

Paris' bridges as Life and Death Arteries

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Paris, considered the most romantic city in the world, includes 37 bridges that cross over the river Seine and connect the right and left banks. These bridges have come to symbolize life, love, and death.

My paper focuses on the context of love and death occurring on the bridges, as part of urban life as well as an imaginative and artistic one.

This paper introduces the River Brigade, a police unit that deals mainly with rescuing brokenhearted suicides, who jump over the Seine bridges. It examines the Alma Bridge, under which Princess Diana was killed. Since then, the Alma Bridge has become a touristic attraction. The bridge is named after the Alma River, considered to be the most beautiful river in the world. On the banks of this River, French and British forces defeated the Germans and the Russians in the Crimean War.

On the Alma Bridge, there is an original-sized statue of the twin flame held by the Statue of Liberty in New York. A scale model of the statue, created by the French sculptor Auguste Bartholdi, is placed not far away over the Grenelle Bridge. Grenelle's adjacent bridge, Mirabeau, is the star of Guillaume Apollinaire's poem, "Under Mirabeau Bridge" which symbolizes the love that flows and disappears in the Seine water under the bridge.

Recently, the Arts Bridge made headlines when the Paris Municipality banned all "Locks of Love" connected to the bridge. The heavy locks symbolized eternal love. The municipality removed the locks because their weight was breaking the bridge. But lovers still secretly attach their "love lock" to immortalize their love.

Bir Hakeim Bridge was named after the Battle of Bir Hakeim, an oasis in the Libyan Desert south and west of Tobruk, where Free French forces and the British army fought the German and Italian armies in 1942. In July of that year, Parisian Jews were gathered on the Bir Hakeim Bridge, before it was named after the battle. The Vichy Government then transported the Jews to their deaths in Auschwitz. Since then, the Bridge serves as a memorial. Every year, on Holocaust Remembrance Day, the names of the French Jews who were transported from the bridge are called out over a period of 24 hours.