a nineteenth-century French traveler and author of an American travel book, recognized the emotional and physical power of the falls, declaring: “It is beyond [his] power to trace the deep emotions that this natural wonder causes in the hearts of man.” The Niagara Falls vignette’s vantage point has been artfully crafted, allowing for a full view of the natural wonder; the falls appear on the horizon line, as water crashes downward forcing a mist to rise at the falls’ base.

Zuber et Cie gives the viewer a deep, expansive glimpse of the falls, exposing the waterfall’s breadth and force (Figure 9). Occupying more than half the space below the horizon line, the vignette is full of water. The waterfalls are the largest elements in the image and dwarf the boats and figures scattered throughout the landscape. Small dots and lines define passengers on the steamboat, viewers amongst the rocks in the river, and groups of people amongst outcroppings in the rock ledges framing the falls. These formal qualities suggest that Niagara Falls is full of a valuable natural resource.

All the figures depicted within the Niagara Falls scene are interacting with the landscape, actively exploring its beauty and power. Led by tour guide figures, American citizens surround the falls and view them from several angles; figures appear on the grassy banks of the Hudson River, on boats in front of the falls, amongst the rocky cliffs, and immediately beside the rushing water. By integrating the figures into the landscape

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66 Davison, *Voyage aux États-Unis d’Amérique*, 82. Translations are my own.

67 The people populating this particular scene are smaller than those in the other vignettes; measuring between 4 and 5 inches, the figures dramatically smaller than the approximately ten inch figures in the four other views.
and showing them _actively_ engaging with their surroundings, Zuber et Cie emphasizes American liberties, which allow individuals to truly experience and independently gain from the nation’s geographical landscape. The federal, republican government does not impose rigid control over the nation’s abundant resources; rather, the government bestows its citizens with the liberty to reap the benefits of the natural world.

The presence of the American Indian at the Natural Land Bridge in Virginia also emphasizes the nation’s economic potential (Figures 8 & 18). For French viewers, the Indian had a heterochronous meaning, alluding to both the European past and future; in both forms the American Indian suggests economic potential. Living amongst the natural world, contemporary French writers, like Jacquemont (1801-1832) and Chateaubriand (1768-1848), believed that the Indian represented a simple lifestyle, a way of life to which the modern European could not return. Like the Noble Savage, the American Indian was a creature of the past, a remnant of the classical time period; Indians reaped the earth’s bounty, living in collective agrarian communities like the Ancients. In 1801, Chateaubriand published the nineteenth-century’s most popular book, _Atala_.

The sentimental novel recounts a fictional story about “two savages” in the wilderness who fall in love and remain chaste. Their non-European background and ability to remain sexually uncorrupted provided a popular image of American Indians as “natural” and

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69 An enemy Indian tribe captures Chactas, a Natchez boy who has been educated by a Spanish settler. Being condemned to burn alive, the Spanish settler’s daughter, Atala, rescues Chactas from the flames. The two escape to Florida, harmoniously living as Christians amongst the natural, un-modernized world and falling deeply in love. Arriving at a mission, Atala tells her true love that she took a vow of virginity; rather than succumbing to her passions for Chactas, she kills herself, remaining morally pure. Chateaubriand’s contemporaries understood Chactas and Atala as noble savages.
morally pure. The wide circulation and repeated publications of *Atala* made the connection between the Noble Savage and American Indian obvious and popular.

The French belief that the American Indian alluded to a past, purer state of existence allowed the Indian to become a French symbol of future progress. Simplicity and lack of modernization presented opportunities for future industry. Upon discovery of the New World and into the nineteenth century, the American Indian became the allegorical figure symbolizing the young nation, suggesting that America was pure, innocent and receptive of new ideas. Appearing throughout European visual culture of America, the Indian appeared everywhere from map cartouches, to travel book frontispieces to paintings and even furniture. In French images, such as Jean Suan’s *Allegory of France Liberating America* (Figure 3), the Indian bows at the feet of the France, thanking her for help and generosity. France leads the American Indian, teaching him how to transition into the modern world. In his/her pure, natural form, the Indian, like the young America, offered itself as a blank slate, ready to be shaped by Western ideas.

In the anonymous print, *Indépendence des États-Unis* (Figure 19), the American Indian stands next to the ocean and tramples a wild leopard. The water, the abundant trees, and the leopard alluded to the untamed, untapped abundance of natural resources. In the background, ships make their way to shore, looking for commodities; in the foreground, the Indian figure smiles and extend his arm, presenting the continent as an open market. The American Indian in French visual culture, therefore, alluded to America’s flourishing economic future. Furthermore, because of the Indian’s openness and natural, innocent state as the natural savage, the Indian as America, symbolized the
continent’s potential as an extension of Europe; European ideals, like republicanism, could cultivate across the uncorrupted American soil.

The spectators gathered around the American Indian spectacle at the Natural Land Bridge suggest that American citizens are actively involved with their land and its resources. Everyone in the vignette takes heed of the Indian performance. As in the Niagara Falls scene, in which all the figures are watching the spectacle of nature, all the figures in the Virginia scene relate to and explore the American Indian, an emblem of American resources and economic potential. This unanimous participation emphasizes that all the nation’s citizens possess liberty to investigate and participate in the cultivation and exploitation of American resources.

The allusions to natural resources found throughout the wallpaper are representative of those found throughout the American Nation. In the nineteenth century, transport and trade of natural commodities such as cotton, tobacco, wood, and indigo kept America in the foreground of international economic exchange. These natural resources and the American ability to use and independently cultivate these products suggested a large degree of “liberté,” and thereby republican progress. The Boston Harbor vignette continues to reference American resources, as the figures engage in hard work, loading and unloading cargo. Because of its complex colonial history with England, the image of Boston Harbor surely called to mind the previous English tariffs and trade restrictions. Throughout the 1820s and into the 1830s, the French understood Boston as a land of productivity and economic success, a land that overcame colonial infringements on

Howe, What Hath God Wrought, 361; Reynolds, Waking Giant, 62.
liberty. To the French, the Boston Harbor of the 1830s emphasized republican economic liberty.

The artist emphasizes the American market by picturing two larger ships, one arriving and one departing (Figure 20). The boat on the right has come in from a trip, as one of the sailors jumps off to tie up the boat. The mast has been lowered and another sailor has taken down one of the main boat poles, passing it onto the dock. Eight other figures unload the boat, filled to the brim with goods. On the departing boat, a sailor hoists the sail while another unhooks the boat’s main line, preparing to launch the loaded vessel. The group of five workers, relaxing in the foreground, reminds the spectator that this is not overbearing work, as breaks are permitted. Zuber et Cie’s image presents one of America’s most famous ports, exporting and importing goods (Figure 15). In the background, church steeples and ship masts, an emblem of trade and industry, pierce the horizon line. The pairing of church and industry, extending above the horizon emphasizes that the American economic system is honest and moral. Through this image, Boston Harbor, the commercial center of the city, becomes an emblem of economic achievement.

The thundering waters of Niagara Falls, the American Indian, and the busy Boston Harbor work to promote an image of fruitful, successful republicanism. Zuber et Cie presents an American nation full of profitable commodities with which all citizens have the liberty to use and appreciate. America, in its idealized republican state, is a plentiful and productive land open to all citizens.
Interconnectivity

In *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, Zuber et Cie infused the landscapes with images of technological and infrastructural improvements. In a diary entry from early 1831, Tocqueville declared:

I know but one single means of increasing the prosperity of a people that is infallible in practice and that I believe can count on in all countries. This means is nothing else but to increase the ease of communication between men.  

By picturing roads, steamboats, and a reference to the Erie Canal, Zuber et Cie portrays America in a similar fashion to what Tocqueville describes, as a highly interconnected nation. The wallpaper, therefore, presents an image of an idyllic, highly connected, economically functioning republican America.

Tocqueville, amongst other French travelers to America, was completely fascinated by the systems that connected the large American nation. In 1828 Chateaubriand reported: “33 highways leave Washington as once the Roman roads started from Rome,” emphasizing the government’s role in connectivity and geographical unification.  

In the Natural Land Bridge scene, a carriage speeds down a wide, twisting road (Figure 8). Extending from the background to the foreground, the road occupies a conspicuous space within the composition, forcing viewers to contemplate its purpose. Facilitating the movement of a very modern carriage, running on tracks, one can

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conclude that this references the numerous road construction projects underway throughout the early nineteenth century. 73

The most notable project, the National Road, began in 1811 and extended from Washington D.C. to Wheeling, Virginia; by 1817 it reached Vandalia, Illinois. The first road to use tarmac, the National Road provided a smooth surface for the transport of goods and mail. 74 Before 1835, the year that state governments assumed financial control of the road, the federal government sponsored road projects and improvements; thus, one can assume the roads seen in the Natural Land Bridge and New York Palisades vignettes, produced in 1834, were the results of federally-funded projects. In a diary entry, celebrating the American roadway, Tocqueville wrote:

In France there are large and very concentrated populations through which winds no road, with the result that they are more separated from the rest of the nation than half the world formerly was. I don’t doubt it would take longer and cost more to have ten sacks of wheat brought from certain communes in lower Brittany to Paris than to transport to the same spot all the sugar of the colonies. In America one of the first things done in a new State is to have the mail come [by road]. In the Michigan forest there is not a cabin so isolated not a valley so wild that it does not receive letters at least once a week. 75

This quotation emphasizes the American road’s importance to the nation’s unity and speedy communication.

Within the same diary entry, Tocqueville continues to praise American connectivity, stating that “…. the discovery of steam has added unbelievably to the

73 Reynolds, Waking Giant, 61.
74 Ibid., 12-13.
75 Alexis de Tocqueville as quoted in: Pierson, Tocqueville and Beaumont in America, 589.
strength and prosperity of the Union.”

First introduced on the Delaware River in 1787, Robert Fulton and Robert R. Livingston, popularized steamboats by opening their services to the public in 1807. Steamboats increased transportation possibilities and decreased shipping times. They traveled up and down the nation’s waterways, transporting raw materials, refined goods, and people. The steamboat provided an easier travel option, allowing for Americans to explore and travel around the vast nation.

In *Travels in America*, Chateaubriand informs the reader that the steamboat can take a traveler:

…from Boston and New York to New Orleans; they are likewise established on the Canadian lakes – Ontario, Erie, Michigan, and Champlain – those lakes where 30 years ago there were scarcely to be seen a few Indian canoes…

Chateaubriand emphasizes how the steamboat contributed to making the country more connected, allowing individuals to experience a greater amount of the American terrain. In fact, Milbert emphatically believes in the steamboats role in the nation’s unity, stating: “Steamboats [are] the link responsible for these [increased] communications.”

Four landscapes found in *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* include an image of the steamboat, thereby emphasizing its importance. Positioned in the foreground, the

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78 It should be noted that steamboats frequently encountered accidents. Fires plagued early steamboats, forcing passengers to swim ashore. Particularly along the Mississippi River, steamboats would run onto ground or get caught in shallow areas of rivers. Despite these problems, steamboats were still a new, quicker, and easier way to travel.

79 Chateaubriand, *Travels in America*, 188.

steamboat at Niagara Falls immediately captivates the viewer (Figure 21). Occupying an eye-catching position in the composition, the steamboat flies an American flag on its bow and chugs across the center of the river. In many ways, the boat appears as a miniature natural wonder. The steamboat’s four vertical smoke stacks mimic the four massive waterfalls. Steam rises from the smoke stacks, creating a cloud formation that imitates the mist rising from the rushing waterfalls in the background. These visual parallels suggest that the powers of technology and nature are tightly intertwined.

Upon close inspection of the steamboat at Niagara Falls, the name of the boat becomes clear; “Erie” appears in capital red letters, above the steam paddle. Several scholars have suggested that steamboat and canal developments are closely intertwined, as their respective developments had economic impacts on each other. 81 Certainly the name of this steamboat alludes to the most successful and important American canal: the $7 million Erie Canal, which opened in 1825. 82 The Erie Canal quickly became the country’s most profitable trade route. During the first year of its opening, over thirteen thousand boats traveled through the canal, leading to the development of several small towns along the canal’s banks while existing towns expanded. 83

The Erie Canal was a major factor in the development of the free market system and wealthy middle class, as privately owned companies could unreservedly use the waterway and build in newly developed towns. After its construction, the government placed it in the hands of private companies. Additionally, between 1825 and 1840, the

81 Reynolds, Waking Giant, 13-14.
82 Ibid., 15.
83 Ibid., 17.
canal facilitated the growth of New York City and provided it with enough commerce to become the financial capital of the world.\textsuperscript{84} Funded by the federal government, the Erie Canal represented the republican ideal of providing for citizens. Praising the canal, Milbert emphasizes that the Erie Canal is simply the first of many canals, explaining: “It was natural that an enterprise, so well conceived, skillfully and economically executed, and crowned with such success, should inspire emulation.”\textsuperscript{85} Referenced in French newspapers and multiple travel books, news of the Erie Canal’s success and future canal constructions had reached France and piqued excitement.\textsuperscript{86}

\textit{Vues d’Amérique du Nord}’s reference to the Erie Canal, like the road and steamboat, calls to mind the improving American economy. Because of these federally supported advancements, the huge American territory became more united, communication was accelerated, and economies flourished, as raw materials and ideas could be efficiently distributed across the nation. By depicting these technological developments, Zuber et Cie has presented a geographically connected, republican nation.

\textit{Conclusion}

Zuber et Cie imagines America as the ultimate example of a republican government. Socially united by participating in American spectacles, the figures are racially integrated. They engage with the American economic system, reaping the benefits of a fiscally successful nation and living as a hearty middle class. Finally, \textit{Vues}

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 142.
\textsuperscript{86} McBride, \textit{America in the French Mind}, 50; Milbert, \textit{Picturesque Itinerary}, 140-142; Chateaubriand, \textit{Travels in America}, 188.
*d'Amérique du Nord* illustrates the governmentally supported systems, which geographically connect, and thereby, support the nation at large. Picturing the United States of America, the French emblem of successful republican government, *Vues d'Amérique du Nord* would have hung in the homes of the French bourgeoisie, Louis Philippe I’s republican supporters.
Chapter Three
A Domestic Spectacle

Domestic viewing technologies developed alongside European panoramas, dioramas, and other large-scale public spectacles. Private, domestic spectacles provided an intimate viewing opportunity and allowed owners to express their own sociopolitical identities. At first, due to their expensive price tag, only the aristocracy owned these devices, but in the early nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie began to purchase viewing technologies as well. In public, a pamphlet or a person would narrate the entire spectacle experience, directing the viewers’ attention to specific elements, crafting a particular narrative. The domestic spectacle, however, provided individuals with more power over their gaze, allowing participants to assume control over and learn from a miniature world.

*Vues d’Amérique du Nord* is an example of a domestic spectacle, which would have been used as a didactic tool and social signifier. Because sale and installation records have not been recovered from Zuber et Cie’s archives, conclusions about this particular paper’s domestic functions can be drawn from architectural and design histories, writings on other scenic wallpapers, and visual cues found in the wallpaper itself. Ultimately, these sources reveal how *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* would have functioned in its original, bourgeois household setting.

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Scenic wallpapers, like *Vues d'Amérique du Nord*, would have hung in domestic areas of sociability, such as the dining room, entry hall, or parlor.\(^8^8\) *Vues d'Amérique du Nord*’s modest price of 90 francs suggests that this wallpaper was geared towards a bourgeois audience.\(^8^9\) During the July Monarchy, the majority of the urban bourgeoisie lived in apartment buildings.\(^9^0\) Parisian apartments were typically six to eight stories with stores on the ground floor. Although apartments were considered valuable, permanent investments, apartments were known to have a fast turnover rate. Apartment tenants frequently used wallpaper as a form to quickly “display taste and establish status.”\(^9^1\) Wallpaper simply needed to be ordered and installed; unlike wall and easel painting, wallpaper was pre-fabricated, fashionable, and a quick solution to blank walls.

In the 1830s, industrialism widened the distance between producers and consumers, leading to the development of “taste professionals,” or individuals who specialized in teaching others how to convey good taste.\(^9^2\) “Taste Professionals” developed etiquette books, style guides, and codified pattern books. These publications expressed a firm belief that certain styles of decoration and furnishings represented specific social classes.\(^9^3\) Decorating the home involved artfully and purposefully selecting the appropriate “social signifiers”; any proper member of the French

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\(^8^9\) Jacqué, “A Study of the Archives of J. Zuber & Cie,” 86.


\(^9^3\) Ibid.
bourgeoisie would have been acutely aware of these expectations. Those choosing to hang *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, therefore, wisely selected this paper with the intention of communicating a specific identity and message: membership in the newly formed, republican bourgeoisie.

With the renewed interest in republicanism and fascination with the American political system, America and its landmarks were common subjects throughout several forms of domestic spectacle. A set of *Vues d’optique*, or perspective prints, with American subject matter, allowed for a viewer to assume control over a miniature nation (Figure 22). By holding a convex lens above colorful, two-dimensional etchings, the viewer seemingly brought the pictures to life. *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, therefore, was not a unique subject for a domestic spectacle; indeed, it was quite popular as it also appeared in magic lanterns and perspective theaters.

*Vues d’Amérique du Nord’s* forty-nine feet of paper creates a panoramic-like environment, which essentially transports the viewer to America. Zuber et Cie presents the young nation for exploration and conversation, facilitating an environment similar to those found in urban panoramas. In its public form, the visual spectacle of a panorama completely encircled and isolated a viewer from the real world, placing him/her amongst an illusionistic scene (Figure 23). The viewer would ascend a dark staircase into the main rotunda room, arriving on a platform surrounded by the panoramic painting; daylight would illuminate the landscape from above as it filtered through a clerestory. At a distance of approximately thirty feet, the viewer could not touch or closely explore the

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canvas; the viewing area and a railing enforced the distance. A panoramic canvas extended above the platform’s ceiling and below the platform’s floor. Unlike the public spectacle’s seemingly limitless appearance, panoramic wallpaper had obvious boundaries, articulated by the chair rail, above which the paper hung, and the ceiling (Figure 24). The panoramic paper’s visible borders and the elimination of the platform and protective railing shattered any possible illusionistic capabilities; a viewer could touch the panoramic wallpaper but could not physically explore the public panorama.

Scenic wallpapers, like the panorama, had educational objectives. Panoramic businessmen promoted their panoramas as being accurate, scientific, and educational. Topographical accuracy, educational brochures, and the presence of a learned tour guide attracted the nineteenth-century public to the panoramic spectacle. Similar to those selling the public panorama experience, Dufour et Cie, another scenic wallpaper company, appealed to educational pursuits in panoramic wallpaper advertisements. For Dufour et Cie and other manufacturers, these scenic wallpapers were also didactic devices and images capable of inspiring educational dialogue. In an advertising booklet for the earliest panoramic paper, Dufour et Cie suggests that in front of Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique:

A mother will give effortless lessons in history and geography to her eager, inquisitive and intelligent daughter whose remarks, more than once, will be an occasion for a kiss on her innocent mouth to silence the naïveties within it,

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96 Frances Terpak, “Objects and Contexts” in Devices of Wonder: From the World in a Box to Images on a Screen, eds. Barbara Maria Stafford and Frances Terpak (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2001), 315.

or to make a response useful to her education. Even the depicted vegetation may serve as an introduction to the history of plants…

Not only does this quotation reveal the intellectual aspirations for the wallpaper, but it also reveals where the manufacturers imagined that the papers would hang. By referring to the mother and daughter, Dufour et Cie has securely located the panoramic paper within the confines of the home. Images on panoramic wallpaper are therefore “an extension of the family[’s private] library,” as learning has moved out of books and onto the wall. In front of Vues d’Amérique du Nord, the owner assumed a role similar to guides at public spectacles and to those depicted on the wallpaper itself. The owner reveals the American landscapes, highlighting its contents and demonstrating command over the visual material.

There are several visual cues in Vues d’Amérique du Nord that suggest this paper’s educational goals. The landscapes shown within each of the five vignettes are themselves instructive and taxonomic in nature. The background of the five scenes highlight specific locations on the North American continent and document identifiable features of each terrain, such as Niagara’s rocky cliffs, the mountains surrounding West Point, and the Boston city skyline. Because of the artists’ accuracy in depicting the landscape setting, Zuber et Cie provides the viewer with an exact knowledge of the appearance of the American terrain for knowledgeable consumption. Furthermore, the

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wallpaper acts as a didactic tool, depicting the results of successful democracy through the five spectacles depicted across the wallpaper. Particular details, including technological developments and diverse populations, within the spectacles allow for educational inspection.

Scattered throughout the landscape scenes, the viewer can identify aspects of modern, American technological advancements, such as the steamboat. Included in conspicuous locations within the composition, the steamboat appears in four of the five American scenes. Offered for exploration and discussion, the steamboat was an American marvel. It contributed to national unity, as the steamboat facilitated speedy transportation and exchange of goods and ideas. In the Niagara Falls image, a steamboat appears at the center of the Niagara River, approximately two feet above the bottom edge of the wallpaper; the boat would be at an adult viewer’s eyelevel (Figure 21). The steamboat’s mechanical elements (the paddle box, smokestacks, and pulley system) are carefully rendered, allowing for a viewer to identify and discuss the boat’s working elements. It is as if a non-annotated image of a steamboat has been transposed from a book onto the wall, allowing viewers to identify and learn the elements themselves.

The figures in the foreground, measuring around six inches in height, also offer themselves for intellectual exploration. Appearing as the brightest, largest, and closest elements in the landscape, a viewer cannot help but to crouch down and explore the American citizens depicted in the foreground of each vignette. As the two-dimensional figures engage in looking, they model the proper spectator behavior for the individuals viewing the actual wallpaper. Furthermore, figures such as the tour guides in the Niagara vignette and the pointing man at Boston Harbor, direct the wallpaper viewer’s gaze.
These figures highlight important elements within the composition, ensuring that both the figural and actual nineteenth-century spectators thoroughly investigate the scene. The American citizens depicted across the foreground could, therefore, serve as viewing surrogates for the French consumer, who acts as an instructor to her children.

Detailed in both dress and anatomy, the figures on the wallpaper also reveal information about Americans and humanity in general. The groupings of African American citizens seen throughout *Vues d'Amérique du Nord* are most striking, as these groups are formally emphasized through color, placement, and compositional irregularities. Because of the artistic emphasis, the figural groups that contain African Americans catch the viewer’s attention and beckon for further exploration. For example, the group in the Virginia scene composed of three blacks and one mixed-race figures boldly contrasts the other clusters, as this particular group holds a stiff, frontal pose. The figures stand shoulder-to-shoulder, while the other Americans in the scene form loose, organic arrangements. Visual arrestsments, such as this, can be identified every time a black figure appears. One must, therefore, conclude that these groups are important to the viewer’s overall experience in front of the wallpaper.

Upon close inspection of the groups of African Americans, it becomes obvious that specific, individual wood blocks were created for black and white figures. The figures are not simply stock characters, painted black or white; rather, Zuber et Cie’s artists paid careful attention to crafting different facial types for the different races. Perhaps this is most clear when looking at a detail from the West Point scene, in which a black and white man stand next to each other in profile. The black figure has a smaller face with a large nose and protruding lips; the white man has a larger face with a small
nose and mouth (Figure 25). These subtle physical differences and the men’s pose, resonate with the nineteenth-century popular and intellectual interest in phrenology and physiognomy. Publications by Franz-Joseph Gall (1758-1828), a nineteenth-century German physician, and Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741 – 1801), an eighteenth-century German scientist, popularized these particular scientific methods. Both German scientists’ books were widely popular in France during the 1830s, as phrenology and physiognomy were understood as legitimate scientific approaches used to diagnose a person’s intelligence and character. Based on external appearances, phrenology focused on the shape of the skull, while physiognomy analyzed facial features and types.

Regardless of their specific differences, both forms of thought were increasingly trendy. Physiognomic prints and publications had wide circulations and were commonly regarded as educational sources. Images depicting people of different races in profile were the most commonly circulated physiognomic prints, and thereby this particular pose became associated with phrenology and physiognomy contexts (Figure 26). The Paris Phrenological Society was established in 1830, giving these scientific practices more public legitimacy.

Eighteenth-century popular culture approached phrenology as entertainment, but with the establishment of the Phrenological Society, these amusements became legitimized as factual sciences.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Zuber et Cie’s educational wall hanging, *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, incorporates tropes from physiognomy and phrenology prints.

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Although most obviously identifiable when the figures are in profile poses, all the African American figures in the image possess exaggerated facial features. The black and white men in profile at West Point clearly demonstrate this principle, as their compositional alignment resonates with those seen in phrenology prints (Figures 25 & 26). Two men are aligned in profile, facing in the same direction, allowing the viewer to draw comparisons between the men’s physical features. One can imagine the nineteenth-century viewer touching the wallpaper and tracing the figures’ profiles and identifying parallels and discrepancies between the people depicted. Like the popular scientific prints, Zuber et Cie encouraged the viewer to make comparisons between the white and black figures, identifying the facial discrepancies, and thereby moral differences as well, between the two races.

The black man, again appearing in profile, dressed in a red Phrygian cap in the Boston Harbor scene, continues to emphasize Zuber et Cie’s educational intentions (Figure 27). Echoing the scientific prints, both in body pose and facial features, this black figure stands in front of a green tent, creating a dramatic contrast. Amongst the busy hustle and bustle of the Boston Harbor, the artists positioned the black figure against a solid background, allowing for the viewer to explore his physicality. Zuber et Cie used the visual tropes of scientific prints, encouraging nineteenth-century viewers to engage in educational instruction and dialogue. Like the public spectacles, contemporary intellectual pursuits influenced the private panorama. By including references to

103 Although these formal elements invite the viewer to explore the black body, the Phrygian cap reminds the viewer that the man possesses liberty and freedom.
phrenology and physiognomy, the domestic unit not only learned about humanity in general, but also became aware of contemporary ideas and philosophies.

Its encompassing composition completely surrounded the viewers, arresting their gazes and transporting them to an American locale. Panoramic wallpaper transformed a convivial domestic space into a distinctive environment that conveyed a social identity. Through its American content, *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* served as an educational tool, presenting technology and racial relationships for close inspection. The wallpaper’s didactic qualities demonstrated the owner’s commitment to familial education and moral improvement, while the intellectual and political themes posed on the paper’s surface emphasized the owner’s political standings. Furthermore this domestic, educational spectacle worked to reinforce, visualize, and sustain the French bourgeois commitment to the republican ideals seemingly exemplified by the United States. French buyers could use *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* as a didactic tool, instructing future generations about ideal politics, social theory, and racial science. In this way, the wallpaper became a carefully-planned social signifier and educational vehicle, ensuring the continuation of republican political ideals.
Conclusion

The bourgeoisie of the July Monarchy adamantly supported political reform and change, working towards a republican government. Although the French were knowledgeable of the American system’s flaws, the United States was the only contemporary, functioning republican government. Whether the American government was successful or not, France’s political future depended on the idea that republicanism could successfully flourish there. Thus, to legitimize political yearnings, the French returned to late eighteenth-century principles and imagined America as an idealized land of republicanism. The visual cues found in the spectacles throughout *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* reveal that unity, racial equality, a flourishing commerce, and geographic connectedness are characteristics of successful republicanism. By displaying this particular scenic wallpaper in the entry hall or dining room or site of sociability in a Parisian apartment, Zuber et Cie’s bourgeois patrons boldly aligned themselves with these political characteristics.

This thesis works to advocate for the importance of the interior, for when one considers *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* in the domestic space, the wallpaper becomes more than decoration. Rather, through its educational, intellectual, and political allusions *Vues d'Amérique du Nord* would have been endowed with great agency, as it worked to define and create social identities and relationships. The daily use of domestic space suggests that material objects found within these contexts passed through the hands and by the eyes of actual people. Thus, interior material embellishments, like panoramic wallpaper,
allow scholars to come closer to real, historical people and social intentions as well as their interactions. As I have demonstrated, *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* provides the modern viewer with the opportunity to explore, identify, and approach a very specific historical moment during the July Monarchy. Ultimately, *Vues d’Amérique du Nord* exposes the French mid-nineteenth-century belief that republican America truly exemplified the political future of France.
FIGURES:


Figure 5: Eugène Delacroix, *Liberty Leading the People*, 1834, oil on canvas. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
Figure 7: Thompson Thomas, *Port of New York from Battery Park*, 1834, colored lithograph. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
Figure 8: Zuber et Cie, “Natural Land Bridge, Virginia,” from *Vues d'Amérique du Nord*, 1834, color block print. Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York.
Figure 10: Zuber et Cie, Detail of “Niagara Falls” from *Vues d'Amérique du Nord*, 1834, color block print. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.
Figure 11: Zuber et Cie, Detail of “Niagara Falls” from Vues d’Amérique du Nord, 1834, color block print. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.
Figure 12: Zuber et Cie, “New York Palisades” from *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, 1834, color block print. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.
Figure 13: Zuber et Cie., Detail of “New York Palisades” from *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, 1834, color block print. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.
Figure 14: Zuber et Cie, “Military Review at West Point” from *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, 1834, color block print. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.
Figure 16: Zuber et Cie, Detail of “Natural Land Bridge, Virginia” from *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, 1834, color block print. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.
Figure 17: Zuber et Cie, Detail of “Military Review at West Point” from from Vues d’Amérique du Nord, 1834, color block print. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.
Figure 18: Zuber et Cie, Detail of “Natural Land Bridge, Virginia” from Vues d’Amérique du Nord, 1834, color block print. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.
Figure 19: Anonymous, *Indépendance des États-Unis*, 19th C., colored lithograph.

Figure 21: Zuber et Cie, Detail of “Niagara Falls” from *Vues d'Amérique du Nord*, 1834, color block print. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.
Figure 25: Detail of “Military Review at West Point” from *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, 1834, color block print. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.

Figure 26: Johann Kaspar Lavater, “The Four Temperments” from *Physiognomische Fragmente*, 1775, woodcut.
Figure 27: Zuber et Cie, Detail of “Boston Harbor” from *Vues d’Amérique du Nord*, 1834. Photograph by Joanna M. Gohmann – Courtesy of Martha Washington Inn – Abingdon, Virginia.


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