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French Screen Studies

ISSN: 2643-8941 (Print) 2643-895X (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rsfc21

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To cite this article: Maya Sidhu (2020): Reconsidering Jean Renoir's *La Marseillaise* through editor Marguerite Renoir, French Screen Studies, DOI: 10.1080/26438941.2020.1741988

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/26438941.2020.1741988

Published online: 07 May 2020.

FRENCH SCREEN STUDIES
https://doi.org/10.1080/26438941.2020.1741988

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ARTICLE

Reconsidering Jean Renoir's *La Marseillaise* through editor Marguerite Renoir

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ABSTRACT

Director Jean Renoir's 1930s films are considered some of the most influential in film history. However, little is known about Renoir's team of collaborators who helped to realise these ground-breaking, politically engaged films. This study considers the role of Renoir's long-time editor during this period, Marguerite Renoir. Through an examination of Jean Renoir's personal letters from and an original shooting script from assistant director Marc Maurette, the author establishes Marguerite Renoir's crucial role in creating Jean Renoir's *La Marseillaise*(1938). Marrying this archival research with a close reading of a scene from the film, she reveals how additional shifts in point of view can be attributed to the editor, ultimately claiming that representing the social body and a collective filmmaking process are deeply intertwined in *La Marseillaise*. At the time of writing, this is the first study to focus exclusively on Marguerite Renoir's unique contributions to this film.

KEYWORDS

Renoir; feminism; 1930s; France; editing; women

In a scene edited by Marguerite Renoir from Jean Renoir's 1938 film *La Marseillaise*, French revolutionary Louise Vauclair (Jenny Hélia) gives a rousing speech before a packed audience of future revolutionary soldiers. Vauclair asserts her right to claims-making with a simple introduction: 'Je me nomme Louise Vauclair. Je suis marchande de poissons au quartier de la douane et je paie l'impôt.'[1] Vauclair is an uncomfortable, incongruous figure within this group of revolutionaries. She is not a would-be soldier fighting for France's independence, nor given her speechmaking is she a soldier's wife watching from the side-lines. Vauclair is a radical figure, and not only for the late eighteenth-century period in question. *La Marseillaise* is much more than a dramatisation of events leading up to the French Revolution. The film also draws comparisons between the French Revolutionary period and the 1930s left-wing antifascist alliance of the Popular Front. Louise Vauclair recalls the problematic tension between emancipatory politics and the exclusionary model of French citizenship itself, which was fundamentally premised on the prohibition of women. In the Popular Front period, during which French women were still barred from voting, French suffragettes used the same argument that they paid taxes, among others, for the right to vote (Bard 1995, 339–342).

In addition to these feminists and revolutionaries, I suggest that another pioneering and politically committed artist is conjured up in the figure of Vauclair. Her stirring speech,

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featuring a multi-perspectival view of the audience pieced together in the cutting room, recalls Jean Renoir's collaboration with his editor, and romantic partner, Marguerite Renoir. While any Renoir scholar would acknowledge Marguerite's essential contributions to Jean's oeuvre, she is often left out of studies as the nature and extent of her exact contributions as an editor are difficult to pin down. This is partly due to the 'invisibility' of editing as an art form and also due to the nature of studies on Jean Renoir, which focus primarily on the director as author. Yet testimony by Jean Renoir and other collaborators shows that Marguerite Renoir was an artistic force in her own right. With this evidence in mind, I tie her crucial role in the Renoir team of collaborators to a reading of the editing style in the above scene.

Additional shifts in points of view can be attributed to the editor, in particular in the scene featuring Vauclair's speech, ultimately showing that representing the social body and collaboration between the director and editor are deeply intertwined in Renoir's *La Marseillaise*. An examination of Marguerite Renoir's contribution allows us, then, to re-examine classical readings of his films, which argue that analytical editing is not a primary feature of his work. In my reading I thus confirm a stronger connection between Jean Renoir's political commitments to the Popular Front and his film style. Before we look in greater depth at Marguerite's editing in this scene, it is important to establish some key elements of her personal and professional relationship with the director, as well as some historical context for an editor's work in 1930s France. Looking at the role of editors more closely will help us to understand her role in the production process as well as inquire into reasons why editors like Marguerite Renoir are largely absent from scholarship of the period.

Marguerite Renoir, women filmmakers and editors in 1930s France

Marguerite Renoir's name itself alludes to the complex dynamics of film authorship during this period. Originally known as Marguerite Houllé, she changed her name to Renoir in the 1930s. Although Marguerite was Jean Renoir's romantic partner for most of the decade and chose to take his name, they never officially married. After their separation she kept her last name as Renoir, but was called either Houllé-Renoir, Houllé or Renoir, and briefly Mathieu (she was briefly and unhappily married to singer Adolphe Mathieu, whom she shot in self-defence in 1948; she was released after one month in prison). The name Renoir, linked to both Jean and Auguste, alluded to a recognisable and illustrious artistic tradition within which Marguerite could inscribe herself. I refer to her as Marguerite Renoir in this article so as to retain the name she chose for herself.

Jean Renoir's principal editor throughout the 1930s, Marguerite Renoir began working with him on the film *La P'tite Lili* (Alberto Cavalcanti, 1927), in which Jean acted. Their collaboration was solidified in Renoir's film *Le Bled* (1929) and she then edited all his 1930s films. Little biographical information is known about Marguerite Renoir. She began her work in film at the young age of 15, colouring film stock at the Pathé studios in Joinville (Bertin 1986, 98). In addition to her work as an editor, Renoir biographers Célia Bertin and Pascal Mérigeau also cite Marguerite's influence on Jean Renoir's increasing involvement in leftist politics during the latter half of the 1930s (Bertin 1986, 140; Mérigeau 2012, 256). She came from a working-class background and was a resolute communist. Both Mérigeau and Bertin go so far as to state that Jean Renoir's political consciousness-raising can be directly attributed to his immersion in the Houllé family of union activists.

Although Renoir always formed his own opinions, and was never a card-carrying Communist Party member, Marguerite openly discussed politics with him and their inner circle (Bertin 1986, 140). She was a constant fixture of Renoir productions ending with *La Règle du jeu/The Rules of the Game* (1939). During shooting, Renoir began a relationship with Dido Freire, a script assistant at the time, ending his professional and personal relationship with Marguerite. Starting in the 1940s, Marguerite went to work closely as editor with director Jacques Becker, who referred to her as his 'plus chère collaboratrice'[2] (Mérigeau 2012, 630). She worked steadily as a film editor for celebrated directors, including Luis Buñuel and Jean-Pierre Mocky, until the early 1970s.

Although there are few biographical details on Marguerite Renoir, a correspondence between Marguerite, Jean and their producer Pierre Gaut during the filming of Renoir's *Toni* (1935) demonstrates Marguerite's leadership role in the editing room and the independence with which Renoir allowed her to oversee the editing process. In a letter to the producer Pierre Gaut, Renoir distinguishes her from Suzanne de Troeye:

> Vous m'aviez parlé de Suzanne dans votre précédente lettre et je tiens à vous rassurer. D'abord Marguerite a la direction du montage et rien ne se fait sans elle. Suzanne joue le rôle de monteuse de l'usine. Si nous montions dans une usine parisienne, nous aurions aussi une ou plusieurs femmes fournies par l'usine et qui seraient à la disposition de Marguerite.[3] (Renoir/Gaut)

This letter suggests that Marguerite made many of the editing decisions on her own, which would then be carried out by the other *colleuses* or cutters at the factory. In another letter to the producer again distinguishing herself from Suzanne de Troeye, who made changes to the negative with which Gaut was unhappy, Marguerite reinforces Renoir's previous support of her work and leadership in the editing process. She writes that 'je n'ai pas besoin de vous rappeler que j'exerce, depuis de longues années mon métier de chef monteuse pour des metteurs en scènes souvent très difficiles et que je n'ai jamais encouru de reproches'[4] (Renoir/Gaut); see also Fléchet 1960). Mérigeau concludes that she exercised a considerable influence on Renoir's career and œuvre during the 1930s (2012, 126), and that she introduced him to a professional filmmaking community of which she had already been a part.

Before turning to Marguerite's role in *La Marseillaise* I would like to consider the role of women editors in the period. Women are generally ignored as 'makers' by historiography of this period. This is partially due, as Dudley Andrew points out, to the focus on more visible players in film production, such as actors, directors and screenwriters: 'It goes without saying that women were excluded from the camp of writers, directors, and producers in theatre as well as cinema, Colette being a notable exception' (1995, 125). Not only were there few women directors or screenwriters, Ginette Vincendeau (1989) shows that major studios were not interested in appealing to women as an audience. Despite the box-office success of films such as *Angèle* (Marcel Pagnol, 1934), *Jenny* (Marcel Carné, 1936), *Hélène* (Jean Epstein and Jean Benoît-Lévy, 1936) and *L'Entraineuse/Nightclub Hostess* (Albert Valentin, 1938), women-centred features were rare. Yet throughout the decade, women composed at least 20% to 30% of film editors (Denis 2011, 79).

Scholarly analysis of 1930s film industry practices is further complicated by the fact that film editing was often assumed to be a technical rather than an artistic craft. However,

Siân Reynolds and Sébastien Denis have shown the increasing professionalisation of the film editor during the decade and the autonomy of women editors in the French context such as Marguerite Beaugé, Suzanne de Troeye, Denise Tual and Marguerite Renoir (Reynolds 1992, 48; Denis 2011, 74). In the American context during this period Kristin Hatch has drawn similar conclusions in her study of prolific Hollywood film editor Margaret Booth (Hatch 2013).

From a contemporary point of view, the editor is traditionally seen as working directly under the director, cutting to his or her storytelling. Originally the profession was broken down primarily into two roles: cutters (*colleuses*) and editors (*monteuses*). In the early days of the cutter, women predominated the profession. Both Denis and Crisp concur that initially women were sought after as film editors due to the fact that the editing process was considered similar to operating a sewing machine. With the coming of sound, the necessity to layer both the audio and visual tracks, and the introduction of editing apparatuses such as the Moviola, the work of an editor became increasingly time-consuming and technical. Denis claims that this increase in difficulty contributed to the professionalisation of the editor, as the director could no longer complete the time-consuming work of editing in addition to other responsibilities and that this led to a decline in the number of *monteuses* during the 1930s (2011, 77), a position confirmed by Crisp in his study on editing in the period (1987). When the profession gained prestige and required an increasing amount of skill, it was assumed that women were no longer the ideal candidates. However, Reynolds draws the opposite conclusion. She claims that the advancement in technology removed obstacles for women, eliminating the need for a formal apprenticeship: 'Recruitment through unofficial links, independently of trade union hierarchies, probably helped women dodge the usual obstacles' (1996, 97; see also Reynolds 1992). She suggests that film editing was a profession with a more balanced gender representation.

Denis and Crisp provide data for the 1930s and 1940s, but gender studies of the profession from this period onward have yet to be done. While there might have been a decline in women *monteuses*, it is uncertain how long this decline lasted. What we do know, however, is that editors such as de Troeye and Renoir became highly regarded professionals in the French film industry from the 1930s onwards. And although all three scholars point to the increasingly complicated technology as a contributing factor to the profession, the story of women editors within the 1930s French film industry is certainly more complicated. A technologically determinist argument that modern editing apparatuses such as the Moviola freed women from the confines of gendered work leaves the relative neglect of their role on the part of film scholars unexplained. By focusing on Marguerite Renoir, the aim is not to isolate an individual and elevate her status to editor-auteur, but rather to examine her contributions in order to complicate the existing scholarship on Jean Renoir's film style.

Jean Renoir's editing aesthetic

André Bazin celebrated Jean Renoir's minimisation of analytical editing (2005, 83–84, 2000, 73–74). Yet scenes that stage multiple points of view appear in several of Renoir's films during this decade and can be considered allegories of the relationship of filmmaking to public life. Many scholars from Bazin onward point to the dialectical relationship

between the personal and the political and the individual and collective in Renoir films; however, the production of this dynamic is not attributed to the editing style. Examples of scenes in which it is precisely through editing that such a dialectic is carried out can be found in *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange/The Crime of Monsieur Lange* (1936), portraying publishing house cooperative members, or the crowd scene in which Boudu leaps into the Seine in *Boudu sauvé des eaux/Boudu Saved from Drowning* (1932). Renoir stated in an introduction to the film that the crowd gathered at the scene was mostly improvised, as people came together spontaneously to watch the filming of the scene. Boudu's staged drowning was sensational for the crowd and the actors within it, who eagerly watched the drama unfold. These spectators then became part of the film itself as extras, watching Boudu's desperate leap, and then following his rescuers, who rush his limp body into the bourgeois bookseller Lestingois's home. The scene is composed of several different shots from the crowd's point of view: from the bank of the Seine, from inside a passing boat and from inside the canoe carrying Boudu and Lestingois to safety. These multiple angles give a 360-degree view of the incident by the linkage of these shots through editing. This ensemble of viewpoints gives the spectator a documentary image of the dynamic, teeming streets of Paris, and the way that the different groups in the city seem to come together in the moment of Boudu's drowning.

The focal point of the scene, then, is located not only in this failed suicide attempt, but also in the making of film, which both disrupts and is integrated into the movement and flow of daily Parisian life. Just like the well-known 270-degree reverse pan in *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, which implicates the spectator in condemning the corrupt Batala (who aims to destroy the publishing house cooperative), here too the spectator is implicated, this time through the editing style, which joins the multiple points of view by linking several shots.

Analysis of this scene shows how an investigation of editing can shed new light on familiar readings of Renoir's films, such as André Bazin's. Bazin identifies Renoir's unique deep staging of cinematic space that avoids additional cuts creating 'l'unité du décor et de l'acteur, la totale interdépendance de tout le réel'[5] (2005, 83–84). He also shows how Renoir prefers deep focus cinematography, frequent panoramas and a mobile camera which freely enters and exits the frame. These techniques, according to Bazin, contribute to a spectator position that more realistically mimics human perception and thus encourages a more active spectatorship due to the ambiguity and mystery of the film, alluding to a world beyond the filmic image (Bazin 2000, 75–76). The suppression of editing is only partial, as is shown by the famous hunting scene from *La Règle du jeu*. In this scene Renoir displays a style similar to director Sergei Eisenstein's montage of attractions, switching rapidly between points of view to comment upon the cruelty of the *haute bourgeoisie* and their practice of hunting for sport, the scene functioning as a comment on the failure of this class in general to think through its own ideological impulses. Renoir does not often rely on classical techniques such as the shot reverse shot, or the establishing shot,[6] which tend to 'morceler le monde'[7] as Bazin contends (2000, 78). The hunting scene therefore stands out in the film by its minimal use of cuts. Yet it is undeniable that the director privileges such moments in his films, which rely on montage to create the impression of a social body. Such scenes show a complex interrelationship between shots and camera movement that reflects the diverse social composition of the audience.

Similarly, discussing a two-minute-long crane shot from *La Marseillaise* in which the characters sing the anthem in a large crowd of fellow revolutionaries, Martin O'Shaughnessy shows how Renoir avoids the 'fragmentation' of analytical editing to capture the crowd scene without detaching 'the personal from the collective' (2013, 27). The careful orchestration of this long take brings the individual characters into view one by one while keeping them tied to the larger context of the group. Yet, stylistically, *La Marseillaise* stands out amongst Renoir's 1930s films. As Alexander Sesonske contends (1980, 344–345), 'talk and action alternate', complex camera movements like the one mentioned above are often followed by repeated shot/counter-shots, giving dialogue scenes 'a greater feeling of forward progression'. The characters are swept up in the tide of the Revolution via the increased frequency of shots, as 'cutting maintains the forward impetus of the scene'. Renoir also employs an analytical editing technique to demonstrate multiple viewpoints and to reinforce the intertwining of the personal and the collective in the scene featuring Vauclair's speech from *La Marseillaise*.

In addition to appeals to collectivity within his films, Renoir's intimate group of co-creators, affectionately known as 'l'équipe de Renoir',[8] played an important role in the realisation of his artistic vision. Although there is no question that Renoir had the ultimate say in his 1930s productions, he relied on the contribution of individuals who understood his filmic ethos, and who could hold many roles during both shooting and post-production. The collaborator that concerns me here is Marguerite Renoir, who acted in his film *Partie de campagne/A Day in the Country* and who was also solely responsible for the editing of this film when it was finally released in 1946, as was confirmed by Renoir himself (1974, 130). When working together on set, Marguerite often asked Renoir for additional camera set-ups to obtain an increased number of shots for the editing room. According to assistant director Marc Maurette, speaking generally about their collaboration, Marguerite also suggested cuts that Jean did not foresee and that Jean 'always followed what she wanted. Always'.[9]

Marguerite's work as an editor was often linked to Suzanne de Troeye, her co-editor on several of Renoir's films during the 1930s, as the 1930s film editor Denise Tual claims (1987, 122), describing how the two had the same mannerisms and dressed alike in Victorian dresses with velvet ribbons around their necks that harked back to Impressionist paintings. Earlier in Marguerite's career, the two women also often worked as continuity assistants, and according to Tual 'avaient beaucoup de talent' and brought 'un peu de fantaisie'[10] to the editing process (1987, 122), as I will now demonstrate in an analysis of Louise Vauclair's speech in *La Marseillaise*.

Marguerite Renoir and editing in *La Marseillaise*

La Marseillaise was shot in 1937 and released in February of 1938. The film sought to construct a different point of view of the French Revolution, recuperating it from the right, as a symbol of the cultural agenda for the leftist Popular Front government, who sponsored and part-funded the film. The film was funded in large part by public subscription and was thought to be a pioneering example of a film by and for the people.[11] As O'Shaughnessy points out, the film can be analysed as much for its commentary on the contemporary political situation of the Popular Front government in 1930s France as for its depiction of historical events (2000, 134). The film avoids the familiar narratives and

tropes of historical epics. Rather than focusing on the reconstruction of dramatic battle sequences, there is a particular emphasis on everyday life, depicting the camaraderie between a group of unknown Provençal soldiers, or, as Renoir calls them, 'des hommes de la rue'[12] (Bertin 1986, 185). For example, there are several meal scenes with these soldiers; such slice-of-life vignettes are inconsequential to the plot, but are hinted at by the film's subtitle: 'Chronique de quelques faits ayant contribué à la chute de la monarchie'.[13] The title of the film alludes both to the French national anthem and to the provenance of the soldiers who journey up to Paris to storm the Tuileries palace and combat the Prussian army in the 1792 Battle of Valmy.

Marc Maurette's shooting script shows how the order of shots changed between shooting and post-production. Notes in pencil on the script also include improvised dialogue added during shooting. An analysis of the shooting script helps us understand the editing work completed by Marguerite Renoir with her assistant Marthe Huguet, as it is possible to see how the order of the shots might have changed between the shooting script and the finished film. I will consider a 10-minute speech scene occurring about one third of the way through the film, in which the French revolutionaries, Louise Vauclair and Moissan, speak before a group of soon-to-be soldiers, attempting to rally them for the journey to Paris, the fight against the Austrians, and the deposition of Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette.

This scene is particularly instructive because it contains several different transitions and camera positions, increasing the number of shots, thus displaying a complex editing style and camera work. The content of the scene is also relevant, as it touches on issues of feminism and women's roles in 1789, but also during the Popular Front in 1936. Marguerite Renoir had the task of creating a social body that represented different segments of society through the linking and timing of shots taken from different positions within the audience, showing an ensemble of voices shifting in agreement and disagreement with Vauclair and Moissan during their speeches.

The space of the *Club des Amis de la Constitution* is thus created by relating these different shots and points of view, portraying an image of the multiple actors shaping politics during the French Revolution.

The contrast between the shooting script and the finished film shows the ways in which the editing reinforces the story (see Table 1), and the movement between shots of different members of the audience accentuates the political and class conflict, a major theme of the scene. The editing closely follows the planned shooting script; however, many improvisations appear to have been made during shooting. These are indicated in pencil on the script. Although the common assumption would be that Renoir called for these additions, considering Maurette's assertion that Marguerite Renoir often asked for additional camera set-ups, one cannot be absolutely sure.

As it more specifically addresses questions of women's politics and includes a more active participation of the audience, I focus primarily on Vauclair's speech within this scene.

Speaking first, Vauclair recounts the story of her lost lover, Antoine, with verve and conviction. Antoine is meant to be an example of the meaningless loss of life caused by the treacherous monarchy, which sent the Austrians to oppress the people. Due to the nature of the theatre-like space of the *Club des Amis de la Constitution*, the camera shifts its position from different parts of the audience, representing changes of viewpoint. The

Table 1. The shooting script for *La Marseillaise* compared with the final film.[14].

SÉQUENCE H	FINAL FILM
H1: GROS PLAN CHARIOT OUVERTURE sur une femme qui parle dans la grande salle des Jacobins. Pendant son discours un mouvement d'APPAREIL situera la salle bondée de monde. La femme parle avec beaucoup de véhémence. La salle l'écoute avec attention.	**H1**: [No change, although the camera appears to pan rather than track]
H2: Un groupe d'auditeurs en ARRIÈRE PLAN Derrière eux, on distingue nettement le décor représentant Marseille. L'un d'eux crie	**H2**: [No change]
H3: GROS PLAN de la femme. Regard sur les interrupteurs, et elle reprend.	**H3**: [Medium shot of Vauclair, revealing crowd behind her]
H4: PLAN de la salle, absolument silencieuse.	**H4** [No shot change, but a pan to pause on women in the balcony]
H5: PLAN de la femme	**H5**: [Close-up Vauclair]
H6: PLAN MOYEN Le groupe où se trouve l'homme qui connaît Givodan. Il se lève et manifeste bruyamment.	**H6**: [No change, Vauclair's speech continues as viewed from the balcony] 'Je connais Antoine … il me doit deux écus'
H7: GROS PLAN de la femme, panoramique sur les chahuteurs se terminant sur le Président qui calme la salle.	**H7** [Cut to the balcony heckler] 'Ça c'est bien dit!'
H8: GROS PLAN de la femme [*crossed out in pencil]	**H8**: [Medium shot Vauclair]
H9: PLAN MOYEN d'un autre côté de la salle, permettant de voir en arrière plan la plus grande partie de ladite salle. Cette fois l'énervement est à son comble. Les partisans de l'Assemblée et ses adversaires s'empoignent sérieusement.	**H9** *[Improvised dialogue during shooting, indicated in pencil*]: **Partisan de l'Assemblée**: [Arena] '[…] Eh bien moi, je prétend que la place d'une femme est au foyer.'
H10: PLAN du President qui obtient le silence.	[*Indicated in pencil on the shooting script*]: **H10: *Balcon**: 'La tienne est aux galères!' *[Final film: 'Et toi, ta place est aux galères!']
H11 GROS PLAN de la femme. Commencement de rumeurs. Coup de marteau du Président	**H11**: [Medium shot Vauclair]
H12 PLAN de la salle. Bagarre encore plus importante que la première.	**H12**: GP [Balcony] 'Vive Robespierre!'
H13 PLAN du Président	**H13** [Arena] 'Votre Robespierre n'a ni éloquence, ni dignité!'
H14 Garnier traverse les rangs des adversaires qui se calment parce que curieux de connaître la nouvelle apportée par lui. PANORAMIQUE le suivant jusqu'à la tribune où il se place à côté du Président.	**H14**: [Balcony] Robespierre, pas d'éloquence, pas de dignité! [It is unclear if this shot (originally H12) was not realised during shooting or if a pan to a long shot of the brawl replaced the change.]

audience is separated first by class, the lower classes seated in the balcony, and the upper classes in the arena, indicated by their lavish dress. The audience is further separated by gender, as the majority of the Revolutionary women are seated together stage left in the balcony. The *découpage* of the scene in the shooting script structures the different shots, but the orchestration of these shots was constructed in the editing room.

One addition of improvised dialogue is particularly noteworthy for considering the intersection of women, film authorship and Popular Front politics. A chauvinist partisan for the French National Assembly, an enemy of the Revolution at this juncture, calls out to Louise Vauclair that her proper place is not at the pulpit but 'à son foyer'. A revolutionary from the balcony shouts back: 'Et toi, ta place est aux galères![15] These lines, indicated in pencil on the shooting script, illustrate the class dichotomy between acceptable roles for women in public life, espousing a view that the working class better supports women's roles as orators and agents. Vauclair, a fisherwoman, also focuses her speech on her recently departed lover Antoine Givodan, showing a lack of concern for the normative conventions of marriage from a bourgeois perspective. It is clear from her speech that she and Antoine shared a life together, but did not consummate their partnership according to the social convention of marriage.

This improvised exchange negotiates not only Louise Vauclair's right to transgress her normative social role as the domesticated housewife. Vauclair, unlike Moissan, who will follow her, must make appeals to the audience in the name of women. For example, at one point she calls out to the audience reminding them that 'nous les femmes, nous sommes là!' (Figure 1).[16] As soon as an audience member calls out 'continue, citoyenne!' however, the speaker identifies a paradox.[17] Furthermore, calling Vauclair a 'citoyenne' recalls the 1930s French suffragettes' continued battle for the right to vote. A 1938 contemporary French audience would have recognised the allusions to the fraught relationship between women and access to citizenry.

As an editor, Marguerite Renoir (or Marguerite with Jean, as we cannot know for certain) makes subtle interventions to these points, which were not included in the shooting script. When Vauclair describes how her partner was killed running from the

Figure 1. Louise Vauclair in *La Marseillaise* (Lions Gate Entertainment).

Figure 2. Women in the balcony in *La Marseillaise* (Lions Gate Entertainment).

enemy, she pauses briefly on the reaction of the women in the audience (Figure 2). A close-up on Vauclair was added during shooting when she mentions how the Austrians tricked her partner, Antoine (Figure 3). Both the move into close-up with Vauclair addressing the camera and the brief pause on the women in the audience can be understood as an appeal to the spectator, seeking identification with the women and Vauclair herself, thus implying a female solidarity. The women behind Vauclair, just like the women editors 'behind' Renoir, reinforce and orchestrate his 'speech', coordinating the images with the dialogue.[18]

The tight shots on Vauclair, which are held during the speech between reverse shots and pans to the crowd, communicate the emotional weight and political urgency of her claims directly to the audience. In close-up, Vauclair speaks about the leadership in

Figure 3. Close-up on Vauclair in *La Marseillaise* (Lions Gate Entertainment).

France, how the King, Queen and Assembly are cheating their own people for profit. Before another interruption, she ends with: 'L'Assemblée, elle trahit parce qu'elle a peur. Ces messieurs veulent bien une révolution mais à leur profit. Si c'est au profit du peuple, ils tirent à la bride et crient l'anarchie!'[19] Vauclair is clearly speaking to a contemporary audience, questioning the authority of the wealthier classes, thus reinforcing Popular Front rhetoric. She cries out that they are waging a war in which the enemies 'ne sont pas devant eux mais bien derrière!'[20] Leger Grindon claims the scene recalls the major Popular Front rallies of 1934 and 1935, in addition to the meeting to initiate the film itself in March of 1937 (Grindon 1994, 56).

Yet the way in which Vauclair's direct address is broken by the interruption of audience members reveals the difficulty of the struggle that lies ahead for the revolutionaries. The shooting script provides a clear demonstration of these improvised shots, capturing such additional points of view. One of these shots is inserted after a man interrupts the speech for comedic effect, calling out 'je connais Antoine Givodan, et il y a pas plus brave garçon que lui, le cœur sur la main, même que je lui dois encore deux écus qu'il m'a prêté à la Foire aux Sentons!'[21] The shooting script indicates a return to close-up on Vauclair, yet in the finished film the camera stays on his position in the balcony, as Vauclair asks them to consider whether they will continue to fight for the government of France and lose more lives unnecessarily (Figure 4). Then Vauclair is interrupted yet again by a supporter who shouts, 'Ça c'est bien dit!'[22] Although one may never know whether the addition of this shot is attributed to Marguerite, Jean or both, the shot reinforces how the speech is experienced from multiple perspectives.

Furthermore, additional shots, which all appear to have been improvised during shooting, reinforce the disagreement amongst the crowd.[23] For example, when the same judgemental partisan who attacked Vauclair for neglecting her womanly duties in the home starts to critique Robespierre's lack of eloquence, a tense shot-reverse shot verbal sparring follows between a man in the balcony and the partisan. Then, angered, this man and others seated in the balcony descend to the floor and take over the arena. The camera, however, pans from the balcony to hold on the partisan's perspective below,

Figure 4. Vauclair from the balcony in *La Marseillaise* (Lions Gate Entertainment).

Figure 5. Chaotic exit in *La Marseillaise* (Lions Gate Entertainment).
All figures from *La Marseillaise* (Lions Gate Entertainment).

perceiving the chaotic exit of several people from the theatre (Figure 5). Again, this change contributes an additional perspective to the event, uncalled for in the original shooting script, which transitioned from the end of Vauclair's speech directly to the beginning of Moissan's via a pan of the audience. Holding the shot from the partisan's point of view implies the unfinished, uncertain nature of the event, as the partisan, representing authority, looks on. Despite the emotional charge the speeches give the crowd, the revolutionaries have much still to accomplish in order to overthrow the *ancien régime*. However the multiplicity of perspectives and the contentious exchanges captured via the increased number of shots point to a democracy taking shape.

The careful orchestration of points of view shifts possible identifications between the speaker and members of the audience. And as previously mentioned, there is a further temporal shift, as Vauclair appeals also to the contemporary spectator when in close-up and incites the audience to consider their agency. The scene is thus a commentary on the necessary collective action of a political movement that always begins with each individual's consciousness-raising. Yet this analysis shows the links between filmmaking practice and politics as necessarily collective endeavours. Marguerite Renoir complements the flowing camera movements and only switches points of view when necessary, retaining the camera's agency. She joins the individual point-of-view shots to capture the heterogeneity of the crowd assembled at the *Club des Amis de la Constitution*. The audience there also recalls that of the film, as the scene can never be complete without the spectator's participation. The spectator perceives the character, and the director, the unseen storyteller, structures their experience of the scene and writes the dialogue. Interestingly, the shooting script calls for 'panoramiques' (pans) in the scene, which are not included. There is no way to know whether or not they were unable to obtain these shots during filming or if this was a later decision made by the editing room. However, we do know that the editor ends up filling in these missing pans of the audience by linking points of view, symbolically joining together audience members exceeding the frame.

Conclusion

As has been shown in the analysis of this scene, assigning authorial importance to Jean Renoir alone does not do justice to the collective body of the French people that the film itself is interested in constructing, particularly through its editing. We can never know which cuts belonged to Marguerite exclusively and which cuts the director might have suggested in the editing room. Parsing out authorship cut by cut seems beside the point anyhow since we know that their collaboration was essential to Jean Renoir's 1930s œuvre. It is my contention that the story of the French Revolution embracing the collective and refusing the familiar narrative of the heroic individual is the result of the collaboration between Jean and Marguerite Renoir. So it should follow that we honour the collectivity embedded within the film's making. At a time when the fate of the nation was at stake, Jean and his collaborators were tasked with imagining a new political reality. We know that Marguerite was as politically active as Jean, if not more. I would like to suggest that the impact of Vauclair's speech is likely to have been the result of Marguerite's editing. Her contribution bonds the film's Frontist commitments to the film's form. We see all parts of the audience coming into view via the editing style, through which Marguerite signs her commitment to the cause.

Notes

1. 'My name is Louise Vauclair. I'm a fisherwoman in the Douane neighbourhood, and I pay taxes.'
2. 'My most dear collaborator.'
3. 'You had mentioned Suzanne in your previous letter, and I would like to reassure you. First of all, Marguerite oversees all the editing, nothing is done without her. Suzanne has the role of factory editor. If we edit in a Parisian factory, we will have several women provided by the factory at Marguerite's disposition.'
4. 'I don't think I need to remind you that for many years I've been working as head editor for directors who are often very difficult and I've never incurred any reproach.'
5. 'The unity of the scenery and actors, a complete interdependence of the real.'
6. Kristin Thompson shows the prevalence of the shot reverse shot in *La Règle du jeu*. She demonstrates that Renoir's innovation lies in the relationship between shots, staging and camera movement rather than in his avoidance of classical technique (1988, 242).
7. 'Break up the world.'
8. 'Renoir's team.'
9. 'Marguerite had her word. She would say … if she would see suddenly he would not make a close-up, "Jean, if you do not give me a close-up, I cannot switch from one take to the other. If one is good at the beginning and the other at the end, how can I cut? I have nothing." So he said, "It's okay, Marguerite, we'll do it." He always followed what she wanted. Always.' Maurette interviewed in English for David Thompson's 1993 documentary on the Criterion DVD of *La Règle du jeu* (2011). Marguerite is discussed by Maurette at 33–36 minutes. For further documentation on her independence while editing *Partie de campagne* see Mérigeau (2012, 287) and Curchod (2012, 64–65). For *La Règle du jeu* see Faulkner (1986, 108).
10. 'Had a lot of talent' … 'some imagination.'
11. See Buchsbaum (1988, 250) and also Andrew and Ungar (2005, 154). The two-franc subscription was paid in 1,500,000 parts and was to be reimbursed to the public in the form of a two-franc reduction on a ticket. The film workers' union CGT, Le syndicat général des travailleurs de l'industrie du film, also provided and oversaw the personnel required for shooting at a reduced cost. See Cravenne (1973).

12. 'Men of the street.'
13. 'A chronicle of certain events relative to the fall of The Monarchy.'
14. I have not transcribed the dialogue, except to signal significant changes in the final film. I have respected punctuation and formatting.
15. 'In the home' … 'And your place is in the galleys!'
16. 'We women, we're here!'
17. Joan Wallach Scott (1997) identifies the paradox of feminist agency from the French Revolution in 1789 onwards. French women were consistently denied citizenship because of their sex, yet they were forced to make claims in the name of women to obtain the promised universality of citizenship.
18. Also see Andrew (2017, 98), who describes the pre-production research conducted by historian Georges Lefebvre on revolutionary women.
19. 'If the revolution takes place at the profit of the monarchy, the people will pull at the bridle and call for anarchy!'
20. 'Not in front of them, but behind!'
21. 'Hey I know Antoine! He was my friend! And I still owe him two *écus* he lent me at the Sentons fair!'
22. 'Well said!'
23. The end of Vauclair's speech presents several changes to the original shots planned that were improvised during shooting.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

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Filmography

Angèle, 1934. Marcel Pagnol, France.
Le Bled, 1929. Jean Renoir, France.
Boudu sauvé des eaux, 1932. Jean Renoir, France.
Le Crime de Monsieur Lange, 1936. Jean Renoir, France.
L'Entraineuse, 1938. Albert Valentin, France.
Hélène, 1936. Jean Epstein and Jean Benoît-Lévy, France.
Jenny, 1936. Marcel Carné, France.
La Marseillaise, 1938. Jean Renoir, France.
Partie de campagne, 1946. Jean Renoir, France.
La P'tite Lili, 1927. Alberto Cavalcanti, France.
La Règle du jeu, 1939. Jean Renoir, France.
Toni, 1935. Jean Renoir, France.

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