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Framing Open Space-time in the Films of Jean Renoir: Society, Ideology, Technology

Barry Nevin

Submitted for the Degree of PhD
To the National University of Ireland, Galway

College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies
School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
Discipline of French

Head of School: Dr Kate Quinn

Research Supervisors: Dr Catherine Emerson and Dr Conn Holohan

Dedicated to the memory of my teacher, Noël Kirrane.

Table of Contents

Declaration **6**

Acknowledgements **7**

Abstract **11**

Chapter 1 – Introduction **13**

1.1 Aims and objectives 13

1.2 Theoretical Contextualisation: Theorising Renoir's Mise-en-scène of Open Space-Time 16

1.2.1 The Socialised Spaces of Renoir's "Open World": Bazin, Faulkner, and Braudy . 16

1.2.2 Deleuze's *Cinéma*(s): from *l'Image-mouvement* to *l'Image-temps* 21

1.2.3 "*Cronos et non pas Chronos*": Renoir and the Image of the Future 22

1.2.4 Deleuze's Critical limits: Society, Ideology, and Technology 28

1.2.5 Deleuze on Cinematographic Space 42

1.2.6 The Future beyond the *Point de Fuite*: Deleuze and Guattari's Spatial Thought 46

1.2.7 "For the future to be open, space must be open too": Doreen Massey 50

1.3 Literature Survey: Renoir and the Emergence of the New 54

1.3.1 Richard Rushton: Renoir's Deleuzian Imaginary 54

1.3.2 Martin O'Shaughnessy: Shooting in "Deep Time" 58

1.4 Corpus and Chapter Breakdown 62

1.5 Renoir *Auteur* and the Cracked Crystal: Discursive Position 70

Chapter 2 – *Teatro Mundi*: Framing Urban Dynamics in Renoir's Paris **73**

2.1 Introduction: Renoir, Cinema and the City 73

2.2 *La Chienne* (1931) 78

2.3 *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932) 94

2.4 *La Règle du jeu* (1939) 106

2.5 Conclusion: Renoir's *Ville-concept* 131

Chapter 3 – Renoir's Natural Landscape as Spatial Arena 135

3.1 Introduction: Opening the Natural Landscape to Space-Time............ 135

3.2 *Le Bled* (1929)... 142

3.3 *The Southerner* (1945) 159

3.4 *The River* (1951) 173

3.5 Conclusion: Dynamising the Landscape.. 194

Chapter 4 – "*Une ouverture d'avenir*" (?): Portraying the Future of the Front Populaire 199

4.1 Introduction: Theory and Texts in Context 199

4.2 *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (1936)... 211

4.3 *Les Bas-fonds* (1936) 227

4.4 *La Grande Illusion* (1937) 241

4.5 Conclusion: "*Nous dansons sur un volcan*."...................................... 264

Chapter 5 – Renoir's *Crises Anti-réalistes*: Framing *le Temps Gelé*..... 270

5.1 Introduction: Seeing Time in the *Image Plane* 270

5.2 *Diary of a Chambermaid* (1946).. 278

5.3 *The Golden Coach* (1952).. 297

5.4 *Eléna et les hommes* (1956) 312

5.5 Conclusion: Society and Spectacle 331

Conclusion... 337

Bibliography 353

Appendices... 366

Appendix 1: Corpus Breakdown... 366

Appendix 2: André Bazin on *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (1936).......... 368

Declaration

I hereby certify that this thesis is entirely my own work, and that I have not obtained a degree in this university or elsewhere on the basis of this work.

Signed: ________________ Date: January 2016

Barry Nevin

Acknowledgements

In 2009, with one hour to spare and nothing to read, I viewed Jean Renoir's *Partie de Campagne* (1936) for the very first time. I was immediately enthralled by the image of Rodolphe (Jacques Brunius) opening the shutters of a provincial restaurant to reveal Henriette (Sylvia Bataille) swinging on a tree, imbued in diffuse, natural light. Although the same moment continues to surprise me after innumerable viewings, such rewards alone are not enough to sustain four years of research. I would like to take this opportunity to thank a number of colleagues and friends, without whom this thesis could not have been completed, let alone envisaged.

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her much-deserved sabbatical year, to read countless drafts and make essential suggestions, all of which have moulded my perspective on Renoir's life and work, and the relationship between the two. Thanks to her unwavering support, endless patience, and contagious enthusiasm for both teaching and research, Catherine turned the potentially isolating task of writing this thesis into a productive, ongoing dialogue which, I hope, will not end with the submission of this work. Catherine's snarling contempt towards *The River* (1951) still pains me deeply, but I am willing to forgive her.

Fiona, Aisling, and Sherida made certain that there was always tea and chocolate in the house. I especially wish to take this opportunity to thank my sisters, Laura and Kate, and my parents, James and Margaret, who have consistently helped me to keep a practical perspective on my studies, and who all ensured that I never starved. I must add a special word for my father, who casually bought me *The Maltese Falcon* (Huston, 1941), *The Third Man* (Reed, 1949), *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder, 1951), *Rebel Without a Cause* (Ray, 1955), and David Thomson's *Biographical Dictionary of Film*, accidentally igniting a passion that I have been fortunate enough to channel into this project.

Abstract

In the films of Jean Renoir (1894-1979), class strata clash in public and private spheres, alternately eroding and bolstering ideological values, and implementing traumatic social upheaval on a local, national, or even international scale. Despite frequent emphasis on Renoir's pioneering exploitation of deep space and lateral camera mobility, and on the various evolutions in Renoir's narrative style and political outlook, the diverse ways in which Renoir frames the dynamic relationship between social space and physical space at each stage of his career have received relatively little attention.

The present study demonstrates the importance of integrating temporality into our analysis of the fluctuating, mutually affective relationship between physical and social space that structures Renoir's volatile societies. Analysing the continuity in space and time preserved by Renoir's techniques, Gilles Deleuze submits that Renoir's narrative style holds the stultifying inadequacies of the accumulated past and the potential creation of a genuinely new future in tension. Reading Deleuze's conceptualisation of Renoir's work through Deleuze and Guattari's spatial thought, Doreen Massey's theorisation of space-time, and archival research, this thesis relates Deleuze's proposal to Renoir's complex mise-en-scène of permeable, socially constructed hierarchies across a range of narrative settings.

Through a textual analysis of features directed by Renoir during the silent era, the 1930s, his wartime exile in Hollywood, and post-war career,

this thesis demonstrates that Renoir’s mise-en-scène of open space-time is the product of his photography of both urban and rural milieux, his political engagement with the French Left, and the distinctive techniques that Renoir exploited in innovative combinations across his rich and varied output.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

"C'est Renoir qui avait une vive conscience de l'identité de la liberté avec
un avenir, collectif ou individuel, avec un élan vers l'avenir,
une ouverture d'avenir."[1]

– Gilles Deleuze

"The space presented to the spectator is as movable as the spectator [...].
Not only do solid bodies move in space, but space itself moves,
changing, turning, dissolving and recrystallizing."[2]

– Erwin Panovsky

1.1 Aims and objectives

Since the 1950s, Jean Renoir's pioneering camera techniques and incisive portrayal of interactions amongst social strata within hierarchised societies have been subject to extensive critical analysis. However, the ways in which Renoir frames the fluctuating political properties of the geographical space inhabited by his characters have yet to be sufficiently explored. By applying

[1] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2: L'image-temps* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1985), 117: "It was Renoir who had an acute awareness of the identity of liberty with a collective or individual future, with a surge towards the future, an opening of the future."
[2] Cited in Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: a Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1974), 6.

Gilles Deleuze's film philosophy and Doreen Massey's spatial theory to a representative sample of Renoir's work, this thesis argues that Renoir's distinctive mise-en-scène foregrounds the integration of space and time, specifically the mutually affective relationship between physical and social space, towards the creation of genuinely new societies.

Drawing on a selection of Renoir's films, Deleuze proposes that Renoir's signature deep space portrays worlds that are pre-disposed towards change. More precisely, Deleuze suggests that Renoir's images capture the fissuring of time into two dyssymetrical jets, one of which is launched towards the future, the other of which falls ceaselessly into the past. Deleuze's investigation is replete with valuable insights regarding Renoir's socially stratified worlds, lending temporal consistency to Renoir's deeply composed images and theatrical motifs. However, it is hampered by a number of methodological flaws, not least Deleuze's reductive view of Renoir's other techniques and diverse social settings, and Deleuze's thoroughly inadequate analysis of cinematographic space. As a result, despite the centrality of spatial politics, diverse geographical settings, Renoir's various stylistic evolutions, and shifting political perspectives to our understandings of the *auteur*'s oeuvre, Deleuze fails to sufficiently address the ways in which Renoir frames the import of space – in its interconnected physical and social aspects – towards the potential creation of a new future within the world viewed.

By placing Deleuze's film philosophy in dialectic with a range of spatial theories and source documents, and drawing on the relationship between space and time invoked by Renoir's narrative techniques, this

thesis aims to determine the extent to which Renoir's mise-en-scène is informed by a conception of space-time as a fundamentally open construct. Three particular questions evoked by Deleuze's landmark study are central to this analysis. First of all, to what extent is Renoir's mise-en-scène of open space-time the product of Renoir's diverse narrative settings, specifically the Parisian milieux and rural landscapes that feature across Renoir's corpus? Secondly, how does Renoir's attitude towards the Front Populaire condition his mise-en-scène of competing spatial politics, and their influence on the actualisation of a new future? Finally, do the formal attributes of Renoir's post-war costume dramas, specifically lavish décor, saturated Technicolor, and a reliance on shallow compositions, create an image of open space-time?

By developing a framework that considers the dynamic spatial and temporal qualities of Renoir's narrative style, and by addressing each of these three questions, this thesis ultimately aims to demonstrate whether or not the range of societies portrayed across Renoir's diverse body of work are consistently structured through open space-time.

1.2 Theoretical Contextualisation: Theorising Renoir's Mise-en-scène of Open Space-Time

1.2.1 The Socialised Spaces of Renoir's "Open World": Bazin, Faulkner, and Braudy

Our present understandings of Renoir's audacious techniques and socially conscious style of filmmaking are largely informed by the work of André Bazin and Christopher Faulkner. Some of the most important elaborations on Renoir's distinctive mise-en-scène were originally formulated by Bazin in his major critical reappraisal of Renoir within the pages of *Cahiers du Cinéma* (especially "Renoir français"),[3] in *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* (an anthology of Bazin's major texts, first published 1958-1962), in *Le cinéma français de la Libération à la Nouvelle Vague* (a collection of newspaper articles, *Cahiers* texts, and a key conference speech outlining the influence of naturalist novels and Impressionist painting on Renoir's oeuvre), and in his posthumous *Jean Renoir* (1971). Drawing on his conviction that "les virtualités esthétiques de la photographie résident dans la révélation du réel,"[4] Bazin proposes that Renoir, Orson Welles, the Italian neorealists, and a select number of their predecessors (such as Robert Flaherty [*Nanook of the North*, 1922; *Moana of the South Seas*, 1926] and Erich von Stroheim [*Foolish Wives*, 1922; *Greed*, 1924]), "croient à la réalité":[5] resulting from

[3] André Bazin, "Renoir français," *Cahiers du cinéma* 8 (1952), 9-29. An abridged version of this article is reprinted in: André Bazin, *Jean Renoir* (Paris: Ivrea, 2005), 69-84.
[4] André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, (Paris: Cerf-Corlet, 2008), 16: "The aesthetic possibilities of photography derive from the revelation of the real."
[5] Ibid., 64: "believe in reality."

their endeavour to photograph an unpredigested real, each director's shooting style "suppose le respect de la continuité de l'espace dramatique et naturellement de sa durée."[6] Building on this, Bazin's texts emphasise Renoir's general avoidance of montage, and pioneering exploitation of deep space, extended takes, and Renoir's understanding of the screen as "le contraire d'un cadre: […] ce qu'il montre tire son prix de ce qu'il cache."[7] Because Bazin addresses time and space in equal measure, and is primarily interested in directors who prioritise ambiguity over homogenised reality,[8] his theories remain a crucial foundation to this (and arguably any) study of Renoir's mise-en-scène.

Bazin's project on Renoir's visual stylistics clearly corresponds with his own broader effort to promote what Bazin himself perceived as the cinema's vocation to embalm objective reality. As a result, he depoliticises Renoir's narrative style, even in the case of the director's most socially engaged works of the 1930s. Christopher Faulkner's *The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir* (1986) therefore represents an essential corrective to Bazin's interpretation of Renoir's work. Building on earlier auteurist textual studies conducted by Raymond Durgnat[9] and Alexander Sesonske,[10] Faulkner crucially foregrounds the critical perspective and contemporary social concerns embedded in Renoir's narrative style. Within the context of this thesis, Faulkner's most noteworthy analysis is his examination of *Toni*

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[6] Ibid., 74: "is based on a respect for the continuity of dramatic space and, of course, for its duration."
[7] André Bazin, *Jean Renoir*, 81: "the opposite of a frame: […] what it shows draws its value from what it conceals."
[8] See especially: Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, 75-80.
[9] Raymond Durgnat, *Jean Renoir* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974).
[10] Alexander Sesonske, *Jean Renoir, the French Films, 1924-1939* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1980).

(1935), which treats a group of workers, many of them Spanish and Italian immigrants, whose daily lives revolve around a quarry and farmland in Provence. Drawing on a deeply staged scene in which the eponymous protagonist speaks to his co-worker, Fernand, whilst labourers work in a quarry located in the background, Faulkner argues that Renoir's techniques perform a "socialization of space."[11] More specifically, Faulkner asserts that "Toni's social condition is coextensive with the condition of other workers included by the shot," and that "what [Toni] says and feels during the scene is determined by the space in which we see him."[12] Crucial to this examination of Toni's stratum, for Faulkner, are Renoir's lateral camera mobility and staging of space in depth, which perform an "active social analysis rather than merely passive observation."[13] Thus, seemingly inconsequential scenes situating a labourer in relation to a quarry in *Toni* "allow for the development of his narrative in space as well as through time."[14] Faulkner reprises this discussion in his analysis of *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, much of which is set within buildings surrounding a partially enclosed courtyard: just as Renoir's techniques socialise the quarries in *Toni*, "the visual concretization of the courtyard is accomplished wholly by Renoir through his systematic use of depth of field and a mobile camera."[15]

Faulkner's examination of *Toni* insightfully points to how aural and visual aspects pertaining to characterisation and landscape interact with one

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[11] Christopher Faulkner, *The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir* (Princeton University Press: Princeton NJ, 1986), 50.
[12] Ibid., 49-50.
[13] Ibid., 50.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., 63.

another expressively to convey both the social and physical aspects of the space occupied by Renoir’s characters. However, each of the above examples emphasise the formal qualities of Renoir’s narrative style to the exclusion of how these techniques dynamise the relationship between individuals and their surroundings. Leo Braudy’s earlier analysis of Renoir’s work in *The World in a Frame* (first published in 1976), points to a range of thematic and formal elements which unquestionably contribute to Renoir’s socialising narrative style. Braudy counterposes Renoir’s “open” worlds with the “closed” style of Fritz Lang’s work (*Metropolis*, 1926; *Fury*, 1936), arguing that these styles represent the two major ways in which film imposes “structures of perception” on the viewer.[16] The following table outlines the core characteristics of each category.[17]

The “open” / Renoir style	*The “closed” Lang style*
Realistic and theatrical origins	Expressionistic and novelistic origins
Pictorial	Architectural
Frame as window to ongoing reality	Screen defines the world
Importance of character	Importance of architecture
Reflexive references to filmmaking	Illusion of sufficiency of film

[16] Leo Braudy, *The World in a Frame: What We See in Films* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 46.
[17] The table printed provides a summary of the salient aspects of each style. For Braudy's complete discussion of the attributes of each style, see: Braudy, *The World in a Frame*, 46-51.

Camera explores scene	Camera orders scene
Impartial camera	Camera is omniscient or identifies with character
Audience as invitee	Audience as victim
Irresolvable relationships and stories	False summary or "happy ending"
Frame within narrative as refuge	Emphasis on inescapable limits of world

Braudy's categories are intended as a series of observations on stylistically opposed tendencies rather than theoretical frameworks for systematic analysis. Braudy himself admits that, although Renoir and Lang stand as exemplars of each tendency, the aesthetic barriers separating these two styles were already breaking down by the 1950s,[18] during which time both directors were still filming. However, Braudy does open our perspective to the range of aspects that potentially inscribe the ongoing process of becoming in our experience of viewing Renoir's films. Most interestingly, Braudy's description of the "open" style draws our attention to the camera's refusal to adhere to a particular character, and its navigation of incoherent relations within a fundamentally incomplete vision of the world, none of which should be ignored when interpreting Renoir through Faulkner. As we examine Deleuze's conceptualisation of the *image-temps* in the following sections, the core question of this introduction regards how the relationship between Bazin's theorisation of Renoir's techniques, Faulkner's emphasis

[18] Ibid., 95-97.

on their socialising potential, and Braudy's observations on how Renoir's camera functions as a window to a heterogenous world, may be integrated within a coherent framework that suitably analyses the fluctuating relationship between social space and physical space in Renoir's work. Crucial to any understanding of how the cinema inscribes patterns of change in narrative spaces is an understanding of how the cinema represents the passage of time, specificially the discarding of the past.

1.2.2 Deleuze's Cinéma(s)*: from* l'Image-mouvement *to* l'Image-temps

Deleuze provides an essential point of reference, not only because his film philosophy remains the key work on how film represents temporality, but because he lends Renoir a privileged status within his study. Before proceeding to Renoir's place in Deleuze's analysis, it is important to note that Deleuze's discussion of Renoir is located within his broader effort to restore importance to cinema's unique affinity with temporality. Deleuze's landmark project encompasses two volumes, respectively entitled *Cinéma 1: L'image-mouvement* (1983) and *Cinéma 2: L'image-temps*, in accordance with the two primary structures that Deleuze associates with the cinematographic image. Corresponding with the sensori-motor schema, the *image-mouvement* incorporates perception, affection and action within a unity of movement, providing the spectator with a range of narrative signs that readily conform to everyday spatio-temporal coordinates. The *image-mouvement* does not exclude time. Rather, "[il] constitue le temps sous sa

forme empirique,"[19] presenting us with "un présent successif suivant un rapport extrinsèque de l'avant et de l'après."[20]

However, Deleuze detects the emergence of *l'image-temps* in the presence of purely visual (*opsigne*) and sonic images (*sonsigne*) in post-war cinema, specifically Italian neorealism.[21] These signs resist assimilation within chronometric time, and therefore preclude the creation of a coherent narrative. Crucially, whereas the *image-mouvement* misleadingly implies that the cinematographic image unfolds in the present, the *image-temps* foregrounds simultaneous non-chronological temporalities. As Deleuze surmises, "le temps sort de ses gonds."[22] The *image-temps* no less implies an absence of movement than the *image-mouvement* implies an absence of time. However, the *image-temps* invokes a reversal of the subjugation featuring in the *image-mouvement*: "ce n'est plus le temps qui est subordonné au mouvement, c'est le mouvement qui se subordonne au temps."[23]

1.2.3 "Cronos et non pas Chronos*":[24] Renoir and the Image of the Future*

Deleuze's approach to both Renoir's mise-en-scène of temporality and the *image-temps* in general is difficult to understand without alluding to Deleuze's understanding of Henri Bergson's own theories of time, or to

[19] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 271: "[it] constitutes time in its empirical form."
[20] Ibid., "a successive present in an extrinsic relation of before and after."
[21] Ibid., 9-15.
[22] Ibid., 58: "Time is out of joint."
[23] Ibid., 271: "it is no longer time which is subordinate to movement; it is movement which subordinates itself to time."
[24] Ibid., 109: "Cronos and not Chronos."

Deleuze's broader understanding of how time operates within the cinema. Bergson and Deleuze's conceptualisation of time is defined through *durée*, a term designed by Bergson to resolve tensions between notions of duration and succession often invoked by chronological, cause-and-effect understandings of time, which plot a frozen past and project an inevitable future. Discussing *durée* in *Le bergsonisme* (1966), Deleuze emphasises Bergson's theorisation of the past and present as elements that co-exist at any given moment. By virtue of this inextricable relationship between the past and the present, *durée* is essentially indeterminate, and constantly introduces qualitatively change to both the present and the embodied past: "Le passé et le présent ne désignent pas deux moments successifs, mais deux éléments qui coexistent, l'un qui est le présent, et qui ne cesse de passer, l'autre, qui est le passé, et qui ne cesse pas d'être mais par lequel tous les présents passent."[25]

Deleuze asserts that because the past is formed at the same time as the present, time (taken to mean Deleuze's understanding of Bergson's *durée*) must ceaselessly split into two dissymmetrical jets, one of which is oriented towards the future and continuously allows the present to pass, the other of which falls ceaselessly into the past, where it is permanently stored in a region of memory: "Le présent, c'est l'image actuelle et *son* passé contemporain, c'est l'image virtuelle, l'image en miroir."[26] This relationship between the actual and the virtual – the ongoing creation of the present and

[25] Gilles Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011), 54: "The past and the present do not designate two successive moments, but two elements that coexist, one of which is present, and which ceaselessly passes, the other which is the past and which does not cease to be, but through which all of the presents pass."
[26] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 106: "[t]he present is the actual image, and *its* contemporaneous past is the virtual image, the mirror image" Italics are Deleuze's own. See also 108-9.

the past – constitutes "l'opération la plus fondamentale du temps,"[27] and is visible in a range of post-war images that exploit *opsignes* and *sonsignes*. Deleuze specifically remarks on two categories of images within which the actual and virtual enter into dialectic. The *image-souvenir* refers to the flashback structures that feature in the films of Marcel Carné (*Le Jour se lève*, 1939) and Joseph L. Mankiewicz (*A Letter to Three Wives*, 1949; *All About Eve*, 1950). The *image-rêve* refers to the dreamlike worlds of Vincente Minnelli (*The Pirate*, 1948; *An American in Paris*, 1951) that absorb characters, affecting the real worlds within which they project their dreams. In these films, virtual *images-souvenir* and *images-rêve* enter into broad, dilated circuits with actual images. Conversely, this actual-virtual circuit is contracted within the *image-cristal*, which presents us with "l'image biface, actuelle et virtuelle à la fois."[28]

Such images proliferate within a crystal of time, a film which constantly produces a composite of various circuits of non-chronological time, each of which forms around three central figures (defined by Deleuze in *Cinéma 1* as "le signe de […] déformations, transformations ou transmutations"),[29] of which the actual/virtual is but one: because neither the virtual nor the actual can be considered in isolation from one another within the bifaced image, but rather enter into varying patterns of exchange with one another – the distinctiveness of one necessarily implying the obscurity of the other – each is alternately expressed through a second figure, the limpid/opaque, as when a flashback or a character's reflection lends clarity

[27] Ibid., 108: "the most fundamental operation of time."
[28] Ibid., 92-93: "the bifaced image, actual and virtual at the same time."
[29] Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement*, 243-44: "the sign of […] deformations, transformations, or transmutations."

to the virtual past, distancing the spectator from the actual present. These figures are conditioned in turn by the seed/milieu, specifically the relationship between the force of the past, and the suitability of the environment that it infuses, allowing virtual images to germinate and generate a new diegetic environment.

This discussion informs Deleuze's analysis of temporality in Renoir's works, whose mise-en-scène foregrounds "le jaillissement du temps comme dédoublement, comme scission."[30] Deleuze likens Renoir's oeuvre to a single metaphorical crystal of time. In the perfect crystal, the present is an ongoing construction, but is invariably dictated by the past, and the crystal precludes the emergence of a new future. However, Renoir's crystal is not perfect. It contains "une faille, un point de fuite, un « crapaud ». Il est toujours fêlé."[31] If Renoir's theatres imprison characters, as in a perfect crystal, they also present individuals with the opportunity to try different roles until finding one that allows them to enter "une réalité décantée."[32] By escaping through the fissure in Renoir's crystal, "le temps se donne un avenir,"[33] invoking "une nouvelle réalité qui ne préexistait pas."[34] Within Renoir's films, the past is a force of death: "Tout ce qui est passé retombe dans le cristal, et y reste: c'est l'ensemble des rôles gelés, figés, tout faits, trop conformes, que les personnages ont essayés tour à tour, rôles morts ou de la mort, la danse macabre des souvenirs dont parle Bergson

[30] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 109: "the gushing forth of time as doubling, as scission."
[31] Ibid., 113: "a fault, a point of flight, a 'flaw.' It is always cracked."
[32] Ibid., 114: "a decanted reality."
[33] Ibid., 117: "time is given a future."
[34] Ibid., 116: "a new reality which did not pre-exist."

[…]. "[35] Such roles are played out by the outmoded aristocracy in Wintersborn (*La Grande Illusion,* 1937) and especially the indolent *haute bourgeoisie* at la Colinière (*La Règle du jeu,* 1939), whose anachronistic etiquette imprisons even the airman who does not belong to their stratum. Deleuze makes two further assertions, respectively regarding the import of politics and technology towards Renoir's mise-en-scene of temporality: Deleuze suggests that Renoir's "élan vers l'avenir" is linked with the director's attitude towards the Front Populaire, with which he was unofficially affiliated during the mid 1930s. Furthermore, Deleuze argues that *profondeur de champ* (which may be translated either as deep focus or deep staging)[36] "rend évident que le cristal est là pour que quelque chose en fuie, dans le fond, par le fond,"[37] because "[elle] ménage toujours dans le circuit un fond par lequel quelque chose peut fuir: la fêlure."[38] As a result, Renoir's understanding of time "en fonction d'une dimension d'avenir"[39] is built into the very structure of his mise-en-scène.

Deleuze discusses the possibility of other crystalline states, one of

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[35] Ibid: "Everything that is past falls back into the crystal and remains there: it is the collection of frozen, fixed, ready-made, too-conforming roles that the characters try out one after another, dead roles or roles of death, the *danse macabre* of memories of which Bergson speaks […]."

[36] David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson distinguish between deep staging and deep focus: "Depth of field should not be confused with the concept of deep space […]. *Deep space* is a term for the way the filmmaker has staged the action on several different planes, *regardless of whether all of these planes are in focus*. […] Deep space is a property of mise-en-scène, the techniques that affect what is placed in front of the camera. Depth of field depends on the camera itself, with the lens determining what layers of the mise-en-scène are in focus. […] In Hollywood during the 1940s, partly due to the influence of *Citizen Kane* [1941], filmmakers began using faster film, short-focal-length lenses, and more intense lighting to yield a greater depth of field. The contract-signing scene from *Citizen Kane* offers a famous example. This practice came to be called deep focus" (*Film Art: An Introduction*. 8th ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008. 172-173.).

[37] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 113-14: "[…] makes it clear that the crystal is there for something to escape from it in the background, through the background"

[38] Ibid., 114: "[it] always retains depth within the circuit through which something can escape: the crack."

[39] Ibid., 117: "in terms of a dimension of the future."

which is worth outlining given its relevance to Renoir's aristocratic realms: the crystal in dissolution, identified by Deleuze in Luchino Visconti's later films, incorporates four central characteristics. Firstly, the ritualised formal dances and family dinners of Visconti's aristocratic realms in films such as *Il Gattopardo* (1963) constitute "un cristal synthétique"[40] that is "hors de l'Histoire et de la Nature, hors de la création divine."[41] Secondly, despite the sumptuous interior design of such environments, they are "inséparables d'un processus de décomposition qui les mine du dedans."[42] The aristocracy embodies "un passé disparu,"[43] and the very settings that ensure their survival also becomes the sites of their demise. Thirdly, Visconti's worlds are only deceptively isolated from the force of history, such as "la montée de nouveaux riches,"[44] the Franco-Prussian War (*Ludwig*, 1972) or the *Röhm-Putsch* (*The Damned*, 1969), only hasten the decay that already permeates these realms. Fourthly, Deleuze detects the motif of a potential for salvation that invariably arrives too late within Visconti's work. Visconti's crystal, unlike that of Renoir, contains no *point de fuite*, and Visconti's characters cannot draw on times past to stall the decline of the present. All four aspects observed by Deleuze frequently coincide with Renoir's portrayal of characters occupying the uppermost echelons of society at critical moments of social upheaval. As a result, the relevance of Deleuze's alternative conceptualisation of time as erosive force shall be addressed as appropriate over the course of this thesis.

[40] Ibid., 124: "a synthetic crystal."
[41] Ibid: "outside History and nature, outside divine creation."
[42] Ibid., 125: "inseparable from a process of decomposition which eats away at them from within."
[43] Ibid: "a vanished past."
[44] Ibid: "the rise of the *nouveaux riches*."

Interestingly, of the four oeuvres examined by Deleuze, only Renoir's allows us to conceive of the future in a potentially positive way, specifically as something that is open to the creation of new realities rather than as a prohibited virtual dimension (as in the perfect crystal), or as an inevitably tragic social regression (Visconti's crystal in dissolution). However, if Deleuze's examination of Renoir's image of "une ouverture d'avenir" (to employ Deleuze's vocabulary) is to be employed constructively within the context of Renoir's mise-en-scène of open space-time, it is essential that we assess the extent of both Deleuze's insights and critical limits in detail.

1.2.4 Deleuze's Critical limits: Society, Ideology, and Technology

By proposing that Renoir's distinctive mise-en-scène simultaneously holds the weight of the past and the potential creation of a genuinely new future in tension on the screen, Deleuze undeniably provides a valuable methodology through which to analyse inscriptions of temporality in the cinematographic image: because his film philosophy foregrounds the import of Renoir's signature style from a perspective that is not confined by Bazin's purely ontological understanding of realism, familiar Renoirian thematic and stylistic attributes such as theatricality and deep space can be interpreted temporally rather than merely as expressive motifs or by-products of continuity in space. However, a number of basic methodological inconsistencies within Deleuze's analysis are immediately evident.

First of all, even though Deleuze alleges that Renoir's entire oeuvre is characterised by the cracked crystalline state, the extent to which Renoir's images consistently portray the bifurcation of time is open to dispute. Although Deleuze specifies that Renoir's crystal "est *toujours* fêlé,"[45] he observes that the crack is not always apparent, notably "dans ses moments pessimistes"[46] when, nonetheless, "quelque chose se forme à l'intérieur du cristal, qui réussira à sortir par la fêlure et à s'épanouir librement."[47] The veracity of Deleuze's assumption demands further elaboration within the context of the various stages of Renoir's career. Secondly, detailed textual analysis is largely absent from Deleuze's prescriptive philosophy when it would seem essential to support his case. Even though Deleuze states in the introduction to *L'image-mouvement* that the goal of his two volumes is "une taxinomie, un essai de classification des images et des signes,"[48] his discussion of Renoir's crystal self-contently recalls plot details in *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932) and *The River* (1951) without analysing the specific cinematographic qualities that distinguish such moments from a written text. This is a major failing in the case of a film such as *The River*, which was originally published as a novella. Thirdly, Deleuze's discussion of Renoir in *Cinéma 2* neglects major instalments in Renoir's career, not only eliding key works such as *La Chienne* (1931) and *Toni* (1935), but also Renoir's entire Hollywood output. Colin Davis rightly asserts that Deleuze "chooses the

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[45] Ibid., 113: "is *always* cracked." Italics are my own.
[46] Ibid., 115: "during [his] pessimistic moments." Note: I have translated "ses" as "his," as Deleuze is directly discussing Renoir's work.
[47] Ibid: "something forms within the crystal which will manage to escape through the crack and spread freely."
[48] Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement*, 7: "a taxonomy, an attempt to classify images and signs."

corpus that suits his reading."[49] Indeed, Deleuze understandably avoids discussing *Le Bled* (1929), a propagandist project funded to commemorate the French conquest of Algeria, and which does not sit comfortably with Renoir's engagement with the Front Populaire. However, Deleuze even ignores films such as *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (1936) and *Eléna et les hommes* (1956), which could respectively bolster his proposals regarding Renoir's attitude towards the Front Populaire and theatricality. As Davis remarks, Deleuze's analysis "is questionable in detail and in general, as the director's entire output is made to fit into a single category which does little justice to it."[50]

It should be noted that Deleuze adamantly refused to categorise himself as an interpreter of films, and his primary concern was to elucidate the ways in which moving pictures could be analysed through "des concepts propres au cinéma,"[51] rather than "des concepts venus du dehors."[52] Yet Davis rightly reads Deleuze's constant references to philosophers as a betrayal of Deleuze's promotion of a specifically philosophical exploration of the characteristics unique to the cinema,[53] and specifically notes that "it looks as if Renoir's entire output is being forced into a preconceived scheme."[54] Alain Badiou even more critically surmises that Deleuze's analysis "semble versée au bénéfice de la philosophie, et nullement à celui

[49] Colin Davis. *Critical Excess: Overreading in Derrida, Deleuze, Levinas, Žižek and Cavell* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2010), 78.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers: 1972-1990* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2003), 83: "concepts proper to the cinema."
[52] Ibid: "concepts brought from outside."
[53] Davis, *Critical Excess*, 76-78.
[54] Ibid., 77.

du simple jugement critique […].”[55] All of these criticisms of Deleuze’s oversights obscure not only the relevance of Deleuze’s ideas, but also the complexity of Renoir’s films. Rather than begrudgingly confine our frameworks to Deleuze’s film philosophy, we can allow Deleuze’s conceptualisation of time to enter into productive dialectic with other theories of space and time, integrating temporality within our interpretation of Renoir’s mise-en-scène of space, and more suitably examine the complexity of Renoir’s work. Although Davis remarks that “[i]n detail also, Deleuze’s observations are unpersuasive or possibly just wrong,”[56] I am convinced that part of what hinders the accuracy or veracity of Deleuze’s ideas is less their infeasibility than their application within Deleuze’s *Cinéma* volumes.

If we are to integrate Deleuze’s conceptualisation of Renoir’s work, systematically and constructively, within an analysis of how Renoir’s distinctive mise-en-scène frames a dynamic space, three specific textual issues concerning the proposals encapsulated by Renoir’s metaphorical crystal of time demand further interrogation. Because these particular matters inform the structure of this thesis, it is important to address them here in detail, with a view to determining how to best integrate Deleuze’s innovative conceptualisation of Renoir’s “ouverture d’avenir” within an analysis of the ways in which Renoir frames open space-time. First of all, Deleuze reduces the many environments of Renoir’s films to theatres. In

[55] Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: « La clameur de l'Être.»* (Paris: Hachette, 1997), 27: “seems weighed towards philosophy's advantage, and in no way towards simple critical judgement […].”
[56] Davis, *Critical Excess*, 77.

Deleuze's analysis, Renoir's crystal is "[une] collection de rôles"[57] and the crystal itself is a theatre that "ne vaut que comme recherche d'un art de vivre."[58] It is true that the "le « surcroît de théatralité » […] que seul le cinéma peut donner au théâtre"[59] (Deleuze cites Bazin) repeatedly forms a crucial point of reference in Renoir's work, either as an aspect of set-design or a signifier of artifice. However, Deleuze thereby reduces settings as diverse as Lestingois' bookshop in *Boudu sauvé des eaux* and the Hindu environment in *The River* to imprisoning theatrical structures. Deleuze remarks that water, specifically the river, provides Boudu (played by Michel Simon in *Boudu sauvé des eaux*) and Harriet (played by Patricia Walters in *The River*) with an escape from the stultifying influence of dead roles through the crack in the crystal, implying that water represents an avenue beyond the *point de fuite*. However, it becomes clear that even this comment is multifaceted in its implications: Deleuze proceeds to liken Nini's (Françoise Arnoul) climactic dance at the end of *French Cancan* (1954) to "[u]ne façon dont le théâtre s'ouvre à la vie, se déverse dans la vie, entraînant Nini dans une eau courante agitée,"[60] and also likens windows to "l'eau gelée de la vitre"[61] which, like the crystal, allows us to witness the bifurcation of time. In each of these cases, any means of escape or of viewing the creation of a new future, is likened to water, reminding us of the dangers of interpreting Deleuze too literally.

Beyond these specific allusions, Deleuze avoids distinguishing

[57] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 116: "[a] collection of roles."
[58] Ibid., 115: "is only valuable as a search for an art of living."
[59] Ibid., 112: "'excess of theatre' […] that only the cinema can give to the theatre."
[60] Ibid., 115-16: "[a] means through which theatre opens into life, pours out into life, carrying Nini along in a turbulent current."
[61] Ibid., 115: "the frozen water of the glass pane."

between the temporal rhythms articulated by Renoir's mise-en-scène of urban Paris (*La Chienne*; *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*) and the rural landscapes of la Sologne (*La Règle du jeu*) and Texas (*The Southerner*, 1945), and the emphatically theatrical settings of Renoir's trilogy of spectacle (*The Golden Coach*, 1952; *French Cancan*, *Eléna et les hommes*). On a broader level, Deleuze disappointingly fails to elaborate the import of place towards the production of a new future. Furthermore, Deleuze ignores the social contexts that produce the theatrical regimes that stratify society and stultify time: the theatres within Renoir's work are produced by pre-existing hierarchical social frameworks such as capitalism and colonialism, which are imbricated in issues regarding gender, sexuality and ethnicity. In doing so, Deleuze elides the complex dialectic between theatre and narrative setting in Renoir's worlds, and crucially ignores the import of the relationship between physical and social space towards the potential freedom or imprisonment of Renoir's characters. In short, Deleuze's perspective on Renoir's mise-en-scène of the theatre ultimately provides a unifying auteurist perspective rather than a tool for systematic analysis.

Deleuze does observe that characters entrapped within these theatrically defined worlds may invoke a new future, but neglects to clarify the role of an individual character's agency in processes of becoming. On the one hand, Deleuze suggests that characters may orchestrate their own exit from the crystal: Boudu (in *Boudu sauvé des eaux*) simply "retrouve le fil de l'eau en sortant le théâtre intime et renfermé du libraire où il a essayé

beaucoup de rôles."[62] Similarly, Harriet is liberated from the crystal because she sacrifices her juvenile infatuation with Captain John (Thomas Breen) in *The River* (1951).[63] On the other hand, without limiting his commentary to any particular film, Deleuze notes that characters may escape the influence of the past "[s]ans qu'il y ait besoin de violence, et par le développement d'une expérimentation,"[64] and even leave "insensiblement, au fil de l'eau courante, c'est à dire du temps."[65] However, this perspective is partly contested by Deleuze's assertion that "l'essai des rôles est indispensable,"[66] and that Camilla (played by Anna Magnani) must try roles with a view to escaping the crystal when she finds herself stranded on the proscenium arch at the end of *The Golden Coach* (1952), "dont l'un lui fera découvrir peut-être la vraie Camilla."[67] Even then, the factors affecting the range of roles, and portraying their availability in open space-time remains open to question, largely as a result of his failure to address the social space that structures Renoir's worlds.

Secondly, Deleuze's approach to the relationship between ideology and Renoir's mise-en-scène of temporality oscillates between sweeping presumptions and shallow acknowledgements of the importance of class to Renoir's stratified societies. The closest Deleuze comes to acknowledging the hierarchies portrayed by Renoir's mise-en-scène is his observation that

[62] Ibid: "finds the water's current by leaving the intimate and closed-up theatre of the bookseller where he has tried many roles."
[63] Ibid., 117.
[64] Ibid., 114: "without the need for violence and through the development of experimentation."
[65] Ibid., 117: "imperceptibly, along the current of the water, that is to say of time."
[66] Ibid., 117: "the trying of roles is indispensable."
[67] Ibid., 116: "one of which will allow her to perhaps discover the real Camilla."

Renoir's deep space allots "un système de rimes entre maîtres et valets"[68] in *La Règle du jeu* (1939). On the other hand, Deleuze states that Renoir's engagement with the Front Populaire informs the propulsion towards the future that features in Renoir's work, making Renoir the only director of a crystalline state whose mise-en-scène is associated with a specific political affiliation: "C'est Renoir qui avait une vive conscience de l'identité de la liberté avec un avenir, collectif ou individuel, avec un élan vers l'avenir, une ouverture d'avenir. C'est même la conscience politique de Renoir, la manière dont il conçoit la Révolution française our le Front Populaire."[69] By implying that Renoir's crystal is partly the product of Renoir's affiliation with the French Left, Deleuze inaccurately assumes that Renoir and his films are optimistic regarding the potential creation of a new future, and that *La Règle du jeu*, in which an invitee is murdered and swiftly forgotten by a shooting party, is merely uncharacteristically "pessimiste."[70] Deleuze thereby suggests that Renoir's alleged ideological perspective informs his post-1938 corpus despite Renoir's notorious disenchantment with French politics following the outbreak of war and his exile in Hollywood.

Deleuze certainly does not imply that any branch of cinema could exist independently of politics. Within his discussion of silent cinema in *Cinéma 2*, Deleuze readily acknowledges that "l'image visuelle montre la structure d'une société, sa situation, ses places et ses fonctions, les attitudes et les rôles, les actions et réactions des individus, bref la forme et les

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[68] Ibid., 113: "a system of rhymes between masters and valets."
[69] Ibid., 117: "It is Renoir who had an acute awareness of the identification of liberty with a future, be it collective or individual, with a surge towards the future, an opening of the future. It is even Renoir's political consciousness, the manner in which he conceives the French Revolution or the Front Populaire."
[70] Ibid., 114: "pessimistic."

contenus."[71] However, if Deleuze's overall project is, as Felicity Colman writes, "to engage [the cinema] as *the* political media [*sic*] of the twentieth century,"[72] the fact remains that Deleuze is conspicuously evasive regarding how these socio-political elements are mobilised in space when time is foregrounded by Renoir's frame.

The third of Deleuze's problematic subarguments is his valorisation of Renoir's deeply-composed images. Deleuze's comments regarding the relationship between Renoir's use of *profondeur de champ* and "une ouverture d'avenir" in the cracked crystal of time reveal two central oversights that are all the more dubious since Renoir is the sole director of a particular crystalline state whose mise-en-scène of temporality is directly associated with a specific camera technique. First of all, Deleuze implies that Renoir's use of deep space differs from that of other directors such as John Ford, William Wyler or Orson Welles, who similarly incorporated deep space as part of their shooting style. Although Deleuze himself proceeds to relate Welles' deep compositions to the mise-en-scène of the *image-souvenir* in *Citizen Kane*,[73] he fails to explore the totality of techniques exploited by Renoir in conjunction with deep space, most notably camera movement and off-screen space. As Martin O'Shaughnessy astutely notes, Deleuze "makes depth staging stand in for Renoir's compositional style as a whole, without discussion of other important elements such as lateral camera mobility."[74]

[71] Ibid., 293: "[t]he visual image shows the structure of a society, its situation, its places and functions, the attitudes and roles, the actions and reactions of the individuals, in short the form and the contents."
[72] Felicity Colman, *Deleuze and Cinema: The Film Concepts* (Oxford: Berg, 2011), 148.
[73] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 138-146.
[74] Martin O'Shaughnessy, "Shooting in Deep Time: the Mise en Scène of History in Renoir's Films of the 1930s," in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, ed. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 23-24.

Each of these two technical oversights – the omission of camera movement and off-screen space – is particularly surprising: Deleuze himself remarks on the importance of camera mobility to Renoir's shooting-style in *Cinéma 1* within the context of the *plan-séquence*, which Deleuze comprehensively describes as "un plan de longue durée fixe ou mobile […] avec profondeur de champ."[75] Deleuze's neglect of off-screen space is nothing short of bewildering: in *Cinéma 1*, Deleuze himself demonstrates an acute awareness of on-screen elements as "un système […] relativement et artificiellement clos"[76] that necessarily implies "le hors-champ,"[77] and specifically observes that the camera can serve as "l'alternative de Bazin, cache ou cadre."[78] Furthermore, Deleuze remarks that the ongoing dialectic between onscreen and off-screen space is most clearly exemplified by the works of Renoir and Hitchcock.[79] In fact, Deleuze himself refers to Noël Burch's model of off-screen space[80] which, drawing primarily on Renoir's *Nana* (1926), argues that Renoir was one of the first to constructively harness the "intermittent or, rather, fluctuating existence"[81] of off-screen space, and was one of relatively few directors to "have used this implicit dialectic as an explicit means of structuring a whole film."[82]

Thirdly, Deleuze indirectly dismisses the manner in which Renoir's

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[75] Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement*, 42: "an extended fixed or mobile shot […] with *profondeur de champ*."
[76] Ibid.,, 31: "a relatively and artifically closed […] system."
[77] Ibid., 30: "the out-of-field."
[78] Ibid., 28: "Bazin's alternative of concealer or frame."
[79] Ibid., 28.
[80] Ibid., 30. Deleuze oddly omits and direct reference to Burch's text in this instance, but refers to *Praxis du cinéma* (the French edition of *Theory of Film Practice*, in which this model appeared) multiple times over the course of *Cinéma 2*, specifically on pages 36-7, and 260.
[81] Noël Burch, *Theory of Film Practice* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1981), 21.
[82] Ibid., 24.

appropriation of classical narrative techniques enters into dialectic with Renoir's signature techniques over the course of the narrative to produce an image of time. For *profondeur de champ* is not solely inscribed as a complex signifying system within individual shots. It is also located within sequences of shots which allow us to interpret the elements that are structured by *profondeur de champ* (through its relationship with other techniques) in narrative space-time. This is particularly important to note for two reasons. First of all, Kristin Thompson reminds us that Renoir's works incorporate shots that do not correspond with characteristically "Renoirian" techniques, but whose function is reinvented within the context of the signature techniques that structure the narrative. In her neoformalist analysis of *La Règle du jeu*, the film for which Deleuze reserves the bulk of his praise insofar as *profondeur de champ* is concerned, Thompson specifically observes the "juxtaposition of classical and non-classical devices" which features "in the spatial and temporal layout of the whole."[83] Secondly, Ronald Bogue suggests that entire films function as crystals rather than isolated individual shots and sequences,[84] implying that the cumulative interconnections between various shots contributes to Renoir's unique image of time. This is particularly important since Deleuze cautiously observes that "[i]l y a des images-temps qui se créent par suppression de la profondeur,"[85] and that this category too "est très divers."[86] Although

[83] Kristin Thompson, *Breaking the Glass Armor: Neoformalist Film Analysis* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1988), 219. See 218-244 for Thompson's complete analysis of the tensions between classical and nonclassical modes of narration in *La Règle du jeu*.
[84] Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2003), 124.
[85] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 143: "[t]here are time-images which are formed through suppression of depth."
[86] Ibid: "is very diverse."

Deleuze proceeds to discuss this within the context of memory in the works of Welles and Resnais, his comments are pertinent to our understanding of Renoir's appropriation of both classically and non-classically structured shots to invoke an image of space-time "en fonction d'une dimension d'avenir."[87] Deleuze himself asserts that the fissuring of time, if less evident, "était déjà vrai du miroir de l'image plane, comme dans *Le Carrosse d'or* […]."[88] However, as in the case of his analysis of Renoir's deeply composed images, he fails to address the range of techniques, settings and narratives styles that enter into dialectic with the *image plane* to produce an image of the fissuring of time "comme scission" (c.f. Deleuze).

Ultimately, Deleuze's conception of Renoir's *profondeur de champ*, as it stands, can achieve no rigour because he implies that his understanding of Renoir's deep spaces is not applicable to deep space featuring within the works of other directors, but fails to distinguish it through its expressive relationship with other aspects of Renoir's mise-en-scène. Deleuze's approach is exemplary of Jean-Louis Comolli's criticism of Bazin and Jean Mitry's erroneous emphasis on technical progress at the expense of ideological influences, whereby "the question of its utility (what is it used for?) was completely obscured by that of its utilization (how is it used?)."[89]

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[87] Ibid., 117: "in terms of a dimension of the future."
[88] Ibid., 113: "was already true of the mirror in flat images [*l'image plane*], as in *The Golden Coach*."
[89] Jean-Louis Comolli, "Technique and Ideology: Camera, Perspective, Depth [Parts 3 and 4]," in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, trans. Diana Matias, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia UP, 1986), 431. For further discussion of aesthetic and technological influences on the development of deep focus technology, see: Patrick L. Ogle, "Technological and Aesthetic Influences Upon the Development of Deep Focus Cinematography in the United States," *Screen* 13.1 (1972): 45-72. For further discussion of the impact of ideology and economy on the development of deep focus technology, see: Christopher Williams, "The Deep Focus Question: Some Comments on Patrick Ogle's Article," *Screen* 13.1 (1972): 73-79.

Without a pre-existing understanding of Renoir's *profondeur de champ* informed by both theories of space and historical contextualisation, spectators will, like Deleuze, remain narrowly confined by the empirical notion of *profondeur de champ* and the temporal attributes arbitrarily assigned to it by Deleuze.

Spectators should not forget that Renoir exploited technology that represented a significant aesthetic deviation from the conditions imposed by contemporary technology on film practice, even exploiting technology considered obsolete in his effort to re-introduce depth to the cinematographic image. Jacques Brunius wrote in 1938 that on the set of *Partie de Campagne* (1936), he and Renoir "decided that scenes could be developed between people more than ten metres or so from each other in depth. But it was only with the greatest difficulty that we were able to procure old lenses, considered fossils – a few Zeiss and a 3.5 Bosch and Lomb."[90] In an interview granted to the critics of *Cahiers du Cinéma* in 1966, Renoir acknowledged that he and cinematographer Jean Bachelet had to order "des objectifs spéciaux"[91] for *La Règle du jeu* which lent "une certaine profondeur, de façon à ce que nous puissions garder nos arrière-plans dans presque toutes les circonstances."[92] Renoir remarked that, even on the set of *The Southerner*, part of the Hollywood corpus overlooked by Deleuze, "J'ai procédé énormément avec des objectifs assez fermés et donnant une grande profondeur de champ, de façon à ne jamais perdre de

[90] Cited in Comolli, "Technique and Ideology," 435.
[91] Jean Narboni, Janine Bazin, and Claude Gauteur, eds, *Jean Renoir: entretiens et propos* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 2005), 284: "special lenses."
[92] Ibid., 284: "a certain depth in such a way that we could retain our backgrounds in almost any circumstances."

vue derrière mes personnages, les champs."[93]

Given the "active social analysis" performed by Renoir's camera (c.f. Faulkner), the technical audacity of Renoir's work during the silent period, the 1930s, in Hollywood and in his post-war career was not a whimsical decision. Renoir's reliance on deep staging (and other unconventional techniques including extended takes, lateral camera mobility, wide shots and of off-screen space) frames characters and their worlds unconventionally, often deviating from the contemporary stylistic zeitgeist, in order to foreground physical spaces within which new social relations within and across individual strata are consolidated, sometimes through unpredictable happenstance events. During the 1930s, Renoir's mise-en-scène represented an esoteric aesthetic choice that was mobilised for his exploration of the ongoing mutually affective relationship between physical spaces and the societies that appropriate them to create a space within which to actualise new futures. Similarly, the evolutions in Renoir's narrative style during the post-war phase of his career cannot be understood without examining their relationship with the societies portrayed. The importance of Renoir's arsenal of techniques at each stage of his career remains a core concern throughout this thesis. The following section outlining Deleuze's sparse references to cinematographic space precisely elucidate the sociological and ideological elements that demand our consideration if we are to constructively integrate Deleuze's insights regarding Renoir's narrative style into this study of the director's mise-en-

[93] Ibid., 338: "By and large, I proceeded with quite closed lenses that granted a great depth of field so that I would never lose sight of the fields behind my characters." Note that by the word "closed" ("fermé'), Renoir was referring to the aperture of the lens: the narrower the aperture, the greater the depth of field available to the camera.

scène of space.

1.2.5 Deleuze on Cinematographic Space

The most flagrant obstacle posed by Deleuze's analysis of Renoir is arguably its elision of any coherent spatial framework. Deleuze relegates space in favour of temporality in order to justify his inclusion of Renoir, whose most stylistically influential works were filmed a number of years before the post-war emergence of the *image-temps*, and even longer before the materialisation of the *image-temps* in French cinema (1958, according to Deleuze).[94] In fact, he specifically dissociates the director from the notion of realism that informs Bazin's analysis of Renoir's mise-en-scène within the pages of *Cinéma 1*: Deleuze states that realism is a quality of the *image-action*, and that realism itself "est simplement ceci: des milieux et des comportements, des milieux qui actualisent et des comportements qui incarnent."[95] Such would seem an accurate description of how Renoir entrenches his characters in a mutually affective relationship with a specific social context through the realist techniques lauded by Bazin and Christopher Faulkner. However, Deleuze emphatically elevates Renoir's exemplary use of deep space beyond the school of realism, clearly in an effort to deviate from the contemporary critical zeitgeist, and to secure Renoir's place within the the pantheon of directors privileged with an entry

[94] Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement*, 284.
[95] Ibid., 196: "is simply this: milieux and modes of behaviour, milieux which actualise, and modes of behaviour which embody."

in *Cinéma 2*: "On hésitera d'autant plus à lui donner le rôle que voulait Bazin, d'une pure fonction de réalité. La profondeur a plutôt pour fonction de constituer l'image en cristal, et d'absorber le réel qui passe ainsi dans le virtuel autant que dans l'actuel."[96]

In fact, the elusiveness of any clear treatise on cinematographic space within Deleuze's reading of Renoir is endemic to the entirety of Deleuze's *Cinéma* volumes. From the opening pages of *Cinéma 1*, it is clear that, insofar as Deleuze's film philosophy is concerned, Deleuze is less interested in space than the movement that unfolds within it. Drawing on Bergson's theses on movement, Deleuze states that "le mouvement, c'est une translation dans l'espace,"[97] and that "[la] translation de parties en espace"[98] leads to "[un] changement qualitatif dans un tout,"[99] but is reluctant to directly address the role of space in the process of becoming. This tendency also pervades *Cinéma 2*, where Deleuze reiterates that movements instigate change within "un tout ouvert qui les comprend et où ils plongent."[100] As Felicity Colman observes, "the type of 'set' that Deleuze invokes […] is a conceptual set that does not always involve spatial figures."[101] Space engendered by the set is of little value to his conception of the evolution of the cinema, and is associated by Deleuze with primitive early cinema, in which "la prise de vue était fixe,"[102] and "le plan était donc

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[96] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 113: "One would be hesitant to give it the role intended by Bazin, namely a pure function of reality. The function of depth is rather […] to absorb the real which thus passes as much into the virtual as into the actual."
[97] Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement*, 18: "[m]ovement is a translation in space."
[98] Ibid: "[the] translation of parts in space"
[99] Ibid: "[a] qualitative change in a whole."
[100] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 237: "an open whole which includes them and into which they plunge."
[101] Colman, *Deleuze on Cinema*, 12.
[102] Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement*, 12: "the point of view was fixed."

spatiale et formellement immobile."[103] Deleuze does mention that "le plan des images-mouvement est un bloc d'espace-temps,"[104] but only with a view to asserting that the *image-mouvement* implies "une perspective temporelle."[105]

Where Deleuze does mention space in relation to film-style, it is through descriptive labels such as the "espaces vides"[106] of Yasujirō Ozu (*Tokyo Story*, 1953) and "espaces déconnectés"[107] of Robert Bresson (*Pickpocket*, 1959), in order to propose that "l'image visuelle a une fonction lisible au-delà de sa fonction visible."[108] Deleuze's most consistent reference to space is ironically incorporated within his understanding of the *espace quelconque*, "un espace de conjonction virtuelle"[109] in which we see "seulement des Puissances et de Qualités pures, indépendamment des états de choses ou des milieux qui les actualisent."[110] Examples include the spiritual spaces of Carl Th. Dreyer (*La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*, 1928) and Bresson, the decontextualised blocs of colour in the works of Agnès Varda (*Le Bonheur*, 1965) and Michaelangelo Antonioni (*Il deserto rosso*, 1964), and the neorealist city (Roberto Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* [1945] and Vittorio de Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* [1948]).

The closest Deleuze comes to lending spatial texture to his theory in *Cinéma 2* merely entails an attempt to dichotomise perceived reality and manifestations of emphatic falsity in the cinema. Drawing on Kurt Lewin's

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[103] Ibid., 12: "the shot was therefore spatial and formally immobile."
[104] Ibid., 101: "the shot of *images-mouvement* is a bloc of space-time."
[105] Ibid: "a temporal perspective."
[106] Ibid., 12: "empty spaces."
[107] Ibid., 28: "disconnected spaces."
[108] Ibid: "the visual image has a legible function beyond its visible function."
[109] Ibid., 155: "a space of virtual conjunction."
[110] Ibid., 169: "only pure Powers and Qualities, independently of the states of things or milieux that actualise them."

terminology, Deleuze distinguishes between a lived "espace hodologique"[111] defined by "un champ de forces, des oppositions et tensions entre ses forces,"[112] and a corresponding Euclidian space that subjugates hodological space to "des lois qui renvoient à la distribution des *centres de forces* dans l'espace."[113] Deleuze interestingly remarks that spaces in the *image-temps* cease to be Euclidean, and that "leurs caractères ne peuvent pas s'expliquer de façon seulement spatiale,"[114] because "[i]ls impliquent des relations non localisables."[115] In light of this, Deleuze tantalisingly refers to the existence of "[des] espaces, vides, amorphes, qui perdent leurs coordonnées euclidiennes,"[116] (alluding to Ozu and Antonioni), and to "les espaces cristallisés,"[117] where "les espaces deviennent hallucinatoires dans un milieu qui ne retient plus que des germes cristallins et des matières cristallisables."[118] However, Deleuze merely employs these references to space and scientific terminology as a prelude to the discussion of the realms of truth and falsity constructed by crystalline regimes in the cinema, and the role of space in either its active physical or social aspects is characteristically ignored.

In general, Deleuze unsurprisingly prefers to rely on a vocabulary extending to conceptions such as sets, figures, zones and bands, and to modalities including gradations and surfaces, and to fields of powers, qualities, and affects, which allow Deleuze to indicate how temporal signs

[111] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 167: "hodological space."
[112] Ibid: "a field of forces, oppositions and tensions between these forces."
[113] Ibid: "laws which are based on the distribution of *centres of forces* in space."
[114] Ibid: "their nature cannot be explained in an exclusively spatial way."
[115] Ibid: "[t]hey imply non-localisable relations."
[116] Ibid: "empty and amorphous spaces which lose their Euclidean coordinates"
[117] Ibid: "crystallised spaces."
[118] Ibid: "landscapes become hallucinatory in a setting which retains nothing other than crystalline seeds and crystallisable materials."

may be represented through specifically cinematographic elements. Overall however, Deleuze's references to space are undermined by inconsistency, vagueness, and downright evasiveness. This is particularly problematic in the case of Renoir's work, to which space – in both its physical and social aspects – is a crucial element of mise-en-scène. The following sections regarding Deleuze and Guattari's spatial thought, and Doreen Massey's theorisation of space-time, examine the potential ways in which Deleuze's conceptualisation of Renoir's temporally imbued images may be coherently integrated within a framework that addresses the fluctuating qualities of Renoir's narrative spaces.

1.2.6 The Future beyond the Point de Fuite*: Deleuze and Guattari's Spatial Thought*

Interestingly, despite that the elusiveness of any clear conceptualisation of space in either of the *Cinéma* volumes, Deleuze's second collaboration with Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2: Mille Plateaux* (1980), grants us a greater insight into what Deleuze understands as the fundamental qualities of space, and lends consistent spatial texture to Deleuze's analysis of Renoir's work through their terminology and social scope. Discussing the formation of strata ranging from the geographical to the social, Deleuze and Guattari provide a useful distinction between smooth and striated space, each of which is respectively defined through nomadic molecular movements, and sedentary molar deposits. Whereas smooth space

incorporates an amorphous realm occupied by nomads who exercise free action, striated space identifies the inherent homogeneity of multiplicities which are potentially translated into models and systems for determining potential methods of organising space.[119] Deleuze and Guattari's terms are deliberately polarised, but they admit that neither brand of space exists in its purest state. Rather, the striated and the smooth "n'existent en fait que par leurs mélanges l'un avec l'autre."[120] Therefore, although molar segments "ne cessent pas de colmater, de boucher, de barrer les lignes de fuite,"[121] they remain inherently vulnerable to ruptures engendered through molecular flux, resulting in the ongoing existence of what Gregory Flaxman terms "contrary modes of fragmentation."[122] Deleuze and Guattari further distinguish between molar tree-like structures that striate space by incorporating hierarchical organisations within centralised points, and molecular rhizomes which subvert these structures by conducting spatial elements along lines towards interleaving multiplicities of space. By exploiting smooth space, the rhizome subverts the stultifying influence of origin, genealogy, and history, rendering the most apparently impenetrable hierarchies permeable. As Deleuze and Guattari surmise, "le monde a perdu son pivot."[123]

Because the tension between these binary sets in space constantly produces *lignes de fuite*, Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualisation of spatial

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[119] Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, see especially 592-625.
[120] Ibid., 593: "only exist, in fact, in mixture with one another."
[121] Ibid., 273: "never cease to seal, plug, block the lines of flight."
[122] Gregory Flaxman, "Transcendental Aesthetics: Deleuze's Philosophy of Space," in *Deleuze and Space*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005), 119.
[123] Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, 12: "[t]he world has lost its pivot."

flux provides a useful framework within which to investigate the importance of social structures to Renoir's mise-en-scène of open space-time. What makes Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of becoming doubly amenable to examinations of temporality in Renoir's work is the similar terminology employed in *Mille Plateaux* and Deleuze's reading of Renoir's work, specifically the correspondence between the *ligne de fuite* theorised by Deleuze and Guattari, and Deleuze's own conception of the *point de fuite*, made manifest by Renoir's mise-en-scène. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari proceed to illustrate their argument regarding space with reference to the process of crystallisation, the metaphor which informs Deleuze's interpretation of Renoir:

> On fait une rupture, on trace une *ligne de fuite*, mais on risque toujours de retrouver sur elle des organisations qui restratifient l'ensemble, des formations qui redonnent le pouvoir à un signifiant, des attributions qui reconstitutent un sujet - tout ce qu'on veut, depuis les résurgences oedipiennes jusqu'aux concrétions fascistes. Les groups et les individus contiennent des micro-fascismes qui ne demandent qu'à *cristalliser*.[124]

In fact, drawing on the metaphor of the crystalline seed and milieu, a metaphor later appropriated by Deleuze within the context of the figures through which time passes in film, Deleuze and Guattari remark on the process by which a stratum, specifically "une strate cristalline,"[125] solidifies its presence in space. Because of the similar metaphors employed in this passage and Deleuze's reading of Renoir, Deleuze and Guattari's spatial

[124] Ibid., 16: "One may make a rupture, draw a *line of flight* but there is still a danger that one will re-encounter organizations that re-stratify everything, formations that restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject – everything you like, from Oedipal resurgences to fascist concretions. Groups and individuals contain micro-fascisms simply waiting to *crystallise*." Italics are my own.
[125] Ibid., 65: "a crystalline stratum."

thought is extremely conducive towards our understanding of what Deleuze means when he refers to the *point de fuite* in Renoir's work. Furthermore, it allows us to formulate three proposals regarding the relevance of the relationship between temporality and Renoir's rigorously hierarchised, albeit porous, societies on three counts: firstly, it suggests that the *ligne de fuite* that brings characters beyond the *point de fuite* potentially represents little more than a pyrrhic victory. Secondly, and more importantly, the framework developed by Deleuze and Guattari allows us to view the stultifying force of the theatre, itself a by-product of social regimes that pre-exist it, as a resistant molar line, rather than a mere signifier of the embodied past. Thirdly, Deleuze and Guattari consider the importance of space as a contested site for the actualisation of a genuinely new future in a way that Deleuze's film philosophy does not. Flaxman rightly remarks that Deleuze's writing on space remains elusive, primarily because Deleuze's theories elide any traditional definition of space, developing spatial modalities (the striated/the smooth; the molar/the molecular) which "only serve to confuse any more general sense of space."[126]

However, Marcus A. Doel appreciatively interprets the very lack of "rigid designators" in Deleuze's theories in favour of emphasising that, insofar as Deleuze is concerned, space and place are not discernible points but "conjunctives, intervals and bonds," that challenge stratification engendered by a given social force within "a fractal world of infinite disadjustment, destabilization, and disjointure."[127] Drawing on Deleuze's

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[126] Gregory Flaxman, "Transcendental Aesthetics," 176.
[127] Marcus A. Doel, "A Hundred Thousand Lines of Flight: a Machinic Introduction to the Nomad Thought and Scrumpled Geography of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari,"

elusive terminology, Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert similarly assert that Deleuze proposes "no general logic of space […] *because the logic of space would be that of the multiplicity itself*."[128]

How these fluctuating qualities of space allow us to relate the *point de fuite* and *ligne de fuite* to precise physical and social aspects of space framed by Renoir's camera demands further theoretical elaboration, if we are to examine the importance of the mutually affective relationship between physical and social space to Renoir's portrayal of hierarchised societies across the remaining chapters of this thesis.

1.2.7 "For the future to be open, space must be open too":[129] Doreen Massey

Although Deleuze and Guattari's spatial thought provides an innovative, extensive terminology that allows us to better appreciate the inherent fallibility of spatial hegemony, particularly the dynamic nature of social strata, their insights regarding visible physical and social elements of cinematographic space are limited, and provide few means of locating the temporally imbued Renoirien motifs analysed by Deleuze (theatricality and rivers, to name two) within a broader geographically defined spatio-temporal context. Conversely, Massey's treatise on open space further

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Environment and Planning D: Society and Space 14, no. 4 (1996): 421.

[128] Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert, "Introduction: Deleuze and space," in *Deleuze and Space*, eds. Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 7.

[129] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE, 2005), 12.

emphasises the mutual implication of each of these aspects of space – the physical and the social – in ongoing processes of becoming. For Massey, any physical space, no matter how apparently enclosed, "is neither a container for always-already constituted identities nor a completed closure of holism."[130] Rather, space is both a physical and social construct composed of "loose ends and missing links."[131] The vast multiplicities hosted by space are themselves "a precondition for the temporal" and "the multiplicities of the two together [space and time] can be a condition for the openness of the future."[132] For Massey, space is characterised by an ineffaceable instability, and much spatial politics is concerned with "how such chaos might be ordered, how juxtapositions may be regulated, how space might be coded, how the terms of connectivity might be negotiated."[133] Echoing Deleuze and Guattari's assertion that molar lines established by centralised power-structures may be subverted by the molecular rhizomes, Massey emphasises the restructuring of cartographies of power can only be achieved through "the construction of (temporary, provisional) stabilisations."[134]

Drawing on Paul Little, Massey crucially asserts that the topography of a given physical space affects the creation of spatial politics: "There needs to be a creative relation to the nonhuman as another participant in this making of places (places are not just human constructs): 'the current hegemonic notion that humans can manipulate and dominate must be

[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid., 89.
[133] Ibid., 151-52.
[134] Ibid., 95.

abandoned, and replaced with the notion that it too is an essential actor, albeit a natural and not a social one, in the creation of liveable places' (Little, 1998, p. 75)."[135] Massey thus suggests that both social and physical aspects of space are crucial to the subordination of predetermining elements (such as class barriers and the variety of aristocratic, capitalist and colonialist models through which they are translated), to what she describes to as "the ongoing event of place,"[136]

Criticising those who would emphasise the transformative impact of time at the expense of space, Massey succinctly remarks that "for time to be open, space must be in some sense open too,"[137] and prefers to refer to "open space" or "space-time" by virtue of this proposition. Yet, insofar as Deleuze's conceptualisation of temporality in the cinema is concerned, temporality does not necessarily imply the emergence of the new: within what Deleuze calls the "perfect" crystal, the emergence of a new reality beyond predetermining elements is impossible. Conversely, the world represented in Renoir's "cracked crystal" provides not only what Massey would call "a precondition for the temporal,"[138] in which time passes (as in the case of the perfect crystal). Through its inherent fissure, the *point de fuite*, it further allots the very openness of any process of becoming. If time and space are mutually implicated within cinematographic space, specifically in Renoir's work, then Deleuze's valorisation of Renoir's ability to frame time "en fonction d'une dimension d'avenir" [139] necessarily

[135] Ibid., 181.
[136] Ibid., 180.
[137] Ibid., 48.
[138] Massey, *For Space*, 89.
[139] Ibid., 117: "in terms of a dimension of the future."

invokes the question of open space-time, an ideological and technological cinematographic product, and a register of the tensions between molar strata and the rhizomatic *lignes de fuite* that disintegrate them by drawing on the "roles" available within a particular geographical setting. Insofar as Renoir's mise-en-scène is concerned, questions regarding open space-time further interpolate the ways in which the camera articulates tensions between the ongoing present and the future anterior through social space.

By mapping Deleuze's interpretation of Renoir onto the mutually affective relationship between social and physical space, as theorised by Massey, we are in a position to examine the relationship between the visual *rimes* amongst strata and the *points de fuite* that signal the perpetual disembeddedness of these relations in space-time, and can arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the techniques that frame this ongoing process. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of integrating temporality within our understanding of the relationship between Renoir's distinctive narrative style and the unstable social barriers that he portrays. The very centrality of class to Renoir's portrayal of space risks becoming an explanatory convenience for Renoir's mise-en-scène, and the relationship between Renoir's techniques and the production of social hierarchies is often obscured as scholars, such as Faulkner, invoke examples of Renoir's mise-en-scène to legitimise their interpretation of Renoir's portrayal of class barriers. Jonathan Murdoch crucially notes that "class should be considered not as a primary determinant of multiple processes but as a general

characterisation of social *outcomes*"[140] and that "class may be the outcome of a whole variety of social practices in the workplaces, the home, the neighbourhood, the political arena, and the cultural sphere."[141] Once we shift our focus to how social configurations are (re)produced by the relationship between space and time, we can avoid imposing a reductive framework on the complex interaction between socialised geographic space and Renoir's camera, witnessing a space in which, corresponding with Massey's theorisation of space, "there will always be loose ends, always relations with the beyond, always potential elements of chance,"[142] all of which are visibly imbricated in "le jaillissement du temps comme dédoublement, comme scission."[143] In doing so, we can arrive at a more comprehensive appreciation of the numerous elements of Renoir's mise-en-scène that allow the spectator to derive an image of open space-time.

1.3 Literature Survey: Renoir and the Emergence of the New

1.3.1 Richard Rushton: Renoir's Deleuzian Imaginary

Insofar as analyses of Renoir's dynamic space-time are concerned, two key Deleuzian interpretations by Richard Rushton and Martin O'Shaughnessy demand discussion. Rushton (2011) discusses Renoir's work with a view to

[140] Jonathan Murdoch, "Middle-class territory? Some remarks on the use of class analysis in rural studies." In *The Rural: Critical Essays in Human Geography*, ed. Richard Munton (London: Ashgate, 2005), 360.
[141] Ibid., 365.
[142] Massey, *For Space*, 95.
[143] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 109: "the gushing forth of time as doubling, as scission."

demonstrating that Deleuze's film theory, unlike that of film theorists of the 1970s and 1980s (such as Jean-Louis Baudry and Stephen Heath), allows us to conceive of the imaginary in the cinema in a positive way, specifically as an apparatus which opens up new expressions of the real. Rushton's analysis centres on the imprisonment imposed by recognition, representation and the imaginary which, for Deleuze, cannot serve as markers of thought and thus prohibit the creation of the new.[144] Drawing on the indiscernibility between the "imaginary" and the "real" in Deleuze's conceptualisation of the *image-temps*, Rushton asserts that "what is imaginary should be considered no less real than that which is supposedly real," and that distinctions between the two cease to matter to our interpretation of reality.[145]

Rushton sees this tension as an essential component of Renoir's work, which portrays reality as an inadequate "show of decrepitude and social stagnation."[146] Agreeing with Deleuze's terminology, Rushton states that the crack in the crystal offers escape from the real and into an imaginary that offers the potential reinvention of the real beyond predetermining elements. When reality has been "cracked up," in Rushton's interpretation, a new real can emerge through the production of a "properly schizophrenic subjectivity," a body-without organs (Rushton borrows the translated version of Deleuze and Guattari's term, "le corps-sans-organes") on which all coordinates are scrambled so that it remains in "a nascent state of potentiality."[147] Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's appropriation of F. Scott

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[144] Richard Rushton, "A Deleuzian Imaginary: the Films of Jean Renoir," *Deleuze Studies* 5, no. 2 (2011): 243-44.
[145] Ibid., 245-46.
[146] Ibid., 253.
[147] Ibid., 253-4.

Fitzgerald's discussion of the "clean break" that offers an opening onto a new real, Rushton remarks that Renoir's work features breaks (the rigid social demarcations which feature in *Boudu*, *La Règle du jeu* and *The River*), cracks (created through the flight of Celestine in *Diary of a Chambermaid*, Lange's escape to Belgium in *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, and Harriet's coming of age in *The River*) and ruptures (the disintegration of social structures that offer no return to the way things were) which offer varying degrees of escape and change within the world viewed.

Rushton's key arguments revolve around examples chosen from *La Règle du jeu* and *The Golden Coach*, the two features for which Deleuze reserves the bulk of his own analysis and appreciation. Rushton first examines Christine's accidental interpretation of the embrace shared by her husband and his mistress as a blossoming love-affair rather than the goodbye that it is intended to represent. In Rushton's analysis, an "all too clear vision of a reality that is flawed"[148] introduces a crack into the crystal, in response to which Christine can consider various other options ranging from elopement with Jurieu or Octave to reconciliation with her husband and Geneviève. In a similar vein, Rushton argues that in *The Golden Coach*, Camilla, Ramon, Felipe and the bullfighter find cracks in one another that each offer potential escape from their current circumstances. At the end of *La Règle du jeu*, when Schumacher attempts to prevent Christine's escape from the crystal by shooting Jurieu (whom he mistakes for Octave), Robert re-imposes the real through "une nouvelle définition du mot 'accident'"[149]

[148] Ibid., 247.
[149] "[A] new definition of the word 'accident'"

which comfortably accommodates the death of Jurieu.[150]

Rushton's interpretation provides a number of valuable suggestions regarding the relationship between characters and the crack. First of all, like Deleuze, Rushton emphasises the role of the characters' own desires in the production of a new future: Rushton focuses on the entry of Renoir's characters to a transcendental field where non-subjective, pre-conscious impulses emerge, potentially opening the characters to cracks in the crystal, at which point the challenge for Renoir's characters is to keep discovering new realities in the hope of escaping the crystal.[151] Secondly, Rushton suggests that characters may restore the cracked crystal, preventing the production of a new future beyond the crystal, implying that the crack does not necessarily present itself to numerous characters at once.

However, partly as a result of Rushton's emphasis on the imaginations of Renoir's characters, his argument is impeded by three key oversights. First of all, the agency implied by the reflective subjective consciousness of characters within the crystal wrongfully supplants the import of the characters' social and physical space towards the introduction of cracks to the crystal: if Christine allows her fate to be determined by the chaos that proliferates around her rather than by "a defined and anchored subjectivity,"[152] this necessarily leaves her trajectory open to the forces operating within the social and physical spaces in which she is entrenched. Secondly, Rushton's assertion that, after Robert's closing speech, "the crack

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[150] Ibid., 248.
[151] Ibid., 253-58.
[152] Ibid., 252.

is sealed up and the inadequacies of the real re-established"[153] is a gross over-simplification of the social and physical factors that contribute to the construction of the crystal, particularly of the social and physical urban space of Paris from which la Colinière is only deceptively isolated. Thirdly, Rushton fails to sufficiently address the import of Renoir's mise-en-scène towards the spectator's perception of the *point de fuite*. Finally, on a more general note, it is worth remarking that both the capacity of imagination for transformation and those who vaunt their imaginative powers are reflexively criticised in Renoir's work, not least of all in his Front Populaire output where characters' projected futures rarely correspond with their wishes, and are never guaranteed. Rushton's approach ultimately succeeds far more in linking Deleuze with alternative psychoanalytical approaches to Renoir's work than in assessing the validity of Deleuze's sub-arguments or engaging with Renoir's texts in depth.

1.3.2 Martin O'Shaughnessy: Shooting in "Deep Time"

In a relatively recent article, Martin O'Shaughnessy (2013)[154] offers an interpretation of Renoir's cracked crystal that is significantly more grounded in both Renoir's political engagement and signature techniques than Rushton's study. O'Shaughnessy discusses Renoir's shooting style in the

[153] Ibid., 248.
[154] O'Shaughnessy, "Shooting in Deep Time," 21. O'Shaughnessy reiterates this argument in Martin O'Shaughnessy, "Between the 'I' and the 'We': Jean Renoir's Films of the Popular Front Era," in *Politics and the Individual in France 1930-1950*, ed. Jessica Wardhaugh (Oxford: Legenda, 2015), 44.

1930s with a view to examining the import of contemporary French society towards Renoir's portrayal of the emergence of history through the director's characteristic cinematographic techniques. In O'Shaughnessy's analysis, the "deep time" of films such as *La Grande Illusion*, *La Bête Humaine* and *La Règle du jeu* differentiates them from Renoir's earlier works such as *Boudu sauvé des eaux*: whereas the unconventional visual depth of the latter allows the spectator to interpret the social stratification of Renoir's societies, the former category incorporates a "chronological depth" that encourages us to read the mise-en-scène of the films concerned in both historical and social terms. Thus, if Boudu's physical nonconformity disputes the rigid, deeply composed frames of the Lestingois' bourgeois residence, the frames of Renoir's Front Populaire output visualise the "power of the collective as the collective itself comes to self-awareness"[155] within a world that is "uneven and in flux,"[156] and history is "opened up to collective intervention."[157] In O'Shaughnessy's view, Renoir's films of the late 1930s mark a definitive rupture with this "solidarity between the camera and human figures:"[158] *La Bête Humaine* and *La Règle du jeu* each portray a "closing down of possibilities" where the frame is no longer open to intervention by the characters and "the future is already charted."[159]

O'Shaughnessy raises two constructive arguments that are relevant to this thesis. First of all, O'Shaughnessy's textual analyses perceptively demonstrate that characters and objects may negotiate the parameters of the

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[155] Ibid., 28.
[156] Ibid., 31.
[157] Ibid., 26.
[158] Ibid., 28.
[159] Ibid., 30.

frame to depict the flow of a specifically chronological time in a manner unique to the cinema. By alluding to elements that must be considered by any study of Renoir's mise-en-scene of temporality, O'Shaughnessy avoids Deleuze and Faulkner's formalist tendencies. Secondly, and most importantly, O'Shaughnessy acknowledges that escape from the crystal is never guaranteed: by opening our interpretation of Renoir's films to history, "the on-screen world loses its solidity and fixity."[160] History therefore features in these films as "an uncertainty driven by the co-presence of competing possibilities."[161] Thus, the circular courtyard of *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* signals both utopian possibilities and their potential limits. Furthermore, the shots of Batala's body and the speeding car, superimposed on one another near the film's close, "simultaneously connote progress (the triumph over capitalism) and flight (the purely local nature of this triumph and the need to escape the law)."[162] Similarly, the feudal-era castle of *La Grande Illusion* suggests both "a potentially authoritarian future" and "that a progressive, egalitarian history may still be rescued, not as something inevitable, but as a possibility."[163]

Although O'Shaughnessy offers several enlightening avenues of enquiry towards inscriptions of temporality in Renoir's work, the limited scope of his analysis results in two key oversights. First of all, O'Shaughnessy's decision to read Renoir's mise-en-scène through significant events, such as the First and Second World Wars, limits our understanding of the term "history." Escape from the crystal is misguidedly

[160] Ibid., 31.
[161] Ibid., 29.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.

lent a privileged status even though many of Renoir's films, particularly those filmed before and after Renoir's most politically attuned works, such as *La Chienne*, *Boudu sauvé des eaux*, *The Southerner*, and *Diary of a Chambermaid* narrate the ongoing production of space-time in characters' everyday lives. One particular bone of contention is O'Shaughnessy's analysis of *Boudu sauvé des eaux* which, according to O'Shaughnessy, lacks the "chronological depth" of *La Règle du jeu*, a film that incorporates a "much greater social density"[164] through both its innovative portrayal of a disintegrating social collective, and the film's references to the war that has been and the war that will inevitably come to pass. Boudu's story, on the other hand, is treated as a self-contained story devoid of historicity, in O'Shaughnessy's sense of the term: when Boudu abandons the Lestingois' bourgeois circle on the day of his arranged wedding, he "is returning to an earlier asocial state, not changing society or moving history on."[165] Partly as a result of the lack of any coherent spatial framework within which to consider the ongoing fluctuating relationship between characters and the socialised physical environment in which they navigate, O'Shaughnessy's appropriation of Deleuze is confined by the dual opposing possibilities of major historical advance or regression. Furthermore, as this thesis shall later demonstrate, the absence of any clear conception of space in O'Shaughnessy's analysis radically simplifies his interpretation of coeval spatial politics to Renoir's mise-en-scène of history, in the sense of the everyday passage of time as well as the major events that punctuate such quotidian narratives.

[164] Ibid., 20.
[165] Ibid., 25.

It would be unjust to criticise O'Shaughnessy for exclusively appropriating Deleuze to the ends clearly proposed by his analysis of Renoir's films of the 1930s. However, it is also worth noting that it is O'Shaughnessy's precise failure to ground his Deleuzian analysis within a coherent conception of space that precludes its relevance to the spatio-temporal tensions informing the mise-en-scène of Renoir's broader, varied corpus.

1.4 Corpus and Chapter Breakdown

I have managed to view all of Renoir's films (with the notable exception of *Marquitta* [1927], which remains lost). However, a comprehensive analysis of Renoir's entire oeuvre could not have been accommodated by this thesis. I am deliberately setting aside a number of films in favour of a range of canonised landmarks and underdiscussed works that provide a representative sample of the aspects that structure this thesis. By this, I mean a selection of films which explore narrative settings explored by Renoir's camera, the impact of his famous engagement with the Front Populaire on his mise-en-scène, and the post-war developments in Renoir's narrative style. Due to the centrality of Deleuze's arguments to any understanding of Renoir's mise-en-scène of space-time, it is worth noting that five of the twelve films selected are directly addressed by Deleuze.

Renoir's works sustain analysis through a variety of structures:

thematic, in terms of the milieu or period in which they were made, and either as separate films or as groups. This thesis draws on three aspects of Renoir's work which, in Deleuze's tantalisingly underdeveloped analysis, condition Renoir's mise-en-scène of temporality (c.f. section 1.3.4). The first two sections – respectively engaging with Renoir's Paris and natural landscape – examine the import of setting to Renoir's portrayal of space-time. The last two sections, which examine Renoir's Front Populaire output and his post-war aesthetic development, respectively explore the impact of Renoir's *engagement politique* and *crises anti-réalistes* on his mise-en-scène of open space-time. Each chapter examines three films in chronological order with a view to discerning evolutions within Renoir's narrative style.

By devoting separate chapters of this thesis to urban and rural spaces, this thesis does not aim to dismiss the similar constitution of each kind of space: Raymond Williams' seminal *The Country and the City* (1973) disintegrates the dichotomy between the country as "a natural way of life" and the city as "an achieved centre,"[166] determining that ideologically-infused representations have blurred our real social experience, which "is not only of the country and the city, in their most singular forms, but of many kinds of intermediate and new kinds of social and physical organisation."[167] Since then, E. Melanie DuPuis,[168] Brian Short[169] and David

[166] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford UP, 1973), 1.
[167] Williams, *The Country and the City*, 289.
[168] E. Melanie DuPuis, "Variations on the rural idyll," in *The Handbook of Rural Studies*, eds. Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden, and Patrick Mooney (London: SAGE, 2006), 124-132.
[169] Brian Short, "Idyllic ruralities," in *The Handbook of Rural Studies*, 133-148.

Bell[170] have also related illusory images of the rural idyll to a broad range of social factors including industrialisation, urbanisation and bourgeois values.

Despite the similar theoretical and social grounding of rural and urban space, each merits separate analysis because Renoir's repeated appropriation of each over the course of his career demonstrates a diversity unique among filmmakers of his generation, and firmly acknowledges his own individuality as a filmmaker. Susan Hayward notes that with the exception of Marcel Pagnol's Marseilles works, Claude Berri's remakes of these films, and Bresson's austere portraits of rural life, "French films have focused on the city (in particular Paris) with landscape appearing as a mere dot on the French cinematic horizon."[171] Interestingly, Renoir exploited cities, particularly Paris, almost as frequently as rural landscapes over the course of his career: *Nana* (1926) is set in reconstructed *belle époque* Paris; *Sur un air de Charleston* (1927) is set in a post-apocalyptic vision of the city; *La Chienne* (1931), *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932) and *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (1936) all take Paris as their primary setting; although *La Règle du jeu* is better remembered for its photography of la Sologne, the first twenty minutes are set in Paris; *French Cancan* (1954) and *Eléna et les hommes* (1956) each celebrated life in Paris after his Hollywood exile; *Le Testament du docteur Cordelier* (TV, 1959) was partly shot on location in Paris; and even *Le Caporal Épinglé* (1962), a prisoner-of-war story set largely within a prison-camp during the Second World War, ends with the protagonist gazing wistfully at the Eiffel Tower following his escape.

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[170] David Bell. "Variations on the rural idyll," in *The Handbook of Rural Studies*, 149-161.
[171] Susan Hayward, "Filming the (Post-)Colonial Landscape: Claire Denis' *Chocolat* (1988) and *Beau Travail* (1998)," in *Cinema and Landscape: Film, Nation and Cultural Geography*, eds. Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner (Bristol: Intellect, 2010), 163.

Yet one could also add Renoir's name to Hayward's list, for natural landscapes provided him with one of his core settings, not only during the silent period and in his critically-acclaimed works of the 1930s, but also during his exile in Hollywood: *La Fille de l'eau* (1925) was filmed in Marlotte, his mother's homeplace; *Le Bled* (1929) was filmed in the Algerian desert; *Toni* is based on a farm in Martigues; *Partie de Campagne* was filmed almost entirely outdoors at Champs-sur-Marne; *La Règle du jeu* (1939) was largely shot at la Sologne; *The Southerner* (1945) unfolds on a Texan plantation; *The River* (1951) was shot on location in India; *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1959) was largely filmed at les Collettes, where Pierre-Auguste Renoir spent his twilight years. Even works that would be difficult to class as rural "landscape" films reveal Renoir's penchant for natural settings: *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932) was partly filmed in the Bois de Boulogne and the outskirts of Paris; *Swamp Water* (1941) is set in Georgia's backwaters; and much of the drama in the esoteric *Woman on the Beach* (1947) is set on an unspecified American beach.

Rather than select films from a broad chronological scope for the second chapter, I have selected *La Chienne*, *Boudu sauvé des eaux* and *La Règle du jeu*. In doing so, I have elided *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, which I have preferred to discuss within the context of Renoir's relationship with the Front Populaire. I have also chosen to discuss the Parisian narrative of *Eléna et les hommes* in relation to the impact of Renoir's *crises anti-réalistes* on our perception of space-time in Renoir's work. *La Chienne*, *Boudu* and *La Règle du jeu* were all made during the 1930s as French society underwent traumatic social change, and the topography of each is

informed by the social, economic and political crosswinds that buffeted the city over the course of the decade. All three establish a counterpoint between the theatrical stasis noted by Deleuze and the Parisian cityscape, thus emphasising the impact of the city as both an affective physical landscape, and a locus of diverse social strata. In each, class tensions intersect to contest the ways in which urban life is configured and experienced, alternately bolstering and eroding the class values that stratify the city. Of specific interest is the manner in which the mise-en-scène of the relationship between particular social strata and urban landmarks such as the Moulin Rouge, the Institut de France, and the Eiffel Tower illustrates the characters' ability to actualise select conditions of possibility presented by urban space by the very act of walking in the city, which like Massey's theorised space-time, is characterised by "throwntogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now."[172]

The third chapter, examining rural space, includes one film from his French, American and later "transnational" period. In the first instance, I have selected Renoir's hitherto neglected *Le Bled*, deliberately setting aside major Renoir works of the 1930s including *Toni* (which has already attracted significant critical attention in book-length studies and articles alike) and *Partie de Campagne* (which has similarly attracted critical attention in book-length studies).[173] The second film discussed within this chapter is *The Southerner*, whose mise-en-scène of social relations in the American South

[172] Massey, *For Space*, 140.
[173] See Olivier Curchod, *La « Méthode Renoir » : Pleins feux sur* Partie de Campagne *(1936) et* La Grande Illusion *(1937)* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2012). See also: Gilberto Perez, *The Material Ghost: Films and Their Medium* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1998), 202-228.

remains critically underdiscussed. Drawing on Massey's assertion that "memories […] are also spatial,"[174] this chapter finally explores *The River* with a view to determining whether or not the "ouverture d'avenir" (c.f. Deleuze) in Renoir's mise-en-scène is framed within the extended flashback that lends form to the Indian landscape. The conditions of engagement with the natural landscape in all three vary chronologically and geographically: whereas the first two constitute thoughtful responses to the contemporary social, political, and economic circumstances in which they were produced, *The River* relegates spatial politics in favour of portraying space itself as a realm of recollection, in which spatial mobility signifies the very act of recollecting. In all three, we see how the deceptively inert landscape becomes a site for the actualisation of a genuinely new present, either through the production of new social hierarchies or the discarding of the embodied past from the deepest layers of human memory. By discussing manifestations of the *point de fuite* in all three films, this chapter also determines the extent to which Renoir's mise-en-scène of open space-time relies on the theatrical motifs that form a key component of Deleuze's analysis.

This thesis devotes the entirety of its fourth chapter to Renoir's Front Populaire output in order to determine the impact of Renoir's engagement with the French Left on his portrayal of open space-time. Renoir was affiliated with numerous left-wing artistic figures including the *groupe octobre* and Louis Aragon. He publicly supported the Parti communiste français and, in Dudley Andrew and Steven Ungar's analysis, directed a

[174] Massey, *For Space*, 129.

cycle of films between 1936 and 1938 which "certifies a leftist humanism even down to our own day."[175] Drawing on the pre-war anxiety articulated by *Ida*, an unfilmed screenplay written by Renoir during the making of *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, this chapter argues that Renoir's mise-en-scène of open space-time in *Lange*, *Les Bas-fonds*, and *La Grande Illusion*, is informed by Renoir's own pessimism regarding the rise of the Front Populaire. Special attention is lent to the similar courtyard settings of *Lange* and *Les Bas-fonds*, the latter currently remaining the most neglected of Renoir's entire Front Populaire output. *La Grande Illusion* has been subject to as much critical analysis as *La Règle du jeu* but, like the latter, demands re-assessment when viewed in relation to my interpretation of Renoir's previous output. Drawing on the political ambiguities in each film, I aim to explore the characters' inability to comprehensively actualise a vision of the future that corresponds with their projected new world. In each, the characters' hopes are contested by what Massey calls the "freedom, dislocation and surprise which are essential to open [space] up to the political,"[176] a quality that allows Renoir's communities to envision a new future, but which simultaneously implies the ineffaceable susceptibility of any space to stratification by opposing forces existing in physically distant albeit socially interconnected spaces. I have not examined *La Vie est à nous* (1936), primarily because Renoir's own involvement is difficult to determine, and the completed film has provided the core subject of Jonathan

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[175] Dudley Andrew and Steven Ungar, *Popular Front Paris and the Poetics of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2005), 322.
[176] Massey, *For Space*, 29.

Buchsbaum's excellent analysis of filmmaking under the Front Populaire.[177] *La Marseillaise* (1938) is also undiscussed as both its production context and mise-en-scène have been extensively documented.[178]

Through an analysis of *Diary of a Chambermaid* (1946), *The Golden Coach* and *Eléna et les hommes*, the fifth chapter examines the impact of Renoir's *crises anti-réalistes* on the spectator's perception of open space-time in Renoir's work. Despite the stylistic similarities between these three films and *French Cancan*, I have excluded the latter, not only because it has been extensively studied but because I agree with Janet Bergstrom's assertion that the film represents "a betrayal of the intelligent, socially evocative, photogenic filmmaking Renoir had excelled in before the war."[179] In particular, *Cancan* fails to extract the reflexive critical potential and incisive political satire embedded in the visibly artificial mise-en-scène, later exploited within *Eléna*. In all three films discussed within this chapter, geographical place-names are secondary to theatricality, which is foregrounded by different combinations of set-design, costume-design, camerawork, music and performance. Rather than merely survey the coalescence of theatrical roles and "real life" that informs mise-en-scène of these works, and which is justly lauded by Deleuze, this chapter primarily emphasises the stultifying impact of the correlation between spectacle and ideology on the spatio-temporal mobility of Renoir's characters. By extension, this chapter determines the import of Renoir's use of saturated

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[177] Jonathan Buchsbaum, *Cinema Engagé: Film in the Popular Front* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1988), 83-184.
[178] O'Shaughnessy, "Shooting in Deep Time," 26-28; Pascal Ory, 'De Ciné-Liberté' à *La Marseillaise*: Espoirs et limites d'un cinéma libéré (1936-1938)," *Le Mouvement social* 91 (1975): 153-75.
[179] Janet Bergstrom, "Jean Renoir's Return to France," *Poetics Today* 17.3 (1996): 459.

colour and emphatically false décor towards the visualisation of open space-time. Referring to Deleuze's elaboration on the potential emergence of time in Renoir's *images planes*, and on Guy Debord's theorisation of the relationship between society, spectacle, and "[le] *temps gêlé*,"[180] this chapter also emphasises the importance of the spectator's pre-existing awareness of the material genesis of Deleuze's metaphorical crystal to our interpretation of space-time in these post-war costume dramas.

By restoring a greater sense of the diversity of the films Renoir directed over the course of his career and the complexity of his mise-en-scène of open space-time in each, the conclusion shall briefly summarise the findings of each chapter, and relate them to the overarching importance of addressing space and time in equal measure within any analysis of Renoir's work, and to new ways in which we may usefully reconceptualise Deleuze's metaphor of the cracked crystal.

1.5 Renoir *Auteur* and the Cracked Crystal: Discursive Position

Given the importance of Deleuze's discussion of Renoir's work to the methodology, it should be emphasised in advance that Deleuze never blatantly asserts that the cracked crystal was conceived by Renoir – the terminology remains Deleuze's own – but Deleuze implies that it is consistently produced by Renoir's works, from *La Petite marchande d'allumettes* (1928) to *Le Petit théâtre de Jean Renoir* (TV, 1970). Deleuze's

[180] Guy Debord, *La Société du spectacle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 192: "*frozen time*." Italics are Debord's own.

auteurist perspective is most concisely encapsulated by Peter Wollen's structuralist understanding of how a director inadvertently introduces stylistic continuity to his/her work:

> The structure is associated with a single director, an individual, not because he has played the role of artist, expressing himself or his own vision in the film, but because it is through the force of his preoccupations that an unconscious, unintended meaning can be decoded in the film, usually to the surprise of the individual involved. The film is not a communication, but an artefact which is retracing a film to its origins, to its creative source. It consists of tracing a structure (not a message) within the work, which can then *post factum* be assigned to an individual, the director, on empirical grounds.[181]

Deleuze specifically argues that the crystal is enacted by the director's frame: the actual-virtual circuit "est le caractère objectif de certaines images existantes, doubles par nature."[182] Although the exchange between the virtual and actual within the crystal of time (for example, "la confusion du réel et de l'imaginaire"[183] in the case of flashbacks that actualise the the virtual past) "se fait seulement « dans la tête » de quelqu'un."[184] Crystalline description remains "une illusion objective"[185] constructed by the filmmaker. Our perception of open space-time in Renoir's work, as Bazin might have put it, "n'est pas dans l'image, il en est l'ombre projetée, par le montage, sur le plan de conscience du spectateur."[186]

Although this thesis does not argue that Renoir deliberately portrayed temporality as conceived by Deleuze and does not aim to

[181] Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meanings in the Cinema* (London: BFI, 1998), 115.
[182] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 94: "is the objective characteristic of certain existing images which are by nature double."
[183] Ibid: "the confusion of the real and the imaginary."
[184] Ibid: "is produced solely 'in someone's head.'"
[185] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 94: "an objective illusion."
[186] Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, 65-66: "is not in the image. It is in the shadow of the image projected by montage onto the field of consciousness of the spectator."

elaborate on the autobiographical texture of Renoir's work in general, it occasionally draws on sources curated at UCLA's Jean Renoir archive in order to bolster unconventional interpretations or to avoid previously prescribed interpretations. Discussing Renoir's canonical works of the 1930s, Dudley Andrew accurately writes that "history, even more than genius, ran through his camera and his pen."[187] This examination of Renoir's mise-en-scène of open space-time is not dictated by the historical events that punctuated Renoir's career, but occasionally draws on Renoir's production materials, letters, and public comments on contemporary society in order to highlight hitherto neglected aspects of particular films. By relating Renoir's complex political outlook and aesthetic concerns to his mise-en-scène of space-time, this thesis aims to further expand our understanding of the import of society, ideology, and technology, towards the constitution of open space-time.

[187] Dudley Andrew, *Mists of Regret* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1995), 293.

Chapter 2 – *Teatro Mundi*: Framing Urban Dynamics in Renoir's Paris

"Le vieux Paris n'est plus (la forme d'une ville.
Change plus vite, hélas! que le coeur d'un mortel...)"[1]
– Baudelaire, "Le Cygne," in *Les Fleurs du mal*

"[W]hat is special about place is precisely that throwntogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now […]; and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and non human."[2]
– Doreen Massey

2.1 Introduction: Renoir, Cinema and the City

Building on Deleuze's association of the theatre with the force of the past in Renoir's work, this chapter argues that Renoir's *surcroît de théâtralité* enters into dialectic with urban dynamics to produce an image of open space-time in *La Chienne* (1931), *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932), and *La Règle du jeu* (1939). The relevance of separate examinations of urban and rural space-time has been challenged by certain social theorists. Echoing

[1] Charles Baudelaire, *Les Fleurs du mal* (France: Gallimard, 1996), 111: "Old Paris is no more (the form of a city. Changes more quickly, alas! Than the human heart…)."
[2] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE), 140.

Howard Newby's assertion that "what constitutes 'rural' is wholly a matter of convenience […] and of little utility,"[3] Doreen Massey is reluctant to distinguish the city from other spatial forms: rather than elucidating a set of qualities unique to urban space, Massey writes that the spatial mobility of cities "is a hyperversion of spatiality in general":[4] the particularity of cities "consists primarily in an intensification, a dramatic exaggeration, of characteristics […] intrinsic to space more generally."[5] Essential to this intensity is the "vast variety of different human (and not only human […]) trajectories" through which "the discordant, the different, the supposedly incongruous, hit up against each other."[6] Interestingly, however, in *L'invention du quotidian* (1980), Michel de Certeau appropriates the shifting social configurations and distinctive architecture of urban space to illustrate his Foucaultian distinction between strategies and tactics, the former postulating "une maîtrise du temps par la fondation d'un lieu autonome,"[7] the latter referring to "l'action calculée"[8] that can only exploit "le terrain qui lui est imposé."[9] These tactics extend to everyday "manières de faire"[10] (literally "ways of doing") which challenge the hegemonic powers that structure the city, manipulating the circuit of time and allowing for the creation of a new future (if only on a small scale).

It is precisely this fluctuating relationship between the city's dense

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[3] Howard Newby, "Locality and Rurality: The Restructuring of Rural Social Relations," *Regional Studies*, 20.3: (1986), 209.
[4] Karen Lury and Doreen Massey, "Making Connections," *Screen* 40.3 (1999): 231.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Certeau, *L'invention*, 60: "a mastery of time through the foundation of an autonomous place."
[8] Ibid: "calculated action."
[9] Ibid: "the terrain imposed upon it."
[10] Ibid., 142.

social tissue and distinctive architecture that has captured the attention of film theorists examining the specific historical affinity between the cinema and the city. Asserting that film is primarily concerned with "actually existing physical reality – the transitory world we live in,"[11] Siegried Kracauer devotes significant attention to the affinity between cinema and the city: "The affinity of film for haphazard contingencies is most strikingly demonstrated by its unwavering susceptibility to the "street" - a term designed to cover not only the street, particularly the city street, in the literal sense, but also its various extensions such as railway stations, dance and assembly halls, bars, hotel lobbies, airports, etc."[12] Kracauer particularly emphasises the import of urban architecture towards the most banal narrative: "[a] street serving as background to some quarrel or love affair may rush to the fore and produce an intoxicating effect."[13] Geoffrey Nowell-Smith similarly remarks on a category of films in which "the city becomes a protagonist, but unlike the human characters, it is not a fictional one,"[14] not only providing a topographical backdrop for the drama but catalysing the characters' individual trajectories within the narrative.

The impact of the city on human perception has been further discussed by James Donald, who asserts that "[t]he city is not a place" but rather a historically-specific "structure of visibility."[15] For Donald, the city is an ephemeral projection, a plural entity at the intersection of

[11] Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1997), 28.
[12] Ibid., 62.
[13] Ibid., 303.
[14] Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, "Cities: Real and Imagined," in *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, eds. Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 99.
[15] James Donald, *Imagining the Modern City* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press), 92.

geographically and historically specific relations that are constantly repatterned by acts of perception, participation and transgression: “[w]ays of seeing and understanding the city inevitably inform ways of acting on the space of the city, with consequences which then in turn produce a modified city which is again seen, understood and acted on.”[16] How this constant recreation of urban space – in both its physical and social aspects – is transposed by the camera and juxtaposed with Renoir’s theatrical motifs, is central to this chapter. Just as “the multiplicities of [space and time] together can be a condition for the openness of the future,”[17] inherent fissures in the molar lines that stratify socialised urban space necessarily provide “[une] condition de possibilité”[18] for tacticians who endeavour to exploit them. Two characteristics of Renoir’s urban narratives are of immediate relevance to this chapter. In the first case, Renoir’s extended takes, wide shots and deep space map the mutually affective relationship between the social space and physical architecture of Paris, demonstrating the ways in which urban space catalyses spatio-temporal trajectories of characters belonging to different social strata, and consolidates new relationships between different classes.

The second characteristic of these three narratives which demands analysis is the presence of commonly recognised landmarks that punctuate the topography of Paris. Such sites include the Moulin Rouge (which features in *La Chienne*), Notre Dame and the Louvre (which each feature in *Boudu*), the Eiffel Tower, and the Palais du Chaillot (each of which is visible

[16] Ibid., 27.
[17] Massey, *For Space*, 89.
[18] Certeau, *L’invention*, 144: “[a] condition of possibility.”

in *La Règle du jeu*). Victor Burgin remarks that such landmarks allow spectators to project their own perceptions of the city onto the screen in an effort to lend coherence to the narrative: "[t]he city in our actual experience is *at the same time* an actually existing physical environment, *and* a city in a novel, a film, a photograph, a city seen on television, a city in a comic strip, a city in a pie chart, and so on."[19] As Chris Rojex observes, topographical sites form the spectator's "index of representations; that is, a range of signs, images and symbols which make the sight familiar to us in ordinary culture."[20] John Urry further notes that our gaze is "signposted" towards a "relatively small number of tourist nodes."[21] Crucially, Renoir often uses these landmarks unconventionally, even counter-intuitively, consequently deceiving such signposting, rendering such indexes useless, and distorting the topographical relationship between these landmarks and the broader space of Paris. This confronts the spectator with a textual space in which the coordinates of social and physical space are emphatically unfixed. The city itself emerges as both a factor and product of open space-time, constructed not only through physical architecture, but also through what Massey refers to as "different resources, distinct dynamics […] and temporalities, which have their own directions in space-time,"[22] recalling Donald's theorisation of the city as a constantly remoulded entity.

We cannot consider the ways in which Renoir frames these transient

[19] Victor Burgin, *In/different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California, 1996), 28.
[20] Cited in David Bell, "Variations on the Rural Idyll," in *Handbook of Rural Studies*, ed. Paul J. Cloke, Terry Marsden, and Patrick H. Mooney (London: SAGE, 2006), 155.
[21] John Urry, cited in Catherine Emerson, "Regarding Manneken Pis: Culture, Celebration and Conflict in Brussels" (Oxford: Legenda, 2015), 126.
[22] Massey, *For Space*, 156.

social relations that continually restructure the city without considering the unique qualities of the urban space that hosts them. Drawing on social and film theorists, this chapter proposes a central two-fold argument: first of all, it is argued that Renoir's signature techniques foreground the impact of urban space on the consolidation of new class relations in *La Chienne*, *Boudu sauvé des eaux* and *La Règle du jeu*, often by entering into dialectic with the theatrical motifs that Deleuze recognises in Renoir's work. Secondly, this chapter demonstrates that Renoir depicts walking as a tactical act which subverts social order and erodes the class values that stratify the city, consequently producing new class relations in everyday Parisian life. This chapter ultimately argues that Renoir juxtaposes theatrically defined class-barriers and specifically cinematographic techniques to reveal the open space-time that structures the societies portrayed.

2.2 *La Chienne* (1931)

Theatrical roles *vs*. urban identities

The tension between urban dynamics and theatrical stasis is manifest from the opening moments of *La Chienne*. Interestingly, the film initially appears to comply with Deleuze's interpretation of theatre in Renoir's work as a locus of pre-defined, imprisoning roles and genres: the narrative unfolds in modern Paris but is bookended by a Guignol proscenium arch within which puppets introduce the drama. In the prologue, music plays from an unseen

source and the curtain behind a proscenium arch rises. Three puppets enter in sequence. The first is a moralising puppet who informs us that the spectator is about to view "un grand drame social"[23] that "vous prouvera que le vice est toujours puni."[24] A second puppet dressed as a policeman enters the stage and contradicts the other puppet, stating that "nous allons avoir l'honneur de vous présenter une comédie à tendances morales."[25] Guignol subsequently enters and unceremoniously beats the puppets into submission before making his own announcement: "Mesdames et messieurs, n'écoutez pas ces braves gens. La pièce que nous allons vous montrer n'est ni un drame ni une comédie. Elle ne comporte aucune intention morale et elle ne vous prouvera rien du tout."[26] Guignol may initially appear revolutionary in comparison with the other puppets. However, the roles available in Renoir's *petit théâtre* are invariably reductive, and even the boisterous Guignol himself attempts to describe the characters through labels which, although helpful in some measure, are inexact inasmuch as incomplete: Maurice Legrand (Michel Simon), we are told, "embodies an intellectual and sentimental culture above the milieu where he dwells, in such a way that he gives the impression of a perfect imbecile." Yet, as Colin Davis notes, Legrand has sufficient self-awareness to label himself an imbecile upon his final, brutal disillusionment in Lulu's (Janie Marèse) apartment prior to his act of murder.[27] Lulu's inconsistency similarly defies

[23] "A great social drama."
[24] "[W]ill prove to you that vice is always punished."
[25] "We are about to have the honour of presenting a moralising comedy."
[26] "Ladies and gentlemen, do not listen to these people. The play that we are going to show you is neither a drama nor a comedy. It carries no moral intentions and will prove absolutely nothing at all."
[27] Colin Davis, *Scenes of Love and Murder: Renoir, Film and Philosophy* (London: Wallflower, 2009), 29.

labels: "Elle est toujours sincère. Elle ment tout le temps,"[28] and must therefore be treated with caution, even when she is not deliberately deceptive. Guignol avoids any definition of Dédé's (Georges Flamant) traits, identifying him as "le môme Dédé, et rien de plus."[29]

The very lack of Renoir's signature techniques in this sequence further exemplifies Deleuze's conceptualisation of Renoir's theatre as a locus of imprisonment: the deep spaces lauded by Bazin, Christopher Faulkner, and Deleuze are nowhere to be seen, and the image is emphatically shallow. Nor does off-screen space play any notable role: the spectator is confronted with a set frame whose visible contents bear no relation to the diegetic space beyond the frame until the images of the three main characters materialise. This is particularly surprising since Noël Burch argues that Renoir was one of the first to constructively harness the "fluctuating existence"[30] of off-screen space and that Renoir is one of few to directors to "have used this implicit dialectic as an explicit means of structuring a whole film."[31] Within the prologue, the parameters of the proscenium arch are not challenged by the puppets who enter from below and do not address left-hand or right-hand spaces adjacent to the theatre, the space behind the theatre set-piece, or the space behind the camera. Thus, the tension between the embodied past and the ongoing present is absent from the prologue.

Davis suggests that "however separate the worlds of the audience, the puppets and the human actors may seem to be, the prologue encourages

[28] "She is always sincere: she lies all of the time."
[29] "[J]ust the lad, Dédé, and nothing more."
[30] Noël Burch, *Theory of Film Practice* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1981), 21.
[31] Burch, *Theory*, 24.

us to regard them as interpenetrating."[32] After all, Guignol remarks that "les personnages n'en sont ni des héros ni des sombres traîtres. Ce sont de pauvres hommes comme moi, comme vous."[33] However, the mise-en-scène of the introductions to the main characters of the drama emphasises the disparities between the space of the theatre and the space of the city rather than the relationship between the two that Davis, Deleuze and Leo Braudy[34] advocate as fruitful avenues of enquiry. Interestingly, the inability of the puppets to interpret the characters or the narrative without employing futile labels already suggests the incompatibility of narratives in the theatre and in the city. The irreconcilability of the theatre and the city is also signalled by the failure of the stage to contain the characters to whom Guignol refers: as he recites his description of each of the characters, images of Legrand, Lulu and Dédé appear in sequence. The deployment of superimposition – a specifically cinematographic device – is aesthetically counterposed with the space of the theatre, which is incapable of enclosing Renoir's three primary characters, who transcend its rigid frame. The palimpsestic mise-en-scène of the introductions provides a metafilmic commentary on the inability of the fluctuating world of the city to be subsumed within the rigid world of the theatre, and on the broader physical and metaphorical limits of the frame. This tension between the petrifying *surcroît de théâtralité* and the malleability of urban space structures our perception of space-time in the remainder of the narrative.

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[32] Davis, *Scenes of Love and Murder,* 28.
[33] "The characters are neither heroes nor absolute traitors. They are poor people like me, like you."
[34] Leo Braudy, *Jean Renoir, The World of His Films* (London: Robson, 1988), 68-69.

Marches dans la Ville: the Production of New Class Relations in Everyday Life

Renoir's use of framing devices in the city pointedly challenges any attempt to confine the fluctuating qualities of urban space to the proscenium arch. After the prologue, the screen fades from the frame of the Guignol stage to an innovative establishing shot of the celebrations unfolding in honour of la maison Henriot. The camera rises upward through a food-shaft whose window frames M. Henriot and his employees at their table. In the background, three windows provide additional frames leading to exterior space. The additional frames offer the first instance of frames within frames in the human drama. Crucially, the windows provide apertures to larger social spaces beyond the current view of the camera's frame. Thus, unlike the all-inclusive frame of the proscenium arch, this shot dispels any temptation to view any single frame (be it the frame of the camera or any single framing device) as a definitive container of life within the city. As Bazin notes, interior décor in *La Chienne* is designed to permit a deep field of vision and there is "une recherche systématique de l'effet de cadre-cache intérieur au plan." [35] A subsequent view of the men dining, shot from the vestibule, reveals both a physical space that hitherto remained off-screen (the vestibule itself) and two additional windows in the background which similarly remained off-screen in the shot viewed from the food shaft. The camera subsequently returns to a position behind the food-shaft, framing the table of employees as it did in the opening shot of this scene. By now, the

[35] André Bazin, *Jean Renoir* (Paris: Ivrea, 2005), 26-27: "a systematic search for the effect of the frame as a concealer within each shot."

evocations of the manifest limits of the camera's own frame have granted us an awareness of the fundamental impossibility of viewing the characters as a coherent set of elements within a single given frame (be they framed by a food-shaft, a window or the camera itself), isolated from the wider society. On-screen space thus enters into a dialectic with the "*specific* existence" and "*primordial* importance" that Burch associates with Renoir's brand of off-screen space.[36] The reflexive critique of the limits of the camera's frame created by the mise-en-scène of this sequence, particularly through deep staging and off-screen space, provides a spatial blueprint for our exploration of the city.

Our first exterior view of Paris is granted after the celebrations honouring M. Henriot. The camera literally frames the affective role of urban architecture, allowing the spectator to perceive crystalline space-time as the paths of the three major characters implicated in the drama converge for the first time. The scene opens with a wide shot of an area recognised by Alexander Sesonske as the steps near the church of St Jean de Montmartre.[37] Dédé, an abusive pimp, and Lulu, a prostitute, descend a stone staircase. The camera briefly cuts to a medium shot of Dédé beating Lulu before cutting back to its original vantage point. Legrand subsequently enters the scene from the foreground and accosts Dédé (fig. 1). The camera cuts to a close shot of Lulu's face as Legrand beholds her features for the first time, and of Lulu and Dédé as she nurses the latter's head. Once again, the camera returns to its broad view of the street as Legrand proceeds towards the

[36] Noël Burch, *Theory of Film Practice* (Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1981), 19. Italics are Burch's own.
[37] Alexander Sesonske, *Jean Renoir, the French Films, 1924-1939* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1980), 89.

background of the image to find a taxi to escort Lulu and Dédé home. The camera cuts briefly to show Dédé petulantly slapping Lulu's leg before returning yet again to a similar shot of the street, revealing Legrand emerging from the shadows of a road in the background, followed by a taxi. The camera cuts to a medium shot of the characters entering the car before returning to a wide-shot similar to the one that opened this scene, as the taxi proceeds towards a road that leads towards the background of the image.

Fig. 1

Sesonske notes two significant aspects of this meeting. First of all, their meeting is pure happenstance: "Lulu and Legrand meet by accident […] with no background to provide identity for each other, no time to prepare for the encounter."[38] Secondly, the characters are "from wholly different worlds."[39] O'Shaughnessy views Lulu and Dédé as "instantly recognisable urban types, walking clichés, preening pimp and subservient whore." Even the characters' clothes emphasise the social resonance of this meeting:

[38] Ibid., 84.
[39] Ibid.

Legrand's fedora, glasses and discreet gestures immediately signal his *petit bourgeois* background. Pitted against Lulu's brazen make-up and the garish flowers that adorn her hat, it becomes immediately apparent that the shared public space of the city provides a locus for the intersection of diverse trajectories plotted by characters belonging to diverse social strata.

Renoir's mise-en-scène of the city, specifically the interaction between off-screen and deeply-composed on-screen space in this shot foregrounds the role of the city as an active social catalyst, recalling Richard Sennett's definition of the city as 'a human settlement in which strangers are likely to meet."[40] Because the space photographed marks the confluence of at least three streets, which each extend beyond the scope of the camera's frame, the spectator remains constantly aware of the possibility for the introduction of new elements from the off-screen spaces that pre-exist the encounter. As Bauman remarks, "[e]ven the streets […] may prove to be obstacles rather than help, traps rather than thoroughfares. They may misguide, divert from the straight path, lead away."[41] Dédé physically assaults Lulu in the midground, Legrand arrives from behind the camera and finds a taxi on a road leading off-screen from the left-hand side of the image, and all three characters depart through a road that leads towards the background of the image. The roads leading off-screen evoke the subjective space beyond the frame. They therefore challenge us to consider the import of the city's architecture towards what Massey describes as "juxtapositions

[40] Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man: On the Social Psychology of Capitalism* (New York: Vintage, 1974), 39.
[41] Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist - or a Short History of Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE, 1996), 20.

yet to flower into interaction […], relations which may or may not be accomplished."[42] If Renoir renders the potential creation of a genuinely new future limpid (to appropriate Deleuze's terminology), it is because the physical space of the city is framed as a milieu that is conducive to the creation of a new future: the space of Montmartre visibly catalyses the social space of the city, producing *points de fuite* in the class hierarchy that stratifies the city. Martin O'Shaughnessy notes that Montmartre itself "was classically associated with prostitution, crime, artists and the entertainment industry, all a far cry from bourgeois respectability."[43] Renoir's portrayal of Paris as a nerve centre of intersecting class values in *La Chienne* arguably stems from the contrast between Renoir's own privileged domestic life and the fluctuating social space of Montmartre in which Pierre-Auguste secured his family's bourgeois identity.

In the shots that follow Legrand's meeting with Lulu, the camera continues to emphasise the import of the interconnected physical subsections of the city towards the event viewed: the camera returns to the repeated wide shot of the streets, whilst Legrand proceeds to the background of the image, searching for a taxi. The camera cuts only briefly to witness Dédé drunkenly shaking his fists. Yet again, the camera cuts to a wide view of the street, where we see Legrand returning to the foreground of the image, accompanied by a taxi, whilst Lulu comforts the intoxicated Dédé. Legrand's arrival is accompanied by the crossing of a car in the mid-ground of the image and the off-screen blare of a honking horn. Collectively, these elements and the camera's view thereof present the entire event as sheer

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[42] Doreen Massey, *For Space*, (London: SAGE, 2005), 11.
[43] O'Shaughnessy, *Renoir*, 2.

happenstance, a collision of unpredetermined social trajectories. Massey notes that spaces, particularly public places, are "internally dislocated by heterogeneous and sometimes conflicting social identities/relations."[44] Certeau specifically views walking as a tactical act whose footsteps "privilégient, muent ou délaissent des éléments spatiaux,"[45] and necessarily establish "une articulation conjonctive et disjonctive de places."[46] In doing so, the act of walking contributes to Certeau's image of "la Ville-concept,"[47] a polymorphous space devoid of a fixed identity, whose internal relations operate "à la fois [comme] la machinerie et le héros de la modernité."[48] The wide shot of Legrand, Lulu and Dédé's convergence at these steps portrays a partial disintegration of *petit bourgeois* society and the creation of a new social configuration that offers all of the characters new roles that efface the "borders […] of alterity"[49] that structure the city.

The mobile character-oriented extended take in the subsequent sequence further suggests that if there are other parts of the city that appear exclusively lower-class, the physical mobility of human beings within the city is also a socially affective act that, in Certeau's terms, "implique des *relations* entre des positions différenciées,"[50] and permeates the city's ultimately arbitrary borders. After the taxi has arrived in front of Dédé's hotel, Dédé and Lulu proceed on foot to the latter's lodgings. A travelling camera tracks their path, capturing incidental details such as a man

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[44] Massey, *For Space*, 152.
[45] Certeau, *L'invention*, 149: "privilege, transform or neglect spatial elements."
[46] Ibid., 150: "a conjunctive and disjunctive articulation of places."
[47] Ibid., 144: "the City-concept."
[48] Ibid: "simultaneously [as] the machinery and the hero of modernity"
[49] Massey, *For Space*, 173.
[50] Certeau, *L'invention*, 148: "implies *relations* between different positions." Italics are Certeau's own.

unlocking his apartment door, posters for Josephine Baker's appearance in the revue *Paris qui remue* at the Casino de Paris, and for singer Adrien Lamy. A brief cut to a long shot of the two characters in front of the metro station reminds us that they are now walking through an unsafe area. At the end of this street, the camera cuts to a wide shot of Lulu and Legrand walking around the corner built partly of wooden scaffolding covered by a sheet of dark cloth. Lulu announces that she is home, proceeding past this ramshackle setting towards a set of steps leading downward to an off-screen space. Legrand watches Lulu depart down the stairs, beyond the scope of the lens, before paying the taxi-man who has followed them in his car to Lulu's residence. One last shot of Legrand looking at Lulu's residence confirms the dilapidated state of her surroundings. Throughout this sequence, captured largely though a travelling shot, the camera refuses to fragment its view of the city, cutting only to situate the characters' shared trajectory in relation to their changing physical and social surroundings. Tellingly, the average shot length of *La Chienne* is actually double that of the contemporaneous national norm.[51] This calculated alternation between stationary wide shots and deeply composed space photographed by a mobile camera reminds us that Lulu's residence, although worlds apart from the middle-class party that opened Legrand's narrative and even the cheap hotel where Dédé lives, is part of a single physically-unified urban space devoid of any definitive social stratification. It also demonstrates that montage need

[51] Charles O' Brien, *Cinema's Conversion to Sound: Technology and Film Style in France and the U.S.* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2005), 161. For a graph representing the average shot lengths of thirty-one films directed by Renoir between 1925 and 1970, see Charles O'Brien, "Relocating Renoir's Sound and Music," in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, eds. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 37.

not preclude spatial or temporal continuity, allowing us rather to view multiple technically disjointed shots within a single consistent vision of crystalline space-time.

The narrative's refusal to situate Legrand and Lulu's trajectory in relation to any instantly recognisable urban landmarks that correspond with our pre-established "index of representations" emphasises the progressive destabilisation of the coordinates of Legrand's social space: whereas the illuminated Moulin Rouge was visible through a window during the celebrations held by la maison Henriot, such urban landmarks are conspicuously absent from this scene, thus drawing the spectator's attention to the deceptive banality of everyday *pratiques d'espace*.[52] Although Legrand is situated within a topographically specific site, and Lulu has mentioned that she lives in the Barbès area, none of the events following their meeting feature any notable landmarks that allow us to readily clarify his precise location beyond the vague area of Montmartre. By producing an ontologically specific reality that deviates from popular images, Renoir defamiliarises the viewer, creating a textual space within which the relationship between class and urban navigation amidst the open space-time of Paris can be clearly assessed.

It is important to reiterate that Deleuze's emphasis on the petrifying influence of theatricality, insofar as this film which eludes his analysis is concerned, is far from redundant. Like the puppets, Legrand is unable to elucidate the polymorphous identities embodied by Lulu and Dédé during their first perfunctary encounter. Zygmunt Bauman indirectly asserts that a

[52] C.f. Certeau, *L'invention*, 146.

“*mis*-meeting”[53] such as that between the three characters generally precludes the creation of a socialised space:

> The meeting of strangers is *an event without a past*. More often than not, it is also *an event without a future* (it is expected to be, hoped to be, free of a future), a story most certainly “*not* to be continued,” a one-off chance, to be consummated in full while it lasts and on the spot, without delay and without putting the unfinished business off to another occasion.[54]

Bauman notes elsewhere that such social intercourse is “always pregnant with the danger of false steps and costly blunders”[55] that “arise from the ignorance of rules, and the strangeness of strangers is, at bottom, our ignorance.”[56] This ignorance, in Legrand’s case, stems from a limited knowledge of the various roles available amongst the lower strata occupying urban space. As Bauman remarks, “I may know of the stranger so little that I cannot be even sure that she ‘fits’ any of the types I am familiar with.”[57] In the case of Legrand, one may even misidentify them as friends. Lulu’s true character-type, the *chienne* of the title, is not recognised by Legrand until the moments that directly precede his act of murder. Her exploitation of Legrand epitomises Bauman’s figure of “the stranger ‘sitting across the barricade,’ blurring the boundaries which ought to be kept watertight, and thus sapping the securely ‘typified’ world.”[58] By pursuing the *ligne de fuite* introduced by Lulu, Legrand willingly permits the public space of the city to become socialised. Clearly, Legrand’s own repertoire of available roles does

[53] Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (Blackwell: Politys, 2000), 96. Bauman’s italics are his own.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell), 149.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid., 150.
[58] Ibid

not even extend to the types denoted in the Guignol prologue. Interestingly, if social engineering has failed the city, it is Legrand who is the transgressor. The subversive nature of Lulu's relationship with Legrand, which O'Shaughnessy describes as a sign of "fallen urban order"[59] is itself indicative of the fact that this order was only ever a provisional social construct.

"*An event without a future*" (?): from Mis-meeting to Murder

Much like the initial meeting between Legrand and Lulu, the climactic murder-scene alternates between the two characters enmeshed in the drama and the wider urban space within which their dispute is unfolding, constantly contextualising the private world of Lulu's apartment and the public space of the city street. Within the apartment, Legrand apologises profusely for failing to realise that Lulu was perhaps subjugated to another against her will. As they argue over Lulu's exploitation of Legrand and his painting, the music from the streets continues to play, uninterrupted by the camera's transition to the interior space, and a man outside begins singing "La sérénade du pavé." As tensions continue to mount between Legrand and Lulu, the camera repeatedly alternates between the street and the apartment. The camera cuts to a close-up of the envelope-cutter and, rapidly, to a shot of the street singers. As the camera rises, we see a boy staring out of his first-floor window onto the singers down below, blithely unaware of the

[59] O'Shaughnessy, *Renoir*, 77.

butchery being committed mere floors above him. The camera places the physical architecture of the city between Lulu's apartment and both the unnamed spectator of the musicians and the audience. By the time the camera peers through the window of Lulu's apartment window, she is already dead, lying horizontally across her bed whilst Legrand apologetically kisses her lifeless hand. Even at this intimate moment, the music continues to play outside and the camera displaces our attention once more towards the street singers outside, creating, in Christopher Faulkner's analysis, "a fairly obvious synecdoche whereby the environment in which the murder takes place is larger than Lulu's room – by implication it is the whole of French society."[60]

Massey notes that part of what contributes to fluctuating spatial dynamics is the eternal elusiveness of any comprehensive view of space: "the recognition of the multiplicities of the spatial […] understands universals as spatio-temporally specific positions," which necessarily demand "acceptance that one is being observed/theories/evaluated in return and potentially in different terms."[61] It is this aspect of space, specifically the role of the city as a "structure of visibility" (and sonority, if we consider the soundscape produced by the singers), which is interpolated as Legrand leaves the apartment. The audience gathered around the singer passes no

[60] Christopher Faulkner, *The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP), 24. For a discussion of this scene, also consult Jean-Louis Leutrat, *« La Chienne » de Jean Renoir* (Crisnée: Éditions Yellow Now, 1994). Although he does not cite Deleuze, Leutrat remarks that by binding multiple moments unfolding in interior and exterior spaces together, the song creates "un « cristal » d'espace-temps" (1994, 35-38). Leutrat understandably regards this scene as the centre of the film for its treatment of space and time (1994, 45), but ignores the relationship between the present and the past within Deleuze's definition of the crystal, and also fails to explore the manifest urban processes to which the film's mise-en-scène of framing devices consistently testifies.
[61] Massey, *For Space*, 89.

remarks on Legrand as he departs the scene of the crime. Dédé, however, imposes on both the performers and the bystanders by honking his horn and obstinately parking his car right in the middle of the crowd. Dédé enters the apartment building pursued by the concierge, who remarks that "Il aurait bien pu me dire bonjour, surtout que j'ai des lettres pour Madame Pelletier."[62] Dédé's obnoxiousness will cost him dearly. He walks out of the building a short time later in the presence of the concierge and the musicians and he drives away. The concierge subsequently decides to bring the letters to Lulu only to find her bloodied corpse. Thus, Dédé is incriminated not because he was found with the body in private, but because he flaunted his presence in public at the door to Lulu's building. Dédé and Legrand's exits from the building occur in quick succession, and were it not for the musicians' presence outside the building, it is possible that the concierge would have remained inside and that Legrand would have been accused of the murder. The group of performers – a distinctly urban phenomenon that is absent from the novel – demonstrates the active role of urban space in the negotiation of social trajectories: Dédé's intrusion on the buskers and their audience results in his unmerited death.

Lulu and Dédé's unwarranted deaths, much like the initial encounter between Legrand, Lulu and Dédé, are hardly deliberate efforts to change their roles within the crystal. Rather, these events are by-products of the topography of the urban landscape which effortlessly subsumes the traumatic personal impact of Lulu's murder on both Legrand and Dédé within the broader narrative of the city, and whose physical space and social

[62] "He could have said hello, especially since I have letters for Madame Pelletier."

order remain untarnished by this gross miscarriage of due legal process. History and justice are subjective products of society and of the physical space that refracts society's perception of events. Urban space prevents the law from offering a just resolution of conflicting claims, yet the very ocular shortcomings that sever Legrand's relationship with Lulu and Dédé also ensure that society's legal process is executed: by the end of the film, the impact of Dédé's death has long since dissipated, and Legrand is a tramp, eking out a living by opening doors for cosmopolitan urban citizens. Legrand remains nonetheless open to prospective *lignes de fuite* in a city where naïve benevolence is encountered as spontaneously as the discarded twenty franc note that greets his sight before a curtain falls in front of the camera, satirising the impossibility of reducing the preceding happenstance drama to the manifest limits of the theatre's rigid frame.

2.3 *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932)

Lestingois' theatre: screening the "dead roles" of petit bourgeois fantasies.

In *Boudu sauvé des eaux*, Renoir's first film following *La Chienne*, in which the eponymous tramp (played by Michel Simon) is rescued from the waters of the Seine by ÉdouardLestingois (Charles Granval), a bourgeois bookshop-owner. Over the course of the film, Boudu wreaks havoc on Lestingois' property and seduces Lestingois' wife, Emma (Marcelle Hainia).

Boudu finally escapes the stultifying confines of Lestingois' bookshop when, on the day of his marriage to Lestingois' maid, Anne-Marie (Sévérine Lerczinska), he escapes on the current of the Seine. As in *La Chienne*, the *surcroît de théâtralité* is a core element of the film's mise-en-scène. Deleuze insightfully draws our attention to buildings whose theatrically informed etiquette and historically imbued décor make the co-existence of multiple temporalities tangible in the image: "Tout ce qui est passé retombe dans le cristal, et y reste: c'est l'ensemble des rôles gelés, figés, tout faits, trop conformes, que les personnages ont essayés tour à tour, rôles morts ou de la mort, la danse macabre des souvenirs dont parle Bergson, comme dans le château de *La Règle du jeu* […]."[63] Such is also the case in *Boudu*: Deleuze specifically remarks that the eponymous tramp "retrouve le fil de l'eau en sortant du théâtre intime et renfermé du libraire où il a essayé beaucoup de rôles."[64] Rather than simply view Lestingois' shop as a theatre, we should examine how Renoir frames its stultifying theatrical properties in relation to the fluctuating urban space of Paris to produce an image of open space-time, internally mediated by contrasting class values.

Like *La Chienne*, the film opens with a scene set on a stage but proceeds to directly link the enclosedness of the stage with the social and semiotic stultification of the Lestingois' home. After the credits, the sound of a flute is heard. Two columns are located to the left-hand side of the screen on the stage, and a garden features on the visibly false backdrop.

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[63] Deleuze, *L'image-temps,* 116: "Everything that is past falls back into the crystal and remains there: it is the collection of frozen, fixed, ready-made, too-conforming roles that the characters try out one after another, dead roles or role of death, the *danse macabre* of memories of which Bergson speaks, as in the château of *La Règle du jeu* [...]."
[64] Ibid., 115: "finds the water's current by leaving the intimate and enclosed theatre of the bookshop where he has tried numerous roles."

Anne-Marie, dressed in leaves and vines, skips a rope across the screen. Lestingois, similarly dressed, prances behind her, playing panpipes. As Lestingois approaches Anne-Marie to embrace her, he pushes one of the columns, which bends flimsily. If the artificiality of the prologue echoes the Guignol show that opens *La Chienne*, it differs crucially, in that the the image of Priapus pursuing Chloë represents Lestingois' fantasy rather than a commentary provided by independent observers. The roles played by both Lestingois and Anne-Marie provide Lestingois with the only fantasies that disengage him from the sterile routines that structure his world. Their affiliation with Greek mythology reflects the extent to which even Lestingois' private thoughts are moulded by his education and cultural interests. The structure of the theatre itself is manifestly shoddy, transforming Lestingois'/Priapus' pursuit of Anne-Marie/Chloë into "a sham-fantasy"[65] that is "clumsy and farcical."[66] After the theatre has faded from view and Lestingois has sent Anne-Marie to prepare soup, he laments that "mes pipeaux sont fatigués."[67] Clearly, the roles provided by mythology are diminishing in their productive capacity.

This is primarily because the scope of Lestingois' dreams is circumscribed by the *petit bourgeois* decorum that structures his domestic life. The statuettes, numerous portraits, and ornamental plates do not merely signify Lestingois' class, nor do the the vertical columns and the doorways framed within doorways simply structure Lestingois' home. The prologue reveals that all of these aspects of décor condition his ability to conjure

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[65] Sesonske, *Jean Renoir*, 123.
[66] Braudy, *Jean Renoir*, 49.
[67] "My pipes are weary."

fantasies. Lestingois himself adamantly adheres to a policy of public respectability: when asked by his maid, Anne-Marie, why they own a piano that nobody plays, Lestingois tellingly replies, “J’ai un piano parce que nous sommes des gens respectables.”[68] By foregrounding décor (often literally) and emphasising the narrow structure of the house, the camera implies that Lestingois’ imagination is stultified by his desires to ground his fantasies culturally. If, as Sesonske suggests, the transfer from this overt theatricality onto the main narrative reflects “the distance between a Parisian bourgeois home and the ancient culture in which Priapus was a living entity,”[69] it is understandable that Deleuze likens Lestingois’ shop (and, albeit indirectly, the roles within) to an enclosed theatre. However, it is essential to also note that the shoddiness of the theatrical set-piece and the rigorous etiquette of the home are further juxtaposed with the spontaneity and diversity offered by the same city that remedies the drudgery of Legrand’s everyday bourgeois life without recourse to an ephemeral fantasy in *La Chienne*. It is doubly important to elaborate on this relationship in further detail since Renoir liberates the dramatic space of René Fauchois’ source-text, set entirely within Lestingois’ bookshop, by incorporating the Parisian cityscape and diverse populace within his narrative.

[68] “I own a piano because we are respectable people.”
[69] Sesonske, *Jean Renoir*, 124.

Appropriating the Urban Cultural Landscape: Individuals and Institutions

The urban landmarks that feature in the narrative may at first seem incidental, even irrelevant. However, as in *La Chienne*, they play an important role in the mise-en-scène of urban space in flux. Rather than show the impact of urban space on the production of social space within a single shot (as in the case of the "mis-meeting" of *La Chienne*), Renoir disperses these landmarks throughout the narrative to subjectivise Boudu's experience of walking in the city. Renoir's technique proceeds in two complementary ways. The first method is employed prior to Boudu's admission to Lestingois' residence, during which time we see a number of physically inert buildings that testify to France's historical, cultural and intellectual legacy. Through a variety of wide shots and deeply composed shots, the spectator views the Institut de France from Lestingois' first-floor window, and the Louvre is located just across the Seine, which flows outside Lestingois' home. Boudu himself dives into the Seine from another landmark, the Pont des Arts. Our views of these *répères* are purely incidental, occurring either during Lestingois' own views through his window or over the course of Boudu's indifferent navigation. At no point do they actively contribute to the dramatic thrust of the narrative.

Renoir's second method of subjectivising the urban experience involves montage, a technique rarely associated with his shooting-style, unless we consider the hunting-scene in *La Règle du jeu*. In fact, it is precisely Renoir's general elision of montage that garnered Bazin's praise,

and this *morcellement* of dramatic space holds no place in Deleuze's conceptualisation of Renoir's mise-en-scène of temporality insofar as the qualities of the *image-temps* are concerned. Interestingly, however, Deleuze remarks on various schools of montage in *Cinéma 1*, Griffith's organic montage, which creates "une unité dans le divers"[70] through "un ensemble de parties différenciées";[71] the "montage of attractions" pioneered by figures of the Soviet school such as Sergei Eisenstein (*Bronenosets Potemkin*, 1925) and Vsevolod Pudovkin (*Mat*, 1926),[72] and the pre-war French Impressionist school of Cartesian montage exemplified by the works of Jean Epstein (*Coeur fidèle*, 1923), Renoir himself (*La Petite marchande d'allumettes*, 1928), and especially Abel Gance (*Napoléon*, 1927), which emphasised "[l]'union cinétique de l'homme et de la machine."[73] This sequence from *Boudu* cannot be located within Deleuze's categorisation of Renoir's montage, which draws heavily on the motif of automata in Renoir's work.[74] Discussing montage in relation to the *image-mouvement*, Deleuze observes that shots contain two facets, framing being the facet turned towards objects, montage the facet turned towards the whole.[75] In *Boudu* however, Renoir's images make the urban space of Paris (the whole) the specific subject of both framing and montage, dynamising both the frame and its interval, integrating temporality within its view of urban space by portraying the physically connected but socially disparate elements existing within open-space time.

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[70] Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement*, 47: "unity in diversity."
[71] Ibid: "a set of differentiated parts."
[72] Ibid., 50-61.
[73] Ibid., 64: "[t]he kinetic union of man and machine."
[74] See Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement*, 62-65.
[75] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 50-51.

Numerous images of Notre Dame are repeatedly edited into the narrative after Boudu's admission to the Lestingois household: the cathedral appears once after Lestingois' failed attempt to visit Anne-Marie's room during Boudu's first night at the residence; it features a second time after Lestingois has been decorated with a medal of bravery; and a third time in the film's final scene, its spire stretching into the sky as a procession of tramps sings "Sur les bords de la Riviera." As in the case of the previously-discussed landmarks, these shots of Notre Dame relate to Boudu about as much as the relatively trivial shots of the cat prowling on the rooftop or Anne-Marie walking into the kitchen alone to eat a sweet. However, this is precisely the point of their inclusion. Renoir's use of montage emphatically detaches Notre Dame from Boudu's experience of walking and living in the city and provides a model of spectatorship for Boudu's wanderings in the city amidst the other aforementioned buildings. The separation implied by Renoir's use of montage emphasises Certeau's assertion that footsteps only appropriate particular spatial elements amidst a polymorphous urban space devoid of a fixed identity.[76] As in the first, Griffithian school, the spectator witnesses the editing of "des rapports binaires qui constituent un *montage alterné parallèle*,"[77] and as in Eisenstein's montage of attractions, "*l'intervalle aussi bien que le tout prennent un nouveau sens.*"[78] If the buildings do not contribute to Boudu's narrative, it is precisely because their intellectual and cultural values are not valued by the tramp.

[76] C.f. Certeau, *L'invention*, 149.

[77] Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement*, 47-48: "binary relationships which constitute a *parallel alternate montage*." Italics are Deleuze's own.

[78] Ibid., 56: "*the interval, as well as the whole takes on a new meaning*." Italics are Deleuze's own.

Fig. 2

Because the landmarks in *Boudu* correspond with the spectator's own "index of representations" (c.f. Rojex) within his/her limited "signposted" gaze (to use Urry's term), they risk typifying the narrative's view of the city. However, the narrative precludes the spectator's projection of any dialectic between the monuments and pre-established ideological associations onto the screen by mapping the subjectivity of Boudu's experience onto that of the crowd. The range of characters viewed in the city by both Renoir's camera and Lestingois' telescope range from tramps like Boudu to middle-class women among others. The plurality of the experiences of walking in the city is most pointedly evoked by a black woman viewed through Lestingois' telescope when he views Boudu for the first time: she would likely find it difficult to appreciate other contemporary urban sites such as the *Exposition Coloniale*, later advertised by a man in the street outside Lestingois' shop door. Given Boudu's own irreverence towards the landmarks that situate his trajectory, it is clear that the values that any of these buildings represent are only stable to the extent that they are

recognised and appreciated by the populace (in fig. 2, the Louvre dominates the background, underscoring the indifference of the passers-by to the cultural legacy embodied by Paris, rushing instead to catch a glimpse of Boudu in the Seine). Even Lestingois, as he opens his windows for the first time in the narrative, employs his telescope in order to ogle the ankles of a number of unwitting young women rather than to savour the cultural legacy embodied by these buildings. Just as Boudu cannot appreciate the bookshops that he passes on the quais as he shuffles towards the Pont des Arts (Boudu later tells Lestingois that he can only read "de grosses lettres"),[79] these buildings represent one particular realm of the city which is either inaccessible to certain citizens or simply passes by unappreciated as we watch them navigate through the city over the course of the narrative.

The relationship between urban society and the cityscape in these particular scenes produces the "incessant flow of possibilities and near-intangible meanings"[80] which Kracauer recognised as a core product of film's relationship with the city. More specifically, Renoir's Paris coincides with Kracauer's theorisation of the spectator of the cinematographic city as Baudelairian *flâneur*, that is to say, one who is "intoxicated with life in the street – life eternally dissolving the patterns which it is about to form."[81] The selective appropriation of the city made manifest by the social diversity of Paris and the editing of Notre Dame throughout the narrative subjectivises the urban experience, creating an image of open space-time where social space dynamises values associated with physical space,

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[79] "Large letters."
[80] Kracauer, *Theory of Film*, 72.
[81] Ibid.

constantly reminding us that space is, as Massey asserts, "multiple, relational, unfinished and always becoming."[82]

Dismantling Domestic Space.

The ongoing dismantling of social values made manifest by the relationship between Boudu and the broader Parisian populace hints at the forces ranged against Lestingois' own home in the heart of the city. In *Le Sens Pratique* (1980), Pierre Bourdieu draws on the model of the Kabyle house to theorise domestic space as a structure whose social code is not reducible to a single set of permanently inscribed rites, but which rather sustains a range of codes that alter depending upon the gender, social perspective, and physical position of the individual navigating within or outside the house.[83] The range of such perspectives is infinitely multiplied in the city, where any notion of home incorporating a stable identity is founded on "fantasies of plenitude and security."[84] The susceptibility of Lestingois' residence to social disruption is increased by the lower floor which, although private property, simultaneously operates as a shop that is open to the public. The very fact that the shop exists in a network of open space is suggested by the numerous shots that stage passers-by in depth beyond the glass window of the shop door throughout the narrative.

[82] Massey, *For Space*, 59.
[83] Pierre Bourdieu, *Le Sens Pratique* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980), 441-61.
[84] James Donald, "This, Here, Now: Imagining the Modern City," in *Imagining Cities: Scripts, Signs, Memory*, eds. Sallie Westwood and John Williams (London: Routledge, 1997), 206.

Boudu channels his energetic physicality and complete disregard for bourgeois etiquette towards the vulnerable space of the Lestingois residence. By defying the role imposed by Lestingois, he reveals that the bourgeois household is as fallible a social structure as the institutions dotted around Paris. He spits out the white wine offered by Mme Lestingois. He lurches and slides across a table on the shop floor after ungratefully consuming the sardines and bread offered by Mme Lestingois and precariously balances a tray of dishes on a carafe of wine with predictable results. Even indoors, he refuses to renounce his habit of spitting. All this remains secondary, however, to his defilement of Mme. Lestingois' boudoir, where Boudu wipes his freshly polished shoes with her bedsheets. Boudu socially subverts the home through his disruption of etiquette and domestic hierarchy: as Lestingois dries him off, Boudu orders Mme Lestingois to leave and her husband deferentially concurs. Boudu rashly dismisses the idea of wearing a tie and declares that he would be embarrassed to wear any of the clothes that his benefactor has to offer him. Boudu unhesitatingly employs the informal *tu* form as he eats his first meal at the house, a habit he later develops with Lestingois' wife before seducing her. Boudu mockingly imitates Lestingois' assertion that that he must learn to change his behaviour and, moreover, proudly declares to Anne-Marie that he has never thanked anyone for anything in his life.

These dual aspects of Boudu's subversion – physical and social – converge in Boudu's manifest indifference towards Lestingois' books. Much of the house is cluttered with stacks of books, giving the impression of a domestic space that is secure in its intellectual ideas. The shot that

introduces Lestingois' home reveals books piled on multiple bookshelves that reach the ceiling of the room, lending structure to the house. Lestingois' free distribution of Voltaire's work to a passing student elevate these books from a mere professional commodity to symbols of the bookseller's passion for intellectual development. It is no surprise that Lestingois is tellingly indifferent towards Boudu's physical acts of subversion: he merely mutters tones of regret when a distraught Mme Lestingois expresses her shock over the dishevelled kitchen, and immediately returns to reading his book. It is not until he subsequently discovers that Boudu has spat in one of his books that Lestingois finally decides that Boudu truly merits "un bon coup de pied dans le derrière."[85] When Boudu returns from the barber, Lestingois readily refers him to his disgruntled wife, tellingly stating that "l'homme qui a craché dans *La Physiologie du mariage* d'Honoré de Balzac n'est plus rien pour moi."[86] That Boudu spits in Balzac's work is not only a sign of the tramp's complete indifference to France's heritage which the narrative has hitherto signalled through its mise-en-scène of urban landmarks. By disparaging the cultural products that provide Lestingois' home with its social function and physical structure, Boudu's act reveals a complete indifference to the Lestingois' personal domestic space, professional role and marital ties.

Lestingois' main flaw lies in his belief that he can maintain apparent integrity of his class values, even though he is transplanting an element completely antipathetic to the physical structure, social values and cultural history of Paris right into his bourgeois domestic interiors. Lestingois' home

[85] "A good kick in the rear."
[86] "The man who spat in Honoré de Balzac's *La Physiologie du mariage* is nothing to me."

is, as Deleuze suggests, an imprisoning structure. However, this theatricality is a by-product of the household's own class-values. Furthermore, Renoir's use of both framing and deep staging demonstrates that Boudu's defacement of Lestingois' home is merely a microcosm of the Parisian populace's varying attitudes towards the institutions dotted around their own city: by examining the relationship between Lestingois' bookshop and the city, it becomes clear that their "théâtre intime" (c.f. Deleuze) is but one of the many cultural havens towards which Boudu (like many other Parisians) is entirely indifferent. As in *La Chienne*, upper-class values, cultural assets, social mores, and historical memory are inevitably bolstered or eroded by the circulation of people who alternately project, ignore, or dismantle them, aided by a bourgeois figure. However, we must review *Boudu* repeatedly and consider aspects of Renoir's techniques that seemingly run contrary not only to general perceptions of his narrative style (particularly those articulated by Bazin and Deleuze) in order to appreciate the open space-time of Renoir's Paris and, building on this, reconsider the true coherence of Renoir's narrative.

2.4 *La Règle du jeu* (1939)

The Trocadéro as *Lieu de Mémoire*: l'Exposition Universelle de 1937

Of the three films discussed within this chapter, the relationship between space and time is arguably most salient in *La Règle du jeu*. Such is

Deleuze's admiration for the film that virtually all of his arguments regarding the range of elements that potentially inscribe temporality in the image – characters, buildings and *profondeur de champ* to name some of the most accessible examples – stem from his reading of the film. However, Deleuze focuses exclusively on la Colinière and the characters within. Indeed, most textual analyses of *La Règle du jeu*, with the notable exception of Sesonske and Keith Reader's comprehensive analyses,[87] tend to focus on the hunting scenes in the marshes of la Sologne and the labyrinthine rural château, at the expense of the geographical space lying beyond the Parian residences viewed early in the film. Yet the narrative thrust of the film cannot be fully understood without appreciating the import of urban space towards the main characters' spatio-temporal trajectories. The majority of the scenes set in Paris unfold in the la Chesnayes' insulated residence where Christine (Nora Grégor) and Robert (Marcel Dalio) first hear Jurieu's emotional denigration of Christine, and where Jurieu's (Roland Toutain) friend, Octave (played by Renoir) attempts to convince the la Chesnayes to invite Jurieu nonetheless to an upcoming retreat at la Colinière. Throughout these sequences, urban life and landmarks are conspicuously relegated to off-screen space.

Interestingly however, the narrative grants us one view of urban Paris, during Robert's attempt to cease his affair with Geneviève de Marras (Mila Parély), marking the narrative's sole view of urban Paris in a film whose first twenty minutes unfold in France's capital. The staging of this scene is far less formally ambitious than the camera's later behaviour at la

[87] See Sesonske, *Jean Renoir*, 393-95; Keith Reader, *La Règle du jeu* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 29-41.

Colinière, where it travels like "[un] invité invisible se promenant dans le salon et les couloirs,"[88] or the fluid mobility that it demonstrates in *La Chienne* and *Boudu.* As a result, this scene remains appreciated less for its mise-en-scène of the relationship between the *haute bourgeoisie* and urban space, than as a prelude to the hunt and the interweaving romantic liaisons among members of both the upper-class and their servants, which eventually culminate in the accidental murder of Jurieu. Nonetheless, this shot is crucial to our understanding of Robert and Christine's flight to la Colinière and the continued presence of Paris as a crucial affective element in the open space-time that structures the world viewed.

Fig. 3

Early in the film, as Robert tells Geneviève, his mistress since the days before his marriage to Christine, that he desires to end their affair, the Eiffel Tower and Palais du Chaillot are visible in the background through a wide

[88] Bazin, *Renoir*, 80: "[an] invisible guest walking in the living room and the corridors."

window. The importance of the scene within the context of the entire narrative is suggested by the fact that the decision to set it in front of recognisable landmarks in urban Paris occurred relatively late in the production: originally, the sequences in Geneviève's apartment were not even part of the script. In fact, Geneviève's character was initially named Paula and only appeared at la Colinière. When Renoir first drafted the conversation between Geneviève and Robert, he originally intended to set it on a golfing green. It was not until Renoir began to envisage the fully-edited film that he introduced the scene in Geneviève's apartment.[89] Even then, Renoir provided no indication of décor or accessories. In Olivier Curchod and Christopher Faulkner's estimation, this afforded Renoir the possibility of filming the conversation in a wide range of environments. They further deduce that this sequence was probably filmed after the sequences set at le Bourget and, by extension, provided the final note on which shooting wrapped.[90] Based on this information, the scene of Robert and Geneviève's conversation at the latter's apartment provides a potentially significant avenue of enquiry towards the overarching concerns of the film.

As in *La Chienne* and *Boudu*, the urban landmarks play a crucial role in our interpretation of la Chesnayes' efforts to stabilise his social space. Unlike the main characters of either of these films, however, neither Geneviève nor Robert (nor any other character belonging to the *haute bourgeoisie*) ever walks in the city, preferring instead to remain insulated from mainstream society. The two national monuments visible beyond the

[89] Olivier Curchod and Christopher Faulkner, eds, *La Règle du jeu: scénario original de Jean Renoir* (Paris: Nathan, 1999), 249.
[90] Ibid., 260.

window, the palais du Chaillot and the Eiffel Tower, each demand analysis within the context of the *haute bourgeoisie*'s flight to la Colinière. Each represents a register of the social tensions that proliferated in contemporary France following the Exposition Universelle de 1937. Prime Minister Léon Blum intended the exposition as a tool for national reconciliation, hoping that it would inspire national cohesion.[91] However, the re-construction of the palais, France's key contribution to the exposition, became a *cause célèbre* when strikes delayed its completion far beyond the scheduled May 1 opening of the event. Sesonske suggests that by 1939, the sight of the palais recalled France's "less than heroic role" in the Spanish Civil war since it displayed Picasso's *Guernica*.[92] The second monument of relevance, the Eiffel Tower, is important primarily because the physical space around it recalls the pavilions designed by Europe's foremost ideological rivals, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, which directly opposed each other either side of the Eiffel Tower.

It is worth elaborating further on the contemporary socio-political resonances of these landmarks. Ihor Junyk states that these buildings constructed for the exposition were meant to homogenise popular perceptions of each country's national identity by functioning as "idealized citizens bearing the traces of an idealized national identity."[93] Hitler and Stalin each erected monuments that displayed the ideological iconography of their own countries, the German pavilion crowned with an eagle and swastika, and the Soviet pavilion featuring a worker and Kolkhoz woman.

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[91] Ihor Junyk, "The Face of the Nation: State Fetishism and 'Métissage' at the Exposition Internationale, Paris 1937," *Grey Room* 23 (2006), 98.
[92] Sesonske, *Jean Renoir*, 394.
[93] Junyk, "The Face of the Nation," 98.

Conversely, France's ethical diversity and conflicting interpretations of the Third Republic[94] precluded state fetishism, resulting in a pavilion that was "itself profoundly split."[95] The rise of the Front Populaire had brought hope to the working classes in the wake of the Depression and the 6 February 1934 riots, but Blum's refusal to aid the Spanish subsequently put the Front's principles into question and, ironically, his own government had collapsed by the time the exhibition had actually opened. The newly reformed palais displeased both right-wing and left-wing leagues: whereas the interior displays representing cultural métissage were labelled a "jumble of exotica,"[96] commentators saw the architectural structure of the building as a "rejection of foreign exoticism and a reaffirmation of classicism and Frenchness."[97] Thus, the palais presented an incoherent "palimpsest of conflicting agendas and ideologies" which, rather than counter the propagandist displays of the dictatorships, "showed the Republic in the midst of an identity crisis."[98] The contradictions in France's identity made manifest by the palais du Chaillot and its contents were further mounting during the making of *La Règle du jeu* following the signing of the Munich Agreement on 30 September 1938. Thus the site that we witness beyond Geneviève's window became, in Shanny Peer's analysis, "contested [terrain] for the articulation of collective national identities."[99] The window transforms the urban landscape into a *lieu de mémoire*, specifically a realm of embodied contradictory identities which France, due to its own

[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 102.
[96] Ibid., 109.
[97] Ibid., 110.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Cited in Junyk, "The Face of the Nation," 98.

fragmentary outlook, was helpless to resolve.

Renoir indirectly expressed his malaise regarding the latest exhibition in "Visite à l'Exposition," one of his many articles for *Ce Soir*, a left-wing newspaper to which he contributed articles from 1936-38. Renoir's article opens with his own intention of attending a number of exhibits and events including "La Vésuve à Paris," an artificial reconstruction of the destruction of Pompei and, to Renoir's own confusion, an orchestra conducted by Camille Saint-Saëns (1825-1921). Renoir subsequently realises that "il s'agissait d'un guide de l'Exposition de 1900, oublié dans un coin de ma bibliothèque."[100] Renoir does not pointedly attack the 1937 exhibition, but he is evidently nostalgic for an event that presents the musical talents of the late Saint-Saëns and places "*la science à la portée de tous*,"[101] whereas Junyk and Peer's analyses suggest that the prominent artistic and technological spheres had, by 1937, been largely supplanted by national propagandist efforts. Renoir alluded to the exhibition in derogatory terms later in his career when, upon returning to Hollywood after a brief trip, he remarked that he was "un peu déçu et attristé de me retrouver au milieu de cette espèce d'exposition '37 qu'est la ville de Hollywood."[102]

By examining the space beyond the window, our perspective is shifted from the monuments as signifiers of the privileged *arrondissement* in which Geneviève's residence is based, and towards the physical distance

[100] Jean Renoir, *Écrits, 1926-1971* (Paris: Ramsay, 2006), 174: "[I]t was a guide for the 1900 *Exposition*, forgotten in a corner of my library."
[101] Ibid. Italics are Renoir's own.
[102] Jean Renoir. Letter to Albert André, 12 July 1941. Correspondence. Box 2, Folder 2. *Jean Renoir Papers 1915-1927,* Production Files. (Collection 105). Performing Arts Special Collections, Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles: "a little disappointed and saddened to find myself in the middle of this kind of 1937 *Exposition* that is the city of Hollywood."

between the apartment and the memories embodied by the Trocadéro. The identity crisis embodied by this *lieu de mémoire* reflects major local, national, and international unrest that carries substantial potential ramifications for a class determined to guard its place in the uppermost echelons of contemporary society. However, the mise-en-scène of this shot leaves little doubt that the *haute bourgeoisie* is actively endeavouring to enforce fixed "chains of meaning" which, in Massey's analysis "embed [space] with closure and stasis."[103] Much like their peers, Geneviève and Robert are not *promeneurs* and do not venture beyond the physical parameters of the apartment. Their physical insulation, much like Certeau's theorisation of the act of walking "a […] pour fonction d'implanter l'autre relatif à ce « je » et d'instaurer ainsi une articulation conjonctive et disjonctive des places."[104] Geneviève's enclosure amidst her colonial décor defiantly distinguishes her private space from the fluctuating urban space beyond her window: a series of black figurines in the apartment hint at France's colonialist regime in Africa whilst her Buddha statues recall the French involvement in Indochina. The apparent stability of the home prompts Sesonske to note that "no stir from the political storms that buffeted Paris during that decade reaches inside this quiet room" where Robert and Geneviève debate their personal affairs.[105]

However, the distance is an illusory bulwark against the social alterity that has installed itself within the very heart of the French capital. The *haute bourgeoisie* is no longer in a position to actively mediate the

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[103] Massey, *For Space*, 19.
[104] Certeau, *L'invention*, 150: "has the function of locating the other relative to this 'I' and of establishing a conjunctive and disjunctive articulation of places."
[105] Sesonske, *Jean Renoir*, 394.

influence of these other cultures, but can eliminate what Masey describes as "that business of walking round a corner and bumping into alterity," a denial linked by Massey with "a tendency to try to escape one of its most productive/disruptive elements – one's different neighbour."[106] Interestingly, although this scene draws on the geographical specificity of urban landmarks to illustrate the potential for escape into a genuinely new present, we do not view the location-shots of city streets that feature in *La Chienne* and *Boudu*. Rather, a pre-established awareness of the political, national and ethical debates that problematise the *haute bourgeoisie*'s day-to-day existence allows us to simultaneously perceive both the ongoing present and, within the apartment, the stultifying influence of the past.

Christine and Robert: Suspending Time in Domestic Space

Only after contextualising the complex dialectic of class, ethnicity and nationality evoked by the mise-en-scène of Geneviève and Robert's meeting may we fully appreciate the spatial and temporal implications of the la Chesnaye residence which is also located in Paris but which remains conspicuously insulated from the inevitability of a war that the nation desperately hoped to avoid. The identity crisis made manifest by the embodied history of the Parisian metropolis underscores the *haute bourgeoisie*'s socially regressive conceptualisation of its own values and those of the French nation. Discussing conceptions of nationhood, Samir

[106] Massey, *For Space*, 94-95.

Amin praises the "ideology of citizenship" that emerged in the wake of the French Revolution to include all of those who had participated in the Revolution, regardless of their ancestral blood ties or religion and notes that *la laïcité* proceeds one step further than religious tolerance, "attempting to rid the new nation of a reference to the past."[107] Amin counterposes this model with the continuity of German states who proudly vaunted the old aristocracy, hereditary blood-ties and religious heritage.[108] Each of these tendencies, notes Amin, represents an extreme point in the potential trajectories available to nation-builders and neither is ultimately attainable in its purest form.

The *haute bourgeoisie* in *La Règle du jeu* is a case in point. France was not yet under Fascist control but, as Keith Reader notes, "elements of its ideology – authoritarianism, racial nationalism, vicious anti-Bolshevism – undoubtedly infected the French body politic."[109] The members of Renoir's *haute bourgeoisie*, like the societies subject to Amin's analysis, "still inherit cultural patterns that become reintegrated with new societal needs,"[110] in this case fascism. The two key focal points of these debates are Robert and Christine: whereas Geneviève's heritage is never questioned (she is white, upper-class and readily recites Chamfort), the position of Robert in front of the window framing the Trocadéro draws our attention to the complexity of "the nation" as embodied by him and his wife. Each is an outsider in contemporary France either in terms of ethnicity or nationality

[107] Samir Amin, "The Nation: an Enlightened or Fog-Shrouded Concept?" trans. Edward Ousselin. *Research in African Literatures* 28.4 (1997): 9.
[108] Ibid., 10.
[109] Reader, *La Règle du jeu*, 14.
[110] Amin, "The Nation," 11.

and this identity informs their relationship with Paris. By 1939, the horizontal social barriers that formed the crux of Renoir's social portraits had entered into a dialectic with increasingly virulent discourse surrounding Jewish and Germanic identity and problematised the relationship between the *haute bourgeoisie* and those of its members who belonged to such minorities in contemporary France.

The most flagrant slur against Jewishness in the film is uttered downstairs in la Colinière, where a butler snidely remarks that "la mère de la Chesnaye avait un père qui s'appelait Rosenthal et qui arrivait tout droit de Francfort."[111] Most noteworthy is the fact that a servant may consider himself entitled to insult his master, simply because contemporary discourse has convinced him of his biological superiority over his master. Thus Sesonske, whilst discussing Robert's gestures as performance, accurately interprets la Chesnaye as a character who "has been so absorbed by the life of style and yet remains so doubtful of his position in it […]."[112] It is worth noting that on the eve of war, audiences were acutely aware of Robert's extraction, chiefly through the casting of Marcel Dalio, who had previously played Rosenthal, a Jewish prisoner of war in Renoir's *La Grande Illusion* (1937). Dalio himself recalled comments regarding his characterisation of Robert, which were published in *L'Action Française*, a right-wing newspaper, following the release of *La Règle du jeu*: "Dalio is astonishing, more Jewish than ever, attractive and squalid simultaneously... He exudes a different odour from far back in time, of another race, always watchful, that does not hunt, owns no château and to whom the Sologne means nothing.

[111] "La Chesnaye's mother had a father named Rosenthal who came right out of Frankfurt."
[112] Sesonske, *Jean Renoir*, 415.

Never before perhaps had the alien character of the Jew been displayed with such force, such brutality."[113] The fierce racism of the comments borders on parody, but is unquestionably echoed by the stereotypes pedalled by the similarly prejudiced characters within the narrative against which Robert endeavours to override the visibility of his extraction.

Christine, an Austrian immigrant, embodies the problematic issues pertaining to Germanic identity. As Durgnat states in his self-consciously right-wing interpretation of Christine, her Austrian heritage implies that she is "not a French wife, but a woman whose loyalties must, like Marie-Antoinette's, remain half to France's hereditary enemy."[114] This interpretation is echoed by the la Chesnayes' peers. Viewing Christine's life in France as a fundamentally extraneous existence, Saint-Aubin remarks "pauvre Christine. Je la plains parce qu'elle est étrangère,"[115] recollecting that she was "obligée de vivre ici à Paris, au milieu de gens qui ne parlent même pas sa langue."[116] Saint-Aubin's lament regarding Christine's allegedly fundamental differences are echoed more spitefully by Geneviève, who predicts Christine's reaction to Robert's extramarital affair on the basis of pre-existing stereotypes: "Christine est restée très de son pays. Une Parisienne comprendrait. Elle, pas."[117]

During the scene of Robert and Geneviève's discussion, it becomes abundantly clear that both Robert and Christine embody origins that were

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[113] Cited in V. F. Perkins, *La Règle du jeu* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 55. Translation is Perkins' own.
[114] Raymond Durgnat, *Jean Renoir* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974), 208.
[115] "[P]oor Christine…I pity her because she is a foreigner."
[116] "[F]orced to live here in Paris, in the middle of people who don't even speak her language."
[117] "Christine has remained a woman of her country. A Parisian would understand but not her."

indexically linked with two of the most problematic conceptions of identity in Europe during the rise of the Front Populaire and the Exposition Universelle and, now more than ever, on the eve of war. Hence the décor of the la Chesnaye residence, viewed directly before and after our view of Geneviève's apartment, recalls the latter's home on all counts except Geneviève's view of the city. Robert's *petite négresse* and Christine's exoticised black bust, much like Geneviève's ornaments, directly relate to their stratum's exoticisation of France's colonies. As in the case of Geneviève, the la Chesnayes only appropriate foreign cultures with the twin aims of bolstering their conception of their own class-identity among *les Français de souche* and supplanting contemporary images of France's fragmented national identity. However, this décor does not suffice for the la Chesnayes, who must simultaneously disregard radical contemporary attitudes towards Jewish and German origins.

Quite unlike the photography of *La Chienne* and *Boudu*, the camera constantly refrains from staging interior and exterior spaces in depth throughout the remainder of the scenes set in the la Chesnaye residence, and there are no windows or doors that could topographically situate their home. Mirrors and curtains obscure the la Chesnayes' topographical relationship with the public space of Paris in long shots of Christine's room, in shots of her sitting at her dressing table and in shots taken from the dressing-table as Christine prepares to leave. When Christine rises to don her coat, we finally see a door in the background which Octave uses in a later scene to access the main vestibule. Christine exits through yet another door only to reveal an opulent ceiling-length mirror that reflects the opposite side of the

vestibule, expanding the apparent depth of her space without connecting it to the physical space beyond the residence. Christine's arrival to the opposite room provides us with our introduction to Robert, whose quarters similarly incorporate mirrors and are conspicuously devoid of windows and whose bedroom doors contain panes of mirrored glass, simultaneously denoting the opulence and the fragility of the la Chesneyes' anachronistic domestic realm.

The delusive effacement of the residence's topographical relationship with the broader space of Paris continues the following morning before Robert has even dressed to visit Geneviève, even though Lisette is opening the curtains around the la Chesnaye residence. As Octave walks into Christine's room, followed by Robert, the camera remains outside their doorway, revealing only a mirror located in Christine's room in the background. Although light shines through the window, our view of the area beyond is obscured by blinds. Ornate mirrors only reflect Octave and Christine as he convinces her to invite Jurieu to la Colinière. Similarly, during Octave's subsequent conversation with Robert, natural light shines through two large windows, but all are veiled with partly transparent curtains and neither of them allows us to view the world beyond. Far more prominent in the room is the large, multifaceted mirror that hangs on the wall behind the characters, reflecting the room and the characters who pass through from multiple perspectives.

The interior architecture of Christine and Robert's residence clearly expresses their efforts to create an impossibly closed space that conceals the social upheavals made manifest by the view from Geneviève's apartment.

Their design strengthens their own confidence in their ability to impress and, as a result, crystallises (in the Deleuzian sense) their place in French society, whilst paradoxically fixing their failure to coherently integrate into it. Our two views of the la Chesnayes' home mark it as a space that prefers to physically seal itself from the surrounding world. The sense of social alienation in the la Chesnayes' residence is augmented by the narrative's refusal to divulge the precise location of their residence (unlike, for example, Geneviève's apartment or, to take an example from another film analysed in this chapter, Lestingois' residence), or to even situate it in relation to other buildings (in *La Chienne*, the precise location of Legrand's apartment is never revealed but it is viewed in relation to neighbouring apartments through the view from his apartment windows). Our introduction to Christine's boudoir takes place via the radio transmission from the airport: as Jurieu voices his discontentment, the camera cuts from the geographically precise airport at le Bourget and rises from behind a radio kept in Christine's geographically imprecise room. No effort is made to clarify even the general location of Christine's apartment, rendering it a Certeauian *non-lieu*. All that is certain is that the la Chesnayes are based in an area within receiving distance of the radio transmission and that their home is close enough to Geneviève's apartment to permit Robert to casually visit her at ten or eleven o'clock in the morning. Interestingly, Renoir's numerous alterations to the film's script collectively moulded a Christine who seeks to create a stabilised domestic space, secure in its outwards social integrity and emotional dynamic: Renoir progressively eliminated Christine's interaction with the world beyond her apartment: Christine was

originally included in the scene at le Bourget airport and Renoir hesitated as to who should turn off the radio following Jurieu's outburst – Lisette or Christine – before finally settling on the latter.[118]

Christine's possible affair with André Jurieu and the latter's vociferous public defamation of Christine provokes scandal amongst the la Chesnayes' circle and, on a personal level, reminds the la Chesnayes of the volatility of their domestic space and social image. Observing that "there is imagined to be the security of a (false [...]) stability and an apparently reassuring boundedness" in places representing home, Massey is careful to note that the identity of a place does not exclusively derive from an internalised history, but also derives "precisely from the specificity of its interactions with 'the outside.'"[119] In Paris, Robert and Christine appropriate a conception of space modelled on physical (and, with it, social) inclusion and exclusion. It is because of this model that they seek both the deceptive emancipation permitted by the rural landscapes and the heritage embodied by la Colinière. However, the space-time encapsulated by Colinière is inextricably connected with the urban space of Paris, and the château's distance from mainstream society only further underscores the futility of any endeavour to bolster their receding social space.

The Country and the City: Retreat to la Colinière

The camera does not merely frame la Colinière, it juxtaposes la Colinière

[118] Curchod and Faulkner, *La Règle du jeu*, 246.
[119] Massey, *For Space*, 169.

with the urban space of Paris circa 1939, reminding us that the characters live in “a space of loose ends and missing links”[120] theorised by Massey, which, no matter how apparently secure, “is neither a container for always-already constituted identities nor a completed closure of holism.”[121] In accordance with the demands of the la Chesnayes, much of la Colinière is unsurprisingly decorated in the same taste as Christine and Robert’s Paris residence. Set-designer Eugène Lourié recollected that he “tried to keep a certain similarity between the decoration of the Paris house and the castle.”[122] Indeed, the château’s interiors are adorned by large paintings, statuettes, mirrors, and ornately crafted bed-posts that also feature in the la Chesnayes’ home. Deleuze’s conception of la Colinière as a space that embodies the past is worth analysing in relation to the la Chesnayes’ attempt to efface the intrusion of the ongoing present and reassert their dominance, and to the problematic conceptions of national identity explored by the film. The theatricality that holds the past in tension with the ongoing present is expressed through two key aspects of the manor’s physical layout, each of which cater to Christine and Robert’s efforts to cement their status among the *haute bourgeoisie.* The first is the château’s expansive hunting grounds which complement its embodied history of past hunts. The second is the proscenium arch, which provides a centrepiece of the celebrations and a podium from which to mock the contemporary social issues impinging on the la Chesnayes’ (im)mobility in Paris.

The château sports ornately designed walls, stuffed pheasants, stag

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[120] Ibid., 12.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Eugène Lourié, *My Work in Films* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 67.

antlers and a range of firearms, all of which evoke a sense of dominance over the landscape that fuels Robert's own adherence to a policy of no rabbits and no fences on his property. Whereas the la Chesnayes' apartment operates through attempted physical (and, with this, social) insulation, la Colinière offers a physically liberating and deceptively isolated space. Thus, the shooting party serves the double function of situating the la Chesnayes within the French cultural heritage visible in material form on the previously-described walls of la Colinière, and bolstering their impression of their social mastery over the physical space of la Colinière. It is now a site of "ritualised destruction,"[123] in which the la Chesnayes, along with their peers, can continue to convince themselves of their domination over the space occupied by la Colinière. Examining Robert's trajectory through Massey, it becomes abundantly clear that the assets indicate Robert's need for a physically, socially and temporally insulated locus: "When black-robed patriarchs organize ceremonies to celebrate a true national identity they are laying claim to the freezing of that identity at a particular moment and in a particular form – a moment and a form where they had a power which they can thereby justify themselves in retaking."[124] The use of material objects to resort to "some particular moment/location in time-space when the definition of the area and the social relations dominant within it were to the advantage of that particular claimant group" implies that "the identity of any place, including that place called home, is in one sense for ever open to

[123] O'Shaughnessy, *Jean Renoir*, 150.
[124] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 169.

contestation"[125] and, insofar as the corpus is concerned, no less transient than the original intentions that underwrote the organisation of the *Exposition Universelle*.

Like the two puppets who try to introduce Legrand's story in *La Chienne* before being beaten into submission by Guignol, Robert and Christine are convinced that they can reduce the contemporary historical narrative with which they are inextricably connected to a controlled mould that corresponds with their own vision. However, Robert's agenda is threatened by the very revue that he organises for his guests. Rather than function as a cohesive device for the la Chesnayes and their peers, the theatre reminds Christine of her home country's current political gridlock and serves to propagate further stereotypes pertaining to Robert's identity. The Tyrolean costumes worn by the singers of the first song performed, "En rev'nant de la revue," are not only a reminder to the contemporary audience that Hitler has taken control of Austria.[126] They are also a reminder to Christine of her problematic identity as a dual citizen of France and Austria, and her inability to return to her family home despite her high social ranking. Robert's social standing is also challenged. As the revue continues, the guests perform "Nous avons levé le pied," a darkly humorous satire of Jewish exiles. Whilst the performers and spectators indulge in the Jewish stereotypes propagated during this rendition, Robert conceals himself behind the curtain and waits for the song to end, unable to join in the buoyant anti-Semitic spectacle (fig. 4). Each of these moments signals the limits of the la Chesnayes' social agency, contesting core aims of their

[125] Ibid.
[126] O'Shaughnessy, *Jean Renoir*, 149.

retreat to la Colinière and reminding the spectator of the dynamic space-time beyond the walls of the château.

Fig. 4

Because Robert cannot similarly mock his Jewish extraction without disparaging his own roots, he must compensate by flaunting his newest acquisition, the Limonaire. Viewing Robert's expressions upon the successful unveiling of the limonaire twenty-seven years after the film's release, Renoir declared "Mais quel plan! Je crois que c'est le meilleur plan que j'aie fait de ma vie. Ah! C'est fantastique. Le mélange d'humilité et d'orgueil, de réussite et de doute..."[127] This pride is contingent on la Colinière and its many assets, a fact which becomes evident when Geneviève demands that he elope with her without considering the import of the château and its assets towards his identity. In response, Robert insists upon staying:

[127] Narboni, Bazin and Gauteur, eds., *Jean Renoir*, 292: " What a shot! I think that it's the best shot that I ever filmed in my life. Ah! It's fantastic. The mix of humility and pride, of success and doubt..."

> GENEVIÈVE: Partons ensemble, Robert!
> ROBERT: Où ça? Ici je suis chez moi. Je ne vais tout de même pas tout abandonner
> GENEVIÈVE: Oh ce que vous êtes agaçant avec votre sens de la propriété. Comme si ça avait de l'importance, une maison!
> ROBERT: Faut [*sic*] d'abord que je parle à Christine.[128]

Robert's unspoken response is, of course, that his house is just that important to him: the historically-charged identity embodied by the house provides Robert with his last physical and social bulwark against the disintegration of his stratum, the public denigration of his ethnicity and the democratisation of French culture in the capital. At a time when contemporary socio-political furore has put the la Chesnayes' potential strategies (to borrow de Certeau's term) out of the question, la Colinière and their insulated Parisian residence provide a social space to allow Christine and Robert to circumvent the public sphere. Following Schumacher's rampage, Corneille remarks that, although no guests were injured, "les oiseaux de l'armurerie ont un peu souffert, et puis j'ai trouvé une balle dans une porte. Bien entendu, je ne parle pas de la verrerie."[129] Corneille's observation, although humorous, is only too fitting – human life, as Jurieu's death shall prove, carries little currency in this society unless it contributes to the endurance of the *haute bourgeoisie*. By extension, it becomes clear that when Deleuze notes that it is Schumacher "qui casse le circuit, qui fait

[128] GENEVIÈVE: Let's leave together Robert!
ROBERT: Where to? I am at home here. I cannot just abandon it!
GENEVIÈVE: Oh you're so irritating with your sense of property. As if a house were that important!
ROBERT: I have to talk to Christine first.

[129] "The birds in the armoury suffered a little, and I found a bullet in a door. Of course, the glassware is another story."

éclater le cristal fêlé et en fait fuir le contenu, à coups de fusil,"[130] rupturing the anachronistic world preserved by the *haute bougeoisie*, he is observing that physical damage to la Colinière undermines the social status symbols and, as a result, the ongoing presence of the embodied past.

Although *La Règle du jeu*, in Deleuze's view, is exemplary of many of the core formal and thematic characteristics that he associates with Renoir's mise-en-scène of temporality, it is worth noting that the effects of time are envisioned from a far more negative perspective than either of the previous films analysed, primarily as a result of the narrative's portrayal of a socially and morally bankrupt France. In fact, the images of a decadent stratum verging on extinction coincide more closely with the four primary qualities that Deleuze associates with Visconti's depiction of time. As in the case of Visconti's aristocratic strata, the *haute bourgeoisie* is constructing "un cristal synthétique"[131] whose contents – including both its members and opulent status symbols – are "inséparables d'un processus de décomposition qui les mine du dedans."[132] The implications of the noticeably fatalistic "élan vers l'avenir" in *La Règle du jeu* is emphasised by the limited mobility of Renoir's characters within Paris and its outskirts. In his discussion of characters who elude the law in French *banlieue* films, Adrian Fielder reads Certeau's theorisation of improvised spaces through Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "autonomous zones." These zones, Fielder clarifies, "are most often constituted by a *constellation* of areas which are *spatially separated*

[130] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 114: "who breaks the circuit, who shatters the cracked crystal and whose gunshots make the contents disperse."
[131] Ibid., 124: "a synthetic crystal."
[132] Ibid., 125: "inseparable from a process of decomposition which eats away at them from within."

and yet linked together as nodes on a shifting network" and which are "assembled into an identifiable modality of occupying space."[133] In Fielder's analysis, such zones constitute an instance of Deleuze and Guattari's *lignes de fuite*. Although the la Chesnayes' home and la Colinière provide the *haute bourgeoisie* with a provisional escape from the traumatic realities of urban Paris, the elusiveness of any *point de fuite* within either of these domestic settings highlights the importance of interiority and externalisation to the *haute bourgeoisie*'s agenda. These nodes accommodate retreats to age-old symbols, but do nothing to create new possibilities through an engagement with what Massey calls the "shared historical process that differentiates the world as it connects it."[134] The la Chesnayes' limited mobility within these zones, like any tactical action, "n'a […] pas la possibilité de se donner un projet global ni de totaliser l'adversaire dans un espace distinct, visible et objectivable."[135] No future can be created beyond these zones for they rely not on the creation of new possibilities, but on a past that has long since dissolved. As Deleuze remarks on a broader level, "la repetition du passé est *matériellement* possible, mais impossible *spirituellement*, de par le Temps."[136]

The Parisian apartments and la Colinière are only deceptively isolated from the imminent war, which shall only hasten the decay of this privileged stratum, as in the case of Visconti's work, in which "l'Histoire

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[133] Adrian Fielder, "Poaching on Public Space: Urban Autonomous Zones in French *Banlieue* Films," in *Cinema and the City: Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, ed. Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 276-7.
[134] Massey, *For Space*, 67.
[135] Certeau, *L'invention*, 61: "cannot […] take charge of a global project or overcome the adversary in a distinct, visible and delineable space."
[136] Deleuze, *L'image-mouvement*, 185-86: "[t]he repetition of the past is materially possible, but spiritually impossible, in the name of Time." Italics are my own.

gronde à la porte."[137] As Renoir himself recalls in his autobiography, *Ma vie et mes films*, "C'est un film de guerre, et pourtant, pas une allusion à la guerre n'y est faite."[138] If history fatally precludes salvation within Visconti's work,[139] the la Chesnayes and their peers are content to pretend that no solution to their impending demise is even necessary. As in Visconti's work, the crystal in dissolution, there is no *point de fuite*, and the force of the past which infuses their socialised autonomous zones is incapable of stalling the decline of the present. As such, the varying conceptualisation of temporality in *La Règle du jeu* demonstrates the extent to which the spectator's perception of space-time in Renoir's work is an ideological product: whereas the nomadic tramp in *Boudu sauvé des eaux* is open to what Massey understands as space's "dynamic simultaneity, constantly disconnected by new arrivals, constantly waiting to be determined," the future is a harbinger of doom for the *haute bourgeoisie*, who must futilely incubate within an impossibly insulated, anachronistic space.

By the end of the film, Jurieu has been accidentally assassinated by Schumacher, and Robert reminds his peers that they will all be returning home the following day. One may wonder how Robert and Christine in particular will contend with the cauldron of competing ideologies embodied by Paris. Jurieu's murder restores Robert's faith in himself. Renoir himself provided some valuable comments on the social import of this single death: "le monde ne vit que de sacrifices, alors il faut tuer des gens pour apaiser les

[137] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 125: "History is rumbling at the door."
[138] Jean Renoir, *Ma vie et mes films* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005), 156: "It is a war film, yet not one reference is made to the war."
[139] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 126.

dieux. Là, cette société va continuer encore quelques mois, jusqu'à la guerre et même plus tard, et cette société va continuer parce que Jurieu a été tué, Jurieu est l'être qu'on a sacrifié sur l'autel des dieux pour la continuation de ce genre de vie."[140]

Robert's unparalleled ability to mediate perceptions of the murder and, in doing so, to create "une nouvelle définition du mot 'accident'"[141] further serve to bolster his confidence in his ability to control domestic space in Paris. In particular, it articulates his ability to condition the social impact of legally impermissible events to his peers, securing him in his ability to exploit the etiquette of his class and preserve its superficial integrity amidst public scorn for his identity. Because his peers accept this explanation without dispute (albeit with some scepticism in the case of Saint-Aubin) and, in the case of the general, even accept it as a sign of Robert's affiliation with the *haute bourgeoisie* ("Ce la Chesnaye ne manque pas de classe," remarks the general, "et ça devient rare, mon cher Saint Aubin, croyez moi, ça devient rare"),[142] Robert's speech is not only one of apparent grief and remorse, but also one of relief. The la Chesnayes can return to their exclusionary domestic space in Paris, delusively confident in their ability to fix their status amidst the turbulent political crosswinds that buffet the city.

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[140] Narboni, Bazin and Gauteur, eds, *Jean Renoir*, 299: "The people only live through sacrifices so one of them must be killed to appease the gods. Here, this society will live for another few months, until the war and even later, and this society will continue to exist because Jurieu was killed. Jurieu is the person who was sacrificed on the gods' altar so that this kind of life might continue."

[141] "A new definition of the word 'accident.'"

[142] "That la Chesnaye has plenty of class, and that's becoming a rare thing these days, my dear Saint Aubin. Believe me, it's a rare thing."

2.5 Conclusion: Renoir's *Ville-concept*

By reading Deleuze's philosophical reflection of Renoir's work through Massey, it becomes clear that three aspects – social space, the ideological perspective informing each narrative, and Renoir's shooting style – central to each film are instrumental in imposing an image of open space-time on the spectator. Furthermore, as this chapter has specifically sought to demonstrate, these elements crucially enter into dialectic with the spatio-temporal tension invoked by the juxtaposition of the *surcroît de théâtralité* and urban space.

Rather than reiterate the vast range of items and cinematographic techniques that contribute to the mise-en-scène of open space-time, it is important to emphasise the importance of ideologically informed perspective, particularly an awareness of tensions among social classes, to our interpretation of Renoir's techniques. Without considering Boudu's lowly social status, Renoir's use of montage would elude this analysis, and the juxtaposition of Boudu with various urban landmarks would remain essentially incoherent, however charming. Coinciding with the emergence of what O'Shaughnessy terms "chronological depth" in Renoir's work of the late 1930s, *La Règle du jeu* most notably demands a knowledge of the *haute bourgeoisie*, and contemporary French society in general, in order to fully appreciate Renoir's integration of temporality within his mise-en-scène of socialised space: so embedded are class concerns in Renoir's mise-en-scène of space-time that the narrative style of *La Règle du jeu* portrays a radically different "élan vers l'avenir" – an unflinchingly negative projection of the

future –when compared with *La Chienne* and *Boudu*.

Because our interpretation of Renoir's urban space-time demands an ideologically-informed perspective and a revised approach to Renoir's techniques, the relationship between space (in both its physical and social aspects) and "le jaillissement du temps comme dédoublement, comme scission,"[143] cannot always be fully appreciated without repeated viewings. Although it would be a gross exaggeration to claim that each individual shot within each of the films discussed invokes open space-time, it is clear that certain shots frame the *ligne de fuite*, during which the past is discarded (the "mis-meeting" in *La Chienne*), or foreground the lingering presence of the past amidst social upheaval (the shot of the Trocadéro beyond the apartment window in *La Règle du jeu*). Furthermore, it is also apparent that these images condition the spectator's perception of other deceptively simple shots (the wide shots during Legrand's first journey to Lulu's residence) and techniques rarely associated with Renoir (such as montage, as employed in *Boudu*) to create an image of open space-time through the cumulative effect of narrative sequences.

By distinguishing between the stultifying *surcroît de théâtralité* and fluctuating urban dynamics, this study does not seek to dismiss conceptualisations of the city as *teatro mundi*: James Donald rightly observes that "*The city* provides an imagery for the way we represent ourselves as actors in the theatre of the world, and for what it feels like to present ourselves in that way."[144] Similarly, both Sennett[145] and Donald[146]

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[143] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 109: "the gushing forth of time as doubling, as scission."
[144] James Donald, "The citizen and the man about town," in *Questions of cultural identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: SAGE, 2011), 171.

encourage the wearing of "masks" as a core component of civility, specifically the privatisation of emotions in the public sphere. However, Deleuze's reduction of Renoir's urban space to theatre, much like these metaphorical theorisations read out of context, risks reducing our perception of Renoir's multi-textured portrayal of space, primarily because they prevent us from engaging with the production of urban space. The city itself may well be a theatre, full of roles to be alternately donned and discarded. However, these changes of role emerge from spatial processes that both contribute to and emerge from the city's own unending process of self re-creation. The lack of any rigid coordinates in space is emphasised by the mise-en-scène of landmarks whose original ideological rhetoric has become obscured in favour of subjectivising their relationship with the characters in each narrative. As Sue Harris states, Renoir's Paris constitutes "a rich site of meaning, even when the city itself seems incidental to the narrative action,"[147] and embodies an "ambiguous and fluctuating significance."[148]

Renoir's city is presented as a disintegrated site, echoing Geraldine Pratt and Rose Marie San Juan assertion that urban streets filmed on location constitute "a likely site of the fragmentary and the unexpected" and, therefore, "can reveal what is otherwise veiled or opaque in everyday life."[149] Furthermore, the possibility for change in all three of the films discussed is presented as a characteristic of everyday life in the city, which

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[145] Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, 264.
[146] Donald, *Imagining the Modern City*, 96.
[147] Sue Harris, "Renoir's Paris: The City as Film Set," *South Central Review* 28.3 (2011): 85.
[148] Ibid., 93.
[149] Geraldine Pratt and Rose Marie San Juan, *Film and Urban Space: Critical Possibilities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2014), 55.

exist in a state of constant becoming. In all three, the city is framed as a catalysing physical structure and a diverse social tissue. *La Chienne* and *Boudu*, as Harris notes, portray Paris as "a place in which ordinary people work, live, interact, and a place in which social difference and class tensions break through to the surface."[150] Similarly, *La Règle du jeu* recounts but one of many excursions to a familiar retreat. The process of disembedding and self-development (or self actualisation, to appropriate Deleuze's term) is an integral part of the urban hermeneutic experience in Renoir's Paris, in which Renoir's mise-en-scène simultaneously dedramatises particular incidents and presents them as crucial signifiers within the context of the characters' lives. Inherently predisposed to temporal flux, Renoir's urban streets, landmarks, dwellers and interiors can never constitute more than Certeau's "Ville-concept," an indeterminate, dangerously splintered site (and sight) within which Renoir's characters are unable to subjugate the inherent openness of space-time, and where the present remains open to the ineffaceable uncertainties of the future.

[150] Harris, "Renoir's Paris," 93.

Chapter 3 – Renoir's Natural Landscape as Spatial Arena

"La vision du paysage n'est pas seulement esthétique, mais aussi lyrique, car l'homme investit dans sa relation à l'espace les grandes directions significatives de son existence."[1]

– Michel Collot

"[C]ette terre, ces champs jouent un rôle."[2]

– Jean Renoir on *The Southerner* (1945)

3.1 Introduction: Opening the Natural Landscape to Space-Time

Building on the previous chapter's elucidation of the import of urban space towards the spectator's perception of open space-time, this chapter aims to determine the import of the rural landscape towards Renoir's mise-en-scène of the "ouverture d'avenir"[3] in *Le Bled* (1929), *The Southerner* (1945), and *The River* (1951). Two difficulties that did not feature in chapter two are immediately apparent. First of all, whereas Paris incorporates a dense myriad of social trajectories, conditioned by the imposing cityscape, the

[1] Michel Collot, "Points de vue sur la perception des paysages," in *La Théorie du Paysage en France, 1974-1994*, ed. Alain Roger. (Paris: Champ Vallon, 1995), 218: "The vision of the countryside is not only aesthetic but also lyrical, because man invests the great, meaningful directions of his existence in his relationship with space.
[2] Jean Narboni, Janine Bazin, and Claude Gauteur, eds. *Jean Renoir: entretiens et propos*, (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 2005), 337: "this land, these fields play a role."
[3] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2: L'image-temps* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1985), 115-16.

rural landscape in these films often appears sparsely populated and, therefore, may initially seem socially inert. Secondly, the motif of the theatre, which formed a crucial counterpoint to urban dynamics in chapter two, is surprisingly unimportant to each of the three films discussed within this chapter, and is often entirely insignificant.

Interestingly however, three aspects of Deleuze's writing suggest an affinity between Renoir's natural landscapes and the passage of time. First of all, the majority of the films that feature in Deleuze's discussion of the inevitable emergence of a new present from the crystal are set in the countryside: *Partie de Campagne* (1936), *The River* (1951), and *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1954) all feature within a single extended paragraph, and resurface once more within Deleuze's discussion of Renoir's mise-en-scène of temporality. Furthermore, *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932) also features within the aforementioned paragraph, but Deleuze tellingly focuses on the tramp's relationship with the Seine rather than on the urban setting. Secondly, Deleuze describes the effect of Renoir's landscapes by drawing on Guy de Maupassant and D. H. Lawrence's literary representations of the rural: for Deleuze, *The River* is "étrangement proche de Lawrence"[4] and Renoir's use of windows in *Partie de Campagne* is "proche de Maupassant,"[5] the author of the source novella. Thirdly, the river, a frequent motif of Renoir's rural landscapes, is the only plastic aspect of Renoir's mise-en-scène that Deleuze distinguishes from Renoir's settings. In particular, Deleuze remarks that rivers provides Boudu (*Boudu sauvé des eaux*) and Harriet (*The River*) with an escape from the stultifying influence

[4] Ibid: "strangely close to Lawrence."
[5] Ibid., 116: "close to Maupassant."

of dead roles through the crack in the crystal, implying that water represents a smooth space that allows characters to exit beyond the *point de fuite*. Furthermore, in his discussion of *Partie de Campagne*, Deleuze addresses the potential emergence of the new through "les remous de la rivière conflée sous l'orage et piquée par la pluie,"[6] hinting at the disruptive impact of the weather on the unsheltered populated landscape.

Deleuze's own application of these observations is impeded by his conflation of the literal with the metaphysical, and his general reliance on formal aspects of mise-en-scène elides any in-depth discussion of the import of the natural setting towards Renoir's portrayal of temporality. Even Deleuze's commentary on Renoir's rivers is developed into a metaphor rather than a tool for systematic analysis: after discussing the rivers that feature in *Boudu* and *The River*, Deleuze likens Nini's climactic dance at the end of *French Cancan* (1954) to "[u]ne façon dont le théâtre s'ouvre à la vie, se déverse dans la vie, entraînant Nini dans une eau courante agitée."[7] Deleuze's formalist perspective is most flagrant in his analysis of *Partie de Campagne*. Likening Renoir's windows to a state of water that allows us to witness the emergence of the truly new, Deleuze specifically remarks that in this film, "c'est par la fenêtre que les deux hommes observent la famille qui arrive,"[8] and that the respective roles of cynic and sentimentalist played by each man exchange facets as the drama develops on the river, thus

[6] Ibid., 115: "the turbulence of the river swollen by the storm and stung by the rain."
[7] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 115-16: "[a] means through which theatre opens into life, pours out into life, carrying Nini along in a turbulent current."
[8] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 116: "it is through the window that the two men observe the family arriving."

relegating the landscape in favour of the window-frame through which it is viewed.

Although the ways in which the socialised landscape catalyses the spatio-temporal trajectories of Renoir's characters is beyond the scope of Deleuze's analysis (possibly because, in appearance at least, they are the least hierarchized of Renoir's milieux), the aforementioned examples insightfully point to specific aspects of Renoir's mise-en-scène that demand consideration within our examination of open space-time. In particular, Deleuze implies that new futures may emerge within rural landscapes in the form of new social relations, possibly at the behest of the elements which, in turn, grant characters new roles (to draw on Deleuze's terminology). However, before engaging with Renoir's films, it is important to establish some basic theoretical and textual ground-work regarding the cinematographic landscape.

Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner's introduction to *Cinema and Landscape* foregrounds the social and physical aspects of space as well as the role of the camera as an "enabling device" in the enactment of cohesive relations, which collectively create a richly textured site, replete with relations ready to be conditioned by the spectator's mind.[9] This three-fold model incorporating the camera, the landscape and the spectator, is valuable in two key respects. Firstly, it emphasises the social and physical aspects of any landscape, be it urban or rural, indirectly underscoring Howard Newby's assertion that the characteristics of rural space are shared by urban space, and that any attempt to differentiate between the two is potentially

[9] Harper and Rayner, "Introduction," 18.

misleading.[10] Rather than understand this as a failing of their analysis, this observation serves as a crucial reminder that rural space is, potentially, no less striated than urban space, and that alterations to the physical landscape necessarily alter what Massey calls "relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded in material practices which have to be carried out."[11] Renoir's ability to frame striated rural spaces has already been suggested by Christopher Faulkner's discussion of Renoir's "socialization" of the rural quarries in *Toni* (1935), where Renoir's signature techniques perform an "active social analysis rather than merely passive observation."[12] Yet, as one may derive from Deleuze's analysis and Massey's understanding of the mutually affective relationship between social and physical space, the landscape is open to factors that allow the filmmaker to frame it as a major agent in the ongoing production of space-time, rather than merely as a backdrop for the framing of human interrelations. Discussing the history of capitalist development, David Harvey astutely reminds us that the physical landscape embodies dynamic properties: "[g]eographical differentiations […] frequently appear to be what they are not: mere historical residuals rather than actively reconstituted features within the capitalist mode of production."[13] How Renoir frames the impact of the physical rural landscape on the dynamisation of social relations is a core concern of this chapter.

Interestingly, Harper and Rayner draw our attention to a second key

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[10] Howard Newby, "Locality and Rurality: The Restructuring of Rural Social Relations," *Regional Studies* 20, no. 3 (1986), 209.
[11] Massey, *For Space*, 9.
[12] Christopher Faulkner, *The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir* (Princeton University Press: Princeton NJ, 1986), 50.
[13] David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), 416.

aspect of the cinematographic landscape: drawing on Bergson's likening of the body and its surroundings to an image gathered by an independent memory within the general process of becoming, they write that "cinematic landscapes, whilst obviously part of a continuum, and equally composed of frames, can also be considered conduits to memories, and a form of time, that transcends the cinema itself."[14] Each of these aspects of the natural landscape – the socialised locus stratified by class barriers and centralising power-structures, and the recollected dreamscape – are of varying importance to this chapter's corpus. Much like Harper and Rayner's analysis, the diversity of the three films discussed within this chapter points to the lack of any precise unifying point of departure for the analysis of rural space-time, and the futility of defining a specialised set of terms on which to exclusively analyse rural settings. Chapter two has already established that even films unfolding within the same geographical locus, and employing a similar array of narrative techniques, must be approached on their own terms if we are to elucidate the import of specific techniques and aspects of topographical space towards the spectator's perception of the cracked crystal. In fact, the landscapes discussed in this chapter pose an additional challenge, for all three were filmed in entirely different countries and ideological contexts: *Le Bled*, Renoir's last silent film, was financed by the French and Algerian governments, and filmed on location in Algeria; *The Southerner* was filmed in Hollywood with the backing of independent producer David Loew as the Second World War neared its end; *The River*, financed once again by an independent producer, narrates a young girl's

[14] Harper and Rayner, "Introduction," 19.

experience of growing up as part of a privileged colonial family in British India, and was released four years after the 1947 Partition. Furthermore, the film almost completely relegates colonial issues in favour of foregrounding the impact of time on the protagonist's memories of her childhood experience of India's landscapes, and is entirely narrated through her recollections.

Because of the radically different national settings and discursive positions of each of the three films discussed, the only immediately apparent similarity between them is, incidentally, the occasional staging of the rural milieu in depth, so it is unsurprising that Deleuze focuses primarily on this aspect of Renoir's works (except in his discussion of *The Golden Coach*).[15] Although this grants the spectator a potentially relevant point of departure towards the perception of crystalline space-time in each, Deleuze's reduction of these worlds to realms invoking a *surcroît de théâtralité* remains problematic as it ignores the significance of these ideological contexts to each film and, in the case of *The River*, tends to overestimate the extent to which theatricality features in Renoir's mise-en-scène.

Because of the crucial role of multiplicities of space-time as "a condition for the openness of the future,"[16] the rural landscape must be examined within the context of Renoir's socialised and recollected landscapes, specifically "en fonction d'une dimension d'avenir."[17] This can only be achieved if we remedy the inadequate spatial grounding of Deleuze's film philosophy – in both its social and physical aspects – and

[15] See chapter four for a discussion of Deleuze's analysis of the formal and thematic characteristics of *The Golden Coach*.
[16] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE, 2005), 89.
[17] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 117: "in terms of a dimension of the future."

integrate Massey's theorisation of space-time into Deleuze's examination of Renoir's narrative style. In the following three textual analyses, I examine *Le Bled*, *The Southerner*, and *The River* as rural spaces whose mise-en-scène cannot be understood without integrating temporality into our perspective. The first two, *Le Bled* and *The Southerner*, constitute incisive portraits of fluctuating spatial politics, and more generally serve as thoughtful responses to to the contemporary social, political, and economic circumstances in which they were produced. *The River* relegates spatial politics in favour of portraying space itself as a realm of memory, in which spatial mobility signifies the very act of recollecting. In all three, Renoir mobilises classical and non-classical techniques to portray a malleable space in which new futures can be actualised.

3.2 *Le Bled* (1929)

"Ce monde coupé en deux":[18] Colonialism and Class in *l'Algérie Française*

By 1929, France's *Exposition Coloniale Internationale* (1931) was on the horizon, and the nation was planning centennial celebrations of the 1830 "pacification" of Algeria, which had been declared an integral part of France in 1848. The anniversary provided the French with the opportunity to

[18] Fanon, Frantz. *Les damnés de la terre*. Paris: Gallimard, 1991), 70: "this world divided in two."

commemorate what *Les Éditions du Centenaire de l'Algérie* described as "la mémoire des soldats de France qui, il y a cent ans, ont libéré l'Algérie du joug barbaresque, puis l'ont rendue à ses justes destinées en y instaurant la 'paix française.'"[19] One of the many cultural products of the celebrations was *Le Bled*, Renoir's final silent film. The French and Algerian governments contributed towards the finance of the film, which was intended to display the country's exotic attractions and lure tourists to the centennial celebrations of the French conquest.[20] The plot of *Le Bled* focuses on Pierre Hoffer's (Enrique Rivero) attempt to extract exorbitant amounts of his uncle's (Christian Hoffer, played by Alexandre Arquillère) money to pay off personal debts and, in parallel, Claudie Duvernet's (Jackie Monnier) arrival in Algeria for the hearing of her late uncle's will. Pierre and Claudie's trajectories converge in Sidi Ferruch, where they fall in love. When Claudie's ill-wishing cousins, Manuel (Manuel Raaby) and Diane (Diana Hart), inevitably attempt to steal Claudie's inheritance, Pierre predictably saves her from Manuel's clutches and the film ends with the couple's engagement party in Sidi Ferruch. Frantz Fanon lambasted the French colonial powers represented by Claudie and Pierre, most notably in *Les damnés de la terre*, in which he discussed the French occupation of Algeria as "pas seulement domination, mais à la lettre décision de n'occuper

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[19] Cited in Catherine Hodeir and Michel Pierre, L'éxposition coloniale, Paris 1931 (Brussels: Éditions Complexe, 1991), 30: "the memory of soldiers who, 100 years ago, liberated Algeria of its barbaresque yoke, then guided it to its rightful destiny by introducing 'French peace.'"

[20] As mentioned in: Raymond Durgnat, *Jean Renoir* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974), 58; Alexander Sesonske, *Jean Renoir, the French Films, 1924-1939* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1980) 68. For further information on the film's production context and Renoir's own attitude towards colonialism, see Barry Nevin, "'What we have done is shameful': Interrogating the Relationship between France and its *Algérie* in Jean Renoir's *Le Bled* (1929)," *Studies in French Cinema* 16.2 (Forthcoming).

somme toute qu'un terrain."[21] Renoir himself was contemptuous towards the French colonial powers: his son, Alain, recalled that Renoir "was sickened by the way in which the French regarded and treated the Algerians."[22] By no surprise, the film's glorification of *l'Algérie française* has hitherto precluded *Le Bled* from serious analysis, largely because Renoir's involvement in pro-colonial projects sits uncomfortably with his engagement with the French Left.

First of all, it is important to note that the film firmly contextualises the narrative within the colonised landscape, which has guaranteed France wealth and international prestige. True to the film's reputation, the prologue not only "indulges documentary interest, with glimpses of picturesque native customs and settlers' daily routines,"[23] as Raymond Durgnat observes, but also emphasises the social stratification of the landscape: an intertitle states that Algeria is "un pays d'une prodigieuse activité industrielle et commerciale,"[24] and subsequent documentary-like images of miners and a train emphasise the economic efficiency of the country under French rule. We should not neglect the ideological implications of the railway, whose taming of "la brousse, les moustiques, les indigènes et les fièvres"[25] is equated by Fanon with "[l']inexistence politique et économique de l'indigénat."[26]

Reflecting the film's ideological aims, Arab Algerians occupy a

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[21] Fanon, *Les damnés*, 300: "not simply domination but the decision, literally, to occupy nothing but a territory." Italics are Fanon's own.
[22] Pascal Mérigeau, *Jean Renoir*, (Paris: Flammarion, 2012), 126.
[23] Raymond Durgnat, *Jean Renoir*, (Berkeley: University of California, 1974), 58.
[24] "[A] land of a prodigious industrial and commercial activity."
[25] Fanon, *Les damnés*, 300: "the bush, the mosquitos, the indigenous populations, and diseases "
[26] Ibid: "the ignorance of the political and economic existence of the indigenous population."

consistently minor place in the film's narrative thrust. Almost invariably assimilated into shots as extras, they confirm the links established by the camera between the landscape and the colonial class structures that striate it. As the Duvernets drive along to their late uncle's land, Algerian men congregate on nearby hills (fig. 1), recalling the composition of Pierre-Auguste's *La mosquée* (1881, a.k.a. *La fête arabe* [fig. 2]). On other occasions, as when Algerian children rush to clean Pierre's shoes, and when older Algerian men carry Pierre's suitcases as he walks with Christian, the Algerians and their country are clearly at the disposal of the dominant white French colonisers. This depersonalisation of the Algerian populace exemplifies Fanon's assertion that, under the French, the Algerians merely formed "le panorama, la toile de fond *naturelle* de la présence humaine française."[27] Even Pierre's former military comrade, Zoubir (Aîssa Berardi), and the latter's large sheep-farm and luxurious villa located in the south of Sidi Ferruch are merely exploited by Pierre to appease his own interest in the Algerian lifestyle and as part of his plan to meet Claudie at the hunt. The narrative thus emphasises Fanon's conception of "ce monde coupé en deux […] habité par des espèces différentes."[28]

[27] Ibid: "a landscape, the *natural* backdrop for the French presence." Italics are Fanon's own.
[28] Fanon, *Les damnés*, 70: "this world divided in two, […] inhabited by different species."

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Fig. 1 *Fig. 2*

As already mentioned, the established farmers of Christian Hoffer's ilk are not the only generation of French colonisers portrayed within the narrative. Crucial to the portrayal of the possibility for change on the hierarchised natural landscape is the introduction of the newest generation of French immigrants to the molar line engendered by the French colonial powers. Pierre is a womanising Parisian who has squandered his inheritance, and is primarily determined to extract money from his uncle in order to settle his own outstanding debts. Claudie has travelled to Algeria to hear her late uncle's will, from which she inherits her uncle's villa and a vast agricultural plot in Algeria. Claudie's cousins, Diane and Manuel, are debt-laden and bitter following the revelation that although their uncle has allocated sufficient funds to clear their current debts, they shall receive no further funds or property from the will. Although the plot arranged by Claudie's cousins encourages us to view Claudie and Pierre as the "good" colonisers, the privileged lifestyle sported by all four locates them collectively within a stratum which, although derived from the older generation of colonisers, represents a new set of superficial values and a lazy sense of entitlement,

which all challenge French colonial identity. Claudie is only going to Algeria, as Christian suspects, to obtain her inheritance which she probably intends to sell to the highest bidder, and initially demonstrates no intention of staying there. Furthermore, Claudie's distinctly bourgeois stuffed mink scarf, worn as she arrives at the port, indicates her taste for dead animals long before the climactic hunt. Even her penniless cousins, dismayed following the brutal disclosure of the will, are dressed lavishly whilst they consume cocktail after cocktail in dismay.

Pierre's similarly superficial preoccupations are also exemplified through his clothes. Upon arriving at his uncle's farmland, Pierre takes no fewer than three suitcases and a large valise off the coach that drops him there. To further satirise Pierre's materialism, the departing coach returns momentarily to drop off yet another suitcase belonging to him. Another key incident in this regard occurs at his uncle's farmhouse when Pierre emerges in front of his uncle and the latter's peers wearing a tuxedo. Although suitable on such occasions in his homeland, his attire is highly unsuitable in his new surroundings and provides what Richard Abel terms a "comedy of costumes."[29] Décor complements this incident, serving as a commentary on both Pierre's perception of himself and his uncle's perception of him: when Pierre exits his room, the flat blank background lends Pierre the importance which a tuxedo would acquire in metropolitan society and conveys his inflated opinion of his own appearance. When he enters the dining area, Pierre's dark tuxedo is pitted against the pale white walls of the dining area on a raised platform that lifts him above the farmers as though he were

[29] Richard Abel, *French Cinema: The First Wave, 1915-1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1987), 159.

standing on a proscenium arch. If he seems to be on a stage, it is because he is the spectacle: the camera demarcates him from the farmers by cutting to a travelling shot of the farmers' shocked expressions. After Christian laughs mockingly in response, the camera cuts to a view of the platform and tilts upward to reveal Pierre's own embarrassed and confused expression. Pierre refuses to adapt to his surroundings, incorrectly assuming that this symbol of bourgeois etiquette is invariably appropriate and universally recognised for its superficial merits.

This refusal to adapt highlights his vanity during a tour of Christian's land. Jokingly warned not to don a tuxedo by Christian, Pierre's alternative is little better: Pierre breathes on his shoes in an attempt to shine them and, as he sits down to tie them, we see to his right, in the background of the image, a vast array of ties, one of which he selects before descending the stairs to his uncle outside. This ridiculous range of ties (a possible reason for Pierre's numerous cumbersome suitcases) and his uncle's reaction to Pierre's fedora, double-breasted jacket and knickerbockers ("Allons! Bon. Aujourd' hui, il s'est habillé en zouave")[30] once more indicate Pierre's preoccupation with appearances that acquire new comedic resonance within the Algerian landscape, and are valued only by his fellow compatriots who are no longer with him. Although these sequences do not directly invoke open space-time, this prior knowledge of the preoccupations of the newest generation of French metropolitan immigrants is central to Renoir's dynamisation of the landscape, and the framing of the *point de fuite* later in the narrative.

[30] "Well then! Today, he is dressed as a zouave."

Sidi-Ferruch Revisited: Staging the *Point de Fuite* in Depth

Central to the narrative's mise-en-scène of open space is the threat represented by Pierre ambitions towards the landscape's embodied history of colonialist intervention. The narrative further emphasises the history of colonialist intervention and international relations personified by the Algerian farmer. As Christian tours his land with Pierre, he correctly assumes that Pierre has no idea what 100, 000 francs represent to the workers who endure labour and hardship, and proceeds to inform his nephew that "Il y a cent ans, nos devanciers n'ont trouvé ici que des marécages."[31] The subsequent conversation leaves no doubt that the deeply-staged background represents both Christian and France's legacy as well as Pierre's responsibility towards it: "Et, avant de les transformer en champs fertiles, des milliers de colons sont morts à la tache... Pendant qu'ils y étaient nos grand-pères auraient bien dû faire de meilleurs chemins. On t'attendait pour celà mon garçon."[32]

The landscape in the background enters into dialectic with the individual figures of Christian and Pierre Hoffer to signal the instability of the French colonial regime. The tension between the molar line and molecular flux (to employ Deleuze and Guattari's distinction), respectively embodied by Christian and Pierre, dynamises the landscape that dominates the background. Each character physically articulates his differing political perspective: the stocky uncle leaves his jacket unfastened, does not wear a

[31] "One hundred years ago, our forefathers found nothing but marshland here."
[32] "And before transforming them into fertile fields, thousands of colonisers died with their boots on... whilst our grandparents were there, they should have made better roads. We have been waiting for you for just that, my lad."

tie and wears a common rural-style cap. He also walks in a far less refined manner than his nephew, hunching his back and tying his arms behind his back. Pierre, on the other hand, walks with a cigarette pursed between his lips and his hands presentably sitting in each pocket of his fastened jacket which even has a handkerchief perched in the upper-left-hand pocket. Christian embodies the past through his allegiance to the image of the nation as an essential agricultural and industrial catalyst amidst an otherwise stagnant, infertile landscape. Christian thus echoes Fanon's conception of "le colon [qui] fait l'histoire,"[33] and "est le commencement absolu: « c'est nous qui l'avons fait »."[34] Like Fanon's unnamed coloniser, Christian "est la cause continuée: « Si nous partons, tout est perdu, cette terre retournera au Moyen Age »."[35]

Fig. 3

The staging of this shot in the field (fig. 3) demonstrates Renoir's conceptualisation of the French colonial powers as structures that Massey's

[33] Fanon, *Les damnés*, 82: "the coloniser [who] makes history."
[34] Ibid., 81: "embodies the very beginning: 'It is we who have made this land.'"
[35] Ibid., 82: "guarantees its continuity: 'If we leave, all will be lost, and this land will return to the Dark Ages.'"

treatise on space reduces to "(temporary, provisional) stabilisations,"[36] specifically suggesting that the land's future is contested by Pierre who, like Claudie and her cousins, was born into the economic privilege earned by farmers such as Christian. The presence of anonymous labourers working the fields in the background of the image almost one century after the conquest further emphasises the undeniable fact that, without future leagues of immigrants to maintain French power abroad, France risks losing the legacy evoked by Christian's hallucinatory vision of the 1830 arrival of Général de Bourmont's troops. The potential disintegration of colonial power over the Algerian landscape suggests that the apparently rigid class structures that stratify the landscape are only provisional constructs. Christian further emphasises the volatility of these social relations when he reveals his decision to bequeath his property to Pierre, and even informs him of this security, somewhat undercutting the patriotic initiative that Christian himself aims to inspire, and putting the future of the French presence in Sidi Ferruch into question.

Ironically, a frustrated André Bazin marvelled at *Le Bled*, viewing it as a "un perpetuel contresens technique: sa mise en scène étant très souvent conçue en profondeur de champ cependant que Renoir s'entête à utiliser des objectifs lumineux donnant une photo très douce mais aucune netteté des arrière-plans."[37] Bazin's analysis threatens to mislead us towards an erroneous belief that *Le Bled* is dominated by shallow cinematography. On the contrary, many shots within the film testify to an effort to stage multiple

[36] Massey, *For Space*, 95.
[37] André Bazin, *Jean Renoir* (Paris: Ivrea, 2005), 20: "a perpetual technical aberration: although its mise-en-scène is frequently conceived in depth, Renoir persists in using large-aperture lenses that grant a soft photo without any clarity in backgrounds."

events in depth. Deleuze distinguishes between “une profondeur […] *dans* le champ,”[38] (in which the foreground, midground and background of the image remain autonomous in their ensemble) and “une profondeur *de* champ”[39] (in which elements across different planes interpolate one another). Deleuze’s second category of composition in depth becomes manifest as Christian Hoffer grants Pierre a tour of his land.

The importance of the ideological tensions exhibited by Renoir’s staging of the landscape in depth (exemplary of Deleuze’s latter category of *profondeur de champ*) is underscored by various other shots that incorporate elements on various planes of the image for no other visible reason than to experiment with “une profondeur dans le champ”: as Pierre and Claudie seek shelter from spontaneous rainfall during their first lone encounter in Algeria, they proceed from the background towards the foreground and are seen arriving at a local hut through the open square structure of the shelter itself. Later, as Claudie drives to her newly-acquired villa, the camera grants us a wide view of the houses and sweeping fields of the country region from a high cliff. A sparse piece of foliage and a sapling growing on the cliff intrude on the scenic background. That each is entirely redundant in dramatic terms and serves only to inhibit our otherwise comprehensive view of the landscape indicates the priority lent to deep staging. These instances of deep staging all lend credence to Bazin’s underdeveloped emphasis on the importance of Renoir’s choice of lenses in *Le Bled*. In particular, Renoir’s deep staging of the Algerian landscape becomes a register of the spatial politics acting on France’s colony.

[38] Deleuze, *L’image-temps*, 140: “a depth *in* the field.” Italics are Deleuze's own.
[39] Ibid: “a depth *of* field.” Italics are Deleuze's own.

At this point, it is worth distinguishing between the *point de fuite* that Deleuze locates in Renoir's work, and the *ligne de fuite* theorised by Deleuze and Guattari in *Mille Plateaux*. Although no visible change within Franco-Algerian relations occurs during Pierre and Christian's tour of the farmland (at least, not of the kind that emerges when Legrand happens upon Lulu and Dédé near St. Jean de Montmartre in *La Chienne*, and participates in a collective *ligne de fuite*), this staging makes the *point de fuite* evident: more specifically, Renoir's mise-en-scène portrays the introduction of the molecular flux embodied by Pierre to the French colonial system, and the resulting tension which leaves spatial politics open to the truly new. Because the landscape, like any physical space, resists overcoding, the control effected by the French ruling powers relies primarily on future generations of immigrants who, in this case, are portrayed as avaricious consumers placing France's legacy at risk: Pierre expresses no ambition to contribute to France's colonial prowess, and is interested only in the financial aid that his uncle has to offer. Although Pierre subsequently agrees to work on his uncle's land for six months in exchange for 100 000F, he only does so after witnessing Claudie riding by on her horse. Furthermore, he accepts Christian's offer with a view to securing the money required to pay his debts rather than to contribute to the colonised landscape which he, like Claudie, may one day inherit from his uncle.

We must similarly remind ourselves that Claudie has only come from France to obtain her inheritance and that, prior to her visitation of her newly-acquired land, she demonstrates no active intention to permanently reside in the country. Furthermore, when Claudie finally decides to retain

her land, it is partly because of the appeal held by the country's very cultural attractions (such as the trained falcons) which the film itself displays in an effort to encourage viewers to emigrate to Algeria. This implies that the newest generation of pied-noirs has lost touch with the drive to modernise which secured Algeria in 1830 and that they stay there simply because they wish to absorb the exotic delights marketed throughout the film, particularly during the prologue, and which are unavailable in their own country.

Clearly, even the rousing vision of (inter)national imperialist expansion that informs Christian's determination has evidently failed to convince Pierre of his duty to France's *mission civilisatrice*. The mise-en-scène of the Hoffers' tour of the farmland therefore challenges any easy acceptance of the narrative's prologue, which portrays Algeria as an enduring composite of domestic resources and colonial rule. In fact, no other shot within the narrative so succinctly encapsulates the competing ideologies embodied by the two generations of colonisers amidst the striated space of Algeria, which stubbornly resists permanent colonisation.

"*C'est honteux, ce que nous avons fait*": Foreshadowing the French Retreat from the Empire

Claudie's participation in and reaction to the hunting scene later in the narrative interrogates the savagery of France's colonial activities but simultaneously suggests that the newest generation of colonisers are unwilling to renounce the exotic appeal of the colonial activities available in

a country that they do not fully appreciate or understand. Claudie enthusiastically seizes a gun from the Algerian chauffeur and determinedly stalks the gazelle behind her dogs, rapidly firing at it until it can be mauled by the party's savage hounds. "C'est honteux, ce que nous avons fait," Claudie subsequently laments, "Cette chasse est trop barbare."[40] As suggested by the mink scarf that she wears upon her arrival at the port, her subsequent reaction to the dead gazelle is a crashing encounter with the reality of this slice of upper-class leisure rather than an expression of colonial guilt: there is a sharp irony in her content retention of her uncle's assets which, as suggested by the cannons accompanying the French army in Christian Hoffer's vision, were violently stolen from the country's indigenous population during the French nation's drive to improve the country. Thus, Claudie's emotional outburst is more suitably read along the same lines as the film's strategic critique of the new generation of bourgeois immigrants, who thrive on the products of colonialism, but derive noticeably less pleasure from the colonising process. Thus, if Claudie's right to her uncle's heritage is, in Benali's analysis, "le marqueur principal de l'achèvement du processus d'appropriation du territoire algérien,"[41] Claudie's inheritance also signals the inherent fallibility of colonial space, particularly at generational junctures where national and ethical values undergo change. Hoffer's victory over the Algerian landscape, like that of the Général de Bourmont's army, is purely provisional.

The glorified advancement propelled by both the current French

[40] "What we have done is shameful. This hunt is too barbaric."
[41] Abdelkader Benali, *Le cinéma colonial au Maghreb: L'imaginaire en tromp-l'œil* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1998), 64: "the primary symbol of the achievement of the process of appropriating Algerian territory."

presence in Algeria and Christian's rousing call for continuity are further challenged from within the film itself by Pierre and Claudie themselves: as they take shelter from the rain beneath a hut, a close shot of both characters fades to a sunlit land in an image which clearly evokes an Algeria unspoilt by colonisation or the individual will to succeed embodied by Christian Hoffer. None of the symbols of modernity that triumphantly scar the land in Christian's vision are to be seen in their antithetical vision of an Algeria that remains untarnished by civilisation and its discontents. Their evocation of the solace to be found in unravaged land marks Christian's vision of de Bourmont's conquest as a rather dystopian triumph of progress and modernity. Pierre and Claudie's dream marks them as manifestly unconcerned for Algeria's future. Yet Claudie's decision to take the reins at her uncle's villa in Sidi Ferruch, where the French invaders established their beachhead in 1830, affirms that she, like Pierre, represents a new generation of landowners who shall now inherit French Algeria's legacy. Claudie's problematic place within Algeria's wider social context is even more firmly established when she later declares "Je passerais volontiers toute ma vie ici,"[42] and later, when her lady-in-waiting burns the "propriété à vendre" ("for sale") sign erected by Manuel and Diane on Claudie's newly inherited property. Each of these moments reminds us of the financial benefits represented by Algeria for Claudie and other women of her generation. Rebecca J. Pulju reminds us that women's rights were "severely restricted" in France where, until 1965, husbands acquired automatic legal control of family property. Conversely, as David Henry Slavin notes, Algeria provided

[42] "I could spend my entire life here."

French women with "an arena where women could act autonomously in economic and social realms."[43] Thanks to the economic policies of France's colony, Claudie's inheritance provides her with a significant degree of financial independence which would be legally impossible to attain in her home country.

The ideological tension between Christian's patriotic, enterprising imperative on the one hand and, on the other, Pierre's selfish dismissal of his uncle's glorification of colonialism, and Claudie's decision to remain in Algeria because of its cultural and economic attractions, is only partly resolved by the film's ending: at a party celebrating his engagement to Claudie, Pierre is finally wearing farm-suitable attire, which provides a counterpoint with the tuxedo and "dandy" appearance earlier sported by Pierre during his tour of Christian's land, signifying his assimilation within the Algerian farming community and, by extension, the legacy of the French colonial army. However, the fact remains that Pierre has remained solely in order to marry Claudie who, as noted earlier, wishes to stay because she is confident in what Algeria has to offer her rather than in what she has to offer to Algeria. Benali notes that Claudie's deprecated character will be revalorised by her decision to stay in Algeria.[44] On a similar note, O'Shaughnessy convincingly argues that the impending marriage re-establishes "the broken link between generations of men," and "announces the broader restoration of order that will come when France turns its back on

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[43] David Henry Slavin, *Colonial Cinema and Imperial France, 1919-1939: White Blind Spots, Male Fantasies, Settler Myths* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001), 154.

[44] Benali, *Le cinéma colonial au Maghreb*, 91.

hedonistic materialism and re-embraces its colonial destiny."[45] However, these points of view are ultimately irreconcilable with the political tensions articulated through Renoir's landscape: officially speaking, the couple fulfils the *mission civilisatrice*, but whether or not they are sufficiently responsible to retain the colonised land remains open to question, and the inability of the film to subsume this reflexive critique beyond the world of *Le Bled* remains problematic: their coupling introduces a *point de fuite* to Christian Hoffer's enterprise, enriching the narrative's framing of the "élan vers l'avenir" (c.f. Deleuze) all the more. Given that Algeria would eventually achieve independence in 1962, it is doubly interesting that Renoir offers no convenient resolution. By spatialising colonial rule through molar and molecular elements, Renoir exposes the flaws, contradictions, and tensions – in short, the *points de fuite* – of the French colonial process, and to the inherent dangers incorporated by crystallised space. By visualising the clash between the history embodied by the landscape and the fluctuating space-time engendered by characters, the landscape itself embodies both past and potential future histories of disenfranchised space, representing a visual repository of ever-changing circumstances of ownership. These same constitutive elements recur in varying measure in Renoir's *The Southerner*.

[45] Martin O'Shaughnessy, Jean Renoir (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2000), 64-65.

3.3 *The Southerner* (1945)

Socialising the Landscape: Class and Capitalism

As in *Le Bled*, the rural landscape is portrayed as a locus that permits people to exploit *points de fuite* in hegemonic class structures and, as a result, produce new power relations. The plot of the film revolves around the everyday efforts of Sam Tucker (Zachary Scott), his wife Nona (Betty Field), and his children to eke out a marginal living on an unspecified farmland in the American South. Encouraged by his dying uncle, Sam Tucker abandons his position as a rural labourer in an effort to raise his family on his own crops, despite the threats posed by the weather, illness, and his malicious neighbours. Much like *Le Bled*, the very structure of Renoir's mise-en-scène is conditioned by the political context underlying the film's production.

The film's opening shots specify the rural setting and capitalist economic system that together structure the narrative space. The establishing shot of the plantation frames a cotton plant, and tilts upwards to reveal the labourers working in the fields. After a tracking shot of the plantation, the camera cuts to a shot of Sam's uncle, Pete (Paul Burns), as he collapses in the heat of the sun. Numerous workers are visible in the distant background within this shot, leaving the spectator in no doubt that Pete's death represents a momentary aberration within the capitalist process that striates the landscape. Before Pete dies, he beseeches Sam to grow his own crops. We learn after his funeral that the workers are operating on minimal

wages, and that Pete himself has died a poor man, leaving nothing to even pay for his tombstone. Although Sam's current role condemns him to the same impoverished circumstances as his uncle Pete, the American rural landscape is presented as a fluid space that permits a high degree of social mobility for those who desire to risk their minimal welfare.

This potential for socio-economic change is most clearly evoked when Sam visits the office owned by his boss, Ruston (Paul Harvey), following Pete's funeral. When Sam visits Ruston's office, the grounds beyond Ruston's office are staged in depth in order to establish both Ruston's economic power and the potential for others such as Sam to attain Ruston's success. Beyond the window located behind the two men, we see a water tower bearing Ruston's name in large letters, leaving us in no doubt of who owns the complex (fig. 4). Under it, a group of men are seated, presumably Ruston's employees. Despite Ruston's economic power and social standing, his casual appearance (compared with the tuxedos worn by Manuel and Pierre in *Le Bled*) and the lack of vain status symbols in his office (which clutter upper-class quarters in Renoir's Front Populaire output) suggest that he is a self-made man who has acquired his fortune through his own labour rather than through the fortunate inheritance of his forefathers' legacy, and who continues to coordinate enterprising ventures. The similarity between Sam and Ruston's respective appearances suggests an accord that does not exist between the two generations of *Le Bled*, and that Sam may repeat Ruston's success through his engagement with the land that Ruston agrees to let him in this scene.

Fig. 4

The staging of Ruston and Sam in front of Ruston's grounds visually recalls the mise-en-scène of Christian and Pierre Hoffer on the Algerian landscape, "conferring form"[46] (c.f. Harper and Rayner) on the social implications governing the exchange. Complementing the ideologically informed staging of shifting rural power relations in depth, the photography of the office décor subsequently registers Sam's exit through a *point de fuite*: the two men occupy different social rankings within American society, as suggested by the shadow of the window-frame, which is projected between them after they walk away from the window and discuss their arrangement in front of the calendar (fig. 5). However, this vertical line is transgressed by their parting handshake that binds their accord, and consolidates new class relations in Sam's world (fig. 6). In short, the framing of their collaboration denotes Sam's *ligne de fuite*, providing an image of Sam's transition to a new position in American society. This sequence informs our perception of rural landscapes as they appear in the remainder of the narrative.

[46] Harper and Rayner, "Introduction," 18.

Fig. 5 *Fig. 6*

Staging Rural Relations in Depth

In a televised introduction granted in 1961, Renoir himself suggested that deep staging was intended to visually consolidate the relationship between Sam and the farm:

> J'ai procédé énormément avec des objectifs assez fermés et donnant une grande profondeur de champ, de façon à ne jamais perdre de vue derrière mes personnages, les champs. Car en réalité cette terre que mon héros voulait absolument cultiver, et sur laquelle il compte pour devenir indépendant, cette terre, ces champs jouent un rôle. C'est aussi un personnage du film, alors il faut le voir. C'est la raison pour laquelle j'ai employé ces objectifs qui me donnent de la profondeur et qui permettent de rester en contact avec le fond, alors que l'on est cependant intéressé, je l'espère, par ce que peut raconter le personnage du premier plan.[47]

Deep space emphasises the import of the rural landscape towards Sam's

[47] Narboni, Bazin, and Gauteur, eds, *Jean Renoir*, 338: "By and large, I proceeded with largely closed lenses that granted a great depth of field so that I would never lose sight of the fields behind my characters. Because, in reality, this land that my hero was absolutely intent on cultivating and on which he counts to become *independent*, this land, these fields play a role. It is also a character in the film, so it is essential that we see it. It is the reason for which I employed these lenses which lend depth and permit one to remain in contact with the background, whilst one is nonetheless interested, I hope, by what the character in the foreground has to say." Note that by the word "closed' ("fermé'), Renoir was referring to the aperture of the lens: the narrower the aperture, the greater the depth of field available to the camera.

desired position in society, dynamising the landscape through its relationship with society. Crucially, Sam does not endeavour to create a new future in the same way as Boudu recklessly escapes bourgeois social imprisonment, or the *haute bourgeoisie* strives to retain the embodied past. Nor does he endeavour to prevent the creation of *points de fuite* in the same manner as Christian Hoffer of *Le Bled*. Although Sam may someday hope to fix his position within the American market, the deeply-staged shots of Sam and Nona on the landscape demonstrate that Sam is currently endeavouring to establish a *ligne de fuite* through the *point de fuite* represented by the American capitalist landscape and the countryside's constantly shifting socio-economic relations. Some of the most impressively deep shots portray Sam and Nona on the land, physically distanced from one another as they endeavour to tame the overgrown land (figs. 7 and 8).

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

Paul Little writes: "There needs to be a creative relation to the nonhuman as another participant in this making of places (places are not just human

constructs)."[48] The range of elements incorporated by this shot, including Sam and Nona, the fields, and the sky, is essential to our understanding of the spatialising forces operating within the world viewed. For although Sam has established a new "cartography of power"[49] in society (to use Massey's term), his *ligne de fuite* towards his desired moment in space-time remains subject to competing social and natural forces that potentially prevent him from solidifying his social status. More specifically, the juxtaposition of Sam and his unsheltered fields holds Sam's current social status and his potential social ascension in tension, emphasising the dual possibilities to which his enterprise is subject: Sam's current social status exists within "the shifting geographies of power-relations,"[50] which are affected not only by Sam's labour, but also by the elemental forces ranged against the landscape.

By referring to "les remous de la rivière conflée sous l'orage et piquée par la pluie, dans *Partie de Campagne*,"[51] Deleuze himself suggests that shifting weather conditions may actualise a genuinely new set of characteristics within the world of the film. The future beyond the metaphorical *point de fuite* may be positive or, conversely, entail destruction, as when prolonged drought parches Sam's seeds, and when the climactic storm later washes Sam's crops away. "[T]he relationship between individual or group disposition and landscape,"[52] recognised by Harper and Rayner as a crucial product of the photography of any landscape in cinema, dynamises Sam's fields, elevating them from a mere backdrop to an active

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[48] Paul Little, cited in Massey, *For Space*, 181.
[49] Massey, *For Space*, 47.
[50] Ibid., 85.
[51] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 115: "the turbulence of the river swollen by the storm and stung by the rain in *Partie de Campagne*."
[52] Harper and Rayner, "Introduction," 16.

social force, emphasising that Sam's mobility is the product of both social interrelations and the natural landscape that moulds them. Although society ultimately recrystallises around Sam's *ligne de fuite* within the film, and the molar reasserts dominance over the molecular, Sam's efforts are not presented as futile endeavours: the narrative nonetheless presents a social space in which his ambitions may be realised in more favourable weather conditions.

Although *The Southerner* conspicuously avoids engaging directly with the wartime context, the scenes unfolding at Ruston's office and on Sam's land recall the impact of the New Deal on American sharecroppers. Anthony J. Badger notes that although the New Deal enabled surplus farm labour "to stay on the land at a time when there was nowhere else to go,"[53] its ambitions to eliminate rural poverty were "largely still-born."[54] Indeed, the New Deal's impact on the American agrarian sector was inconsistent at best: prosperous farmers capable of contending with others in the free market "were given permanent protection by the government at the expense of the national interest,"[55] whereas sharecroppers, in Badger's analysis, remained "economically and politically powerless," even though their income already "scarcely attained bare subsistence levels."[56] Unsurprisingly, the "unprecedented mechanisation and technological advance" during the four decades that followed the ratification of the New Deal were accompanied by "the virtual disappearance of the family farm" and a

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[53] Anthony J. Badger, *The New Deal: The Depression Years, 1933-40* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1989), 168.
[54] Ibid., 299.
[55] Ibid., 163.
[56] Ibid., 182.

"massive flight"[57] from the rural landscape, the latter continuing through the 1940s and 1950s.[58]

"This Knot of Conflicts":[59] The Rural Idyll in Dissolution

Interestingly, although Renoir frames the land belonging to Devers (J. Carroll Nash), Sam's decidedly uncooperative neighbour, with characteristic attention to deep space, the portrayal of space-time on the former's land is evocative of a radically bleaker future. Renoir stages Devers' ranch in depth, allowing the spectator to view Devers within his shed in the foreground, and his home and animal pen in the background. However, deep space reveals little of interest regarding Devers' land: a dense barrier of trees circumscribes our view of his establishment, both in our view of the space beyond his house and in the space beyond his barn, confining our view to his house, barn and animal pen throughout the narrative. Reflecting E. Melanie DuPuis's assertion that "social elites create the rural idyll either through excluding others from rural communities or by making them invisible,"[60] this physical insulation testifies to Devers' attempt to establish an impossibly "closed" space in which his impervious social dominance has permanently overcoded a geometrically-defined section of the landscape, and hints at an illusory, uninterrupted liberty that extends even beyond the

[57] Ibid., 189.
[58] Ibid., 302.
[59] Massey, *For Space*, 141.
[60] E. Melanie DuPuis, "Variations on the rural idyll," in *The Handbook of Rural Studies*, eds. Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden, and Patrick Mooney (London: SAGE, 2006), 126.

confines of his property.

Fig. 9

This attitude is later expressed on numerous occasions, as when Devers unjustly insists that "Lead Pencil," a catfish caught by Sam, cannot belong to Sam, owing to Devers' own repeated (and failed) attempts to ensnare the fish. Devers' ruthless autocratic regime contributes to his steadfast refusal to aid Sam in the latter's struggle to farm his land: Devers refuses to grant typhoid-free drinking water and milk for the ailing Jot on two separate occasions. Even when Sam offers his services in exchange, Devers demonstrates little sympathy, insisting that "it's just like I told you Tucker. I don't need no extra help. […] Too bad about your boy, I know what that is, a sick kid, pretty sorrowful." Devers' own crops once fell victim of hail, his animals were stuck by blackleg, his wife died and his son was claimed by pellagra. Devers' identification with Sam, rather than provoking compassion, encourages him to establish a social bulwark against prospective competition. After denying Sam the milk he needs, Devers

declares: “But I told you before, it’s wrong for a man to get too big for his britches. Whenya got no money ya work for them what’s got it, that there’s the rule. Why don’t ya go back to Ruston, get your six bits a day, some milk for your child, maybe some doctorin’ even?” This distorted outlook is merely a scapegoat for his avaricious externalisation of unwanted intrusions on his space. Although Devers himself once undertook such a feat, he wishes to prevent others beyond his enclosure from establishing social hegemony through the rural landscape. What Sam sees as “some old-fashioned idea I had about neighbourliness,” Devers disparages as “always comin’ around asking the neighbours for help.”

If a job without prospects is “the rule,” then Devers has also broken it, but stubbornly believes that he can implement class barriers through his steadfast refusal to grant assistance to others, and through his illegitimate domination of the space of others within the broader capitalist society. Devers’ personal interpretation of the American social ladder is based not on the value which people like Ruston place on experience, but on the price that Devers himself arbitrarily places on success within each phase of sharecropping in light of his own personal woes and distorted perception of spatial mobility. As in the case of Sam’s property, the deep staging of Devers’ property creates an image of open space-time. Crucially however, it interacts with both on-screen and off-screen elements: the trees, juxtaposed with the open space of Sam’s farm, draw our attention to what they conceal and suggest that Devers’ opposition to change is futile.

Deleuze’s categorisation of the primary crystalline states (c.f. section 1.3.3) provides a useful means of integrating temporality, specifically the

differing implications of Renoir's "élan vers l'avenir," as it features within our view of each farm's portion of the socialised American landscape. Although the shots of Sam's land are evocative of the cracked crystal, in which a genuinely new future can be implemented beyond predetermining elements, the framing of Devers' land recalls the decidedly isolated *haute bourgeoisie* of *La Règle du jeu*, whose enclosure at la Colinière evokes the fourth crystalline state, namely the crystal in dissolution.[61] Like Visconti's characters who, in Deleuze's analysis, render defenceless against the external histories impinging on their worlds, and are deprived of any *point de fuite*,[62] Devers has blinded himself to the socio-economic implications of new spatialising forces beyond his ranch. Although he is now wealthy and successful, he also appears to lack the initiative to purchase new plots. Devers mentions that he had intended to buy Sam's plot but that it was too expensive. No price is mentioned and it is quite possible that Devers was simply unwilling to invest any sum. The decline of Devers' world is further suggested by his battered family unit, which parallels the corporeal decay featuring in Visconti's works: unlike the stabilising family unit that contributes to Tucker's determination, Devers is deprived of his wife and son, and fate has spared only Devers' daughter Becky, and nephew Finlay. The absence of any large plot of fertile land under Devers himself, along with the shards of his fragmentary family unit implies that both Devers' place in the capitalist market and the legacy of his farm remain open to change. It is worth comparing what occurs here with Pierre and Claudie since, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, both *Le Bled* and *The*

[61] See especially section 1.3.3 of this thesis.
[62] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 124-26.

Southerner are portraits of spatial politics: As in *Le Bled*, the likely future of Devers' farm is not envisioned in the positive terms allotted by Renoir's "ouverture d'avenir," as conceptualised by Deleuze. Decidedly blind to the production of new agrarian powers in adjacent fields, his physical enclosure only underscores his receding power.

"A Sphere of Flows":[63] the Country and the City

Corresponding with the narrative's broader emphasis on the socialisation of the landscape, Renoir's mise-en-scène and script directly address the circulation of capital between the countryside and urban space. The film refers to two examples of urban space, only one of which is directly conveyed through visual images. First of all, there is the city, home of the infamous factory where Sam's cousin works. References are frequently made to the city but the city space itself is never seen. Although Sam denounces the city factories as a place of work, his friend, Tim, remarks at the end of the film that rural and urban space simultaneously operate as producer and consumer within a symbiotic capitalist relationship: "Your plough, she sure didn't grow on no tree. And your gun that you feed your bunch with in the winter, you didn't plant no seeds to get that. […] Believe me friend, it takes all kind to make up this whole world." Secondly, there is the town which Sam and Nona visit when their son falls sick. The presence of Harmie's general store and the doctor's surgery mark it as a harbour of

[63] Massey, *For Space*, 99.

resources. The importance of the surgery within the context of Sam's social mobility cannot be overestimated: without the doctor's advice, Jot's death would be far more likely, even inevitable – both Devers' son and many of Sam's grandmother's siblings were claimed by the ailment in the past – and could rupture the nuclear family unit, leading to the personal, professional and social disruption embodied by Devers. Thus, Leo Braudy's assertion that "nothing good can come from the town"[64] represented in *The Southerner*, is inappropriately drastic. Clearly, the representations of urban space within the narrative do not merely operate through the reductive Manichaean rural/urban contrasts detected by O'Shaughnessy,[65] but through their respective places in the larger American society: without the town, Sam cannot escape into what Massey calls "the constantly-being-produced new geometries of power" within "the shifting geographies of power relations,"[66] and we cannot fully appreciate the social catalyst represented by Sam's work in his fields.

It is worth noting that the relationship between the country and the city, and the import of their mutual implication towards open space-time both become more accessible upon repeated viewings of *The Southerner*: just as Pierre and Claudie's unchanging, fundamentally avaricious personalities inform our subsequent viewings of the Algerian landscape in *Le Bled*, the progressive emphasis on the vast social tissue that inextricably connects the rural and urban landscape in the latter part of the film enriches our experience of Renoir's deeply-composed landscapes upon subsequent

[64] Leo Braudy, *Jean Renoir, The World of His Films* (London: Robson, 1977), 140.
[65] O'Shaughnessy, *Jean Renoir,* 170.
[66] Massey, *For Space*, 85.

viewings of the film, and it may be difficult to fully appreciate Renoir's framing of the spatial and temporal resonance of Sam's interaction with the landscape upon our initial viewing. Armand-Jean Cauliez tellingly maintains that "on ne peut pas, à proprement parler, faire allusion à la profondeur de champ" in *The Southerner.*[67] Building on this, Cauliez remarks that certain scenes "*contraignent* des éléments plus ou moins épars à se rassembler dans un montage à la fois ramassé et harmonieux."[68] Cauliez's reaction is understandable, for many of the deceptively simple connections enacted by deep space may be neglected by the spectator unless he/she contextualises Renoir's ideologically structured deep spaces "en fonction d'une dimension d'avenir" (c.f. Deleuze). By integrating temporality into our analysis of space, it becomes clear, here, more than ever, that the camera serves as an "enabling device" (c.f. Harper and Rayner), entrenching ownership of the natural landscape within society's various interconnections, contingencies, power-relations, and the resulting *points de fuite*, one of which may allow Sam to actualise his American dream.

[67] Armand-Jean Cauliez, *Jean Renoir* (Paris: Éditions Universitaires, 1962), 118: "we cannot, in the true sense of the term, refer to *profondeur de champ*."
[68] Cauliez, *Jean Renoir*, 118: "*constrain* more or less scattered elements into a montage which is at once concise and harmonious." Italics are Cauliez's own.

3.4 *The River* (1951)

Eliding Colonised Civilisation and its Discontents

The River is at once like and unlike both *Le Bled* and *The Southerner*. Like both films, *The River* foregrounds the characters' interaction with the natural landscape. Like *Le Bled*, the film portrays social relations within a colonial setting, in this case Calcutta in British India. However, whereas the "élan vers l'avenir" (c.f. Deleuze) in each of the previous films analysed within this chapter is articulated through responses to the contemporary social, political, and economic circumstances in which they were produced, *The River* relegates spatial politics in favour of portraying space itself as a realm of recollection, in which spatial mobility signifies the very act of recollecting. *The River* focuses primarily on the young Harriet's life on the banks of the Ganges river with her parents, brother and five sisters. Over the course of the film, she falls in love with Captain John, a wounded war veteran who has come to visit his cousin, Mr. John. Captain John is also pursued by Mr. John's Eurasian daughter, Melanie, and by Valerie, the daughter of the owner of the local jute-factory managed by Harriet's father. A dismayed Harriet unsuccessfully attempts suicide after Valerie's conquest of Captain John, and the accidental death of Harriet's younger brother. By the end of the film, Captain John has left and the three girls – Harriet, Melanie, and Valerie – witness the arrival of Harriet's newborn sister to the world.

Although Renoir maintained the essential plot of Rumer Godden's

source novella, he decided to introduce the character of the mature Harriet, witnessed only through voiceover as she invokes the memories viewed by the spectator onscreen. It is perhaps because of this relegation of political concerns in favour of examining recollections and the very act of recollection – a central preoccupation of both Bergson and Deleuze's writing – that *The River* should happen to be the only one of the three films explored by this chapter to appear in Deleuze's discussion. Interestingly, unlike the portrayal of *l'Algérie française* in *Le Bled*, *The River* does not frame colonialism as a provisional regime subject to revision. Nor is the British family, on whom *The River* centres, put on trial. Furthermore, although the exploitation of the landscape's resources is central to the family's current status (as in *Le Bled* and *The Southerner*), the continuity of the jute-factory is ensured by the tranquility of the elements and the benevolence of the gods. The mature Harriet recollects that the river of the title fuelled the jute mill managed by her father: "Its waters came from the eternal snows of the Himalayas. […] It flowed slowly between banks of mud and white sand, rice fields and jute fields. The jute grew in flat marshes, nourished by monsoon floods. Country boats of all shapes and sizes brought the jute to the factories. Some of them came [...] through the winding arteries of the Delta."

Harriet later surmises that "jute was the reason we lived in India" and that "our whole life depended on it," but recounts no traumatic disturbance to "the never-ending procession of men carrying [jute] piled on their heads" in the film's prologue or during Captain John's guided visit. In fact, the long shot that captures the lines of workers carrying jute in the

midground and background of the subsequent documentary-like shots of the workers implies a rigorously striated space within which a new future is neither desirable nor envisaged. Rather than provide a metaphor for the dislocation of the colonisers (as in *Le Bled*), the landscape provides a site of collaboration for the British colonising forces who sell processed jute as string, and the colonised Indian bodies, who receive sea-shells in exchange for raw jute.

The spatio-temporal continuity of colonial power is particularly striking since the Partition of the British Indian Empire had already been ratified four years prior to the release of the film. In fact, this depiction of British colonialism is far from the reality encountered by Renoir and his crew during production: Renoir's regular set-designer Eugène Lourié wrote that in India, "the sky was red from flaming Muslim houses."[69] Even Renoir himself, who marvelled that India was "still living in an aristocratic style which has about completely disappeared in our mechanized civilization," likened modern Calcutta to "the Bronx of India," with its "ugly factory chimneys reminiscent of Liverpool or Pittsburgh."[70] Understandably, Renoir was criticised by critics upon the film's release for its failure to interrogate British colonialism,[71] prompting Bazin to write an impassioned defence of Renoir's unapologetic emphasis on the virtues of British colonialism and the film's complete elision of the bloodbath of religious strife that followed the Partition: "Lui reprocher de n'avoir point profité de cette fugace histoire d'amour pour nous décrire la misère de l'Inde ou faire le procès du

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[69] Eugène Lourié, *My Work in Films* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 162.
[70] Jean Renoir. Letter from Renoir to Mr Schlamm dated 14 April 1949. Correspondence Files: Box 9, Folder 7. *Jean Renoir Papers, 1915-1927*.
[71] Durgnat, Jean Renoir, 283-4.

colonialisme, c'est lui reprocher de n'avoir pas traité un tout autre sujet."[72] Unlike either of the previous films, the potential for the creation of a new future does not lie in change related to social class or demand an understanding of the socio-economic framework within which the colonial landscape is imbricated. Rather, Renoir's framing of open space-time "en fonction d'une dimension d'avenir" can only be understood if, building on Massey's assertion that "memories […] are also spatial,"[73] we consider the central importance of the act of recollection to the precise design of Renoir's mise-en-scène, and the possibility for the emergence of "juxtapositions yet to flower into interaction" within the mature protagonist's psyche.

From Indian Landscape to Harriet's Dreamscape: Staging Memory in Depth

It is probably by virtue of these defining aspects of *The River* that Deleuze approaches the film so appreciatively. Given the centrality of Deleuze to any study of the relationship between film and memory, and the importance of *The River* to this chapter, it is important to assess Deleuze's examination of the film, which features in *Cinéma 2*. As in the case of Deleuze's other textual observations, he offers a tantalising albeit sorely underdeveloped suggestion regarding the creation of a new future: Deleuze writes that Harriet and her siblings, "abrités dans une sorte de cristal ou de kiosque

[72] Bazin, *Jean Renoir*, 107: "To reproach him for not having benefited from this fleeting story of love to describe the misery of India, or put colonialism on trial, is to reproach him for not having written an entirely different story."
[73] Massey, *For Space*, 129.

hindou essaient des rôles, dont certains tournent au tragique, dont meurt tragiquement le petit frère."[74] Deleuze does recognise the centrality of Harriet's personal story to the narrative of *The River* and later mentions that Harriet "sera sauvé parce qu'elle saura renoncer au rôle de son premier amour,"[75] thus outgrowing the "dead role" embodied by her childhood state. However, Deleuze's analysis is hampered by three faults, of which the first two are endemic to Deleuze's general approach to Renoir's mise-en-scène of temporality. First of all, he effortlessly likens the children's home to a theatre of roles without examining how the screen holds these childhood roles in tension with the potential creation of a genuinely new future. Secondly, Deleuze includes Renoir's film within his discussion of Renoir's distinctive *images-temps* without examining precisely how the formal properties Renoir's mise-en-scène articulates the potential creation of a genuinely new future within the narrative. Thirdly, Deleuze is evidently so intent on emphasising the *ouverture d'avenir* as it features in Renoir's work that he fails to address the centrality of memory to the narrative, even failing to distinguish between the young and the mature Harriet and to examine the relationship of the *images-souvenir* with the co-existing present-day vantage point from which the older Harriet's commentary issues. Although it is already abundantly clear that Deleuze's conception of the cracked crystal is reductive, Deleuze's negligence in the case of *The River* is particularly surprising since Deleuze himself appropriates three central Bergsonian models pertaining to memory and becoming over the course of his analysis

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[74] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 115: "sheltered in a sort of crystal or Hindu kiosque, try roles out, some of which take a tragic turn, as a result of which the little brother dies tragically."
[75] Ibid., 117 "will be saved because she will be able to renounce the role offered by her first love "

of the *image-temps*, and their influence is prevalent in Deleuze's discussion of the flashback structures employed by Marcel Carné (*Le Jour se Lève*, 1939) and Joseph L. Mankiewicz (*All About Eve*, 1950).[76]

Whereas Godden's novel features occasional instances of free indirect speech articulating the young Harriet's fleeting thoughts, and is largely recounted by an omniscient narrator,[77] the film alters the narrative's discursive position by elevating the newly-conceived mature Harriet to the narrator of the entire story. The decision to provide the mature Harriet's voiceover was made relatively late in the production and did not feature in the first script, provisionally entitled "Eastward in Eden." However, Renoir wrote during cutting that he had repeatedly envisaged a commentary which would be justified by the fact that Harriet is a writer.[78] This decision coincided with a broader stylistic shift in the projet's mise-en-scène. Prior to filming, Renoir declared that "the style of *The River* is going to be as close to reality as possible. We want to avoid as much as we can the building of phony sets."[79] Following his collaboration with Godden, however, Renoir's stylistic approach changed radically: "This script […] is now a kind of poetic drama, very far away from the film adaptation of the novel we were considering in the beginning."[80] The accompanying commentary transforms

[76] See Deleuze, *L' image-temps*, 67-75 and 92.
[77] For example, when Harriet is told to wear shoes outside: Oh, well!' she said, and sighed again and her mind went off on a rapid Harriet canter of its own, too rapid for stops. Will-I-get-hookworm-you-get-all-kinds-of-worms-in-India-and-diseases-too-there-is-a-leper-in-the-bazaar-no-nose-and-his-fingers-dropping-off-him-if-I-had-no-fingers-I-couldn't-learn-music-could-I-no-March-of-the-Men-of-Harlech. She looked at her own fingers […]": Godden, *op. cit.,* 3.
[78] Letter from Renoir to Claude Renoir Jr dated 22 September 1950. Correspondence Files: Box 10, Folder 13. *Jean Renoir Papers, 1915-1927*.
[79] Document entitled "Jean Renoir' in Renoir's handwriting. Written December 1948. Correspondence Files: Box 9, Folder 3. *Jean Renoir Papers, 1915-1927*.
[80] Letter from Renoir to Kenneth McEldowney dated 1 August 1949. Correspondence Files:

Renoir's conception of the film into a retrospective visualisation of life in India in which time, space, and change are articulated entirely through Harriet's subjective dreamscape.

Following his discussion of the dilated actual-virtual circuits made manifest in flashbacks, Deleuze elaborates on the relationship between memory and crystalline images in his discussion of the works of Max Ophüls, specifically *Lola Montès* (1955). Deleuze suggests that bifurcation invoked by flashback structures can enter into dialectic with the crystalline structure so that "le dédoublement du temps, qui fait passer tout les présents et les fait tendre vers le cirque comme vers leur avenir, mais aussi qui conserve tous les passés."[81] Deleuze's argument is extremely insightful within the context of the "perfect crystal" represented by Ophüls' work, but where Renoir's crystal is concerned, how can *profondeur de champ* articulate the "ouverture d'avenir" within the memories of both the younger Harriet and the world of the older Harriet? Interestingly, Deleuze elsewhere examines Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (1941) with a view to demonstrating that the function of *profondeur de champ* is "[d']explorer chaque fois une région du passé, un continuum."[82] Drawing on Bergson, Deleuze asserts that *profondeur de champ* creates "un certain type d'image-temps direct, qu'on peut définir par la mémoire, les régions virtuelles de passé […]. Ce serait moins une fonction de réalité qu'une fonction de mémoration, de

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Box 9, Folder 11. *Jean Renoir Papers, 1915-1927*. For an in-depth discussion of the technical issues encountered by Renoir's crew in India, see Alexander Sesonske, "The River Runs, The Round World Spins," *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 3.2 (2005): 105-131.

[81] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 112: "the dividing in two of time, which makes all the presents pass and makes them tend towards the circus as if towards their future, but also preserves all the pasts."

[82] Ibid., 140: "to explore an entire region of the past, a continuum, every time."

temporalisation: non pas exactement un souvenir, mais « une invitation à se souvenir ».”[83]

Deleuze insightfully proposes that *profondeur de champ* presents the past either by portraying an effort to evoke memories in the actual present or by revealing “[des] nappes de passé”[84] constituting virtual memory: through shadows, ceilings and oblique lines that join one plane to another, Welles' deep focus forms regions of the past which, although defined by “les aspects ou éléments *optiques* empruntés aux différents plans en interaction,”[85] are irreducible to the dimensions of space, creating “un ensemble de liaisons non-localisables, toujours d'un plan à un autre, qui constitue la région de passé ou le continuum de durée.”[86] In fact, Deleuze reductively remarks that “la plupart des fois où la profondeur trouve une pleine nécessité, c'est en rapport avec la mémoire.”[87]

However, such a perspective on Welles' deep compositions seems irreconcilable with the *élan vers l'avenir* articulated by Renoior's staging of multiple events in depth. Both the contradictions between Deleuze's analyses of Renoir and Welles' respective uses of *profondeur de champ* and the possibility of a resolution between these needlessly opposed stances are rendered more flagrant by Deleuze's assertion that the only pre-cursors to Welles' particular appropriation of *profondeur de champ* were Erich von Stroheim's work (particularly *Greed* [1923]) and Renoir's *La Règle du jeu*,

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[83] Ibid., 143: a certain type of image-temps that can be defined by memory, virtual regions of the past […] a function of remembering, of temporalisation: not exactly a recollection but ‘an invitation to recollect.’”
[84] Ibid., 129: “sheets of the past.”
[85] Ibid., 142: “optical aspects or elements borrowed from interacting planes.”
[86] Ibid: “a set of non-localisable connections, always from one plane to another.”
[87] Ibid: “most of the occasions where *profondeur de champ* is entirely necessary are in connection with memory.”

and by Deleuze's decision to put Renoir and Welles on equal footing for pioneering a kind of *profondeur de champ* that rendered the cinema "plus exigeante, plus contraignante, en quelque sorte *théorématique*."[88] Rather than excluding space from our analysis of the temporal implications of *profondeur de champ* in *The River*, it is essential that we consider the inextricable relationship between space and time to Renoir's mise-en-scène of Harriet's recollected India. In particular, it is essential that viewers address the potential of flashbacks to act as a *mise-en-abîme* of memory or, more specifically, *une profondeur de champ mémoriale,* in which the spatiality of memory (as recognised by Massey) is addressed "en fonction d'une dimension d'avenir" (c.f. Deleuze).

"*Dans une mémoire-Être, dans une mémoire-monde*":[89] *Image-souvenir* as *Élan vers l'Avenir*

Three key points must be noted before conducting an analysis of key moments from the narrative of *The River*. First of all, contrary to Deleuze's examination of *The River*, the younger Harriet does not merely renounce her infatuation with Captain John. Her "changing of roles" is dictated by Captain John's own embrace with the older Valerie. Secondly, remarking that the mise-en-scène of the film provides a "double perspective"[90] on the

[88] Ibid: "more demanding, more constraining, in some sense *theorematic*." Italics are Deleuze's own.
[89] "In a Memory-being, in a Memory-world"
[90] Prakash Younger, "*The River*: Beneath the Surface with André Bazin," in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, ed. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau (West Sussex: Wiley-

events recounted by Harriet in which she herself is imbricated, Prakash Younger surmises that "the style of the film constantly makes us aware of the subjectivity of the older Harriet's 'objective' perspective and, conversely, also hidden within her 'objectified' younger self."[91] Thirdly (and building on Younger's observation), the juncture established between the past (the younger Harriet and the Indian landscape which are visible on-screen) and the ongoing present (established aurally through the mature Harriet's commentary) challenges us to examine the very role of the flashback structure in the film for the mature Harriet. The particular challenge posed by *The River* is to determine how the image of the past conveys the "ouverture d'avenir" (either in the form of a *point de fuite* or a *ligne de fuite*) in both the Harriet's memories and in the ongoing present moment experienced by the mature Harriet. As such, the two central aspects that demand analysis are *profondeur de champ* and the voiceover provided by the older Harriet.

The rupture between the younger Harriet and Captain John occurs late in the narrative following a discussion between Captain John and Melanie at the latter's home which is separated from Harriet's home by a wall. An outdoor shot taken grants us a view of Melanie exiting the house, Harriet perched behind a tree located in front of the house, and Valerie hiding behind the wall. Both Harriet and Valerie are carrying flowers for Captain John following his personally humiliating fall and pursue the captain as he searches for Melanie, progressively disappearing within the obscure darkness that lies beyond the lush green trees dominating the

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Blackwell, 2013), 172.

[91] Younger, "*The River,*" 172.

background, whilst the mature Harriet verbally recollects that "I was caught in an unexpected intrigue, but my adolescent pride would not let me turn back."

Fig. 10

In this shot (fig. 10), *profondeur de champ* enters into dialectic with the mature Harriet's voiceover to represent "les nappes virtuelles du passé qu'on explore pour y retrouver le souvenir cherché."[92] Yet simultaneously, in accordance with the role Deleuze associates with Renoir's use of *profondeur de champ*, change in Harriet's world is about to be instigated through the literal departure of the girls in this deeply-staged shot and in the subsequent shot of the girls as they proceed, surrounded by trees "au fond, en profondeur, par le troisième côté ou la troisième dimension, par la fêlure:"[93] the younger Harriet's progressive distanciation from the the presence of the wall surrounding her home in foreground (the same vantage

[92] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 144: "the virtual sheets of the past that we explore to find the sought-after memory."
[93] Ibid., 113: "in the background, in depth, through the third dimension, through the crack."

point from which the children view Melanie arriving home from school early in the film) reminds us that the mature Harriet's act of recollecting is invoking the relegation of her own state of childhood. The adult Harriet hints at the crucial juncture that this precise moment represents as she remarks that "suddenly we were running away from childhood, rushing toward love." Somewhat gravely, she proceeds to state that "the enchantment began and ended in the grove." Upon this final line, Valerie too disappears into the trees in the background. The subsequent shot of Harriet and Valerie, still running towards the background amidst the trees, challenges us to think further about how the "ouverture d'avenir" that Deleuze associates with the cracked crystal enters into dialectic with "la coexistence de toutes les nappes de passé,"[94] itself specifically linked by Deleuze with the deep focus cinematography of *Citizen Kane*, and the extent to which an escape literally effected through the background implies the possibility for change in both the past (the story recounted) and present (the adult Harriet who narrates the story). The organic emergence of the commentary relates the characters' spatio-temporal trajectories to Deleuze's Bergsonian assertion that "la mémoire n'est pas en nous, c'est nous qui nous mouvons dans une mémoire-Être, dans une mémoire-monde."[95] Younger notes that this shot is both objective in its wide scope and subjective in its inclusion of the younger Harriet.[96] The extended take of the girls' disappearance through the background reflects Harriet's introspective act of digging further into the recesses of her memory.

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[94] Ibid., 130-1: "the coexistence of every sheet of the past."
[95] Ibid., 129-30: "memory is not within us, it is us who move in a memory-Being, in a memory-world."
[96] Younger, "*The River*," 172

As Harriet thus reminds herself of the pivotal role this moment played in her life and that of the other girls, the mature Harriet is forced to confront herself with exactly how the event affected and continues to affect her. In the shots that follow, Harriet and Melanie look on, both morally depleted after Valerie and Captain John's embrace. Harriet's voice in the following lines suddenly sounds wounded: "The kiss on her lips, terrifying and fascinating, burned into my heart and hurt. It was my first kiss, but received by another." The audible grief in Harriet's tone indicates the mutually affective link between each version of herself which is absent from conventional voiceovers. Mary Anne Doane distinguishes between voice-off and the interior monologue. The former "*belongs* to a character who is confined to a space of the diegesis, if not the visible space of the screen."[97] In the latter, although voice and body are represented simultaneously, "the voice, far from being an extension of that body, manifests its inner lining."[98] Interestingly, although the older Harriet "displays 'the inner life' of the character,"[99] the younger Harriet manifestly embodies a composite of both the young girl of presents long since past and of the mature Harriet's subjective recollections in a manner absent from Doane's definition of the interior monologue. The image of the young Harriet becomes the embodiment of what Deleuze terms "le point d'indiscernabilité"[100] within the crystal of time, in which the actual and virtual, as present and past, become unassignable. Even when the mature Harriet's voice speaks, the

[97] Mary Ann Doane, "The Voice in the Cinema: The Articulation of Body and Space," in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford UP, 2009), 324.
[98] Doane, "The Voice in the Cinema," 324.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 109-110: "the point of indiscernibility."

actualised memories are no less limpid, for the virtual and actual images continually "mirror" one another. Therefore, the commentary is not merely a question of the older Harriet's voice signifying "the privileged mark of interiority, turning the body 'inside out.'"[101] Like Lola Montès, she is mentally implicated in her younger self's spatio-temporal trajectory.

Deleuze himself remarks on a category of the *hors-champ* (or "out-of-field") "[qui] renvoie […] au Tout qui s'exprime dans les ensembles, au changement qui s'exprime dans le movement, à la durée qui s'exprime dans l'espace, au concept vivant qui s'exprime dans l'image, à l'esprit qui s'exprime dans la matière."[102] This invisible field can be evoked "en actes de parole très spéciaux, réflexifs et non plus interactifs (voix qui évoque, qui commente, qui sait, douée d'une toute-puissance ou d'une forte puissance sur la suite des images)."[103] Because this category extends to the mature Harriet's voice, it is only by listening closely to her commentary that the spectator can understand how the recollected event challenges the mature Harriet to break with childhood in the present day. In light of the cathartic effect of the mature Harriet's recollections portrayed by the narrative, this sequence demonstrates that each of Deleuze's temporally-defined views of *profondeur de champ* – as *image-souvenir* and *élan vers l'avenir* – may be subsumed within the visual and aural aspects of Renoir's mise-en-scène.

Apart from challenging the spectator to apprehend the dual

[101] Doane, "The Voice in the Cinema," 324.
[102] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 306: "[which] is connected to the Whole that is expressed in sets, to the change that is expressed in movement, to the duration that is expressed in space, to the living concept that is expressed in the image, to the spirit that is expressed in matter."
[103] Ibid: "through very particular speech acts, which are reflexive and no longer interactive (the voice that evokes, comments, and knows, endowed with an omnipotence or a strong power over the sequence of images)."

temporalities operating within *The River*, this sequence also evokes the question of the function of Harriet's deliberate reollection, and how it corresponds with the future that she desires: whereas the younger Harriet is initially unwilling to cast her love for Captain John aside, the mature Harriet has deliberately meditated on this distressing moment and, in doing so, has liberated herself of the stultifying influence of the past. Defining the flashback as "a privileged moment in unfolding that juxtaposes different moments of temporal reference,"[104] Maureen Turim notes that "[s]ome flashbacks directly involve a quest for the answer to an enigma posed in the beginning of a narrative through a return to the past."[105] Whilst Harriet's visualised recollections in *The River* adhere to Turim's examination of the relationship between the past and present, and the subjectivisation of history through the act of recollecting, the film defies these preconceptions by refraining from offering an enigma to be restored. Of more importance is Turim's remark that "the past is an object of desire, due to its personal, intense, and even liberating attitudes."[106] The impact of oscillation between various emotions on the ongoing present is itself a crucial role of the mature Harriet's extended recollection. Deleuze writes that the act of thinking, by drawing on the past "tel qu'il se condense au dedans, dans le rapport avec soi,"[107] invokes a dialectic between the present and our accumulated past that is potentially conducive to evolution: "Penser le passé contre le présent, résister au présent, non pas pour un retour, mais « en faveur, je l'espère,

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[104] Maureen Turim, *Flashbacks in Film: Memory & History* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 1.
[105] Ibid., 11.
[106] Ibid., 12.
[107] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*. (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2004), 127: "as it is condensed in the inside, in relation to oneself."

d'un temps à venir » (Nietzsche), c'est-à-dire en rendant le passé actif et présent au dehors, pour qu'arrive enfin quelque chose de nouveau, pour que penser, toujours, arrive à la pensée."[108]

It is only when the mature Harriet reflects on the moment in the grove that her goal in recollecting becomes clear. The mature Harriet's reflection on her younger self's pursuit of Captain John brings her through the sheets of the past, producing new thoughts that liberate the mature Harriet from the stultifying effects of the past. Her younger self, now re-interpreted, has become what Deleuze calls a *rôle mort* (or a "dead role").[109] Through the voiceover, a juncture is wraught between the ongoing present and the present that has long past. For the mature Harriet, repetition results in difference.

"*The river runs, the round world spins*": Escaping the Crystal *au Fil de l'Eau*

One final aspect of Deleuze's interpretation of *The River* must be interrogated and located within the context of open space-time. As noted in the introduction, the only space that Deleuze distinguishes from the theatrical roles that proliferate throughout Renoir's work, is the river. Discussing the guarantee that "quelque chose se forme à l'intérieur du

[108] Ibid: "[One can] think the past against the present and resist the latter, not in order to effect a return but "in favour, I hope, of a time to come" (Nietzsche), that is to say, by making the past active and present to the outside so that something new will finally emerge, so that thinking may always reach thought."
[109] C.f. Deleuze, 116.

cristal, qui réussira à sortir par la fêlure et à s'épanouir librement,"[110] Deleuze remarks:

> C'était déjà le cas de Boudu, qui retrouve le fil de l'eau en sortant du théâtre intime et renfermé du libraire où il a essayé beaucoup de rôles. Ce sera le cas d'Harriet dans le film grandiose « *Le fleuve* », où les enfants abrités dans une sorte de cristal ou de kiosque hindou essaient des rôles […] dont la jeune fille va faire son apprentissage, jusqu'à ce qu'elle y trouve la puissante volonté de vie qui se confond avec le fleuve et le rejoint au dehors.[111]

However, the disparity between Deleuze's interpretation of water and the two films already discussed in this chapter, *Le Bled* and *The Southerner*, further flag the dangers of overreading or taking Deleuze too literally and, indeed, of unjustly assigning social significance to a recurring motif in Renoir's work: in *Le Bled*, the only source of water is the desert oasis at which local camels drink and in which Manuel's car becomes trapped. In *The Southerner*, a river runs alongside Sam's land, providing sustenance through fish but, on the other hand, it harbours typhoid that renders its water undrinkable and floods Sam's land. In *The River* on the other hand, the Ganges provides an important source of inspiration for Harriet as well as a potential source of recourse when she attempts suicide. However, once again, we must be careful to also examine the role of the river for the mature Harriet and, by extension, examine its temporal implications within Renoir's

[110] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 115: "something forms within the crystal which will manage to escape through the crack and dispersing freely."

[111] Ibid., 115: "This was already the case of Boudu, who finds the water's stream [*le fil de l'eau*] by leaving the intimate and enclose theatre of the bookseller's where he has tried numerous roles. It will be the case of Harriet in the grandiose film, *The River*, where the children, sheltered in a sort of crystal or Hindu kiosk try roles […] which will provide the young girl with her learning process until she finds in it the powerful will to live which coalesces with the river and unites with it outside."

image-souvenir.

In his discussion of Boudu's escape from the stultifying influence of the Lestingois' bourgeois bookshop, Deleuze implies a rhizomatic quality of water that irresistibly transports characters towards a genuinely new future beyond predetermining elements. Rather than emphasise the qualities of water within a strictly societal perspective that informs Deleuze's interpretation of Boudu's relationship with the river, I wish to examine the river as a metaphor for rhizomatic thought. Interestingly, Deleuze and Guattari elaborate on the following verse from "Ol' Man River" to describe the rhizomatic circulation of knowledge:

> He don't plant tatos
> Don't plant cotton
> Them that plants them is soon forgotten
> But old man river he just keeps rollin [*sic*] along.[112]

Deleuze's assertion that Harriet's will to live coalesces with the river[113] threatens to mislead us from the relationship between the mature Harriet and her imagined image of the river. It is not just the young Harriet who unites with the object of her poetry in her attempted suicide, but her older self, whose narrative opens and closes with shots of the flowing Ganges.

The river itself signifies the very capacity of the mature Harriet's recollections to instigate escape from the past. Gaston Bachelard, one of Deleuze's key influences,[114] counterposes the materiality of water with

[112] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2: Mille Plateaux*, (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980), 36. English lyrics cited are Deleuze and Guattari's own.
[113] C.f. Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 115.
[114] Deleuze draws on Bachelard to emphasise that images can only be deemed virtual through their relationship with corresponding actual images and vice versa: "Ce sont des « images mutuelles », comme dit Bachelard, où s'opère un échange" / "They are 'mutual

crystals during his reflection on the material imagination of water in *L'Eau et les Rêves*: "Les « images » dont l'eau est le prétexte ou la matière n'ont pas la constance et la solidité des images fournies par la terre, par les cristaux, le métaux et les gemmes."[115] Water thus operates as a transitory element. Anticipating Deleuze's favoured metaphor of the seed (albeit forty-three years before the publication of *Cinéma 2*), Bachelard elaborates on the potential of the material imagination of water to render the imagination's interpretative capacity of flows in objective reality more malleable: "L'eau gonfle les germes et fait jaillir les sources. L'eau est une matière qu'on voit partout naître et croître. La source est une naissance irrésistible, une naissance *continue*. De si grandes images marquent à jamais l'inconscient qui les aiment."[116] Because of the young Harriet's own preoccupation with the river (expressed in her poem "Big River" and through the river-bank setting of the story she recounts to Captain John and Valerie), Bachelard's later discussion of the relationship between water and death is valuable to our exploration of the role of the mature Harriet's imagined image of water to the casting aside of her "dead role."

Drawing on the image of Shakespeare's Ophelia, Bachelard writes that "l'eau emporte au loin, l'eau passe comme les jours. […] Chacun des éléments a sa propre dissolution, la terre a sa poussière, le feu a sa fumée.

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images' as Bachelard phrases it, where an exchange operates" (Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 94).

[115] Gaston Bachelard, *L'Eau et les Rêves: essai sur l'imagination de la matière* (Paris: Livre de Poche, 2011), 29: "'Images' whose basis or matter is water do not have the same durability and solidity as those produced by earth, *by crystals*, metals and precious stones." Italics in English translation are my own.

[116] Ibid., 22: "Water swells seeds up and causes springs to gush forth. Water is a kind of matter that we see springing up everywhere and increasing. The spring is an irresistible birth, a *continuous* birth. The unconscious that loves such great images is forever marked by them. The unconscious that loves such great images is indelibly marked by them."

L'eau dissout plus complètement. Elle nous aide à mourir totalement."[117] Rather than emphasise the corporeal deaths evoked by Bachelard, notably that of Ophelia herself or Goethe's figure of Faust, or even on Harriet's attempt to end her own life, I wish to realign this statement with Deleuze conceptualisation of "le jaillissement du temps comme dédoublement, comme scission,"[118] specifically the mature Harriet's mental transitions signalled by the mature Harriet's grief-stricken voice. Discussing the elemental substance of water as it features in reveries and literature, Bachelard himself argues that water invokes a process of becoming within the imagination rather than an exclusively literal death: "L'être voué à l'eau est un être en vertige. Il meurt à chaque minute, sans cesse quelque chose de sa substance s'écoule."[119]

The younger Harriet' s later attempts to drown herself is less a reaction to Captain John and Valerie' s embrace than a response to her guilt following the death of her brother, who dies of a cobra-bite whilst Harriet is pursuing the captain. As the mature Harriet visualises her immersion in the river, she recollects: "There were so many unsaid things I'd forgotten to tell Bogey and now I would never tell him." Like the water that flows towards the future in Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of the rhizome, the imagined river subsumes the past within the mature Harriet's own orientation towards the future. Harriet's guilt has evidently haunted her since the death of her brother. It is only by revisiting her infatuation with Captain John that she

[117] Ibid., 107: "water carries [things] far away, water passes like the days. […] Each of the elements has its own type of decomposition, earth into dust, fire into smoke. Water dissolves more completely. It helps us to die completely.
[118] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 109: "the gushing forth of time as doubling, as scission."
[119] Bachelard, *L'Eau et les Rêves*, 13: "A being devoted to water is a being in flux. S/he dies every minute. Something of his/her substance is constantly dissipating."

manages to understand that her childhood self does not merit reproach for its limited perspective. As Harriet watches her younger self sink beneath the water, she drowns. Within her memory visualised through the *image-souvenir*, "une seule matière a tout pris. « Tout est dissous. »"[120] The progression of the mature Harriet's imagined narrative reflects her own renewed understanding and sympathy towards her younger self's childish infatuation with Captain John. There is a humorous irony in the quick transition from Harriet's attempt at drowning to the shot of her, crouched and soaked, sitting inside the docked river-boat. Whereas Lola Montès experiences "un vertige, une oscillation,"[121] and remains within the crystal following her climactic dive, Harriet has transcended the past that she has felt compelled to recollect. Turim observes that "flashbacks in most cases terminate at precisely the point at which they must be sealed off, in which the imperatives of fixing interpretations and reaching judgements in the present must be imposed. Made aware of the past, the spectator is freed to forget it once again."[122] Compelled to revisit the past, Harriet herself is now allowed to discard the grief that it brought upon her. This renewal is at the heart of Harriet's poetic summarisation of life as she finally recalls the birth of her youngest sister. The closing shot of her mind's eye lingers on the Ganges as she evokes the image of water through her poetry once more:

> The river runs, the round world spins.
> Dawn and lamplight. Midnight. Noon.
> Sun follows day. Night stars and moon.
> The day ends. The end begins.

[120] Ibid:"[a] single matter has taken over everything. 'Everything is dissolved.'"
[121] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 113: "a dizziness, an oscillation."
[122] Turim, *Flashbacks in Film*, 12.

3.5 Conclusion: Dynamising the Landscape

Harper and Rayner rightly remark that any cinematographic landscape is the product of a "complex combination of found or chosen features – some visual, some aural, some relating to movement, some based in innate understanding."[123] Although this chapter has deliberately sought to analyse a wide range of aspects of mise-en-scène beyond *profondeur de champ* (among them off-screen space, characterisation, and interior décor), the fact remains that Renoir's use of deep space, lauded by Bazin, Deleuze, and Faulkner, is crucial to Renoir's portrayal of open space-time across all three landscapes analysed. This continuity within the implications of Renoir's mise-en-scène is particularly interesting given the range of social, political and cultural contexts underlying the production of each film: the spatio-temporal tropes visible in *Le Bled*, which was directly commissioned as a propagandist project, are visible in *The Southerner* and *The River*, neither of which was subject to the same ideological control exercised by the French (or any other) state. However, this crucial unifying aspect should not prevent us from respecting the diversity of Renoir's corpus. In each of these three films, Renoir's portrayal of the natural landscape challenges any easy attempt to derive an image of open space-time through our established methodological framework in at least one of two particular ways.

First of all, the *surcroît de théâtralité* that provides a formal and thematic keystone of Deleuze's framework and a spatio-temporal counterpoint to the urban dynamics of Renoir's Paris, is of little concern to

[123] Harper and Rayner, "Introduction," 20.

Renoir's mise-en-scène in each of these films. Rather, Renoir exclusively foregrounds the landscape in its social, physical and metaphysical aspects, and juxtaposes it with the hopes and histories embodied by individual characters. In doing so, Renoir frames the natural landscape as "a precondition for the temporal,"[124] portraying the eruption of new *points de fuite* or *lignes de fuite*, in all three films.

The second challenge posed by the natural landscape is that it appears physically inert, and devoid of the unique architecture that catalyses characters' trajectories to portray "le jaillissement du temps comme dédoublement, comme scission."[125] Renoir's natural landscape can only be viewed as an active force if we view these rural spaces from at least one of two perspectives that each inform Renoir's mise-en-scène: on the one hand, we may view the rural as a site of what Harvey terms "actively reconstituted features,"[126] which is subject to both the elemental forces of nature and capitalist activity, and in which, as Jonathan Murdoch reminds us, "gender relations, forms of ethnic belonging, sexual identities, and so forth will […] be recast."[127] In *Le Bled* and *The Southerner*, as in the case of the films analysed in chapter two. Renoir's open space-time is not only technical but an ideological product, which emphasises the mutually affective relationship between physical and social space. In each of these films, the landscape itself becomes a *point de fuite* through its innate defiance of overcoding, and its impartiality towards hegemonic social strata existing within overarching

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[124] Massey, *For Space*, 89.
[125] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 109: "the gushing forth of time as doubling, as scission."
[126] Harvey, *The Limits to Capital*, 416.
[127] Jonathan Murdoch. "Middle-class territory? Some remarks on the use of class analysis in rural studies." In *The Rural: Critical Essays in Human Geography*, ed. Richard Munton (London: Ashgate, 2005), 373.

social structures, specifically colonialism and capitalism. The precise import of the landscape towards the production of new positions of economic power is emphasised in both films by the presence of an off-screen *ailleurs*: to Algeria's landscapes, there is France, and to the Texan fields, there is the town. In all of these areas, the characters' social standing would inevitably differ, and each narrative emphasises the socialisation of the landscape as both a factor and product of adjacent spaces: Claudie would have neither the rich inheritance granted by her uncle nor the economic return that it provides for her and for Hoffer's labourers, and the security of work and regular pay in a factory would preclude Sam Tucker's potential rise to Ruston's lofty heights. This inextricable social connection is crucial to the disintegration of what Williams, and other social theorists cited over the course of this chapter, recognise as the myth of the rural idyll.

This same structure informs *The River*, in which it is unlikely that the colonial family would live with the same privileges that they currently enjoy in India. However, although the landscape in *The River* situates the jute-mill run by Harriet's father within a global economic and geographically precise context, these specificities are subjugated to its representational value as the space of memories revisited by Harriet. This refers us back to the second core avenue of enquiry towards Renoir's mise-en-scène of open space-time outlined in the introduction to this chapter: by considering both the visual and aural aspects of *The River*, we may interpret shots of the natural landscapes as what Harper and Rayner call "conduits to

memories,"[128] even interpreting them as a tissue of memorised realms. Most interestingly, within the mature Harriet's *mémoire-monde*, the potential for exiting a *point de fuite* remains, invoking dramatic personal consequences in the ongoing present moment that provides her with a vantage point on the entire visualised narrative. As Gilberto Perez observes of *Partie de Campagne*, "rather than assigning meaning to the landscape, the fiction becomes a foray in quest of meaning."[129]

Interestingly, the relegation of an ideologically informed narrative style denoting the mature Harriet's passage through "les nappes de passé" is where Deleuze's film philosophy is most enlightening, and the relevance of both Deleuze and Massey's spatial thought tends to wane. In all three, however, the process of becoming is fundamental on a dramatic, structural, and textual level. As in the case of the urban narratives studied in chapter two, the camera only occasionally frames the confluence of heterogeneous forces that engender a *point de fuite* or *ligne de fuite*, but such shots condition the manner in which the spectator views each entire film. Because Renoir portrays the "ouverture d'avenir" in all three films regardless of their production context, geographical setting, and ideological perspective, it is unsurprising that Renoir's natural landscapes appeal to Deleuze, even if he misguidedly analogises them with theatres. Corresponding with Harper and Rayner's distinction between scenery framed by the camera from painted landscapes, the frame of all three films "allows for, or even encourages, the audience to move over, or scan, the image; and the overall effect of a film is

[128] Harper and Rayner, "Introduction," 19.
[129] Gilberto Perez, *The Material Ghost: Films and Their Medium* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 218.

to place the audience in a dynamic and extensive experience."[130]

[130] Ibid., 18.

Chapter 4 – "*Une ouverture d'avenir*" (?): Portraying the Future of the Front Populaire

"We must address a relational politics for a relational space."[1]

– Doreen Massey

"Notre grand Jean, s'il a eu le coeur à gauche,

n'avait pas la tête politique."[2]

– Roger Leenhardt

4.1 Introduction: Theory and Texts in Context

By analysing the mise-en-scène of space-time in Renoir's Front Populaire output, this chapter argues that *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (1936), *Les Bas-fonds* (1936), and *La Grande Illusion* (1937) articulate Renoir's lack of confidence in the new future envisioned by his communities. In particular, this analysis demonstrates that the subjugated social groups featuring in each of these films are helpless to comprehensively apprehend or overcome the hegemonic social structures that striate space. Asserting that Renoir is the director who came closest to understanding time "en fonction d'une

[1] Doreen Massey, *For Space*, (London: SAGE, 2005), 61.
[2] Claude Gauteur, *Renoir l'insurgé* (Paris: Les Éditeurs Français Réunis, 1980), 47: "Our great Jean, if he had a heart for the left, had no head for politics."

dimension d'avenir,"[3] Deleuze proceeds to ground this attribute in Renoir's own engagement with the Front Populaire during the 1930s: "C'est Renoir qui avait une vive conscience de l'identité de la liberté avec un avenir, une ouverture d'avenir. C'est même la conscience politique de Renoir, la manière dont il conçoit la Révolution française ou le Front Populaire."[4]

Deleuze's indirect discussion of the relationship between Renoir's ideological messages and shooting-style in his films is surprising within the context of a work that largely elides such discussions and generally depoliticises Renoir's mise-en-scène, and testifies to the undeniable impact of Renoir's *engagement politique* on his social and aesthetic development. At its peak, the Front Populaire introduced collective contracts, salary increases averaging 12 percent, a forty-hour working week and paid annual holidays. Although Deleuze's optimistic statement necessarily simplifies both Renoir's involvement with the Front Populaire and Renoir's mise-en-scène, his comments on Renoir's political affiliation remain valuable nonetheless, as they suggest a direct link between Renoir's contemporary political outlook and the range of futures available to Renoir's characters.

On the one hand, Deleuze's optimism regarding the relationship between Renoir's public commitment to the Front Populaire and the "élan vers l'avenir" articulated by Renoir's cracked crystal of time within an analysis that largely depoliticises Renoir's work is entirely understandable. First of all, a cycle of films directed by Renoir between 1936 and 1938

[3] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 117: "in terms of a dimension of the future."
[4] Ibid: "It is Renoir who had an acute awareness of the identity of liberty with a future, be it collective or individual, with an impulse towards the future, an opening of the future. It is Renoir's very political awareness, the manner in which he conceives the French Revolution or the Front Populaire."

"certifies a leftist humanism even down to our own day"[5] and complements Frontist prisms of analysis. *Toni* (1935), a film treating a group of exploited Italian immigrants based in Martigues, demonstrated a clear interest in engaging with the tribulations of the proletariat, and is "a precursor of [Renoir's] work of the Popular Front years."[6] *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, filmed with the cooperation of the anarchist-leaning *groupe octobre*, treats a group of exploited workers who consolidate a socialist cooperative following the death of their avaricious boss. The production and distribution of *Lange* (September 1935 – April 1936) coincided with the Front Populaire's campaign preparations for the May 1936 legislative elections, as Bowles remarks and, "in its time […] appeared as militant and unconcealed support for the left."[7] Renoir subsequently helped to produce the fervently propagandist *La Vie est à nous*, which he later claimed to have envisaged in response to the anti-semitism he had witnessed in Nazi Germany.[8] Produced shortly after the Radicals, Socialists and Communists had endorsed the common programme of the Front Populaire, the film "transformed Left filmmaking activity from a hope to a reality."[9] *Les Bas-fonds* (1936) once more orchestrated the fall of the oppressive capitalist structures, this time embodied by an exploitative landlord. The film was revised at the last minute under the direction of the Parti communiste français in favour of

[5] Dudley Andrew and Steven Ungar, *Popular Front Paris and the Poetics of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2005), 322.
[6] Keith Reader, "*Toni*: A Regional Melodrama of Failed Masculinity," in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, ed. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 452.
[7] Brett Bowles, "Renoir under the Popular Front: Aesthetics, Politics and the Paradoxes of Engagement," in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, eds. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013: 406.
[8] Gauteur, *Renoir*, 62.
[9] Jonathan Buchsbaum, *Cinéma Engagé: Film in the Popular Front* (Urbana: Illinois UP, 1988), 185.

greater fidelity to Maxim Gorki's source text.[10] After *La Grande Illusion* (1937), a worldwide critical and financial success which viewed the First World War as a revolution rather than a massacre, Renoir made *La Marseillaise* (1938), which recounted the early events of the French revolution through the eyes of the French aristocracy and the popular classes. Originally funded through a popular subscription system, the film was regarded from its inception as "*le* film du Front Populaire,"[11] and was launched by Renoir as "a film by the people and for the people."[12] However, this programme was ultimately aborted when funding fell short and the film ultimately became, in Renoir's words, "an absolutely normal enterprise," thus ending his public association with the Front Populaire.[13]

Secondly, of all the directors associated with French popular cinema of this period, Renoir was the Left's closest public collaborator. Although not an official member of any political party, Renoir publicly supported Secretary General Maurice Thorez on the platform of the Eighth Congress of the Parti communiste français in 1936.[14] He also served on the administrative council of Ciné-liberté, a CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail), which produced a number of films by workers' syndicates including Renoir's own *La Marseillaise* and on the editorial board of its

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[10] Colin Crisp. *The Classic French Cinema, 1930-1960* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993), 183.
[11] Pascal Ory. "De 'Ciné-Liberté' à *La Marseillaise*: espoirs et limites d'un cinéma libéré (1936-1938)," *Le Mouvement social* 91 (1975): 163 ("*the* film of the Front Populaire").
[12] Andrew and Ungar, *Popular Front Paris*, 154.
[13] Alexander Sesonske, *Jean Renoir, the French Films, 1924-1939* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1980), 323-25.
[14] Laurent Marie, "Renoir and the French Communist Party: The Grand Disillusion," in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, eds. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 328.

journal, *Ciné-Liberté*.[15] When *Commune*, the journal of the Association des Écrivains et Artistes Révolutionnaires (AEAR), published a letter of support to the Soviet Union in November 1936, Renoir was the only filmmaker among the signatories who included André Gide, Le Corbusier and Picasso.[16] Renoir was later offered *carte blanche* by Louis Aragon to write for the Communist newspaper *Ce Soir*,[17] to which he contributed articles from 4 March 1937 to 7 October 1938. Renoir's promotion of Russian culture further endeared him to the French Left: during February-March 1935, Renoir visited Moscow to present *Toni* with Marguerite Houllé, Claude Renoir and Georges d'Arnoux[18] before commencing pre-production of *Lange*. As late as July 1938, Renoir was giving speeches on Soviet cinema, including discussions on the image of Lenin in Soviet film.[19] It is no surprise that by February 1937, Roger Leenhardt had baptised Renoir "the genius director of the Left [*les gauches*]."[20] A chapter entitled "Le Front Populaire" in Renoir's autobiography depicts a nation enlightened by a blissful glimmer of hope: "Il fut un moment où les Français crurent vraiment qu'ils allaient s'aimer les uns les autres. On se sentait porté par une vague de générosité."[21] Indeed, Renoir's apparent commitment even seems to have outlasted the Front itself: the agenda of *La Marseillaise* already bore a posthumous quality by the time of its release in February

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[15] Dudley Andrew. *Mists of Regret: Culture and Sensibility in Classic French Film.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1995), 217.
[16] Buchsbaum, *Cinéma Engagé*, 161.
[17] Marie, "Renoir and the French Communist Party," 331.
[18] Pascal Mérigeau, *Jean Renoir* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012), 238-9.
[19] Gauteur, *La double méprise*, 35.
[20] Ibid., 60.
[21] Jean Renoir, *Ma vie et mes films* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005), 114: "It was a moment when the French truly believed that they were going to love one another. We felt ourselves being carried along by a wave of generosity."

1938, at which time Renoir was still contributing articles to *Ce Soir*.[22]

On the other hand, whilst it is important to retain Deleuze's remarks as a valuable avenue of enquiry towards our examination of Renoir's Front Populaire output, it would be misguided to interpret these films as though Renoir believed in what Keith Reader calls "the imaginary resolution of political contradictions."[23] Rather, it is worth reminding ourselves that the Front Populaire was weakened from the outset by national political and economic instability. In the wake of Léon Blum's notorious refusal to intervene on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War, the Front Populaire collapsed, having held power for only 380 days. A second government, established under Blum in March 1938, lasted barely a month. Furthermore, scholars have established that Renoir's commitment from 1936 to 1938 was neither absolute nor unconditional. The very fact that Renoir did not obtain membership of any political party during this period hints at Renoir's own reservations regarding the true (un)feasibility of Blum's agenda. Elizabeth Grottle Strebel labels Renoir "a humanist socialist,"[24] and Claude Gauteur criticises those who doubt the sincerity of Renoir's brief commitment, somewhat helplessly arguing that Renoir "Saint Renoir n'existe pas, ni n'a jamais existé. […] Jean Renoir fut un homme,

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[22] *La Marseillaise* is viewed as a belated contribution to Frontist filmmaking by the following: Jean-Pierre Jeancolas, *Le Cinéma des Français: 15 ans d'années trente (1929-1944)* (Paris: Nouveau Monde Éditions, 2005), 196; Edward Ousselin, "Film and the Popular Front: *La Belle Équipe* and *Le Crime de M. Lange*," *The French Review* 79 (2006), 956.
[23] Keith Reader, "Renoir's Popular Front Films in Context," in *La Vie est à nous!: French Cinema of the Popular Front 1935-1938*, eds. Ginette Vincendeau and Keith Reader (London: BFI, 1986): 40.
[24] Elizabeth Grottle Strebel, "Jean Renoir and the Popular Front," in *Feature Films as History*, ed. K.R.M. Short (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee, 1981), 76.

avec toute la force et les faiblesses qu'implique l'humaine condition."[25] François Poulle is less forgiving, and although he understands that "il y avait plusieurs couleurs politiques chez Renoir," [26] criticises Renoir for not declaring his true sympathies in public. Some of Renoir's own associates were more scathing. Pierre Braunberger (producer of Renoir's *Tire au flanc*, [1928], *La Chienne* [1931] and *Partie de Campagne* [1936]) aligned Renoir's Front Populaire output with the director's opportunistic search for a target-audience: "Sur l'échiquier politique, il se situait plutôt à droite. […] Il était social sans être socialiste. […] Je l'encourage vivement à accepter [la proposition des communistes] comme une tâche ingrate, lui expliquant qu'il a l'opportunité de trouver, enfin, un vrai public."[27] Charles Spaak, co-writer of *Les Bas-fonds* and *La Grande Illusion*, claimed Renoir "oubliait que marxisme et nazisme n'étaient pas synonymes"[28] and was "le traître intégral."[29] All of these interpretations of Renoir's attitude towards the Left, whether sympathetic in nature or not, only leave his motives and the political messages of his Front Populaire output open to further speculation.

Furthermore, Renoir's career from 1938 to 1940 provides enough grounds in itself to question his previous public commitment to the Left during the rise of the Front Populaire. Renoir followed *La Marseillaise* with the dark naturalism of *La Bête Humaine* (1938) and, the following year,

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[25] Gauteur, *La double méprise*, 9: "Saint Renoir does not exist, nor has he ever existed. […] Jean Renoir was a man, with all of the strengths and weaknesses entailed by the human condition."
[26] François Poulle, *Renoir 1938 ou Jean Renoir pour rien: enquête sur un cinéaste* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1969), 18: Renoir was a man of many political colours."
[27] Mérigeau, *Jean Renoir*, 257: "On the political chessboard, he was rather on the right. […] He was social without being socialist. […] I strongly encouraged him to accept [the communists' proposition], explaining to him that there he had the opportunity to finally find a real public."
[28] Ibid: "forgot that marxism and nazism were not synonyms."
[29] Ibid: "a complete traitor."

delivered the scathing satire of *La Règle du jeu* (1939). Moreover, the very Renoir who had claimed that "[e]n tournant à l'étranger, on trahit à la fois la France et le cinéma,"[30] and had condemned Marcel Carné's *Le Quai des Brumes* (1938) as a fascist film[31] was, by 1939, planning an adaptation of *La Tosca* in fascist Italy and, in 1940, accepted Mussolini's invitation to offer a master class at the Centro sperimentale di cinematografia, a move for which many of Renoir's former Communist allies never forgave him.[32] Renoir claimed that he was simply following the French government's orders as part of his country's broader aim to dissuade Mussolini from forming an alliance with Hitler.[33] However, Mérigeau remarks that the contract for *la Tosca* dispatched by Scalera studios is dated 12 July 1939 whilst Renoir's orders from the army are dated 2 September, concluding that Renoir "choisira par la suite de taire, préférant situer sa décision de filmer *Tosca* après que la guerre avec l'Allemagne eut été déclarée."[34]

Because Renoir himself wrote relatively little on his public affiliation with the Left following the outbreak of war, O'Shaughnessy's lament that Renoir pre-1936 "is largely unavailable to us except through the films,"[35] still remains true fifteen years later. Assessing both the relationship between Renoir and the Front Populaire, and the range of potential futures evoked by Renoir's mise-en-scène demands that we examine the limited

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[30] Gauteur, *La double méprise*, 54: "[b]y filming abroad, we betray France and the cinema at the same time."
[31] Marcel Carné, *Ma vie à belles dents* (Paris: L'Archipel, 1996), 102.
[32] Brett Bowles, "Renoir under the Popular Front: Aesthetics, Politics and the Paradoxes of Engagement," in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, eds. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau (New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 299.
[33] Sesonske, *Jean Renoir*, 441.
[34] Mérigeau, *Jean Renoir*, 440: "to be quiet, preferring to situate his decision to film [*La*] *Tosca* after the war with Germany had been declared."
[35] O'Shaughnessy, *Jean Renoir*, 16.

documents detailing Renoir's personal sentiments circa 1935 prior to the May 1936 elections, from which point Renoir's involvement with the French Left publicly effaced any personal misgivings which he may have harboured.

One noteworthy instalment in Renoir's Front Populaire output remains hitherto undiscussed. After the release of *Toni* and prior to the production of *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, Renoir penned *Ida*, an ultimately unfilmed screenplay. Two drafts of *Ida* survive, each of which was written during the pre-production stages of *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, the first written on 8 August, the second on 26 August 1935. *Ida* recounts the tensions between two factions, the woodspeople and village-people, living in la Cordelière, a fictional town located near Paris.

The leader of the woodspeople, Taillefer, is commonly referred to by the characters and the narrator as the King of Prussia (*le roi de Prusse*), directly relating him to Kaiser Wilhelm II, the last king of Prussia. Taillefer thus provides a direct link between the memories of the Franco-Prussian War and the outbreak of the First World War. The narrative further suggests that such volatile political figures are still active, not only within the fictional world of la Cordelière but also in contemporary Europe. The script notes that Taillefer was once unconstitutionally granted jurisdiction by the local mayor and that "en quelques années son autorité n'était plus discutée et on pouvait dire que c'était une espèce de Mussolini ou de Hitler de la forêt."[36] The potential of historical repetition is echoed by Vandeuvres, the

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[36] Jean Renoir, *Ida,* 8/8/35-8/28/35. Box 42, Folder 25. *Jean Renoir Papers 1915-1927,* Production Files (Collection 105). Performing Arts Special Collections, Young Research Library, University of *California, Los Angeles.* Draft 2, 10: "[i]n a few years, his authority

most prominent member of the village-people, who works as a butcher in the village centre. This enterprise is described as “la plus vilaine maison en pierres meulnières que l’on puisse imaginer,”[37] and contrasts with the “mentalité simple et harmonieuse”[38] exhibited by the small church located opposite it. Most alarmingly, the narrator proceeds to locate the building within the screenplay’s contemporary national context: “Cette maison du boucher m’entraîne bien loin mais il faut qu’on en parle. Ce sont ces horreurs qui ont déshonoré la banlieue de Paris et aussi les alentours de toute grande ville.”[39] As in the case of Taillefer, the narrator directly equates Vandeuvres with the two rising fascists of the interwar period: “En Allemagne on fait HITLER, en Italie on fait MUSSOLINI, en France la même catégorie de petit bourgeois arrogants fait des maisons en pierres meulières et c’est presque aussi dangereux.”[40] That Vandeuvres ranks no higher than the *petite bourgeoisie* directs us towards the right-wing sentiment and authoritarian ambitions that proliferated within French society among, even relatively middle-class ranks of society, before Renoir began filming *Lange*. In an introduction to the setting, the narrator even remarks that the salient parallels between the fictional narrative and contemporary society risk provocation:

> Cette miniscule agglomération de deux cents habitants sera le

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was no longer discussed and one could say that his was a sort of Mussoloni or Hitler of the forest.”

[37] Ibid., 18: “the most dreadful burstone house imaginable.”

[38] Ibid: “simple and harmonious mentality.”

[39] Renoir, *Ida*, 19: “This butcher’s is distracting me a good deal but we must speak about it. These are the horrors that have dishonoured the banlieues of Paris as well as the surrounding areas of every big city.”

[40] Ibid: “Germany creates HITLER, Italy creates MUSSOLINI. In France, the same category of arrogant *petits bourgeois* creates houses of burstone and they are almost as dangerous.”

> centre de l'histoire que je vais essayer de transcrire. Naturellement je change le nom du pays et des indigènes. Quelqu'un pourrait se reconnaître et se vexer. Mais, mes noms de remplacement ne sont pas faux. Ils sont empruntés à des gens et à des lieux réels qui auraient très bien pu être les acteurs et former le cadre d'un drame analogue.[41]

This chapter does not merely aim to criticise Deleuze's generalisation on the basis of biographical details of Renoir's engagement with the Front Populaire, prior readings of Renoir's films, or by revisiting *Ida*. Rather, by drawing on Renoir's simultaneous involvement in both *Ida* – a cautionary tale of seething tensions in French society – and *Lange* – the first French film to solidify Renoir's public commitment to the French Left – this chapter argues that Renoir's mise-en-scène of coeval spatial politics during this period is informed by his own pessimism regarding the rise of the Front Populaire, and that the forces ranged against Renoir's characters should not be relegated in favour of examining the futures projected by Renoir's communities.

From *Point de Fuite* to *Ligne de Fuite*: Framing the Future in Rhizomatic Space

Central to Renoir's Front Populaire output is the tension between the

[41] Ibid., 1: "This tiny agglomerate of two hundred people will be the centre of the story which I am going to try to transcribe. Naturally I am changing the name of the country and the people. Someone could recognise him/herself and get angry. But my replacement names are not false – they are borrowed from real people and places which could very easily have been the actors and formed the frame of a similar drama."

propulsive force of the characters' endeavours to implement new projects leading to the potential creation of a new future and the external spatio-temporal forces ranged against these projects. At this point, it is important to distinguish further between the *point de fuite* conceptualised within Deleuze's description of the crystal, and the *ligne de fuite* which he discusses in *Mille Plateaux*, each of which has already been outlined in the introduction, and illustrated in the two previous chapters. To summarise, Deleuze and Guattari assert that although "on fait une rupture, on trace une ligne de fuite,"[42] the fact remains that "les groupes et les individus contiennent des micro-fascismes qui ne demandent qu'à cristalliser,"[43] and therefore, "on risque toujours de retrouver sur elle des organisations qui restratifient l'ensemble."[44] Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on the forces existing beyond any *point de fuite* signals the potential futility of implementing a new future by those who exploit a "ligne de chance, ligne de hanche, ligne de fuite."[45] Deleuze and Guattari's allusion to the molecular flux introduced by an insurgent community is particularly pertinent in the case of the three films discussed in this chapter, within which subjugated communities endeavour to consolidate a collective project that offers them a *ligne de fuite* from oppressive circumstances. By virtue of the fact that space is, in Doreen Massey's words, "so unamenable to a single totalising project,"[46] the restructuring of cartographies of power (or molar

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[42] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980), 16: "one may make a rupture, draw a line of flight."
[43] Ibid: "groups and individuals contain micro-fascisms simply waiting to crystallise."
[44] Ibid: "there is still a danger that one will re-encounter organizations that re-stratify everything."
[45] Ibid., 36: "line of chance, line of hips, line of flight." Italics are my own.
[46] Doreen Massey, *For Space,* London: SAGE, 100.

lines, to use Deleuze and Guattari's term) can only be achieved through "the construction of (temporary, provisional) stabilisations"[47] that inevitably vie against one another within a "sphere of dynamic simultaneity."[48] Therefore, the molar may reassert dominance over the molecular, and society may recrystallize around the *ligne de fuite*, nullifying the escape effected through the *point de fuite*. Such a perspective informs the mise-en-scène of open space-time in the three films analysed within this chapter, which collectively demonstrate that the trajectory of a rhizomatic "line of hips" is constantly contested by hegemonic molar lines, and is never assured.

4.2 *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (1936)

Les Éditions Batala and the Courtyard: Staging "the Necessity for the Political"[49] in Depth

Le Crime de Monsieur Lange recounts the efforts of the eponymous protagonist (René Lefèvre) and his fellow employees at a publication house to establish a socialist cooperative following the apparent death of their exploitative boss, Batala (Jules Berry). Aided by the workers of the adjoining *blanchissierie* owned by Valentine (Florelle) and Meunier *fils* (Henri Guisol), an enthusiastic capitalist backer, the community markets Lange's *Arizona Jim* comics. At the peak of the cooperative's financial

[47] Ibid., 95.
[48] Ibid., 107.
[49] Ibid., 162.

success, Batala returns unscathed but is shot by Lange. Aided by Valentine, Lange is escorted across the Belgian border by a group of men who deem the murder a necessary one.

Unsurprisingly, Renoir himself regarded *Lange* as "un essai de lien des fonds et du premier plan, par le même plan."[50] During the first third of the narrative, the deep space so central to Deleuze's conceptualisation of Renoir's mise-en-scène conveys the vacillating vitality of the workers' presence in the courtyard and publishing house as they work at *Les Éditions Batala*. On the morning of work in the opening sequence, deep staging and lateral movement offer what Lyall Bush calls "frequent excesses of information that are irrelevant except that they suggest a film world as semiotically rich and as seamlessly detailed and unpredictable as the world in which the audience lives."[51] As the workers arrive, Lange's eyes follow Édith's (Sylvia Bataille) legs as she quickly ascends the stairs to Batala's office. The camera cuts to a frontal view of Lange and, after we hear a voice call "Lange!" off-screen, the camera pans to the left to reveal Valentine. As she jokingly mocks Lange, we realise that she occupied this formerly off-screen space as Lange was ogling Édith's legs. As Valentine walks back to her deeply-staged laundry area, Lange looks up towards off-screen space once more before an inspector intrudes on the left-hand side of the image and asks him where Batala is.

Throughout this sequence, Renoir's camera depicts the social relations as the "sphere of dynamic simultaneity" theorised by Massey's

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[50] Jean Narboni, Janine Bazin, and Claude Gauteur, eds. *Jean Renoir: entretiens et propos* (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 2005), 324: "an essay of links between backgrounds and foregrounds within the same shot."
[51] Lyall Bush, "Feminine Narrative and the Law," in *Cinema Journal* 29, no.1 (1989), 58.

treatise on space, “constantly disconnected by new arrivals, constantly waiting to be determined (and always undetermined) by the construction of new relations.”[52] The physical proximity and social interaction between each of these businesses establishes a precondition for the horizontal merger effected through the consolidation of the cooperative: Valentine effects a significant degree of mobility in both the launderette and the workers’ quarters of *Les Éditions Batala*, imbricating each enterprise in the other by supplying linen to Batala and his employees, and occasionally walking around Batala’s publishing house. Although these sequences lend credence to Sesonske’s assertion that the characters share an “essentially topographical relation,”[53] he is incorrect to assume that the cooperative enterprise “simply becomes one through the interpenetration of the areas around the court.”[54] These early moments in the narrative portray the elements required for the creation of politics rather than the future potentially invoked by these politics. The camera’s framing of the fleeting passages of workers in the buildings displays the very lack of a cohesive political agenda that could implement a new future.

The workers remain socially entrapped within the exploitative workplace, where Batala refuses to allow his workers to exercise their own creative liberty. Furthermore, he has accumulated multiple debts that he does not intend to repay, placing not only his own future but that of his unwitting workers at risk. The photography of two spaces – Lange’s room, and Batala’s office – demonstrates the social imprisonment imposed by

[52] Massey, *For Space*, 107.
[53] Alexander Sesonske, “Jean Renoir as Moralist: *Le Crime de M. Lange*,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 8.1 (1974), 8.
[54] Sesonske, “*Le Crime de M. Lange*,” 8-9.

Batala's regime within the world of the courtyard. Lange's room, although laden with items that fuel his imagination, insulates him and his ideas from mainstream society, and its only window looks out onto the opposite side of the courtyard. This social gridlock is also visible in Batala's office, located within *Les Éditions Batala*. When Batala presents Lange's ideas to Baigneur, a representative of one of the publishing house's many creditors, in an effort to prolong his own solvency, deep space registers the tensions between capitalist production and the artistic creativity: in the foreground, Lange, Batala and the debt-collector agree to write off Batala's soaring debts through the publication of *Arizona Jim*. The unceasing pace of work in the background conveys the assimilation of the workers within the rapid pace of the capitalist workplace and its sheer drive to produce within the hierarchical structure of Batala's company. Clearly, neither Lange nor any other worker can strive to secure their own reputations as artists or a better quality of living within their stratified workplace.

The obscurity of any *point de fuite* from the gridlocked social space of *Les Éditions Batala* even remains when the camera frames an aperture leading from the courtyard to mainstream society: an archway breaches the apparent insulation provided by the wall, permitting the constant ebb and flow of people, values and ideas to and from the courtyard. After Batala finds a letter from a creditor and angrily expels Lange from the office, Lange recounts the incident to two fellow employees while the window behind them frames the archway in deep space. On another occasion, Valentine plays with a dog in front of the archway. The camera subsequently pans to the left, revealing that Valentine is being watched by Lange from an

upstairs window of the publishing house. The camera pans further left until we are granted a clear view of the door to Batala's office, located in the background, thus contrasting the liberty of the courtyard and its connection with mainstream society with the stultifying capacity of Batala's workplace. Later, as Lange speaks to Valentine in the courtyard, they are both pitted against the archway whilst people walk through it, to and from the courtyard. On all of these occasions, the oppression of the workplace is contrasted with the potential opportunities existing beyond the courtyard. Because the employees of the *blanchisserie* and the publishing house lack any cohesive political agenda, they are incapable of creating a revolutionary social project, and no future can be guaranteed, let alone plotted.

Each of the above cases, be it in the courtyard, Lange's room or the publishing house, lends credence to Christopher Faulkner's assertion that "there may be an argument for saying that Renoir's moving camera and shooting in depth have the effect of leaving the visual field continually open to the play of difference."[55] Crucially however, the camera's framing of the social and physical space of *Les Éditions Batala* underscores the absence of a collective project that could liberate any of the characters from the stultifying inadequacies of their professional lives. Whereas Massey emphasises "the necessity for the political"[56] in any attempt to harness "a space of loose ends and missing links,"[57] only Batala's exploitative brand of capitalism striates the space within the publishing house. Yet the circulation

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[55] Christopher Faulkner, "Paris, Arizona; or the Redemption of Difference - Jean Renoir's *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (1935)," in *French Film: Texts and Contexts*, eds. Susan Hayward and Ginette Vincendeau (London: Routledge, 2000), 31.
[56] Massey, *For Space*, 162.
[57] Ibid., 12.

of people between the courtyard and the city through the archway presents the courtyard as a socially open milieu that accommodates new configurations. However, to clarify their circumstances through Deleuze's own terminology, the lack of any rhizomatic "line of hips" that could carry characters through the spatio-temporal *point de fuite* merely renders such a prospect opaque.

"*Faites des cartes, et pas des photos ni des dessins*":[58] *Arizona Jim vs. Cagoulard* as Doomed *Ligne de Fuite*

The framing of the courtyard and the archway repeatedly signals the cooperative's inability to comprehensively implement their socialist project. Moreover, Renoir's mise-en-scène demonstrates that the cooperative is leaving itself open to assault from external social forces. Before proceeding to this analysis, it is worth noting that scholars other than Deleuze have interpreted Renoir's mise-en-scène as a positive conception of socialist projects. O'Shaughnessy's Deleuzian analysis of the historical moment in *Lange* particularly lauds the removal of the billboard from Charles' (the concierge's son, played by Maurice Baquet) room. The camera first frames the advertising panel placed over the window of Charles' room. After Lange begins to remove the panel, the camera cranes upwards diagonally, revealing groups of workers leaning out of the first-floor windows of *Les Éditions Batala*, who all watch Lange. Tracking left, the camera reveals another

[58] Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, 36: "Make maps, not photos or drawings."

group of workers looking out of a window. The camera cranes downwards, as Meunier *fils* prevents the concierge from interfering with Lange's efforts. More and more workers gather at the window. The camera switches to Charles' room, as we view the panel being removed by the workers, opening the physical space of the bedroom to the exterior courtyard. Discussing the political and temporal implications of this sequence, O'Shaughnessy writes that "the frame itself is no longer immutable in either its physical or its symbolic dimensions but, becoming an object of dispute between the workers and their boss, it is opened up to collective intervention."[59] Although O'Shaughnessy's formal analysis is entirely accurate, he overestimates the import of this local landmark towards a genuinely new future within the narrative's overall context, primarily because he fails to remark that the significance of this historical moment is limited to the space of the courtyard, and consequently neglects the forces ranged against the budding cooperative during Batala's absence.

Much like Deleuze's confidence in the sincerity of Renoir's affiliation with the Front Populaire, O'Shaughnessy's optimism regarding the creation of a genuinely new society is understandable. The archway, of little political import earlier in the narrative, acquires a completely new social significance following the apparent death of Batala and the arrival of Meunier *fils*, the jovial son of one of Batala's creditors. Following the

[59] Martin O'Shaughnessy, "Shooting in Deep Time: the Mise en Scène of History in Renoir's Films of the 1930s," in *A Companion to Jean* Renoir, eds. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 26. O'Shaughnessy reiterates this argument elsewhere, observing a "clear solidarity between the camera and the group." See O'Shaughnessy, "Between the 'I' and the 'We': Jean Renoir's Films of the Popular Front Era," in *Politics and the Individual in France 1930-1950*, ed. Jessica Wardhaugh (Oxford: Legenda, 2015), 41-57.

decision of the employees to consolidate a cooperative, Meunier *fils* shakes hands with one of Batala's ex-employees at the window of the publishing house. The window behind them frames the archway located in the background, as well as the space enclosed by the courtyard walls. The camera does not merely frame the archway and an employee, as in many of the previous cases, but the establishment of a new relationship between a capitalist investor, a member of the cooperative and the off-screen space evoked by the archway, foreshadowing the agreement between Sam and Ruston in *The Southerner* (1945). The manifest amenability of the smooth space beyond the window to the cooperative's venture renders the potential creation of a new future limpid. In short, the camera frames the possibility of a *ligne de fuite.*

Fig. 1

The "élan vers l'avenir" (c.f. Deleuze) articulated by this scene is challenged later within the narrative. Having consolidated the cooperative

and discarded the embodied memories of Batala's regime, the workers are in a position to produce the *Arizona Jim* comics conceived by Lange in the privacy of his bedroom. Reflecting the ongoing circulation of ideas from the space beyond the courtyard to the interior space of the courtyard, within which the comic-covers are shot, a cover announcing the upcoming battle between Arizona Jim and Cagoulard appears on the screen. The corresponding cover, which the cooperative are later shooting, shows Arizona Jim standing victoriously above the titular black-hooded villain. This cover immediately signals the limits of the cooperative's impetus. "Cagoule," the French word for hood from which "Cagoulard" is derived, was the press-name given to the Organisation secrète d'action révolutionnaire in recognition of the hoods its members allegedly wore during secret meetings.[60] Led by decorated bourgeois Great War veteran Eugène Deloncle,[61] la Cagoule emerged from l'Action Française, a reactionary organisation which suffered severe losses during the riots of February 6, 1934.[62] Catalysed by the rise of the Front Populaire during 1935, the year in which Lange was filmed, la Cagoule made an attempt on the life of French Prime Minister Blum the following year.[63] The presence of la Cagoule is reminiscent of Renoir's own memories of his séjour in Berlin during Hitler's election as chancellor (30 January 1933), where he was shocked that "ce vieux Berlin était une ville paisible avec de bons

[60] D. L. L. Parry, "Counter Revolution by Conspiracy, 1935-37," in *The Right in France: From Revolution to Le Pen*, eds. Nicholas Atkin and Frank Tallett, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 161.
[61] Joel Blatt, "The Cagoule Plot, 1936-1937," in *Crisis and Renewal in France, 1918-1962*, eds. Kenneth Mouré and Martin S. Alexander, (New York: Berghahn, 2002), 86-104.
[62] Philippe Bourdrel. *La Cagoule: Histoire d'une Société Sécrète du Front Populaire à la Ve République*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1992), 20.
[63] Ibid., 33-34.

bourgeois qui fumaient leur pipe et qui discutaient des élections comme on aurait discuté d'élections normales […] et voilà que le lendemain de l'élection, une autre partie de la population – à moins que ce ne soit la même – était déchainée."[64] The image of la Cagoule, exploited by the cooperative for its financial viability within the pages of *Arizona Jim*, is darkly indicative of the very real social threat posed by fascist movements beyond the insulated enthusiasm of the cooperative, and testifies to Andrew and Ungar's vision of contemporary France as "an internally riven nation."[65]

Crucially, at the peak of the cooperative's success, a wooden door is shut across the archway for the first time. In fact, none of the workers is even seen outside the courtyard following the consolidation of the cooperative with the notable exceptions of Charles, who exultantly delivers *Arizona Jim* to the kiosks, and Meunier *fils*, before he announces his news of the *Arizona Jim* film. Despite the active collaboration of the cooperative, Renoir's framing of the closed archway obscures the likelihood of any change in mainstream society: the emphatic shallowness of the foreground enters into dialectic with the off-screen space beyond the archway, invoking a tension between the cooperative and the world that it exteriorises. Although O'Shaughnessy optimistically remarks that "the positive transformation that the co-operative can bring about in a space from which conflict has been removed,"[66] the appropriation of la Cagoule within the insulated setting alarmingly implies that the decidedly myopic cooperative

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[64] Gauteur, *La double méprise*, 62: "this old Berlin was a peaceful city with good bourgeois people who were smoking their pipes and discussing the elections as one would have discussed normal elections […] and then on the morning after the election, another part of the population – unless it was the same part – rose up destructively."
[65] Andrew and Ungar, *Popular Front Paris*, 339.
[66] O'Shaughnessy, "Between the 'I' and the 'We,'" 54.

risks immanent subjugation to an unduly trivialised social menace, which potentially impedes the growth of the cooperative, constituting what Deleuze and Guattari term “des micro-fascismes qui ne demandent qu’à cristalliser.”[67]

Fig. 2

The members of the cooperative superficially suspend the past, blinding themselves to potential threats to the space of the courtyard, and whitewashing their projection of a new future. They also transform their world within the courtyard into a new Arizona: during Lange’s final conversation with Batala, the map of Arizona that was once pinned in Lange’s room now features in Batala’s former office. Much like the billboard removed from Charles window, the movement of the poster to Batala’s former office suggests that the workers have redefined their past through their present successes, whitewashing their original motivations and misinterpreting the requirements of the future. If the film holds the weight

[67] Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, 16: “micro-fascisms just waiting to crystallise.”

of the past and the potential creation of a genuinely new future in tension, it does so by pitting the determination of the cooperative against the public beyond the courtyard. Although *Arizona Jim* has amassed major income for the cooperative, the threat of domestic Fascist movements operating at a local level threatens the existence of the cooperative's hopes and dreams long before the extrusion of Valentine and Lange.

Although Deleuze does not discuss *Lange*, he is right to emphasise the stultifying influence of the "rôles morts ou de la mort"[68] available within Renoir's theatres: this scene portrays the courtyard as a theatrical space within which the new roles acquired ensure entrapment rather than the liberty that the community of workers aims to secure. As in la Colinière, the "ligne de hanche" has ceased marching and solidified as a centralised socio-economic structure that remains open to contestation by "des organisations qui restratifient l'ensemble."[69] Such is the cooperative's effort to preserve the spatio-temporal "closure and stasis"[70] spurned by Massey that their world, although devoid of the opulent surroundings that characterise Visconti's work, constitutes a synthetic realm of the kind recognised by Deleuze in Visconti's work.[71] Despite the apparent promise embodied by the cooperative's collective venture, its prospects remain subject to the incohesion of its own members (note the problematic inclusion of the reluctant concierge) and the force of history from the outset. Indeed, much like the *haute bourgeoisie* of *La Règle du jeu*, their inability to either subjugate the inherent openness of space-time or to synchronise with the

[68] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 116: "dead roles or roles of death."
[69] Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, 16: "organisations that re-stratify everything."
[70] Massey, *For Space*, 19.
[71] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 124.

broader spatial politics of Paris dooms them to extinction.

"*Faites la ligne et jamais le point!*":[72] Suspending the Past, Obscuring the Future.

The futility of implementing a new future on a limited, geographically circumscribed local level is underscored by the eventual return of Batala, who withdraws a gun from his former desk, only further emphasising the superficiality of the cooperative's attempted expunction of the past. The ensuing murder sequence simultaneously marks the definitive fracture not only between Lange and the cooperative but also between Lange and the Parisian public. The staging of the murder-sequence begins with an exterior shot of Lange holding Batala's pistol in the latter's former office and culminates in a 270º pan that sweeps laterally across the circumference of the courtyard. Two particular interpretations of the pan are significant within the context of this study.[73] A sceptical Colin Davis remarks on "the striking absence of "the community that is supposedly encompassed by [the pan]." Central to Davis' interrogation is "the contrast between the *visual* absence of the community and its *audible* presence"[74] which, for Davis, suggests "Lange's solitude, his position outside the community, and the foundation of

[72] Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, 36: "Run lines and never plot a point!"
[73] For other interpretations of the pan, see the following, who all restore a politics of collectivity to the camera movement: Sesonske, 1980; Elizabeth Grottle Strebel, 1981; Stephen Tifft, 1987; O'Shaughnessy, 2000, 2011; Ousselin, 2006.
[74] Colin Davis. *Scenes of Love and Murder: Renoir, Film and Philosophy* (London: Wallflower, 2009), 67. Italics are Davis' own.

the murder in desire and rivalry rather than political commitment."[75] O'Shaughnessy specifically argues that Davis "is wrong […] in suggesting that there is an implicit separation of Lange from the rest of the co-operative."[76] Interpreting Lange's escape from the "totalizing circling gaze" of the camera as a "step into the uncharted space of the authentic political act,"[77] O'Shaughnessy purports that "the sound [of laughter] surely serves to remind us of exactly in the interests of whom or what Lange is acting."[78] Although Davis's argument is more convincing than that of O'Shaughnessy, neither sufficiently addresses the breadth of physical space incorporated by the bravura camera-movement, and each fails to interpret the pan in relation to the mise-en-scène of the courtyard in earlier narrative sequences, or to the space that becomes the subject of the camera's fleeting gaze.

Through the formally radical camera-movement, space is foregrounded in its capacity as a "precondition for the temporal,"[79] an aspect effaced by Deleuze's depoliticisation of the pan, and by Bazin's famous map of the camera's movement, in which, like any map in Massey's analysis, "space is completely and instantaneously interconnected," and the "loose ends and ongoing stories" are ignored.[80] In particular, it is primarily preoccupied not only with the absent cooperative but also with the very vacancy of the physical space between Lange and his coworkers and beyond the courtyard. The detachment of the camera acknowledges the possibility

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[75] Ibid., 67.
[76] Martin O'Shaughnessy, "Breaking the Circle: *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* and the Contemporary Illegibility of the Radical Text," in *South Central Review* 28, no. 3 (2011), 37.
[77] Ibid., 32.
[78] Ibid., 37.
[79] Massey, *For Space*, 89.
[80] Ibid., 106-7. See appendix 2 for a reproduction of Bazin's map.

of hitherto invisible trajectories interfering with Lange's solitary course of action within a manifestly open space, but neither the public nor the cooperative is present in Lange's hour of need. Unlike the fluid shots that elsewhere track the fleeting entrances and exits of other characters within the world of the courtyard, the view beyond the archway is now uninhibited by passing bodies. Readers of the *Arizona Jim* comics, through their absence, are portrayed as avid consumers whose purchases ensure the financial growth of the cooperative, but who do not personally contribute to the expansion of the cooperative's network in any notable way. In fact, the financial success reaped by the comics renders the cooperative even more oblivious to the threats potentially admitted by the impartial archway than during the photo-shoot of the *Arizona Jim* comic-covers, and their laughter during Lange's off-screen approach to Batala articulates their blindness to both Lange's plight and the limits of their own collaborative project. Whether or not we agree with O'Shaughnessy's assertion that Lange is reminded of the cooperative as he commits murder, the fact remains that neither Lange's comrades nor the Parisian public are present to assist Lange during the cooperative's darkest hour.

If the pan is, as Bazin proposes, "the pure spatial expression of the entire mise-en-scène,"[81] it is because it further dismantles the pre-existing perceptions of any reassuringly fixed spatial coordinates projected by the spectator and the cooperative, revealing a malleable space that is, as Massey writes of public spaces, "riven with antagonism, always contoured through

[81] O'Shaughnessy, *Breaking the Circle*, 42.

the playing out of unequal social relations."[82] Given the inherent political fissures within the alleged cooperative which are constantly evoked by the narrative, the pan hardly represents a sudden, radical shattering of the cooperative but the final statement on the inevitable dissolution of the cooperative.

By the end of the film, Lange and Valentine have been forced into voluntary exile, whilst the fate of the cooperative remains uncertain. The shot of the beach, notes Tom Conley, represents "an indistinct border between air and land or 'molar' and 'molecular' states of being."[83] Although Conley is referring to this distinction as it appears in Deleuze's differentiation between the liquid and solid masses that contrast with one another in the classic French cinema,[84] it would be even more suitably read through Deleuze and Guattari's spatially informed interpretation: the cooperative's temporary success holds no currency as they venture towards an uncertain future, unsure of their ability to navigate the social structures the as-of-yet invisible world beyond the border. If, as Faulkner writes, "*Le Crime de Monsieur Lane* is not a mirror held up to life […]; it is a mirror held up to a measure of desire circa 1936,"[85] it is also, in hindsight, a starkly realistic moral lesson on the self-destructive blindness that provisionally ensured the survival of the Left's delusive hopes.

[82] Massey, *For Space*, 153.
[83] Tom Conley, "Jean Renoir: Cartographies in Deep Focus," in *Cartographic Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2007), 50.
[84] See especially Deleuze, *Cinéma 1*, 114-16.
[85] Faulkner, "Paris, Arizona," 28.

4.3 *Les Bas-fonds* (1936)

Many elements of set-design featuring in *Lange*, such as the courtyard and multi-storey building are explored by Renoir's camera to lend renewed social resonance to Gorky's source-text. Before examining Renoir’s mise-en-scène in detail, it is important to note that the film’s script deviates significantly from Gorky’s play (*Na Nde* / *The Lower Depths*, 1902). Unlike Gorky’s drama, the first third of Renoir’s film portrays the fall from grace of a heavily indebted baron (Louis Jouvet) and his chance-encounter with Pépel (Jean Gabin), a thief who attempts to rob the bankrupt Baron’s home only to find it holds nothing worth stealing. Over the course of the film, the baron readily sheds his prestige and joins the doss-house in which Pépel and various other lost causes live. The shelter itself is run by the exploitative Kostylev (Vladimir Sokoloff). Pépel is conducting an affair with Kostylev’s wife, Vassilissa (Suzy Prim), but loves her younger sister Natacha (Junie Astor). When Kostylev and Vassilissa try to blackmail a policeman by granting him Natacha, Pépel and the other tenants kill Kostylev. Pépel serves a spell in prison and, at the film’s close, walks away into the country with Natacha. Beyond these events, much of the film narrates the marginal day-to-day existence of its tenants and their suffering at the hands of Kostylev. As we shall see, the mise-en-scène of space-time in *Les Bas-fonds* would only seem to confirm Renoir’s reservations regarding the hopes and dreams ignited by the rise of the Front Populaire.

Framing the Archway as Social *Point de Fuite*

As in *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, the openness of space and the extent to which change may be envisioned are primarily products of the class relations framed by the camera within a distinctive piece of architecture. The stultifying import of striated space on the creation of a new future is centrally articulated through Kostylev's shelter which, much like *Les Éditions Batala*, is located within a courtyard incorporating an archway that leads to mainstream society. Kostylev's bourgeois protocol impedes any social or economic liberty desired by the lower class. Durgnat relates Kostylev to the personality type of the Russian "ghetto Jew" who has succeeded through swindling others and dreams of prosperity and solid bourgeois connections that will preserve him from persecution.[86] The interior décor of Kostylev's quarters, tellingly based in the upper floor of the building and adorned with numerous items stolen on his behalf by Pépel, solidifies his bourgeois pretensions. Kostylev's financially prohibitive regime entraps characters within the shelter. Thus, Kostylev continuously extracts money from his tenants, managing his shelter as a member of the "deserving rich," much like Batala. As he declares to Pépel, "Tu oublies que je suis le patron ici et que tu me dois le respect."[87]

Beneath Kostylev's quarters are the titular *bas-fonds*, a cellar divided by ramshackle walls and curtains, and inhabited by a range of vagrants, only some of whose names and pasts are ever revealed. What is most alarming about this film, within the context of Renoir's unofficial affiliation with the

[86] Raymond Durgnat, *Jean Renoir* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974), 142.
[87] "You forget that I am the boss here and that you owe me respect."

Front Populaire, is that the abused residents of the shelter, far from collaborating on any social project in a "ligne de hanche" (c.f. Deleuze and Guattari), have no desire to plot a new future for themselves, either as individuals or as a group. Three tenants – Anna (Nathalie Alexeeff), an anonymous actor (Robert le Vigan), and Nastia (Jany Holt) – receive particular emphasis: Anna, a woman dying of an undisclosed ailment (possibly the loss of the will to live), remains in her bed and finds solace in the possibility of a blissful afterlife; an alcoholic actor dwells on the fabricated glories of his past, and dreams of a utopic sanatorium instead of opening his eyes to a reality in which such far-fetched wishes shall never materialise. Whereas Gorky's actor quotes Shakespeare in front of the other tenants,[88] Renoir's actor refuses to demonstrate his ability to recite such monologues until he has finally exited the shelter to hang himself. Nastia condenses her quarters with decorative patterns, and pollutes her memories with her book, *L'Amour Fatale*. All stultify their spatio-temporal trajectories by performing their lethargy, pessimism and individual pasts, testifying to Braudy's assertion that "the life of the tenement is basically self-involved theatre."[89] Whereas the community of Lange, however internally fragmented and synthetically insulated, collaborate on *Arizona Jim*, these tenants are utterly directionless.

Although the shelter contains a variety of characters, later to include the fallen baron, the lower depths are closed to the circulation of ideas. Potential collaboration with the upper classes is not possible. The only member of the upper classes who joins is the baron himself, and he is

[88] Maxim Gorky, *Les Bas-fonds*, trans. Genia Cannac (Paris: L'Arche, 2009), 14.
[89] Leo Braudy. *Jean Renoir, The World of His Films* (London: Robson, 1977), 122.

entirely penniless, with nothing to love, no confidence in the class to which he now subscribes, and nothing to invest in it, financially or morally. Sesonske notes that the characters are framed unambitiously in the shelter: "the scenes in the asile feel essentially static; the flow of the film seems to stop here […] and though the camera does move, it seems both less fluid and less resolute in its movements. As no action occurs in these scenes but merely aimless talk and pointless motion, so the camera too seems to have lost purpose."[90] This is precisely the point of Renoir's narrative: these characters embody "la danse macabre des souvenirs"[91] from which any *point de fuite* is decidedly obscured. The camera subjectivises the tenants' experience of everyday life in the *bas-fonds*, specifically their ability to blind themselves to an ongoing present as it unfolds within the world beyond the courtyard, and their downright refusal to actualise a new future beyond their current oppressive social circumstances: on the one hand, the potential liberation of the tenants from their current circumstances is made manifest by the mainstream society that is barely visible beyond the archway in the exterior shots of the courtyard, and through the visible existence of other social settings beyond the courtyard. On the other hand, none of the characters demonstrates any intention of transgressing this aperture leading beyond the shelter. In fact, the majority of the tenants languish within the confines of the *bas-fonds*, where this very potential for departure through the "ouverture d'avenir" remains opaque to them.

Crucially, Renoir juxtaposes shots unfolding within the lower depths of the shelter with day-to-day conversations taking place between tenants in

[90] Sesonske, *Jean Renoir*, 278.

[91] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 116: "the *danse macabre* of memories."

the space of the courtyard, and with various other settings such as the aristocratic home formerly occupied by the baron, and the banks of the Marne visited by the baron and Pépel. The juxtaposition of these various settings grants the spectator a greater view of the various socialised spaces existing beyond the insulated shelter, thus allowing the spectator to critically interrogate the tenants' insulation within their squalid world. The importance of such settings to Renoir's portrayal of interconnected spaces is only underscored by their very absence from the Gorky play. (Indeed, Sesonske notes that whereas Gorky's source-text is set entirely within the shelter, less than a quarter of Renoir's film's 236 shots occur in locales that we actually see in the play.)[92]

The rare scenes in which the tenants enter the space of the courtyard simultaneously emphasise the openness of space and the lack of any cohesive project that could elucidate and exploit potential opportunities for a new future beyond the archway. With the exception of the unpremeditated murder of Kostylev, the courtyard never provides the spontaneous communal meeting point that we see at the beginning of *Lange*. Rather, it provides a locus for uneventful meetings between the characters who dwell in Kostylev's shelter and in the other buildings surrounding the courtyard. In the beginning of the film, Nastia lingers inside the arch, watching Pépel as he exits to the street. On another occasion, a small number of the tenants including the baron, Nastia and Louka among others sit in the courtyard outside the shelter, their utter directionless acedia hinted by the broken-down horseless carriage in which Nastia and the baron sit (fig. 3). Rather

[92] Sesonske, *Jean Renoir*, 259.

than portray an "ouverture d'avenir," these shots depict idleness in perpetual motion. As Sesonske notes, "none of these characters can conceive of their lives as really different."[93]

Fig. 3

As in *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, the camera stages the archway and particular social configurations in depth to denote the necessity of what Massey calls "stabilising projects," one of which could establish a *point de fuite* from the destitution engendered by Kostylev's regime. Three different pairs of characters are pitted against the archway to signal this potential for escape: Pépel and Natacha, Vassilissa and Pépel, and Natacha and the policeman. Early in the film, as Vassilissa warns Pépel against crossing her, the archway features in the background, behind the door to the balcony. The same pattern re-emerges later in the film as the oppressed Natacha is courted by the commissaire, to whom Vassilissa and Kostylev have offered Natacha

[93] Ibid., 262.

in order to prevent him from holding them liable for their unsuitable living conditions. Upward mobility is contingent on sexual bargaining in each of these cases.

As Pépel tries to convince Natacha to leave with him, the camera captures them sitting on the stairs that lead to Kostylev and Vassilissa's quarters, facing the shelter-entrance that looks directly on to the deeply-staged archway (fig. 4). During this scene, Pépel tries to convince her that their lives may turn out differently, stating that "les ivrognes ne sont pas toujours ivres, les voleurs pas toujours en prison."[94] and suggesting that she leave with him, thus proposing the only realistic project amongst the tenants. Clearly, a joint-escape by Pépel and Natacha is a possibility. Crucially, Pépel advocates an understanding of how they might change their circumstances rather than lofty dreams. It is worth also noting that Pépel's room in the *bas-fonds* testifies to his downright refusal to lie to himself or to patiently listen to the lies of others: Pépel personalises his space through meaningful objects including the statuette of the horses, freely given to him by the baron, which serves as a reminder to him of his own "occupation" of thief through the very fact that it was originally awarded to the baron for his equestrian feats. As Sesonske asserts, Pépel's space-time is "merely overlapping that of the derelicts who sleep or smoke or just lay open-eyed."[95] Interestingly, these three scenes framed in front of the archway are framed in relation to the courtyard, but distance each pair of characters from the other tenants. This implies that the characters endeavouring to escape towards new social circumstances are in no way reliant on the other tenants,

[94] "Drunkards are not always drunk, and thieves are not always in prison,"
[95] Sesonske, *Jean Renoir*, 266.

who collectively squander their futures in the shelter without interrogating the validity of Kostylev's authority, and further emphasises the importance of a social project to the pursuit of a *ligne de fuite*.

Fig. 4

Collectivising Kostylev's Murder: Provisional Solidarity

Echoing Deleuze's understanding of Renoir's Front Populaire output, O'Shaughnessy locates the film within its Frontist context through the manner in which it "unmasks a corrupt order and shows the oppressed move from passivity to revolt."[96] However, the extent to which this murder is framed as a revolutionary political event is debatable. The shots that follow Kostylev and Vassilissa's vicious physical assault of Natacha after her rejection of the policeman recall the commentary on the social criticism

[96] O'Shaughnessy, *Jean Renoir*, 122.

embedded in the mise-en-scène of Batala's death in *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* both formally and politically. However, whereas the pan in *Lange* emphasises the disintegration of the provisional relationship between Lange and the other members of the cooperative, the camera in this scene from *Les Bas-fonds* frames a nascent collective project budding amongst the numerous residents and passers-by in the courtyard. The camera begins with a medium shot of the closed window of Kostylev's quarters through which Natacha's screams can be heard. The camera gradually tracks backwards and pans downward to the courtyard where Louka is now visible, looking up at the window which is now off-screen. The camera pans to the right, and we see a group of four children standing still, looking in the direction of the window. The camera pans further right and pauses to frame a man standing at the door of a house within the courtyard. Two women standing beneath a washing line also watch and a man opens a window above the archway to listen, also looking towards the window. Within the same shot, the resident accordion-player and the baron walk through the archway, singing and playing music until they pause, shocked to hear the screams emerging from behind the closed window. Louka runs toward them and tells them that it is Natacha who is screaming. For the first time in the narrative, the camera frames the entrance of socially disparate characters to a communal space, all joined in their preoccupation with the event taking place behind the closed window. Whereas the relationship between what we see and hear during the camera-pan in *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* emphasises the fissure within the deceptive cohesion between Lange and his workers, the shared response to Natacha's screams during the pan marks the awakening of a collective

spirit amongst the residents around the courtyard, most of whom we have not seen before.

Still, the impetus germinating within the courtyard does not permeate the entire complex. When the baron alerts Pépel to the violence ensuing in Kostylev's quarters, Pépel immediately runs out from his quarters to Kostylev's floor. As Pépel ascends the stairs: the accordion-player who earlier listened to Natacha's cries in the courtyard now sits on the stairs, still listening, with a blend of curiosity and helplessness. Three other tenants stand at the foot of the stairs, roused but ineffectual, unwilling to come to Natacha's aid.

The cohesion of the tenants is further challenged in three shots that follow Kostylev's descent from his quarters. The following three shots portraying Kostylev's murder depict the collective revolt as a senseless act devoid of any clear political purpose, even if its outcome is politically subversive in nature. When Kostylev exits, the doorway leading to the courtyard frames him exiting towards the bystanders who were earlier dispersed across the courtyard. As they drag Kostylev away, Pépel runs into the courtyard, followed by a number of other tenants. During this shot, the potential outcome of the event is unclear as our view is obscured by the narrowness of the doorframe and the mobile bodies exiting through it. This provides a revealing contrast with the physical and social negotiation of the parameters of the frame effected by the cooperative's removal of the billboard in *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, where the cooperative act systematically and simultaneously in perfect unison, cheered on by their peers. The next shot reveals Kostylev roaring, at the mercy of the men who

beat him and drag him. The course of action becomes unclear once again as the camera pans from a close-shot of Kostylev to a close shot of Pépel, who is being restrained from violence by the tenants. In each of these two shots, the camera vainly endeavours to obtain clusters of information regarding the action at hand. In the subsequent shot, it follows the baron as he struggles through the vengeful mob towards an anvil on which Kostylev's head has fallen. The camera pauses at the anvil as the baron walks off-screen and tilts upward to reveal Pépel looking down at the defunct landlord. Throughout, the frame provides an inadequate aperture towards a mass of disorganised, impulsively scurrying bodies with no centralised thrust or collectively coordinated points of articulation. Although the courtyard provides a locus for a shared project, they are bound only by a shared manifestation of combustible hatred. Their ill-will towards Kostelev serves a specific moment and does not extend to the establishment of a new regime within the shelter.

Although the mob attempts to collectivise responsibility for Kostylev's death, suggesting the potential birth of a new social project within the shelter, their efforts pass unrewarded. The baron authoritatively declares "Nous sommes tous aussi fautifs que Pépel."[97] The shoe-mender admits "Moi aussi, j'ai donné des coups,"[98] whilst Louka declares "C'est les bas-fonds qui l'ont tué mais pas plus Pépel qu'un autre."[99] One of the policemen abruptly declares "Tais-toi, vieux fou,"[100] and arrests Pépel without even noting the comments of the latter's co-tenants, demonstrating

[97] "We are all as much at fault as Pépel."
[98] "I also dealt him blows."
[99] "It is the lower depths that killed him, not Pépel, any more than anybody else."
[100] "Quiet, old fool."

the futility of lower-class collective enterprises amidst social structures responsible for upholding justice. Collective negotiation with the authorities is crucially ineffectual.

"*C'est fini de chanter...*":[101] Pursuing the *Ligne de Fuite*

In an ending which does not feature in Gorky's original play, we witness a newly-freed Pépel and Natacha walking towards the screen and into their new world.[102] Natural surroundings had featured earlier in the narrative, during Pépel's discussion with the baron on the banks of the Marne, and during a garden party to which the policeman escorts Natacha. In the former, they provide a site of reflection; in the latter, a site of pantomimic bourgeois etiquette. As Natacha and Pépel walk toward the screen, however, for the first time in the narrative, the pursuit of a *ligne de fuite* is visible. The camera, formerly divested of its "role" (c.f. Sesonske) in the doss-house, plots the possibilities of a new space and its future: the camera tracks backwards in an extended shot as the characters walk, suggesting that their every step is one into the unknown.

Conversely, the tenants' potential actualisation of a new future is, disappointingly, no more limpid (to appropriate Deleuze's terminology) in the scenes that follow Kostylev's death than in those that precede it. Although his murder, coupled with Vassilissa's departure in the following scene and Louka's unexplained absence, leaves a smooth space (in Deleuze

[101] "The time for singing is over."
[102] Gorky, *Les Bas-fonds*, 123.

and Guattari's sense of the term), the tenants fail to plot their own agenda, and therefore prevent me from fully conceding to Dudley Andrew's opinion that the landlord's death must be taken as a reprise of Lange's assassination.[103] Faulkner rightly lambasts the lack of a revolutionary project at the heart of the film:[104] no comments are made on Kostylev's death in the scenes that follow his demise and the individual characters persist in their standard daily behaviour, loitering aimlessly in the shelter. As in our introduction to the *bas-fonds*, no shots frame the insular interiors of the shelter in relation to exterior space. An accordion-player is even singing "C'est toujours le carnaval." Death has clearly degenerated into little more than a habit within the shelter: upon Anna's death, Louka remarks "Ne t'en affliges pas, ma fille. Comment pourrions-nous avoir pitié des morts quand nous n'avons même pas pitié des vivants? Nous n'avons même pas pitié de nous-mêmes."[105] Louka himself is absent from the final scenes within the courtyard, alluded to on occasion but lamented by none. It is not until the actor's suicide that the tenants collectively react sensitively to a death within the shelter as the baron announces "Venez, c'est sérieux. L'acteur s'est pendu... Ce soir, c'est fini de chanter."[106] In the play, on the other hand, Satine (who does not feature in the film) simply complains that the actor has spoilt their song, and the play ends without the sensitive reaction elicited by Renoir's baron.[107]

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[103] Dudley Andrew. *Mists of Regret: Culture and Sensibility in Classic French Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1995), 292.
[104] Christopher Faulkner. *The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1986), 82-3.
[105] "Do not distress, my girl. How could we pity the dead if we do not even pity the living? We do not even pity ourselves."
[106] "Come here, it's serious. The actor has hung himself... Tonight, the singing is over."
[107] Gorky, *Les Bas-fonds*, 123.

Nastia and the baron's glimpse of this brutal eruption of the all-too-real consequences of living in the shelter forces them to confront their peers with their own realisation that shelter-life has obscured their perception of space, time and humanity. The baron's position at the head of the stairs, halfway between the courtyard and the lower depths, suggests a call to integrate into the space-time of broader society. However, the single question that now remains is whether or not it is too late for the characters to effect a successful integration into the society from which they have been estranged for so long, especially since details of their prior education and careers are largely withheld. To this, the film offers no answer, dwelling instead on a close-up of the baron's distraught features and the uncertain future that they now embody. The camera refrains from connecting the tenants with the archway or space beyond the shelter, either individually or as a group.

Contrary to O'Shaughnessy's earlier-cited Frontist interpretation of the film's climactic murder, Sesonske more convincingly reads the mixture of hope and despair in the film as a reflection of the last stages of the remains of the euphoric moment that following the victory of the Front Populaire and the grim political reality of 1937 that confronted France. The reading I have just offered clearly concurs with Sesonske's view: the portrayal of the tenants as a group who, with a small number of exceptions, must await catastrophes before considering the necessity of change, only further entrenches the film within the inconvenient truths of its contemporary context. Even the few hopes offered in the film amount to little more than personal desires for independence and social mobility which

were soon to be drowned out within a country which could soon devote little attention to the cares of such wishful individuals. One year after the writing of *Ida*, it was becoming increasingly clear that the French could no longer insulate themselves within the solitary, idealistic pacifism of the French Left, or confidently bank on optimistic promises regarding Europe's future.

4.4 *La Grande Illusion* (1937)

La Grande Illusion recounts the capture of Maréchal (Jean Gabin) and Boëldieu (Pierre Fresnay), lower and upper-class pilots respectively, by German aviator Captain von Rauffenstein (Erich von Stroheim). The French soldiers are sent to Hallbach prison-camp where they meet other prisoners of various class-rankings and ethnic origin, among them the Jewish Rosenthal (Marcel Dalio), and together plot to escape from Hallbach. Many futile attempts later, they are sent to Wintersborn, where von Rauffenstein is now serving as commandant. Boëldieu sacrifices himself to allow Maréchal and Rosenthal to escape. The two escapees remain at the home of Elsa (Dita Parlo), a German war widow, for an extended period of time before eventually leaving, narrowly avoiding German troops as they cross the Swiss border.

Heroic Roles in Three Striated Spaces

Partly based on Renoir's own experience of the First World War, *La Grande Illusion* was filmed as the hopes promised by the Front Populaire were rapidly waning, and serves as a reponse to contemporary political tensions that laid a foundation for the Second World War. As O'Shaughnessy notes, the film "is an attempt to make productive sense of the First World War within the French republican and revolutionary traditions while at the same time responding to the challenges of the 1930s," not least the Spanish Civil War (July 17, 1936 – April 1, 1939) and the rise of Fascism.[108] As such, my analysis does not seem to demonstrate that the film exudes a clairvoyant pessimism regarding the French Left, or the future of France in general. Rather, it shall attempt to demonstrate that Renoir frames the alarming influence of social hierarchies on the radical restriction of entire populations.

La Grande Illusion is particularly worthy of analysis within the context of open space-time as the film provides Deleuze with two key examples of his ideas regarding Renoir's mise-en-scène of temporality: firstly, Deleuze draws on Wintersborn, the last prison-camp featured in the film, to illustrate the presence of buildings that lend the embodied past physical form; secondly, Deleuze refers to two categories of characters portrayed in *La Grande Illusion*, which each suggest how affective bodies may embody contrasting temporalities within individual shots. On the one hand, Boëldieu and von Rauffenstein are imprisoned by their aristocratic

[108] Martin O'Shaughnessy, *La Grande Illusion* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 25. See also, O'Shaughnessy 22-26.

etiquette: “Certains de ces rôles peuvent être héroïques, comme les deux officiers ennemis poursuivant des rites déjà dépassés, ou charmants, comme l’épreuve du premier amour: ils n’en sont pas moins condamnés, parce que déjà voués au souvenir.”[109] On the other hand, Deleuze emphasises the liberating capacity embodied by the corporeality of “les deux évadés [qui] seront sauvés par le sacrifice de l’autre [Boëldieu].”[110] By extending the relevance of Deleuze’s ideas to three key settings that express the tensions between freedom and imprisonment, and by mapping this dialectic onto the geographic space of the film rather than the exclusively theatrical spaces foregrounded by Deleuze, it becomes clear that the influence of spatial politics on the production of a new future is as much the subject of *La Grande Illusion* as *Les Bas-fonds*. Moreover, the mise-en-scène of all three settings subverts Renoir’s previous usage of his signature techniques, particularly deep staging and framing devices such as doors and windows, problematising Deleuze’s assumption that “la profondeur rend évident que le cristal est là pour que quelque chose en fuie, dans le fond, par le fond.”[111]

Hallbach: Subordination and Solidarity

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[109] Deleuze, *L’image-temps*, 117: “Some of these roles may be heroic, such as the two enemy officers proceeding with rites that are already antiquated, or charming, such as the test of first love: they are nonetheless condemned because they are already destined to become memories.” Here, Deleuze refers to Harriet’s experience of heartbreak in *The River* (1951). See chapter two for a discussion of Harriet’s liberation from the influence of her past.

[110] Ibid: “[t]he two escapees [who] will be saved by the sacrifice of the other one [Boëldieu].”

[111] Ibid., 114: “depth makes it clear that the crystal is there so that something can escape from it, in the background, through the background.”

After their plane is shot down by von Rauffenstein, Boëldieu and Maréchal are briefly granted the privilege of eating with the German soldiers before being summoned to Hallbach, the first of the three settings in question, where they meet a range of prisoners of various social backgrounds including Cartier (Julien Carette), a music-hall entertainer from Paris, a school-teacher, an engineer and Rosenthal, a French citizen of Jewish descent whose family has absorbed the fixed assets that Boëldieu's elite class has failed to retain over the course of time. The tension between the stultifying force of German regulations and the future projected by the French would-be escapees is expressed through spatial tensions between the prison setting and the off-screen space beyond. The physical presence of the prison actively draws on the absence of natural surroundings. Our only glimpse of the proximity of the natural landscape to Hallbach occurs as a horse-drawn cart is brought through the prison-entrance (see fig. 5). The relatively shallow image of the gate contrasts with what it reveals once opened: a deep shot of a field that stretches far to the distant background, interrupted only by a border of trees. The deep staging of two women looking past the gate in the foreground and two labourers collecting crops in the background emphasises the visual depth of the image, a device previously employed during the farmland tour in *Le Bled* (1929).

Fig. 5

Most interestingly, the editing of this shot definitively precludes the prospect of even viewing the field from the building occupied by the imprisoned soldiers. A cut from the women looking in from beyond the gates, to the German soldiers training within the camp, and a subsequent cut to the French prisoners in their quarters, only further emphasises each army's physical distance from the fields beyond the gate. As in *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932), montage is not merely assimilated within a classical narrative style but, rather, is employed to mark an emphatic barrier between the two points in space. In fact, the natural landscape remains an imagined image for the prisoners during their entire stay at Hallbach. Outdoor shots within the camp repeatedly emphasise the domineering buildings that circumscribe the soldiers' views of the surroundings: when Arthur dictates the rules of the camp to the newly-arrived soldiers; as the French soldiers dump the earth removed whilst digging their tunnel; and later, within Maréchal and Rosenthal's prison-cell, when Arthur reiterates that non-military outfits cannot be worn. The tension between the onscreen space of

the camp and the outlying invisible space is further invoked by the prisoners and guards. On the two occasions where the elusive landscape is evoked during the prisoners' stay at the camp, it is relegated to off-screen space: first of all, when the engineer first informs Maréchal that the prisoners are building a tunnel, and that "on doit aboutir dans un jardin, derrière les bâtiments que tu vois là-bas. C'est en pleine campagne."[112] The framing of the conversation – beginning with close-ups of each man and proceeding to a close shot of the two men – only further emphasises their distance from the fabled garden. The second moment occurs as the prisoners send a cellmate on a false expedition to a latrine to investigate suspicious sounds outside their quarters. Once outside, he is informed by Arthur that the German soldiers caught a would-be escapee in the very outdoor area to which the prisoners' tunnel ultimately lead. Arthur gestures towards an off-screen space that lies beyond the camera, stating "on l'a attrapé dans les jardins derrière les bâtiments et on l'a tiré dessus."[113] As in the case of the worlds beyond the photo-shoot during *Lange* and the society existing beyond Kostylev's *bas-fonds*, the space lying outside the prison remains an imagined concept for the imprisoned parties. Whereas a physical aperture is available to those characters who choose to use it in each of these prior productions, none is present to the characters of *La Grande Illusion*. In fact, following the death of the soldier recounted by Arthur, it becomes clear that their escape-tunnel is beset by menaces that potentially preclude the soldiers' place within the new future and space of which they dream.

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[112] "We aim to end up in a garden, behind the buildings that you can see over there. It's right in the open country."
[113] "We caught him in the gardens behind the buildings and opened fire on him."

What is most interesting about *La Grande Illusion* within the context of this chapter's aims is that the very techniques Renoir previously exploited to liberate the insular settings of *Lan*ge and *Les Bas-fonds* are here used to emphasise the hopeless confinement of the French prisoners, specifically the prisoners' lack of agency and the futility of attempting to actualise or even envision a new future. In *Lange* and *Les Bas-fonds*, deep staging juxtaposes the spaces of the courtyard and the city, signalling the potential integration of the tenants with new social configurations and the possibility for change in social space. In *La Grande Illusion*, deep staging instead primarily indicates the possibility for constant surveillance. The very scenes at Hallbach where the characters converse with one another frequently exploit deep staging to play on the tension between the prisoners' suspension of concern for their present situation and the constant surveillance effected by the prison-guards. Before the prisoners first sit down together to indulge in Rosenthal's newly-arrived food, the stationary camera frames the characters seated around the table. As they speak, a guard discreetly walks through the door located in the background, glances around the room towards the foreground and, satisfied with the proceedings, leaves and shuts the door. This understated action takes place over the course of approximately eight seconds and risks passing unnoticed by the spectator or even, it is worth noting, by the prisoners themselves. The impossibility of creating a new future is further emphasised in the subsequent shot, also staged in depth, taken from the opposite side of the prisoners' table. As the soldiers eat, talking about their choice of food, the window behind them frames the German guards on patrol in the yard. This surveillance is later evoked, if in

more comical terms, when another guard, having already conducted a head-count of the soldiers in the cell, returns for an inspection as Cartier laments the hole in his trousers.

These moments do illustrate the solidarity between the prisoners, and it is understandable that Deleuze emphasises the agency of the prisoners and the potential future that they embody: the foreground of this deeply-staged image creates new relationships, altering social configurations, demonstrating here, more than ever, the extent to which the openness of space-time and the potential for change are rooted within the individual characters, who collectively challenge hegemonic social outlooks through social interaction. In the cell, the prisoners arrive at new understandings of each other, collapsing vertical barriers and threatening horizontal divisions through humour, most notably as Cartier playfully mocks Boëldieu, donning the latter's monocle and singing "Frère Jacques." However, there is an ongoing tension between the foreground and background within these shots, and the background of these images occasionally contradicts the optimism of the foreground. Despite the shared goal that imprisonment instils in the various characters, these moments serve as clear reminders that German surveillance, if discreet and sometimes invisible, is ubiquitous both within and beyond the walls of the quarters, and almost entirely nullifies the potential establishment of any *ligne de fuite* from the camp and its oppressive regulations.

The system of surveillance staged in depth during the prisoners' interactions with each other in their quarters is reprised in the theatre. Whilst the camera faces Cartier and the other entertainers, we, as viewers of the

film, engage with the spectacle as a distraction, much like the prisoners and German officers who form the mass of spectators (fig. 6). However, during the interlude between Cartier's numbers, the camera grants us a longtitudinal view of the deep space of the theatre. Lurking distinctly in the background are two guards who remind us of the diegetic wartime context within which the escapist musical numbers are being performed (fig. 7). The timing of the reverse shot of the spectators – between Cartier's musical acts – reminds us of the social reality that exists beyond the world of the stage, and which awaits the prisoners when the musical distraction has ended. As a result, this juxtaposition of shots emphasises the deceptively liberating nature of the numbers, implying that the proscenium arch is far more useful when dismantled and used to structure the escape-tunnel. Regardless of new configurations established amongst characters of various ethnicities, classes, interests and occupations within the cell and the theatre, a higher level of authority prevents the soldiers' escape. Furthermore, whereas the tenants of the *bas-fonds* were metres away from the potential liberty offered by the archway, the creation of a genuinely new future remains an even more elusive prospect, to be decided on the distant battlefield.

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

The Jailer Jailed: Wilhelm II and Imperial Authority

The limits of the French soldiers' solidarity are accentuated by the narrative's multiple references to the hierarchical structure to which the prison-guards remain universally subjugated, similarly entrapped within a war that they have no personal reason to fight. Nicholas MacDonald calls our attention to two shots which each underscore the imprisonment of the soldiers after they are first admitted to Hallbach. In the first instance, the departure of one group of French soldiers towards their cell reveals a troop of hitherto invisible German soldiers who were previously standing behind them. These soldiers similarly follow orders as they drill. The second example occurs as Cartier and the engineer search for a suitable location to dump the unearthed gravel previously removed from the tunnel. As they continue their search off-screen, the stationary camera gazes through a wire fence that encloses the young soldiers being trained in another section of the camp that lies adjacent to the small patch of land where the prisoners empty the earth that they have dug to make way for the escape-tunnel. As Macdonald surmises, "Who exactly is prisoner and who jailer?"[114] The narrative repeatedly reminds us of this through the staging of the French and German soldiers in depth.

The hierarchies within the German army are noticeable on a number of occasions. After the soldiers empty bags of earth outside, two German soldiers open the main gate to the camp to allow a horse-drawn cart to enter. The camera cuts to an elderly German woman who remarks "the poor boys"

[114] Nicholas MacDonald. *In Search of* La Grande Illusion, (Jefferson: McFarland, 2013), 38.

and, subsequently, to a close shot of some of the young German soldiers being drilled. The camera cuts once more to the interior of the French prisoners' room where a German soldier is conducting a head-count. It cuts yet again to Boëldieu and the view that the window grants him of the soldiers training outside. Boëldieu succinctly describes their mutual imprisonment: "D'un côté, des enfants qui jouent au soldat—et de l'autre, des soldats qui jouent comme des enfants."[115] The camera cuts to a wide shot that incorporates each of the two physical spaces introduced in this narrative sequence, staging the outdoor drill and the prisoners' indoor exchanges in depth. As the camera pans from the engineer to Maréchal to Boëldieu to Rosenthal, the German soldiers beyond the window remain in view. The spectator clearly perceives the soldiers marching, squatting and performing other drills at the behest of their officers across the breadth of the yard. The camera subsequently views the French soldiers through the window as they look out towards the yard that is now relegated to offscreen space, behind the camera. The haunting, rigorously disciplined sound of their march is not just a hint towards both the German WWI jailers and the contemporary rise of nazism (as suggested by O'Shaughnessy)[116] but also a testament to the unquestioning rigorous uniformity enforced by any imperial will, be it incarnated by Wilhelm II or Hitler.

Rather than offer a reductive prisoner/imprisoner binary, the spaces juxtaposed by the window-frame collectively grant us a view of the oppressive power structure that dominates both the prisoners and the German soldiers who remain its unquestioning instruments. The German

[115] "On one side, children play soldier. On the other, soldiers play like children."
[116] Martin O'Shaughnessy, *La Grande Illusion* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 83-84.

soldiers in this scene are similarly entrapped as they answer to the officers who train them in the background for war. The officers in turn answer to the royal authority that forces these men to battle. Thus, the possibility for these new cooperative attitudes and mutual understandings amongst the prisoners to effect change within the broader social context are hampered not by the visible German characters, but by the imperial authority that imprisons German soldiers within the national war-machine, and forces them to imprison others who are invoking these changes within the prison camp. Deep space implies imprisonment by emphasising the homogenisation of a space, specifically the almost complete elimination of the "relations, fractures, discontinuities, practices of engagement"[117] which, in Massey's analysis, open space to negotiation.

Imperial authority is directly challenged in a number of sequences, most notably in one key scene. Following Germany's first seizure of Douaument, the camera pans from a view of the news bulletins on the wall to a shot of the German soldiers singing behind a window, with two portraits hanging above them. A soldier exits the building and the camera tracks left to follow him, as he salutes to fellow German soldiers and sings, to the French prison-building located opposite. After Boëldieu compliments Maréchal's determination to stage their spectacle despite the loss of Douaument, the camera cuts back to the interiors of the building within which the soldiers are singing. The camera travels left, incorporating the many soldiers who chant in unison. Panning by a map on the wall that hints at rigorous striation of German land on both a local and national level, the

[117] Massey, *For Space*, 85.

camera lingers momentarily on the German guitar-player, piano-player and a singing soldier before tilting upwards to reveal the portraits of two figureheads of royal authority, namely Kaiser Wilhelm II and his wife, Augusta Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein. The latter's status as the last German empress and queen of Prussia hints through hindsight at the bygone era that Boëldieu and Rauffenstein represent on a broader level.

The presence of the Kaiser interrogates the reasons underlying warfare and the folly of extracting the pyrrhic victories that defined the battles of WWI, especially since he embodied three qualities that, according to Michael Howard, "characterized the contemporary German ruling elite: archaic militarism, vaulting ambition, and neurotic insecurity."[118] Wilhelm dismissed Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's *Realpolitik* in favour of the politically aggressive policy of *Weltpolitik*, which fuelled Germany's aggressive international diplomacy and military expansion. The Kaiser's flagrant detachment from diplomacy as well as his close personal and ideological relations with Archduke Franz Ferdinand laid a foundation for the July crisis,[119] where the Kaiser and the German chancellor, Theobald von Bettman Hollweg, issued their formal assurances to Vienna that Germany would support it in case of a showdown with Serbia.[120] Wilhelm's operations foreshadowed Hitler's similarly intolerant determination which, as *Ida* suggests, was becoming increasingly clear to neighbouring nations by the 1930s. Juxtaposed with this outmoded relic of fecklessly ambitious world-policy is the soldiers' collective chant of "Die Wacht am Rhein." That

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[118] Michael Howard, *The First World War: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007), 9.
[119] Ibid., 18.
[120] Ibid., 18-19.

song promises of an everlasting abundance of German blood to protect the greater glory of Germany:

> And even if my heart breaks in death,
> You'll never ever become foreign territory.
> As rich in water is your flood,
> Is Germany in heroes' blood.[121]

The chorus sung by the German soldiers during the final pan in this narrative sequence lauds patriotism without asking the price or the results of such unquestioning adherence to imperial authority:

> Dear fatherland, no fear be thine,
> Dear fatherland, no fear be thine,
> Firm and True stands the Watch, the Watch at the Rhine.
> Firm and True stands the Watch, the Watch at the Rhine.[122]

Most salient in this scene is the contrast between the soldiers' fervently patriotic celebrations and the Kaiser whose unthinking drive for expansion contributed in no small part to the declarations of war in 1914. The mise-en-scène of our introduction to the portraits reminds us of the soldiers' own national obligation to attack the French and, as O'Shaughnessy remarks, shows "how this apparently popular attachment to nation […] works to sustain a hierarchical social order and the militarism that goes with it."[123]

The Kaiser's influence is visible in a number of scenes throughout the film including the very first scene set in Germany: when Boëldieu and

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[121] Und ob mein Herz im Tode bricht,
wirst du doch drum ein Welscher nicht.
Reich, wie an Wasser deine Flut,
ist Deutschland ja an Heldenblut.
[122] Lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein,
lieb Vaterland, magst ruhig sein,
Fest steht und treu die Wacht, die Wacht am Rhein.
Fest steht und treu die Wacht, die Wacht am Rhein.
[123] O'Shaughnessy, *La Grande Illusion*, 84.

von Rauffenstein speak together for the first time at the German airbase, their heads are situated either side of a picture of Wilhelm that is adorned by the German flag and staged in depth. Wilhelm's portrait features again as the German soldiers at Hallbach laugh about the British habit of eating plum-pudding and later appears once more at Wintersborn as von Rauffenstein sits down and calls out the French soldiers' escape records. In all of these cases, the human interaction between the soldiers, particularly their attempt to liberate their circumstances through humour and friendship, belie the imperial wartime impetus projected by Wilhelm's image, but much like the French prisoners at Hallbach, the German soldiers are helpless to overcome it. Because the soldiers on either side unquestioningly fulfil their national duty and joyfully celebrate each provisional victory amidst the constant tug-of-war that defined the four years of battle (as is evidenced by the fact that only a few shots later, Maréchal celebrates Douaumont's recapture by the French), the future represented by the younger soldiers is no more certain than the decline of the pre-war aristocracy.

Wintersborn: the Kaiser's prison

The two central aspects of the mise-en-scène of imprisonment in Hallbach – the ubiquity of German guards and the tension between the prison and outlying natural landscapes – continue to structure the dialectic of confinement and escape that features in Wintersborn, the second of the central narrative settings. The stultifying impact of the extensive network of

German soldiers at Hallbach is signalled by Boëldieu, Maréchal and an anonymous Demolder's escape-records, which not only indicate that they share twelve escape-attempts between them, but that two of the would-be escapees have gone to extreme lengths to escape: Maréchal has attempted escape on five occasions disguised not only as a heating engineer but, on other occasions, as a German soldier and even as a woman. Boëldieu has attempted escape on four occasions through a heating duct, in a trash bin, through sewers and once in a laundry basket. As in Hallbach, Maréchal and Rosenthal embody the "élan vers l'avenir" within an otherwise petrified environment that actively prohibits their escape. In fact, Rosenthal and Maréchal's shared disregard for the imaginary resolutions desired by the tenants of *Les Bas-fonds* becomes abundantly clear during their brief exchange with the Senegalese officer. We first witness him in conversation with the other soldiers when he shows Maréchal and Rosenthal his artwork entitled "La Justice Poursuivant le Crime" (literally "Justice Pursuing Crime"). If Maréchal and Rosenthal appear indifferent to the artwork, it is because they instinctively dismiss idealised conceptions of a world where morals structure all outcomes in society, and the guarantee that Justice actually pursues crime rather than the reverse. Further underscoring Maréchal and Rosenthal's impetus, the unnamed officer creates yet another image whilst Maréchal speaks to Boëldieu regarding the escape-plan.

At Wintersborn, the forces that striate the natural landscape are emphasised as von Rauffenstein guides Maréchal, Boëldieu, and Demolder (Sylvain Itkine) to a vantage-point where two machine-gunners are stationed. A deep shot of the German countryside below tempts the

prisoners with a view of the land. As the four men exit behind the camera in sequence, the focus shifts to the vast landscape overlooked by the machine-gunners. Although the shot of the landscape is breathtaking in scope, the presence of the machine-gunners reminds us that this landscape does not embody unconditional freedom and is, in fact, rigorously striated. As with the instances of the landscape previously studied in the second chapter of this thesis, the land is intrinsically political and subject to the dominant powers, in this case the German army which was earlier visible during the transport of the prisoners to Wintersborn, manning each stop and emphasising the political authority that the Germans hold over the national rural landscape. The forces of the army transform the landscape into a stultifying locus, petrified and petrifying, a genuine force of death where physical escape necessarily and simultaneously implies detection, vulnerability and the possibility of death.

As in Hallbach, the physical structure of the building defies escape, and prison-guards ensure constant surveillance. The impenetrability of the walls and networks of surveillance are primarily emphasised during two moments, namely the French prisoners' introduction to Wintersborn and, later, the death of Boëldieu. After Boëldieu, Maréchal and Demolder arrive at Wintersborn, von Rauffenstein warns them that any hopes of escape are out of the question. After Demolder remarks on the 13th century walls, the camera tilts upwards to view the domineering fortress, beginning with its coat of arms and panning to the left, emphasising the staggering dimensions and impenetrability of the prison walls. Set-designer Eugène Lourié recalled that the crew voted unanimously to use the actual fortress built by Kaiser

Wilhelm on Haut Koneigsbourg, for exterior shots of "the inaccessible castle in the mountains."[124] Lourié was obliged to construct his own sets for interiors because "the configuration, the size of the rooms, everything was all wrong."[125] In designing the sets, Lourié "tried to visually express the severity and grimness of the inaccessible stone fortress. I wanted to make evident von Rauffenstein's words, '*Nobody* escapes from here. *Nobody*.'"[126] That the medieval castle which now imprisons von Rauffenstein was besieged, burned and looted during the Thirty Years' War only to be rebuilt during the 1900s by none other than Wilhelm II hints yet again on an extratextual level towards the role of the German monarchy in imprisoning its military. As von Rauffenstein guides the French prisoners around the fortress, the ubiquity of the German surveillance is marked discreetly but distinctly through deep staging and off-screen space. As the camera records the soldiers standing and passing through areas that the French soldiers are visiting, it reminds us of the German soldiers' presence in adjoining spaces as-of-yet unseen by the visitors. As Maréchal describes his escape attempts to Rauffenstein at Wintersborn: a silhouetted guard is visible in the door behind him in the background. Later, as von Rauffenstein remarks that his men "are not young but enjoy playing soldier," a soldier is distinctly visible in the passageway behind them, through which they have yet to walk as part of their tour.

As in Hallbach, windows frame the French and German soldiers' shared imprisonment. The deep staging of the two officers' conversation

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[124] Eugène Lourié, *My Life in Films* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985), 11-12.
[125] Ibid., 12.
[126] Ibid., 21.

regarding the death of the old order recalls the mise-en-scène of the lunchtime conversation between the POWs at Hallbach. When the camera frames Rauffenstein and Boëldieu sitting down, it grants a view of the area beyond the windows. The castle walls are visible in beyond the window, imprisoning Rauffenstein as much as Boëldieu and the other captive soldiers. The staging of this sequence is echoed in turn once again following Boëldieu's death, which takes place in von Rauffentein's private quarters: having closed Boëldieu's tormented eyes, von Rauffenstein proceeds towards the window where the two officers had previously conversed and where his geranium was perched. As von Rauffenstein approaches the window of the room, the camera once more stages the space beyond the window in depth: a wide shot of the space where the two officers previously sat grants us a view of the domineering walls of Wintersborn through three large windows. Also distinguishable is a patrol-guard whose presence reminds us of the German order that blocks all escape from the domineering physical space of the prison. The importance of this background is suggested by Renoir and Lourié's collaborative effort to stage the space behind the window in depth. The backing visible through the window in each of these instances was actually a photographic blow-up of the castle walls at Haut Koenigsbourg. Renoir suggested that the illusion would be perfect if a sentinel could be viewed on the gallery so Lourié reportedly cut a silhouette of a soldier from a cardboard box and, hiding himself below the ridge of the wall in the background, moved the silhouette by hand.[127] That the view from the window in each of these two scenes was an artificial

[127] Ibid., 28.

construct emphasises the dual importance of the physical and social aspects of the imprisonment imposed by Wintersborn, and the crew's endeavour to repeatedly emphasise the similar implications of the prison for the French and German armies.

Elsa's Home: Deceptive Security

Von Rauffenstein dutifully remains assigned to Wintersborn whilst Rosenthal and Maréchal, embodying the future through their defiant impetus, continue their endeavour to shed the structures imposed on their spatio-temporal mobility by German rule. However, the mise-en-scène of the natural landscape implies that their attempt to discard the past and plot a new trajectory in space-time remains subject to the processes discussed by Deleuze and Guattari, already cited elsewhere in this thesis: "On fait une rupture, on trace une ligne de fuite, mais on risque toujours de retrouver sur elle des organisations qui restratifient l'ensemble […]. Les groups et les individus contiennent des micro-fascismes qui ne demandent qu'à cristalliser."[128] Because the framing of the German soldiers' map at Hallbach and the framing of exterior space at both Hallbach and Wintersborn emphasise the rigorously striated space of the German landscape, the fields are just as menacing in their capacity for entrapment as the scenes at either of the prison-camps, perhaps even more in their physical

[128] Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, 16: "One may make a rupture, draw a *line of flight* but there is still a danger that one will re-encounter organizations that re-stratify everything […]. Groups and individuals contain micro-fascisms simply waiting to *crystallise*." Italics are my own.

openness and limited protection against surveillance. The escape from Wintersborn, although instrumental in approaching the *point de fuite* in oppressive German regulations, does not constitute a liberating *ligne de fuite*: in German territory, the French soldiers are enemies of the country and subject to the suspicion of its people, and they are even forced to hide from a casual passerby walking with her horse. Furthermore, the political nature of the landscape threatens their relationship, almost convincing them to abandon the hope and solidarity that had ensured their joint escape, and without which their prospect of escape from Germany is much less likely.

If Elsa's home is a haven for the escapees, this is not because it is situated in the countryside, and integrates them with a supportive domestic unit, but because it conceals the soldiers against suspicion and potential capture. The ability of both the cottage and Elsa herself to protect the soldiers against the soldiers who march to Wölfisheim mark the home as a protective space that eludes the political networks designed to ensure the captivity of foreign soldiers. However, it is easy to overestimate both the home's apparent security and the extent to which the landscape represents liberty for three main reasons: for the first time, the characters integrate with family life and refrain from discussing their projected escape to France. Secondly, during their stay at Elsa's home, Maréchal leaves her stable and stretches himself in front of a wide, breathtaking shot of the German landscape (fig. 8). Finally, for the first time in the narrative, windows and décor frame the natural landscape beyond the house. In the scene following the Christmas celebrations, Rosenthal opens a window and walks into kitchen where Maréchal and Elsa are also looking out a window. In the next

scene, Rosenthal and Maréchal are outside, leaning against a wooden cart as both men conclude that they must announce their impending departure to Elsa. Rosenthal subsequently tells Elsa that they will be leaving that night and, afterwards, opens a window to reveal Maréchal leaning against Elsa's cart. The series of interconnections established between interior domestic space and exterior natural landscapes through the formerly restrictive device of the window marks a mobility in space found nowhere else in the narrative. However, this mobility is deceptive: the fact remains that the natural landscape is surveyed by German soldiers, a fact underscored by the the troop of soldiers that pass during the soldiers' arrival at Elsa's house earlier in the film.

Fig. 8

Deleuze likens Renoir's windows to “l'eau gelée de la vitre, du miroir plan

ou du cristal profond,"[129] through which we see "le temps, dans son double mouvement de faire passer les présents,"[130] just as we see "le jaillissement du temps comme dédoublement, comme scission" within Renoir's work in general.[131] Such an insightful observation only further underscores the extent to which the most Renoirian of framing motifs, insofar as it features within *La Grande Illusion*, represents a complete subversion of Renoir's prior use of windows.

The camera continues to frame the escapees within a socially stultifying locus and the future in these images remains embodied by the soldiers. This impetus carries Maréchal and Rosenthal across the Swiss border towards freedom and officially free themselves of the forces that striate the German landscape, as recognised by the German soldiers who cease firing on the soldiers once the latter have crossed the border. However, this drive also encourages them to return to the aerial battles that threaten to relay the escapees' spatio-temporal trajectory to the German prison-system once again, or to their grave. Deleuze is correct to emphasise the *élan vital* embodied by the escapees, specifically their orientation towards the future, for they alone represent the insurgent spontaneity introduced by space to hegemonic social configurations. However, by the end of the film, Renoir's mise-en-scène has consistently challenged any easy attempt to view them as the representation of anything other than squandered potential. The camera does not merely sympathise with the two anonymous figurines marching home for dispatch to a nameless grave. It pities their valour and laments

[129] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 116: "the frozen water of the glass pane, the flat mirror."
[130] Ibid: "time, in its double movement of making presents pass."
[131] Ibid.,109: "the gushing forth of time as doubling, as scission."

their inevitable loss.

4.5 Conclusion: "*Nous dansons sur un volcan*."

By drawing on *Ida* and reading the three films concerned through Deleuze and Massey, we are in a position not only to integrate the import of buildings and characters within our interpretation of spatial politics in Renoir's work, but also to determine the impact of Renoir's engagement with the Front Populaire on his framing of space-time. All of these characters endeavour to escape the embodied past at one point or another, but are emphatically myopic, sometimes in ways that are reflexively criticised by the camera (*Lange* and *Les Bas-fonds*), on other occasions earning the camera's sympathy (*La Grande Illusion*). Massey writes that "the recognition of the multiplicities of the spatial […] understands universals as spatio-temporally specific positions," which necessarily demand "acceptance that one is being observed/theorised/evaluated in return and potentially in different terms."[132] This is signalled not only by the camera's framing of the geographical space before it, but through the characters' own navigation in space. Interestingly, all three films feature a central edifice (*La Grande Illusion* features two) that have been striated by the various "cartographies of power"[133] that condition the characters' spatio-temporal trajectories, and problematise any implementation (or, in the case

[132] Massey, *For Space*, 89.
[133] Ibid., 85.

of *Les Bas-fonds*, even the envisioning) of a *ligne de fuite* from the embodied past. The characters' necessarily limited perspectives condition their potential escape beyond their current condition, and subject themselves to unpredictable external social forces. Their necessarily short-sighted view of physical space and the social forces that striate it are constantly signalled by Renoir's signature style, notably deep space, lateral camera movement, and calculated use of off-screen space, all of which were developed by Renoir during what arguably represents the most technologically innovative period of his aesthetic and political development.

Although Renoir frequently portrays social projects that can only be achieved in collaboration with another member or number of members of their community, we should not automatically conclude that the characters who do not subscribe to antiquated etiquette or stultifying capitalist regimes are guaranteed to be rewarded for attempting to liberate themselves. *Lange* and *Les Ba*s-*fonds* feature communities that crucially fail to engage with a comprehensive conceptualisation of space (itself an impossibility), inadvertently leaving their spaces open to restratification. As for *La Grande Illusion*, although the impetus of Maréchal and Rosenthal is held in tension with the constraints of German rule, the only true escape from the force of striated space is effected at the end of the film. Space is open, but even then, the aftermath of the story is as uncertain as that of *Lange* and *Les Bas-fonds*, by virtue of the heroes' projected circular trajectory (notwithstanding thie plans to reunite at Maxim's in Paris).

Insofar as the specific temporal dimension of these films is concerned, Deleuze's decision to liken each film to a cracked crystal, from

which time escapes and "se donne un avenir,"[134] is an oversimplification: each film testifies to the constant imposition of social forces upon the *ligne de fuite* embodied by individuals and groups that appropriate a given set of circumstances to enter a process of becoming. Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of "des micro-fascismes qui ne demandent qu'à cristalliser"[135] provides a useful means of revising Deleuze's categorisation of Renoir's crystal of time, and illustrating why Renoir's Front Populaire output appears more politically oriented towards the radical pessimism of *Ida* than the hopes and dreams expressed by the Front itself. Each film testifies to the constant recrystallisation of flawed crystals around the *ligne de fuite* that escapes the crystal in which the societies are established (or "born" to use Deleuze's term),[136] from which individuals and groups must constantly endeavour to extricate themselves.

Before closing this analysis, it is important to observe precisely how it interrogates Martin O'Shaughnessy's relatively recent study of this period in Renoir's career, for his analysis is also concerned with the passage of time, specifically what O'Shaughessy terms "the mise-en-scène of history," and is informed by aspects of Deleuze's film philosophy which are central to this thesis. On the one hand, O'Shaughnessy is not undividedly optimistic regarding the portrayal of social progress within Renoir's Front Populaire output: O'Shaughnessy lucidly argues that Renoir's mise-en-scène of history, during his Front Populaire period, involves a sense of "uncertainty,

[134] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 117: "time is given a future."
[135] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2: Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980): "micro-fascisms simply waiting to crystallise."
[136] c.f. Deleuze, *L'Image-temps*, 115: "On naît dans un cristal, mais le cristal ne retient que la mort […]."

driven by the co-presence of competing possibilities," and acknowledges that progress in *Lange* can only be achieved through problematic acts of violence.[137] However, he fails to question the sincerity of Renoir's attitude towards the collective enterprises that feature in Renoir's work of this period, and generally overestimates the social agency of the characters in each film who endeavour to supplant the economic and political molar lines that impede their spatio-temporal trajectories. He even asserts that the mise-en-scène of *Les Bas-fonds*, "in contrast to an immobilizing social realism which would tie characters to social roles and locations, […] loosens their bonds to open up the possibility of transformation."[138] Although O'Shaughnessy insightfully acknowledges what Massey refers to as "[a] notion of becoming," his analysis remains surprisingly closed to "the articulation of forms of power witin spatial configurations,"[139] which Massey surmises as a unifying argument of her treatise on space. Because the projects plotted by Renoir's communities are necessarily subject to social forces articulated beyond their own physically enclosed spaces, the range and potential impact of the futures envisaged by Renoir's communities is alarmingly limited. Clearly, the very "closing down of possibilities"[140] detected by O'Shaughnessy in *La Bête Humaine* and the final scenes of *La Règle du jeu*, should be read as a historical and social process in itself, whose spatial politics are *mises en scène* from the very beginning of Renoir's involvement with the French Left. Indeed, the phrase "Nous dansons sur un volcan," an anonymous word of caution that was

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[137] O'Shaughnessy, "Shooting in Deep Time," 28-29.
[138] Ibid., 32.
[139] Massey, *For Space*, 93.
[140] O'Shaughnessy, "Shooting in Deep Time," 30.

voiced during the reign of Charles X and later inspired Renoir's portrayal of the *haute bourgeoisie* in *La Règle du jeu*,[141] could well be applied to any of the three films discussed.

The three films analysed are evidently rich in texture, and the numerous interpretations to which they have been subjected over time, including the reflexively critical attitude elucidated by this chapter, arguably result from Renoir's own conception of history. Recollecting the 6 February 1934 crisis, a fatal riot organised by far-right leagues which catalysed the rise of the Front Populaire, Renoir commented on his own perspective on the process of interpreting history. The parallels between his memories and the multiple perspectives continuously unearthed within the three films analysed are so salient that they are worth citing in full:

> Le 6 février 1934, le jour où il y a eu ces bagarres place de la Concorde, je déjeunais dans un petit restaurant qui était peut-être à cinquante mètres de l'endroit où ça se passait. Et il se passait pas mal de choses. Eh bien, c'est en rentrant chez moi que j'ai rencontré un ami qui m'a appris ce qui avait eu lieu pendant mon déjeuner! On croit toujours qu'un événement est immédiatement et universellement perçu. On croit même qu'il est immédiatement et universellement compris. Ce n'est pas vrai. L'événement reste souterrain ou isolé pendant très longtemps. Ce n'est que peu à peu qu'il émerge, ce n'est qu'après coup qu'il prend son sens.[142]

By opening our analysis of Renoir's Front Populaire output to both Renoir's multifaceted political outlook and Massey's theorisation of space as "a

[141] Narboni, Bazin, and Gauteur, eds., *Jean Renoir*, 298: "We are dancing on a volcano."
[142] Narboni, Bazin, and Gauteur., eds., *Jean Renoir*, 207: "On February 6th, 1934, the day that these riots unfolded in Place de la Concorde, I was eating lunch in a little restaurant that was perhaps about fifty metres from the area where it all happened. And quite a lot happened. Well, it was when I was going home that I met a friend who informed me about what had happened during my lunch! We always believe that an event is immediately and universally perceived. This isn't true. The event remains buried or isolated for a very long time. It only emerges little by little. It only acquires meaning after the fact."

sphere of coexistence of a multiplicity of trajectories," which exists within "a shared historical process that differentiates the world as it connects it," we can consider the full range of futures available to Renoir's communities. Only then can we fully appreciate Renoir's ability to integrate temporality within its perspective of the mutually affective relationship between social and physical space, and the complex ideological stances embedded in Renoir's narrative style.

Chapter 5 – Renoir's *Crises Anti-réalistes*: Framing *le Temps Gelé*

"Tout était faux : faux réalisme, faux crédit et même fausses catins […]."[1]

– Gustave Flaubert, 29 April 1871

"Ce qui vous fait exister, ce n'est pas la force de votre désir […],
c'est le jeu du monde et de la séduction, c'est la passion
de jouer et d'être joué, c'est la passion de
l'illusion et des apparences […]."[2]

– Jean Baudrillard, *Les Stratégies Fatales*

5.1 Introduction: Seeing Time in the *Image Plane*

Foreshadowing Deleuze's own emphasis on the theatricality that infuses Renoir's settings, Leo Braudy states that "Renoir's world of theater and his world of nature do not exist in mutually exclusive categories, and in fact more of the unique quality of film can be illuminated if one examines their interaction than if one keeps them totally separate."[3] This thesis has elsewhere sought to avoid reducing Renoir's worlds to theatres, arguing that

[1] Letter from Flaubert to George Sand dated 29 April 1871, cited in Pierre Bourdieu, *Les Règles de l'art: genèse et structure du champ littéraire* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1992), 91.
[2] Jean Baudrillard, *Les Stratégies Fatales* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1983), 200: "What makes you exist is not the force of your desire […], but the play of the world and seduction; it is the passion of playing and being played, it is the passion of illusion and appearances […]."
[3] Leo Braudy, *Jean Renoir, The World of His Films* (London: Robson, 1977), 148.

a full appreciation of Renoir's mise-en-scène demands that we examine the counterpoint through which the *surcroît de théâtralité* and narrative setting interact expressively. However, Braudy and Deleuze's comments are pertinent in the case of the three films discussed in this chapter: in *Diary of a Chambermaid* (1946), *The Golden Coach* (1952), and *Eléna et les hommes* (1956), geographical place-names are secondary to the theatricality foregrounded by different combinations of set-design, costume-design, camerawork, music, and performance. It is worth noting that the emphatic theatricality that distinguishes each of the three films was not always a deliberate choice on Renoir's part. Years after its release, Renoir stated that "*Le Journal d'une femme de chambre* correspond à une de mes crises anti-réalistes."[4] Renoir further elaborated: "Il y a des moments où je me demande si la seule vérité n'est pas la vérité intérieure et si la vérité des maquillages, des costumes, des apparences, des meubles, la vérité extérieure, si vraiment nous ne devons pas la négliger pour avancer un tout petit peu plus en avant vers cette vérité intérieure. *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre* correspond à cette préoccupation."[5] This aesthetic watershed disappointed even Renoir's most faithfully optimistic critic, André Bazin:

> Par quelle aberration mentale, par quelle absence d'esprit auto-critique, ou par quel goût dangereux du paradoxe, Renoir a-t-il voulu tourner précisément en Amérique le sujet qui lui dentait le plus à cœur et surtout qui pouvait le moins se traiter hors de France ? […] On sent les sunlights sur les rosiers de Burgess Meredith, le film entier baigne dans cette lumière d'aquarium

[4] Narboni, Bazin, and Gauteur., eds., *Jean Renoir*, 314: "*Diary of a Chambermaid* corresponds with one of my *crises anti-réalistes*."

[5] Ibid.: "There are moments when I ask myself if the sole truth is not *la vérité intérieure* and if the truth of make-up, of costumes, of appearances, of furniture, the *vérité extérieure*, if we really should not neglect it in order to advance a bit more towards this *vérité intérieure*. *Diary of a Chambermaid* corresponds with this preoccupation."

> caractéristique des studios hollywoodiens et tout – les acteurs compris – y fait figure de fleur japonaise dans un bocal.[6]

Perhaps as a result of the unflattering reviews, Renoir avoided emphatically artificial mise-en-scène in his following features, *Woman on the Beach* (1947) and *The River* (1951). He returned to the style of *Diary,* filming *The Golden Coach* in its entirety at Italy's Cinecittà studios with a prologue and epilogue set in front of a proscenium arch, only when his plan to film "quelques plans d'atmosphère dans un pays d'Amérique latine"[7] fell through. Although this film also divided critics,[8] Renoir exploited a similar colour palette for *French Cancan* (1954), a crowd-pleasing fictionalisation of the opening of the Moulin Rouge, and again for *Eléna et les hommes*, arguably his most socially incisive study of theatre and artifice.

Despite Deleuze's inadequate conceptualisation of space, he formulates two key observations that are conducive to a comprehensive understanding of how Renoir's revised aesthetic portrays the relationship between space and time. Observing that *The Golden Coach* is characterised

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[6] André Bazin, "*Le Journal d'une femme de chambre*: une suite manqué à *La Règle du jeu*." *L'Écran Française*. 15 June, 1948. Accessed in Production Files. Box 29, Folder 12. *Jean Renoir Papers 1915-1927* (Collection 105). Performing Arts Special Collections, Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles: "What mental aberration, lack of self-judgement, or dangerous taste for paradox lead Renoir to film, in America, the subject that was closest to his heart, and which could least be treated outside France? […] We feel the sunlamps on Burgess Meredith's rose-bushes, the entire film is bathed in that aquarium light that is typical of Hollywood studios, and everything – including the actors – looks like Japanese flowers in a fishbowl." For a more comprehensive review of the reception of *Diary of a Chambermaid*, see Elizabeth Ann Vitanza, "Rewriting the Rules of the Game: Jean Renoir in America, 1940-1947." (PhD diss., University of Los Angeles, California, 2007), 172-187.

[7] Jean Renoir, *Correspondance (1913-1978)*, eds. David Thompson and Lorraine LoBianco (Paris: Plon, 1998), 268: "some atmospheric shots in a Latin American country."

[8] It even divided *Cahiers* critics. Jacques Doniol-Valcroze embraced the work: Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, "Camilla et le don," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 21 (1953): 44-6. Other critics reacted negatively to Renoir's visibly artificial décor: Herman G. Weinberg criticised Renoir for saturating the visuals at the expense of believability: Herman G. Weinberg, "Lettre de New-York," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 24 (1953): 35.

by a reduced number of shots staged in depth, Deleuze states that "le jaillissement du temps comme dédoublement, comme scission,"[9] visible in Renoir's deeply composed shots, "était déjà vrai du miroir de l'image plane, comme dans *Le Carrosse d'or*,"[10] even if "c'était moins visible."[11] Here, Deleuze not only "makes depth staging stand in for Renoir's compositional style as a whole,"[12] as O'Shaughnessy observes in his analysis of Renoir's films of the 1930s, but also misleadingly implies that the entirety of *The Golden Coach* is comprised of "flat" images, even though depth is a crucial element of Renoir's mise-en-scène of this film.[13] However, Deleuze usefully implies that the *image plane*, which nonetheless features frequently in Renoir's post-war work, articulates the tension between the past and the ongoing creation of the present moment.

Secondly, as stated in the introduction (and further discussed within the second and third chapters of this thesis), Deleuze likens each of Renoir's diverse environments to a theatre "[qui] ne vaut que comme recherche d'un art de vivre."[14] As such, Deleuze observes that the tension between the embodied past and the potential creation of a new future articulated through the contrast between "des rôles gelés, figés, tout faits, trop conformes,"[15] and the potential for escape from these roles in the form of "une nouvelle

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[9] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2: L'image-temps* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1985), 109: "the gushing forth of time as doubling, as scission."
[10] Ibid., 113: "was already true of the mirror in flat images, as in *The Golden Coach*."
[11] Ibid: "it was less visible."
[12] Martin O'Shaughnessy, "Shooting in Deep Time: the Mise en Scène of History in Renoir's Films of the 1930s," in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, ed. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 23-24.
[13] I have elsewhere examined the elusive significance of deep staging to *The Golden Coach*: Barry Nevin, "Artifice in Depth: *Profondeur de champ* in Jean Renoir's *The Golden Coach* (1952)," *Kinema* 38 (2012): 5-38.
[14] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 115: "[that] is valuable only as a search for an art of living."
[15] Ibid., 116: "frozen, fixed, ready-made, too conformative roles."

réalité qui ne préexistait pas."[16] Thus, by drawing on the virtual possibilities available, characters may find a role that allows them to actualise a point of flight and enter "une réalité décantée."[17] Deleuze provides an enlightening framework within which to analyse the temporal constraints imposed by theatre, and allows the spectator to determine that a contrast between theatre and "real life" within Renoir's images could provide a tension between the stultifying force of the past and the ongoing present, regardless of the the depth of the image. However, Deleuze's definition of theatre requires further elaboration. Given the variety of theatrical motifs emerging from various molar lines (to use Deleuze and Guattari's term) – colonialism, capitalist hierarchies, and pre-war aristocratic class barriers to name but a few – it would be reductive to ground an analysis of these three emphatically theatrical works within the same methodology that Deleuze employs for films as diverse as *Boudu sauvé des eaux* and *The River*. If we are to employ Deleuze constructively, we must avoid conflating the generalities of Deleuze's approach to theatricality with the stylistic specificities of Renoir's aesthetic in this portion of the corpus.

To assess the critical limits of Deleuze's observations regarding the composition of Renoir's crystal, we must distinguish between two particular aspects of theatre that feature in different Renoir works, as dichotomised by Thomas Elsaesser. On the one hand, Elsaesser states that Renoir's theatre features as a "formalized game"[18] with an agreed set of rules and

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[16] Ibid., 116: "a new reality that did not pre-exist."
[17] Ibid., 114: "une réalité décantée."
[18] Thomas Elsaesser, "Theatricality and Spectacle in *La Règle du jeu*, *Le Carrosse d'or* , and *Éléna et les hommes*," in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, eds. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 240.

conventions that bind performer and audience. On the other hand, theatre incorporates spectacle, a "riot of color and movement" embodied by "a firework of energy, ecstasy, and the *élan vital.*"[19] Although spectacle implies a public space, it requires no diegetic audience because "it is affirming the sense of being fiercely alive."[20] Elsaesser's analysis usefully echoes that of Deleuze by suggesting that characters can escape a role through a liberating force that is simultaneously of and at odds with the theatre (escaping theatre through theatricality), thus holding the petrifying force of theatrical roles and the potential creation of a future, free of theatrical influences, in tension. However, Elsaesser unjustly emphasises the liberating power of spectacle at the expense of its potential ideological function. In doing so, he unduly elevates spectacle's spontaneity and life-asserting force from a possible attribute of spectacle to an inherent characteristic. For spectacle can be deployed to entertain, or to homogenise space and establish hegemonic strata with equal facility.

Theorising spectacle as "un rapport social entre des personnes, médiatisé par des images,"[21] Guy Debord's *La Société du spectacle* (1967) associates the increased value of superficial appearance in the modern world with a progressive lack of authenticity in society which has degraded human knowledge and the capacity for critical thought.[22] Debord particularly emphasises the correlation between the impossibility of entering into critical

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[19] Ibid., *Élan vital* is a term coined by Henri Bergson in *L'Évolution Créatrice* (1907) to explain the development of organisms. In *Le bergsonisme*, Deleuze describes the *élan vital* as "une virtualité en train de s'actualiser" ("a virtuality in the process of being actualised"). C.f. Gilles Deleuze *Le bergsonisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011), 96.
[20] Ibid., Theatricality and Spectacle," 240.
[21] Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, 16: "a social relationship between people that is mediated by images."
[22] See especially: Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, 27-28.

dialectic with spectacle and the striation of space-time: "Le spectacle se présente comme une énorme positivité indiscutable et inaccessible. Il ne dit rien de plus que « ce qui apparaît est bon, ce qui est bon apparaît ». L'attitude qu'il exige par principe est cette acceptation passive qu'il a déjà en fait obtenue par sa manière d'apparaître sans réplique, par son monopole de l'apparence."[23] Spectacle constitutes a potentially crucial tool for ruling classes within hierarchical societies aiming to subjugate social strata: "Dans le spectacle, une partie du monde *se représente* devant le monde, et lui est est supérieure. […] Ce qui relie les spectateurs n'est qu'un rapport irréversible au centre même qui maintient leur isolement. Le spectacle réunit le séparé, mais il le réunit *en tant que séparé*."[24]

The spectacle and its ideology both become the focal point of our vision and consciousness but "échappe à la reconsidération et à la correction,"[25] thus precluding revolutionary action. Society is, in Deleuze and Guattari's sense of the term, crystallised. Most interestingly, in a chapter entitled "Le temps spectaculaire," Debord emphasises the impact of the appeal of spectacle and its corollary, fixed social relations, on the prohibition of a new future. Asserting that "La raisonnement sur l'histoire est, inséparablement, *raisonnement sur le pouvoir*,"[26] Debord argues that spectacle prevents people from synchronising with the progression of real

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[23] Ibid., 20: "The spectacle presents itself as something enormously positive, indisputable and inaccessible. It says nothing more than that which appears is good, that which is good appears. The attitude which it demands in principle is passive acceptance which in fact it already obtained by its manner of appearing without reply, by its monopoly of appearance."
[24] Ibid.,, 30: "In the spectacle, one part of the world *represents itself* to the world and is superior to it. […] What binds the spectators together is no more than an irreversible relation at the very centre which maintains their isolation. The spectacle reunites the separate, but reunites it *as separate*." Italics are Debord's own.
[25] Ibid., 23: "escapes reconsideration and correction."
[26] Ibid., 133: "Reasoning about history is, necessarily, reasoning about power." Italics are Debord's own.

time by creating "[une] *fausse conscience du temps*"[27] through "la paralysie de l'histoire et de la mémoire."[28] Debord specifically refers to "sociétés froides"[29] as those who "ont ralenti à l'extrême leur part d'histoire,"[30] establishing hegemony through "une structure définitive a exclu le changement"[31] and the construction of "la pseudo-histoire […] à tous les niveaux de la consommation de la vie."[32]

Given that vivid spectacle provides the substance of these films rather than being a trivial embellishment, it is important to examine the socio-political deployment of spectacle and the temporal stasis that this implies. In particular, it is important to shift our perspective towards the ways in which Renoir frames the dialectic between politics and spectacle to foreground temporality in his portrayal of social space. In all three films, incumbent power structures amongst upper-class institutions, ranging from families to colonial bodies to the French military, exploit spectacle as part of their theatrical regimes in order to enforce a specific set of ideological values within a given space, and to nullify space's ability to provide what Massey terms "a precondition for the temporal."[33] In doing so, these bodies reassure members of their own class of their own socio-political hegemony and assimilate lower social strata within their theatrical regimes with a view to externalising their values. By relating the mise-en-scène of spectacle in each of these films to the materiality of the crystal, this chapter aims to

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[27] Ibid., 156: "[a] *false consciousness of time*." Italics are Debord's own.
[28] Ibid: "the paralysis of history and memory."
[29] Ibid., 129: this may be literally translated as "cold societies," but Debord seems to be emphasising the lack of circulation implied by such coldness.
[30] Ibid: "have slowed down their historical activity to the limit."
[31] Ibid: "a definitive structuring [that] has excluded change."
[32] Ibid., 130: "pseudo-history […] at every level of consumption of life."
[33] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE), 89.

demonstrate the ways in which the visual style in each of these *crises anti-réalistes* invokes a tension between the ideological stratification effected through spectacle and those who endeavour to escape its influence, thus provoking the spectator to interpret spectacle both temporally and spatially.

5.2 *Diary of a Chambermaid* (1946)

Diary of a Chambermaid, based on Octave Mirbeau's *Journal d'une femme de chambre* (1900),[34] traces the experience of a newly-hired chambermaid (played by Paulette Goddard) who, weary of executing orders, aims to become her own mistress. During her stay at the Lanlaire residence, she encounters the domineering, socially detached Mme Lanlaire (Judith Anderson), who keeps her ineffectual husband (Reginald Owen) penniless whilst doting on Georges, her disgusted, gravely ill son (Hurd Hatfield). She also meets the neighbouring Captain Mauger (Burgess Meredith), who laughs at the Lanlaires' self-assumed importance, and Joseph (Francis Lederer), a fellow servant who, after ten years of service in the Lanlaire manor, is plotting to steal the family's vast collection of silverware and begin a new chapter in his own life as the entrepreneur of a café in Cherbourg. Célestine ultimately opts to leave with Georges instead of Joseph, who wrests Célestine from Georges's hands before meeting his own violent end at the hands of a mob of Bastille Day revellers.

[34] Differences between Mirbeau's novel and Renoir's adaptation are discussed as appropriate. For an extensive list of differences between each, consult: Charles Tesson, "Jean Renoir et Luis Buñuel: Autour du *Journal d'une femme de chambre*" in *Jean Renoir: Nouvelles Approches*, ed. Frank Curot (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1995), 39-62.

Whereas the previous three chapters have demonstrated that deep staging is a crucial technical component and ideological device in Renoir's films of the 1930s, the few events staged in depth in *Diary of a Chambermaid* generally depict trivial actions that co-exist without competing for the enforcement or disintegration of a given social configuration. So rare are these incidents that they can be summarised in four moments. First of all, as Célestine and Joseph speak in the foreground, we witness two men, presumably rail workers, performing work in the background. Later, as Célestine walks around Georges's room for the first time with Joseph, M. Lanlaire is visible in an adjoining room, pulling curtains off shelves. On another occasion, early in the narrative, Célestine removes an item of clothing from the washing-line in the foreground, revealing M. Lanlaire as he tends to his roses in the background. Finally, in a moment which will be discussed later in this section, Mme Lanlaire brings Célestine through the background to a deeply-staged boudoir as she offers her maid a new role within the household. Beyond these moments, characters and décor are framed with little visible intent to stage spaces in depth. Renoir's technique also incorporates far less camera movement than his films of the 1930s. Indeed, William Gilcher's formalist study of Renoir's American work observes that although the camera is noticeably more mobile during the first half of *Diary*, it is "largely motivated by character movement," and its actions are "rigidly executed."[35] Renoir himself readily acknowledged that *Diary of a Chambermaid* was "un très vieux projet, qui s'est trouvé entièrement modifié, étant donné que je l'ai réalisé au

[35] William Harry Gilcher, "Jean Renoir in America: A Critical Analysis of his Films from *Swamp Water* to *The River*" (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 1979), 307.

commencement de cette période ou je voyais les scènes d'une façon plus concentrée, plus théâtrale, avec moins de champs et de contre-champs."[36]

Clearly, we must avoid the temptation to examine the import of Renoir's signature composition-in-depth and lateral camera movements towards the mise-en-scène of space-time in favour of drawing on Deleuze's assertion that theatricality and the *image plane* condition the spectator's perception of temporality in Renoir's work. Renoir's understated framing foregrounds the theatricality of the world viewed, directing our attention towards the use of costume-design, décor, and characterisation to articulate tensions between the hegemonic molar line embodied by Mme Lanlaire's own mise-en-scène of opulence and the subversive goals that motivate her servants.

"*I'm trying to get you to stay with me*": Freezing Domestic Space

As mentioned in the introduction, Deleuze draws our attention to physical locations in Renoir's work where time freezes, and the possibility for change in space is nullified. As demonstrated in chapters two and four, such buildings are only closed to the extent that hegemonic systems striate their social configurations. Much like each of these locations, the physical and social space of the Lanlaire residence initially appears isolated from the impact of time and outlying spaces. The windows and doors that elsewhere

[36] Jacques Rivette and François Truffaut, "Entretien avec Jean Renoir," *Cahiers du Cinéma* 34 (1954): 19: "a very old project, which was entirely modified since I directed it at the beginning of that period when I saw scenes in a more concentrated manner, more theatrical, with less cross-cutting."

connect domestic interiors with public spaces (see *La Chienne* [1931], *La Grande Illusion* [1937] or *The Southerner* [1945]) only lead to and from the servants' quarters, between each floor of the residence, and out to the garden which is in turn enclosed by a high wall. The Lanlaires' apparently immutable grandeur is emphasised by the wide shots of their high ceilings, lengthy corridors, ornate frames, statues, and rose-gardens that distinguish their residence from the modest abode and untended garden of the neighbouring antagonist, Captain Mauger.

Within the home, Mme Lanlaire's rigorous adherence to right-wing politics render her husband and son ineffectual. Mirbeau's M. Lanlaire is even more powerless in Renoir's film than in the novel: although Mirbeau's M. Lanlaire succeeds at least in killing three thrushes at one point in the novel,[37] Renoir's powerless patriarch openly remarks that he always has terrible hunts because he never carries gun-cartridges. Although he temporarily rebels during the anti-Bastille Day celebrations, his spirit is rapidly quenched by Mme Lanlaire's disciplinarian authority. Mme Lanlaire's attempts to crystallise time reach their zenith in her relationship with her son. When Georges returns home early in the film, Mme Lanlaire determinedly declares "I'll see that he never leaves me again, never." Her attempt to perpetually embody his ideal maternal authority is blatantly indicated by the large portrait of her that hangs in his room, recalling the mise-en-scène of *La Chienne*: in the latter film, Legrand's belittling wife leaves a portrait of her former husband, believed-deceased war veteran Alexis Godard, hanging in their sitting-room. Godard's honourable presence

[37] Octave Mirbeau, *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), 173.

looms over those living in the apartment, even though it bears no resemblance to the present-day image of Godard who, in fact, escaped the war under another man's name, and supports himself in Paris through petty crime. Similarly, Mme Lanlaire's portrait immortalises her image. Committed to the canvas at a precise moment in the past, it is left hanging beneath a sheet in Georges's room until his return. Later, when Georges rebels against his mother's plot to retain him within the mansion, even by procuring Célestine, Mme Lanlaire stifles his impetus to leave: "You won't be sorry, I'll take care of you. […] I'll watch over you as I've always done since you were a fragile little boy. Haven't I always protected you, sheltered you?" Mme Lanlaire clearly maintains a relationship with her son based on her memories of him rather than on the fully-grown man that he is, and the outcome falls in Mme Lanlaire's favour despite Georges's objections.

Clearly, like the la Chesnayes who resort to la Colinière, Mme Lanlaire endeavours to isolate the residence from the provincial town within which it is situated, echoing Massey's discussion of the tendency of anachronistic social groups to resort to "some particular moment/location in time-space when the definition of the area and the social relations dominant within it were to the advantage of that particular claimant group."[38] Unsurprisingly, Mme Lanlaire herself displays even less mobility within the physical space of the manor than any of the other characters: whereas M. Lanlaire ventures into the garden on occasion and, when enraged, even pursues Mauger beyond the cleft in the wall that separates their gardens, Mme Lanlaire remains solely within the architectural parameters of her

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[38] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 169.

house, never even entering the garden for the entirety of the film. The importance of reading their residence temporally is indicated by the fact that the family's social circle has drastically diminished. Mme Lanlaire remarks that "We are not as young as we once were. Our friends don't want to visit us as they once did." Although the action unwinds almost forty years before *La Règle du jeu* (1939), in which the la Chesnayes socialise (albeit in closed circles) with members of high society, Mme Lanlaire's crystallisation of domestic space has already deprived the family of contacts beyond the walls of their residence. In fact, Renoir's narrative generally emphasises the isolation of the Lanlaire residence to a much greater extent than Mirbeau's novel, in which Mme Lanlaire never utters this phrase. Although the hierarchised domestic space and the domineering décor create an insulated ornament of the past, Mme Lanlaire's rules do not extend beyond the sterile world of their manor. In fact, the tension invoked by costume-design and characterisation, between the setting and its potential disintegration, implies that Mme Lanlaire's regime fails to even maintain control within her home.

Vérité Intérieure as *Élan Vital*: Célestine, Joseph and Upward Mobility

The tension between "[les] rôles gelés, figés, tout faits, trop conformes"[39] imposed by Mme Lanlaire, and the *élan vital* oriented towards "une réalité decantée,"[40] is chiefly articulated through the contrast between professional façade and private desires embodied by Célestine and Joseph. Deleuze's

[39] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 116: "[the] frozen, fixed, ready-made, too conformative roles."
[40] Ibid., 114: "a decanted reality."

discussion of the origins of the crystalline states provides an enlightening framework within which to analyse how a character's private motives may enter into dialectic with superficial aspects of his/her presentation to confront the spectator with competing versions of what we may accept as reality. Drawing on the collaborations between Tod Browning and Lon Chaney (*The Unholy Three* [1925]; *The Unknown* [1927]), Deleuze remarks that the actor, like the crystal, has both an opaque and a limpid face. Prefiguring his emphasis on the relationship between theatricality and the crystal later in the chapter, particularly in his analysis of Renoir's work, Deleuze states that "le cristal est une scène"[41] within which the actor "rend actuelle l'image virtuelle du rôle, qui deviant visible et lumineux. […] Mais plus l'image virtuelle du rôle devient actuelle et limpide, plus l'image actuelle de l'acteur passe dans les ténebres et devient opaque."[42]

Although Deleuze's discussion of "[la] double face de l'acteur"[43] is intended as a clarification of the figures through which time passes, specifically the limpid and the opaque, it also provides a valuable metafilmic avenue of enquiry towards the relationship between role-playing and temporality, each of which is emphasised by Deleuze in his exploration of Renoir's worlds within *Cinéma 2*. Building on his preoccupation with realistic performance, Renoir similarly conceptualised the relationship between *la vérité intérieure* and *la vérité extérieure*, respectively pertaining to the inner characteristics and outward appearance of characters, each of

[41] Ibid.,, 97: "the crystal is a stage."
[42] Ibid: "makes the virtual image of the role actual, so that the role becomes visible and luminous. […] But the more the virtual image of the role becomes actual and limpid, the more the actual image of the actor moves into the shadows, and becomes opaque."
[43] Ibid., 98: "[the] double face of the actor."

which contributed to what Renoir recognised as a core aim of acting: "mettre le public en contact avec un être humain."[44] Renoir stated that he situated Célestine's narrative within the fin-de-siècle context of the source novel not merely in order to remain faithful to Mirbeau, but in an attempt to describe the inner characteristics of characters: "Je vois très bien tous les films se passant en 1900 […]. Alors on n'aurait plus de recherches, on n'aurait plus de préoccupations de vérité extérieure, on serait tranquilles, on pourrait s'occuper uniquement de ce qui se passe à l'intérieur chez les personnages qu'on monte sur l'écran."[45] Rather than limiting Deleuze or Renoir's examination to the relationship between the spectator and the onscreen oscillation between the actor and his/her character, the following analysis shall examine the impact of the ongoing dialectic between an individual fictional character's public displays and private sentiments on that character's relationship within its social environment. In doing so, we may understand how Renoir's emphasis on theatricality and performance, within a setting entrenched in ideologically imbued spectacle, lends the framed theatrical space an emphatically temporal dimension.

Renoir further states in his autobiography that "la vérité intérieure se cache souvent derrière un environnement purement artificiel."[46] In the case of *Diary*, this environment extends not only to the manifest superficiality of the Lanlaire residence, but to the roles imposed within it: the Lanlaire

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[44] Jean Renoir, *Ma vie et mes films* (Paris: Flammarion, 2006), 123, "to place the public in contact with a human being."
[45] Narboni, Bazin, and Gauteur, *Jean Renoir*, 315: "I easily saw all of the films set in 1900 […]. So we would not have to do any more research. We would no longer be preoccupied with *vérité extérieure*. We could be calm. We could specifically address what was happening inside the characters who we were portraying on the screen."
[46] Renoir, *Ma vie et mes films*, 247: "The *vérité intérieure* is often hidden behind a purely artificial environment."

residence is artificial to the extent that the costumes assigned by Mme Lanlaire bear no true resemblance to the motives of the characters who wear them. Interestingly, because we are aware of the animosity harboured by Célestine and Joseph towards Mme Lanlaire, the costumes designating socially-assigned roles (the *vérité extérieure*) underscore each character's ulterior motives (*vérité intérieure*), invoking a tension within the overtly theatrical social space of the Lanlaires' home. Thus, the narrative conveys the possibility of escaping beyond a *point de fuite* not by staging competing possibilities for change in depth but by using the *vérité intérieure* to transform Célestine and Joseph's respective costumes from mere symbols of subservient status into Brechtian distancing devices. The inconsistency between the servants' personal agendas and assigned roles demonstrate that Mme Lanlaire's spectacular domestic theatre serves less to seal space than to provide her with a reductive structure of visibility that threatens the continuity of her regime.

The fallacy of judging characters based on the *vérité extérieure* is repeatedly signalled from the outset. When Célestine first arrives, she assumes that M. Lanlaire is a servant because he sits down in the kitchen and wears unelaborate clothes. Similarly, Joseph assumes that the unkempt Mauger can offer nothing to Célestine, and is later surprised to learn that he has offered Célestine 25, 000 francs for her hand in marriage. Ironically, Célestine assumes that Joseph will never rise to any position higher than a valet and is shocked to learn that he is in a position to offer her a steady income at his bar in Cherbourg.

The reductive influence of Joseph's costume is evidenced by both

Mme Lanlaire and Célestine's attitudes towards him. Through his costume, Joseph garners both Célestine's scorn and Mme Lanlaire's confidence: Célestine remains unconvinced that Joseph could ever act beyond the official duties implied by his clothing despite his repeated hints towards his desire to rise in society: Joseph declares that he considers himself "the valet, amongst other things," to which Célestine responds "Nonsense! You're the valet and that's all, and don't put on airs with me." On the surface, Joseph carefully corresponds with the demands of Mme Lanlaire, sharing a rapport with Mme Lanlaire that is unique among all of the servants. Entrusted with a complete set of keys, Joseph is the only one amongst the servants who is permitted to enter the downstairs vault that contains the Lanlaires' fortune. Like Mme Lanlaire, he stands against the Republic, declaring to Célestine that it was "created for weaklings." Yet beneath his costume, Joseph aims to break free of his socially-assigned role and to integrate with the world of business and upward mobility which has developed through the birth of the very Republic that evokes his disgust. In Mme Lanlaire's company, his *vérité intérieure* is emphatically opaque to his mistress, subjugated to his carefully composed *vérité extérieure*, invoking a tension between the established decorum of the Lanlaire residence and its potential dissolution.

Even when Mme Lanlaire discovers Joseph's plot to elope with Célestine and the silver, she condescendingly insists "you're a valet Joseph, you'll always be a valet," failing to realise that Joseph may access alternative options in society in order to shed his pre-assigned role of valet. As Braudy rightly notes, "[the Lanlaires'] world is theatrical and closed because they consciously erected its limits around them through added

ignorance and prejudice."[47] Joseph is a lower-class non-national resident (as indicated by his accent), but his acquisition of assets pertaining to both the world of business and of French heritage secure his place as a French citizen. Furthermore, the prized silverware is located under the stairs used by the aristocrats to reach their bedroom, suggesting that Joseph is capable of robbing the house of its very foundations. As Joseph states to Mme Lanlaire on Bastille Day, "I must have it as you had it for my peace of mind. It represents, as it has to you, my new position in life, my new security." Like Rosenthal of *La Grande Illusion* (1937), whose French terrain guarantee him the same citizenship as the aristocratic Boëldieu, Joseph's entrepreneurship will guarantee him a steady income. In a world where social status is achieved through a steady source of capital, rather than noble blood and family heirlooms, these fixed assets will represent medals of honour rather than an isolated source of wealth and embodied national identity. As Renoir himself stated: "À l'origine et, je crois, également dans sa réalisation, le film est une espèce de course vaine de la part de gens représentant une société déjà morte; c'est une course de fantômes. Ces gens représentent une bourgeoisie qui n'existe plus, car la bourgeoisie qui les a remplacés est une bourgeoisie d'affaires, une bourgeoisie active, une bourgeoisie qui fait de l'argent […]."[48]

From the moment Célestine arrives at the residence, the narrative repeatedly signals Mme Lanlaire's attempt to similarly cast Célestine within

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[47] Braudy, *Jean Renoir,* 148.

[48] Narboni, Bazin, and Gauteur, eds*., Jean Renoir*, 358-9: "From its origins and, I think, equally in its direction, the film is a type of vain race on the part of people representing an already-dead society; it is a race of ghosts. These people [the Lanlaires] represent a bourgeoisie which no longer exists, because the bourgeoisie which has replaced them is a bourgeoisie of businesses, an active bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie which makes money."

her specific role as chambermaid. When Célestine and Louise first arrive, Mme Lanlaire deems Célestine's name "too complicated" and regards Célestine's insistence on keeping her own name as "very interesting." Mme Lanlaire inspects Célestine's body, remarking "I like your figure" but stating that she will modify Célestine's clothes. Célestine provides a distinctive contrast with Louise, who fulfils her role as expected: Louise is far more obedient than Célestine, and her name is accepted as "very proper" by Mme Lanlaire. When Mme Lanlaire finally receives word that Georges is returning home, she determinedly executes the next stage of her social objectification of Célestine in an elaborately-designed bedroom: "I told you I wasn't satisfied with your clothes. Now we'll do something about it. […] I'm going to try an experiment. Undress please." Upon this statement, Mme Lanlaire proceeds to withdraw dresses specially ordered from Paris from the wardrobe. She shows Célestine an old catalogue of hair designs and immediately sprays her with her own choice of perfume. In a moment dominated by Renoir's characteristically self-conscious theatrical set-design, Mme Lanlaire beckons her towards a section of the bedroom in the background which is framed by curtains in a manner resembling a proscenium arch (fig. 1). Read through Deleuze, Mme Lanlaire's transformation of Célestine reveals the problems with the choices of roles available within the residence. For although Deleuze suggests that characters must experiment with roles within the crystal, the available roles are predefined by Mme Lanlaire, who wishes to retain Célestine as her subservient instrument. That the dress fits Célestine adequately, as Mme Lanlaire remarks, only further emphasises that Célestine's new role is

literally tailor-made in Mme Lanlaire's imprisoning anachronistic vision.

Fig. 1

Yet Mme Lanlaire's careful composition of domestic space, right down to her theatre of roles, cannot absolutely nullify Célestine's *vérité intérieure*, and Célestine's disruption of social configurations within the residence remains a possibility: although Célestine initially submits to Mme Lanlaire's demands for a new costume out of obligation to her mistress, she inadvertently develops a loving relationship with Georges that belies her assigned role and threatens the social status of the family unit. Eventually, Célestine does unleash her temper on an unperturbed Mme Lanlaire, when the latter lends Célestine her wraparound and beckons her to bring broth to Georges: "What do you think I am? A dog, or a cat or an animal or something? That you can send for me one minute and throw me out the next? […] I don't want to dress like you, or look like you, or be like you. I can't stand it here any more! I'm through! I'm through!" Small wonder that Joseph insists that "you and I are alike" to Célestine: like the spectator, he

recognises the *décalage* between each of their theatrically-defined roles and their own private intentions.

Mme Lanlaire's unperturbed smile reveals that she refuses to acknowledge the gravity of the threat posed by Célestine to the carefully guarded domestic space. On one hand, Mme Lanlaire's confidence is justified. Célestine's position in society is imbricated not only in class but in patriarchal society. Mme Lanlaire therefore knows that Célestine's only options within her current role are conformity or resignation, and presumes that her son would never liberate himself from his own role as a bourgeois member of society by marrying below his station. On the final count, Mme Lanlaire is proven wrong: Célestine and Georges ultimately elope, leaving the manor in the past. However, it is important to remark that Célestine's position in society problematizes any creation of a genuinely new position in society. As a woman entrenched in subservient positions within hierarchical society, Célestine's potential *lignes de fuite* are clearly conditioned by her gender. Her upward social mobility is contingent on the acquisition of money which, realistically, may be obtained only through unfeasible years of service or, alternatively though marriage to a man of means. Even simple acts of displacement, as when Célestine frantically arrives at the train station at the beginning of the film and, later, when she resigns from her post and implores Joseph to "hitch up the carriage and take me to the station. […] Joseph, get me out of here, please!" mark male mobility as a prerequisite for female agency. Célestine realises this, and the importance of shedding her subservient role, better than anybody:

> Life is life. From now on I'm going to fight and I'm going to fight hard and I don't care who's going to get hurt just so it's not me [*sic*]. And I tell you what, I'm not going to be a chambermaid any longer. No I'm not. I'm going to be a mistress and have a house of my own. […] And I'm going to grab the first man I meet to get where I'm going. Yes I am, the very first man. I don't care whether he's handsome or ugly or young or old. Just so he's got money. That's the main thing, money. [...] No more love for Célestine.

If the mobility of the train that brings Célestine and George from the village suggests a *ligne de fuite* from the theatre of Mme Lanlaire's socially oppressive residence, Célestine's diary implies that she remains entrapped within the crystal due to patriarchal dominance: whereas she defiantly writes "no more love for Célestine" during her first night at the Lanlaire residence, the film ends with her writing marriage vows into the same diary. As Katherine Golsan writes, "the narrative concludes in female subservience" and "her final destination is within the confines of [the] predictable patriarchal feminine."[49] Célestine's fate is sealed, her spatio-temporal trajectory guided by the rails, and her attempted escape contingent on her submission to her new male partner in life. Braudy appropriately notes that "Célestine's journey into the provincial world of the Lanlaires is temporal as well as spatial. She seems like an emissary from the present to the past."[50] More precisely, Célestine journeys into a theatrical space that contains roles that congeal characters and their social relations, entrapping characters in a stultifying spatio-temporal realm within which they must elucidate a suitable point of flight. Célestine retains her *élan vital*, which internally supplants her assigned *rôle mort*, inadvertently inspiring Georges

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[49] Katherine Golsan, "A Hollywood Fairytale: Renoir's *Diary of a Chambermaid,*" *South Central Review* 25.2 (2008): 56-7.
[50] Braudy, *Jean Renoir,* 148.

to do the same. However, her new role similarly limits her social agency. Destined towards an uncertain future, she remains subject to the potential presence of stultifying spatial forces, theorised by Deleuze and Guattari as "des micro-fascismes qui ne demandent qu'à cristalliser."[51]

Class as Spectacle in Dissolution

The Lanlaire residence recalls Wintersborn (*La Grande Illusion)* and la Colinière (*La Règle du jeu*), which, in Deleuze's analysis, each lend physical form to temporal stasis. As in the case of the regimes that structure these two buildings discussed by Deleuze, Mme Lanlaire's domestic dictatorship is first and foremost a mise-en-scène (in the most theatrical sense of the term) of striated space that cannot be implemented without a stage: as made clear upon Célestine's arrival, roles within the residence are cast with little regard for the personality of those who perform them. Instead, attention is specifically lent to costume and other aspects of appearance. Given the temporal stasis that Mme Lanlaire endeavours to impose on the manor, and Deleuze's own emphasis on the petrifying force embodied by theatre in Renoir's work, the gradual physical and social erosion of the Lanlaire's lavishly decorated residence should be read in both spatial and temporal terms. Although deep space is rarely employed within the narrative, set-design significantly underscores the permeability of Mme Lanlaire's socialised stage. In the garden, a cleft ruptures the wall that is

[51] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2: Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980): "micro-fascisms simply waiting to crystallise."

meant to separate the Lanlaires' garden from that of Captain Mauger, who mocks the Lanlaires and readily courts Célestine.

As in the case of the *haute bourgeoisie* in *La Règle du jeu*, the Lanlaires endeavour to preserve what Massey refers to as "a moment and a form where they had a power."[52] This vain effort is challenged over the course of the narrative by repeated assaults on the opulent décor that bolsters Mme Lanlaire's sense of propriety. Because the physical décor of the residence is crucial to the preservation of Mme Lanlaire's regime, Captain Mauger's breaking of the glass windows that house the Lanlaires' flower-beds is not merely an act of vandalism. It represents the active dismantling of the *haute bourgeoisie*'s values that are already undergoing gradual dissolution. Thanks to the breached wall separating Mauger's garden from that of the Lanlaires, he is free to transgress the wall that surrounds the Lanlaires' garden. He even demonstrates his ability to accurately aim a stone at the Lanlaires' glasshouse from the comfort of his own garden. The breaking of glass suggests a relentless, immediately apparent and fundamentally irreversible march of time. Viewed in temporal terms, it represents the rupturing of the embodied past, an additional *fêlure* in Renoir's cracked crystal. Furthermore, Mauger transgresses the property twice, physically mocking M. Lanlaire, who reacts only by futilely chasing Mauger with the same gun that he refuses to load, leaving himself open to Mauger's Chaplinesque physical effrontery. M. Lanlaire recalls Robert de la Chesnaye's fastidious demand for "no rabbits, no fences," but is worse, for he fails to punish those who do enter and thus leaves Mme Lanlaire's regime

[52] Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender*, 169.

subject to appropriation. If, as Durgnat suggests, the Lanlaires' system is "defeated anyway,"[53] it is partly because Mauger is not only free to transgress and deface the property, but because M. Lanlaire refrains from suitably punishing him.

The progressive disintegration of Mme Lanlaire's distinctly theatrical regime culminates in the staging of the anti-Bastille Day celebrations. Windows resembling proscenium arches, the opulent marble fireplace and the silverware laid out within the room testify to the importance of theatrical routine and complementary décor in the creation of class-inflused space. The opulent aura of the room is ruptured when M. Lanlaire, in his sole act of revolt, opens the window to allow the march played by the Bastille Day music-band to invade the carefully composed setting. The destruction of the Mme Lanlaire's stage features once more in the climactic brawl in the greenhouse between Joseph and Georges as the latter's hands break through the greenhouse in an attempt to prevent Joseph from escaping with Célestine. The shattering of glass is particularly pertinent in this case since, as already discussed, Georges's dissatisfaction within the home partly stems from his disdain for his mother. That Georges's hands shatter the glass in the closed door of the greenhouse further suggests the usurpment of the family's stubbornly-maintained social position from within, as radical an attack on the foundations of the Lanlaire household as Joseph's removal of the family silver. Braudy accurately locates "some new openness in personal relations" in the "emergence of

[53] Raymond Durgnat, *Jean Renoir* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974), 254.

conflict from the shroudings of class and society,"[54] stating that Georges's own shattering of the greenhouse during the fight indicates Georges "new sense of connection."[55] This greenhouse-scene marks a reprise of the motif of broken glass and the final stage in a series of physical manifestations that erode the temporal stasis imposed by Mme Lanlaire's mise-en-scène. Braudy states that "Renoir's sets emphasize a world of enclosures" and that, near the end of the film, "the tight seal of the house is momentarily broken when the songs of the crowd impel Lanlaire to rebel against his wife and open the windows."[56] In reality, costume-design, set-design and characterisation foreground the role of spectacle in the imposition and simultaneous dissolution of the Lanlaire's crumbling regime. As Deleuze notes of the cinema in general, "Nous ne parlons pas des dimensions de l'espace, puisque l'image peut être plane, sans profondeur, et prendre par là d'autant plus de dimensions ou puissances excédant l'espace."[57] *Diary of a Chambermaid* demonstrates that Renoir's revised approach to theatricality (almost exclusively reliant on the relationship between costume-design, set-design and characterisation, and the static frame of the camera) within his cinematographic compositions invokes the passage of time.

Perhaps understanding the semiotic value of the techniques that he had earlier denigrated, Bazin later revised his scathing review of the film: "C'est aussi sans doute avec *Le Journal* que Renoir se dégage totalement cette fois du "réalisme" de son oeuvre française. […] Aussi bien est-ce peut-

[54] Braudy, *Jean Renoir*, 92.
[55] Ibid., 93.
[56] Ibid., 92.
[57] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 34: "the image may be flat, without depth, and through this very fact, assumes all the more dimensions or powers which go beyond space."

être ici que prendra source la hantise du théâtre de Renoir […]. C'est peut-être pour la première fois que nous discernons dans l'oeuvre de Renoir, non plus le théâtre, mais la théâtralité à l'état pur."[58] Indeed, Braudy rightly notes that *Diary of a Chambermaid* presents us with a Renoir who is "already closer to the attitude toward the past he will have in the 1950s.[59] This theatricality would resurface in its most self-consciously artificial form six years (and three films) later in *The Golden Coach*.

5.3 *The Golden Coach* (1952)

Given this chapter's general emphasis on theatricality, it is worth noting that Deleuze lavishes more praise on *The Golden Coach* than of any other instalment in Renoir's post-war corpus, remarking that it is in this film that the Renoirian images of "[la] « théâtralité à l'état pur »"[60] (Deleuze cites Bazin's revised review of *Diary of a Chambermaid*) "seront portés au plus haut point […]."[61] This exchange is all the more prominent for those who have read Prosper Mérimée's *Le Carrosse du Saint-Sacrement* (1829) since Renoir sacrificed much of Mérimée's source text, foregrounding the protagonist's problematic attempts to distinguish between the theatre and

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[58] André Bazin, "1946 – *The Diary of a Chambermaid* (*Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre*)." *Cahiers du Cinéma* 78 (1957): 81. "Without doubt, it is also with *Diary* that Renoir extricates himself entirely this time from the "realism" of his French work. […] Perhaps it is also here that Renoir's dread of the theatre finds its source. […] Perhaps for the first time in Renoir's work, we no longer discern theatre, but theatricality in a pure state."
[59] Braudy, *Jean Renoir,* 148.
[60] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 116: "theatricality in a pure state."
[61] Ibid., 113: **"**will be brought to its highest point […]."

"real life" within both the world of the *commedia dell'arte* troupe and the Spanish court. In the play, Camilla, the lead actress, has already established her reputation in a Spanish colony in Peru. The entire play is confined to the viceroy's quarters where he is informed by his servant of Camilla's romantic involvement with other men in the colony including a matador and a captain, and of the allegedly subversive nature of her performances. Over the course of the play, Camilla meets with the viceroy to defend herself and, eventually, to request a coveted golden coach purchased by the viceroy. Much of Mérimée's narrative revolves around their disputes and provisional reconciliations, the viceroy's eventual appeasement of Camilla through the gift of the titular coach, which she finally renounces to the church.

Renoir's adaptation not only elaborates on Camilla's (played by Anna Magnani) relationships with the viceroy (Duncan Lamont), the captain (Paul Campbell) and the matador (Riccardo Rioli). He also portrays Camilla's arrival in the colony and juxtaposes the theatrical sets constructed by the *commedia dell'arte* troupe with the ideologically charged spectacle embodied by the Spanish court within their opulently designed palace. Renoir's sets underscore the theatricality inherent to each of these strata by setting the entire narrative on a stage, bookending the story with shots of a proscenium arch that circumscribes the limits – spatial and temporal – of the characters' world.

“*A Few Rules...*”: Theatre as “*le Contraire du Dialogue*.”[62]

Although theatre is a “formalised game” (c.f. Elsaesser) for both Camilla’s troupe and the court, each stratum characterises one particular aspect of spectacle, the second component of theatre elucidated by Elsaesser: on the one hand, Camilla and the troupe employ the visual appeal of theatre to establish a link with members of the audience, regardless of their class. On the other hand, the Spanish court performs by drawing on social etiquette, lavish décor, and costumes. The court demands no target audience other than themselves, employing socially regressive spectacle in an effort to reassure themselves of their own hegemony and to externalise any potentially intrusive elements that do not correspond with the colonial identity that they actively perform.

The camera frames the communal, democratic social space created by Camilla’s theatrical displays. Even before the troupe’s opening night, her first lines on the newly-constructed proscenium arch at the innkeeper’s residence are “my dear public, my dear public.” The camera later emphasises the relationship between Camilla and her spectators during the troupe’s first public performance. As one of the troupe’s child-performers bows at the front edge of the stage, the camera retracts to allow the audience to enter the frame, illustrating a relationship between the audience and the performers that we are never granted, for example, during the court’s dance in the palace. During Camilla’s performance before the general public, the camera further emphasises this relationship by photographing the audience

[62] Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, 23: “the opposite of dialogue.”

from the point of view of Camilla (fig. 2), pitting the footlights located in the foreground with the audience to emphasise what Elsaesser terms the "rules and conventions recognized as binding together performer and audience," which are essential to Camilla's brand of theatre and which distinguish it from the self-indulgent spectacle of the court which, corresponding with the obverse aspect of Elsaesser's dichotomy, "require[s] no particular audience (other than us, the film spectators)."[63]

Fig. 2

Whereas Camilla is constantly expanding social relations beyond the physical space encompassed by the stage, the court relegates others beyond the courtyard through class-specific practices that serve to socially discriminate against those who cannot compete with their brand of spectacle. Elsaesser's distinction between theatre as binding contract and autonomous spectacle is later made manifest during the scenes following the actors' first performance at the palace. Shortly after this performance,

[63] Elsaesser, "Theatricality and Spectacle," 239.

Camilla arrives on a balcony in the foreground to speak to the viceroy whilst the other members of the court evacuate towards the parlour in the background where they proceed to dance (fig. 3). This parlour is visible through three doors adorned by curtains that emphasise the theatricality of the dance unfolding in the background. The court's performance of pre-assigned movements demands no audience, and is devoid of the spontaneity that thrills Camilla's spectators: their gestures are mechanical responses that conform to social etiquette and the rhythm of the music that plays, performing their "rôles morts ou de la mort"[64] of which Deleuze speaks. During this scene, costume-design articulates the ideological properties of the court's theatrical presentation, testifying to Debord's conception of societies of spectacle as those demanding "le conformisme absolu."[65] Furthermore, this deep shot not only elides any easy assimilation within the *image plane*, it also becomes an ideologically charged signifier of Camilla's obligation to remain distanced from the space striated by this performance.

Fig. 3

[64] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 116: "dead roles or roles of death."
[65] Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, 129: "[a]bsolute conformism in existing social practices."

The different brands of theatre embodied by the troupe and the court are further expressed through each stratum's costumes: whereas the deep multicoloured hues of the *commedia dell'arte* costumes worn by Camilla and the troupe testify to a rich historical and cultural legacy and distinguish the characters from the palatial setting, the golden clothes worn by the viceroy, the duke, the marquise and various other members of the court during the troupe's dramatisation signal the court's general preoccupation with opulence that forms a core part of their everyday performance. The avarice implied by the golden designs acquires a distinctly colonialist dimension during this scene as the viceroy wearily curses his country's agenda before Camilla: "We're here only for this treacherous gold. No-one dreams of anything else. And where gold commands, laughter vanishes. If you had a goldmine here, you too would stop laughing." The viceroy himself reduces the court's activities to "a few tricks of speech, a few gestures now and then. A few rules." The extravagant veneer sported by the court provides what Susan Hayward terms "literally a *mise en scène* and performance of wealth."[66] However, unlike Camilla's enactments, which consolidate new public relations amongst different strata, their self-indulgent opulence and repetitive etiquette aims to exclude lower strata through "un rapport irréversible au centre même qui maintient leur isolement."[67]

Off-screen space is essential to our understanding of the relationship

[66] Susan Hayward, "Design at Work: Renoir's Costume Dramas of the 1950s," in *A Companion to Jean Renoir*, ed. Alastair Phillips and Ginette Vincendeau, (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 92.
[67] Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, 30: "an irreversible relation at the very centre which maintains their isolation."

between the court's externalisation of undesired elements of the colony and the simultaneous petrifaction of the court's own roles. The fact that this process of externalisation affects the future of the colony encourages us to read Renoir's mise-en-scène in temporal terms. The court is content to play out its roles and ignore turbulent colonial issues unfolding beyond the palace, particularly the conflict between Spanish troops and Peruvian natives at a colonial outpost in Cusco.[68] The real violence of Cusco is reduced to comments that are both menacing and deceptively comic in tone. The first reference is spoken by the exploitative innkeeper who threatens Felipe when the latter accosts him: "Better not cause any trouble here or it's Cusco for you. […] Cusco, the army, they're trapped by Indians there and not too particular about how they get replacements so be careful." A short time later, as Camilla grants her first performance to the public, the viceroy, the marquise and her father play cards in a parlour. When the marquise doubts the sincerity of the viceroy's love for her, she declares, "I stood by you loyally when you ordered my poor husband to Cusco. A general commanding an outpost like that... […] Since those beastly Indians made me a poor defenceless widow..." The Viceroy insists that her husband "died a hero" and ignores talking about the war until he later exploits it as a pretext for retaining the coach as a personal asset. In fact, when Felipe later declares to Don Antonio (Odoardo Spadaro) that "I've been offered a captaincy in this war they're fighting here," it marks the first time that the

[68] The only reference to Cusco in the source-text is when Camilla declares to the viceroy that her other suitors are of no concern: "Should your highness have doubts, he may send the captain to Panama and the matador to Cusco!" / "Pour peu que Votre Altesse conserve des doutes, elle peut envoyer le capitaine à Panama, et le matador à Cuzco!" (Prosper Mérimée. *La Carrosse du Saint-Sacrement; Lettres d'Espagne; Carmen* (Paris: Larousse, 1927), 33.

conflict in Cusco is defined as a war by any of the characters.

In fact, we are completely unaware of the severity of the colonial conflict until the viceroy attempts to justify both his purchase of the coach and his demand for contributions from the nobility towards the war effort: the viceroy remarks that whereas the coach was bought during a time of peace, Spanish colonial rule is now at war with rebelling Mexican natives. It is already ridiculous that the main concern of the nobility is now the use of a coach. The Viceroy's allusion to the war, made without any reaction of surprise from his counsel, implies that the strife has been escalating out of control for at least a short period of time prior to this discussion. In fact, Hayward suggests that the decreased wealth of the court is already suggested by the understated arrival of the coach in the beginning of the film.[69] Yet the colony remains emphatically insulated from the off-screen horrors reported by the characters, linked to the war solely through verbal reference and political connection. The court's refusal to negotiate with the face of the colonised indigenous people amidst its own efforts to sustain its manifestly extravagant lifestyle blinds them to the conflict and signals the potential dissolution of colonial rule.

Social threats, once relegated beyond the walls of the colony, are reassuringly invisible. Within the walls of the colony however, they pose an immediate threat. Thus, rather than prioritise the war, the nobility exploits the coach as a fulcrum to purge Camilla from the palace. The nobility initially reacts negatively to the viceroy's demand for contributions to the war effort, insisting that "the nobility has never paid taxes" and only offer

[69] Hayward, "Design at Work," 92.

such a donation in exchange for the coach and the ratification of a decree prohibiting entry to the palace of anyone not descended from at least eight lines of noble ancestry. Insofar as surveillance of the social space within the palace is concerned, the court is portrayed as a vigilant group. Members of the nobility obtrusively peer through curtains and doors around the palace, and members of the nobility wear eye-glasses around their necks. The concern for the purity of social space within the palace is most notably evidenced after their performance when the chief justice suspiciously asks "Who knows what lies behind those masked faces?" as he urges his superior to reconsider holding a personal meeting with any of the actors. However, this vigilance is circumscribed by the walls of the palace. All of the windows that separate the palace from the colony are covered either with blinds or criss-crossing shutters. This allows the court to mute the presence of the impoverished society beyond the windows in their daily lives but to witness events beyond the window, such as the arrival of the golden coach, by approaching the windows more closely. Nothing enters the windows to invade the private space of the court. Rather, they must go to the windows in a deliberate effort to witness the world beyond the palace.

This enclosure and the colonisers' quest for gold and silver also prevents them from arriving at an understanding of the "beastly Indians" (as the marquise labels the native South Americans) later befriended by Felipe who, during his captivity, realises that "They're not savages. They helped me discover a truth and kindness and beauty. […] They're much better than we are. That's what I've discovered. […] I'm leaving this civilisation that's making us brutal and dishonest." Their preoccupation with the war stems

primarily from five silvermines located west of Cusco that fuel the lifestyle displayed so opulently during the dance sequence on the veranda and disparaged by the viceroy himself in the very same scene.

The theatrical regime of the palace, like Wintersborn, la Colinière and the Lanlaire residence, lends temporal stasis a physical structure, forming a locus of "rôles morts" (c.f. Deleuze). The numerous references to off-screen space during the scenes set within the palace emphasise the ignorance, deliberate enclosure and self-indulgent spectacle enforced by the court's externalising social protocol. At the end of the film, the war is still looming beyond the confines of the palace, a fact that we should not ignore despite the visual beauty of the palace and costumes that lure the spectator as much as the colonisers into focusing on Camilla's confinement onstage.

"*Any Platform, Any Public Place...*": Camilla's Social Confinement

Emphasising Camilla's isolation on the proscenium arch in the film's closing scene, Deleuze observes that Camilla alone remains entrapped within the world of the theatre at the film's close: "À la fin du *Carrosse d'or*, trois personnages auront trouvé leur rôle vivant, tandis que Camilla restera dans le cristal, mais pour y essayer encore des rôles dont l'un lui fera découvrir peut-être la vraie Camilla."[70] Because the social stratification of the Spanish court's palace is beyond the scope of Deleuze's analysis, he fails

[70] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 116: "At the end of *The Golden Coach*, three characters will have found their living role, whereas Camilla will remain within the crystal, but to try more roles there, one of which may allow her to discover the true Camilla."

to address the extent to which Camilla's audience – an aspect that distinguishes her brand of the theatre from that of the court – contributes to Camilla's confinement. In Merimée's play, Camilla returns to the viceroy with the coach, accompanied by the bishop, and the bishop announces to all present that she has granted the coach to the church. Order has been restored. Renoir's conclusion begins similarly, presenting Camilla on the stage ascending the stairs with the bishop, who remarks to all present that Camilla has returned the coach. After the bishop has invited everyone to the church ceremony featuring Camilla, the jubilant troupe emerges from the lower floor, playing music as they climb the stairs. The nobility, Camilla's loves, the people of the colony and Camilla herself all walk towards the balustrade to watch the musicians as they play. Don Antonio raises his arm, the actors bow towards their audience and a curtain falls. Don Antonio declares that he wanted to present "a new melodrama in the ltalian style, but Camilla is still missing." He calls Camilla on-stage and she accordingly enters from the right-hand wing of the stage. Don Antonio warns Camilla against the folly of engaging with reality: "Don't waste your time in the so-called real-life. You belong to us, the actors, acrobats, mimes, clowns, mountebanks! Your only way to find real happiness is on any stage, any platform, any public place, during those two little hours when you become another person, your true self." A red curtain falls between Camilla and the remainder of the troupe. She now shares the stage only with Don Antonio, trapped on the stage of life, robbed of her suitors:

> CAMILLA: Felipe, Ramon, the Viceory. Disappeared. Gone. Don't they exist anymore?
> DON ANTONIO: Disappeared. Now they are a part of the audience. Do you miss them?
> CAMILLA: [*pauses*] A little.

Camilla's silent display of emotion represents grief, humility and, above all, a nuance hitherto absent from the narrative. We should therefore consider that Camilla is emoting what she truly feels. Camilla remains an actress by profession, but she is not exhibiting her grief with a view to eliciting applause. Therefore, although I agree with Janet Bergstrom's assertion that Camilla "speaks of her suitors with warmth and regret," I am far less convinced by Bergstrom's assertion that "[s]he decides to give up her three suitors and remain with the troupe. The decision is her own."[71] Rather than focus exclusively on Camilla's isolation on the proscenium arch, we must remember two significant points: first of all, the fall of the curtains is not pure happenstance. It occurs after the renunciation of the coach, thus implying that the audience present during the reception of Camilla's act is directly implicated in her imprisonment. Whether Camilla is giving a conscious performance or making a sincere "act of true charity," her confinement results from what the people surrounding her at this point in time believe, especially since Camilla's theatre, unlike that of the court, relies on a diegetic audience. Even if her act of charity is genuine, Camilla's act remains a performance because the court and townspeople who have hitherto constituted her audience (and who now share the stage with her) only appreciate it as such. Don Antonio's determination to direct a new

[71] Janet Bergstrom, "Jean Renoir's Return to France," *Poetics Today* 17.3 (1996): 485.

melodrama immediately after Camilla's alleged triumph selfishly devalues the real emotion felt by the grieving Camilla, and fixes her status as a performer.

Secondly (and building on the previous point), the stage marks the confluence of social forces operating in the Spanish colony. As an emphatically socialised theatre, it is in no way disconnected from the rest of the theatrically defined hierarchised space of the colony: when the curtain falls, the characters who have now "disappeared" and become "part of the audience" according to Don Antonio all remain on the stage, divided only by two curtains that fall in succession on the stage. Deleuze's assertion that Camilla's lovers have escaped the crystal risks simplifying both the film's dissection of social spaces of theatre and Don Antonio's remark that Felipe, Ramon and the viceroy are part of the audience. If Don Antonio insists that Camilla must exploit "any stage, any platform, any public place," then "the audience" to whom he refers does not designate any particular physical space, least of all the seats in front of the proscenium arch photographed in the prologue and epilogue, but rather the spectators themselves who enter into a social contract (to borrow Elsaesser's term) with the performers in any given physical space. Throughout the film, audiences feature within the narrative world on the stage, as when the court watches the troupe play "The Birth of Harlequin." Even though the characters are part of Camilla's audience, this does not mean that they have been liberated from their own "dead" roles. In fact, an earlier draft of Don Antonio's speech reveals that the falling curtain does not necessarily mean that Camilla's act has liberated them of their role:

> Noble sirs and gentle ladies! See where destiny has led the characters of this comedy in the Italian style. How do they find their happy endings? (*Medium shot: Antonio stands to one side and the curtain rises to show Ramon and a bull.*) …Ramon, the bullfighter...Ramon, the man of uncomplicated passions! Here he is – once again united with his noisy reality... (*The curtain is lowered and raised to reveal Felipe surrounded by Indians.*) …Felipe, the nature lover...pioneer – has finally found his true destiny. (*The curtain is lowered and raised to show the viceroy and the marquise*) ...The viceroy...in all his greatness and misery! Misery of noble courts, meshes of intrigue, the necessary nourishment of this unhappy race, bound from their tenderest infancy in the tinsel of royal palaces...(*The curtain is lowered and raised again for Camilla.*)[72]

Although it would be misguided to allow the previous draft to dictate an interpretation of the finished film, this version does indicate a conception of the world as a theatre in which people are at once spectators of Camilla and, either by virtue of their profession or their class, performers trapped in roles that stultify social agency. The complexity of the filmed version of this sequence lies in the decision to progressively isolate Camilla from her peers through two curtains whilst suggesting, as in the previous draft, that they all still remain on a single all-encompassing stage. Even Camilla, who comes closer to shedding her role than we or her peers may initially realise, has been trapped on the stage and within the crystal by other people's expectations of her. Far from embodying potential escape from the crystal as Richard Rushton suggests,[73] the characters are all entrapped within the theatre, either through the attraction of the stage or the appeal of the spectacle flaunted by the court. Crucially, Camilla's spectators also remain

[72] Jean Renoir, "*The Golden Coach*. Shooting script (mimeographed/offprint), 205 pages, annotated." n.d. Box 3, Folder 1. *Jean Renoir Papers 1915-1927,* Production Files (Collection 105). 203-4.
[73] Richard Rushton, "A Deleuzian Imaginary: the Films of Jean Renoir," *Deleuze Studies* 5.2 (2011): 253-58.

trapped in their own roles on the theatre of life, and it is implied that none will find the role that will liberate them from the theatre and the stasis it implies. Felipe is the only character who, through his experience of captivity under the Indians, appears to approach a new future devoid of theatrical shackles. This off-screen space, deprived of any roads that could accommodate Camilla's coach, and resisting enslavement under the Spanish, arguably represents the only true *ligne de fuite* from any of the characters' shared plight. However, insofar as Felipe's own experience is concerned, it is important there is a sharp irony in his retention of his military uniform following his experience in the economically impoverished milieu.

The Golden Coach arguably demonstrates the extent to which society is capable of nullifying the potential of space as a precondition for the temporal more clearly than any other Renoir film, with the possible exception of *La Grande Illusion*. Through the complex interplay between the *surcroît de théâtralité*, off-screen space, and deep space, the film intimately demonstrates that so long as hegemonic powers deploy social spectacle, the potential for escape from any socially assigned role is but a fantasy with no bearing on the reality that is theatre, echoing Debord's lament for the development of a world within which "[t]out ce qui était directement vécu s'est éloigné dans une représentation."[74]

[74] Guy Debord, *La Société du spectacle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1992), 15: "all that was once directly lived has become mere representation."

5.4 *Eléna et les hommes* (1956)

In *Eléna et les hommes*, Renoir further develops the stylistic and political motifs that feature in *The Golden Coach*. Like the latter film, *Eléna* exploits ideologically-charged décor to foreground theatricality, specifically exploring the influence of military spectacle on volatile nationalist sentiment in the public space of *belle époque* Paris. Renoir himself emphasised the importance of the narrative's formal qualities upon the film's portrayal of artifice in an introduction granted during the film's release on 30 November 1955: "Mon histoire […] est une histoire beaucoup trop fantaisiste pour que l'on puisse lui donner aucune apparence de réalité. Il vaut mieux partir en disant que c'est une histoire fausse."[75] Discussing his reliance on studio-constructed décor, Renoir observed that:

> L'action, dans ce film d'apparence artificiel, s'accommoderait mal de décors réalistes. Les rouges et les bleus s'y affrontent sans transition. Claude Renoir a tourné quelques plans de paysages orageux qui nous ramènent directement vers l'imagerie pour enfants. Ingrid Bergman, qui jouait le role principal, s'en tira avec son génie habituel et réussit à donner un personnage aussi *invraisemblable* que les décors.[76]

Eléna features a myriad of interwoven relations, competing political plots, economic interests and hidden motives, not to mention a central heroine

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[75] Narboni, Bazin, and Gauteur, eds., *Jean Renoir*, 378: "My story […] is far too fantastical for anyone to lend it any appearance of reality. It is better to begin by saying that it is a false story."

[76] Renoir, *Ma vie et mes films*, 248: "The action in this film of artificial appearance would not readily accommodate realistic décor. The reds and the blues clash with one another without any transition. Claude Renoir filmed some shots of stormy landscapes referring us to images made for children. Ingrid Bergman, who played the main role, got by with her characteristic genius and succeeded in creating a character as *unbelievable* as the settings." Italics are my own.

whose complexity renders her own precise outlook difficult to elucidate. Eléna Sorokowska (Ingrid Bergman) is an impoverished Polish princess pursued by the elderly Martin-Michaud (Jacques Jounnaud), an industrial shoe-manufacturer who also seeks to marry his son to the daughter of an industrialist manufacturing rubber products. During Bastille Day celebrations, Eléna is separated from Martin-Michaud and accidentally meets Henri de Chevincourt (Mel Ferrer). He introduces her to General Rollan (Jean Marais), who is inspecting the troops at the Paris garrison that day. When a French surveillance balloon accidentally lands in Germany and its soldiers are imprisoned as spies, Rollan is encouraged by his advisers to issue an ultimatum. The release of the soldiers transforms Rollan into a national hero, and the French call for him to become president. Fearing that Rollan may establish a dictatorship, the President of the Republic places him under house arrest. Driven by their own interests, Rollan's advisers asks Eléna to convince Rollan to break free and seize power. Although Rollan initially agrees out of love for Eléna, he departs with his mistress, Paulette (Elina Labourdette), in the wake of his election as president, renouncing the French military and his prospective political career. Meanwhile, Eléna foregoes the marriage of convenience to Martin-Michaud and remains with Henri.

"*Vive Rollan!*": Nationalist spectacle and the French public

There is a moment during the opening Bastille Day celebrations where Eléna is tossed from one area of the ecstatic crowd to another. Many are waving or selling flags and all are equally eager to catch a glimpse of General Rollan as he conducts the military review at the Paris garrison. Only moments ago, she did not even know who Rollan was ("Qui ça, Rollan?"[77] she responds to a man who asks if she has come to see the general). Yet by the next shot, she is loudly crying "Vive Rollan!" When she accidentally bumps into Henri for the first time two shots later, she is insisting that she wants to see Rollan in person. Carrying the child of a mother who prefers to direct her energy towards cheering enthusiastically for Rollan, Eléna is swept away by the crowd once more and happens upon a man who offers her the chance to look through a periscope in a vain effort to witness Rollan. The periscope is patriotically adorned with the French tricolour. It is also hopelessly impractical: because both apertures are located on the same side of the periscope, Eléna must turn her back to the events at hand in order to view them. In doing so, she must also redirect her attention from the crowd exclusively towards the limited view offered by the periscope of a select area above the crowd, and risks being buffeted by the people. In the process of obtaining the periscope, Eléna loses both her umbrella and the child, all in her effort to see this figurehead whom she has never even heard of until now. The very impracticality and patriotic design of the periscope within this scene serves as an enlightening metaphor for

[77] "Rollan? Who is that?"

the reductive perspective implied by patriotism within the given socio-political context. Eléna's experience with the periscope provides a metaphor for the distortive and socially volatile perspective implied by the nationalism that consumes the crowd: the narrow view offered by ideologically-informed perspectives, particularly nationalist ones, is restricted and unreliable, almost to the exclusion of everything else. The view of the world becomes reductive and unclear, and is liable to leave the patriot open to assault while his/her back remains turned.

As the celebrations progress into the night, soldiers and members of the general public alike sing "L'artilleur de Metz" in praise of the French military and join in the singing of "la Chanson de Roland" (homonymous with Rollan), a ballad that elevates Rollan to the legendary status of Roland and which is heard repeatedly over the course of the narrative. Clearly, "Vive Rollan!" not only expresses support for a single figure who embodies what they consider the French political ideal. It articulates the failure of the nationalist majority to accommodate alternative opinions in a place where support for Rollan, however ubiquitous, is not unanimous. Later during the celebrations, Henri and Eléna raise a glass to Rollan, a man sitting in the bar shouts "À bas Rollan!" in response. After Eléna flees the conflict, the man clarifies: "À bas Rollan, à bas les dictateurs!" This anonymous man's scepticism regarding Rollan's suitability as a French political figure, as we shall see, is justified in part by Rollan's susceptibility to ulterior motives of his influential advisers. That an opinion opposed to that articulated by the majority of French citizens is accepted only as an insult rather than a topic for discussion signals the myopic perspective of the majority of the French

public and the dangerous failure of the patriotic crowd to accommodate deviating opinions. As Colin Davis notes, the celebration "may in fact involve nothing better than mindless, proto-fascist conformism" and "[i]n the midst of its joy, [the crowd] may rapidly become a murderous mob."[78] These sequences could well be read as a microcosm of the entire film's incisive portrayal of the impact of spectacle on popular political sentiment. Renoir himself recollected that "Autour de [la femme, Eléna], j'ai construit une satire, je me suis amusé avec des histoires politiques, des histoires de généraux. J'ai essayé de montrer la futilité des entreprises humaines, y compris l'entreprise qu'on appelle le patriotisme […]."[79] The characterisation of both Rollan and Eléna enters into dialectic with the film's theatrically informed mise-en-scène to reflexively criticise the deployment of military and political images to rouse the unquestioning support of an ignorant flock.

"*On dirait que c'est vous qui avez arrangé tout ça...*": Rollan and his *Corps Politique*

As in the cases of *Diary of a Chambermaid* and *The Golden Coach*, we cannot integrate temporality into our analysis of space in *Eléna* without discussing the narrative's satirical exploration of the relationship between

[78] Colin Davis, *Postwar Renoir: Film and the Memory of Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 76-77.

[79] Jean Narboni, Janine Bazin, and Claude Gauteur, eds., *Jean Renoir: entretiens et propos* (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 2005), 152: "I constructed a satire around [the woman, Eléna]. I toyed with political stories, stories of generals. I tried to demonstrate the futility of human enterprises including the enterprise which we call patriotism […]."

society and spectacle. Rollan's public identity is instrumentalised by his associates in their endeavour to stoke the already fervent nationalism with a view to furthering their own political goals. This is particularly evident during the military review taking place amidst the Bastille Day celebrations. Renoir's shooting of the review makes it clear that the review itself is partly a ploy to ignite public enthusiasm, for the proceedings themselves are startlingly anticlimactic when juxtaposed with the throngs that congregate in the streets of Paris, a fact echoed by a woman who sarcastically declares "Ils appellent ça un défilé!"[80] In a wide shot, Rollan arrives on his horse and dismounts to inspect the underwhelming number of soldiers lined up. Reds, whites and blues of the military uniforms dominate the frame. Surprisingly, we witness little of this event that marks a climax for the *Le Petit Journal* Parisian public: just as Rollan begins his review, the camera cuts to Eléna and Henri who are discussing Rollan's future. The camera does not cut back to the review until the review is complete and Rollan's associates are congratulating him: "120, 000 personnes, c'est un record."[81] Far less important than the anticlimactic scale of the review are the numbers accumulating outside of the garrison, which testify to Rollan's growing success. The sober framing of the formalities, dominated by static long shots and medium shots, recalling the *images planes* of *Diary of a Chambermaid*, lends scope to the superficiality and spectacle implied by the colours and elaborate costumes, which are completely counterposed to the kinetic dynamic that proliferates in the crowd scenes (fig. 4).

[80] "And they call that a parade!"
[81] "120, 000 people, it's a record."

Fig. 4

At this point, it is worth recalling Renoir's distinction between *la vérité intérieure* and *la vérité extérieure*, as *Eléna*'s narrative presents us with two aspects of Rollan: firstly, the Rollan adored by the Parisian public whose routines are measured by the emphatic theatricality implied by mise-en-scène; secondly, the Rollan who is incapable of acting of his own accord, and whose inability to make decisions renders it increasingly difficult for the spectator to determine how he ever became a general in the first place, much less the object of national admiration. Debord states that "L'image imposée du bien, dans son spectacle, recueille la totalité de ce qui existe officiellement, et se concentre normalement sur un seul homme, qui est le garant de sa cohésion totalitaire. À cette vedette absolue, chacun doit s'identifier magiquement, ou disparaître."[82] Such is the case of Rollan who, like Debord's star [*vedette*], "a renoncé à toute qualité autonome pour s'identifier lui-même à la loi générale de l'obéissance au cours des

[82] Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, 59: "The imposed image of the good envelops in its spectacle the totality of what officially exists, and is usually concentrated in one man, who is the guarantor of totalitarian cohesion. Everyone must magically identify with this absolute celebrity or disappear."

choses,"[83] sacrificing his own agency in order to channel the crystallising capacity of nationalist discourse. thus negating the self beyond the political relations crystallised through spectacle. The colourful costumes and set-design of the military review not only suggest Rollan's existence as a French symbol, but simultaneously emphasise Rollan's presence as a superficial nationalist image lacking agency. Daniel Serceau accurately remarks that Rollan is "[un] [s]upport de toutes les projections,"[84] and "n'a […] d'autre consistance que de fournir un objet à un désir qui lui préexiste."[85] Indeed, all of Rollan's decisions are made by his private group of advisers, and when their advice is not sufficient, they articulate their demands through Eléna. Rollan constantly refuses to develop his own authority, and remains a superficial nationalist spectacle, deployed by his own associates in their endeavour to ignite the spirits of the French public and to satisfy their own political ambitions.

The contrasting hues of the costumes worn by Rollan and his advisers accentuate the satire of Rollan's constructed public image. Rollan's advisers all remain discreetly dressed in grey suits whereas Rollan presents himself at the review in his elaborate military regalia adorned with golden designs, a feathered hat and a light blue uniform which distinguish him from the visitors and other soldiers present. Henri introduces Rollan's associates to Eléna as "le corps politique du général." Interestingly, *le corps* may be translated not only as Rollan's corps (as suggested by the Criterion DVD)

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[83] Ibid.,: "has renounced all autonomous qualities in order to identify himself with the general law of obedience to the course of thing."

[84] Daniel Serceau. *Jean Renoir: la sagesse du plaisir* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1985), 54: "[a] canvas for all projections."

[85] Ibid: "has no […] consistency other than to furnish an object for a desire that pre-exists him."

but also as a body. Henri proceeds to assign each man the function of a particular corporeal organ: "Duchêne, le cerveau; Fleury, les yeux; Lisbonne, le coeur; et Buchez, l'esprit. […] Et voici l'indispensable Isnard, ancien champion de course à pied."[86] To introduce these men as Rollan's body suggests that Rollan himself is merely an ideologically-infused image whose trajectory is entirely dictated by these five men in both the public space of Paris and in the media. The remarks that follow further reinforce such an interpretation: Henri remarks that Lisbonne began as a theatre publicist, to which the latter proudly remarks, "Sans moi, Sarah Bernhardt serait encore à la Comédie Française."[87] It is Lisbonne who declares, after their collective introduction to Eléna, "Bon sujet d'article: « La Princesse et le Général, »"[88] suggesting his power to mould the general's image in the newspapers. Furthermore, that Isnard is associated with movement and deemed "essential" by Henri suggests that Rollan's own trajectory would grind to a halt without his coterie.

Their influence visibly informs Rollan's activities over the course of the narrative. It is they who pull Rollan aside from his conversation with Eléna regarding her daisy moments after their introduction, and warn him that the government representative is now present, thus ensuring that he maintains essential relations with official members of the government. When Vidauban, an officer in the military accidentally lands a hot-air balloon in German territory and is imprisoned, the advisers realise that the country will need a leader to deal with the crisis. In particular, they require

[86] "Duchêne, the brain; Fleury, the eyes; Lisbonne, the heart; and Buchez, the mind. […] And here is the indispensable Isnard, former running champion."
[87] "Without me, Sarah Bernhardt would still be at the Comédie Française."
[88] "A good headline: 'The Princess and the General.'"

someone who can serve as a visually appealing mouthpiece, and simultaneously allow them to engineer the political machine to their own ends. Tellingly, Rollan presents himself to his public from his balcony on two occasions (following the release of Vidaubin [fig. 5] and a later promotional appearance [fig. 6]), smiling and waving silently whilst his coterie waits discreetly behind him, separated by a door. Their influence remains salient on a narrative level throughout the remainder of the narrative. Indeed, the composition of these shots – with Rollan's visually muted advisors staged in depth behind Rollan, invisible to the public but nonetheless present – provides a metaphor for the social forces operating through the spectacle embodied by Rollan himself. When the advisers later conclude that Rollan must perform a *coup d'état*, Duchêne remarks that Rollan may not even accept, underscoring their own importance in determining Rollan's political trajectory. When they realise that Eléna is needed to motivate Rollan towards a *coup d'état*, Fleury succeeds in learning Eléna's entire marriage schedule, the reasons for which the wedding will be delayed for one month (incidentally, to take place at the same time as her future son-in-law's wedding), and her current location the château de Maisonvilliers. These are but a few examples that demonstrate that Rollan the human being is a startlingly ill-equipped to perform his own role of general and that, as Martin O'Shaughnessy writes of the crowd "[s]pectacle's sensual appeal is the main form of influence upon this non-reflective mass."[89] No-one realises this better than Rollan's *corps*. The crowd idolises the image of Rollan propagated by his coterie rather than

[89] Martin O'Shaughnessy, *Jean Renoir* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 205.

Rollan the human being, about whom they know surprisingly little. If they scraped beyond the *vérité extérieure* projected by his advisors, it is unlikely that they would wish for him to take office at all, much less in a *coup d'état*.

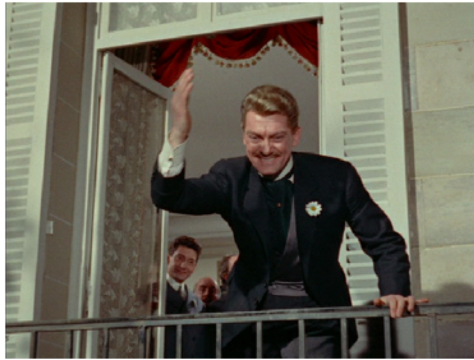

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

Rollan's core flaws may well be his indecisiveness, his submission to authority and his apparent lack of interest in his political career as Serceau suggests.[90] However, these failings stem from a general lack of willpower that imprisons him within his "fixed, ready-made, too-conforming" role.[91] For much of the film, Rollan remains in docile imprisonment under the orders of the president, or leaving himself open to the persuasion of his colleagues and Eléna (herself under the influence of Rollan's ambitious colleagues), unwilling to exercise his authority. Rollan is a colourful ideological instrument whose military uniform precedes any coherent corporeality. His rise to prominence evidently results from the skilful scheming of his coterie, whose fingers are placed on the pulse of the French

[90] Serceau, *Jean Renoir*, 55.
[91] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 116.

nation. Consumed by the increased fervour of nationalist sentiment, the crowd is predisposed towards any figure offering potential opportunities to elevate France's grandeur, and the trajectory of the nation is sealed.

In fact, the military manoeuvres near Martin-Michaud's residence that provide us with our sole view of Rollan on the battlefield are reduced to a hollow self-aggrandising farce. Despite the proximity of Martin-Michaud's castle and the manoeuvres, the mise-en-scène of the landscape in each is radically different: as Henri and Eléna ride in the château's grounds, the camera pits them against a natural forest beneath the blue sky (fig. 7). Conversely, when Eléna and Henri are escorted to Rollan's base, the emphatically false décor used to construct these outdoor surroundings is bathed in a red light that reduces the manoeuvres to a spectacular caricature (fig. 8). After Eléna offers Rollan a daisy to aid him in his future decisions, one of Rollan's officers informs him that one of the on-field commanders has given the order to attack. "Sous les feux de bataille, dans une vraie guerre," remarks an incredulous Rollan, "il ferait massacrer tous ses hommes."[92] Both Rollan and the army are, in the final analysis, ineffectual. As the characters manoeuvre throughout the castle, various items of military regalia are either encased in glass or draped on mannequins like museum pieces. These displays suggest that the roles inhabited by Rollan and his men are, indeed, no less than the identities inhabited by the aristocratic officers in Deleuze's analysis, "condamnés, parce que déjà voués au souvenir."[93]

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[92] "Under enemy fire, in a real war, he would have massacred his men."
[93] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 117: "condemned because they are already destined to become memories."

Renoir's satire of Rollan's image arguably stems from his own engagement with the surface image of the military during his childhood. Renoir wrote that he romanticised the armies of the late 19th century as a result of lead soldiers, which "étaient une grande chose pour tous les enfants de ma génération."[94] Renoir remarked that "[i]l y en avait de très beaux,"[95] and elaborated on his childhood impressions of the spectacle of warfare: "Pour moi, la guerre, avec ses vraies misères, avec ses vrais malheurs, n'existait pas aux époques de beaux costumes. Cette guerre réaliste avait commencé avec les costumes crasseux de la fin du XIXe siècle […]."[96] If, as Deleuze observes in relation to the four crystalline states, "on voit le temps dans le cristal,"[97] *Eléna* must be examined on its own terms. As in the case of Renoir's previous *crises anti-réalistes*, the passage of time is opened to our consideration only when we view the *société froide* (c.f. Debord) embodied by these dead roles whose spectacular appeal prevents society from questioning the efficacy of its institutions.

Fig. 7

Fig. 8

[94] Renoir, *Écrits*, 32: "were an important matter for all of the children of my generation."
[95] Ibid: "[s]ome of them were quite beautiful l y en avait de très beaux."
[96] Ibid: "For me, war, with its real miseries, with its real misfortunes, did not exist in epochs of beautiful costumes. This realistic war had begun with the grubby costumes of the end of the 19th century […]."
[97] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 109: "we see time in the crystal."

As in *Diary of a Chambermaid*, the tension between the *vérité intérieure* and the *vérité extérieure* invoked by costume-design is crucial to our understanding of the imprisoning capacity of socially assigned roles. Unlike Célestine and Joseph, whose defiant attitudes contrast with their official roles and serve to hold their potential futures in tension with the imposing force of the past, Rollan's submissive boredom dismisses the potential creation of a new future beyond the current role designated by his costume. To agree with Durgnat's suggestion that Rollan, "through his love for Eléna, realises the emptiness of power"[98] would be to flatter the general. Rather, Rollan's disinterest in the army wavers little as the film progresses, but he gradually realises that he can use it to appeal to Eléna, who insists on catalysing his relationship with the French public in order to encourage him to seize power. Rollan finally casts aside his role and escapes towards a new future but only by renouncing both his military career and Eléna. Furthermore, when he finally escapes the influence of his cohorts in the closing scene, it is only because his mistress has persuaded him to travel with her to the south of France instead of taking the train bound for Paris in the wake of his election. The front page of a newspaper closes the film, announcing that both are spending their honeymoon in Venice and that Rollan has retired, definitively detached from the French military, his *corps*'s agenda and his "dead" role as their political instrument. Throughout the film however, Rollan's refusal to exercise his own agency assimilates him within the hollow spectacle that structures the entire film and crystallises social relations within a city, where the public sacrifices its

[98] Durgnat, *Jean Renoir*, 316.

agency to such superficial images.

"*J'aime la foule...* ": Eléna, Men and Social Mobility

The power of spectacle to induce "la paralysie de l'histoire et de la mémoire"[99] is especially interesting in the case of Eléna because she eventually sacrifices her agency to the appeal of spectacle. This is particularly alarming because, as Hayward notes, Eléna "displays a great sense of freedom far in excess of the reality of the times" and the idea of women making independent choices in the *belle époque* period "is undoubtedly more myth than fact."[100] Indeed, Eléna herself refuses to commit to any man in the name of love (Martin-Michaud provides little more than a convenient financial buttress) until she finally falls for Henri. Although she has no fixed assets by her own estimation, she does not even capitalise on the success of the men whom she has nurtured to success such as the budding composer whose opera has been accepted for performance thanks to Eléna's support. Renoir himself claimed that Eléna "ne sait pas ce que c'est que l'argent, elle ne l'a jamais su. Elle s'en fiche, ça ne compte pas; d'ailleurs, elle serait aussi heureuse mendiante que millionnaire."[101] Indeed, once at the Bastille Day celebrations, she recklessly loses one item of clothing after another (a parasol, a small handbag, a glove) and buoyantly

[99] Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, 156: "paralysis of history and memory."
[100] Hayward, "Design at Work," 383.
[101] Renoir, *Écrits*, 384: "does not know what money is. She has never known. She doesn't care about it. It does not count. Moreover, she would be as happy a beggar as a millionaire."

discards her hat in favour of developing a rapport with the crowd of revellers.

Eléna's affinity with the crowd is suggested on numerous occasions and initially appears harmless. When she first travels to the city streets with Martin-Michaud, the crowd is visible from her carriage through a small window. When the carriage ceases to move, Eléna readily descends, leaving her fiancé behind: to Martin-Michaud, the crowd is a threat; to Eléna it is an invitation. Nor is Eléna averse to mixing with citizens of lower social ranking than herself: "Ah princesse, on se mélange?" one man asks. "C'est pour ça que vous avez pris la Bastille!"[102] she responds. This rapport is further emphasised by her intercultural appropriation of the everyday habits of her new homeland. As Hayward notes, the red and white colours that adorn Eléna's apartment initially suggest Eléna's strict allegiance to Poland.[103] Eléna continues to develop a strong rapport with French populace, as evidenced by her drinking of wine (despite her self-professed love of Polish vodka), her fluent French, her support of Rollan and her eventual commitment to his cause (or rather that of his coterie). Eléna herself repeatedly declares "J'aime la foule" as she drinks with Henri during the Bastille Day celebrations, suggesting her desire to be carried along by the social dynamic rather than subjugated either her own romantic desires or those of any one man. Yet Eléna's affinity with the crowd is problematic, since her nascent support for Rollan marks her not only as one of the crowd, but also as the personification of its nationalist fervour that subjugates both Eléna and the broader public to Rollan's brain-trust: like them, she supports

[102] "Ah princess, are we mixing together today?" / "That is why you stormed the Bastille!"
[103] Hayward, "Design at Work," 101.

Rollan enthusiastically on Bastille Day before she even sees him, and when she does finally meet him, she is easily duped by his superficial image.

Eléna's susceptibility to the appeal of spectacle is later evidenced when Fleury suggests that Rollan escape to Paris on a train. Disappointed by the escape-plan, she admits "J'aurais prefere la bataille. C'est de plus glorieux. Mais la fin justifie la moyenne."[104] This penchant for spectacle leads Eléna to make two significant errors of judgement which together lead to her confinement within the crystal without her knowledge. First of all, her attraction to the nationalist spectacle embodied by Rollan prevents her from realising that Rollan is far less interested in national duty than in her love or from attempting to discern whether or not Rollan and his policies would befit presidential candicacy, specifically international relations. As social tensions mount in Paris in the wake of the imprisonment of the French soldiers in Germany, Rollan issues an ultimatum to the Germans but later admits to Eléna at Martin-Michaud's residence that he sent the ultimatum out of love for her. Even when Eléna insists that "Je ne compte pas, c'est votre cause,"[105] Rollan refers to his career as "la cause que vous me faites haïr."[106] Secondly, as a result of her failure to comprehend Rollan's fundamental indifference to his military career, Eléna fails to realise that she is being exploited by both Rollan's coterie and her own fiancé, who has bartered Eléna's favours in return for the imposition of tariffs on imported shoes. Eléna sacrifices her own agency by insisting upon crystallising the ambitions and ideals of the image of "le général Rollan" rather than Rollan

[104] "I would have preferred battle. It is more glorious. But the end justifies the means."
[105] "I do not count, it's your cause [that counts]."
[106] "The cause that you make me hate."

himself.

It is because of Eléna's devotion to the crowd that Henri represents her only hope for escape from the crystal which is constituted by nationalist sentiment and, its corollary, Eléna's misplaced devotion to Rollan. Henri remains critically distanced from the political atmosphere, only attending the Bastille Day celebrations because Rollan is his personal friend and only shouting "Vive Rollan" in an effort to impress Eléna in front of one of Rollan's few detractors. Eléna predictably spurns Henri's lack of ambition. When she asks Henri to tell her his main goal, he responds, "De ne rien faire. Mon idéal est d'atteindre à la parfaite paresse. Malheureusement de nos jours, c'est presque impossible. […] La paresse universelle pour les pauvres, comme pour les riches. Quel but!"[107] Eléna initially spurns Henri's ideals, ignoring the value of adhering to ideals that are detached from dominant ideology, and continues in her efforts to persuade Rollan to seize power. At the end of the film, when escape becomes imperative for Rollan, Henri dons Rollan's uniform, stands at a dimly-lit window with Eléna and pretends to kiss her romantically in order to detract attention from Rollan who escapes through the crowd gathered outside. The crowd is only settled by the example of love set by Henri and Eléna's masquerade whose popularity among the crowd further testifies to the superficial demands of the popular masses. Thanks to Henri's monologue, Eléna accepts the kiss as a primal form of nationalism, itself associated with Henri's understanding of France's cultural legacy: "Les Français ont un respect pour les choses de l'amour. […] En ce qui concerne le forage des puits de pétrole ou le choix

[107] "To do nothing. My dream is to achieve perfect idleness. Unfortunately, these days it is almost impossible. […] Universal idleness for both the poor and the rich. What a goal!"

de nos gouvernements ou la fabrication des explosifs, nous sommes peut-être légèrement d'à coté. Mais quand il s'agit de l'art de vivre, vous pouvez faire confiance aux Français."[108]

This kiss offers the perfect compromise between Eléna's support for French patriotic icons and her own desire to aid Rollan's escape. Love (or the illusion of love) can distract both the crowd and Eléna from Rollan's public appeal. By closing their eyes for one another, they also close their eyes to the spectacle of Rollan, freeing them from the unconditional patriotism inspired by their theatrical surroundings. In the end, Eléna and Henri are free to gaze beyond the window, breaking free of their *jeu de rôles* in front of the otherwise preoccupied crowd. The appeal of spectacle dissolves through this *deus ex machina* by the final scene of what is rightly announced in the credits as *une fantaisie musicale*, liberating society from its petrifying reverence for Rollan. However, as in the case of *Diary of a Chambermaid*, the heroine is subject to a double-bind, and remains subjugated to Henri: although the molar line imposed by spectacle has disintegrated, patriarchal dominance crystallises around Eléna's *ligne de fuite*, precluding her entry into a social configuration in which she is free to determine her own future.

[108] "The French respect matters pertaining to love. […] When it comes to digging for oil or choosing our governments or the manufacturing of explosives, perhaps we do not quite come in first place. But when it comes to the art of living, you can bank on the French."

5.5 Conclusion: Society and Spectacle

Hayward astutely observes that the textual richness of Renoir's economical storytelling in *Eléna* is "an effect of set design as much as camera-work."[109] The same could be said of any of the three films discussed in this chapter: if we are to interpret each film's mise-en-scène temporally, the theatre (and spectacle more precisely) must be recognised as a social construct in its various ideologically-imbued forms and, in the case of the ruling classes, as a composite of molar lines "[qui] ne cessent pas de colmater, de boucher, de barrer les lignes de fuite."[110] Deleuze's remark regarding the *image plane* in Renoir's work undoubtedly remains more valuable for the way it diverts the spectator's attention to alternative aspects of Renoir's mise-en-scène, particularly in *Diary of a Chambermaid*, than as an accurate remark regarding the formal qualities of *The Golden Coach*: deep space remains a crucial narrative technique at key moments across *Coach* and *Eléna*, and even at one point in *Diary*.

The visual aesthetic of these three films is similar, and all three portray worlds where what Christopher Faulkner refers to as Renoir's "socialization of space"[111] is inextricably connected with the passage of time. Furthermore, all three are surprisingly pessimistic works that portray the human attempts to nullify the "juxtapositions yet to flower into

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[109] *Susan Hayward*, "Design at Work," 103.
[110] Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux*, 273: "never cease to seal, plug, block the lines of flight."
[111] Christopher Faulkner, *The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir* (Princeton University Press: Princeton NJ, 1986), 50.

interaction"[112] amongst space's "loose ends and missing links,"[113] and particularly those amongst members of different social classes: the ruling classes seek to entrench their *sociétés du spectacle* in the very "chains of meaning which embed [space] with closure and stasis,"[114] and which Massey aims to dispel from our notion of spatial politics. All three depict attitudes towards social space entailing diverse ramifications regarding the nature of Renoir's crystal, some of which intersect with the characteristics associated by Deleuze with Visconti's mise-en-scène of temporality.

In particular, *Diary of a Chambermaid* and *The Golden Coach* evoke an artificially constructed "cristal synthétique,"[115] which is "inséparable d'un processus de décomposition qui les mine du dedans."[116] Their worlds are subject to history, which prevents potential salvation from arriving on time. Moreover, the hegemonic strata in each embody "a vanished past" by endeavouring to preserve a precise moment in space-time through spectacular décor and antiquated social practices. New social configurations usurp Mme Lanlaire's theatre from within, specifically "la montée de nouveaux riches,"[117] observed by Deleuze in Visconti's work, and embodied by Joseph in *Diary*. Similarly, the Spanish colonial forces of *Coach* are under increased pressure from the looming off-screen violence in Cusco. Worse still, when the Spanish court does realise that it is imbricated in a costly conflict, its morally corrupt members remain primarily preoccupied

[112] Massey, *For Space*, 11.
[113] Ibid., 12
[114] Ibid., 19.
[115] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 124: "synthetic crystal."
[116] Ibid., 125: "inseparable from a process of decomposition which eats away at them from within."
[117] Ibid: "the rise of the *nouveaux riches*."

with Camilla and the coach. Camilla ultimately remains entrapped within the colonial *société du spectacle*, and the prospect of a genuinely new future that corresponds with the heroine's desired terms remains unlikely. Even in *Diary of a Chambermaid* and *Eléna et les hommes*, where the heroines emerge from a stultifying social configuration, the prospect of a genuinely new future that corresponds with either of the heroines' desired terms remains unlikely.

If Renoir's women are, as Sumit Ghose observes, "often present as the key agents for the resolution of the problems that both arise in the discourse and affect the lives of the male characters,"[118] the heroines' own agency in each of the films analysed is subjugated, however inadvertently, by their male counterparts who endeavour to actualise their own desires. Ultimately incapable of overcoming the limitations imposed by patriarchal society on their prospects, spatial politics over which they exercise only partial control lend credence to Roger Viry-Babel's assertion that "tous [les espaces Renoiriens] traduisent la notion d'enfermement et de dépendance, aux Autres en général, et à l'Homme en particulier. Il n'y a pas de lieu, d'espace où la femme puisse s'isoler."[119] Rather, such a space can only exist "hors des limites du champ et du hors-champ, dans un futur toujours inaccessible."[120] Space is open to becoming, but the openness of that process of becoming is inevitably conditioned by gender. It is undoubtedly

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[118] Sumit Ghose, "Treatment of Women in the Cinema of Jean Renoir" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 1997), 8.

[119] Roger Viry-Babel, "Les Images de la Femmes dans l'Œuvre de Jean Renoir" PhD diss. Université de Nancy II, 1988), 302: "all [Renoirian spaces] express the notion of enclosure or dependency, on Others in general, and on Man in particular. There is no place or place in which the woman may isolate herself."

[120] Ibid: "outside the limits of the field and out-of-field, in an eternally inaccessible future."

true that Renoir's male protagonists fare little better than his heroines analysed within this chapter. However, the men in each of these three films are given the opportunity to implement the future on their own terms rather than basing their projected trajectory on the demands of the women who surround them.

On a formal level, the films studied in this chapter provide an interesting response to broader debates surrounding the representation of temporality in *Cinéma 2*, as Deleuze himself hints at the relevance of colour, spectacle, and the qualities of Renoir's *crises anti-réalistes* during his discussion of "les puissances du faux," stating that we see crystalline description "dans les domains les plus divers, les vues plates et les aplats de couleurs de la comédie musicale […]."[121] The relationship between the mise-en-scène of social space and temporality within these three *crises anti-réalistes* can be best understood if we first consider the material geneaology of Deleuze's crystal and, building on this, examine how socially stultifying ideological discourse is lent visual, symbolic form. Both the deep spaces and the "flat" images featuring in the corpus emphasise the material spectacles that stratify the worlds in each film, portraying the settings as milieux susceptible to the ideologically manipulative force of spectacle, which inhibits the potential creation of a genuinely new future, liberated from the *rôles morts* (c.f. Deleuze) and *temps gelé* (c.f. Debord) imposed by theatricality.

Deleuze arguably provides the most lucid albeit indirect dissection of the impact of Renoir's *crises anti-réalistes* on the director's socialisation of

[121] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 165: "in a diverse range of areas, the flat views, and flat tints of colour in the musical comedy […]."

space: for Deleuze, “la vérité, ce n’est pas quelque chose qui préexiste, qui est à découvrir,”[122] but rather “est à créer dans chaque domaine.”[123] It is a fallacy to even believe in any definitive kernel of truth since “dire « la vérité est une création » implique que la production de vérité passe par une série d’opérations qui consiste à travailler une matière, une série de falsifications à la lettre.”[124] Although Debord insightfully reduces alleged ideological facts to “[une] conscience déformée des réalités,”[125] visibly false realities constitute the only tangible truths in each of the three films discussed and, by virtue of this, serve as “des facteurs réels exerçant en retour une réelle action déformante.”[126] By going beyond ontological understandings of realism for their terms of reference, these films construct their own truths regarding reality of spectacle and its ideological influence in a world where “tout ce qui était directement vécu s’est éloigné dans une représentation,”[127] pushing Bazin’s assertion that “realism in art can only be achieved through artifice”[128] to its limit. As Éric Rohmer notes of *Eléna*, Renoir “travaille moins sur une réalité noble que sur la caricature qu’elle a suscitée.”[129] Although Sesonske writes that the films Renoir made after *The River* (1951), in comparison with those of the 1930s, demonstrate “a preference

[122] Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers: 1972-1990* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2003), 172: “the truth is not something that pre-exists, something to be discovered.”
[123] Ibid: “must be created in every domain.”
[124] Ibid: “to say ‘the truth is a creation’ implies that the truth is produced by “a series of processes that mould its substance, literally through a series of falsifications.”
[125] Debord, *La Société du spectacle*, 203: “[a] deformed consciousness of realities.”
[126] Ibid: “real factors which, in return, instigate real deforming acts.”
[127] Ibid., 15: “all that was directly lived has receded into a representation.”
[128] André Bazin, “Le réalisme cinématographique et l’école italienne de la Libération,” in *Qu’est-ce que le cinéma?* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 2008), 269: “
[129] Éric Rohmer, “Les Singes et Vénus,” *Cahiers du Cinéma* 64 (1956): 39: “works less on a noble reality than on the caricature that it has sustained. He embellishes it without making it tasteless, with imagery which is its true subject ”

for spectacle over social criticism,"[130] the very importance of Deleuze's film philosophy and Debord's social manifesto to this analysis makes it clear that spectacle reflexively articulates social criticism. In all of these worlds, theatricality is not merely a stylistic choice. It enters into dialectic with Renoir's understated framing to demonstrate Renoir's own assertion that "la vie est un tissu de déceptions."[131]

[130] Sesonske, "The River Runs," 127.
[131] Renoir, *Ma vie et mes films*, 27: "Life is a tissue of deception."

Conclusion

> "[C]e n'est […] pas seulement l'intérieur de chacun des plans que le réalisateur doit déterminer en fonction d'une certaine conception de la spatialité, mais la totalité de l'espace filmé."[1]
>
> - Éric Rohmer

This thesis began with two central aims: firstly, to develop a framework that would allow us to integrate temporality into our analysis of Renoir's mise-en-scène of space, with due consideration of the importance of social space, technology, and ideology, to Renoir's vision. Secondly, this thesis aimed to demonstrate that Renoir's mise-en-scène frames the mutually affective relationship between physical and social space at each stage of his career, producing an image of open space-time, in which the possibility for change remains a constant possibility. Three questions evoked by Deleuze's analysis of Renoir's work were central to this analysis, this study specifically sought to demonstrate the import of Renoir's major narrative settings, political perspectives on the French Left, and the major evolution in Renoir's post-war aesthetic style towards his mise-en-scène of open space-time. Within this conclusion, I firstly wish to briefly summarise the preceding interrogation of each of these concerns, and how they allow us to arrive at a more comprehensive appreciation of what Leo Braudy refers to as Renoir's

[1] Éric Rohmer, *Le Goût de la Beauté* (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 2004), 42: "The director must not only shoot the contents of every shot in relation to a certain conception of spatiality, but the totality of the filmed space."

"open world."[2]

Clearly, the spatio-temporal ontology of Renoir's work is constructed around a range of ideological, technological and plastic components, which are illustrated in various measure by Deleuze's film philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari's spatial thought, and Doreen Massey's treatise on open space-time. Essential among the avenues of enquiry derived from these frameworks is the correspondence between the *point de fuite* located by Deleuze in Renoir's work, and the *ligne de fuite* conceptualised by Deleuze and Guattari. By emphasising the importance of the ongoing *ligne de fuite* to Deleuze's conceptualisation of temporality, we can relate Renoir's framing of "le jaillissement du temps comme dédoublement, comme scission,"[3] to the ongoing tensions between hegemonic and subjugated spatial forces. By reading this through Massey's theorisation of spatial politics, the spectator is in a position to examine how the mutual implication of space and time is played out within various narrative settings including urban streets, rural fields, domestic interiors, and realms of memory whilst also lending special attention to characteristically Renoirian elements discussed by Deleuze, ranging from *profondeur de champ* to plastic aspects of mise-en-scène, such as theatres and rivers.

Renoir's mise-en-scène of space-time implies that societies are produced within ongoing processes of spatialisation, itself a fundamentally open process which, corresponding with Deleuze and Guattari's theorisation of the "champ social" (or "social field"), "ne cesse pas d'être animé de

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[2] Leo Braudy, *The World in a Frame: What We See in Films* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 46-51.
[3] Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2: L'image-temps* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1985), 109: "the gushing forth of time as doubling, as scission."

toutes sortes de mouvement de décodage et de déterritorialisation qui affecte des « masses », suivant des vitesses et des allures différentes."[4] Across Renoir's silent works, landmark films of the 1930s, Hollywood output and post-war *crises anti-réalistes*, Renoir's directorial style clearly displays the import of centralised social practices such as capitalism and colonialism towards the homogenisation of society, but constantly leave them open to dispute by coeval social politics and the import of the physical landscape, in both its urban and rural forms. This is not merely a space in which social analysis is performed by the camera, or where characters may visibly implement change, but a manifestly dynamic, inherently heterogenous product of the fluctuating interrelations between physical and social space, whose sheer breadth and imbrication in time both permit and challenge any attempt to determine "how such chaos might be ordered, how juxtapositions may be regulated, how space might be coded, how the terms of connectivity might be negotiated."[5] This particular point is critical to our understanding of the relationship between Renoir's camera-techniques and the milieux photographed, for it acknowledges that spatialisation is not merely the product of human intervention (even if this is a salient aspect of films as diverse as *Le Bled* [1929] and *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* [1936]), but also of the physical space that they navigate (as in *La Chienne* (1931] and *The Southerner* [1945]), which actively alters the spatio-temporal trajectories of Renoir's characters.

Unsurprisingly, this concern is saliently articulated by Renoir's

[4] *Gilles Deleuze* and Félix Guattari. *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2: Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980), 268: "never ceases to be animated by all sorts of movements of decoding and deterritorialisation which affect 'masses,' operating at different speeds."
[5] Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: SAGE), 151-52.

camerawork. Through a blend of his signature techniques and appropriation of classical norms, Renoir's frame presents us with a relational and interactional space which, to cite Massey, is composed of "loose ends and missing links"[6] which form "a precondition for the temporal."[7] Much of this self-conscious approach to space often features in deeply-composed scenes or mobile shots which, in Bazin's analysis « suppose[nt] le respect de la continuité de l'espace dramatique et naturellement de sa durée."[8] Interestingly however, this even remains true of *Diary of a Chambermaid* (1946), which features noticeably fewer images composed in depth. Furthermore, Renoir's portrayal of open space-time is occasionally a product of montage, a technique disparaged by Bazin's realist theory, and one rarely associated with Renoir to this day. The combinations of techniques employed in both of these particular cases may appear to be crudely incoherent, even amateurish, upon initial viewings. However, as Andrew Sarris ecstatically wrote in *The American Cinema*, "there is nothing crude about Renoir's technique once its purposes have been fully understood. Only when style is confused with meaningless flourishes does Renoir's economy of expression seem inadequate for textbook critics."[9] Clearly, beyond the avant-garde merits of Renoir's pioneering exploitation of deep space, camera mobility, and off-screen space, the combinations through which Renoir's alternately innovative and classical techniques interact expressively remain all the more intriguing, and no less valuable to

[6] Ibid.
[7] Ibid., 89.
[8] André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?*, (Paris: Cerf-Corlet, 2008), 74: "is based on a respect for the continuity of dramatic space and, of course, for its duration."
[9] Andrew Sarris, *The American Cinema: Directors and Directions, 1929-1968*. 2nd ed. New York: Da Capo, 1996), 74.

our interpretation of the mutually affective relationship between social and physical space across Renoir's work.

Yet the very structure of this thesis pointedly warns us against limiting our analysis to Renoir's camera-techniques. Moreover, if we are to appreciate the diverse ways in which Renoir invokes an image of open space-time, we cannot limit the scope of our analysis to a particular phase of Renoir's career. It is now clear that, apart from the consistent importance of social formations and ideologically conditioned techniques, three particular elements are crucial to Renoir's portrayal of space as what Massey calls an "open, relational, unfinished and always becoming"[10] construct. Chapters two and three demonstrated that Renoir frames the import of physical settings, both urban and rural, towards processes of becoming in space. In the case of Renoir's Paris, as it features in *La Chienne* (1931), *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932), and *La Règle du jeu* (1939), the camera frames the spatio-temporal tension between theatricality and urban dynamics to portray social mobility "en fonction d'une dimension d'avenir."[11] Crucially, the characters' fates are not exclusively determined by their own agency, but often feature as a by-product of the Parisian cityscape. The deceptively inert rural landscape is no less instrumental to Renoir's portrayal of open space-time. Interestingly, the *surcroît de théatralité* discussed by Deleuze is largely, if not entirely, absent from the Algerian, American, and Indian rural settings analysed. Rather, in the case of *Le Bled* (1929) and *The Southerner* (1945), we must consider the broader ideological context in which the films were produced if we are to acknowledge the manifest heterogeneity and

[10] Massey, *For Space*, 59.
[11] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 117: "in terms of a dimension of the future."

simultaneity of the power-relations that striate space, and which inform Renoir's use of deep staging and off-screen space. Interestingly, in the case of *The River* (1951), spectators must detach themselves from such political and economic coordinates, and develop a philosophical approach to the spatial memories portrayed. Clearly, all of the above urban and rural milieux demand analysis on their own terms. Nonetheless, the mise-en-scène of each is informed by a conception of space as a sphere of heterogeneity and simultaneity, which constantly remains subject to radical revision.

Secondly, although Renoir's perspectives on the French Left are crucial to the integral relationship between space and time within Renoir's Front Populaire output, Renoir's unfilmed *Ida* (1935) suggests the importance of further locating the fluctuating social space of *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (1936) and *Les Bas-fonds* (1936) with the context of the rise of Fascism. Each concretely situates a community's endeavour to reconstruct social spheres in relation to other coeval powers that striate space. By extension, the virtually inescapable limitations imposed by military and national hierarchies in *La Grande Illusion* (1937) do not merely form a prelude to the social stultification that precludes viewers from envisioning a positive future within the anachronistic aristocratic realms of *La Règle du jeu*. Rather, they encourage us to view the former film as a representation of the latter stages of Renoir's longstanding concern for the increased likelihood of war.

Thirdly, the emphatically theatrical settings invoked by Renoir's *crises anti-réalistes* encourage us to view the societies represented in *Diary of a Chambermaid*, *The Golden Coach* (1952), and *Eléna et les hommes*

(1956) in both temporal and spatial terms. A complete appreciation of the relationship between space and time in these settings demands that we acknowledge the importance of role-playing within each film, distinguish between the various kinds of theatre featuring within each narrative, and specifically determine the ideological role that it incorporates for the strata that deploy it. Spectacle itself becomes the subject of each film, simultaneously constructing and deconstructing truth within the world of the narrative, almost entirely freezing the potential for social progress. The *point de fuite* remains salient in all three, but the rigidly stratified, patriarchal societies that structure all three narratives invariably problematise the heroines' actualisation of genuinely new circumstances within the worlds portrayed.

Although a comprehensive analysis of Renoir's entire oeuvre could not be accomplished within the limited space of this thesis, the importance of a fundamentally open social space within which class barriers are negotiated and social change is possible, evidently remains crucial to Renoir's mise-en-scène throughout his varied career in silent filmmaking, in his most famous works of the 1930s, during his wartime Hollywood exile, and in his post-war *crises anti-réalistes*. Renoir sometimes portrays self-destructive societies, in which change cannot be envisioned in positive terms, but his conceptualisation of social space as an ongoing process, affected by physical space and imbued with temporality, remains consistent across each phase of Renoir's career. Tellingly this perspective even pervades *La Règle du jeu*, filmed on the eve of war as Marcel Carné was filming the foreboding apogée of poetic realism, *Le Jour se Lève* (1939). It

is worth briefly comparing their structurally opposed styles at this crucial juncture in French history. Referring to Leo Braudy's distinction between open and closed worlds, outlined in the introduction to this thesis, Ben McCann argues the latter film "can be unequivocally placed in the 'closed' film column."[12] Interestingly, even in Renoir's alleged "film de guerre,"[13] Renoir refuses to portray their irrevocable fate within formally static compositions in which the fluctuating qualities of space have been nullified. Rather, Renoir insists on conceptualising a fluid space, and on defining the inevitability of the impending war through the manifest co-evalness of differing ideological perspectives in Paris, and the liberty (albeit deceptive) experienced by a vanishing class amidst the landscapes of la Sologne. Even Renoir's fatalism finds its greatest expression in movement, rather than in stasis.

The chronological breath and aesthetic diversity of this corpus has enabled us to both reassess canonised landmarks (*La Grande Illusion*, 1937; *La Règle du jeu*, 1939) and revisit works that remain underappreciated (*Diary of a Chambermaid*, 1946), and which even risk being forgotten (*Le Bled*, 1929), despite the prestige that Renoir's name lends to their titles. Given the chronological scope and aesthetic diversity of the films examined, it is hoped that the foregoing analyses have demonstrated the contribution that integrating time within an analysis of social space can make to an appreciation of relationship between Renoir's innovative mise-en-scène and the spatial politics portrayed.

[12] Ben McCann, *Le Jour se lève* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 36.
[13] Jean Renoir, *Ma vie et mes films* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005), 156: "war film."

"*Le dernier état à considérer serait...*": Reconstituting the Cracked Crystal

Deleuze's analysis of Renoir's work, like any attempt to impose a single framework on a diverse corpus, obviously has its limits. Beyond the criticism waged against Deleuze in the introduction, two further points regarding Renoir's cracked crystal, as conceptualised by Deleuze, are clarified by the preceding analysis. Each is worth noting as a contribution to future analyses of Renoir's mise-en-scène of space-time, or any study informed by Deleuze's conceptualisation of the *image-cristal*. First of all, Renoir's crystalline state is not consistent from film to film: *La Règle du jeu* and *The Golden Coach* resemble Visconti's crystal in dissolution to a far greater extent than the cracked crystal, primarily through the elusiveness of *points de fuite* beyond the insular worlds portrayed in each. Such possibilities for deviations from the crystalline states assigned by Deleuze has already been signalled by Lucio Angelo Privitello's argument that Visconti's *Il Gattopardo* (1963) exemplifies Federico Fellini's seed-crystal rather than the crystal in dissolution.[14] Such caution towards Deleuze's categories should remain central to any study of temporality in an individual director's oeuvre, if we are to extract the practical applications of Deleuze's innovative concepts. Secondly, the state perceived within an individual film is not necessarily consistent from shot to shot: *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* and *The Southerner* (1945) alternate between moments depicting optimistic

[14] Lucio Angelo Privitello, "The Incompassable Language of Natural Aristocracy: Deleuze's Misreading of Visconti's *The Leopard*." Senses of Cinema 37 (2005), accessed July 31, 2015, http://sensesofcinema.com/2005/feature-articles/leopard/

lignes de fuite (as when the cooperative is formed, and when Sam acquires his land) and moments in which mobility in space-time is arrested (the image of la Cagoule in *Lange*, and Devers' physically insulated ranch). Such cases exemplify Ronald Bogue's insightful (albeit undeveloped) suggestion that films may be interpreted as though the crystal contained facets of different qualities.[15]

By integrating Deleuze and Guattari's spatial thought into our analysis, and demonstrating its relevance to the fluctuating spatial politics of Renoir's films, this thesis aimed not only to demonstrate the possibility of interpreting the theatre (likened by Deleuze to the realm incorporated by the interior of the crystal) as a composite of molar lines, but to also distinguish between the *point de fuite* (the visible possibility for change within the world viewed) and the *ligne de fuite* (the visible emergence of new interrelations in space-time) in Renoir's work. In particular, by emphasising the importance of constantly pursuing the latter with a view to creating a new future, this thesis aimed to elaborate not only on how each is made manifest by Renoir's framing, but also to illustrate their susceptibility to "des micro-fascismes qui ne demandent qu'à cristalliser."[16] Renoir's work frequently portrays characters who endeavour to actualise new possibilities (particularly in his Front Populaire output), as well as characters who are beset by forces beyond their control, with which they must repeatedly contend. Renoir's framing (particularly within his Front Populaire output and *crises anti-réalistes*) suggests that the new sets of circumstances

[15] Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2003), 124.
[16] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2: Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1980): "micro-fascisms simply waiting to crystallise."

invoked by qualitative changes in space, no matter how radically differentiated from those embodied by the past, are not sufficient to stave off the inevitable re-emergence of spatialising forces. Similarly, characters attempt to fix their social identities in the city or countryside are subject to the "freedom […], dislocation […] and surprise" which, in Massey's analysis, "open [space] up to the political," and by extension, to opposing social forces.

Indeed, Deleuze's observation that, in Visconti's work, "l'Histoire gronde à la porte,"[17] is arguably true of the entire body of work examined within this thesis, and not solely of those which, as per this thesis, correspond with all of the major characteristics that Deleuze identifies in Visconti's mise-en-scène of temporality. History should not only be understood in the sense of the major wars that menace the *haute bourgeoisie* of *La Règle du jeu* or the Spanish colonisers in *The Golden Coach*, but within the context of the everyday lives portrayed within much of Renoir's French, American, and "international" work: across all of Renoir's narratives, if characters actualise a genuinely new future beyond predetermining elements, this state of being inevitably materialises in the form of a fleeting present moment, which rarely corresponds with the imagined ideal, and its transcience has no currency in the irresistible *jaillissement* of the present. As such, it is important to note that Renoir's work exhibits another potential crystalline state, which cannot be characterised by a single crystal, but rather the endless constitution of flawed crystals. As they pursue their own goals, Renoir's characters must

[17] Deleuze, *L'image-temps*, 125: "History is rumbling at the door."

constantly vie to escape the embodied past, and locate yet another *point de fuite*, lest they remain petrified within the theatre of *rôles morts* that stultifies society. As Jean Epstein once wrote (evidently under Bergson's influence), "Crystals become larger, growing one on top of another."[18]

Richard Rushton has already suggested the possibility of repairing the cracked crystal through his assertion that, through Robert's speech to his guests at the end of *La Règle du jeu*, "the crack is sealed up and the inadequacies of the real re-established."[19] However, because Rushton is primarily interested in how Deleuze's film philosophy allows us to conceive of the imaginary as a constructive apparatus, which opens up new expressions of the real, his analysis centres on the imaginations of Renoir's characters at the expense of any attention to the shifting spaces in which they implement their ideas.[20] Furthermore, Rushton's somewhat off-the-cuff comment is grounded neither in any logical development of Deleuze's philosophy, nor in any precise aspect of Renoir's mise-en-scène.

It is well worth noting that Deleuze's own casual approach to alternative states crucially signals the potential existence of alternative conceptualisations of time existing beyond the primary states discussed in the subsequent pages of *Cinéma 2*. Even when Deleuze discusses these four states (the perfect crystal, the cracked crystal, the crystal in formation, and the crystal in dissolution), he employs a somewhat inquisitive, uncertain register: before discussing Federico Fellini's crystal, Deleuze remarks that

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[18] Jean Epstein, "*Photogénie* and the Imponderable," in vol. 2 of *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907-1939*, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 189.
[19] Richard Rushton, "A Deleuzian Imaginary: the Films of Jean Renoir," *Deleuze Studies* 5, no. 2 (2011): 248.
[20] See section 1.4.1 of the introduction.

"Il y a *peut-être* encore un troisième état,"[21] suggesting that he is still slightly uncertain regarding the signs that he locates in the cinema, and the criteria that he is establishing to interpret them. Similarly, when proceeding to the fourth state characterised by Visconti's work, Deleuze begins by stating that "Le dernier état à considérer *serait* le cristal en décomposition."[22] Deleuze's use of the conditional form implies a degree of uncertainty within Deleuze's perspective, and encourages us to see beyond the basic templates outlined in his text. A strong determination to elucidate the richness inherent to such ambiguities in Deleuze's philosophical discourse, and to demonstrate how they may prove conducive to a stronger appreciation of the rich textures of Renoir's cinematographic spaces characterises this study's general approach to Deleuze, and it is hoped that the reader agrees that the results have proven fruitful. If, as Patricia Pisters notes, "one of the most challenging aspects of 'applying' Deleuze is to highlight the relation of the cinema books to concepts that he developed elsewhere, mostly together with Guattari,"[23] then the frameworks for reconceptualising both our understanding of space-time in Renoir's work and the cinema in general, are also some of the most rewarding.

[21] Ibid., 117: "There is *perhaps* another, third state." Italics are my own.
[22] Ibid., 124: "The last state to be considered *could be* the crystal in dissolution." Italics are my own.
[23] Patricia Pisters, *The Matrix of Visual Culture: Working with Deleuze in Film Theory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2003), 9.

Final Remarks: Keys and Ideas

Criticising the pessimism and violence of *La Règle du jeu*, Deleuze remarks that the film "est un des plus beaux films de Renoir, mais ne nous donne pas la clef des autres,"[24] instantly evoking the question within this study of whether or not there is any particular film that encapsulates the essence of Renoir's mise-en-scène of open space-time. Having already emphasised the complexity and diversity of Renoir's most deceptively similar films, it would appear that the very idea of a single key to Renoir's work becomes ever more elusive, even impossible to select, from either Renoir's canonised landmarks or the deceptively minor instalments that feature across each phase of his career.

Similarly any effort to precisely determine Renoir's "idée complète,"[25] defined by Deleuze as a cinematographic world in which "[s]ans qu'il y ait besoin de violence, et par le développement d'une expérimentation, quelque chose sortira du cristal"[26] (a statement whose relevance has been sufficiently assessed over the course of this thesis), seems as intangible as it is expansive unless we, like Deleuze, limit our perspective to a single portion of Renoir's corpus, to a particular aspect of Renoir's mise-en-scène, or summarise this *idée* within an impractically vague formulation. One aspect of Deleuze's aforementioned statement remains certain: something inevitably alters the tectonics of Renoir's societies, but the forces that invoke change cannot be understood without a

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[24] Ibid., 114 "is one of Renoir's finest films, but does not give us the key to the others."
[25] Ibid: "complete idea."
[26] Ibid., 114: "Wthout the need for violence and through the development of experimentation, something will escape from the crystal."

comprehensive recognition of the spatial politics operating within Renoir's work, and how they correspond with Renoir's narrative style.

At this point, it is more appropriate to refer to how the preceding analysis corresponds with Renoir's own comments on his approach to filmmaking. Discussing his portrayal of the French Revolution in *La Marseillaise* (1938) in an interview with the editors of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Renoir stated: "L'Histoire avec un grand H est fabriquée par les historiens. Qui sont très utiles, car ils présentent une synthèse sans laquelle on ne comprendrait pas. Mais dans un film, on peut essayer de faire comprendre ce côté hâché, irrégulier, imprévu de la vie pendant les grands événements."[27] With or without "un grand H," the word "histoire" should be understood in the dual sense of "history" and "story." For if, as Gilberto Perez observes Renoir's art entered "the arena of what is, and developed the means for rendering and interpreting the world's situations in their concrete complexity,"[28] it is because Renoir intimately frames the significance of deceptively minor interactional events within the broader context of an inherently relational space: Lulu and Legrand's happenstance meeting in *La Chienne* is just as pivotal and symbolic an event as Harriet's mental flight towards the grove in *The River*, the colonial war ignored by the Spanish court in *The Golden Coach*, and the transgression of the Swiss border in *La Grande Illusion*. Simple acts such as walking in the street, tilling a field, and

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[27] Jean Narboni, Janine Bazin, and Claude Gauteur, eds, *Jean Renoir: entretiens et propos* (Paris: Cahiers du cinéma, 2005), 207: "History with a capital H is created by historians, who are very useful, because they present a synthesis without which we could not understand it. But in a film, one can try to make people understand this uneven, erratic, unforeseen aspect of life during major events."
[28] Gilberto Perez, *The Material Ghost: Films and Their Medium* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1998), 194.

dwelling within interior space, are no less important to our understanding of society and space than the confinement of another country's citizens, or the colonising process. All potentially bolster or erode ideological values that are constantly in flux, and all subject space, itself a dynamic, ongoing compilation of "loose ends and missing links,"[29] to radical revision. Eliciting what Perez calls Renoir's "sympathy combined with detachment,"[30] all are lent equal dramatic weight, and contextualised within the broader network of inherently interconnected territories.

Space, in its transformative capacity and intrinsic relationship with time, becomes the central object of Renoir's vision. Even when Renoir presents us with the close-ups of *Diary of a Chambermaid* or the tenebrous confines of *Les Bas-fonds*, our focus is never restricted to a delimited character or set of objects. Rather, our gaze searches beyond the parameters of the camera's frame within the dynamic Whole of space-time, absorbing Renoir's cinematographic images of a transient world that is fundamentally incomplete, necessarily imbalanced, and imbued with as many possibilities as the societies in which we live. Whether or not Renoir himself was entirely aware of this precise continuity within his work when he wrote his autobiography is subject to debate. However, his approach to the integral relationship between space and time is probably best encapsulated by the words that entitle Renoir's own chapter on his ideal approach to mise-en-scène, and with which this thesis shall close: "Faire partie d'un tout."[31]

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[29] Massey, *For Space*, 12.
[30] Perez, *The Material Ghost*, 220.
[31] Jean Renoir, *Ma vie et mes films* (Paris: Flammarion, 2005), 156: "Forming part of a whole."

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This bibliography is divided into a list of written texts, artworks, and a list of films cited over the course of this thesis. Whereas this filmography lists only the works mentioned over the course of this thesis, the appendix features a list of Renoir's entire body of films.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Corpus Breakdown

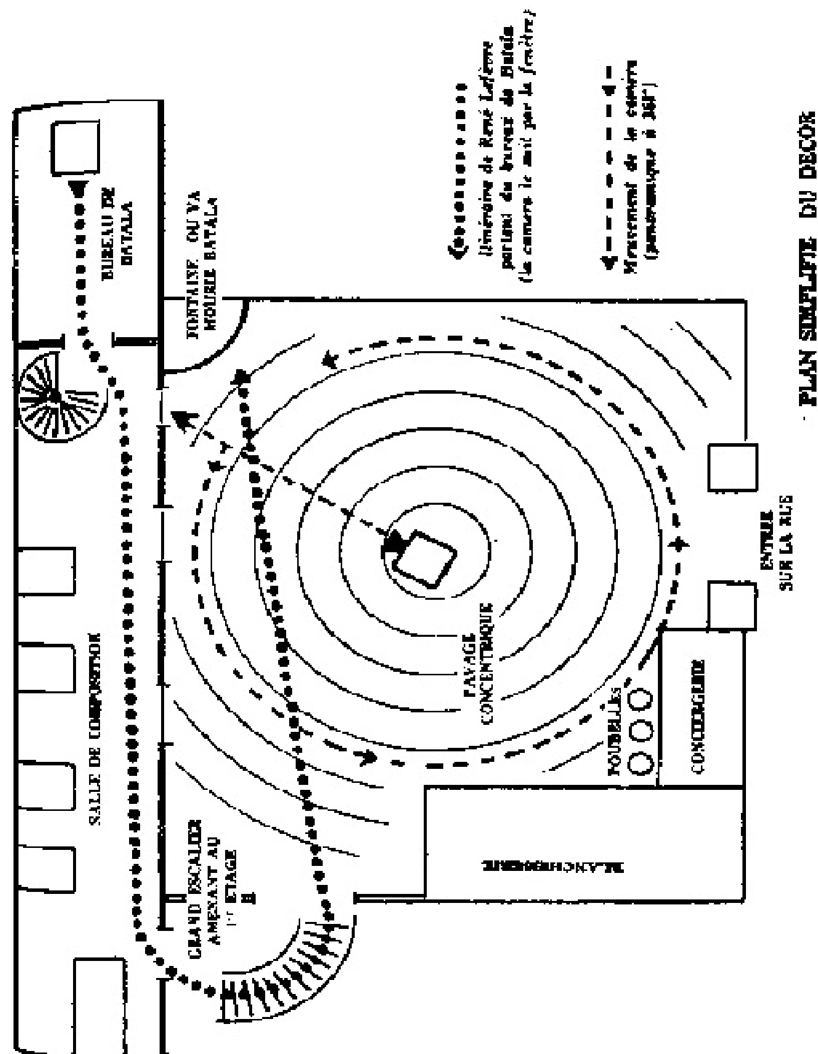
As the filmography features a complete list of the films referenced over the course of this thesis, the final column ("Discussed by thesis") specifically refers to the twelve films discussed in detail within this thesis.

	Black & White	Colour	Discussed by Deleuze	Discussed by thesis
Silent films				
Catherine / Une vie sans joie (1924)	●			
La Fille de l'eau (1925)	●			
Nana (1926)	●		1	
Charleston (1927)	●			
Marquitta (1927)	●			
La Petite marchande d'allumettes (1928)	●		2	
Tire au flanc (1928)	●			
Le Tournoi (1928)	●			
Le Bled (1929)	●			●
Sound films				
On purge bébé (1930)	●			
La Chienne (1931)	●			●
La Nuit du carrefour (1932)	●			
Boudu sauvé des eaux (1932)	●		2	●
Chotard et cie (1933)	●			
Madame Bovary (1934)	●			

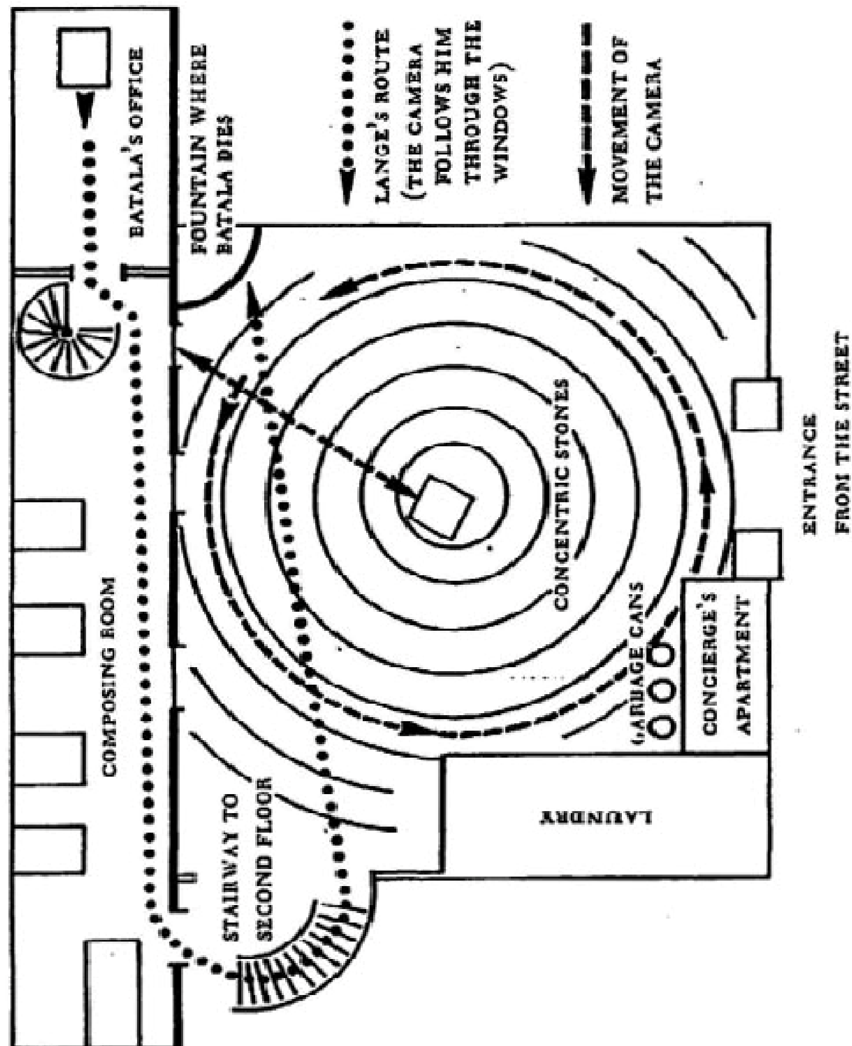
Toni (1935)	●			
Le Crime de Monsieur Lange (1936)	●		1	●
La Vie est à nous (1936)	●			
Partie de Campagne (1936)	●		2	
Les Bas-fonds (1936)	●			●
La Grande Illusion (1937)	●		2	●
La Marseillaise (1938)	●		2	
La Bête Humaine (1938)	●		1	
La Règle du jeu (1939)	●		1 + 2	●
Swamp Water (1941)	●			
This Land is Mine (1943)	●			
*Salute to France (*1944)	●			
The Southerner (1945)	●			●
Diary of a Chambermaid (1946)	●		1	●
Woman on the Beach (1947)	●			
The River (1951)		●	2	●
The Golden Coach (1952)		●	2	●
French Cancan (1954)		●	2	
Eléna et les hommes (1956)		●		●
Le Testament du Docteur Cordelier (TV, 1959)	●			
Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe (1959)		●	2	
Le Caporal Épinglé (1962)	●			
Le Petit théâtre de Jean Renoir (TV, 1970)		●	2	

Appendix 2: André Bazin on *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* (1936)

Below is André Bazin’s map plotting the camera’s movement during the climactic murder of Batala in the final scenes of *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*. The map is reproduced in both its French and English versions.



Originally printed in André Bazin, *Jean Renoir* (Paris: Ivrea, 2005), 41.



Originally printed in André Bazin, *Jean Renoir*, trans. W. W. Halsey and William H. Simon (London: W. H. Allen, 1974), 44.

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