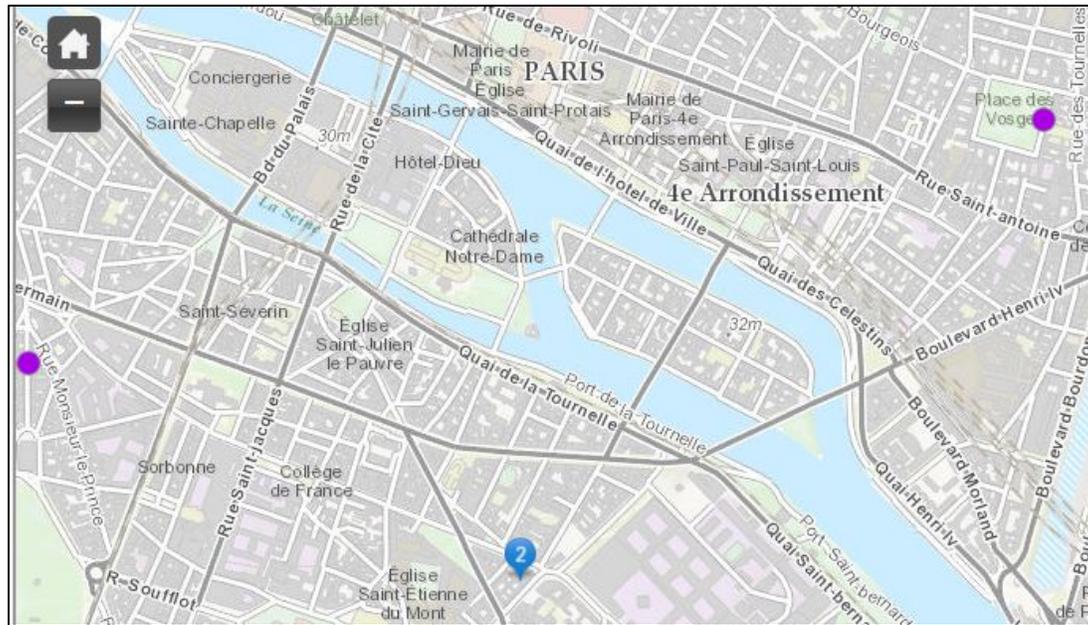


In 1878, the young Marguerite Eymery arrived in Paris from the countryside, where she took up residence with her cousin, Marie de Saverny, at 11 avenue de l'Opéra (circle number 1), in the 2nd arrondissement. It was the first in a series of events that would launch the eighteen-year old's career and transform her into a literary icon – the Decadent novelist Rachilde.



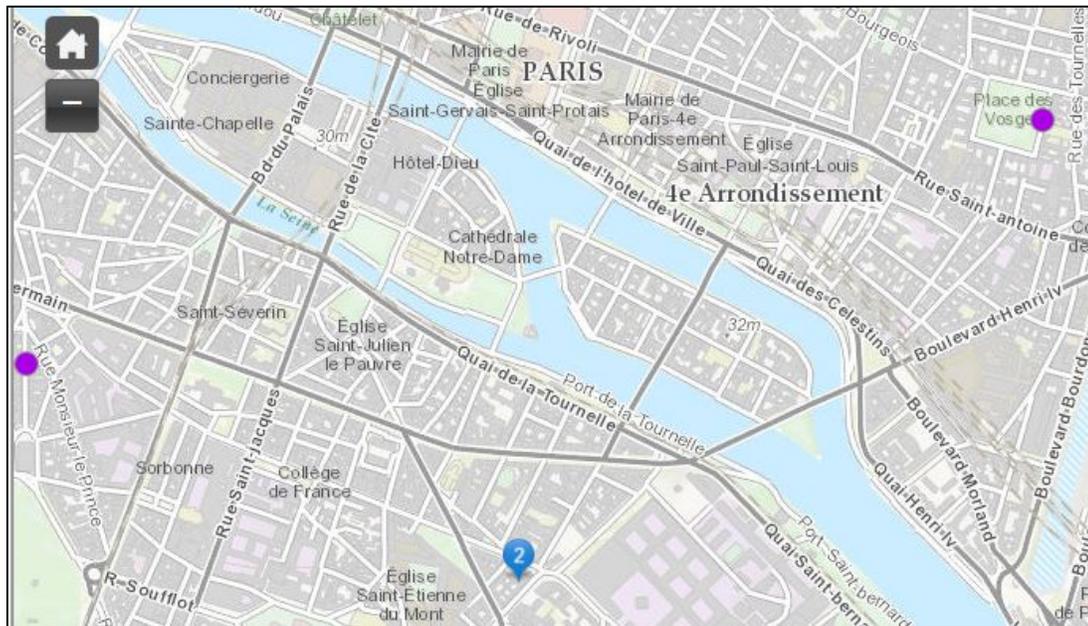
Her location in the city would prove instrumental in helping her land her first publisher. Indeed, avenue de l'Opéra was only about three-hundred meters away from the Palais-Royal, where many publishers' offices were located. Potential collaborators thus surrounded the aspiring writer. All that she needed was to find someone willing to work with her. Rachilde was helped in this matter by her cousin's connections. Saverny was the head of the fashion magazine *L'école des femmes* and helped the young author start her career as a writer in Paris by letting her work on some articles for her magazine and introducing her to the members of a few literary salons – including among others actress Sarah Bernhardt, writer Arsène Houssaye, and publisher Edouard Dentu (blue circle), with whom she published her first novel, *Monsieur de la nouveauté*, in 1880.

These social connections proved indispensable. But they were ultimately rooted in the geography of the city. Dentu's office was located within easy walking distance of Rachilde and Saverny. It was thus easy for the author to meet with her publisher when she needed to. Her physical position within the city, in other words, helped shape her collaboration.

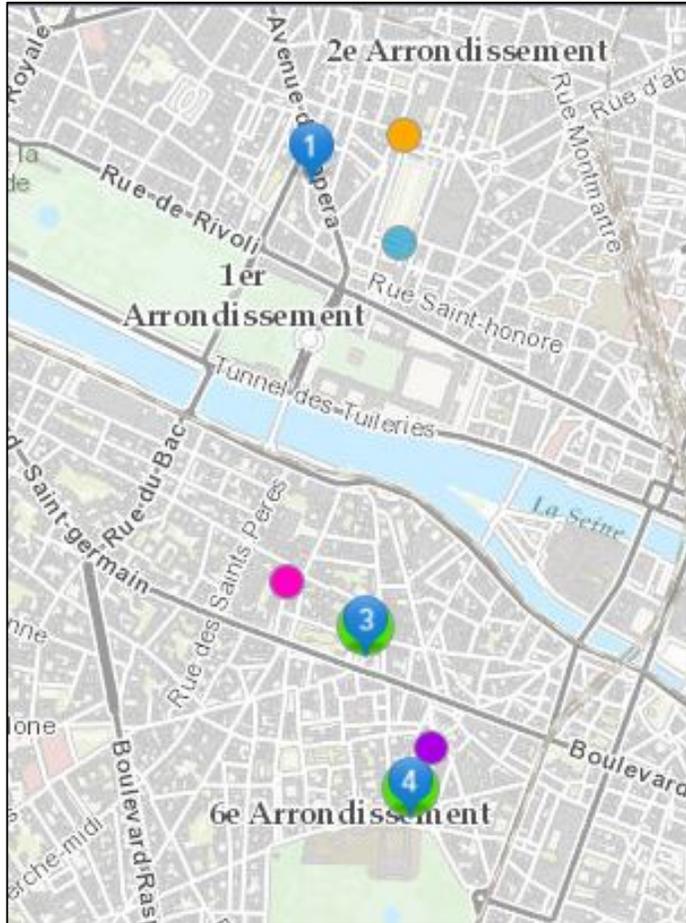


Rachilde's career was underway by 1880, but the author was not satisfied with the ways things were going and wanted a change. That change occurred when she moved from the rive droite to the rive gauche in 1881, after receiving money from her father upon her twenty-first birthday – a change that would put Rachilde in contact with new publishers and help her become a more famous author. From 1881 until 1889, she lived on her own at 5 rue des écoles (*circle number 2*), in the 5th arrondissement an intellectual hub and a vibrant neighborhood, with the Sorbonne University nearby. It was also a much more affordable arrondissement than where she had lived with her cousin. There, Rachilde started collaborating with a new publisher, Edouard Monnier (*purple circles*), conveniently located close to her new home, 7 rue de l'Odéon. Monnier published six of her books, from 1885 until 1888. Her collaboration with him was strategic. Monnier, or “la pire des canailles,” as Rachilde called him, was also, according to Michael Finn, “known for his risqué illustrated book-covers and his habit of cheating on the number of copies printed” (2009: 44).

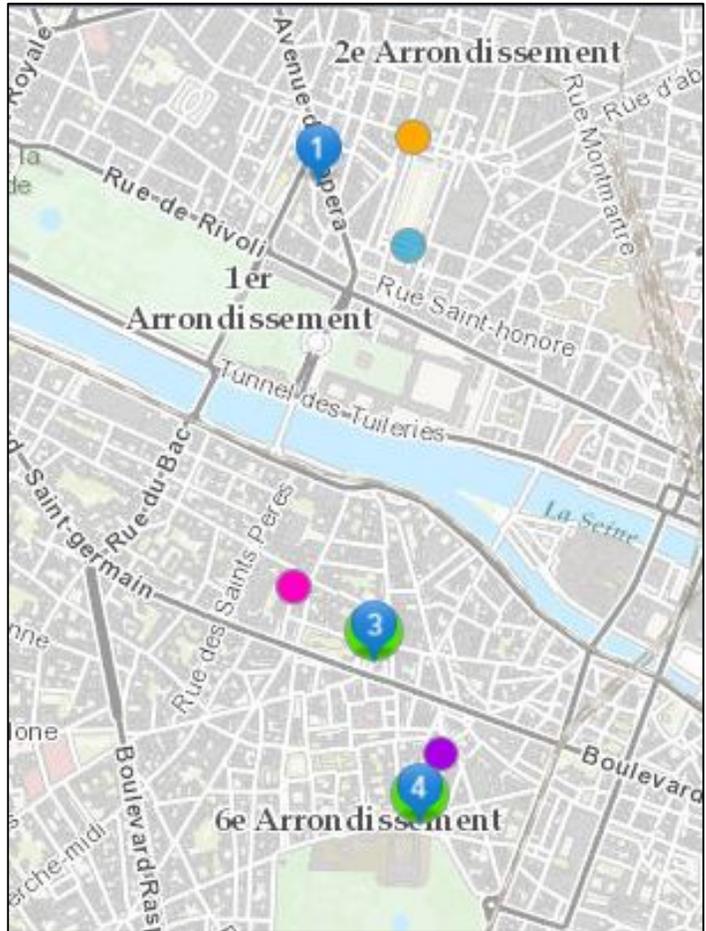
Finn, Michael R. 2009. *Hysteria, Hypnotism, the Spirits, and Pornography. Fin-de-siècle Cultural Discourses in the Decadent Rachilde*. Newark: U. of Delaware Press.



Rachilde seemed like a perfect fit for Monnier. In fact, the writer had just become extremely famous thanks to the publication of her scandalous book, *Monsieur Vénus*, published in 1884 in Brussels by Auguste Brancart. *Succès de scandale*, the book gave immediate notoriety to Rachilde. She had to have it published in Belgium as it was deemed too risqué for the French authorities. Even if Rachilde was sentenced to pay a fine of 2000 francs (which she never did) because her book was considered improper, the publication of *Monsieur Vénus* achieved what she had always wanted: Rachilde became a household name – hated by some, admired by others. It also meant that the publishers with whom she collaborated following *Monsieur Vénus* would not be afraid of working with her and would willingly play up her scandalous notoriety. Monnier matched that description. Both shared similar interests, living in the same “intellectual” arrondissement. They enjoyed being known for being scandalous and used their reputation as a strategy to sell more books.



In 1889, Rachilde moved once again (*number 3 circle*), to the 6th arrondissement, and like her previous moves, this move also helped instigate new collaborations. The 6th was slightly more expensive than where she had been living previously, but now that she was married to Alfred Vallette, the founder of the journal *Mercur de France*, she could afford living there. As Rachilde's career was more successful, the place where she was living mirrored that evolution. Again, living in a wealthier arrondissement precipitated a change in publishers. Indeed, Rachilde started working with nearby publishers Félix Brossier and later Léon Genonceaux (*pink circle*), who took over Brossier's business in 1890. These two men, who also lived in the 6th arrondissement, published her next three books, from 1889 until 1891. But the collaboration came to an end in the early 1890s, when both men were either condemned or threatened for their *outrage[s] aux bonnes moeurs*.



This forced Rachilde to find another publisher as previous collaborators had proved more scandalous than her books. In 1893, she published a single book with Simonis Empis (*yellow circle*), for once collaborating with a publisher outside of her neighborhood. Empis, whose offices were located near where she had lived with her cousin, was located further away than any of her other publishers, but she may have met him when she lived with her cousin and worked with Dentu. Unlike Rachilde's previous publishers, Simonis Empis did not have a scandalous reputation, which was what Rachilde was probably looking for as she wanted to be seen as a more "serious" author. She only worked with Simonis Empis for a single book, because in 1893, her husband's *Mercur de France* became a publishing house (*green circles*). Rachilde did not need to look any further for a publisher who would accommodate her every need. Ten years later, Rachilde and Valette moved to 26 rue de Condé (*circle number 4*), remaining in the 6th arrondissement and bringing their publishing house with them. Rachilde had never been closer to her publisher.

At the beginning of her career, Rachilde benefited from her family's connections. Not only could she live with her cousin, in a place so conveniently located to start a literary career, but she was also introduced to various important figures in contemporary cultural life such as Sarah Bernhardt, as well as publishers like Dentu. As her career progressed, she could afford living on her own. During that time, and even after she moved in with Vallette, she worked with publishers who lived nearby, more or less in the same arrondissements, and who also shared similar strategies. Her moves, in fact, always entailed a change in publishers. Her geographical location in the Parisian social space was thus key for her to maintain a place in literary society. Who she was working with and where she was living helped her to remain in the elite sphere to which Decadent writers like her belonged or were thought to belong.