Imagining the Built Environment: Montreal's Portuguese Community

By: Claudia Oliveira

claudiaraqueloliveira@hotmail.com

As a child in the city of Montreal, St-Laurent Boulevard was always a source of excitement for me. Having grown up in a Portuguese family, going to the Main was like going home; maybe it was all the familiar faces or maybe it was hearing people speak my mother tongue. Whatever the reason, one thing is certain: the Portuguese quarter on St-Laurent and its surrounding streets have helped me to stay connected to a country that I may otherwise have forgotten. Yet in thinking about its impact on my life, I have often wondered what this community has meant to others in Montreal. Thus, in light of this conference about the city as palimpsest, I would like to explore the impact that Portuguese immigration has had on Montreal, and the traces that have been left by those who build cultural communities here. Though the Portuguese left their country for difficult economic and political reasons, they succeeded in coming together as a community in Montreal to build what is now known as "Little Portugal". Through mutual help and resources, they succeeded in renovating a neighbourhood that was run down and unsafe. The following paper focuses on three sites or spaces inhabited by the Portuguese in Montreal: the Portugal Park on St-Laurent and Marie-Anne, the Portuguese Association of Canada, a former synagogue, located at 4170 St-Urbain, and the Mission Santa Cruz Church, located at 60 Rachel Street. These spaces will allow for a better understanding of the different methods by which a cultural community can represent itself in a new land and how its appropriation of space can assist in its survival. The exploration of space by the Portuguese and its role in the proclamation of "Portuguese" identity will be analyzed using Henri Lefebvre's theories of space. This approach will explore identity through space and will illustrate how the

Portuguese community has created spaces that are identifiably Portuguese in nature. Furthermore, analyzing different structures in the Portuguese community will also illustrate how an ethnic community can promote visibility, even when inhabiting a space that was built for a different purpose. The architectural elements and their identifiably Portuguese characteristics will also be considered using Dell Upton's method of analyzing architecture using a cultural landscape approach. Furthermore, Dolores Hayden's theories on place memory and her view of sites as storehouses for collective memory will also be considered. This approach will touch on the role of the built environment as a device that enables and anchors memory. How have these three sites preserved and promoted collective memory and for whom are they mnemonic devices? By analyzing the architecture and urban planning of this community, the contributions that this ethnic community has made in shaping the urban landscape of Montreal become clearer.

Why Immigrate?

Historically, the Portuguese have had centuries of strong and significant ties to North America. According to *The Guide to Ethnic Montreal*, Portuguese navigators and fishermen have long been following the massive eastern coast cod stocks. In fact, some historians believe that Colombus had information from the Portuguese when he came to North America.[i] In Canada, Portugal's legacy can be found in the cartography of the country. For, example there are a few sites in Canada with Portuguese names, such as Portugal's Cove in Newfoundland and the Bay of Fundy (which comes from the term *Rio Fundo*, meaning Deep Bay) in Nova Scotia.[ii] The area that is today known as Labrador comes from the Portuguese *Lavrador*, meaning landowner, a term given to the area by Jo o Fernandes, who mapped part of Canada's eastern coast for Portugal.[iii]

In modern times, many Portuguese immigrated to Canada because of the political turmoil in Portugal. In 1926, army officers overthrew Portugal's civilian government and abolished parliament, suspended civil rights and created a dictatorship.[iv] However, the country's economic problems persisted and the government soon turned to António de Oliveira Salazar to serve as minister of finance. Salazar's influence would soon grow. From 1932 to 1968, Salazar served as the Prime Minister of the country. His authoritarian and Fascist government did much to suppress its people. Poverty, lack of employment, the overpopulations of the Azores and Madeira, military service, colonial wars and repression are but a few of the things that motivated many to leave the country.[v] Thus, many of those who left the country were doing so to get away from Salazar and his regime. Furthermore, during the 1960s, revolutions in Portugal's African territories, such as Mozambique, Guinea and Angola, worried many young men and their families. Many fled Portugal in an attempt to escape obligatory military service.[vi]

Those who immigrated to Canada, began to do so in the early 1950s, when Canada was promoting immigration for the purpose of obtaining agricultural and railway workers. In 1952, both countries developed an agreement which allowed the Canadian government to recruit workers by contract, from all areas of Montreal.[vii] Furthermore, the process was accelerated by means of sponsorship and family reunification. From the mid-1970s onward, the number of Portuguese immigrating to Canada began to diminish, partly because of changes in Canadian legislation and also because of better work prospects for the people in Portugal. It is interesting to note that, despite the fact that many of the immigrants came from rural areas, they often chose to settle in urban spaces. There, they constructed ethnic communities that were both self-contained and self-sufficient.[viii]

Portugal Park

The Portuguese community in Montreal is no exception to this phenomenon of a self-contained and self-sufficient ethnic community. The core of the community is "in an area bounded by Sherbrooke to the south, St-Denis to the east, avenue du Parc to the west and the CN/CP [Canadian National/Canadian Pacific] railway lines to the north."[ix] On the corner of St-Laurent and Marie-Anne is the Portugal Park. According to documents in the Montreal archives, the area to the south of Marie-Anne, between Saint-Dominique and Saint-Laurent, was once known as Square Cherrier. Then, on April 4 1899, the city renamed the square Vallières. Stanilas-Denis Vallières (1853-1939) was the alderman of the Saint-Denis district from 1900 to 1904, and of the Duvernay quarter from 1904 to 1906.[x]

There may have been a few factors in the renaming of the square and the honouring of the Portuguese community. First, in 1974 (the year before the park was inaugurated), the Portuguese community was honoured by l'Ordre des architects du Québec, for renovation work in the area bounded by St-Joseph Boulevard, Park Avenue, St. Denis and Sherbrooke Streets.[xi] Wherever they move, the Portuguese tend to start up extensive renovations, through mutual help and cooperation.[xii] In 1975, the Ministry of Immigration released the following statement:

> Thanks to their determination, the Portuguese of the Saint-Louis quarter have succeeded in reconstituting an urban area that is not only viable, but also enjoyable... The rejuvenated facades and the more important yet discreet interior renovations, do not fully divulge the profound changes that have been brought about by the social restructuration of this neighbourhood...[xiii]

Why were the Portuguese held in such high esteem for their work in the rejuvenation of this neighbourhood? The answer lies in the very reason why this area has attracted so many newly arrived immigrants. The area was relatively poor and inexpensive; green spaces were rarely seen. Though the houses were far from new constructions, they were spacious and allowed for

the reunification of immigrant families and offered the Portuguese the advantages to living in a central location in the city.[xiv] In less than twenty years, the Portuguese residents of the Plateau Mont-Royal transformed the neighbourhood into a safer, cleaner, and more valuable area. Furthermore, the transformation of this park did a great deal more for the community. When it was still known as the Vallières Square, the park was mostly used as a hub for people who wanted to drink in public.[xv] As a result, its transformation into a park for the Portuguese community, may have contributed to the improvement of the neighbourhood itself.

The naming of the Portugal Park in 1975 was directly linked to the achievements and recognition of the community.[xvi] Furthermore, in 1975, there was a festival honouring 'The Portuguese Immigrant', an initiative of the *Fédération des organismes portugais du Québec*.[xvii] In light of this event, Roger Sigouin, a representative of Mayor Jean Drapeau, announced that the park would change its name, in the presence of hundreds of Portuguese in the Vallières Square.[xviii] Yet the change of name made certain politicians uneasy. The toponomy committee was formed solely of members of Mayor Jean Drapeau's Civic party and certain opposition members feared that more areas of Montreal would be renamed in honour of other ethnic communities.[xix] Bringing this fear to the foreground, one Councillor of the Montreal Citizens Movement asked the council chamber: "Are you afraid we'll request that Sherbrooke St. be changed to the Ho Chi Minh Trail?"[xx]

There were two distinct phases to this park. At first, when the park was inaugurated, it was covered with grass and only contained a column, bearing two dedications. One side of the column commemorates the first Montreal to Lisbon commercial air flight on the 17th of April, 1971. The other side of the column contains a copy of one of the stones used to mark the discovery of new lands by the Portuguese navigators of the 16th and 17th centuries.[xxi] In 1990,

this green space was transformed; the city honoured the community by replacing most of the grass with cobblestones and adding a large sculpture and concrete open-air stage decorated with Portuguese ceramic tiles. Though some angry residents complained about the loss of green space, members of the Portuguese community were thrilled to have a park similar to those they had had in their homeland.[xxii] The site created greater visibility for the community. It is an example of how communities take over space and how they create symbols of their identity. Yet to better understand the dynamics of this space, a theoretical approach must be considered.

A study of Henri Lefebvre's theories of space can assist in the understanding of how the built environment can contribute to the preservation and promotion of a community's identity. Lefebvre identifies three kinds of spaces, the first being spatial practices. In this type of space, an emphasis is placed on the design.[xxiii] In other words, how is this space used? In the case of the Portugal Park, on any one day, many different people pass through the park. Some are indeed, of Portuguese origin or descent, and take advantage of their time in the park to sit or read the local Portuguese newspaper. Others watch as their children play, while some run to the gazebo to escape the rain. The park is used as a site for concerts and theatrical performances. It is also a popular stop for the religious parades that take over the streets.

The second kind of space, according to Lefebvre, is representations of space.[xxiv] Much like a map can represent a city, while not being the city itself, the Portugal Park can also be seen as a representation of the Main, a testament to its multi-cultural layers. Two students at Concordia University explored this notion by taking a journey on the 55 bus. The 55 bus begins its journey on Boulevard St-Laurent at the Old Port, continues northwards through China Town, past the Portuguese quarters and Little Italy, all the way up to the Chabanel Street garment district.[xxv] The passengers that come on and off the bus come from diverse backgrounds; as they

board the 55, their voices begin to intermingle and so too do their languages. From this daily occurrence, Project 55, an oral history of St-Laurent Boulevard, was created by artists Jasmine St-Laurent and Nancy Rebelo. The project offered a story of immigrants as told by immigrants; the students were interested in knowing what the street meant to those they interviewed on the 55 bus, in terms of how these immigrants adjusted to living in Montreal. The result was an oral history package that combined an audio tour, a pamphlet and a comprehensive lesson.[xxvi] One of the stops on the tour was the Portugal Park; in St-Laurent and Rebelo's project, it is seen as one of many symbols of the community whose identity was carved into this street. Thus the Portugal Park represents a stitch, if you will, in the multi-cultural fabric of St-Laurent Boulevard. The park acts as a representation of space because it represents the multiculturalism of the area it occupies, namely St-Laurent Boulevard.

The third kind of space for Lefebvre is a space of representation.[xxvii] In this case, this is a space in which the notion of being 'Portuguese' is represented. In other words, the space is turned into something with a specific identity. What elements of this space make it recognizably Portuguese? Let us first begin with the tiled roofing on the gazebo; this roofing method is steeped in tradition and is a key element in the concept of a conventional Portuguese home. Furthermore, Portuguese ceramic tiles, or *azulejo* as they are called in Portuguese, decorate and line the stage, fountain and entrance of the park. The use of these tiles in particular is a mark of Portugal's heritage, because its roots are distinctly Portuguese and adorn countless buildings throughout the country.

A Synagogue Turned Cultural Center

All of the facets and decorative aspects of the Portugal Park show that the community has created spaces that stand as conscious symbols of their identity. But how have they forged their identity into spaces that were not built for this purpose? Consider the example of the building at 4170 St-Urbain, which now houses the Portuguese Association of Canada. The building was constructed between 1913 and 1920, as a synagogue which housed the Beth Hamedrash Chevra Shaas congregation, built by architects Mayers and Girvan.[xxviii] Why was a former synagogue located in this area of the Plateau Mont-Royal? The answer to that question lies in the events surrounding the arrival of the Portuguese to Canada.

The immigration of the Portuguese coincided with the exodus of the Jewish Community from the Main. From late in the nineteenth century through to the Second World War, the heart of the Jewish community in Montreal lay in the area beginning at St-Antoine (previously known as Craig Street) and ran north to Mount Royal Avenue. It sprawled about six blocks on either side of St-Laurent.[xxix] This area was a stepping stone of sorts; a means to an end. This transitional zone allowed for immigrants to prosper and "was literally a road to opportunity and an incubator for greatness."[xxx] Joe King, author of *From the Ghetto to the Main: The Story of the Jews of Montreal*, explains that as the community prospered, Jewish immigrants moved their community northward.[xxxi] As early as 1931, as the Jewish community worked its way to Mount Royal, Greek and Portuguese immigrants began to move into tenements vacated by the Jews.[xxxii] With the end of the Second World War and the return to peace and prosperity, many of the immigrants who had arrived in Canada at the beginning of the century left the Plateau Mont-Royal and settled in middle-class suburbs.[xxxiii] The immigrants who arrived after the war were searching for inexpensive housing and gravitated to St-Laurent Boulevard. Thus, "Greeks,

Portuguese and Hungarians, to mention only the largest of these communities, settled in Montreal in a neighbourhood that already bore the obvious traces of the ethnic communities that had come before them."[xxxiv] The Jewish and Portuguese immigrants differed in that they came from very different environments. The Eastern European Jews that arrived at the turn of the twentieth century "already had a longstanding urban tradition, many of them possessing a solid background in industrial trades and commerce."[xxxv] The Portuguese, on the other hand, settled in urban areas, despite their rural roots in Portugal.[xxxvi]

On January 7 1956, a group of newly arrived Portuguese immigrants inaugurated the first Portuguese association in Canada, the *Associação Portuguesa do Canada* (APC).[xxxvii] In the following years, the APC would become one of many institutions run by the Portuguese community. The APC organized cultural, artistic, recreational and athletic activities for the Portuguese community. It also assisted the community in integrating itself into the community, by offering French and English language courses and assisted in finding jobs for those who had just arrived in Canada.[xxxviii] At the beginning, the headquarters of the Canadian Portuguese Association was at the corner of the Main and Sherbrooke, in the Godin Building.[xxxix] In the early 1970s, the institution moved to 4170 St-Urbain, just south of Rachel. This former synagogue was one of many that was left behind by the Jewish community, which were turned "into churches or meeting places of another style altogether."[xl]

Recalling Henri Lefebvre's spaces of representation, the synagogue has architectural elements that are characteristic of synagogues in Montreal at this time. An inventory of the synagogues of Montreal described this building in the following terms: its "careful composition and its proportions [as well as its] circular and semi-circular forms are a typical part of the architectural language used for new synagogue buildings in Montreal at that time."[xli]

Furthermore, though many of its significant features have been modified, one can easily see that this was once a religious building. Some of the architectural elements that suggest this building was designed for a religious purpose are the Romanesque arches over the two main doors and the circular window on the facade, "under the peak of the pitched roof-line."[xlii] The window which now contains the symbol of the Portuguese Association of Canada, may have once housed an inset Star of David. The tall arched windows may also indicate that the stairwells led to the women's gallery. At the back of the building, the rear circular window as well as other arched windows have been covered with brick. Yet perhaps the most impressive signifier of the building's use as a synagogue is the untouched Hebrew inscription of the name of the congregation inscribed on stone trim above the main entrance. The inside of the structure contains fewer symbols of the APC's former use as a synagogue.

When the Portuguese Association took over the space in the 1970s, they began to cover the walls with images of Portugal. The posters that decorate the basement walls depict traditional Portuguese customs, including bullfighting. Others show familiar landscapes of Portugal. Inside the space formerly used as a synagogue, few Jewish elements are recognizable. The arched side windows, now covered, house a variety of images, from Catholic saints to local soccer teams. A painted Portuguese flag adorns the gallery, visible from the first floor. Pictures of important figures of the Portuguese community line the walls.

Has the prior use of this building been lost? No, in fact many architectural studies of synagogues in Canada have included this building in their research. Thus, one could say that it still belongs to the collective memory of the Jewish community that first built it. The success of its transformation from synagogue to cultural center is due, in part, to the subtlety of the architecture. This greatly facilitated the process of conversion. Most of the features of this

building were easily altered or replaced with elements that would assist in the collective memory of the Portuguese, such as the circular window on the facade, which was replaced with symbol of the Portuguese Association or the former women's gallery now adorned with saints and a Portuguese flag. Much as it was undoubtedly the pride of the Jewish community, the building is now a testament to the resilience of the Portuguese. This pride is made evident by the many awards and commemorative plaques on display within the building, in honour of the Portuguese Association.

From the viewpoint of traditional architectural history, one would tend to focus on the intention of the builder or architect of this building. Evidently, the building was constructed to be used as a synagogue. However, an analysis of this building from a cultural landscape approach that acknowledges the "fragmentation of environmental meaning"[xliii] would be more useful. In his writings on cultural landscapes, Dell Upton wrote:

> [...] No builder can be certain that his or her work will have specific meaning, be used in certain ways, or be assigned a given value by its public [...] Once introduced into the landscape, the identity of a building and the intentions of its makers are dissolved within confusing patterns of human perception, imagination, and use. Consequently, the meaning of a building is determined primarily by its viewers and users.[xliv]

As Upton acknowledges, the meaning of a building is determined after its design and construction. In other words, akin to Lefebvre's concept of spatial practices, it is the use of a space that measures its value. Long after its initial design, the space at 4170 St-Urbain went from being used as a synagogue, to being transformed into a cultural center, representative of the Portuguese culture. Though the architects Mayers and Girvan set out to construct a building that stood as a representative of Jewish culture and religion, its use has changed. Thus, its value lies not in its design, but rather in the manner by which it is viewed and used by those who inhabit it.

Furthermore, "most of what is important about architecture is *un*intended."[xlv] Clearly, the architects did not intend to create a building that was subtle enough in its features, that it could fit any number of community purposes. Yet perhaps that is what is most valuable about this structure; its unintended flexibility. Shifting away from a focus on creator and intention, which is esteemed in traditional architectural history, requires a more contextualized approach. Upton calls for a "focus [on] the human experience of its own landscape, rather than the relationship of maker and object."[xlvi] Thus, analyzing this site as a form of cultural landscape would focus on the value and meaning that this building has been given by those who have come to treasure it most. The Portuguese immigrants of Montreal and their children have much to value about this building, for it has offered services and opportunities for those who left all of their belongings and friends behind. The APC used the building to help the Portuguese integrate themselves into the community by bringing Portuguese from different areas of Portugal together. It also helped in coping with a new country and language, by offering language classes and helping to find employment for those who had just arrived in Canada.

Place Memory

Those who leave their country in search for other opportunities in another country will undoubtedly encounter many difficulties. Learning a new language (in the case of the Portuguese in Montreal, learning two languages), adapting to a new climate and a new culture, are some of the challenges they faced. In this kind of situation, new immigrants will often turn to their beliefs as a means to cope with the drastic changes in their lives. The Portuguese, who are traditionally of the Catholic faith, did not waste any time in fulfilling these spiritual needs. According to the *Rencontres* exhibition catalogue, during the 1950s the Portuguese Catholics came together in a hall at the Notre-Dame Basilica.[xlvii] Then in 1963 the Corporation for the

Portuguese Catholics of Montreal was founded. This organization asked the Archbishop of Montreal for the authorization to create a Portuguese mission. Once they received permission the community had its first permanent place of worship on Clark Street. In 1964, they established a Catholic Portuguese mission under the name of Mission Santa-Cruz at 4440 Clark, a building once owned by the Jewish community.[xlviii] In 1984, the former Mount Royal Protestant elementary school was purchased at the corner of Rachel and Clark.

The Portuguese used this school, in part, to hold Portuguese language classes for the children of the community. C.B. Paulston, author of *Educational Language Policies in Utopia*, believes that the success of these Portuguese language programs lies in the recognition of

> the legitimacy and value of the students' ethnic background in the eyes of the dominant majority. They help contribute to the positive attitudes students display toward *both* cultures...Simply, by bringing all the children together, the classes contribute to a sense of community cohesion.[xlix]

The importance of finding a place, where language can be taught, is essential in the preservation of culture and the promotion of a sense of community. Though social memory is often tied to story-telling or oral history, as in the case of the Project 55, it can also be triggered by the urban environment. This notion of place memory was coined by philosopher Edward S. Casey, who defined it as:

> the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favor and parallel its own activities. We might even say that memory is naturally place-oriented or at least place-supported.[l]

 How then could one say that the *places* found in the Portuguese community evoke or trigger memories in Portuguese immigrants? Returning to the Portugal Park, when the Portuguese see elements of the park that parallel other architectural characteristics of buildings in Portugal, they

find themselves in familiar territory. This place evokes a memory of another place; perhaps a sea of red roof tops in Lisbon or a church in the center of the city.

The urban landscape may also trigger other kinds of memory, such as visual memory. Photographic collections may help in documenting the growth of the Portuguese community and the changes it has undergone in the last fifty years. An exhibition hosted by the *Centre d'histoire de Montréal* in collaboration with *le Carrefour des jeunes lusophones du Québec*, succeeded in doing just that. From September 18 2003 to April 25 2004, *Rencontres. La communauté portugaise de Montréal, 50 ans de voisinage* commemorated fifty years of a strong Portuguese presence in the city of Montreal.[li] The organizers used three sites to exhibit their material. The first was at the *Associação Portuguesa do Canada* (APC), at 4170 St-Urbain and featured profiles of residents who had contributed to the community. The second site was at the *Missão* [or Mission] *Santa Cruz*, the Portuguese Catholic church at 60 Rachel; it focused on the religious aspect of the community. The third site, at the *Centre d'histoire de Montréal*, at 335 Place d'Youville, highlighted the social aspect and achievements of the community. The exhibition also included guided tours, a collection of interviews with members of the Portuguese community in a "clinique de mémoire" setting and a catalogue.[lii] The catalogue is a detailed account of the history of the Portuguese, their immigration to Canada, their traditions, and their built environment. Furthermore, excerpts from the interviews conducted by the organizers of the exhibition and the *Carrefour des jeunes lusophones du Québec* accompany pictures, many of which were taken by members of the community. The interviews were conducted at various places in the Portuguese community; among them were the Mission Santa Cruz church, the Portugal park, *la Maison des Acores* (an organization for Portuguese immigrants that came from the Acores islands) and the church of Notre Dame de Fatima in Laval. Many important members

of the Portuguese community were invited for these interviews, while others responded to publicity campaigns in Portuguese publications.

When I visited the *Centre d'histoire de Montréal*, I was able to interview one of the organizers of the exhibition, Elodie, who explained how the exhibition came to be. Joaquina Pires, who works for the city of Montreal as a consultant in intercultural relations and is an active member in the Portuguese community, was the person who first approached the museum with the idea of organizing an exhibition which profiled the Portuguese community of Montreal. From there, a close relationship developed between the virtual *Musée de la Personne*, the *Centre d'histoire de Montréal* and the Portuguese community. Thus, the community was very hands-on for this project and ensured that their identity was properly represented.

The Portuguese community's emphasis on proclaiming their identity seems to be directly linked to their memories. According to Dolores Hayden, "identity is intimately tied to memory: both our personal memories (where we have come from and where we have dwelt) and the collective or social memories interconnected with the histories of our families, neighbours, fellow workers, and ethnic communities."[liii] Thus, by proclaiming their identity through sites such as the Portugal Park, the Mission Santa Cruz or the APC, the Portuguese are also creating a space where both their personal memories of Portugal and their collective memories of the country come together. These examples suggest that the built environment facilitates and promotes collective memory. Hayden refers to urban landscapes as "storehouses for these social memories."[liv] Thus, various sites within the Portuguese community can be seen as "storehouses" for collective memory. Why are these sites so powerful? Hayden explains that even "ordinary urban landscapes can nurture citizens' public memory [and] encompass shared time in the form of shared territory."[lv] As a result, the very fact that the Portuguese were able to find a place in

the city of Montreal, that they could share and transform, greatly facilitated their process of storing memories.

Yet, the Portuguese quarter and its built environment in Montreal not only stores the memories of the Portuguese, but also of the rest of Montreal. When the Portuguese started to come to Canada in large numbers, over fifty years ago, they set out to integrate themselves in the Canadian and Quebecois communities. Though the building of their community allowed for the promotion and proclamation of their identity, it also facilitated their integration. In 1975 Immigration Minister Jean Bienvenue said that the Portuguese were one of the best-integrated immigrant communities in Quebec.[lvi] Surely, the services offered by the Portuguese community, particularly by the APC, contributed to the positive outcome of their integration.

Mission Santa Cruz Church

On November 30 1986 the Santa Cruz Church was inaugurated on a lot adjacent to the former Our Lady of Mount Royal School.[lvii] The imposing structure, at the heart of the Portuguese community, attracts the attention of many who walk past it, particularly when it's the time of the religious festivals. At certain times of the year, the church will be covered with extravagant and multi-coloured decorations. The church hosts religious festivities, such as the Santo Cristo, Espírito Santo and Nossa Senhora do Monte festivals, all of which include processions.[lviii] Another event, the festival of Santa Cruz, is a weekend celebration in the month of June that features prayers, communion, an outdoor dinner, a bazaar and a religious procession, which is the highlight of the weekend.[lix] Many residents in the community witness these events and are often more than willing to partake in the outdoor dinner and bazaar. In spatial terms, Dolores Hayden argues that festivals and parades help to define cultural identity "by staking out

routes in the urban cultural landscape."[lx] This most definitely applies to the religious processions of the Portuguese, which have distinctive routes in the city. The processions often close down the streets at the heart of the Plateau, namely St-Laurent, Rachel and St-Urbain, making stops at focal points such as the Portugal Park and of course the Mission Santa Cruz church. The building of this church points to the manner by which an ethnic community can shape urban space, for it not only proclaims its identity but also affects other residents of the neighbourhood. However, it is not only the church that would be considered distinctive as an ethnic building type. Dolores Hayden mentions that "distinctive design traditions for outdoor spaces [may also be] associated with different ethnic groups – yards or gardens planted in certain ways identify [...] Portuguese residents."[lxi] How then, have the Portuguese succeeded in creating distinctive outdoor spaces that are Portuguese in nature and serve as a means to proclaim their presence in the community? As previously mentioned, the Portuguese community was honoured for its efforts in renovating its area on the Plateau Mont-Royal. Part of those renovations included outdoor gardens and religious imagery in *azulejo* (hand-painted ceramic tiles), similar to the ones found in the Portugal Park.

It appears that many of the efforts being made within the community to create spaces are there to promote Portuguese culture and enable memory. Why this focus on collective memory and why is it being promoted? I believe that the Portuguese community has explored memory through space for two very distinct reasons. The first would be the growing exodus of the Portuguese from the initial settlement location in the city. Many, in search of homes in suburban areas, have left this area and settled elsewhere in the city. Has this development made the area any less Portuguese? No. In fact, it's quite the opposite. One could consider the example of the Portugal Park and its two-phase creation. At first, the park only contained this

single column, but in 1990 it was reinvented and transformed into a space that created greater visibility for the community. Perhaps the two phases of this Park show not only the direct link that this space has to the collective memory of the community, but also the growing need of the Portuguese to anchor memory. Because the Portuguese have begun to exit the community, the need for this space to become a container of collective memory has increased. There are approximately 40,000 Montrealers of Portuguese origin, who reside in all parts of the city and even off the island.[lxii] Though many Portuguese no longer reside in the community, "their cultural and social life continues to be centred around the Main."[lxiii] Its status as a carrier of memory has made it a nuanced place because it represents a community that is no longer concentrated in this area. Yet the park's role in collective memory is not passive, for it also functions as an enabler of memory. Those who actually emigrated from Portugal did so forty or fifty years ago. As first and second generation Portuguese-Canadians build their lives in this country, their attachment and memories to Portugal fade. As a result, the Portugal Park plays an active role in the collective memory of the Portuguese because it is a teaching tool for a future generation, of which I myself am a part of.

The Portuguese community has handled and constructed their built environment in various ways. It has created spaces, such as the Portugal Park and Mission Santa Cruz church, as a means by which to carve its identity into the history of a street which harbours many different cultures. As per Henry Lefebvre's theories of space, these sites act as spaces that are distinctly Portuguese in nature. However, the Portuguese also transformed spaces to suit their community's needs, as in the case of the former synagogue turned cultural center. Though the building may not provide as clear a message as the Portugal Park, it still succeeds in promoting Portuguese identity by including elements which are associated with its culture. Furthermore, its

value does not lie in the intention of its builder, as Dell Upton underlines, but rather in its use. The building's unintended subtleness has allowed for this structure to be easily transformed and re-used. In terms of place memory, both the Portugal Park and the APC building (in which the notion of the "Portuguese" is represented), act as containers of collective memory. These carriers are used to preserve the Portuguese culture, while teaching its descendents about the land that their families left behind. Other sites within the community, such as outdoor gardens or renovated homes, also point to very distinctive design traditions for outdoor spaces, as illustrated by Dolores Hayden's views on urban landscape history. Though the traditions of the Portuguese and their contributions to the urban landscape of Montreal are very rich, their community is but one of many which make up the urban fabric of St-Laurent and by extension, Montreal. Many cultural communities have come and gone. Yet their influence on the built environment and the traces they leave behind, as in the case of the Portuguese, cannot be erased from the urban landscape of Montreal.

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[xi] *The Montreal Gazette*, "Square honors Portugal" 18 June 1975, np.

[xii] Robert A. Murdie and Carlos Teixeira, "The City as a Social Space." *Canadian Cities in Transition. The Twenty-First Century.* Trudi Bunting and Pierre Filion, eds. (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 2000) 215.

[xiii] Jean-François Leclerc, *Recontres. La communauté portugaise de Montréal, 50 ans de voisinage*, exh. cat. (Montreal, QC: Centre d'histoire de Montréal, 2003) 18: "Grâce à leur détermination, les Portugais du quartier Saint-Louis ont réussi à reconstituer un milieu urbain non seulement viable, mais agréable... Les façades rajeunies, discrets paravents de renovations intérieures plus importantes, ne laissent cependant pas soupçonner la profondeur des changements qui a amené la restructuration sociale de ce voisinage, hier encore menacé."

[xiv] Leclerc 18.

[xv] Ovila Lefebvre, "Le parc où se réunissent les amateurs d'alcool de bois passe aux enfants" *La Patrie*, 6 November 1949, 67.

[xvi] Leclerc, 18.

[xvii] *Le Devoir*, "Le Square Vallières est baptisé parc du Portugal" 8 September 1975, np.

[xviii] Ibid

[xix] *The Montreal Gazette*, "Square honors Portugal" 18 June 1975, np.

[xx] Ibid

[xxi] Aline Gubbay. *A street called the Main: the story of Montreal's Boulevard Saint-Laurent*. (Montreal, QC: Meridian Press, 1989) 121.

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xxxvi Victor M.P. Da Rosa and Carlos Texeira 7.

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xliv Upton 197

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li I would like to thank my colleague Medhi Ghafouri, for letting me know about this exhibition.

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